

INDIAN WARRIORS AND PIONEER MOTHERS: AMERICAN IDENTITY AND THE
CLOSING OF THE FRONTIER IN PUBLIC MONUMENTS, 1890-1930

by

Paul Scolari

Bachelor of Arts, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1987

Master of Arts, University of Pittsburgh, 1991

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This dissertation was presented

by

Paul Scolari

It was defended on

April 1, 2005

and approved by

Nancy Glazener, Associate Professor, English

Barbara McCloskey, Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Terry Smith, Andrew W. Mellon Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Kirk Savage, Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture
Dissertation Director

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Abstract: At the end of the 19th century, Americans heralded the end of the westward march across the continent. The West had been won. The historian Frederick Jackson Turner put it best when in 1893 he proclaimed:

“And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.”

Long understood as a geographically remote wilderness where the epic struggle between “civilized” and “savage” would determine the fate of America’s future, suddenly the frontier defined the nation’s past. Previous scholars, in examining the work of artists, writers, entertainers, and others, have explored how certain individuals fashioned a nostalgic legacy of western expansion at this moment in the nation’s history.

My dissertation charts new territory in this field by exploring how Americans nationwide fashioned a legacy of western expansion in an assemblage of works of art neglected until now, sculptural monuments erected in public space. In so doing, it provides a fresh understanding of the nation’s defining legend, the myth of the frontier, and how this myth corresponds to the history upon which it is based.

By employing the Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum Inventory of American Sculpture to examine the entire range of public monuments commemorating western expansion from 1890-1930, my study provides an unprecedented synthesis on this topic. Inventory

research revealed one striking pattern--monuments focused overwhelmingly on two figures, the Indian and the pioneer. It also led to one surprising finding--while represented as combatants in the battle for the continent in the 19th century, both figures would be remembered heroically in the wake of western expansion, each the foundation upon which citizens would construct American identities in the early-20th century.

Thus, in a series of case studies complementing my Smithsonian Inventory research, my dissertation examines the life of two mythic American figures, the Indian and the pioneer, and how these figures were used to fashion a legacy of western expansion in a rich array of artifacts including public sculptures, minted coins, and memorial highways.

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PREFACE

During the course of researching and writing my dissertation, a long list of mentors, colleagues, friends and family provided many years of support and encouragement. It gives me great pleasure now to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of them.

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While writing my dissertation, I have had the great fortune of working as a historian for the National Park Service (NPS) at Golden Gate National Recreation Area in the San Francisco Bay Area with a great bunch of professionals in the conservation field. I wish to thank several of my NPS colleagues not only for nurturing a great work environment, but also for their understanding and encouragement as I pursued dissertation completion. I would especially like to thank my supervisors over the course of these years, Ric Borjes, Historical Architect and Steve Haller, Historian, who hired me as a graduate student and who have been unwavering supporters. Co-workers to whom I am grateful include: Archeologists Leo Barker and Marty Mayer, Architectural Historian Kristin Baron, Curators Diane Nicholson and Jonathan Bayless, GIS Specialist Han Barnaal, Historical Architects Barbara Judy, Jane Lehman and Jim Kren and Landscape Architects Nick Weeks, Kimball Koch and Andrea Lucas.

In fulfilling my duties as the American Indian Liaison at Golden Gate National Recreation Area since 1998, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with many individuals from the Ohlone and Coast Miwok communities, native Californians whose ancestors were the aboriginal inhabitants of the lands now comprising the park. I am grateful for the friendships that have developed as a result of this work with Tim Campbell, Tony Cerda, Andrew Galvan, Jakki Kehl, Rico Miranda, Frank Ross, Ann-Marie Sayers, Linda Yamane, Irene Zwierlein and others too numerous to mention here. Over many years, each of these individuals has provided me with lessons on viewing American history and culture from an American Indian perspective. I hope that they will find that some of these lessons were absorbed and reflected in the pages that follow.

Among the friends who have provided support over the years I am particularly grateful to Santa Rosa neighbors Milt Harris and Lea Goode-Harris, graduate school friends and Pittsburgh residents Mark Kemp and Geeta Kothari, and my best friend since grammar school Frank Lavin. Milt and Lea both read draft portions of my dissertation, providing comments and spirited encouragement to carry forth my work to the end. Mark and Geeta were the best of friends in graduate school. Among their many virtues, I have always respected their dedication to learning and university education. They have remained a thread connecting our family to Pittsburgh, and I am grateful for their gracious hospitality on my return visits there. Frank might as well be my brother. He supports me, and I him, in everything we do. I am grateful for the countless times he boosted my spirits and encouraged me to push on.

Most importantly of all, I would like to thank all of the members of my family (the Scholaris, the Slatterys, the Montaranos, the Costers and the Milletts), who for all these years have stood in my corner and cheered me on. This work is dedicated to all of them, especially to my mother, Gloria, my biggest cheerleader, and to the memory of several loved ones who are not here today: my father, Fred, brothers Dave and Bill, and my mother-in-law Judy Coster, founder of the two-person Indian Head Nickel Buffalo Club in support of my completion of Chapter 3 of this study, who generously purchased the lap-top computer on which I carried out the final two years of writing.

Of course, I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my immediate family, my wife Lynnette and our two daughters, Beatrix and Imogen. For the better part of a decade, and most especially in the last two years, my dissertation has been a part of our family life on most weekends. During this time, Lynnette picked up the slack around the house and with the kids when I was absent writing. Looking back on these years with hindsight only sharpens my realization that we all did this together. I remember going to Starbucks on Sunday mornings with Trixie. I would write; she would do her homework. I remember Lynnette, Trixie and Gigi meeting me at Santa Rosa's Main Library at the end of a writing day, Gigi calling for me through the stacks at the top of her lungs. Writing a dissertation in this manner was not a recipe for joy. Yet, amidst all the work and disruption, you guys made life a joy. For this, and for all of your love and support over these many years, I am immeasurably grateful. I love you guys.

1. IMPERIAL CONQUEST: FROM NATIONAL MISSION TO NATIONAL MEMORY

The United States of America was born of imperial conquest. Title to the nation's continental expanse was underwritten by military force. In the 19th century, this violent political struggle between the United States and the continent's Indian tribes was the basis of the nation's defining legend. American adventure and heroism grew out of the clash between "civilized" and "savage" on the frontier borderland.¹ By the dawn of the 20th century, Americans declared the end of western expansion and the political struggle that accompanied it. What had been a defining national mission, the peopling of the continent by civilized Europeans, became a defining national memory; America's heritage was now rooted in a frontier past. How was the story of imperial conquest of the North American continent told at this moment in our nation's history? Remarkably, despite all the attention paid to those renowned turn-of-the-century figures who demonstrated a growing interest in the theme of the passing frontier--the Frederic Remingtons, the Owen Wisters, the Buffalo Bills--this fundamental question has never been the focus of a detailed study. In the following chapters, I explore how at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century a legacy of imperial conquest was fashioned by American citizens

¹ The most comprehensive and thorough treatment on the myth of the frontier is Richard Slotkin's monumental trilogy, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1992).

in an assemblage of works of art virtually neglected until now, sculptural monuments erected in public space.

Western expansion across the continent in the 18th and 19th centuries occurred far more swiftly than the young United States had imagined it would. In the years preceding the American Revolution, colonists from the eastern seaboard had established settlements as far inland as the base of the Allegheny Mountains. In the post-Revolutionary period, populations made their way over the Alleghenies and into the states of Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, stretching into the Mississippi Valley following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. With reports back from the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804–06 that the continent’s interior was comprised of a “Great American Desert,” the westward flow diverted to the Mexican holding of Texas in the 1820s, where fertile lands at low fees could be obtained by way of land grants from the government in Mexico City. The 1820s and 1830s saw the opening up of the Far West. Explorers, traders and trappers traversed western lands identifying passages that made way for the large migrations of succeeding decades. Between 1840 and 1865, some 350,000 emigrants made their way to the Pacific Coast, many seeking a fortune in the California Gold fields, still more in search of land to plow. Finally, with the conclusion of the Civil War, settlement focused on the nation’s vast interior, where the development of transcontinental rail lines had made it viable for large-scale agricultural operations to carry goods to urban markets.²

Though imagined in the mythology of the American frontier as an untrammelled, virgin wilderness, the continental United States European settlers encountered had actually been

² Information in this concise summary of western expansion is from Howard R. Lamar, “An Overview of Western Expansion,” in *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, Edited by William Truettner (Washington and London: National Museum of American Art Exhibition Catalogue, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1-26. For a fuller study of the history of the American West see, Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

wrought through centuries of land and resource management by hundreds of Indian tribes for whom the land was home. As they displaced Indian tribes from their traditional homelands, successive waves of European settlement were therefore met by fierce native resistance. As early as the 16th century, the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto battled the Timicua, the Apalachee, the Creek, and others, in the Southeast. In the Southwest, Pueblo tribes disrupted Spanish rule by means of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. While the Spanish battled Indians in the Southwest in the 17th century, English settlers along the Eastern seaboard met armed resistance from native Algonquian peoples. Native-colonial conflict continued into the 18th century, as Indian tribes mired themselves in international disputes among France, Spain, and England. What had by then evolved into a tradition of hostility continued with the birth of the United States. Before 1800, the infant nation had carried out major campaigns against Chippewas, Miamis, Delawares, Shawnees, Potawatomis and others in the Old Northwest. The early 19th century saw major conflicts with the Seminoles in the Southeast, followed by warring with most tribes whose traditional homelands resided east of the Mississippi River during the period of Indian Removal from 1832-1848. Despite these many decades of conflict, the period of greatest Indian-United States warfare still remained to be fought between 1840-1890, as widespread American settlement in the Far West encroached on Indian lands in the Southwest, along the Pacific Coast, in the Intermountain Rockies, and on the Great Plains. By 1890, five decades of hostility had resulted in the confinement of all of the tribes of these regions to reservation lands. With the surrender of the Sioux to United States military forces in the aftermath of the 1890 Battle of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, four centuries of warfare between the continent's native peoples and successive colonial powers had come to a wrenching conclusion.³

³ A concise history of Indian warfare can be found in a series of three essays appearing in the *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, William C. Sturtevant, General ed., and Wilcomb E.

With settlement reaching into all of the continent's regions and with the Indian Wars drawing to a close, there arose talk at the end of the 19th century of the coming end of the westward march. The most dramatic declaration came from the historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his now classic essay of 1893, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner closed his essay with the following coda:

And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.⁴

Long understood as a geographically remote borderland where the epic struggle between civilized and savage would determine the fate of America's future, the frontier suddenly defined the nation's past. Though Turner's interpretation of the frontier would influence the field of American history well into the 20th century, his was just one in a chorus of voices through which a legacy of western expansion was fashioned at this moment in the nation's history.⁵ At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, American citizens nationwide immortalized imperial conquest, what Turner termed the "first period in American history," in a rich array of

Washburn, Volume ed., Volume 4 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988). The three essays are as follows: Douglas Edward Leach, "Colonial Indian Wars," pp. 128-143; John K. Mahon, "Indian-United States Military Situation, 1775-1848," pp. 144-162; and Robert M. Utley, "Indian-United States Military Situation, 1848-1891," pp. 163-184.

⁴ "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" appears in, Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, with a Forward by Ray Allen Billington (Huntington, New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 1-38. Though Turner's essay provides a starting point for the present study, exemplifying the widespread belief that the period of the American frontier had come to a close at the end of the 19th century, scholars since the 1950s have steadily chipped away at Turner's sweeping treatment of history, showing how Turner's scholarly work was colored by the virgin land myth--the idea that the encounter with an unspoiled wilderness served as the wellspring of American democracy--and emphasizing that the history of the American West did not end in 1890. The first scholar to recognize in Turner's work manifestations of frontier mythology was Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).

Examples of scholarly works that have attempted to provide new directions for the discipline of the history of the American West include the following: Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, Edited by William Cronin, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992), and *Trails: Toward a New Western History*, Edited by Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991).

⁵ Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), p. 4, discusses the generation of historians trained and influenced by Turner.

public memorials. Ordinary and extraordinary experience alike would be colored by these public monuments--sculptures erected in city centers, coins circulated by the Federal government, transcontinental highways built for the emerging automobile and embellished with roadside sculptures. In the opening decades of the 20th century, the mundane act of purchasing a subway fare or the novel adventure of driving on the open road in one of the first generations of automobiles reminded one that theirs was a nation rooted in a frontier past.

Today, public monuments erected in earlier times are typically a mute presence in the built environment. Yesterday's heroes are not our heroes. The language of restrained sculptural form is now foreign to us. Within the last two decades, however, scholars have begun to realize that the study of neglected public monuments presents an opportunity for developing fresh understandings of the past. In reanimating public monuments by explaining how they came to be, we enliven the people and communities for whom monuments were an important focus of public life.

In earlier centuries, public monuments originated in the bastions of the powerful, serving to aggrandize and consolidate central rule through the heroic portrayal of the mighty sovereign. With the fall of European monarchies and the international trend toward widespread suffrage and democracy in the 18th and 19th centuries, sovereignty shifted from the monarch to the national citizenry. With this political shift the function and meaning of public monuments changed. Previously aggrandizements of an individual sovereign, now they were expressions of national history, heroes and identity as defined by "the people." Accordingly, by the end of the 19th century in the United States, public monuments took on a decidedly democratic cast. Initiative for their creation arose from the general citizenry. Increasingly, the common man figured at the center of the heroic chronicling of history instead of the powerful ruler.

In point of fact, the democratic qualities attached to public monuments amounted to a powerful rhetoric. More often than not, public monuments were sponsored by socially elite groups who wielded the most power in the commemorative process. They decided who or what would be commemorated. They selected the artist who would carry out the commission for the monument. They controlled the purse strings. But monument sponsors could not exercise complete command of the process. Because commemoration was carried out in the public sphere, monuments needed to generate acceptance from the rest of the citizenry. Other members of the public could, and occasionally did, mobilize in opposition to commemorative undertakings. This gave to public commemoration a multi-vocal quality, as competing interests intermingled and influenced one another, their antipathies emerging over definitions of history and community.⁶

In the United States, the period from 1890-1930 was the golden age of the public monument.⁷ Commonly referred to as the Progressive Era, this span of time was marked by political, social and cultural upheaval as the United States, predominantly rural during the first 100 years of its history, was rapidly becoming an urban-industrial nation. In the midst of this period of profound change, United States citizens endeavored to reorient the social order on a widespread scale. In particular, members of an emerging urban middle-class, armed with a faith in the power of education and expertise to solve the nation's social problems, set about reforming many facets of American public life: civic and government institutions, industry, medicine, law, education, and business, to name only a handful. A measure of this Progressive-Era reform

⁶ This historical and theoretical understanding of the public monument is gleaned from Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 3-8.

⁷ For a detailed discussion of the emergence and significance of public sculpture in this period see, Michele H. Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1-70.

entailed the redefinition of the nation itself.⁸ Because the very purpose of the public monument was to define nationhood through the historical events and heroes held most dear in the hearts of “the people,” public monuments emerged as an important means by which citizens attempted to construct American identities in the Progressive Era.

This study emerges at the intersection of the historical circumstances thus far described-- the perception that the close of the American frontier spelled the end of a historical epic, the emergence of the monument as a preferred means by which United States citizens defined American history and identity in the public realm, and the redefinition of the nation amidst the social cataclysm of the Progressive Era. Put another way, as the United States embarked upon a modern, urban-industrial age, Americans brought closure to the previous epoch through public commemoration, creating thereby American identities rooted in the history of western expansion.

Gross numbers alone provide stark evidence of the desire to fix a memory of western expansion in public space at this moment in the nation’s history. Data in the Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum Inventory of American Sculpture show a total of just 45 sculptural monuments representing themes related to western expansion erected in the public realm in the 19th century up until the year 1890. The number erected from 1890–1930, in contrast, approached 300. With the landscape of memory becoming an increasingly visible and important part of public space around the turn of the century, therefore, monuments dedicated to western expansion were among the first to emerge as a conspicuous nationwide presence.

In order to tell the story of how Americans built a legacy of western expansion in public monuments in the late-19th and early-20th century, I carried out two interrelated inquiries. First, I

⁸ My understanding of the Progressive Era and the reorientation of American society is based on the following works: Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), and “The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s,” in John Higham, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1970), pp. 73-102.

used the Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum Inventory of American Sculpture (Smithsonian Inventory) to examine the entire range of public monuments commemorating western expansion during the period from 1890-1930. The Smithsonian Inventory, while ongoing, includes all the data collected since the early 1970s in a nationwide survey of outdoor sculpture in the United States. Though the body of nearly three hundred public monuments commemorating western expansion that the Smithsonian Inventory yielded may have gaps, it nevertheless constitutes a representative sample from which I was able to establish the broad patterns of commemoration.⁹

I carried out my Smithsonian Inventory research in 2001 and 2002 with the assistance of Christine Hennessey of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. In my effort to identify all the public monuments related to western expansion erected between 1890-1930, I did keyword searches on every conceivable theme having to do with western expansion, such as, “western expansion,” “frontier,” “Indian,” “Indian Wars,” “Pioneer,” “explorers,” etc. Each database entry I located was very informative, containing the following information fields on each monument: Artist, Title of Work, Date, Medium, Dimensions, Inscriptions, Description of Work, Subject Categories Under which Work Appeared, Object Type, Owner, Special Remarks, Condition, References, Smithsonian Control Number. Because works in the database were not searchable by date, I made my way through over 3,000 database entries, sorting them according to date and theme. I ended up identifying 278 monuments erected between 1890-1930 having to do with western expansion.

In the compilation of public monuments from my Smithsonian Inventory searches, one striking pattern emerged. Though Americans commemorated a range of frontier figures--

⁹ The Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum Inventory of American Sculpture may be visited in person or accessed on-line at <www.siris.si.edu/>. I am greatly indebted to Christine Hennessey of the Smithsonian American Art Museum for her assistance with my database searches.

explorers, hunters, trappers, miners, railroad entrepreneurs, pony express riders--to name just a few, they overwhelmingly focused upon two figures in particular, the Indian and the pioneer. In monuments commemorating western expansion from this period, one of every three monuments had as its focal point the image of the Indian or the image of the pioneer. In terms of raw numbers, 94 of the 278 monuments I examined focused upon the figure of the Indian, and 93 of the 278 focused upon the figure of the pioneer. No other figure was featured in public monuments commemorating western expansion with anywhere near the frequency of the Indian or the pioneer.¹⁰

In one respect, this finding is hardly surprising. Throughout much of the 19th century, the two figures played central roles in the mythology of the American West. Indeed, the two figures were frequently paired, with the civilization of the American pioneer defined through contrast with the savage Indian. At the end of the 19th century, when imperial conquest of the North American continent became a matter of national memory instead of a national mission, a significant shift occurred in the representation of these two figures. In public monuments from 1890-1930, both the Indian and the pioneer would be remembered heroically. Perennial combatants in the battle waged over the continent throughout the 19th century, both figures by the end of the 19th century would come to serve as representatives of a bygone era of American history. As such, they both served as the foundation upon which people would now construct American identities rooted in the history of western expansion.

Complementing my database research, my second line of inquiry involved examining in detail a limited number of public monuments that together embody the patterns of

¹⁰ I would like to point out that working with the Smithsonian Inventory was an inexact science. Parsing out one theme from another left much to the judgment of the researcher. While one could probably quibble with some of the specific judgments I made in organizing this data, I believe that the broad patterns that emerged from the data are incontrovertible. It is these broad patterns that show through in the organization and conclusions of this study.

commemoration revealed by my analysis of the Smithsonian Inventory data. Each of the chapters in this study represents one of these in-depth case studies. Though each presents us with a singular story, they were selected for their ability to illuminate the broader landscape of commemoration. Collectively, these case studies represent a comprehensive look across the nation. They reveal the motivations of a range of patrons. They uncover consensus and discord over the memory of western expansion and the associated identities that emerged across local, regional and national spectrums. In sum, they comprise the first study synthesizing how Americans at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century fashioned a legacy of imperial conquest of the American West. The chapters that follow explore how different American publics, in commemorating imperial conquest from 1890-1930, competed to define American history and identity through two seminal American symbols, the Indian and the pioneer. Before venturing into the body of this study, an overview of the chapters will provide a brief but useful glimpse of the road to follow.

In 1890, the United States Census Bureau found that there were at least two individuals living in every square mile of the continental United States. For the Census Bureau and Frederick Jackson Turner, this piece of demographic data spelled the end of western expansion. This was the evidentiary proof upon which Turner famously announced the closure of the American frontier. In chapter two, "Signal of Peace," I explore the profoundly different way that American citizens brought western expansion to a close in public monuments. In chronicling western expansion as the pioneer settlement of the American West, Turner neglected to as much as even mention Indian displacement and warfare. In contrast, the figure of the Indian played one of the leading roles in the effort to bring western expansion to a close through public commemoration. Remarkably, public monuments represented imperial conquest of the

American West not in the traditional terms of an American military triumph, as one would expect, but rather in terms of a heroic Indian defeat. Chapter two thus begins the exploration of the emergence of the heroic Indian figure in public monuments from 1890-1930 through an examination of the most commonly represented theme, the Indian offering a signal of peace.

I continue exploring the emergence of the heroic Indian from 1890-1930 in chapter three, “The First American,” by telling for the first time the story of an American icon, the Indian Head–Buffalo nickel. The end of the Indian Wars in a signal of peace signified that domestic warfare was over, that peace and prosperity reigned for the first time in the continental United States absent any internal threat. In so doing, it opened up possibilities for embracing the image of the Plains Indian warrior as a symbol of American identity like never before in the nation’s history. No monument demonstrates this new embrace better than the Indian Head–Buffalo nickel. Chapter three situates the Indian Head–Buffalo nickel in relation to other turn-of-the-century representations of Indians such as appeared in the scientific discipline of ethnography and the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. In so doing, it traces out how the tradition of employing the image of the Indian as a symbol of American identity on the nation’s coinage was profoundly transformed at this moment in history. But the honorific treatment of the Indian warrior as the First American on the Indian Head–Buffalo nickel came at a heavy price, severing the image of the Plains Indian from a native history of political and armed resistance to imperial expansion.

Chapter 4, “Vengeance,” transitions between the examination of the image of the Indian and the image of the pioneer. It explores the collision of national and regional memories of western expansion by telling the story of the volatile effort to erect a monument in Denver to the pioneers of the state of Colorado. The crowning figure of the planned Denver monument was to be a mounted figure of the familiar Indian offering a signal of peace. In marshalling forth such a

design, the Denver Real Estate Exchange, a coalition of government and business interests, acted as a local manifestation of an emerging national elite. For this elite an Indian offering peace, while signifying the end of western expansion, simultaneously pointed to the nationwide emerging urban-industrial order this managerial class was overseeing as an inevitability of history. Chapter four explores what happened when this emerging national memory was confronted by an Intermountain West regional memory espoused by organizations of first settlers. While in national memory the figure of the Indian and the figure of the pioneer would both be remembered heroically, each the basis of an American identity rooted in the legacy of the American West, pioneer societies in the Intermountain West fashioned a regional memory in which the Indian and the pioneer remained combatants. Chapter four examines how the proposed monument design fashioned by the renowned artist Frederick MacMonnies became the battleground upon which regional and national versions of memory competed to define an American identity in the Intermountain West.

In chapter five, “The First Family,” I explore the commemoration of the pioneer in the place where the figure may have had its greatest symbolic potency, along the American roadside. The Denver monument campaign was unusual in portraying the pioneer as an unabashed conqueror and Indian fighter. Typically, the emphasis was placed on the pioneer’s role in settling, domesticating and civilizing the American West. Consequently, in monuments to pioneers from 1890-1930, the pioneer mother and family emerged with a new prominence. The most ambitious and fascinating effort to commemorate the pioneer mother was undertaken by the hereditary society known as the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Chapter five tells the story of the creation by the DAR of the National Old Trails Road. One of the nation’s first transcontinental highways designed for the automobile, the National Old Trails Road was

built on top of pioneer trails and graced at regular intervals by a monument to pioneer mothers, the *Madonna of the Trail*. In this chapter I explore the correspondences between the road, the *Madonna of the Trail*, and the practices and expectations of the auto touring public for whom early road travel presented an opportunity to seek out an American identity under the emblem of the patriotic touring slogan, “See America First.” I explore the trouble the D.A.R. ran into in attempting to locate a *Madonna of the Trail* in Santa Fe, New Mexico, demonstrating that a national identity rooted in the figure of the pioneer could be as contested as the national memory rooted in the figure of the Indian.

My study ends by fast-forwarding several decades to the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though the figure of the Indian was featured prominently in the construction of a national memory of western expansion earlier in the 20th century, Indians themselves, without a public voice, had no role in the creation of this memory. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s, through a series of important protest actions--the Alcatraz Occupation, the storming of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C., the stand off at Wounded Knee on the Oglala Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota--that Indians for the first time burst onto the public scene, crafting for themselves a political voice. In a concluding Epilogue, “Red Power,” I explore how Indian activists re-fashioned the memory of western expansion created at the beginning of the 20th century in their bid for self-determination in the late-20th century. The thin veil of peace hanging over domestic relations between native peoples and European-Americans throughout the 20th century was set ablaze by political imagery emphasizing broken peace pipes, red fists, conflict, atrocity and war. Let us now explore how Americans built the legacy of imperial conquest of the North American continent that these cathartic protests of the 1960s and 1970s were compelled to dispel.

2. SIGNAL OF PEACE

Of all the dynamics that comprised the history of western expansion, none was more frequently repeated, nor perhaps, as significant, as the collision between the expanding United States and the Indian tribes inhabiting lands that the growing nation wished to settle. Conflict between colonists and Indian tribes predated the establishment of the United States, and carried forth after the American Revolution. No span of years produced as many historic encounters between Indian tribes and the United States military, however, as the period from 1846-1890.¹¹ This period of conflict was precipitated by the end of the Mexican-American War and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. With the signing of the Treaty, the boundaries of the United States expanded to the West Coast of the continent. The permanent Indian frontier, a territory established in the central Plains to contain Indians from across the nation and thus limit regional Indian warfare, was broken down as emigrants settled in the region or traveled through it to settle further west or seek a fortune in the California gold fields.¹² To support settlement, the United States developed a military strategy premised upon the construction of a series of guardian forts throughout the American West.¹³ As settlement encroached on traditional Indian lands in the Southwest, the Mountain West, and the Plains regions, the United States military engaged the tribes of these regions in a series of armed conflicts as it attempted to restrict the tribes to

¹¹ Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. xiii.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

reservation lands.¹⁴ This period of armed conflict came to a close in the 1880s and 1890s. With a series of United States military triumphs including the laying down of arms by Sitting Bull, the capture of Geronimo, and the victory against the Sioux at the Battle of Wounded Knee, where many innocent Sioux women and children were killed, hostilities came to an end, leaving the relationship between the United States and Indian tribes irreparably frayed.

The Indian Wars of the 19th century were widely covered in printed media in the United States. By the mid-19th century, the emergence of the telegraph introduced the element of timeliness into news reporting and meant that information about Indian conflicts could be wired across the country with lightning speed. Simultaneously, the Indian War correspondent emerged as a significant source of war reporting. Correspondents accompanied the United States military on its various Indian campaigns and reported on these conflicts both in newspapers and popular journals of the day such as *Scribner's* and *The Century*. In a thorough study of Indian War reporting, John Coward came to the conclusion that American Indians received “bad press” in the American media. “Typically,” Coward summarized, “a short telegraphic report from the frontier described ‘hostile’ Indians maiming, mutilating, kidnapping, and killing white men, women, and children as they traveled south and west across the continent.”¹⁵

As a result of this media attention, during the latter half of the 19th century, Americans followed the progress of the Indian Wars more than at any other time in the nation’s history.¹⁶ The New Orleans *Picayune* claimed in 1866, for example, “We cannot open a paper from any of our exposed States or Territories, without reading frightful accounts of Indian massacres and

¹⁴ Ibid., p. xvi.

¹⁵ John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-1890* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 5.

¹⁶ Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West*, 1984, p. xiv.

Indian maraudings (*sic*).”¹⁷ Considering that this period of conflict was fresh in the minds of American citizens, it is not surprising to discover the Indian Wars and the nation’s relationship with native people one of the two major themes animating the public memory of western expansion in public monuments at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the other major theme centering on the pioneering settlement of the nation. What is surprising, and unrecognized in the vast scholarly literature on the American West, is that while the Indian was vilified in Indian War coverage in the 19th century, and while western expansion left in its wake a legacy of turmoil and conflict between the United States and Indian tribes, monuments erected in the public realm in the wake of the Indian Wars created an enduring image of peace and friendship. Strikingly, the theme repeated most often represented the heroic figure of an Indian offering a signal of peace (Figure 1).¹⁸

In exploring for the first time the prevalent figure of the Indian as peacemaker, this chapter opens up a whole new understanding about attitudes toward the legacy of western expansion in turn-of-the-century America. As we shall see in this and subsequent chapters, the signal of peace could be understood in various and contradictory ways by members of the American public. Regardless of particular interpretations, the pervasiveness of the theme of peace in public monuments stood as testimony of the desire to bring closure to the history of western expansion, signifying the promise of unprecedented material and economic progress now that the nation was no longer threatened by war on the domestic front. Thus, through public monuments at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, a facile peace was declared. The memory of the Indian as an enemy of western expansion, resisting the spread of European

¹⁷ Quoted in Coward, *The Newspaper Indian*, 1999, p. 5.

¹⁸ As discussed in the introduction to this study, 94 of 278 monuments related to western expansion erected between 1890-1930 focused upon the figure of the Indian. Of these 94 monuments, almost one-third, 28 total, represented the Indian as a peacemaker. This was the only theme amongst the 94 to recur with any kind of consistency.

civilization in the New World, was put to rest. Instead, as we shall see in this and the next chapter, as the nation looked back at the period of western expansion, more than ever before in American history, the Indian was embraced as a friend and symbol of the nation.

Because he invented the theme of the Indian offering a signal of peace, and explored issues regarding the public memory of western expansion and the Indian Wars in greater depth than any other sculptor from the turn-of-the-century period, Cyrus Dallin is both the logical and necessary starting point for this discussion. Dallin was born in 1861 in Springville, Utah, in the heart of Ute and Paiute country about 50 miles south of Salt Lake City, to Mormon pioneer parents who had traveled west across the Great Plains in 1851. As a young boy, Dallin came to know and associate with Ute children twice annually when the Ute would settle outside Springville to trade hides and meat with some of the 1,400 town residents. Dallin's career as an artist received an initial boost in 1880, when two wealthy benefactors, one a Bostonian named C.H. Blanchard who had financial interest in the silver mine belonging to Dallin's father, provided the funds for the eighteen year old Dallin, who had demonstrated artistic promise, to study sculpture in Boston. Upon his arrival in Boston, Dallin entered the studio of Truman Bartlett, a noted portrait and monumental sculptor. After initial successes in a number of sculpture competitions, Dallin traveled to Paris in 1888 to work and study in the studio of Henri Michel Chapu at the Julien Academy. Dallin returned to the United States in 1890, and would carry out a second stint in Paris from 1896-1899 in the studio of Jean Dampt. Though he carried out dozens of monumental works representing a variety of themes throughout his career, and though he was a lifelong instructor, Dallin is best remembered for his monumental Indian-themed works. As the noted sculptor and art critic Lorado Taft declared, "We have no one who does these Wild West subjects with the impressive gravity which Mr. Dallin puts into them...Mr.

Dallin seems to have been called to make a distinctive and invaluable contribution, alike to American art and American history.”¹⁹

Lorado Taft’s statement attests to the fact that Dallin’s renown was established due to a series of four equestrian sculptures representing an epic version of the Indian response to western expansion: the *Signal of Peace* of 1890, the *Medicine Man* of 1899, the *Protest* of 1904, and the *Appeal to the Great Spirit* of 1909 (Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4). Each statue in the series represented the figure of a heroic nude Plains Indian on horseback. A 1915 journal article described how this series of equestrians represented a narrative of the Indian response to western expansion. The *Signal of Peace* represented the initial native effort to live at peace with the newcomers invading their lands. The second in the series, the *Medicine Man*, represented a spiritual leader who, having perceived impending conflict, was depicted warning his people of the troubling times to come. In the *Protest*, Dallin employed the image of a militant warrior to depict Indian resistance to the encroachment of the United States. In the final equestrian, the *Appeal to the Great Spirit*, an epic reference to the messianic Ghost Dance religion that swept Plains Indian reservations at the end of the 19th century, the still-heroic Plains warrior looked skyward with outstretched arms and pled for the salvation of his people through divine intercession.²⁰

Up until now, scholars have attempted to understand Dallin’s mounted Indian sculptures in either one of two contexts: in light of the artist’s biography or with consideration given to prevailing scientific theories about native people from the turn of the century.²¹ Those

¹⁹ The biographical information on Dallin is from Rell G. Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin: Let Justice Be Done* (Springville, Utah: Springville Museum of Art and Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1976) and John C. Ewers, “Cyrus E. Dallin: Master Sculptor of the Plains Indian,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* (January 1968): 35-43. The Lorado Taft quotation appears in Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* (New York: Arno Press, 1969 [originally published in 1903 and 1924]), pp. 489-499, 576.

²⁰ William Howe Downes, “The Field of Art,” *Scribners Magazine* 57 (June 1915): 774, 779-782.

²¹ The biographical interpretation can be found in Ewers, “Cyrus E. Dallin, Master Sculptor of the Plains Indian,” (Winter 1968): 35-43, and in Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin*, 1976. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), pp. 215-221,

employing the biographical interpretation have highlighted Dallin's upbringing in the West and his own reports of friendly interactions with native people as a young boy. For example, Dallin was fond of telling a story about sharing a train ride with a Sioux tribal delegation on its way to Washington, D.C. to meet with the President of the United States, describing the delegation as "the finest group of men I have ever seen."²² Biographical interpretations of Dallin's work have followed the pattern of pointing to anecdotes such as this one as the basis for explaining his sensitive portrayal of his Indian subjects. The conclusion that John Ewers drew is representative, "If there is one quality that seems to characterize Dallin's Indians more than any other, it seems to me, it is their dignity."²³ While some have read Dallin's Indian subjects as dignified portrayals that rose above the prejudices of his time, others have understood his works as consistent with other images from the period that represented Indians as a vanishing race. According to the theory of evolutionary progress, the scientific thinking that informed popular ideas about human history at the turn of the century in the United States, American Indians, along with indigenous peoples worldwide, represented the early stages of universal human evolution. Primitive indigenous peoples were thought to embody a childhood stage in human evolution believed to be vanishing at the turn of the century, as peoples of European descent who embodied a higher form of evolution and civilization were believed to be ascendant. Those who have read Dallin's sculptures in the context of theories of evolutionary progress have thus pointed to their participation in an ideology that imagined American Indians as belonging to a bygone era without hope of vitality in the modern world.

interprets Dallin's works in the context of the theory of evolutionary progress, which held that primitive peoples were dying out in the face of modernity.

²² Quoted in Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin*, 1976, p. 36.

²³ Ewers, "Cyrus E. Dallin, Master Sculptor of the Plains Indian," (Winter 1968): 43.

The conventional wisdom certainly begins to help us understand Dallin's equestrians. It is important to recognize that Dallin's mounted figures, with their handsome features and overall sense of calm, represented their Indian subjects in a dignified manner. A quick comparison with the roughly hewn, "savage" Indian figures in Frederic Remington's painting *Shotgun Hospitality* of 1908 demonstrates how Dallin's figures distinguished themselves from contemporary images of Indians by other artists (Figure 5). At the same time, there is an elegiac tone in Dallin's solitary horsemen. As he let go of the reins of his steed and gestured skyward with outstretched arms, the figure in *Appeal to the Great Spirit*, in particular, seemed to relinquish control over his destiny, placing a final hope for salvation in supernatural hands. Due to this elegiac tone, one can understand how Dallin's mounted Indians might have contributed to the conventional turn-of-the-century belief that the figure of the Indian represented a dying race, the vanishing American. While there is nothing to quibble about with these interpretations, they fail to recognize the importance of Dallin's sculptures as public symbols that resonated with the events of the recent past, and thus to consider their significance in the construction of a public memory of western expansion and the Indian Wars at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. For a society beginning to take stock of the legacy of western expansion, Dallin's mounted Indians were loaded with vitality, situated as they were on the cutting edge of dynamic, shifting perceptions about American Indians. Comprehending the vitality of Dallin's mounted Indians in the context of the late-19th and early-20th century lays the groundwork for grappling with the world of public memory beyond Dallin's famous works.

No less a critic than Lorado Taft found Dallin's equestrians compelling works of public art. Taft referred to Dallin's mounted Indians as "among the most interesting public monuments in this country." Commenting on the *Signal of Peace*, he said that it was "worth a score of *Paul*

Reveres and Shermans and Reynoldses.”²⁴ Taft’s statements touch upon something that is both fascinating and extremely significant in Dallin’s work that has yet to be appreciated by scholars. At the turn of the century, Dallin reinvigorated the equestrian sculptural tradition by taking it in an entirely new direction with his monuments commemorating western expansion and the Indian Wars. Whereas the equestrian had always represented a formally attired military commander, Dallin for the first time in the United States blended the tradition of the sculptural nude figure with the equestrian pose. The sculptor augmented the interest provided by the nude figure with ethnographic elements of Plains Indians. Whereas sculptors in the United States had for decades struggled with the prosaic qualities of European-American dress, Dallin was able to delve into the exotic and romantic by virtue of his choice of equestrian subject. Because of the absence of saddle and stirrups, for example, the relationship between rider and horse in the *Signal of Peace* was more direct than in the traditional equestrian. Dallin was rewarded for this novel version of nature’s nobleman, winning critical acclaim and awards in both France and the United States for his equestrian Indians.²⁵

While his modeling of the nude figure combined with the use of ethnographic detail infused the conventional equestrian with new visual interest, Dallin’s exploration of the thematic possibilities of the Plains equestrian was truly extraordinary. In the history of art, the equestrian form had been traditionally employed for the reverential treatment of military commanders (Figure 6). Ordinarily, the equestrian theme did not stray beyond the representation of the heroism of the military commander symbolized by the easy command with which he guided his steed. In his series, Dallin greatly expanded the thematic possibilities of the equestrian

²⁴ Taft, *The History of American Sculpture*, 1969, pp. 489-499, 576.

²⁵ All four equestrian Indians in the series were awarded prestigious awards. *Signal of Peace* won a First Class Medal in Chicago at the World’s Colombian Exposition, 1893. *Medicine Man* won a Silver Medal in Paris at the Exposition Universelle, 1900. *Protest* won a Gold Medal in St. Louis at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904. *Appeal to the Great Spirit* won a Gold Medal in Paris at the Salon, 1909.

monument, representing successive native responses to western expansion that in sum formed a simple, almost schematic, narrative. He thus used the equestrian form to represent the pacifist warrior, the visionary religious leader, the resistant warrior, and finally the warrior who placed his people's fate in the hands of a higher power.

Prior to Dallin's series, the best-known equestrians in the United States from the 19th century represented Generals George Washington and Andrew Jackson. At the same time that Dallin was fashioning his series, the equestrian treatment of United States military commanders in public monuments commemorating the Civil War was commonplace. This explains Lorado Taft's references to Generals Sherman and Reynolds, both of Civil War fame. Given the tradition of commemorating United States military commanders through the equestrian form, Dallin's series treating reverentially the Plains Indian, whom the United States military had recently defeated in the last of the Indian Wars, proposed a remarkable about-face in the tradition of public commemoration in the United States. In his series, Dallin proposed as the focus of public remembrance of the history of western expansion not the triumph and heroism of United States military forces, as had been the case in all past military encounters, but rather the native response to western expansion--the heroism of the defeated.²⁶

²⁶ Dallin's choice of the figure of the Indian as the focal point for public remembrance was indicative of a broader trend. My Smithsonian Inventory research revealed that in comparison to the overwhelming number of monuments representing the figure of the Indian and the pioneer, 187 together, there were comparatively few monuments, a total of just 14, erected in honor of Veterans of the Indian Wars. Though it did not erect any monuments so far as I know, "The Order of the Indian Wars of the United States" was established in 1896 to perpetuate the memory of servicemen who fought in the Plains Indian Wars. The Order held symposia and published papers on the servicemen of the Indian Wars. Information about this organization may be found at <<http://indianwars.com/>>. Perhaps the single-most important focal point in the commemoration of the United States military role in western expansion was the memory of "The Last Stand" of Brigadier General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn of 1876. As pointed out in *The Frontier in American Culture*, Edited by James R. Grossman with essays by Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick (Chicago and Berkeley: Newberry Library Exhibition Catalogue published by the University of California Press, 1994), pp. 26-45, the terms of western expansion were inverted in the memory of the Little Bighorn, with the conquering forces of the United States remembered not as aggressors but rather as heroic victims. While images of "The Last Stand" proliferated in popular media in the late-19th century, the primary focus for the memory of "The Last Stand" was the battlefield itself. For an examination of the battlefield as a commemorative site see Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their*

As Taft's statement implied, Dallin's series was remarkable for the way the figure of the Indian displaced the figure of the United States military commander in the reverential equestrian role. In lauding the native response to the settling of the American West, Dallin's series was particularly remarkable in its handling of the theme of Indian militancy. Contemplating the interrelationship between the *Signal of Peace* and the *Protest* in Dallin's series provides particularly crucial insight for understanding Dallin's novel treatment of Indian resistance.

In the *Signal of Peace*, the first in the series, the Indian figure was valorized for having attempted to live at peace with the United States. It is important to recognize that conceptually, the heroism of the native offer of peace provided the basis for the heroism of the *Protest*, the third equestrian in the series. In the *Protest*, Dallin made the unprecedented move of attributing heroism to the theme of Indian resistance to the encroachment of the United States. Having made an offer of peace, the Plains warrior in the *Protest* was not to be understood as the marauding, bloodthirsty savage aggressively preying on American innocents, as in monuments from the mid-19th century such as the *Rescue Group* which stood on the United States Capitol grounds, as well as typically rendered in media coverage of the Indian Wars, but rather as a warrior called to arms by a just cause, the protection of his people's homeland (Figure 7).

The artist valorized Indian militancy by treating his figure group with a great deal of nuance. Unlike the native figure in Greenough's *The Rescue*, who waved a battle-ax with wild abandon, Dallin's figure is unarmed. Though the figure of the *Protest* raises a clenched fist in a clear sign of resistance and defiance, the absence of weaponry eliminates the implication that this is a scheming, marauding savage. Instead, it is a figure that, though unarmed, has been left with no alternative but to resist. Dallin's figure is accorded all the more dignity by demonstrating

Battlegrounds (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). Other than the preservation of the battlefield, there were no monuments erected to Custer or "The Last Stand."

self-control and restraint. Whereas the Indian figure in *The Rescue* is restrained at the shoulder and wrist only by the pioneer figure towering over him, the figure in the *Protest*, though the essence of defiance, also exhibits a great deal of self-control. The taut elbow of the right arm keeps the fist from fully extending, holding it at bay. With his left arm, the figure draws the reins of his horse toward his body, causing the animal to pull up abruptly. Thus, unlike the Indian figure in *The Rescue*, the figure in the *Protest* is not a belligerent figure. Rather, it is a figure that is straining to control a justifiable rage. Dallin stated in words the same case against Indian vilification that he articulated in his monumental equestrians:

I have heard people speak of the Indians as cruel. I never found evidence of any more cruelty among them than among white men. I don't believe that we can point to an Indian outrage that has not had its counterpart in the white men's record. When we say that the Indians were treacherous, we are simply closing our eyes to facts. Very few treaties made between white men and red were ever broken by the red men. I think you will find that every Indian war was started by the whites and that every Indian outrage was committed by way of retaliation for some outrage perpetrated by the white men.²⁷

Dallin's statement goes even further than his monumental series, indicting the use of United States military force in support of the outrages of white men. Nevertheless, the statement buttresses the argument that when viewed outside the constricting lens of biography, beyond the all too common concept of the vanishing Indian, and in relation to the period of American history that it aimed to memorialize, Dallin's series comes into proper focus. In fashioning a memory of western expansion and the Indian Wars in his series of equestrians, Dallin aimed to resuscitate the image of the Indian from a century of "bad press."

Having seen the way Dallin's sculptures embodied the profound and disturbing aspects of western expansion, we can now comprehend why Lorado Taft noted them for treating the wild west theme with "an impressive gravity," seeing in them a contribution not just to American art

²⁷ Quoted in Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin*, 1976, p. 44.

but to American history as well. In his series, Dallin put forth a visual focal point for the public memory of western expansion. According to Dallin, the most compelling theme worthy of remembrance in relation to western expansion was the conflict between peoples, native warrior vs. the United State military. In the United States, conflict and war had been traditionally remembered through heroic men in equestrian monuments. Dallin adopted the equestrian tradition and turned it on its head with his series of equestrian warriors. Whereas the heroism of those who put their lives on the line on behalf of the United States had traditionally served as the focal point of public memory, Dallin proposed that what was worthy of honorific treatment in the story of western expansion was the native response to the encroachment of the United States.

Dallin's series put forward a nuanced vision of heroism based upon his conception of the native response to western expansion. Though individual works from the series were erected in the public realm, all four works were never erected as a series in one location.²⁸ Dallin's Indian epic was thus never realized anywhere except in the artist's mind. Indeed, Dallin did not himself start out by attempting to design a series of equestrians. Rather, the series evolved over two decades of his work, and was best described only in a 1915 journal article in which the series was considered retrospectively. Rather than having an impact as a series, Dallin's groundbreaking equestrians instead provided a "menu" of Indian heroism that, as we shall see, served as a signpost for what was to emerge as a public memory of western expansion was fashioned in the early decades of the 20th century. Having considered the series as a whole, we must now consider the works in the series individually as we make our way toward a broader discussion of the field of public memory from the turn of the century period.

²⁸ Soon after their completion, three of the four works in the series were placed in some of the most prominent public spaces in the eastern United States. *Signal of Peace* was placed in Lincoln Park in Chicago. *Medicine Man* was placed in Fairmont Park in Philadelphia. *Appeal to the Great Spirit* was placed at the entrance to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

A discussion of Dallin's *Protest* in the catalogue of the landmark Smithsonian Institution exhibition of 1991 entitled *The West as America* reveals that this area of public memory and Dallin's role in its creation are not well understood. In one of its chapters, the exhibition catalogue discusses how in studio paintings, small-scale private sculptures, and mass-produced art, images of "hollering" Indians served as symbols of American pride, defiance and masculinity. In this discussion, the *Protest* is pointed to as an example of how the popularity of the image of the "hollering" Indian as a symbol of this kind pervaded the realm of public monument-making as well.²⁹ While such an interpretation may apply to the studio images created by Frederic Remington and others who translated the traditional image of the treacherous media Indian into fine art genres at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, such an interpretation of the *Protest* constitutes a serious misreading of how Dallin understood the monument, and the reception it received as a potential public symbol.

Dallin's conception of the *Protest* refutes the interpretation that the statue somehow symbolized American values at the turn of the century. For Dallin, the *Protest* was not at all symbolic of America. On the contrary, according to the artist, it symbolized the just fight of native people against United States military force in the history of western expansion. For the artist, the *Protest* symbolized the Sioux Nation, not the United States of America. Though articulated in the tame language of academic sculpture, the *Protest* carried with it the provocative message that the success of western expansion across the continent was tainted by moral compromise. As a focal point for public memory, it would have symbolized not mythic American values such as pride and defiance, but rather the history of the resistance of a minority native population against the United States. The public reception that the *Protest* received at the

²⁹ Alex Nemerov, "'Doing the Old America,' Images of the American West, 1880-1920," in *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, Edited by William Truettner (Washington and London: National Museum of American Art Exhibition Catalogue, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 311-313.

turn of the century also belies the argument made in *The West as America*, contradicting the claim that images of hollering Indians flourished in the public realm. Of the four designs comprising Dallin's series, the *Protest* was the least successful. Indeed, it was the only one of the four of Dallin's series of equestrians that was never erected in the public realm. If the point of public statuary is to make its way into the public realm by means of permanent installation in the built environment, one can only conclude that the *Protest* failed as a public image.

In the past, scholars have accounted for the public failure of the *Protest* in aesthetic terms, suggesting that the sculpture lacked the "solemn grandeur" of Dallin's other designs.³⁰ A more compelling suggestion for the statue's public failure is that it did not resonate for thematic reasons. As we shall see, the Indian figure was commonly the focal point in constructions of a public memory of western expansion at the turn of the century. However, my Smithsonian Inventory research revealed not a single monument commemorating Indian militancy from the turn of the century period. Given that Dallin's move to treat with reverence native resistance to western expansion was out of step with the celebratory mood surrounding the successful march of empire across the United States, and in light of the policy of the nation since passage of the Dawes Severalty Act in 1887 to promote assimilation of native people into mainstream America, this should hardly come as a surprise. Commemorating Indian resistance would not have been in keeping with the prevailing tide of assimilation, which included among its many manifestations attempts to refashion Indians into land-owning farmers, efforts to educate Indian youths at boarding schools such as the famous Carlisle School, and prohibitions against traditional native religion in favor of conversion to Christianity.

Of the four works that comprised the "menu" Dallin fashioned, the work that was in keeping with this broader historical context, and that therefore had the single-most importance

³⁰ Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America*, (New York: Crowell Press, 1968), p. 530.

for the public remembrance of western expansion and the Indian Wars at the turn-of-the-century, was not the animated warrior of the *Protest*, but rather the acquiescent warrior depicted in the *Signal of Peace*. So widely did the theme resonate in the artistic community and amongst members of the public that the idealized figure of an Indian offering peace became one of the central symbols of the public memory of western expansion. A detailed examination of this theme, beginning with Dallin's own version, is thus now needed.

Dallin modeled the *Signal of Peace* in 1890 during his first stint in Paris. At the time, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which employed actual native actors for the Indian roles in its performances, was playing an extended engagement in Paris. Like other artists from the period, Dallin turned to the Indian actors in Buffalo Bill's Show as he modeled his frontier-themed works of art. While working in the studio of Chapu, Dallin made frequent visits to Buffalo Bill's Indian camp. These visits inspired in Dallin a renewed interest in his boyhood associations with native people. Dallin entered the *Signal of Peace* in the Salon of 1890, where it was awarded Honorable Mention, and was described as the "first distinctive American statue ever exhibited at the Salon."³¹ Emboldened by his success at the Paris Salon, Dallin had the sculpture cast in bronze and exhibited at the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. In Chicago, Dallin was awarded a First Class Medal for the *Signal of Peace*. The sculpture was purchased by a prominent local citizen, Judge Lambert Tree, and donated to the City of Chicago. In 1894, the commemorative work was placed by the City of Chicago in Lincoln Park, where it still stands today.³²

At the time that he created the *Signal of Peace*, the treatment of Indian subject matter represented for Dallin a new, experimental direction in his work. In 1890, as mentioned above,

³¹ Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin*, 1976, p. 38.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

he had not yet conceived of an entire series treating the theme of the Indian. When Dallin did create that series years later, he constructed a simple, fictional narrative within which the *Signal of Peace* represented the first encounter of native people encroaching on their lands. But when Dallin created and first presented the *Signal of Peace* it was a stand-alone work without a narrative, and first encounters were long past. In 1890, it was the Indian Wars of the Plains and the last stages of western expansion that were freshly remembered in the United States. It was this series of events that provided the backdrop for the creation and public consideration of the *Signal of Peace*.

While scholars have focused on Dallin's biography as a means of understanding his work, they have failed to note what is most fascinating and significant about Dallin's early life-- that he grew up in the American West in the latter half of the 19th century, just when western expansion was reaching its final stages, and the United States military was involved in a series of historic engagements with Indian tribes of the region. As the following quote testified, Dallin himself indicated that the *Signal of Peace* was inspired by just such an encounter:

The origin of that statue goes back to my boyhood, to a day when I witnessed a peace pow-wow between the Indian chiefs and the United States Army officers. I shall never forget those splendid looking Indians arrayed in their gorgeous head-dress [sic] riding upon their ponies to the army camp where the pow-wow was to be held. The Indians dismounted, gravely saluted the officers, and followed them into one of the tents... The pipe of peace was passed; and before it was smoked, it was pointed to the north, south, east, and west, the boundaries of the firmament, then to Mother Earth, the source of all life, then to the Great Spirit above, whither all life goes. This was done with a dignity and grace that it is impossible to describe. The chiefs spoke then, rising from their places and accompanying their words with impressive, easy gestures... In making my model of *Signal of Peace*, I used, to a certain extent, one of the Buffalo Bill Indians; in putting into it that dignity typical of the Indian, I had in my memory the chiefs who rode up to the peace pow-wow many years before.³³

³³ Ibid., p. 39.

Though Dallin may have embellished and romanticized this youthful memory, the statement nevertheless suggests that a fruitful frame of reference for considering the meaning of the *Signal of Peace* is to be found in how it resonated with the circumstances inspiring its creation--the history and politics of western expansion in the latter half of the 19th century.

As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the period when Dallin grew up in the American West was noteworthy for the armed conflicts that occurred between the United States military and the Indian tribes of the region. This period was also characterized by efforts to avoid such conflicts through peace treaty negotiations. From 1846-1890, virtually all Indian tribes in the western United States experienced peace treaty councils such as the one to which Dallin referred. From the colonial period forward, the purpose of the peace treaty had always been the same: the peaceful transfer of large tracts of tribal land from Indian to United States title, and the description of a smaller tract of land that would remain in Indian title. If all worked according to plan, the tribe would be moved onto its smaller piece of land, called a reservation, and the transferred land, now part of the United States, would be developed as the nation saw fit. Underlying the peace treaty was the hope that western expansion, with its imperative of displacing Indians from their lands, could occur without the shedding of blood through violent conquest.³⁴

An editor of the *Army and Navy Journal* in the 19th century concisely described the two poles of interaction--symbolized by the peace pipe and the rifle--that characterized relations with Indian tribes in the course of western expansion in the latter half of the 19th century, "We go to them Janus-faced...One of our hands holds the rifle and the other the peace-pipe, and we blaze away with both instruments at the same time."³⁵ The Indian Wars of the 19th century were an

³⁴ Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West*, 1984, pp. 36 and 47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

inspiration to a great number of late-19th and early-20th century artists. In the wake of the last wave of western expansion across the continent, painters such as Frederic Remington and Charles Shreyvogel emphasized the rifle in their paintings. Their art emerged from the journalistic tradition that emphasized violent conflict, vilified the Indian, and valorized the United States military.³⁶ These artists thus treated with reverence the United States military in its archetypal military encounter with Indians (Figure 8).

Dallin's *Signal of Peace* instead focused upon the archetypal political encounter. It eschewed violence, a theme whose traditional parameters rendered the Indian an entrenched enemy, in favor of the theme of peace that also ran as a current through the history of western expansion, valorizing the Indian as a peacemaker. Scholars have heaped attention upon studio painters of western art whose subject matter revealed a fascination with the violent interaction of the United States military and the Indian tribes of the North American continent. In so doing, they have buried under a mass of literature the fact that for many Americans, the violent conquest of native people had posed a moral dilemma at worst, an uncomfortable episode in the nation's history at least.

Toward the end of the 19th century, the perspective that the United States had dealt with American Indians shamefully became increasingly popular, inspired by individuals such as Helen Hunt Jackson, whose chronicling of the Indian problem in an 1881 book entitled *A Century of Dishonor*, served as a significant impetus toward reform of United States Indian policy in a direction emphasizing peaceful assimilation rather than warfare. As a result of the reform movement, even press coverage started to change in the late-19th century, its "explanatory frame" shifting from the representation of marauding savages to an emphasis on peaceful,

³⁶ See, for example, Alex Nemerov, *Frederic Remington and Turn of the Century America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

progressive Indians. As a result, by the 1870s, the idea of the “civilized savage” began to appear more and more in newspapers. While a response to the Indian reform movement, the changing image of the American Indian in printed media also coincided the ramping down of conflict between the United States and Indian tribes at end of 19th century.³⁷

While scholars have explored the meaning of representations of conflict of Indian Wars by virtue of the attention paid to painters such as Frederic Remington, none have explored the significance of the “civilized savage” and the theme of peace. The theme of peace between colonial settlers and the continent’s Indian tribes had been taken up by artists as early as the 18th century. The two best-known examples are probably Benjamin West’s, *Penn’s Treaty with the Indians* (1771), and Nicholas Gevelot’s relief sculpture of the same theme at the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. (1827). Each of these works, by focusing upon the figure of the settler as well as the Indian, demonstrate how traditional representations of the theme highlighted the benevolence of white settlers in the attainment of peace between the races. While re-introducing the theme at the end of the 19th century, Dallin also profoundly changed the tradition by focusing solely on the Indian figure offering a sign of peace. The artist established what would become an important trend as the theme was adopted by other artists and flourished in efforts to construct a public memory of western expansion. In Iowa, Chief Mahaska (1907-09) was remembered for having lived at peace with the white man, and Chief Keokuk (1913) proffered a peace pipe. Chief Oshkosh in Wisconsin was honored as a man of peace (1911). With his right arm raised in a signal of peace, Chief Seattle was remembered in the city bearing his name as a “firm friend of the whites” (Figure 9). The white fraternal organization that descended from the Sons of Liberty, later going by the name of the Improved Order of Red Men,

³⁷ For a discussion of the Indian reform movement and the emergence of the “civilized savage” in media reporting see, Coward, *The Newspaper Indian*, 1999, pp. 196-226.

made a habit of commemorating native leaders for having sought peace with the United States.³⁸ The Improved Order of Red Men and its female counterpart, the Order of Pocahontas, parodied Indian traditions and customs as they understood them in their organizational structure and ceremony. In the public realm, the organization carried out a concerted effort aimed at projecting an image of racial harmony between the continent's original and new inhabitants. Accordingly, they commissioned Cyrus Dallin himself to fashion a monument to Chief Massasoit, the Narragansett Chief renowned for having rescued the people of the Plymouth Colony from the privations of a harsh winter. Standing in a *contrapposto* pose ala Michelangelo's biblical hero *David*, Massasoit was installed on the shores of Plymouth Bay, a peace pipe displayed prominently in his grasp (Figure 10). Commissioned by a variety of patrons geographically dispersed across the nation, these monuments speak forcefully of the widespread interest in creating an enduring image of peace through the heroic figure of the Indian at the close of the period of western expansion. An analysis of two patrons whose attitudes about relations between the United States and the continent's Indian tribes registered viewpoints held at opposite ends of the Indian reform spectrum, aptly registers some of the important ways with which the theme of peace resonated as a focal point for public remembrance in the turn of the century United States.

As he donated Cyrus Dallin's award-winning *Signal of Peace* to the City of Chicago, Judge Lambert Tree wrote a letter to the city's park commissioners revealing that what was foremost in his mind were the troubling qualities of western expansion:

I fear the time is not far distant when our descendants will only know through the chisel and brush of the artist these simple, untutored children of nature who were, little more than a century ago, the sole human occupants and proprietors of the vast northwestern empire of which Chicago is now the proud metropolis. Pilfered

³⁸ James W. Lowen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999), pp. 144-147.

by the advance-guards of the whites, oppressed and robbed by government agents, deprived of their land by the government itself, with only scant compensation, shot down by soldiery in wars fomented for the purpose of plundering and destroying their race, and finally drowned by the ever westward tide of population, it is evident that there is no future for them except as they may exist as a memory in the sculptor's bronze or stone and the painter's canvas.³⁹

By referring to native people as “untutored children of nature,” imagining their eventual disappearance in the face of an overwhelming civilization, Judge Tree demonstrated his culture's faith in the theory of evolutionary progress. As Judge Tree put it, “it is evident there is no future for them except as they may exist as a memory.”

But Judge Tree's statement enumerated several causes for the vanishing American, it did not just describe inevitable Indian decline. In his letter to the City of Chicago about the donation of the statue, he called to mind shameful aspects of the history of western expansion which had been perpetrated on native people by European-Americans: pilfering, oppression and robbery, deprivation of land, violence at the hands of the United States Army. In this litany of offenses one can't help but recognize the reform perspective preached by Helen Hunt Jackson in her famous diatribe, *A Century of Dishonor*. Judge Tree celebrated the product of western expansion in his reference to the “proud metropolis” of Chicago. However, the triumph of civilization for Judge Tree was bittersweet, associated as it was with the conquest of native peoples and the dispossession of Indian lands.

Judge Tree's statement provides clues for comprehending one extreme end of how the *Signal of Peace* functioned as a public image. It is difficult to imagine a harsher condemnation of western expansion than Judge Tree's tirade. By comparison, the monument he donated was remarkably tame. He may have been thinking of oppression, robbery, plundering, and genocide as he donated the monument, but certainly the monument itself suggested nothing of this. Judge

³⁹ Quoted in Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin*, 1976, p. 40.

Tree shows us that even as people recognized shameful aspects of western expansion, they nonetheless could believe that what was important in perpetuating an enduring image of western expansion and the American Indian was not the episodes of conflict, but rather the impression of a lasting peace between the races. Having stated that the Indian's only future resided in public memory, "in the sculptor's bronze or stone," Judge Tree appears to have concluded that the greatest measure of justice after a century of oppression and vilification could be exacted through the fashioning of an immortal image that valorized the race.

For Judge Tree, the history of the relationship between the United States and Indian tribes was fraught with conflict, discord and violence. Nonetheless, he selected a sculpture that would perpetuate the image of an everlasting peace between the United States and Indian tribes in the public realm. The equestrian Indian in the *Signal of Peace* was singled out as the heroic figure in the story of western expansion, but heroism in this guise entailed the forgetting of native resistance to western expansion and of the cruel history borne in mind by Judge Tree. While the theme of peace could appeal to someone like Judge Tree, who saw nothing but shame in United States-Indian relations, it could also appeal to reform-minded patrons whose commemorative focus resided on the spectrum opposite Judge Tree's--patrons for whom the friendly welcome with which native people greeted colonial settlers was foremost. Though it never materialized, the ambitious effort to erect a monument in the harbor of New York City to the North American Indian, often referred to as the Wanamaker monument after the monument patron, expressed this as well as any other monument from the period.

On February 22, 1913, President William Howard Taft was in New York to attend the groundbreaking for a grand monument to be dedicated to the North American Indian. Authorized by an act of Congress, the monument was to stand at the Army's Fort Wadsworth,

overlooking New York Harbor. Planning for this effort was led by John Wanamaker, founder of Wanamaker's Department Store in Philadelphia, and his son, Rodman. The Wanamakers' interest in American Indians had led them to sponsor photo-documentary expeditions to Indian reservations in 1908, 1909 and 1913. These expeditions were photographed by the Wanamakers' longtime friend Joseph Dixon, a former employee of the Eastman Kodak Company who took over 6,000 photographs in the course of the three expeditions. Legend says that the idea for the memorial was born after the 1908 expedition, when the Wanamakers, Dixon and none other than William "Buffalo Bill" Cody of Wild West Show fame conversed about the vanishing race of American Indians. As it developed, the Wanamaker plan called for a memorial including a museum, an art gallery, a display of weaponry, an exhibit on Indian life and a research library. The memorial would be surmounted by a 60-foot high statue of an Indian with one hand uplifted in a gesture of peace (Figure 11). Of all the monuments representing a signal of peace from the period, this would be the grandest in terms of location and scale. Word of the monument spread far and wide, and many of the nation's leading sculptors, Cyrus Dallin included, hoped to gain the commission.⁴⁰

In a letter to President Taft seeking government support of the monument proposal, Rodman Wanamaker described the monument in these terms:

⁴⁰ Information about the Wanamaker monument appears in several sources, including, Alan Trachtenberg, "The National American Indian Memorial, 1913: An Imaginary Monument to the 'Vanishing Race,'" an unpublished manuscript delivered as a paper at the American Studies Conference, *Going Public: Defining Public Culture(s) in the Americas*, Washington, D.C., 1997. My thanks to Professor Trachtenberg for generously sharing this paper with me. As I was completing this study Professor Trachtenberg published a book entitled, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), that further discusses the Wanamaker monument. Though I quickly scanned this book I was unable to incorporate its findings into this study. Two further sources are, *American Indian Portraits from the Wanamaker Expedition of 1913*, Chosen and with an Introduction by Charles A. Reynolds (Brattleboro, VT: S. Greene Press, 1971) and Felice Ciccione, "Indian Memorial," in *Gateway National Recreation Area Program and Activity Information for Visitors* (Winter 1998-1999): no page numbers. Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, p. 217, described Dallin's interest in winning the Wanamaker monument commission.

I would like to have your cooperation, with permission and grants from congress, in placing on Lafayette Island, in New York harbor, a statue of the North American Indian – the first inhabitant and Citizen of this continent and the accepted symbol of the United States. This statue, heroic in size, would stand as the eastern gateway of our country, with out-stretched arms in welcome, by day or night, if it was deemed advisable to serve as a harbor light, to all those coming to this land of liberty and freedom, recognizing also the welcome which the Red Man gave to the White Man when our forefathers first came to these shores.⁴¹

For Wanamaker, the Indian offering a greeting of peace represented the symbolic surrender of native peoples. A brochure prepared for the event stated the following about the proposed design, “The bow and arrow, with the left hand hanging entirely at full length, indicates that he is through with his war weaponry; the uplifted hand, with the two fingers extended toward the open sea, is the universal peace sign of the Indian.”⁴² Despite this subtle hint of conflict, the viewpoint of the Wanamaker patrons emphasized harmony between the United States and the continent’s Indian tribes. The Wanamaker Indian was the “First citizen of this continent.” As he imagined the monument in situ, Rodman Wanamaker saw the colossal Indian figure in the act of welcoming Europeans, then and now, to the new world.

Thus, the history of United States–Indian relations was foremost in the minds of both Judge Tree and the patrons of the Wanamaker monument as they each set about erecting their monuments depicting the theme of peace. As they contemplated the history of United States–Indian relations, Judge Tree and the Wanamakers articulated viewpoints at opposite ends of the reform spectrum. The story of western expansion elicited shame from Judge Tree as he reflected on American atrocities. In contrast, no sense of regret or shame was expressed by the Wanamaker patrons. As they planned their tribute to the North American Indian, native offers of friendship toward colonial settlers were foremost in their minds. Remarkably, despite the disparity of their characterizations of United States–Indian relations and western expansion,

⁴¹ Trachtenberg, “The National American Indian Memorial, 1913,” 1997, p. 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Judge Tree and the Wanamaker patrons both gravitated to the identical theme in fashioning an enduring public image of the western past. The case of Tree vs. the Wanamakers demonstrates the broad appeal that the theme of peace had for Americans looking retrospectively at the history of western expansion. At one extreme, the image of a heroic Indian giving way to the ascendant United States could speak to those for whom western expansion was tinged with regret. At the other extreme, the native offer of friendship to the colonial settler represented the best and wisest impulses of the North American Indian, the impulse by which he could be deemed the “First citizen of this continent.”

Regardless of the subtleties with which one might understand the offer of peace, in every instance, the image projected in public space was the same. The Indian offering peace invariably signified that the period of conflict was over, that peace was left in its wake, and that the way was cleared for unimpaired material progress in the continental United States. One scholar describing *actual* treaty making in the 19th century put it succinctly when he said, “The purpose of the treaty-making process was to benefit the national interest without staining the nation’s honor.”⁴³ Public monuments representing peace between nations erected in the wake of western expansion set this concept in stone. Tellingly, the United States began its colonial expansion across North America promoting just the theme through which it put a close to the enterprise. Western expansion across the continent through peaceful means was of such compelling interest to the nascent United States that the young nation developed an iconography for commemorating it (Figure 12). In the Thomas Jefferson peace medal, one of many such medals that were given to Indian tribes and prized by them as powerful symbols of friendship, a bust of the president was represented on the obverse, while the reverse included the inscription “Peace and Friendship,” with images of a pair of shaking hands and a peace pipe overlapping a tomahawk

⁴³ Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West*, 1984, p. 36.

symbolizing the same.⁴⁴ Monuments signifying peace from the turn of the century thus fulfilled what had been a desire for the United States since the founding of the nation. The earlier peace medals, while commemorating peace between nations, were also forward-looking, a guarantee that friendship would ensue. That guarantee of course failed as western expansion entailed conflict, conquest and the fraying of Indian–United States relations. As a public memory of western expansion was created through public monuments at the turn of the century, however, conflict and military conquest were largely locked in memory’s vault. There are no monuments to Indian resistance from the period, and remarkably few commemorating the exploits of the United States military given this nation’s penchant for rallying behind its soldiers. Rather, as Americans created a backward look in public memory they gave closure to western expansion, choosing not to remember conflict and conquest, and satisfying the abiding desire for peace with native peoples of North America by declaring an eternal peace in the public realm. Dallin’s *Signal of Peace* was the first work to give expression to this impulse. It was followed by monuments that honored Indians across the nation for having peacefully accepted the march of civilization.

⁴⁴ Francis Paul Prucha, “Presents and Delegations,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, William C. Sturtevant, General ed., and Wilcomb E. Washburn, Volume ed., Volume 4 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), pp. 238-243.



Figure 1. Cyrus Dallin, *Signal of Peace*, 1890.



Figure 2. Cyrus Dallin, *Medicine Man*, 1899.



Figure 3. Cyrus Dallin, *Protest*, 1904.



Figure 4. Cyrus Dallin, *Appeal to the Great Spirit*, 1909.



Figure 5. Frederic Remington, *Shotgun Hospitality*, 1908.



Figure 6. Henry Kirke Brown, *George Washington*, 1853-56.



Figure 7. Horatio Greenough, *The Rescue*, 1837-52.



Figure 8. Frederic Remington, *Cavalry Charge on the Southern Plains in 1860*, 1908.



Figure 9. James Wehn, *Chief Seattle*, 1912.

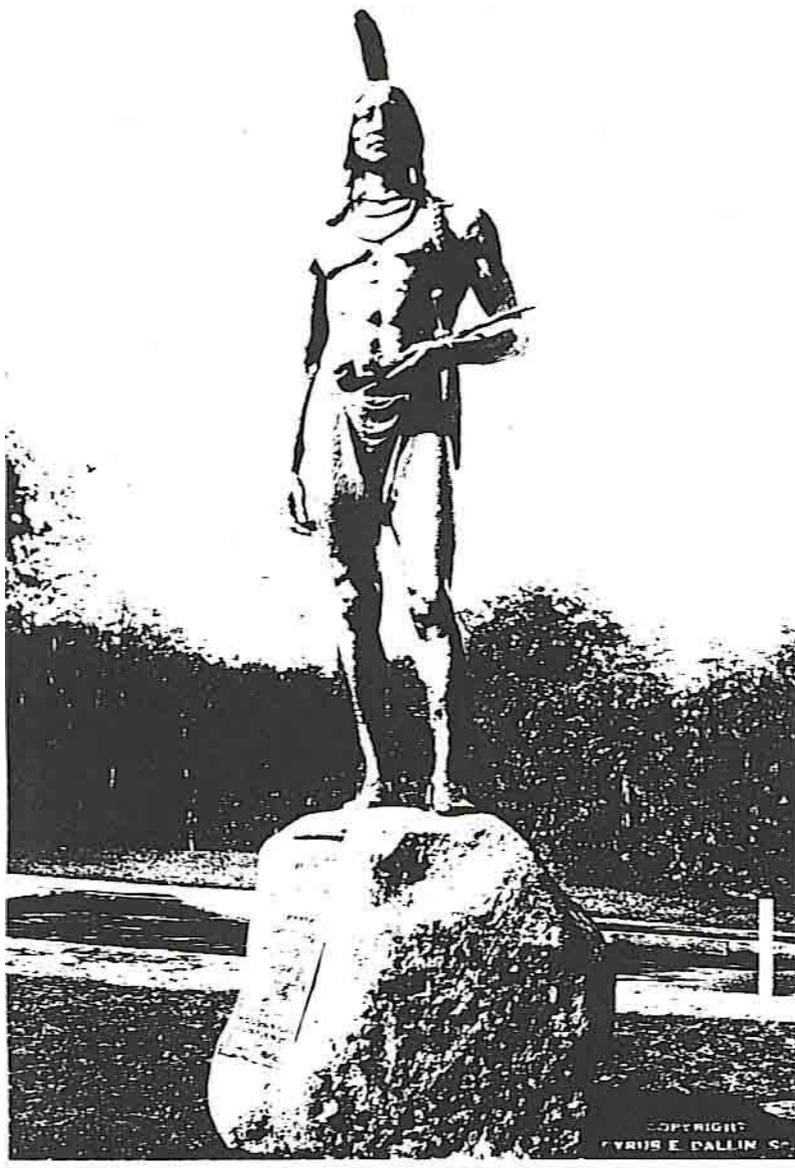


Figure 10. Cyrus Dallin, *Massasoit*, 1920.

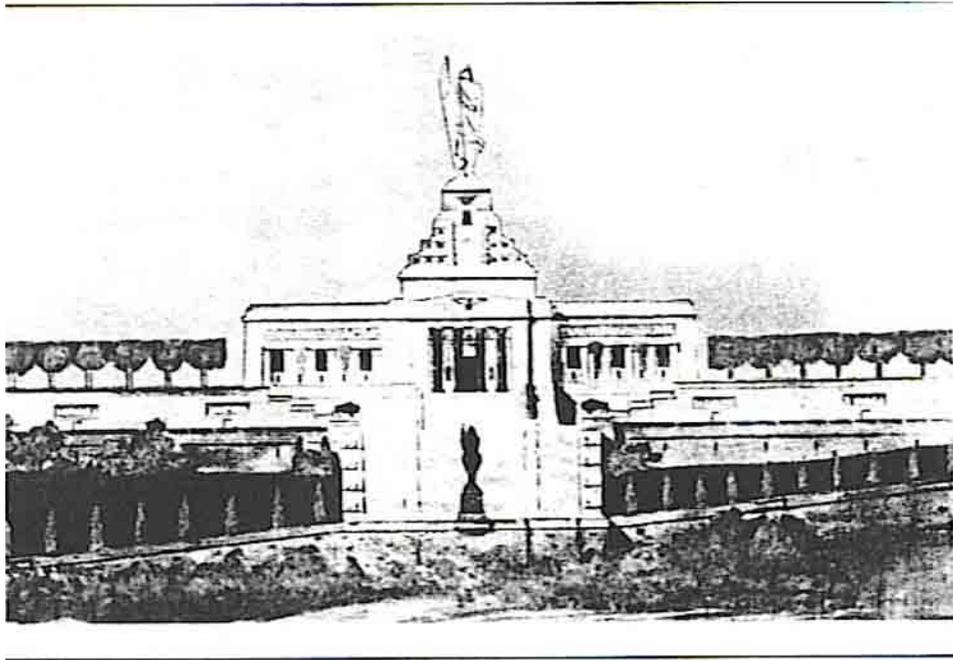


Figure 11. Thomas Hastings and Daniel Chester French, *National American Indian Memorial Conceptual Design*, 1913.



Figure 12. John Reich, *Thomas Jefferson Peace Medal*, 1801-1809.

3. THE FIRST AMERICAN

In her book, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the U.S Capitol, 1815-1860*, Vivien Green Fryd detailed how the decoration of the nation's capitol made the building into a shrine to manifest destiny, the ideology by which European-Americans believed it was their divine right to take over and settle the North American continent from ocean-to-ocean.⁴⁵ According to Fryd, images of Indians appeared with great frequency in the artworks of the Capitol, an indication of the important symbolic role they played in the ideology of imperial expansion. In these artworks, Fryd noticed that the image of the Indian almost always played a marginal role, as the savage foe of the United States or as a counterpoint to the pioneer, fated to extinction while the pioneer thrived in the New World (see Figure 7 in Chapter 2 and Figure 13). Fryd put it like this, "In these paintings and statues, Indians are relegated to shadows and borders, to circumstances of less power than Europeans and settlers, and to positions that augur their diminishment and disappearance. This marginalization adheres to white America's attitudes and the federal government's official policies toward the native population."⁴⁶

In the previous chapter, we saw how in public sculptures at the end of the 19th century, the image of the Indian as the foe of the United States began to be supplanted by the image of the Indian offering a signal of peace. Along with this thematic shift, the image of the Indian gained a new visual prominence. No longer was the figure relegated to shadows and borders, as at the

⁴⁵ (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ Fryd, *Art and Empire*, 1992, pp. 157.

Capitol at mid-century, but instead it was made to occupy the most esteemed visual spaces. Think of the equestrian riders in Dallin's epic series, for example. At the beginning of the 20th century, this shift from border figure to center of attention was best exemplified by what is undoubtedly the most widely known public work of art from the period, the Indian Head-Buffalo nickel (Figure 14, hereinafter Indian Head nickel).

The contrast between this federally commissioned work of art from 1913 and those works commissioned by the Federal government for the United States Capitol in the mid-19th century could not be greater. If in the mid-19th century the image of the Indian had been marginalized by serving as the foil for a superior civilization or by placement literally in the shadows and borders of works of art, here the image has been placed front and center, right at the heart of the formal composition, symbolically at the core of the nation's identity. According to Fryd, the mid-19th century marginalization of the Indian image sprang from the politics of ethnicity associated with the ideology of manifest destiny. Portraying the Indian as a savage enemy or doomed race justified Indian removal and settlement of native lands by European-Americans.⁴⁷ As we shall see in this chapter, at the beginning of the 20th century, the politics of ethnicity of the mid-19th century no longer held sway.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the end of western expansion and the Indian Wars and the start of peace and friendship provided the basis for the reformulation of the symbolic importance of the Indian. No artifact embodied this reformulation better than the Indian Head nickel. On the nickel, the figure of the Indian manifested a hybrid identity. The figure's physical characteristics marked him above all else as a racial Other, a figure temporally and socially outside the bounds of modern America. In the mid-19th century, this kind of racial difference signified the Indian's inferiority in comparison to American civilization. At the

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

beginning of the 20th century, however, with Americans ambivalent about the course of modern life, the American Indian became a prized symbol precisely because of his perceived difference. Compared to an artificial modern life in an urban environment, the Indian symbolized an authentic life lived close to the earth. Ironically, the figure on the Indian Head nickel was crafted as a racial Other only to be embraced as the prototypical American, establishing thereby a national identity rooted in the primitive and authentic. This absorption of an Indian racial identity within an American national identity constituted a new, modern synthesis by which the now fully formed continental United States attempted to authenticate its presence in the New World by means of association with the aboriginal.

Although the period from 1890-1930 has frequently been discussed as the golden age of public monument making in the United States, at least one aspect of this golden age, the art of medal making, has been little studied, remaining instead a field attracting the attention only of specialists in numismatics.⁴⁸ Yet, virtually all of the leading sculptors from the turn of the century period made fine art medals, and there was great interest in this genre both privately and publicly. In 1911, leading officials in President William Howard Taft's (1909-1913) Department of the Treasury who were seriously considering making design improvements to the nation's coinage embarked on an effort that would result in the creation of the most significant example of medal art from the period. Just as proponents of the Progressive movement in American cities sought to project a high level of sophistication and civilization through the beautification of the civic built-environment, particularly through decorative public sculptures, members of the Progressive Taft administration imagined a monetary currency composed of artfully designed

⁴⁸ None of the recent literature on public commemoration and the arts, studies such as Michele Bogart's, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989) have focused upon commemorative coins or medals. Even Wayne Craven's exhaustive study of American sculpture, *Sculpture in America* (New York: Crowell Press, 1968), does not discuss this genre.

coins corresponding to the level of civilization they believed Americans had achieved as a nation.⁴⁹

As they began to look into the matter, however, Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh, his son Eames, former Director of the Mint A. Piatt Andrew, and current Director George E. Roberts, experienced a waning of ambition. As it turned out, the redesign of currency required the approval of the United States Congress. The only instances not requiring Congressional approval were those cases where designs had been in existence for 25 years. Under these circumstances, the redesign of currency could be enacted by Executive Order of the President. Instead of embarking on the long and uncertain road toward Congressional approval, therefore, this cadre of Treasury officials instead chose to aim their aesthetic reform zeal on the one coin that could be redesigned without Congressional backing, the 5-cent nickel.⁵⁰

Though the group considered holding an open competition for the purpose of procuring a design for the new nickel, it ultimately contracted directly with the sculptor James Earle Fraser.⁵¹ Fraser was born in Winona, Minnesota in 1876, and grew up in the American West. At the age of four, the family moved to Dakota Territory, where Fraser's father was a civil and mechanical engineer for the railroads. Fraser enrolled in the Ecoles des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1896, and two years later became an assistant to Augustus St. Gaudens. By the time of the commission for the nickel, Fraser had been working independently for a decade in New York City. Among his

⁴⁹ For the relationship between beautification and civic reform see Bogart, *Public Sculpture and The Civic Ideal in New York City*, 1989, and William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

⁵⁰ I fashioned the narrative about the effort to create the Indian Head nickel from correspondence and other materials at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Materials relating to the Indian Head nickel are in two small collections: 1) Record Group 104, Bureau of the Mint, 1870-1941, Correspondence 1873-1932, Records of the 1909 Lincoln 1-cent and 1913 5-cent nickel [hereinafter Record Group 104 (a)]; and 2) Record Group 104, Bureau of the Mint, Office of Director Central Files, Case Files on US Coins, 104-83-0042, Box 1 of 3. Two volumes in this latter Record Group pertain to the Indian Head nickel [(hereinafter Record Group 104 (b))].

⁵¹ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a), letter from the Director of the Mint to James Earle Fraser dated January 18, 1912.

milieu, which included other fine artists as well as patrons from the socially elite and political classes, Fraser had established a reputation as a fine sculptor, particularly of portrait busts and medallions.⁵²

The design of the nickel, with the obverse image of the Indian Head in profile and the image of the buffalo on the reverse, was conceived and developed by Fraser without input from his federal patrons. Before even receiving the commission, Fraser had done much work independently to flesh out the design. When released for review to a select few, the Indian Head nickel was enthusiastically endorsed by all parties whose support was needed to move ahead with the minting of the coin. The prominent sculptors Daniel Chester French, Cass Gilbert and Edwin Holland Blashfield wrote letters of support to the Secretary of the Treasury.⁵³ Waldo Moore of the American Numismatic Association proclaimed, “Let us have a coin so designed in commemoration of the early Indian and Bison of North America.”⁵⁴ As Fraser made the minor technical alterations to his design that would render it suitable for minting, federal officials gained President Taft’s support for the new design. In February 1913, the Treasury Department announced the forthcoming new coin. Within a month of the announcement, the mints in San Francisco, Denver and Philadelphia had already minted 18,000,000 new nickels. In the 25-year period that the Indian Head nickel was minted, from 1913-1938, 1,212,916,248 coins were put

⁵² Biographical information on Fraser is from *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, Edited by William Truettner (Washington and London: National Museum of American Art Exhibition Catalogue, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), p. 353, and *James Earle Fraser: The American Heritage in Sculpture* (Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art Exhibition Catalogue, Tulsa, OK: Salina Press, 1985), pp. 1-38. The papers of James Earle Fraser are held at Syracuse University. In preparing this chapter I was not able to visit and study this collection. Future work on this chapter would include a visit to Syracuse University to carry out research on this material.

⁵³ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a). The Blashfield letter is dated August 28, 1912. Secretary MacVeigh, in a letter to Director Roberts dated September 14, 1912, made reference to these three letters.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, letter from Waldo Moore to Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeigh dated July 15, 1912.

into circulation.⁵⁵ In attempting to convince his father Franklin MacVeagh, the Secretary of the Treasury, to support the minting of Fraser's new coin design, Eames had declared that in addition to functioning as currency, the coin would be an attractive, permanent souvenir.⁵⁶ With over 1.2 billion minted, a more widespread and influential souvenir is not imaginable.

Despite its universal familiarity and apparent cultural significance, the Indian Head nickel has received scant attention. One scholar concluded that the profile head on the coin, a composite of three models, all of whom were Plains Indians, was an example of how the image of the Plains Indian came to symbolize all North American Indians by the 20th century. Accordingly, it "served to remind Americans of the Plains Indians" by means of a prominent national symbol.⁵⁷ There is nothing wrong with this straightforward interpretation of the coin. However, James Earle Fraser's description of the coin's iconography suggests that the meaning of the Indian Head nickel runs much deeper:

In designing the buffalo nickel, my first object was to produce a coin which was truly American, and that could not be confused with the currency of any other country. I made sure, therefore, to use none of the attributes that other nations had used in the past. And, in my search for symbols, I found no motif within the boundaries of the United States so distinctive as the American buffalo or bison.

The great herds of bison that roamed the western plains played an important role in that great American epic, "The Winning of the West." With the Indian head on the obverse, we have a perfect unity in theme, truly American. It has a pertinent historical significance, and is in line with the best traditions of centuries of coin design where the purpose was to memorialize a country or a nation.⁵⁸

A careful consideration of this quotation reveals that the genesis of the coin's meaning resides in two iconographic lineages in the United States: 1) the tradition of the vanishing Indian, where the

⁵⁵ National Archives, Record Group 104 (b). These numbers appear in a letter from letter from William H. Brett to Bill Peason dated April 1, 1958.

⁵⁶ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a), letter from Eames MacVeagh to Franklin MacVeagh dated May 4, 1911.

⁵⁷ John Ewers, "The Emergence of the Plains Indian as the Symbol of the North American Indian," *Smithsonian Institution Annual Report 1964* (1965): 542.

⁵⁸ National Archives, Record Group 104 (b), typed statement by James Earle Fraser.

Indian stands for a primitive, bygone way of life doomed to inevitable extinction; and 2) the tradition of using the image of the Indian as a personification of the American nation.⁵⁹

We shall first focus on the tradition of the vanishing Indian. The passages from Fraser's statement that lead to this tradition are those in which the artist indicated that he chose the buffalo for the "important role" that it played in the "Winning of the West," and further, when he pointed to the thematic link, "we have a perfect unity in theme," between the Indian and the buffalo, stating that the relationship between the two had "a pertinent historical significance." Just what was the historical significance of this pairing?

For several hundred years leading up to and into the 19th century, the buffalo was both the material and spiritual staple of the Indians of the Plains. Then, from 1840-1890, the population of American bison declined steeply as the species was brought to the precipice of extinction. Traders and hide hunters precipitated the calamity, and the industrial manufacture of belting material from the buffalo's summer hide in the 1870s dealt a severe blow.⁶⁰ Finally, the United States Army played a small but symbolic part in the destruction of the buffalo. As a means of driving the Plains tribes onto reservations, General Phillip Sheridan, famous for having uttered the repugnant phrase "the only good Indians I ever saw were dead," ordered the extermination of the buffalo.⁶¹ Plains tribes fought hard to preserve their buffalo hunting grounds, but ultimately failed against the superior firepower of the Army. By the time that Fraser made his statement, it was widely understood that the American bison, tens of millions of which had inhabited the

⁵⁹ Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), p. 92 and p. 225, located the coin in these traditions in separate sections of his study, but did not discuss the coin or the manner in which it partook in these traditions at any length.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁶¹ Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition, 2001), p. 265.

Plains just decades before, had been pushed to the brink of disappearance.⁶² For even longer, and with a renewed vigor in the wake of the closing of the American frontier, the ending of the Indian Wars and the movement to detribalize and assimilate Indians into American society, it was just as widely held that the native populations of the United States would suffer the same fate.

When Fraser stated that the unification of the buffalo and the Plains Indian in the nickel's design had a "pertinent historical significance," therefore, he was referring to the demise of the symbiotic relationship between the two in the course of the expansion of the United States. Fraser's quotation neither gloried in the defeat of the Plains Indians, nor did it condemn the role of the Army in hastening the Indians' demise. The quote was silent on the particular circumstances of western expansion. What Fraser focused on was not what led to the decline of the Indian and the buffalo, but rather the epochal significance of this decline. Recall that Fraser referred in his statement to "The Winning of the West" as that "great American epic," without actually talking about winners and losers. For Fraser, the "Winning of the West" represented a page out of universal human history. The Indian and the buffalo were significant players on this grand stage. They stood for a primitive way of life that had been unique to the North American continent, but a way of life whose time had inevitably passed with the ascendance of a more civilized culture in the United States. Indeed, the belief that the buffalo and the Indian were

⁶² Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, p. 225. The plight of the buffalo received widespread notoriety with the publication in 1887 of William T. Hornaday's pioneering and now classic scientific study, *The Extinction of the American Bison: With a Sketch of Its Discovery and Life History* (Seattle: Shorey Book Store, 1971, reprinted from the *Report of the National Museum, 1887*). Fraser's interest in preserving a memory of the buffalo was thus part of a broad cultural interest in the conservation of the buffalo that emerged as the animal's plight became well known. Other manifestations of this interest in conservation included the establishment of the American Bison Society in 1905, as well as the setting aside by President Theodore Roosevelt of the National Bison Range on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana in 1908. For a recent study of the nomadic lifestyle of the Plains Indians that culminated in the 19th century see, Pekka Hamalainen, "Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures," *Journal of American History* 90, 3 (December 2003): 833-862.

vanishing is what inspired Fraser and his patrons to preserve their memory on the nickel in the first place.

In depicting the vanishing Indian, the Indian Head nickel was only the latest example of a theme that began to appear in literature and the visual arts in the United States 100 years before.⁶³ The theme was first given sculptural form in the mid-19th century in Thomas Crawford's *Dying Chief* from the Senate Pediment depicting the *Progress of Civilization* (Figure 13).⁶⁴ In the pediment, a slumping Indian Chief seated upon a tree stump is juxtaposed to an array of figures symbolizing the progress of the United States: a pioneer chopping down a tree, a soldier pulling a sword from his scabbard, a merchant surrounded by symbols of commerce, a schoolteacher. With eyes and shoulders cast downward, the Indian figure laments his passing in the face of such progress. The juxtaposition between the Indian and the figure nearest him, the pioneer, draws a particularly strong contrast. As the motionless Indian slumps on his hindquarters, the sprightly pioneer readies for another vigorous swipe at the tree he is about to topple. The downcast eyes and shoulders signify the Indian figure's utter powerlessness. So rapt is he in his melancholy that he can't even bear to watch as the pioneer is engaged in the building of a nation to supplant his own.

As the theme of the vanishing Indian flourished in the mid-19th century, one of the places where it was frequently employed was on paper currency. Fraser's use of the vanishing Indian theme on the Indian Head nickel thus followed a precedent for the decoration of money established in the 19th century, where the nation's progress was linked to the commercial marketplace through the symbolism of the passing Indian. Before the Federal government was able to distribute bank notes nationally, local and regional banks followed the practice of

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 12-31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 215-216.

circulating paper currency within regions of the country. Frequently, bills depicted an Indian contemplating the progress of the American nation. In a typical example from Nebraska, an Indian stands beside his horse on a promontory overlooking a steaming train racing across the countryside (Figure 15). The Indian, with his primitive modes of transportation and weaponry, horse and spear, represents a passing way of life on the American continent that can't possibly match, according to the image, the culture of technological progress represented by the train.⁶⁵

Fraser was fascinated with the theme of the passing Indian early in his career. In addition to the Indian Head nickel, he completed what is without question the most widely known example on the theme from any period in American history, his equestrian *End of the Trail* (Figure 16). Fraser initially designed the *End of the Trail* in 1893. It was not until 1915, however, that the artist first put the sculpture on public display at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco where it was widely admired, winning a Gold Medal for best sculptural work in the Fine Arts competition. In the sculpture, the lifeless body of a weary and beaten warrior slumps over a stumbling horse. The warrior's spear, which is not grasped by the figure but rather rests impossibly between the torso and arm, points precipitously downward. No image from the turn of the century period represented better the widespread belief that traditional tribal cultures were at the time dying in the face of a more advanced civilization in the modern world. It is significant that no element in the *End of the Trail* suggested the cause for this Indian decline. The Indian and horse appeared to simply be running out of life force. Indian decline was not a matter of cause and effect, but rather an inevitable chapter in the universal history of mankind.

⁶⁵ "Surviving Images, Forgotten Peoples: Native Americans, Women, and African Americans on Early United States Bank Notes," Smithsonian Institution, The National Numismatic Collection, Virtual Exhibit, p. 1. <<http://americanhistory.si.edu/csr/nnc/survivin/danatext.htm>>.

In the *End of the Trail*, Fraser didn't draw the stark contrast between the vanishing Indian and the emergent pioneer as Thomas Crawford had in the United States Capitol Pediment. As evidenced by the following commentary from the Exposition, however, the sculpture certainly loaned itself to such an analysis. In a guide to the art of the exposition, Eugen Neuhaus contrasted the *End of the Trail* with Solon Borglum's *The American Pioneer*, another equestrian sculpture appearing at the Exposition (Figure 17). "The symbolism of the *Pioneer* and the *End of the Trail* is, first of all, a very fine expression of the destinies of two great races so important in our historical development. The erect, energetic, powerful man, head high, with a challenge in his face, looking out into the early morning, is very typical of the white man and the victorious march of his civilization. Contrast this picture of life with the overwhelming expression of physical fatigue, almost exhaustion, that Fraser gives to his Indian in the *End of the Trail*. It is embodied in rider and horse. Man and beast seem both to have reached the end of their resources and both are ready to give up the task they are not equal to meet."⁶⁶

The *End of the Trail* and the Indian Head nickel both brought Fraser enormous renown in his time, making him one of the most famous artists in the nation, and securing for him a reputation for all time. In attempting to understand the Indian Head nickel, it is useful to pair the two works and consider them together. Though scholars have noted how both works drew their inspiration from theories of universal history that imagined Indians as vanishing in the modern world, striking visual differences between the two works have passed without remark.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ *The Art of the Exposition; Personal Impressions of the Architecture, Sculpture, Mural Decoration, Color Scheme & Other Aesthetic Aspects of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (San Francisco: Paul Elder and Company, 1915), p. 32.

⁶⁷ Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, pp. 215-228, discusses both the Indian Head nickel and *The End of the Trail*, but does not discuss the formal qualities of the works in detail, and thus does not focus upon the significant visual differences between the two works.

Understanding these differences is crucial for coming to grips with the significant meaning overlaying the vanishing Indian theme in the Indian Head nickel.

In the *End of the Trail*, the nearly lifeless body of the warrior is abject. The mood of the sculpture is akin to the image of Christ on the cross. The figure is portrayed at the moment that he is about to expire. The *End of the Trail* represented the perceived condition of the Indian in the modern world, displaying the figure at the moment of extinction. As Juliet Helena Lombard James put it in her commentary on the sculpture, “One of the strongest works of the Exposition in its intense pathos is this conception of the end of the Indian race.”⁶⁸ Unlike the equestrian work, none of the formal qualities of the Indian Head nickel portend an inevitable demise. In contrast to the pathetic horse and rider in the *End of the Trail*, the image of the Indian on the nickel is dignified. With head held upright, ruggedly handsome features, and fixed forward gaze, the figure is the picture of strength and composure. This contrast is carried forth in the animals in each of the works. Compared to the stumbling horse in the *End of the Trail*, the buffalo on the nickel is erect and statuesque. This visual analysis demonstrates that while thematically alike in representing the myth of the vanishing Indian, the two works are worlds apart in the way that they formally treat the theme. In order to comprehend this striking formal contrast, it is necessary to now examine how the Indian Head nickel relates to the second iconographic tradition pointed to by Fraser in his description of the coin’s meaning: the employment of the Indian as a personification of the American nation.

The pertinent excerpts from Fraser’s statement pointing to this tradition are those in which the artist expressed the desire to create a design that was “in line with the best traditions of centuries of coin design where the purpose was to memorialize a country or a nation.” Fraser

⁶⁸ *Sculpture of the Exposition Palaces and Courts; Descriptive Notes on the Art of the Statuary at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco* (San Francisco: Press of H.S. Crocker, 1915), pp. 34-35.

divulged the identity of the nation he wished the coin to memorialize when he said that he wanted it to be “truly American,” a design “that could not be confused with the currency of any other nation.” Here, in the commemorative purpose of the Indian Head nickel, we have a significant departure from the *End of the Trail*. While the *End of the Trail* memorialized the American Indian race at the precipice of extinction in the modern world, the Indian Head nickel was instead intended to be a marker of the identity of the United States. The dignified, honorific quality of the Indian Head nickel, as we shall see, resulted from this contrast in the coin’s commemorative purpose.

The practice of employing an Indian figure as a personification of the American nation out of which the Indian Head nickel emerged was rooted in a tradition that actually predated the establishment of the United States. During the age of European exploration and colonialism, the image of an Indian Queen was used to personify “America,” then understood as the Western Hemisphere, the fourth global continent along with Asia, Africa and Europe (Figure 18). In the years preceding the American Revolution, the term “America” increasingly was used to refer to the thirteen Atlantic seaboard colonies that were beginning to emerge as a political unit. At this point, the visual tradition of the Indian Queen evolved into the Indian Princess, who was used to symbolize this nascent American identity (Figure 19).⁶⁹

Despite the close relationship between the two figures, the Indian Princess differed from the Indian Queen in many important respects. The Indian Queen was a barbaric figure whose attributes rooted her as deeply in the Caribbean and South America as they did the northern portion of the Hemisphere. She typically wore a feathered skirt and headdress, carried a club as well as bow and arrows, and sometimes appeared with a severed head pierced by an arrow at her

⁶⁹ E. McClung Fleming, “The American Image as Indian Princess, 1765-1783,” *Winterthur Portfolio* II (1965): 65-81.

feet. Amongst her array of attributes could be found monkeys, parrots, and other symbols of the raw wealth of South America. While the Indian Queen was fashioned as “the creature of an alien race,” the Indian Princess was instead conceived of as the daughter of Britannia, the female personification of Great Britain and the British Empire. The Indian Princess frequently appeared with bow and arrows, but never with a club. Her complexion might be tawny, but it was often indistinguishable from the white of Britannia. Though her attributes varied considerably, she always appeared wearing a feathered headdress, her lone unwavering feature.⁷⁰

The Indian Princess’s more refined bearing was matched by an equally ennobling ambition, the pursuit of liberty. In contrast to the Indian Queen, who might be depicted lounging lazily in an exotic New World setting or worse, presiding over scenes of savage warfare, the Indian Princess frequently appeared with the Phrygian cap and pole of liberty, ancient Roman symbols of freedom. The pairing of liberty with the Indian proved to be a compelling Revolutionary period symbol, for it expressed the political ambitions of the colonists in a figure that embodied a New World, American identity distinct from Europe and the Mother Country. The most noteworthy example of this revolutionary period identity is the famous Boston Tea Party, where the Sons of Liberty dressed in the garb of Mohawk Indians as they dumped tea into Boston harbor in defiance of the Mother Country’s import taxation.⁷¹

After the colonies gained independence, the Indian Princess remained popular for a time, now personifying the young nation born of freedom (Figure 20). Before long, however, the popularity of the Indian Princess began to fade. As nation building proceeded apace, distaste for the idea of rebellion steadily grew. The rise of conflict with real Indians as a perennial political issue complicated the symbolic use of the Indian image further. As a result, the Indian Princess

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 70-74.

⁷¹ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1-9.

was succeeded by a series of other allegorical figures, culminating with Columbia, the female counterpart of Columbus, who by 1815 was firmly implanted as the personification of the nation.⁷²

After a period of dormancy, the Indian Princess as an allegory of liberty re-emerged as a national symbol on United States coinage in the middle of the 19th century. Beginning with the establishment of the Federal Mint and the provisions guiding the creation of currency in 1792, a figure of liberty wearing a Phrygian cap commonly served as a motif adorning federal coinage (Figure 21). In the 1850s, Phrygian liberty was replaced by the Indian Princess on a number of coins minted by the Federal Treasury. The replacement of this version of liberty with the Indian Princess occurred due to southern objections to the use of the Phrygian cap, a symbol associated with the movement to abolish slavery in the South.⁷³ The Indian Princess as an allegory of liberty was first used in 1854 on a series of gold coins (Figure 22). This series was followed by the Indian Head one-cent piece from 1859-1909 (Figure 23). While reduced from a full-figured representation to a simple, profiled head, the Indian Princess on all of these coins retained the one feature that was a constant in the colonial and early-American Indian Princess, the feathered headdress. On all of these coins, the conspicuous appearance of the word “Liberty” written across the figure’s headband clearly rendered the allegorical meaning of the figure. While her prominent headdress signified her Indian identity, the figure of the 1850s, with her Caucasian facial features and the ideal profile of a classical Greek goddess, like her Revolutionary period antecedents, served more as a geographic referent to the United States than as a symbol of her race.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 51-53, and E. McClung Fleming, “From Indian Princess to Greek Goddess, The American Image 1783-1815,” *Winterthur Portfolio* III (1967): 37-66.

⁷³ Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, pp. 91-92.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the visual tradition of Indian liberty moved in a profoundly different direction as the traditional female allegorical figure was replaced by a male figure imbued with human qualities the Indian Princess never embodied. The first coin to realize a change was the Indian Head gold piece minted in 1908 in denominations of \$2.50 and \$5.00 (Figure 24). The key differences between this coin and those that preceded it are readily apparent upon visual inspection. A male figure has replaced the female. In contrast to the Caucasian facial features of the Indian Princess, the figure on the later coin has features resembling those of an actual Indian. Where fluid lines and smooth surfaces depicted the Indian Princess in an idealized human form on earlier coins, the 1908 coin employed a less decorative technique emphasizing the naturalism of the male Indian Head. Notice, for example, the decorative quality of the continuous profile line of the earlier coin, versus the broken, more descriptive quality of the profile lines of the later coin. The net effect of these changes was to begin to downplay the allegorical nature of Indian liberty and to emphasize the figure's human and racial characteristics. Even with these changes, the 1908 Indian Head retained traces of the allegorical quality of the Indian Princess. The figure's facial features, while clearly those of a member of the Indian race, were stiff, cartoonish and uncommonly small and compact. Most significant of all, like the Indian Princess, the identity of the figure on the 1908 coin was still defined first and foremost by the prominent accessory he wore, the feathered headdress, the feature that dominated the composition.

While planning the Indian Head nickel, Fraser's federal patrons placed the coin squarely in the tradition of Indian liberty charted in the previous paragraphs. In a letter to Fraser reviewing the legal requirements governing national currency established by Congress in 1792, the Director of the Mint George Roberts quoted Section 3517 of the statute, "Upon the coins

there shall be the following devices and legends: Upon one side there shall be an impression emblematic of liberty, with an inscription of the word 'Liberty' and the year of the coinage." The Director went on to say, "The Indian Head has always been accepted as 'an impression emblematic of liberty.'"74

In the Indian Head nickel, Fraser fully effected the transformation of Indian liberty from a white, female allegorical figure masquerading as a Plains Indian into a male figure that above all else projected an Indian racial identity with a high degree of realism that had taken its initial steps in the 1908 Indian Head (Figure 14). Compared to previous liberty coins, where the headdress had been the most prominent visual element, the Indian Head nickel greatly reduced the importance of this accessory. The figure wore only a modest pair of eagle feathers. Instead, Fraser drew attention to the unadorned face and head of his figure, fashioning these with extraordinary care. Wrinkles at the chin, mouth and eyes, furrows in the cheeks, and weathered facial features, imbued the figure with the human character that came with age and experience. To this compelling human visage Fraser added clear markers of the sitter's race. With his thick, matted hair gathered into a braid, strong jaw and aquiline profile, the figure displayed physical characteristics that were unmistakably those of a Plains Indian. Here was a figure that above all else wore the physical characteristics of his race, not costumed accessories, as the markers of his racial identity. Fraser expressed keen interest in the racial appearance of the models he used for the Indian Head nickel, referring to one as, "the best Indian Head I can remember."⁷⁵ It was thus no accident that Fraser created such a powerful image of racial difference in his design for the nickel.

⁷⁴ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a), letter dated January 12, 1912.

⁷⁵ Ibid., letter from James Earle Fraser to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs dated July 12, 1931.

In fashioning such a distinct racial portrait, Fraser imbued his figure with an ethnographic quality that distinguished it from its predecessors. Ethnography is a term from the field of Anthropology referring to the scientific method of gathering “raw cultural data” from a people other than one’s own with the goal of capturing a likeness of that culture in all its complexity.⁷⁶ As it developed in the United States in the 19th century, the field of American Anthropology concerned itself above all else with the ethnographic recording of American Indians. Such cultures were imagined as living in what has come to be called an “ethnographic present.” Though inhabiting the modern world, American Indians were thought of as living remnants of an earlier time, thus socially and culturally radically different than modern people. According to the theory of evolutionary progress under girding American Anthropology, they embodied a primitive stage of development already experienced by those more civilized. Anthropologists thus believed that detailed ethnographic recording of these peoples could provide the basis by which modern man could study his own ancient past.⁷⁷

Fraser’s interest in fashioning a racial portrait from the composite of several carefully studied individuals, his detailed and highly descriptive graphic technique, and his pairing of the Indian with the buffalo, the basis of Plains material and spiritual culture, all come into focus within an ethnographic frame of reference. At the time that Fraser crafted the Indian Head nickel, professional anthropology was beginning to gain a foothold in American universities. Anthropologists were busy conducting fieldwork with Indians in the West in a frantic attempt to salvage as much authentic ethnographic data as possible before it was tainted by the influence of modern culture or worse, before Indians themselves passed away.⁷⁸ Photographer/anthropologists played a significant role in this salvage operation, taking literally

⁷⁶ Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, pp. 228-231.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-231; Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 1998, pp. 105-106.

⁷⁸ Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, pp. 231-236.

tens of thousands of photographs in an effort to fix for future generations an image of the vanishing race. A visual comparison of Fraser's Indian with any number of these images demonstrates how seamlessly the figure on the nickel fit within this ethnographic gallery of racial difference (Figure 25).

The emphasis in the Indian Head nickel on the Indian as a symbol of racial difference was new to Indian liberty, where traditionally the figure served primarily as a geographic referent to the United States. However, the use of the Indian image as a racial symbol was very much in keeping with the other visual tradition that formed the foundation of Fraser's coin, the vanishing Indian. This synthesis of Indian liberty with the vanishing Indian renders the Indian Head nickel a truly fascinating artifact of rare significance. Indian liberty and the vanishing Indian, until blended by Fraser in the Indian Head nickel, existed as two distinct iconographic traditions. In uniting these two previously distinct traditions, the Indian Head nickel transformed both. In the process, it reformulated American identity based upon the image of the Indian at the beginning of the 20th century.

Like the figure on the Indian Head nickel, the visual tradition of the vanishing Indian had always been represented by a male warrior of Plains Indian vintage--a figure that above all else symbolized racial difference. Though in Fraser's ethnographic figure the visual tradition reached a height of naturalistic representation, images of the vanishing Indian, unlike Indian liberty, typically included signifiers suggestive of racial physiognomy. Such markers were important because as a symbol of the Indian race, the vanishing Indian from the mid-19th century always served as the antithesis of white America and the American nation. We witnessed such a contrast in Thomas Crawford's U.S. Capitol Pediment, where the vigorous pioneer represented

the ascendant United States and the nude, crouching Indian chief represented the passing “Red Man” (Figure 13).

Another classic portrayal of the vanishing Indian from the mid-19th century, one modeled on Crawford’s figure, appeared on an engraving by G.S. Goodrich (Figure 26).⁷⁹ In the engraving, a Plains warrior sits in the foreground and gazes across the Potomac River to the United States Capitol in the distance. An imaginary obelisk with the growing list of states entering the union rises like a phoenix out of the Capitol building. The symbolism here is blunt. The Indian sits apart from the United States, literally on the other side of the river. A stand-in for his entire race, the Indian watches helplessly as the expanding nation squeezes him out of the picture. In the Crawford and Goodrich images, the politics of ethnicity of the mid-19th century were operative. While providing a stark contrast to ascendant American civilization, the doomed Indian provided justification for the dispossession of aboriginal lands.

Remarkably, in the Indian Head nickel, the vanishing Indian was put to a profoundly different use. Long the benchmark against which American civilization measured itself, in the Indian Head nickel this racial symbol has become one with the identity of the United States. The grafting of the vanishing Indian to the tradition of Indian liberty on the Indian Head nickel transformed this symbol of racial difference into the cherished symbol of the American nation. How is this new fusion of Indian racial identity with the national identity of the United States to be understood?

In *Playing Indian*, a study of how Americans throughout the history of the United States have fashioned identities through the practice of dressing up as Indians, Philip Deloria writes about the American embrace of the Indian as a symbol of racial difference at the beginning of the

⁷⁹ Fryd, *Art and Empire*, 1992, p. 116.

20th century.⁸⁰ Deloria attributes this embrace to the perception that the beginning of the 20th century marked the dawn of a new social era in the United States. One important annunciation of this revolutionary change was offered forth by Frederick Jackson Turner. In Turner's formulation of this societal transformation, the process by which American society developed as a by-product of western expansion and frontier settlement had come to a close around 1890. In the wake of this watershed period of national democratic development lay a new era characterized by an urban, industrial society.

As this new era dawned, people commonly expressed the feeling that modern life lacked an authentic quality of earlier times. Compared to a rural existence, one now lived life in an urban setting cut off from the earth and the rhythms of nature. Mass-produced goods manufactured in factories lacked the character and quality of goods produced in earlier, artisan economies. Wage employment and the grind of the workweek placed labor in the hands of large corporations and rendered it less meaningful. Believing that their lives were consumed by inauthentic experiences, Americans at the beginning of the 20th century sought out sources of authenticity to fill this void. Accordingly, as Americans fashioned identities in this new era, they gravitated to symbols that they held to be authentic. Because modern life was considered to be inauthentic, authenticity was frequently located in peoples and experiences seen as radically different from modernity. Deloria shows how the ethnographic Indian symbolizing racial difference and living a prehistoric lifestyle in the modern world served as a prime example and source of authenticity for white Americans.⁸¹

The embrace of racial difference in the Indian Head nickel is intelligible in this modern quest for the authentic, especially in the search for an authentic manhood. In his study, Deloria

⁸⁰ 1998, pp. 95-127.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-108.

discusses the emergence of summer camps for boys in the late-19th and early-20th century. While providing an escape from an urban setting coded as effeminate, such camps aimed to instill physical vigor through contact with nature, outdoor activities and sports. Deloria pays particular attention to Ernest Thompson Seton, one of the co-founders of the Boys Scouts of America who joined the camping movement with the practice of playing Indian. In the following statement Seton summed up what he believed boys derived from playing Indian, “Most boys love to play Indian. They want to know all about the interesting things the Indians did that are possible for them to do. It adds great pleasure to the lives of such boys when they know they can go right out in the holidays and camp in the woods just as the Indians did and make all their own weapons in Indian style as well as rule themselves after the manner of a band of Redmen.”⁸² In Seton’s view, modern manhood’s saving grace resided in bringing America’s youth into contact with wild nature and the primitive Indian.

The Indian Head nickel emerged from the same set of impulses that inspired the Boy Scout movement. Believing that modern life left them with little opportunity to develop a healthy and natural masculinity, ruling class American men sought activities and symbols more befitting their gender.⁸³ Theodore Roosevelt’s interest in pursuits of the “strenuous life,” athletics pitting man-against-man, the hunting of wild game in the great outdoors and the combat of warfare, was the epitome of this phenomenon. Roosevelt also perceived in the Indian a source of authentic masculinity. He once proclaimed regretfully that his veins did not contain “a strain of Indian blood” as a means of countering the effects of over-civilization.⁸⁴ While he lacked American Indian genes, Roosevelt nonetheless did his best to ensure that this symbol of racial

⁸² Ibid., quoted on p. 107.

⁸³ For an interesting, early study of this phenomenon see “The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890s,” in John Higham, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington and London: Indian University Press, 1970).

⁸⁴ Quoted in Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, p. 250.

difference would animate a new American identity at the dawn of the modern age. In 1905, as part of his interest in improving the design of the nation's currency, Roosevelt gave birth to the idea of transforming the national symbol of Indian liberty from a delicate white female figure masquerading as an Indian to a virile male Indian figure. Roosevelt encouraged the nation's leading artist, Augustus St. Gaudens, to place such an image on the \$10.00 Golden Eagle coin.⁸⁵

Due to Department of the Treasury regulations, St. Gaudens was prohibited from employing such an Indian head, and he instead produced another coin adorned by a white goddess wearing a Plains headdress. Nonetheless, it was during Roosevelt's White House administration, in 1908, that Indian liberty was indeed transformed into a virile racial type on the \$2.50 and \$5.00 gold coins (Figure 24). That James Earle Fraser's succeeding Indian Head nickel followed up this first effort with a coin also in line with Roosevelt's original conception was no coincidence. Fraser was a friend of Roosevelt's who shared his interest in a vigorous masculinity as represented by the "strenuous life" and the primitive Indian.⁸⁶ In portraits he made of Roosevelt, Fraser highlighted these associations above others. His original Vice-Presidential portrait of Roosevelt, carried out on the recommendation of his teacher St. Gaudens, who was unable to carry out the work due to poor health, was turned down by the Senate because it represented Roosevelt not as the traditional statesman, but rather as the Rough Rider famed for having charged Spanish troops in Cuba at the Battle of San Juan Hill (Figure 27). Later in his career Fraser created for the Museum of Natural History in New York another sturdy image of Roosevelt, this one an equestrian of the former President flanked on either side by primitive man, an American Indian and an African American (Figure 28). The honorific treatment of the racial

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁶ Entry on James Earle Fraser in American National Biography Online at <<http://www.anb.org>> (Oxford University Press under auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies).

portrait on the Indian Head nickel was thus one of several flash points through which Fraser demonstrated an abiding interest, shared with Roosevelt, in primitive masculinity.

As discussed throughout the first part of this chapter, Americans in the mid-19th century defined themselves in opposition to an Indian racial Other. At the beginning of the 20th century, American self-definition made an about-face. Perhaps better than any artifact from the period, the Indian Head nickel exemplifies the effort during the development of the modern industrial age to now display and incorporate racial difference as the basis for one version of American identity. For people increasingly constrained by regular workweeks, crowded urban living, and divorced from self-sustenance, the Plains Indian who ranged freely for his livelihood, produced the materials he needed through the work of his own craft, and protected himself and his people by means of his own cunning and bravery, was now an attractive symbol of authenticity and masculinity. While highlighting the racial difference of the Indian, prominent men such as Theodore Roosevelt and James Earle Fraser now conceived of the figure less as an enemy and more as an early representative in a genealogical line of American manhood. This transformation of the Plains Indian from enemy to first American was actually articulated very clearly in a place where some of the direct visual sources for Fraser's coin that we have not yet looked at are also to be found, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. In continuing our effort to understand the hybrid identity of Fraser's Indian, therefore, we must now turn our attention to Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the most popular form of mass entertainment from the period spanning the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

William Cody, a.k.a. Buffalo Bill, the inventor and main attraction of the Wild West Show, was born in Iowa in 1846 and grew up in Kansas. As a young man, Cody served as an ox-team driver and a messenger for the precursor of the pony express before working on several

wagon trains heading west. This experience combined with an adventurous spirit, he prospected for gold and participated in trapping expeditions, led to his becoming a civilian army scout and guide during the Civil War. Cody joined the Seventh Kansas Regiment before the war's end, but returned to civilian life and married after the Civil War. Once married, Cody returned to the West and resumed work as a civilian army scout for the next ten years. It was at this point in his career that Cody began to evolve into a showman.⁸⁷

While working as an army scout after the war, Cody participated in fringe entertainment exploits such as buffalo shooting matches. These activities led to employment opportunities helping to operate celebrity buffalo hunts such as the widely publicized adventure led by General Phillip Sheridan with Grand Duke Alexis, the Russian Czar's son, as the principal guest. By the 1870s, the image of Buffalo Bill dressed in fringed buckskin and serving as frontier scout, hunter and Indian fighter, had become a familiar Dime Novel character (Figure 29). Having gained a measure of fame, Cody established a pattern spending summer months as a civilian army scout in the West and winter months dramatizing his western exploits through theater performances in the eastern United States.⁸⁸ In 1883, along with his wise and enterprising partners Nate Salsbury and John Burke, Cody elaborated on his performances and invented the Wild West Show, transforming not only his own career but the American entertainment industry as well.⁸⁹

The Wild West Show blended elements of the stage show, the circus, and sportsmen's exhibitions into a spectacular public interpretation of the western frontier experience. In the early years, the fictional dramas of white-Indian conflict, the appearance of real characters from the frontier such as Sitting Bull, the expert shooting of westerners such as Annie Oakley, and the

⁸⁷ Biographical information on William Cody is from Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 11-20.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-27.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-45.

presence of exotic animals such as the buffalo, were presented as dramatizations of contemporary circumstances taking place in the American West. In later years, with the widespread belief that the frontier was coming to a close, the Wild West Show presented itself nostalgically. In these years, the show was something of a living monument to characters and dramas believed to have receded into the annals of history.⁹⁰ Despite these shifts in perception, a constant claim of the Wild West Show was that it presented an authentic version of the American frontier experience.⁹¹ Before going bankrupt and closing up shop in 1913, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show had performed in front of millions of people in the United States and abroad. It had made William Cody the most recognizable celebrity in the United States. Most importantly for the purposes of this discussion, its claims to authenticity combined with its popularity made it the vehicle by which most United States citizens came to understand the history of western expansion across the continent.

Given the subject matter of Fraser's coin, it is striking to learn that other than Buffalo Bill himself, the buffalo and the Indian were consistently the two most important elements of the Wild West Show. The Show always traveled with its own herd of American bison, the largest living indigenous creatures of the Americas. Programs featured stories about these "monarchs of the Plains," and a staged buffalo hunt was always the most thrilling of the hunting dramas presented. The performance of live buffaloes in the Wild West Show added to the excitement of the spectacle and supported the Show's claims to authenticity.⁹² Another novelty of the Wild West Show distinguishing it from previous popular entertainments was that it employed actual native people to play the Indian roles instead of actors dressed like native people. These "show Indians," as they called themselves, acted out the conventional role of villain in many of the

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 221-222.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 55-63.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 232-236.

Wild West's staged dramas, demonstrated traditional dances, songs and games, and performed skillful acts of horsemanship.

In making the buffalo and the Indian "household" characters, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show helped create the climate out of which the Indian Head nickel emerged. The relationship between the show and the coin, however, was actually more direct. The Show also provided visual sources and an imperative for the coin. From the very beginnings of the Wild West Show until the end, colorful programs and advertisements, crucial components of the potent media machine that was essential for the success of the Wild West Show, paired the images of the buffalo and the Indian with Buffalo Bill. An early program from 1883 represented a Plains Indian head in profile with a central buffalo symbol, while in an 1885 program the buffalo appeared in profile exactly as it appeared on Fraser's coin (Figures 30 and 31). Around 1900, a stampeding Buffalo became the symbol of the Show itself, providing an alert to the public that the Wild West would be performing in its town soon (Figure 32). By 1907, programs asked the audience to "Remember the Buffaloes," informing the reader that "out of the many million buffalo that thirty years ago roamed over the great Western prairies scarcely five hundred head are now living."⁹³ The Wild West Show was thus an important means by which most Americans learned of the plight of the American bison, the namesake of their favorite popular entertainer, whose "conversion" from buffalo hunter to conservationist was yet another example of the swiftness with which perceptions about the American Frontier were transformed at the end of the 19th century.

Fraser's tribute to the American Bison on the Indian Head nickel can be said to have answered Buffalo Bill's call to "Remember the Buffaloes." The relationship between Fraser's distinctive racial image and Wild West Show Indian imagery was closer still. For years after the

⁹³ Ibid., p. 233.

coin was minted, Fraser and the Treasury Department were flooded with requests for the name of the Indian model for the coin. In a 1931 letter responding to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who was following up on a claim made by an Indian named Two Guns Whitecalf that his portrait served as the model for the nickel, Fraser indicated that the Indian Head was a composite of three Plains Indian models--Iron Tail, a Sioux, Two Moons, a Cheyenne, and a third model he couldn't recall.⁹⁴ At the turn of the century, the Indians in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show were being promoted as trademarks of the Show. Iron Tail was the most prominent of all, attaining celebrity status (Figure 33). Fraser found Iron Tail's physical appearance particularly well suited to his interest in the racial portrait. When the artist referred to one of his models as having, "the best Indian Head I can remember," he was talking about the famed Iron Tail.⁹⁵

In addition to finding his favorite model in the Wild West Show, Fraser also appears to have found inspiration in the formal qualities of the promotional imagery published by the Show. As we have seen, the silhouetted portrait on the Indian Head nickel inherited its formal layout from preceding Indian head coins. Fraser's profiled Indian figure also appears to have been indebted to Wild West Show souvenir images, a pictorial form blending ethnographic portraiture with an emphasis on the exotic, decorative qualities of Indian dress (Figure 34). At the turn of the century, the quest for the authentic Indian discussed earlier made this type of racial portrait enormously popular with fans of the Wild West Show. Iron Tail so identified with this conventional souvenir pose that he made Gertude Kasebier, a member of the Photo-Secessionist group and the leading portrait photographer of the day, destroy a more candid frontal photograph of him, and then re-photograph him in profile wearing a flowing headdress (Figures 35 and 36).⁹⁶

⁹⁴ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a), letter dated July 12, 1931.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 2000, p. 203.

Though Fraser never talked about his indebtedness to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show other than to recognize Iron Tail as one of his models, the close relationship between the coin and the Show is nonetheless convincingly demonstrated through the visual sources for the coin. Members of the public at large turned to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show as the authoritative source for things western. Artists did too. Fraser was one of many western art specialists who used the Wild West Show for inspiration. In fashioning his racial portrait in the Indian Head nickel, Fraser was particularly indebted to Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Before Fraser put forward a distinctive image of racial difference as the face of an American identity, Buffalo Bill fashioned for himself the role of a liminal frontier figure and trumpeted the Indian racial identity of his "show Indians" as part of the basis for his own and the Wild West Show's claims to authenticity.

As helpful as the Wild West Show is in fleshing out the genesis of the Indian figure on the Indian Head nickel, it is even more helpful for the light it sheds on the shifting racial politics underlying the transformation of the Plains Indian from the enemy of the nation to first American on Fraser's coin at the beginning of the 20th century. Without question, William Cody's interest in bringing to his audience genuine representatives of the Indian race achieved its greatest success when he persuaded the Sioux warrior Sitting Bull to tour with the Wild West Show in 1885. A veteran of the campaigns between the United States Army and Indians of the Plains in the 1860s and 1870s, Sitting Bull emerged as a widely known symbol of Indian subversion when in the 1870s he refused to move onto the Hunkpapa Sioux Reservation. Instead, he led a band of 3,000 warriors into Canada where they remained armed and free. Only in 1881, due to pressure from the Canadian government and after much cajoling from representatives of the United States Army, did Sitting Bull lead his remaining followers back across the border and onto reservation

land. Once back in the United States, Sitting Bull remained a prominent Sioux leader and ardent defender of his tribal culture.⁹⁷

A famous photograph disseminated as part of the Show's media blitz showed Buffalo Bill standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the great Sioux warrior (Figure 37). The photograph was one of eight taken of Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull by the photographer William Notman when the Wild West Show was on a tour stop in Montreal, Canada. This particular photograph was the most widely distributed of the eight, and it sometimes appeared with the caption, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85."⁹⁸ The caption referred to the fact that both Sitting Bull and Cody were present in the field during the campaigns of 1876 that included the Battle of the Little Bighorn--the famous conflict that resulted in the death of Brigadier General George Armstrong Custer and the biggest route of the United States Army by the Plains tribes in their many years of warfare. It is important to take note of the way this image and caption reimagine race relations in the aftermath of the Indian Wars. It's not just that Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull can appear together and abide each other's presence. The suggestion is that the ill will engendered by political conflict and war over Indian lands has been set aside, rendering the conditions by which these symbols of their respective races and the warring sides could become fast friends. The speed with which the image of Sitting Bull has been transformed is remarkable. Less than ten years after fleeing the country as a renegade of the nation, this photograph projects the image of the Hunkpapa Sioux chief chumming it up with America's favorite hero.

As Buffalo Bill projected an image of his own friendly relations with American Indians, the popular entertainer and entrepreneur encouraged his audience to do the same. Before and after performances of the Wild West Show, customers could visit the Show's Indian Camp--a

⁹⁷ Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, 2001, pp. 417-427.

⁹⁸ Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 2000, pp. 178-179.

place where “show Indians” were available for meeting and mingling. To allay people’s fears about such encounters, press coverage of the Wild West Show, particularly after 1890 when it was widely perceived that the Indian Wars had concluded, began to promote images of Indians as safe, portraying the performers as exotics who no longer posed a threat to the tide of western expansion. William Cody’s partner John Burke has been credited for the promotion of the safe Indian. A journalist who wrote a biographical piece on Burke concluded, “It is pleasant to know...that the Indians who have traveled with Buffalo Bill are firmly convinced of the white man’s power and of the hopelessness of the Indian’s trying to cope with it. They have done more in the interests of preserving peace than all the school educated Indians in the country.” To bolster this image, Wild West promotional material increasingly portrayed the show Indians in rosy terms through the publication of human-interest stories. Promotional literature told of Christian Indian marriages, reported anecdotally on Indian experiences of American life in the towns and cities in which the Show performed, and described Indian visits to sick children in hospitals.⁹⁹

As evidenced by the foregoing, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, as it crafted the Plains Indian image as a distinctive component of the Show, transformed this one-time opponent into a friend and object of fondness. As the Wild West Show set aside the image of the Plains Indian as an enemy, portraying the Plains warrior instead as a friend of Americans, it simultaneously began to transform the identity of this racial figure. While he continued to sport the strong physical and ethnic characteristics of an Indian, the Plains warrior came to be identified as the prototypical American as well as the symbol of his race. This transformation was explicitly represented in a Wild West Show poster entitled, *An American* (Figure 38). In the poster, an

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 161-219, includes the John Burke quote, as well as an extensive discussion of Buffalo Bill’s “show Indians.”

Indian scout wearing fringed buckskin is depicted on horseback atop a grassy hilltop with the Great Plains stretching out behind him in all directions. The rider performs the role of scout as he shades his eyes from the glare of the sun and peers into the distance. This image appeared on Wild West Show posters beginning in 1885. It was in 1893 that the title, *An American*, was added as the caption for the poster. Henceforward, the image was used together with posters showing other nationality types such as Cossacks, Mexicans, and Arabs, that made up the Wild West Show's Congress of Rough Riders of the World.¹⁰⁰

In 1898, Cody backed up his promotion of the Plains warrior as the prototypical American with a proposal he put before the Federal government. As the Spanish-American War was heating up, Buffalo Bill offered to lead a force of his American Indians into battle alongside American troops so that together they might drive the old guard Spanish colonial empire from the New World. The Federal government did not act upon Cody's proposal.¹⁰¹ One cannot help but be struck, however, by the parallel between Cody's offer and Theodore Roosevelt's resignation from the position of Assistant Secretary of the Navy to lead a battalion of troops composed of cowboys and college athletes into battle. Roosevelt called his battalion the Rough Riders in homage to the Wild West Show's pageant of primitive manhood, the Congress of Rough Riders of the World. Though never realized, Cody's proposal to have the prototypical American fight alongside the contemporary soldier in a brotherhood of ancient and modern manhood stands as a testament to the effort to fashion a new American identity through a blend of primitive and modern man.

The path of the image of the Plains warrior from enemy, to friend, to object of human interest and finally to prototypical American in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show provides a key

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 249-251.

for understanding the assumptions underlying Fraser's use of the racial portrait as a symbol of American identity. We have witnessed how in designing the nickel, Fraser took many of his cues from Buffalo Bill. He made the buffalo and the Indian his central symbols as Buffalo Bill did in his Show. He modeled his imagery directly from imagery originating in the Wild West Show. He proudly claimed that his coin, unlike earlier Indian head coins, represented an authentic ethnic type, just as Buffalo Bill had used actual Indian performers rather than whites acting out the parts of Indians. Buffalo Bill promoted his Show as a truly American entertainment. Fraser and his patrons understood their coin as definitively American. Finally, Fraser's coin tracked Buffalo Bill's promotion of the "show Indian." As Buffalo Bill transformed the Plains Indian Warrior from enemy to prototypical American, Fraser transformed the vanishing Indian from the antithesis of an American identity to the very essence of it. Ultimately, Fraser's Indian Head and Buffalo Bill's prototypical American were one and the same figure. First minted in 1913, the final year that Buffalo Bill's West Show performed before going bankrupt, the Indian Head nickel, among its richly layered meanings—vanishing Indian, Indian liberty, ethnographic Other, and first American--can also quite literally be understood as a commemoration and permanent souvenir of Buffalo Bill and his Show.

Fittingly, the mingling of an American Indian racial identity with the national identity of the United States that forms the core of the Indian Head nickel's meaning was palpably rendered through a series of events surrounding the ceremonial dispersal of the first 500 coins minted. The occasion for this dispersal was the event described at the end of the previous chapter, the groundbreaking of the planned but never realized Wanamaker monument to the North American Indian in New York Harbor. On that February day in 1913 when the Wanamakers and their

supporters gathered, the first 500 Indian Head nickels minted were pulled from a pouch by President Taft and distributed to each of those in attendance as a souvenir of the occasion.¹⁰²

Recall that the planned Wanamaker Monument was intended, through the monumental image of an Indian offering a signal of peace, to represent the spirit of harmony and friendship between the United States and the continent's Indian tribes at the dawn of a new century. In addition to President Taft and the memorial patrons, thirty-two Indian Chiefs were present at the occasion. They had been invited by Rodman Wanamaker, who had befriended them on successive ethnographic expeditions in Indian country in 1908 and 1909, during which he and his associates shot thousands of photographic portraits and miles of moving pictures.¹⁰³ As one might expect, the day was filled with events through which the spirit of harmony to be symbolized by the planned monument was enacted. The Indian Chiefs, appearing in Plains regalia, performed a traditional war song, after which they raised the American flag and signed a declaration of allegiance to the United States. These performances were accompanied by the singing of patriotic songs and followed by the actual groundbreaking, which was carried out through the exchange and use of traditional digging implements of the respective cultures, buffalo bone and silver shovel (Figure 39).¹⁰⁴

What is striking about this series of events orchestrated by the monument patrons is the cross-fertilization of cultures manifested in them. The Indians present were made to raise the American flag and declare their allegiance to the United States, but they were also asked to bring

¹⁰² Trachtenberg, "The National American Indian Memorial, 1913," unpublished manuscript, 1997, p. 1. As stated in the previous chapter, the Wanamaker monument, including the dissemination of the Indian Head nickel at the groundbreaking event, are discussed in Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004). Because the publication of this book coincided the completion of this study, I was not able to integrate Trachtenberg's conclusions into the present study.

¹⁰³ *American Indian Portraits from the Wanamaker Expedition*, Chosen and Introduced by Charles A. Reynolds, 1971, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Trachtenberg, "The National American Indian Memorial, 1913," unpublished manuscript, 1997, p. 5, and Ciccione, "Indian Memorial," Winter 1998-99, no page number.

forward elements of the aboriginal. Through the singing of the traditional war song and the use of the traditional native digging implement, these traces of the aboriginal commingled with the American identity they were made to embark upon by virtue of their pledge of allegiance to the United States. The hybrid quality of this event was strikingly captured in a Wanamaker ethnographic photograph showing an American Indian woman wrapped in the American flag (Figure 40). The correspondence between this photograph, the monument groundbreaking events and the figure of the Indian on Fraser's nickel is uncanny. In all three, racial difference and national iconography joined to form a new, hybrid American identity rooted in the aboriginal. A more fitting token for the Wanamaker monument groundbreaking than the Indian Head nickel could not have been devised had it been designed expressly for the event.

Earlier in this chapter, we witnessed how the Indian on Fraser's nickel served as a symbol of authenticity. The blending of racial difference and American identity transformed the Indian figure into an ancient torchbearer of the nation's masculinity. Buffalo Bill crafted the Plains Indian in a similar manner, treating the figure as the prototypical American among Rough Riders of the world. In a letter to President Taft seeking support for his monument campaign, Rodman Wanamaker pointed to another dimension of authenticity to be gained through the construction of a hybrid Indian-American identity. In the Taft letter, Wanamaker referred to the Indian as "the first inhabitant and Citizen of this continent."¹⁰⁵ Through this characterization, Wanamaker recognized an aboriginal identity that preceded and existed outside the bounds of American citizenship. With its grounding in the timeless earth, the aboriginal had an authoritative connection to the New World that European-American citizens of the United States had always coveted as the basis for an authentic American identity. As the author D.H. Lawrence put it in

¹⁰⁵ Trachtenberg, "The National American Indian Memorial, 1913," unpublished manuscript, 1997, p. 4.

his writings on the role of the Indian in the formation of American identity, “No place exerts its full influence upon a newcomer until the old inhabitant is dead or absorbed.”¹⁰⁶

At the beginning of the 20th century, aboriginal authority and authenticity, at the verge of death because of the vanishing Indian, were absorbed into the now fully realized continental American nation by virtue of the christening of the Indian as the first American. The Indian Head nickel was only one among other notable examples of the authentication of American identity through association with the aboriginal. Under the Antiquities Act of 1906, the first piece of historic preservation legislation in the United States, Indian ruins and archeological sites were designated national treasures and set aside as protected federal lands. Adoption of these native heritage sites by the Federal government expanded the scope of United States history back thousands of years, giving to it the mantle of antiquity.¹⁰⁷ In these same years the national park idea, established with the preservation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, began to develop into a full-blown system with its own federal caretaker, the National Park Service. Under the Organic Act of 1916, vestiges of pristine wilderness would be set aside to form the nation’s natural heritage, available so that present and future generations could experience for themselves the encounter with the aboriginal landscape.¹⁰⁸ Considered together, all of these examples are recognizable from today’s vantage point as part of an emerging national heritage, rooted in the primeval continent, under authorship by the Federal government at the beginning of the Modern age.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 1998, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

¹⁰⁸ On national parks see, Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd Edition Revised (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) and Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks, A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

In this chapter we have explored the honorific treatment of the figure of the Indian on the Indian Head nickel in all its richness and complexity. In closing, we must take a moment to consider how this tribute worked to obscure the relationship between the figure of the Indian and the history of native people in the United States. As the image of the Indian, the Plains Indian no less, was accorded rarefied treatment as the symbol of American national identity, there was a simultaneous draining from the image of any identification with Plains Indian history. Throughout the 19th century, the Plains tribes resisted colonization of their lands by the United States as fiercely as any of the continent's tribes ever had. At Sand Creek in 1864 and at Wounded Knee in 1890, the two most notable examples, Plains women and children died in massacres at the hands of United States military forces. In the wake of the Indian Wars, a mere twenty years after the siege at Wounded Knee, the image of the Indian was paid the strange respect of symbolizing the nation against which Plains tribes had warred for decades. As it enriched the history and identity of the American nation by commemorating "the early Indian and Bison," therefore, the Indian Head nickel simultaneously put aside the memory of Plains Indian resistance to western expansion, failing to acknowledge the profound rift that existed between the United States and the native tribes now subsumed within its borders.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ National Archives, Record Group 104 (a), quote made by Waldo Moore of the American Numismatic Association in a letter to Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh dated July 15, 1912.



Figure 13. Thomas Crawford, United States Capitol Senate Pediment, *Progress of Civilization* (Three Views), 1855-63.



Figure 14. James Earle Fraser, *Indian Head - Buffalo Nickel*, 1913.



Figure 15. Western Exchange Fire and Insurance Company, *Two Dollar Note*, 1857.

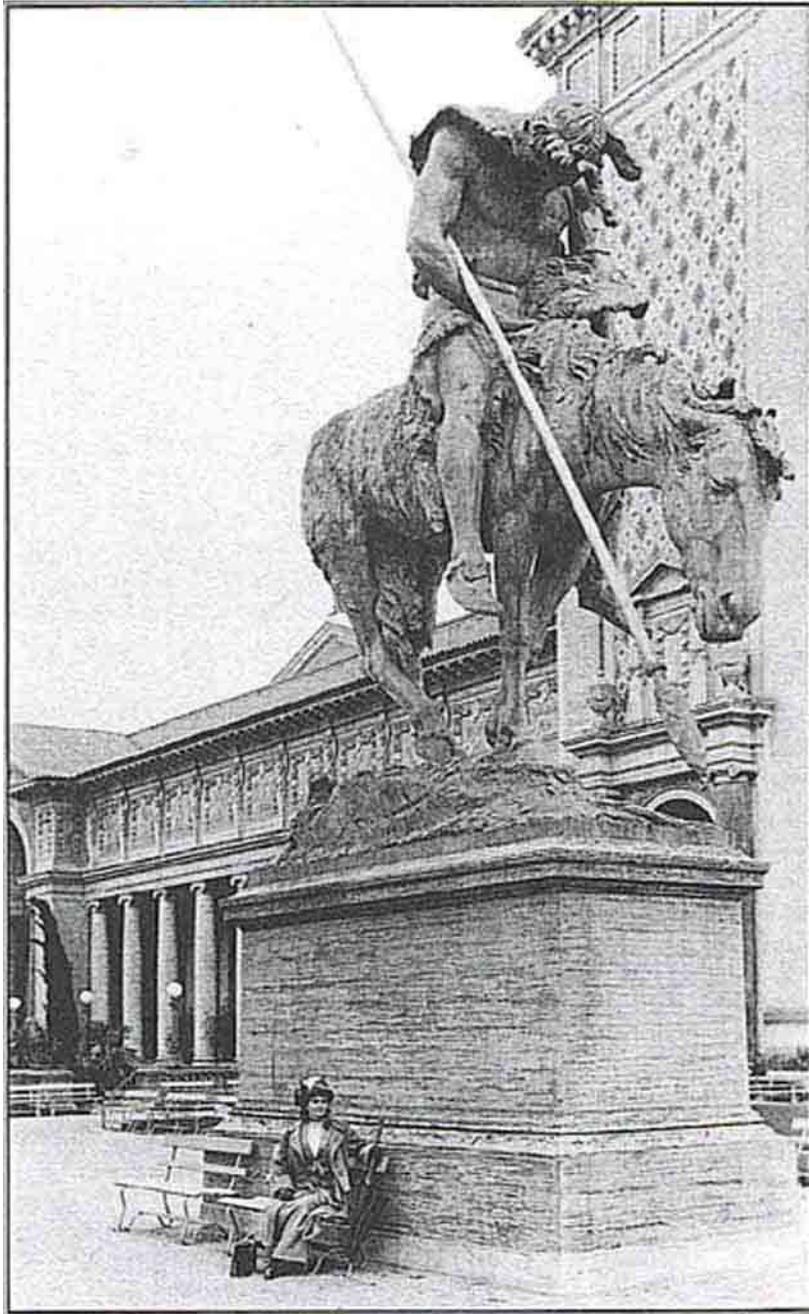


Figure 16. James Earle Fraser, *The End of the Trail*, 1893-1915.



Figure 17. Solon Borglum, *The American Pioneer*, 1915.

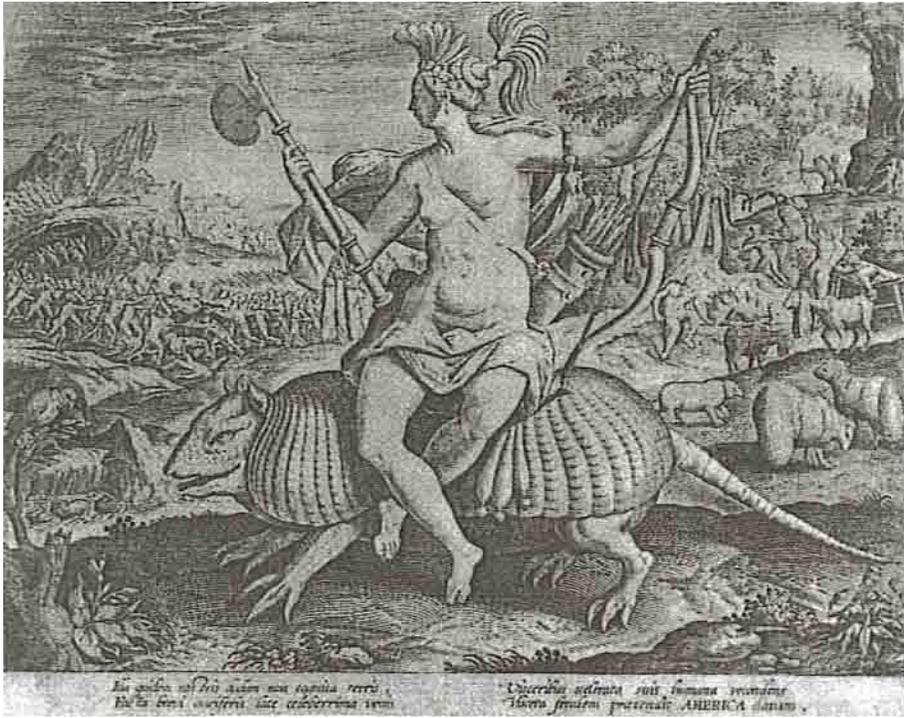


Figure 18. Martin de Vos, *Personification of America*, 1595.

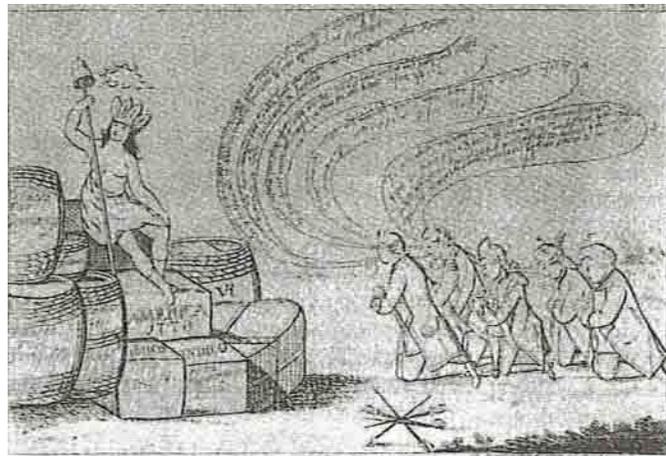


Figure 19. Matthew Darly, *The Commissioners*, 1778.



Figure 20. P. Wagenaar, *Holland Recognizes American Independence*, 1782.



Figure 21. *Liberty Coin, 1794.*



Figure 22. James Longacre, *Indian Head Gold Dollar, 1854-56.*



Figure 23. James Longacre, *Indian Head Cent*, 1859-1909.



Figure 24. Bela Lyon Pratt, *Indian Head \$2.50 Gold Coin*, 1908-29.

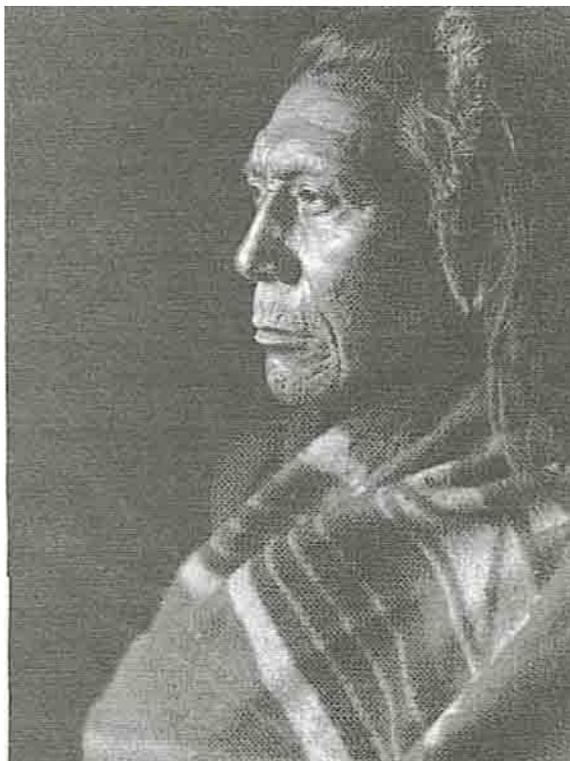


Figure 25. Joseph Kossuth Dixon, *Antoine Moise (Flathead)*, 1913.



Figure 26. From S. G. Goodrich, *A Pictorial History of the United States*, 1865.



Figure 27. James Earle Fraser, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 1904.

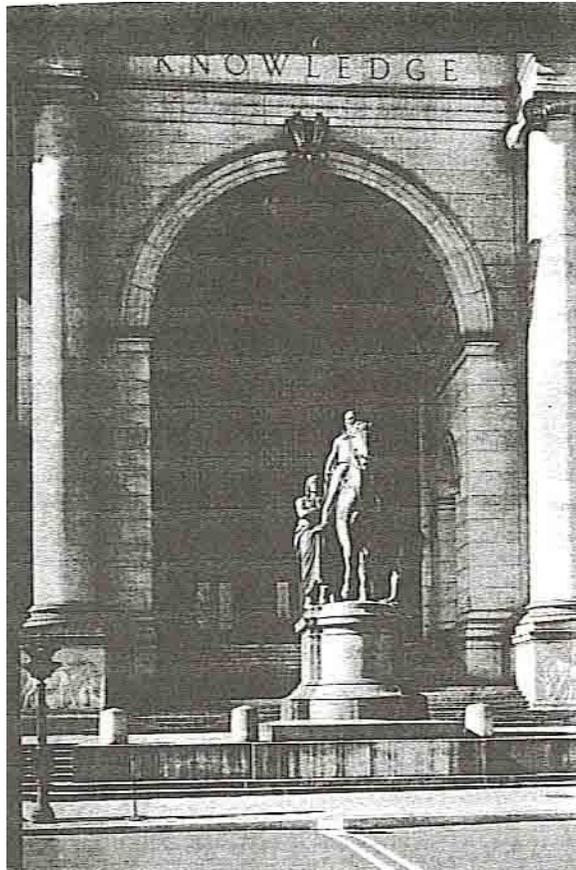


Figure 28. James Earle Fraser, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 1940.



Figure 29. *Buffalo Bill*, c. 1875.

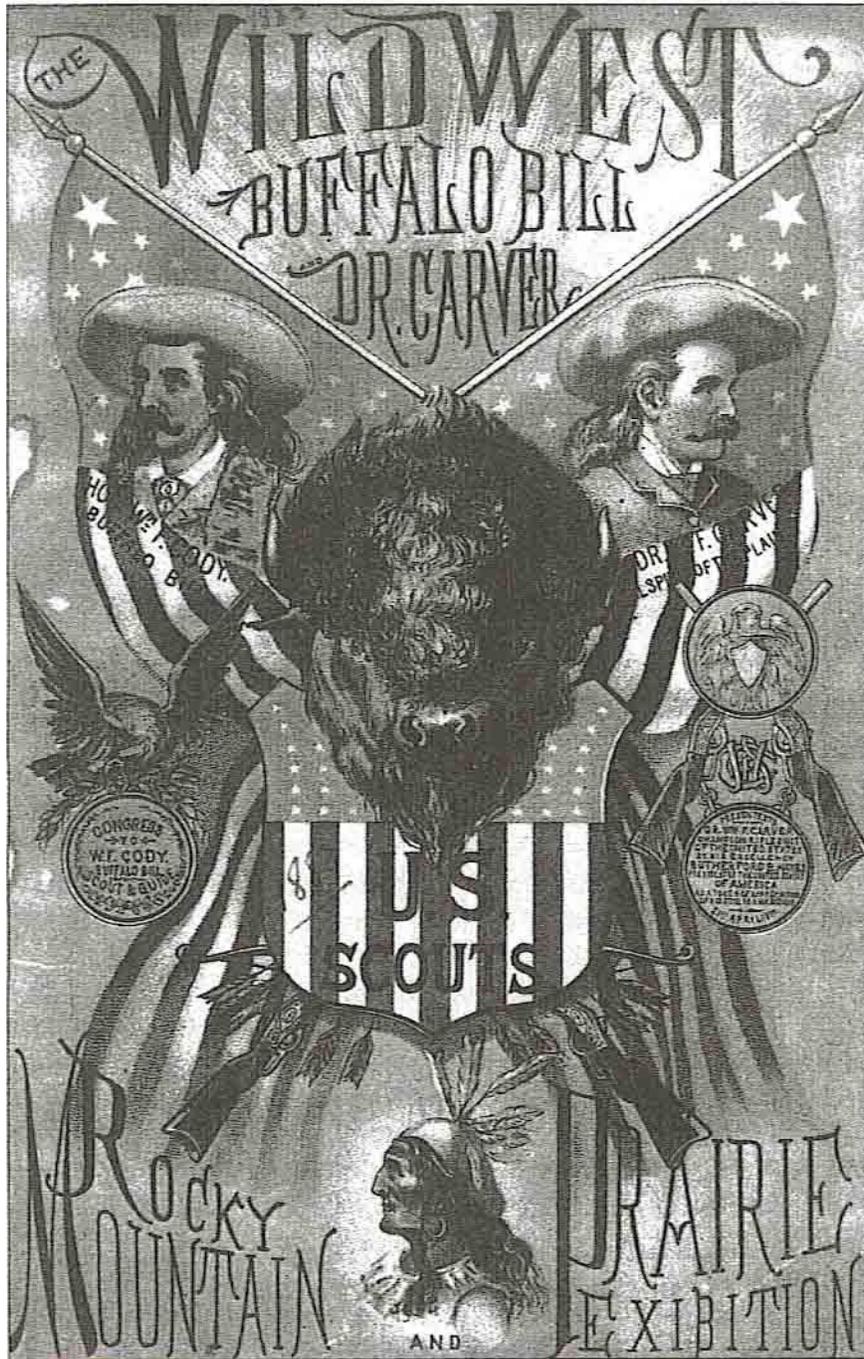


Figure 30. Program, *The Wild West*, 1883.



Figure 31. Program, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 1885.



Figure 32. Poster, *I Am Coming*, 1900.

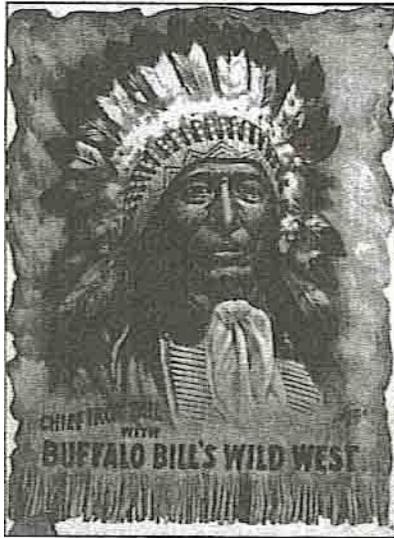


Figure 33. Poster, *Iron Tail*, Date Unknown.



Figure 34. Program, *Iron Tail*, 1907.



Figure 35. Gertrude Kasebier, *Iron Tail*, 1898.



Figure 36. Gertrude Kasebier, *Iron Tail*, 1898.



Figure 37. William Notman, *Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill*, 1885.

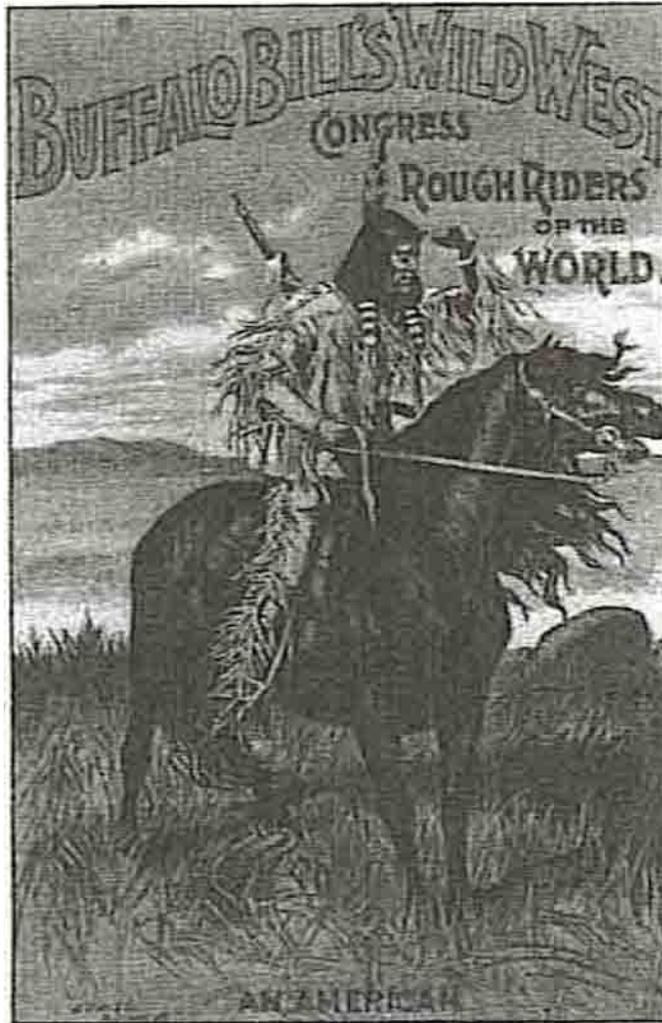


Figure 38. Poster, *An American*, 1893.



Figure 39. *President Taft Breaking Ground with Indian Tool, 1913.*



Figure 40. *Joseph Kossuth Dixon, Emma Kickapoo, 1913.*

4. VENGEANCE

The preceding chapters of this study showed how the figure of the Indian served as a focal point for remembering the imperial conquest of the American West. The point of the monuments examined in Chapter 2 was to draw attention away from the violence and conflict of conquest and to instead bring the period of western expansion to a close by focusing upon the peace that had been secured. The symbol of that peace was the figure of the virtuous Indian, heroic for having stoically accepted the fate dealt him by history. In peace, as witnessed in the examination of the Indian Head nickel in Chapter 3, the figure of the Indian served as the foundation for a newly reformulated national identity rooted in the aboriginal past. More than ever before in American history, the figure of the Indian was availed as a symbol of what made the American nation unique. The present chapter explores the limits of this version of memory by examining the campaign to erect in Denver a monument dedicated to the pioneers of the state of Colorado.

On June 24, 1911, the city of Denver successfully completed a stormy seven-year effort to erect a public monument honoring the settlement of the American West by unveiling the *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument Fountain* (Figure 41, hereinafter *Kit Carson Monument*). With its gurgling waters offering a counterpoint to the din of surrounding downtown traffic, the *Kit Carson Monument* stands today where it has since its dedication, in the city of Denver's civic center, shadowed by the nearby state capitol building. The work of Frederick MacMonnies, one

of the leading academic sculptors working in the Beaux-Arts idiom at the turn of the century, the monument rises 30 feet above the street. It is comprised of three graduated pools carved from granite and a program of bronze sculpture whose iconography presents the viewer with a condensed history of the American West. A statue of Kit Carson upon a rearing horse, rifle in hand and pointing to lead the way toward westward expansion, surmounts the whole. Western motifs--an oxen-skull frieze and water jets in the shape of mountain lion heads--decorate the shaft that supports the statue of Kit Carson. At street level, the fountain's round base is occupied by three life-sized reclining figures--a virile hunter, an aged prospector, and a sturdy pioneer mother with child and rifle. Today, the benign appearance of the *Kit Carson Monument* belies the tumultuous story of its creation. By simply looking at the monument one could not know that the figure of Kit Carson was placed at the pinnacle of the design only after the figure of an Indian offering a signal of peace was stricken from the monument in an act of symbolic vengeance (Figure 42). In order to appreciate how a memory of western expansion was constructed in the United States at the turn of the century, it is essential to tell the story of this monument campaign, where the theme which was accepted so widely as a fitting capstone to the close of the American frontier, an Indian offering a signal of peace, raised such ire.

The idea of constructing a monument in Denver dedicated to the pioneer settlement of the American West was conceived in 1904 by an organizational elite known as the Denver Real Estate Exchange (Denver Exchange), one of a thriving number of civic improvement groups in the city at the time. The Denver Exchange had the backing of Robert Speer, the Mayor of the city between 1904-12 and 1916-18, and himself a member of its Public Improvement Committee. A boss-style leader and believer in the ability of an uplifting urban environment to improve the citizenry, Mayor Speer strove successfully in his two terms to fashion the Denver

cityscape into a “City Beautiful” monument to himself. Though he dabbled in unsavory political practices, Speer was nonetheless a successful power broker who was able to administer an increasingly complex city whose population exploded from around 130,000 to over 210,000 between 1900-1910.¹¹⁰ Speer announced much of his eventual public improvement program in a speech delivered soon after taking office in 1904. In this speech, Speer discussed his intention to adorn the city with municipal art, making the Denver Exchange’s idea for a monument a mayoral initiative in calling for “a statue to the pioneers of the state.” The effort to erect this monument, spearheaded by the Denver Exchange, would become an early focal point of Speer’s municipal art campaign.¹¹¹

The Denver Exchange acted swiftly after Speer’s announcement. It sought advice about planning such an undertaking from the park boards of several eastern cities, and about the form that the monument should take from the nation’s leading sculptors of monumental art. Based on the advice of these professionals, the Denver Exchange arrived at the decision to erect a combination fountain-monument, to be “pure and classical, and by one of our great and well known sculptors.”¹¹² At this early stage in the process, the Denver Exchange did not envision the construction of a monument with a sculptural, iconographic program. Instead, its goal was to erect a tastefully designed, but purely architectural, fountain-monument which would serve as a

¹¹⁰ William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 168-189 and pp. 234-253, sets out the municipal context within which the *Kit Carson Monument* must be understood.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

¹¹² This quote appeared on p. 7 of a brochure published by the Denver Exchange, Committee on Public Improvements, Chaired by John S. Flower, whose members included Mayor R.W. Speer, Henry Van Kleek, J.W. Shackelford, and H.K. Brown. The purpose of the brochure was to promote the concept of the monument and raise funds for its completion. Entitled, *To the West, To Colorado, and To the Men Who Made Colorado and the West, This Brochure is Dedicated*, the brochure appears to have been circulated in 1905. The brochure and other rich archival materials related to the *Kit Carson Monument* are located at the Denver Public Library, Western History Department, Pioneer Monument Collection, 1906-1983 (hereinafter Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection). Many of the materials in this collection came from a time capsule placed in the monument’s cornerstone when this was set in place in 1911. The time capsule was subsequently retrieved when the monument was rededicated in 1983. My thanks to the staff of the Denver Public Library, Western History Department, for assisting with my research on these materials.

beautiful street embellishment at a location that was being primed by Mayor Speer and other civic beauty advocates as the future site of a grand civic center, “Right within the shadow of the Capitol building, and standing at the divisional point between the state’s temple of law, the city’s business district, and Denver’s residences (Figures 43).¹¹³ While honoring the pioneer settlement of the West through the erection of such a monument may have been a philanthropic undertaking, the Denver Exchange also aimed to enhance its legitimacy by linking its endeavors to the work of the pioneers, “It is very proper that those who are so much interested in lands and buildings, and those things which add to the betterment thereof, should seek to have provided without delay this memorial to our pioneers, who cleared the way nearly half a century ago and made it possible for Denver and Colorado Springs and Pueblo and our beautiful smaller towns and rich farm lands to astound the world with their greatness...Yes, it is proper that the Public Improvement Committee of the Denver Real Estate Exchange should undertake the task.”¹¹⁴

In 1905, the Denver Exchange began an aggressive effort to raise funds for the design and construction of this fountain-monument. An appeal was circulated in the form of an illustrated brochure. The title of this document, “To the West, To Colorado, and To the Men Who Made Colorado and the West, This Brochure is Dedicated,” stated with a certain drama the theme around which the Denver Exchange hoped to wage a successful fundraising campaign. This appeal for funds in no uncertain terms made it clear that the effort to erect the fountain-monument was to be exclusively an elite undertaking. At a time when it was common for patrons to make the populist boast that pennies from school children funded the erection of particular monuments, no subscription for less than \$1,000 would be accepted to erect the

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 5, Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 1989, pp. 234-235.

¹¹⁴ Denver Exchange Public Improvement Committee, *To the West*, 1905, pp. 5-7.

present monument.¹¹⁵ Information provided in the brochure, such as letters discussing the monument written to and from Augustus St. Gaudens, Lorado Taft, Daniel Chester French, and Frederick MacMonnies, the nation's leading "high artists," suggested to the informed patron that the Denver Exchange intended to deliver on this investment by furnishing to the city a supreme work of art, the most impressive erected in the city to date.¹¹⁶

This fundraising effort was immediately successful. On June 28, 1906, the *Denver Republican*, in a front-page article, reported that \$30,000 of the \$50,000 the Denver Exchange hoped to raise had been secured. Early fundraising success meant that the Denver Exchange could select an artist to design the work, which it did by commissioning Frederick MacMonnies, its second choice after Augustus St. Gaudens, who refused the commission due to age. Under Special Ordinance No. 123, 1906, the Denver Boards of Supervisors and Alderman, along with Mayor Speer, set aside the desired tract of land for siting the monument, a triangular tract bounded by Broadway, West Colfax Avenue, and Cheyenne Place, on September 6, 1906. By this time, MacMonnies and his client the Denver Exchange had begun discussing the design of the monument.¹¹⁷

During the contract negotiation over design of the monument, MacMonnies encouraged the Denver Exchange to abandon its concept of commissioning a simple architectural work, suggesting to his patron that the subject at hand merited a work with a full sculptural program in bronze instead. As MacMonnies put it, "My strongest reason for accepting this commission was

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 7-13.

¹¹⁷ Details regarding the selection of the artist to complete the Denver monument and the development of the design process are gleaned from two undated monument campaign letter updates furnished by the Public Improvement Committee of the Denver Exchange. The first of these, probably dating to the latter half of 1907, was specifically addressed "To Coloradans-The Pioneers of Colorado and the Sons of Colorado." The second was accompanied by images of the figures in MacMonnies' final monument design, and thus appears to date to 1909. These letter updates, as well as Special Ordinance No. 123 of the Denver Boards of Supervisors, Aldermen, and Mayor Speer, are located at the Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection.

the unusual interest of the subject, both artistically and historically, which suggested to me great possibilities of producing a most unique and beautiful work of art.” MacMonnies explained to his patron that he was so enamored of the possibilities of the subject that before even settling a contract, he had begun work on a monument design, “As early as last May [1906] I had agents at a reservation in your vicinity collecting Indian relics and data, in order that time should be gained. I have meanwhile arranged my affairs and am ready to begin at once--in fact, my men are at work setting up preliminary sketches.”¹¹⁸ While the Denver Exchange at first clung to its original idea of contracting for a purely architectural design, it ultimately gave in to MacMonnies’ forbearance. It petitioned and received from the Colorado state legislature a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to augment its already successful money-raising campaign, and eventually sketched out a contract whereby MacMonnies would carry out a monument with a full sculptural program for \$70,000, \$20,000 more than the Denver Exchange originally intended to pay, but \$10,000 less than the price the shrewd MacMonnies would ordinarily ask for a work of this scale.¹¹⁹

By the spring of 1907, MacMonnies had completed and sent off to Denver his preliminary design for the fountain-monument (Figure 42). With great anticipation, the Denver citizenry greeted its appearance in Denver newspapers on April 17. The crowning figure of MacMonnies’ design, as hinted at in his earlier correspondence with the Denver Exchange, was the nude figure of a Plains Indian upon a rearing horse delicately balanced upon an outcropping of rock. This crowning figure was supported by a shaft decorated with small-scale animals

¹¹⁸ Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection, letter from Frederick MacMonnies to John S. Flower dated October 15, 1906.

¹¹⁹ Information regarding the allocation of funds for the monument is gleaned from the earlier of two undated letter updates on the monument campaign furnished by the Public Improvement Committee of the Denver Exchange. This letter update, as well as the Denver State Legislature House Bill No. 185 allocating \$15,000 for the monument, are located at the Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection.

characteristic of the region, from whose mouths water was designed to spout into basins below. The hexagonal-shaped base of the monument would bear three life-sized, reclining figures representing a miner, a pioneer settler, and a hunter, trapper or cowboy. While the fountain-monument's sculptural program was intended to evoke the regional culture of the American West, qualities such as its overall symmetry, the neo-classical vocabulary of its architectural form, and figure poses modeled on art-historical precedents, bespoke MacMonnies' academic training in the French Ecoles des Beaux-Arts, and represented his best efforts to imbue the events of the recent past with grandiose significance by treating them with the formality traditionally reserved for Classical subject matter.

By the time it appeared in Denver newspapers, the preliminary design for the Pioneer Monument had already been approved by subscribers to the monument campaign. In the minds of the donors, MacMonnies was carrying out the role of the consummate professional artist. He had successfully completed the first phase in his effort to deliver a supreme work of art to the civic core of the city, ennobling in concept and to be wrought in the traditions of the art of Europe. According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, ratification of the donors' decision by the Denver Exchange and by the city Art Commission, who were also versed in the process of commissioning "high art" works of civic sculpture we should recall, would be a simple formality.¹²⁰ On the following day, however, this campaign effort, which for three years had enjoyed only success and unheeded progress, was sent reeling by a dispute which would bring it to the precipice of failure. On April 18, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that the Colorado Society of Pioneers (Society of Pioneers), supported by the Sons of Colorado, vehemently objected to MacMonnies' preliminary design.¹²¹ In the ensuing weeks, this initial salvo was

¹²⁰ "Accept Pioneer Monument Design," April 17, 1907, page unknown.

¹²¹ "Triumphant Indian Arouses Ire of Pioneers," p. 1.

supported by an outpouring of criticism of the design appearing in the Denver press, which temporarily stopped the project in its tracks.

As originally conceived, MacMonnies' design was part of what we now know was emerging nationwide as a typical way of remembering the imperial conquest of the American West. According to this conception, the settling of the North American continent by Europeans was an inevitability of history, the story of progress from savagery to civilization. As we have seen, the figure of an acquiescent Indian offering a sign of peace was commonly the heroic focal point in this conception of history. MacMonnies' monument promised to be the most elaborate version of the signal of peace theme. In order to comprehend its commemorative purpose the artist directed an environmental reading starting from the ground and working its way upward, "My idea in the design has been to make a gradual transition from civilization to savage life--the Fountain Monument rising from the City of Denver. First, the Pioneer Settlers, Miners, Cowboys; then the Wild Animals; finally the Savage and the Buffalo (which are even now almost myths!), sacrificed to civilization and about to disappear forever into the Happy Hunting Grounds."¹²² According to the artist's design, the pioneering stage was a way station between civilized Denver and its savage past, heroically sacrificed. MacMonnies' intention was to honor the pioneer settlement of the American west by celebrating what he and his patrons saw as the fruits of that settlement, the civilized urban landscape surrounding the viewer, denoted in the conceptual design by the statuesque female figure with parasol, the well-bred and mannered dog, and the nattily attired equestrian riders. Reading the design from the ground up, from the urban city space inhabited by the viewer, through the pioneer figures, to the Indian on horseback, one traveled back in historical time through successive stages of cultural development. While an

¹²² Letter from MacMonnies to the Denver Exchange dated February 15, 1907, and reprinted in the *Rocky Mountain News*, April 17, 1907, p. 1.

homage to the pioneers of the state, in celebrating the pioneers' role in paving the way for civilization, the design also paid implicit tribute to the monument patrons, Mayor Speer and the Denver Exchange, whose leadership was giving flower to the civilization celebrated by the design.

Despite MacMonnies' instructions, critics of the monument did not read the composition from the ground up. Instead, they read the monument the way public works of art were conventionally read, from the top down. Their understanding was that the crowning register of the monument was the place reserved for the heroic focal point of the composition, and they believed that a figure of a pioneer should inhabit that space. The following statement by Captain J.D. Howland, a member of the Society of Pioneers and an artist of pioneer themes, while setting the tone for the reception that MacMonnies' monument design would receive in Denver newspapers, captures the primary faults people found in MacMonnies' design:

MacMonnies is unquestionably a great artist. His preliminary plan is of great artistic and theatrical force. But his figures show a lack of knowledge as to what is demanded by our local conditions. His miners, settlers, hunters and cowboys are around the base; and towering above all is the triumphant Indian. It does not represent truth. It does not represent Colorado. It does not represent pioneer days. The place for the Indian in such a monument is dead upon the ground, or subjugated or fighting at the base. The pioneer himself should be triumphant over all and holding the place of honor.¹²³

All critics of the monument read the composition in the same way as Howland, from the top down, and found the same two fundamental faults: 1) they believed an image of a pioneer, not an Indian, should serve as the focal point at the top of the monument; and 2) if an Indian appeared at all in the monument, they believed it should not be idealized and heroic, but rather should explicitly represent a threatening or defeated enemy.

¹²³ "Triumphant Indian Arouses Ire of Pioneers," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 18, 1907, p. 1.

Perhaps the best intellectually armed critic of the design was T.M. Patterson, a retired United States Senator from Colorado who had served from 1901-1907. The owner and publisher of the *Rocky Mountain News*, Patterson was an outspoken critic of Mayor Speer's cozy relations with the city's corporate and business interests, and frequently used his newspaper as a tool to attack Speer.¹²⁴ Patterson wrote a rambling editorial in his newspaper lambasting the monument design on several fronts.¹²⁵ He claimed that the monument, with the Indian figure above the pioneer, "reverses every rule of commemorative art in bronze or marble." The placement of the Indian atop the monument, he continued, was as inappropriate a choice as placing a figure of Mars, the god of war, atop a peace monument, or a figure of Aguinaldo, the Filipino revolutionary, atop a monument dedicated to veterans of the Spanish-American War. As a suitable alternative to the present design, Patterson offered Horatio Greenough's *Rescue Group* in Washington, D.C., with its heroic pioneer figures and savage Indian foe (see Figure 7 in Chapter 2). Patterson delivered the ultimate condemnation when he claimed that the monument, intended to honor the memory of the pioneer, would actually function better as a work honoring the American Indian, the archenemy of the pioneer:

To me it seems as though, whatever the epoch and characters the monument is intended to commemorate may be, to crown it with the heroic figure of an Indian triumphant would be in bad taste and therefore it would be bad art. Unless, indeed, the distinct purpose is to commemorate the Indian as we read of him in verse and prose, not described by those who were compelled to wage the stern battle of existence against him, but by the idealist who, for the euphony of art, and moved by a sentiment of misguided and misplaced justice, would have left him in undisturbed possession of the continent.

¹²⁴ Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Queen City: A History of Denver* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company), pp. 159-156.

¹²⁵ *Rocky Mountain News*, April 25, 1907, p. 16.

In an earlier press article, Howland had also concluded that the design would serve as a more fitting tribute to the memory of the American Indian, “If the men paying for this monument want to celebrate the victory of Sitting Bull over Custer they are going about it the right way.”¹²⁶

As a means of coming to grips with why MacMonnies’ design was found objectionable to some in Denver, it is fruitful to compare his version of the signal of peace to Cyrus Dallin’s, the classic example of the theme (see Figure 1 in Chapter 2). With his festooned spear signifying the laying down of arms and his legs dangling in relaxed fashion, the rider in Dallin’s work was represented in repose. If there was a spirit that animated the rider in this sculpture it was a spirit of calm. Particularly when coupled with the pose of the horse, with its four feet planted firmly on the ground, rider and horse in Dallin’s figure group unambiguously signified acquiescence. The mounted warrior in MacMonnies’s work fell in line with this emerging trend of acquiescent warriors insofar as he raised his open hand to signify supplication. Unlike the firmly planted equestrian in Dallin’s work, however, the horse in MacMonnies’ design reared its hind legs in a spirited pose that was traditionally employed by artists to signify triumph. A classic example of this triumphant equestrian pose, one that very likely served as a model for MacMonnies, was Jacques-Louis David’s *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (Figure 44). Additionally, where Dallin’s warrior disarmed his spear by raising it to signify his pacifist intentions, MacMonnies’ rider cocked back his spear such that visually it remained a potential weapon. The sum total of these differences was that MacMonnies’ design embodied an ambiguous set of visual cues, some pointing toward pacifism, others toward vigor and triumph. It was to these latter cues that critics of the monument focused their attention.

So galvanized was the Society of Pioneers against MacMonnies’ work, that it assembled itself in Denver a week after the design’s first appearance in newspapers, drawing up resolutions

¹²⁶ “Triumphant Indian Arouses Ire of Pioneers,” *Rocky Mountain News*, April 18, 1907, p. 1.

in opposition to it. The *Rocky Mountain News* described the emotionally charged atmosphere in which the resolutions were drawn up, “Pioneer after pioneer, both men and women, arose, and in trembling voices told in simple words, but with touching pathos, tales of the days of blood, when father or mother, brother and sister, and entire families had been mercilessly slaughtered with the accompaniment of indescribable torture and indignities by the same red man a younger generation proposes to commemorate in a triumphant and heroic figure of bronze.”¹²⁷

The early years of Denver and its environs were indeed marked by conflict with the aboriginal tribes of the area, the Arapaho and Southern Cheyenne, as well as the other Plains tribes that ranged through the area, the Sioux, Crow, Blackfeet, Pawnee and Shoshone. By means of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, the United States had reached an agreement with these tribes securing passage through the area and enabling the building of military outposts. The Pike’s Peak Gold Rush of 1858, however, resulted in an unexpected flood of settlement. The town of Denver was established in 1859. Widespread settlement ensued, and in 1861 the territory of Colorado was established by the United States Congress. As native lands were encroached upon, deadly engagements between settlers and Indians inevitably ensued. As these engagements were multiplied, exaggerated and sensationalized in Denver newspapers, hysteria gripped the city in the early 1860s. If press accounts were not enough to instill a climate of fear, mutilated bodies of settlers reputed to have been killed by Indians that were paraded through the streets of the city certainly were.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ “Pioneers are Hostile to Statue,” April 26, 1907, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁸ The historical circumstances of early Rocky Mountain settlement and the ensuing conflict between the United States and the region’s Indian tribes is described in Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), pp. 102, 122-127 and Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 86-98.

Under Territorial Governor John Evans and the military commander of Colorado Colonel John Chivington, an aggressive military strategy was pursued in order to drive the Cheyenne and Arapaho from the territory and thus eliminate conflict between natives and settlers. American aggression in Colorado culminated in one of the worst atrocities committed in the entire history of western expansion. At Sand Creek, Colorado Territory, a massacre of some 200 peaceful Cheyenne, mostly women and children, was perpetrated by the Third Colorado Cavalry in November 1864. Though ultimately recognized by political and military officials in Washington, D.C. as a moral debacle, the massacre was greeted with glee in Denver. A gory display of Cheyenne scalps, among them women's pubic hair, strung across a Denver stage at intermission of a theater performance was received by the audience with applause. According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, "Colorado soldiers again covered themselves with glory," at Sand Creek.¹²⁹

Some forty years later this period of conflict was still recalled with vividness in the Intermountain West. Whether individual accounts of Indian atrocities shared at the rally of the Society of Pioneers against the MacMonnies monument design were fictitious or true, exaggerated or right on the mark, in a city with a legacy such as Denver's they accorded the organization the kind of leverage that would ultimately force the monument patrons and MacMonnies to take heed. The first resolution arrived at on the night of April 25 cut to the heart of the matter, pointing to what the Society of Pioneers found disturbing in the monument design. It claimed that out of "reverence for the memory of our early companions massacred, mangled and mutilated by a merciless savage foe, [we] enter our most solemn and emphatic protest against the adoption of the design submitted. It is too soon for the pioneers...to give their assent to an effort to idealize the American Indian." The second and third resolutions, while

¹²⁹ Quoted in Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West*, 1984, 92.

expressing gratitude to the Denver Exchange for its role as patron of the monument, threatened to derail the entire undertaking. The second resolution denounced Henry Read, Chairman of the Denver Art Commission, who immediately upon hearing of the criticism of the monument had argued that the campaign should move ahead despite opposition. The final resolution protested the use of the word “pioneer” as an inducement for subscriptions, and demanded that “pioneer” be stricken from any association with the monument if it were to go forward as designed by MacMonnies. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported that the Society of Pioneers was even contemplating filing a court injunction barring further use of the word “pioneer” and tying up funds gathered thus far under the auspices of the pioneer monument.

Despite the outburst of emotion against MacMonnies’ monument design, Mayor Speer, the Denver Exchange, the city Art Commission, and the artist himself, did not fold in the face of opposition. Mayor Speer, no doubt, recognized in the controversy the role of his longtime political foe Patterson. It was Patterson’s *Rocky Mountain News*, after all, that had broken the story of the Society of Pioneers’ opposition to the monument, and that enlivened the controversy through daily coverage of the pioneer story. Ever since Speer had been elected in 1904, Patterson and the fellow members of his “reform group” shared one goal, to take down Mayor Speer and end the corporate-government alliance that flourished under his leadership. Speer, the Denver Exchange, and the City Art Commission no doubt saw opposition to the pioneer monument as only the latest attempt by the Mayor’s political enemies to make hay. For the time being at least, they gauged that they could weather the political storm.¹³⁰ Accordingly, on April 23, in the midst of the controversy, the Denver Exchange met to decide if it would ratify the

¹³⁰ Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, p. 181, cites another example of Patterson’s use of the *Rocky Mountain News* to attack his political foe Speer. Wilson describes the controversy over the naming of a public park after the corporate leader Walter S. Cheesman in return for monies donated to the city for the construction of an outlook pavilion in the park by Cheesman’s heirs.

decision of the subscribers--made before the public controversy arose--to go forward with a contract with MacMonnies. Those who attended the meeting, among them Mayor Robert Speer and his city Art Commission as guests, considered the criticism of the design appearing in newspapers. Despite the criticism, the Denver Exchange, with the endorsement of the Mayor and the Art Commission, voted to finalize the contract with MacMonnies. As summarized by the *Rocky Mountain News*, "Resolutions were adopted approving the design submitted by the sculptor, expressing confidence in him, and providing that all criticisms be sent to him for his consideration."¹³¹

For the moment, the Denver Exchange adhered strictly to its initial plan to deliver to the subscribers to the fund and to the city a beautiful monument measuring up to the standards of City Beautiful civic art. Sticking with the renowned MacMonnies and his design, as the Exchange put it, was a guarantee that the monument would be artistic. Underlying this decision, of course, was the belief that the Exchange could only give in to the Society of Pioneers, whose criticisms included demands to hand the commission over to a regional artist to carry out the monument in a different design, at the risk of ending up with a pedestrian work of mediocre quality, not the kind of beautiful adornment the Denver Exchange and Mayor Speer envisioned for the future civic center of the city.

With the Denver Exchange and the Society of Pioneers at an impasse, both sides in the dispute over the design having formalized their positions via resolutions, the fate of the monument campaign, for the moment, resided with MacMonnies in his studio in Giverny, France. After reviewing the comments of critic after critic who failed to read the composition of the monument in the way he had intended for it to be read, MacMonnies concluded that all that was required to get beyond the impasse was a fuller explanation of his intentions. Rather than

¹³¹ "Order Contract For Pioneer Monument," April 24, 1907, p. 4.

attempting to build support for the monument campaign by redesigning the monument, MacMonnies concluded that he and the Denver Exchange simply needed to convince critics of the monument that their displeasure with it resulted from a misreading of its symbolism. If critics of the design would read the composition properly, in the manner intended by the artist, then they would realize that their concerns were unfounded.¹³² In their subsequent effort to convince the Society of Pioneers to rally behind the monument, the Denver Exchange and MacMonnies acted out the parts of consummate turn-of-the-century professional elites with the utmost faith in their ability to persuade the public of their expertise and authority. In a formal update letter which enclosed MacMonnies' response to his critics, the Denver Exchange addressed the Society of Pioneers and the Sons of Colorado assuredly, stating that after carefully considering the response of the artist, and recognizing his authority in determining what was proper for a piece of monumental public art, they would no doubt "throw to the winds" their mistaken interpretation and accept the monument as designed by MacMonnies.¹³³ As it would turn out, the Society of Pioneers and its backers did not share with the Denver Exchange the same respect for the authority of the professional artist.

Having successfully ingratiated himself with the Denver Exchange over the issue of carrying out a monument with a sculptural program versus a purely architectural work earlier in the monument campaign, MacMonnies now resorted to ingratiation once again in attempting to convince his critics to accept his design. He opened up the letter to his critics by taking the

¹³² This would not be the only instance when MacMonnies would come into conflict with citizens who read a work of art of his more literally than the artist intended. In another example, Michele H. Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 259-270, describes the controversy over MacMonnies' monument to *Civic Virtue* (1922) in New York City. Critics of the sculpture, women's groups foremost among them, objected to the personification of "Vice" in the form of a female figure, and more particularly to the manner in which the male heroic personification of "Virtue" was portrayed stamping upon the female figure of "Vice" at his feet.

¹³³ Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection, undated letter update from the Public Improvement Committee of the Denver Exchange to Coloradans, The Society of Pioneers and the Sons of Colorado, probably from the latter half of 1907.

blame for the controversy, “I am very happy to say it is entirely my fault.” In answer to those who complained that the Indian should not be placed at the top of the monument he continued, “I should have explained in my letter descriptive of the design that, although in conventional monuments a crowning figure is generally the hero of the occasion, yet this problem is another matter. Being a fountain-monument, the place of honor is not necessarily at the top, and that which would be a crowning figure on a monument or column can be made by its design and size a finial or decorative terminal in this case, and architecturally subservient to the rest.” Nonetheless, MacMonnies admitted, the arrangement posed a substantial challenge, “I regret I did not state in my letter that this idea gave me much trouble to incorporate--overshadowing, without crowning; an action of spirit, without triumph or aggression--and I believe I found it when I designed the warrior making the sign of peace or truce (the outstretched palm), the eternal truce of the vanquished, (and with a certain poetic license) mounting and disappearing forever.” To further ingratiate himself with the Society of Pioneers, MacMonnies blatantly represented a disdain for the American Indian by peppering his letter with several racial slurs, referring variously to, “barbarians and relentless savages,” as well as, “this redoubtable and vanquished foe,” and finally, “the greatest enemy of civilization known to history.”¹³⁴

There is no record of a formal reply from the Society of Pioneers to the Denver Exchange’s entreaty to reconsider MacMonnies’ design. Nor is there a record in Denver newspapers, or anywhere else, of further exchanges about the monument design that might have occurred. What can be deduced is that the Society of Pioneers and its supporters remained steadfast in their opposition to the design. Given the gulf between MacMonnies’ design and the sentiments expressed by the Society of Pioneers this hardly comes as a surprise. Though

¹³⁴ Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection, letter from Frederick MacMonnies to John S. Flower dated May 17, 1907.

MacMonnies' written description of Indians as barbarians, savages and defeated enemies corresponded to statements made by the Society of Pioneers, he had not imbued the figure in the monument design with these characteristics. The triumphant quality of the horse's pose may have been tempered by the Indian figure's raised open hand, but the classically formed figure mounted on his steed at the top of the monument was out of step with period images of vanquished Indians. Consider, for example, the vigor exemplified by MacMonnies' figure group when compared to the slumping, lifeless horse and rider in James Earle Fraser's *End of the Trail*, the spear of the warrior in Fraser's composition pointing to a precipitous decline where MacMonnies' figure held his spear in his firm grip (see Figure 16 in Chapter 3). Further, rather than pointing to what was foremost in the minds of the Society of Pioneers, a history of conflict and warfare, the monument instead focused upon a symbol of peace and the civilization and prosperity that had ensued as a result of that peace. To salvage the campaign from the clutches of failure, MacMonnies was ultimately forced to make the epic voyage from France to Denver to meet with the various constituencies engaged in the design process. The final section of this chapter will discuss the redesign of the monument that emerged after MacMonnies' trip to Denver. To fully comprehend that final design, however, further discussion about MacMonnies' initial design and why it was rejected is required.

In his effort to convince critics to accept his design, MacMonnies' behavior from today's vantage point was comically disingenuous. His argument that figure compositions on fountain-monuments did not have to conform to the conventional hierarchies of monumental art, and that the figure of the Indian should thus be viewed not as the crowning piece but rather as a finial or decorative terminal, appears to have been fashioned by MacMonnies out of expediency rather than established practice or theory. After all, in earlier correspondence with the Denver

Exchange, when he was trying to obtain a commission for a work with a sculptural program and not just an architectural work, MacMonnies made it clear that his interest in completing the monument resided in carrying out a figure of an Indian, “As early as last May [1906] I had agents at a reservation in your vicinity collecting Indian relics and data, in order that time should be gained...My strongest reason for accepting this commission was the unusual interest of the subject, both artistically and historically, which suggested to me great possibilities of producing a most unique and beautiful work of art.”¹³⁵ While in his letter to his critics MacMonnies argued that the Indian figure was merely a finial, his earlier statements contradict this by demonstrating that for MacMonnies the most important figure in the composition, the one he claimed to have prepared for most carefully, and about which he was most excited, was the Indian figure. The fact that critics of the design could not be persuaded away from their opposition is testimony to the feebleness of MacMonnies’ explanation.

By means of their first monument design, MacMonnies’ and the Denver Exchange attempted to align themselves with a national trend to bring the period of western expansion to a close by pointing to the heroic figure of the Indian offering peace. But MacMonnies and his patron took the heroic Indian type to a new extreme, running into trouble by casting the peace-offering Indian in a near-triumphal pose, as well as by inverting traditional art-historical racial hierarchies by placing the Indian figure above the white figures in the composition. In tandem with its problematic formal and thematic qualities MacMonnies’ monument design ran into another set of problems peculiar to Denver and the Intermountain West that were touched by the western historian Clyde A. Milner II in an essay entitled, “The View from Wisdom: Four Layers of History and Regional Identity”:

¹³⁵ Denver Public Library, Pioneer Monument Collection, letter from Frederick MacMonnies to John S. Flower dated October 15, 1906.

Where is the West? Who are westerners?...To those outside the West, the region is one of vast indistinct contours with grand landscapes of mountain and plain and lone heroic figures--the mountain man, the woman homesteader, the daring cowboy, and the doomed Indian. From inside the West, on the other hand, the answers to these questions constitute a gritty and endlessly varied range of local contexts, in which region and identity acquire their most enduring connections with the complex history of the West through the lives and *memories* (emphasis added) of self-proclaimed westerners.¹³⁶

Working in his studio in France, several thousand miles from Denver, MacMonnies considered his design eminently western and appropriate. When revealed to the citizens of Denver, however, those representing the epitome of self-proclaimed westerners, the Society of Pioneers, found the imagery inappropriate and even offensive.

What MacMonnies, and even more importantly his patrons, failed or perhaps could not have realized, was that in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, organizations of “first settlers” were forming throughout the western United States, promoting the informal transmission of shared memories amongst themselves. The Colorado Society of Pioneers was one of these organizations. The memories of its members collectively constituted an idealized version of pioneer history. MacMonnies’ initial design did not conform with this self-fashioned pioneer history. As the Society of Pioneers’ J.D Howland had put it, “[MacMonnies’] figures show a lack of knowledge as to what is demanded by our local conditions. His miners, settlers, hunters and cowboys are around the base; and towering above all is the triumphant Indian. It does not represent truth. It does not represent Colorado. It does not represent pioneer days.”¹³⁷

In his essay, Milner discusses the formation of regional identity in the western United States. At the turn of the century, as the first families of New England were establishing elite hereditary organizations in the East, early settlers in the western United States were doing the

¹³⁶ Milner’s essay appears in an anthology entitled, *Under and Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*, Edited by William Cronin, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992) pp. 203-222. The quotation reproduced here opens the essay on p. 203.

¹³⁷ “Triumphant Indian Arouses Ire of Pioneers,” *Rocky Mountain News*, April 18, 1907, p. 1.

same. Many personal histories have survived from this period, as it was common for the members of these organizations to write down their memoirs as part of their identity-forming enterprise. Out of the oral as well as written transmission of these stories, a shared regional memory emerged. Any monument commemorating western expansion and the settling of the West erected in Denver, as it turned out, would have to conform with this regional version of history.

Milner points out that there were consistencies in theme and anecdote in the personal accounts through which early settlers crafted their western identity. Autobiographers tended to skim over the great majority of their lives, focusing most of their attention on overland journeys to the West and their early years in the West. Milner found that individuals who had distinguished careers as lawyers, judges and senators nevertheless filled up most of their personal narratives with stories of time spent in the West in the early days of settlement.¹³⁸ These years defined their identities as westerners. The narrative which recurred over and over in these accounts focused on the dangers of the overland journey as the storyteller ventured into an unknown wilderness territory. Key themes recurring in virtually all narratives were encounters with threatening Indians and experiences of vigilantism.

According to Milner, these narratives were effectively codified into a formulaic version of history as they were transmitted amongst family members, friends, and at gatherings in local communities. Milner points out the complex nature of this shared memory. In his and other studies of pioneer narratives, exaggerated fears and fictional accounts of Indian attacks abound. Inaccuracies and fictions, according to Milner, are easily documented. The appearance of these

¹³⁸ In the course of the monument controversy Jerome Smiley, the renowned historian of Denver's early history, weighed in with a viewpoint corresponding to Milner's. In a letter appearing in the *Rocky Mountain News*, September 11, 1907, p. 14, Smiley described the explosive settlement of Colorado in the 1860s, making the case that the banker, the physician, the shopkeeper, and all manner of tradesmen and professional, not the frontiersman in buckskin, pioneered settlement in the State of Colorado.

themes nonetheless served to authenticate the personal narrative and emphasized the storyteller's role in establishing an ordered world in the previously untamed wilderness.¹³⁹

The Colorado Society of Pioneers, like other pioneer groups in the West, premised its identity, its westernness, on a shared memory of early days in the West. To be a member of the Colorado Society of Pioneers, an individual had to have lived in Colorado before the region became a territory in 1861. At the time of the monument campaign, membership of the Colorado Society of Pioneers was in the neighborhood of 400.¹⁴⁰ The response of the Society of Pioneers to MacMonnies' initial monument design registers the central importance of issues concerning memory and history in the identity formation of these self-proclaimed westerners. In the weeks following the publication of MacMonnies' design, testimony which might ordinarily have been shared only amongst family and an extended local community was spattered over the pages of the largest-circulation newspapers in the city of Denver. The entire reading public of Denver figuratively huddled around the campfire to listen to tales of early Colorado. No doubt to the delight of Mayor Speer's political enemies and to the dread of the Mayor and the monument patrons, with the publication of these pioneer accounts the campaign to create a pioneer monument in Denver developed into a battle between competing versions of memory--the one held in the hearts and minds of the pioneers and the other represented by the design of MacMonnies and his patrons.

The circumstances of the controversy between these competing versions of memory were succinctly represented in a cartoon appearing on the front page of the April 28, 1907 edition of the *Rocky Mountain News* (Figure 45). In the cartoon, entitled "'INJUNS," The Pioneer Fires

¹³⁹ For a further study of fictionalized Indian encounters see, Glenda Riley, "The Specter of a Savage: Rumors and Alarm on the Overland Trail," *Western Historical Quarterly* 15 (October 1984): 427-444.

¹⁴⁰ See, "Pioneers Weep, Crowd Cheers as Stately Shaft is Unveiled," under sub-heading, "Journey to Rockies Called Bigger Feat than Columbus'," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 25, 1911, Section One, p. 9.

Another Shot,' a larger than life figure of a pioneer clad in fringed buckskin and armed with a rifle matching his stature, takes aim and fires at the figure of the Indian atop the MacMonnies design, causing the Indian and his steed to flee from their perched position. In the upper left corner of the cartoon, a scene in diminutive scale representing the memory of the pioneer figure depicts a swarm of Indians on horseback surrounding a burning homestead. In succinct visual form the cartoon demonstrates the way that MacMonnies' design was measured against a regional memory that boasted of the exploits of pioneer settlers and chronicled dramatic encounters with savage Indian foes. Because it did not conform with this shared memory--in MacMonnies' monument the pioneer figures did not serve as protagonists but rather reclined passively at the base, and the Indian figure, though signifying defeat at the hands of civilization, was imbued with dignity and calm as he stretched out his hand in a sign of peace rather than representing a combative threat--MacMonnies' design was vehemently opposed by the Society of Pioneers.

While capturing the essence of the dispute over the MacMonnies' design with remarkable accuracy, the *Rocky Mountain News* cartoon was also prophetic in the sense that the pioneer ultimately prevailed in eradicating the figure of the Indian from the MacMonnies' fountain-monument design. In September 1907, five months after his design was first published in Denver newspapers, giving rise to the controversy which threatened to terminate the monument campaign, and after attempting to resolve the controversy by means of written correspondence, MacMonnies made the long journey from his studio in Giverny, France to Denver, in a last-ditch effort to convince critics to accept his design. As it turned out, the Society of Pioneers would remain unconvinced, and the trip turned into an opportunity to work out face-to-face with the various constituents a direction for the redesign of the monument that would prove satisfactory to

all parties involved. According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, “MacMonnies’ yesterday started on the return trip to Paris, in some doubt whether or not to alter the design, but inclined to make the change, making the Indian secondary and placing a pioneer figure on the summit.”¹⁴¹

While the ever-obstinate MacMonnies struggled to maintain the appearance that he, the professional artist, remained in control of the design process, the controversy over the design which had lasted for five months by this time demonstrated that he and the Denver Exchange were in fact not in control. Fueled and informed by a strong sense of regional memory and identity, and given a public forum by Mayor Speer’s enemies at the *Rocky Mountain News*, the outcry against the monument delimited what would and would not be allowable in the design. The parameters for the redesign of the monument were easy to glean based upon criticism of the original design. To begin, the image of the Indian needed to be removed from its prominent location. If an Indian figure appeared at all in the monument, the only type allowable was a threatening, ignoble savage ala Greenough’s *Rescue Group* (see Figure 7 in Chapter 2). The dignity accorded to the near-triumphal peace offering Indian in MacMonnies’ original design combined with the design’s inversion of traditional racial hierarchies by which white heroes were commonly placed above representatives of other races proved unacceptable. Second, and just as importantly, the protagonist of the monument needed to be the pioneer. A pioneer figure would therefore have to replace the Indian figure at the top of the monument.

Though he did not concede to changing the design while in Denver, MacMonnies had indeed begun reformulating the monument with the pioneer in a more prominent role on his trip out west. Press articles reported that MacMonnies was provided with a photograph of a second generation Coloradan, Thomas Boutwell, “clad in the rough and ready garb of the pioneer” (Figure 46). The genesis of the picture is indicative of the effort underway in the West at the

¹⁴¹ “May Take Indian From Pioneer Monument,” September 6, 1907, p. 1.

time to fashion a hereditary elite based upon the trappings of pioneer imagery, “It was a picture made on Colorado day, when Mr. Boutwell was in camp with his parents in City park. Mr. and Mrs. James L. Boutwell captured first prize then for the most characteristic turnout. Mr. Boutwell looks in the picture as his father looked in pioneer days. He is a big, strapping, sturdy man, and the photograph is a good type.”¹⁴² In addition to forming through the telling and retelling of personal stories, as Milner described in his essay, regional pioneer memory and identity were also created and perpetuated at gatherings such as Colorado day. At these gatherings, self-proclaimed westerners paraded the authenticity of their identity through dress and performance. MacMonnies took the photograph of Boutwell clad in fringed buckskin back to his studio in France, and it would indeed serve as the basis for the reformulation of the monument design.

The figure of the Indian atop MacMonnies’ original design had served in the ideology of progressivism as the colorful symbol of a primitive past inevitably giving way in the face of a superior civilization and urbanization. The signal of peace brought western expansion to a tidy and dignified close, with all actors in the narrative achieving a measure of heroism. Because of the dissonance with which this conception of imperial conquest resounded in the chorus of regional memory propounded by the Society of Pioneers, the Indian figure ultimately was stricken from the design in a symbolic act of commemorative vengeance. Intended to serve as a focal point of civic pride and unity, the effort to erect the monument, because of the controversy over the original design, brought into plain view differences in the beliefs and values of the monument patrons and its critics. In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to discuss how the revised design of the monument, with Kit Carson as the pivotal figure, carried the monument campaign beyond this impasse.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Two years after departing Denver, the photograph of Thomas Boutwell in his possession for inspiration, MacMonnies had revised his design, arriving at an arrangement that would be greeted with universal acceptance and enthusiasm. Photographs of the redesigned fountain-monument which littered Denver newspapers in June 1909 showed that there was only one substantial change, but it was a crucial change indeed. The figure of the Indian which had previously crowned the monument was replaced by the figure of Kit Carson, the renowned frontiersman so closely identified with the Rocky Mountain region (Figure 47). Depicted upon a rearing horse in the reformulated design, much like the Indian in the earlier design, Carson was shown leading the march of civilization westward. He deftly looks over his shoulder and gestures toward the “promised land” with his right hand, the same hand with which the Indian in the original design had offered peace. The figures of the Pioneer Mother, the Prospector and the Hunter remained in their positions at the base in this reformulated design, rounding out an iconographic program now based purely on pioneering themes.

With this new design, MacMonnies and his patrons had conceded wholeheartedly to the demands of the Society of Pioneers. Whereas MacMonnies’ original design portrayed western expansion as an inevitability, the result of evolutionary progress from primitive indigenous cultures to superior European-American culture, his second design represented westward expansion as conquest, the agent of that conquest being the pioneer as symbolized by Kit Carson. As with his Indian and horse figure group, MacMonnies still modeled the horse and figure of Kit Carson on Jacques-Louis David’s equestrian portrait of *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (Figure 44). Now, however, the art-historical precedent made perfect sense, the new world conqueror Carson modeled on the conqueror of Europe from one hundred years before. For the Society of Pioneers, who were addressed at their first annual reunion as, “...the uncrowned Napoleons of the

West, [who] have conquered, by [their] indomitable perseverance and energy, an empire greater than that of the imperial Caesar,” MacMonnies with this design had struck a resonant chord, arriving at a design that was in sync with personal memory, collective memory and the western identity which sprang from these forms of memory.¹⁴³ Members of the Society of Pioneers, whose identities as westerners were based upon the period in their lives--remembered, fabricated, or a combination of each--when they helped to tame a wilderness land replete with outlaws and savage Indians, could embrace Kit Carson as an exemplary representative of themselves.

Having replaced the figure of the Indian with Kit Carson, MacMonnies chose not to include an Indian figure at all in his revised design. Criticism of the initial design had made it clear that only the representation of the Indian in the guise of a savage foe would have been allowable. While MacMonnies was perfectly comfortable spouting vulgar verbal references of Indians, it is fair to assume that his sensibility as an artist trained in the Beaux-Arts idiom would not have countenanced his producing an image of an ignoble savage. This kind of image also would not have meshed with the “City Beautiful” aspirations of the Mayor and the Denver Exchange, whose sensibilities reflected the prevailing attitude that preferred to understand imperial conquest in the terms of a heroic Indian defeat rather than as a successful martial campaign against a savage enemy. As we have witnessed in previous chapters, the savage Indian simply had no place in the realm of public sculpture at the beginning of the 20th century.

While there was no image of an Indian in the revised monument, it is essential to realize that the Indian was still an integral part of how people understood the revised design in Denver. MacMonnies’ original design had unleashed a flood of Indian hating sentiment that was expressed in Denver newspapers. Comments such as, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian,” which appeared in the April 28, 1907 edition of the *Rocky Mountain News*, were pervasive in

¹⁴³ Barth, *Instant Cities*, 1988, p. 159.

press coverage of the response to MacMonnies' original design.¹⁴⁴ Indian hating of this kind was carried on as tradition in Denver even after the hostilities of the 1860s subsided. At a gathering of the Society of Pioneers in September 1883, Colonel John Chivington was greeted with great enthusiasm, "Men threw up their hats, women waved their handkerchiefs, and all huzzaed at the top of their voices." In Denver, at a gathering of the Society of Pioneers, Chivington could express pride in the event for which he was notorious, "I stand by Sand Creek," he defiantly proclaimed.¹⁴⁵ Thus, while the placement of Kit Carson at the top of the monument was greeted with enthusiasm, so too was the removal of the Indian from the top of the monument a cause for celebration. In this, Denver newspapers contrasted the western from the eastern United States. While the East, which knew of the Indian only from wild west shows, was embarked on an effort to raise a monument in honor of the Indian in New York Harbor (the same Wanamaker Monument examined in the previous two chapters), crowed the *Rocky Mountain News*, the West, which knew of the warpath and reservation Indian, "declined to be [party] to any attempt glorify the redskins."¹⁴⁶ The East–West divide on Indian affairs that was an ever-present dynamic in the history of western expansion was here memorialized in the *Kit Carson Monument*.¹⁴⁷ So integral was the Indian to the meaning of the Kit Carson Monument, and so obsessive was the hatred of Indians and the preoccupation of images of ignoble savages, that press articles referred to the figure of a conquered Indian at the feet of Kit Carson, a figure that in fact was not there.¹⁴⁸

To achieve a full understanding of the *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument* it is essential to comprehend how the figure of Kit Carson at the same time could speak to both the Indian-hating

¹⁴⁴ "No Money to Any Monument to Red Man," p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Barth, *Instant Cities*, 1988, p. 124.

¹⁴⁶ "Kit Carson on Pioneer Monument," June 10, 1909, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 1982, p. 132.

¹⁴⁸ "Kit Carson in Indian's Place," *The Denver Times*, June 9, 1909, p. 2 and "Kit Carson on Pioneer Monument," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 10, 1909, p. 6.

impulses of the Society of Pioneers and the impulses of MacMonnies and his patrons to avoid vulgarity in creating a monument that would attain popular support. By the time Carson's image appeared in the Denver monument, his standing as a national hero had endured for half a century. Richard Slotkin describes the bifurcation of Carson's renown in a manner that is germane in understanding the Denver monument. At the time that the Denver monument was being constructed there existed a vulgar version of Carson's renown which had been disseminated in dime novels published from around 1850 on, and a more polite version which started to emerge through biographical writings around 1900.¹⁴⁹ The qualities of the dime novel Carson that Slotkin describes, a frontiersman of violent exploits who battled the Indian and white renegade, suggest how Carson and the entire program of the monument would have been understood by those whose Indian-hating rhetoric shone through the pages of Denver newspapers during the controversy over the monument design. The qualities of the biographical Carson that Slotkin describes, the rescuer of white women, the civilized citizen, the Indian sympathizer, suggest how Carson and the entire program of the monument would have been understood by MacMonnies and his patrons. In October 1910, as MacMonnies was preparing to ship the completed monument to Denver, *The Century Magazine* published an article on the *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument* that was accompanied by a biographical account of Carson himself.¹⁵⁰ The article portrays the polite version of Carson--the American hero cast in the mold of luminaries such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, more accomplished in civilized than uncivilized pursuits--thus providing an avenue for comprehending how a viewer would have understood the monument in ennobling, wholesome terms. In the end, the Denver monument resided in the

¹⁴⁹ *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), pp. 198-207.

¹⁵⁰ Charles H. Harvey, "Kit Carson, Last of the Trail-Makers, Apropos of the Denver Memorial," *The Century Magazine* 80 (October 1910): pp. 871-880.

middle of these extreme poles, mediating between interpretations of Kit Carson at either end of the spectrum.

On June 24, 1911, the 53rd anniversary of the encampment of the gold-seeking Greene Russell Expedition at the site that would become Denver, the *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument* was officially unveiled. Leona Wood, the young granddaughter of Kit Carson, performed the unveiling in front of a crowd of thousands enjoying a holiday atmosphere. After seven long, and at times contentious years, the Denver Exchange effort to erect an impressive piece of monumental art designed to inspire the creation of a full-scale “City Beautiful” civic center reached a successful climax. Even in success, however, the Denver Exchange was overshadowed by the Society of Pioneers. As it turned out, the events surrounding the unveiling of the monument, and the ceremonial unveiling itself, focused not so much on the monument, on the grand work of art, but rather on the pioneers who gathered in Denver for a reunion coinciding with the monument unveiling.

In the media coverage of the series of events leading up to and following the unveiling, gatherings of pioneers, personal interviews with pioneers, city tours for the pioneers, a gala reunion party for the pioneers, the monument itself became something of a footnote, with attention showered not upon the monument and what it represented but rather upon the pioneers themselves. One recognizes in the slant of media coverage the continuing role of Mayor Speer’s nemesis T.M. Patterson and his *Rocky Mountain News*, working to undermine any public success that the Mayor might enjoy. In the blitz of media attention, the identity of the pioneers as *the* authentic nation-builders, westerners, and repositories of pioneer memory, reached full flower. A cartoon printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* on the day of the dedication with the caption, “The Present and the Past Mingle in the Minds of the Pioneer Today,” suggests the authority that

personal memories of the pioneers had in relation to the monument, the repository of collective memory (Figure 48).¹⁵¹ The cartoon shows an elderly pioneer man viewing the Kit Carson Monument, the sight of which conjures a series of vignettes of pioneering life--the overland journey, an Indian encounter, a gold miner, a buffalo hunt--representing specific personal memories. While the monument helps to conjure memories of western expansion, the authoritative repository of that memory resides not in the public monument but rather in the pioneer and the Society of Pioneers. The prevailing attitude about the pioneers and pioneer memory, the attitude which enabled them to take over control of the effort to design the *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument*, and which accorded them the ultimate authority in matters concerning the history of western expansion, was expressed in the *Rocky Mountain News* on the day of the dedication, “There could be columns written of these stories told around the pioneers’ room; stories more realistic than any told in history, for these are related by the participants.”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ June 24, 1911, p. 1.

¹⁵² “Monument Erected in Commemoration of Pioneers Unveiled Today,” June 24, 1911, p. 4.



Figure 41. Frederick MacMonnies, *Kit Carson Pioneer Monument Fountain*, 1911.

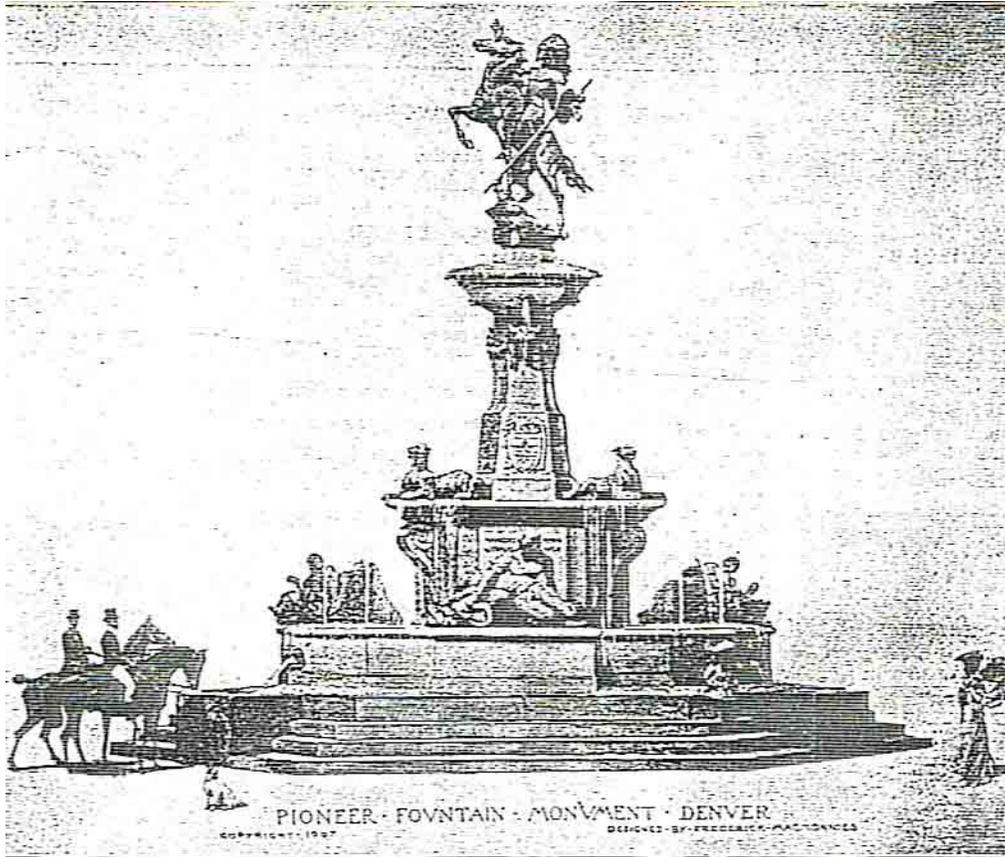


Figure 42. Frederick MacMonnies, *Pioneer Monument Fountain Conceptual Design with Indian Offering Signal of Peace*, 1907.

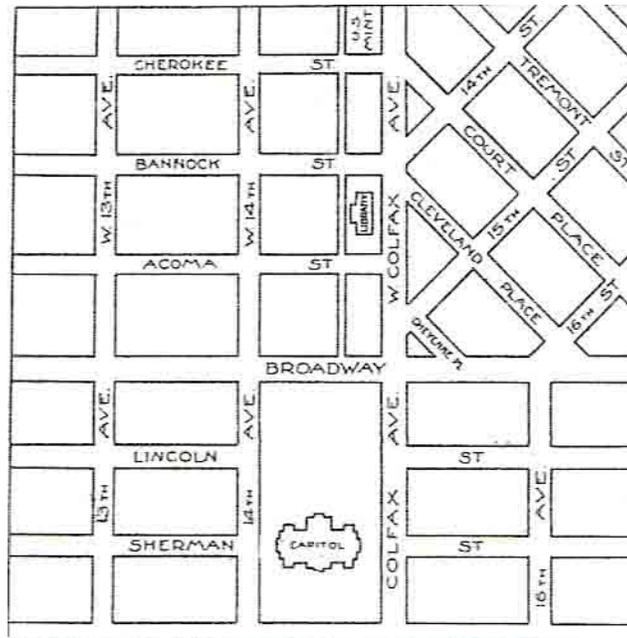


Figure 43. Plan of downtown Denver showing monument location at Cheyenne Place.



Figure 44. Jaques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, 1809.

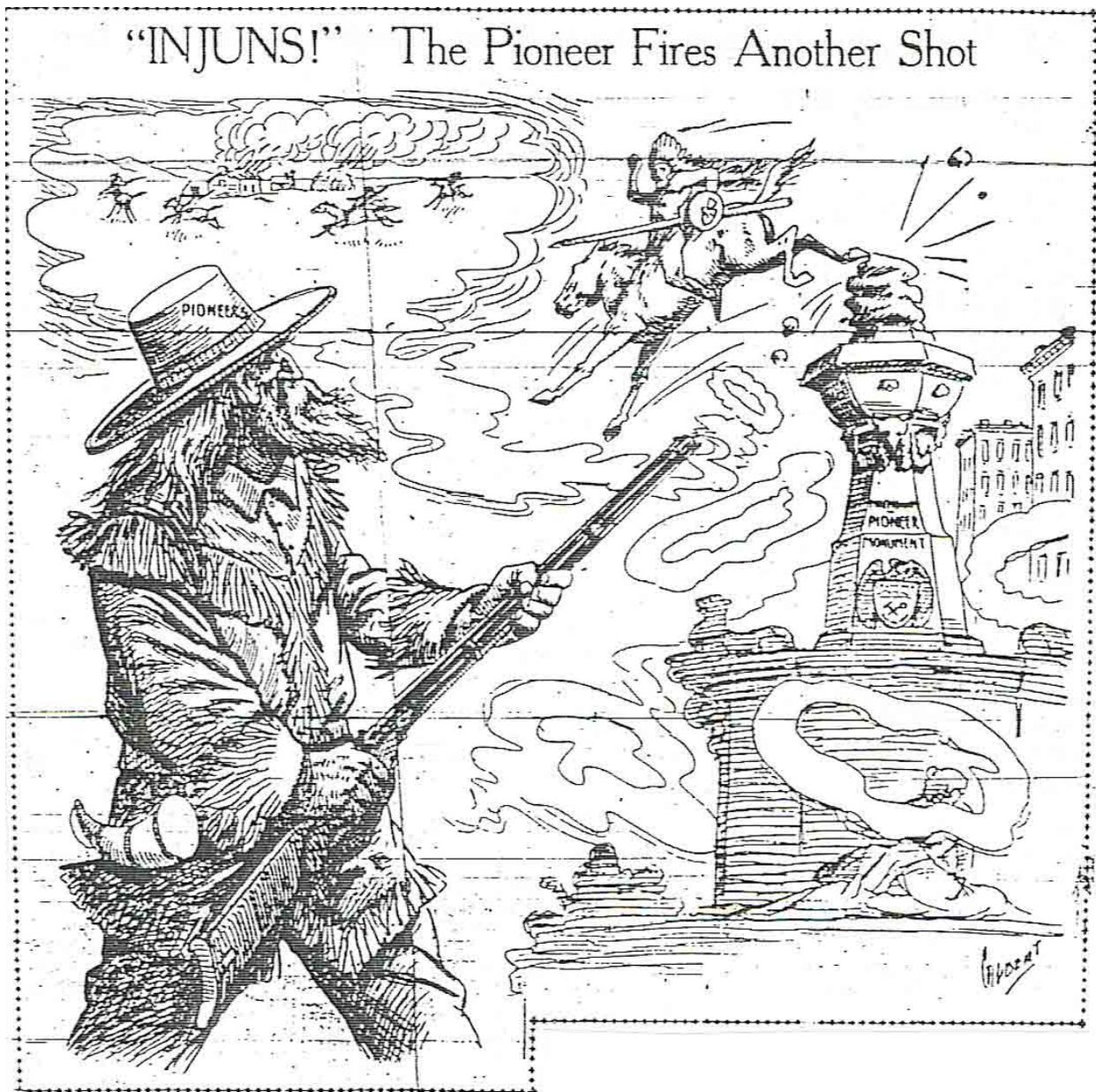
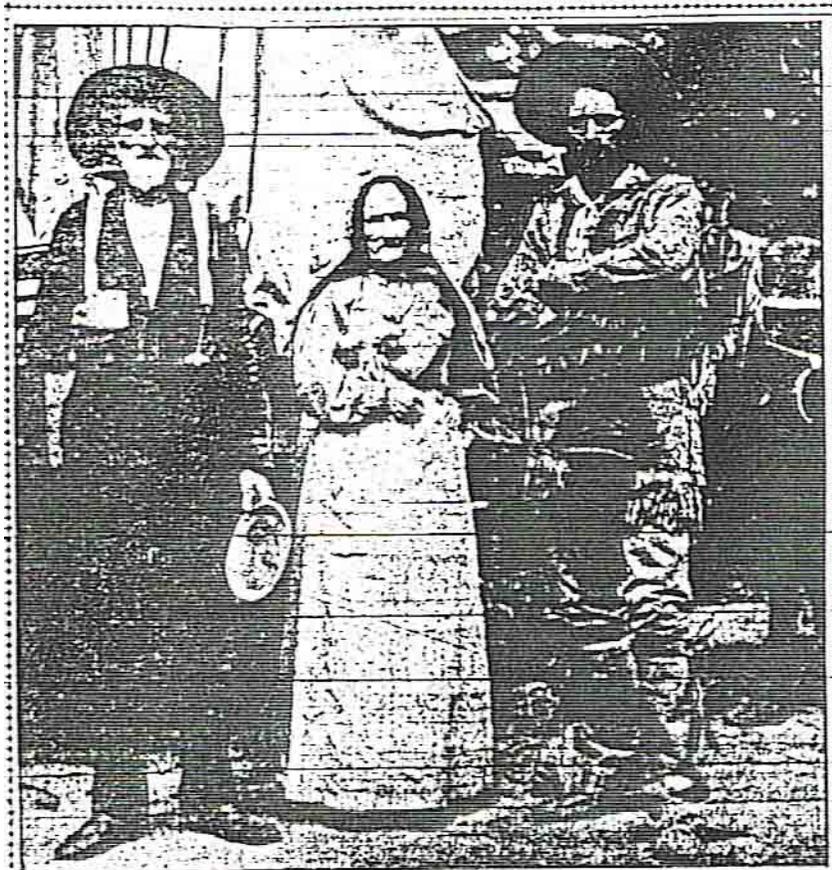


Figure 45. *Rocky Mountain News*, "'INJUNS!' The Pioneer Fires Another Shot," April 28, 1907.

Thomas Boutwell Taken as Pioneer Type
by Sculptor in Designing Heroic Figure



Thomas P. Boutwell, on right, whose picture in pioneer costume caught the eye of Sculptor Macmillan. This picture may form the nucleus of a crowning figure for the projected pioneer monument in place of the mounted Indian, as shown in original plan of monument. - With Boutwell, are his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Boutwell.

Figure 46. *The Daily News*, "Thomas Boutwell," September 7, 1907.



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BRONZE SCULPTURE OF KIT CARSON, DESIGNED BY FREDERICK MACMONNIES TO SURMOUNT THE NEW DENVER PIONEERS' MONUMENT.

Figure 47. Frederick MacMonnies, *Preliminary Model of Kit Carson*, 1909.



Figure 48. *Rocky Mountain News*, "The Present and the Past Mingle in the Minds of the Pioneers Today," June 24, 1911.

5. THE FIRST FAMILY

Two visions of pioneering emerged during the Denver monument campaign and competed for the right to represent the public memory of western expansion in the regional setting of Denver. For the monument patrons, the Denver Exchange, and their artist, Frederick MacMonnies, pioneering was subsumed within a national narrative of material progress and the triumph of western civilization in the New World. According to this vision, the pioneer was to be remembered first and foremost as a nation-builder, with pioneering representing one of several developmental stages that paved the way for the full capitalist exploitation of the American West. This approach downplayed the role of human agency in western expansion, representing pioneering, as well as the so-called demise of the Indian, as inevitable stages within a broad vision of human history and evolution culminating in the highly civilized “City Beautiful” environment the monument was intended to inhabit and help shape.

In contrast, the Colorado Society of Pioneers’ vision of pioneering had a personal emphasis, one that placed the image and agency of the pioneer at the center of the public memory of western expansion. For the Society of Pioneers, pioneering represented a moment of personal transformation as violent frontier experiences such as the hardships of the overland journey west, the meting out of rough vigilante justice and especially violent vengeance against hostile Indians, shaped pioneers from “tenderfoots” or “pilgrims” into hardened “westerners.” According to this vision, western expansion was not an inevitability but rather resulted from

pioneer struggle and fortitude. Ultimately, it was the successful case that the Society of Pioneers could make as the authentic voice of the American West, as the first neo-natives who tamed the frontier, which gave them the authority to speak for the region and the locality of Denver. Because of this, the *Kit Carson Monument* campaign took the form of a ritualistic commemoration through violence. The Indian figure was vengefully removed from atop the original MacMonnies design as the Society of Pioneers demanded, and its replacement with the figure of the white hero Kit Carson avenged the initial offense.

The *Kit Carson Monument* represented the bold assertion of a western regional memory of western expansion over a universalistic view of western expansion critiqued as having been imported from the East by the Denver Exchange and MacMonnies. With an elitism based upon an ancestral connection to the winning of the west, the Society of Pioneers successfully filled the role as the natural spokesmen for an authentic local perspective, more authoritative than the Denver Exchange and the vesting that went with its artist specializing in the portrayal of historical themes. The great irony of this so-called homespun perspective was that it was nurtured on frontier myths that were themselves born and bred in the east and disseminated from media originating there. Despite its singularity, the *Kit Carson Monument* (and the pioneer memory that inspired the final design) nonetheless conjured up the mythic frontier social order dominated by a rough masculinity familiar in any number of popular western forms from the nineteenth century on beginning with James Fennimore Cooper's leather stocking tales and ending with the dime novel western.

The spirited interest in perpetuating a memory of pioneering in Denver was indicative of a widespread trend in the late-19th and early-20th century. According to John Bodnar, the pioneer emerged as the most powerful historical symbol in the country in the late-19th century, finding its

strongest and most widespread use in the small towns and settlements of the Midwest and Great Plains states.¹⁵³ Bodnar's conclusion corresponds to my own research in the Smithsonian Inventory, which revealed that the figure of the pioneer was the focal point of commemoration in over a third of all public monuments commemorating western expansion, equally as widespread as the figure of the Indian.

In the previous chapter, we witnessed how the image of the pioneer could be inflected with different meanings. For the Denver Exchange the pioneer figure was a nation-builder, enabling the capitalist development of the United States; for the Society of Pioneers the figure was above all a frontiersman and Indian fighter. While these themes were perennially associated with the figure of the pioneer, they were not typically the focal point of commemoration. Instead, commemoration more often emphasized the pioneer's role in settling the land, domesticating it with the plow, and establishing thereby a prosperous community where before there was wilderness.¹⁵⁴ Domestication of the continent was frequently signified in public monuments by a symbol that emerged with great potency in the wake of western expansion, the pioneer mother and family. If, through the figure of the Indian as the First American, Americans constructed an authentic national identity rooted in prehistory and the wild, aboriginal landscape, then through the neo-native figure of the pioneer mother and her children, the First Family, Americans sought an authentic national identity rooted in the domesticated, settled landscape. This chapter tells the story of the most ambitious and interesting effort to commemorate the pioneering American family in the wake of western expansion, the campaign waged by the

¹⁵³ *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the 20th Century*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 33.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Of the 93 pioneer monuments from the Smithsonian Inventory over half, 49, explicitly focused upon pioneer settlement and the establishment of community. Of these 49, 36 focused upon the pioneer family, be it the nuclear family with father and mother or the pioneer mother. The remaining 44 monuments focusing upon pioneering themes emphasized a variety of pioneering aspects: hunters, explorers, miners, etc., with no strong thematic pattern showing through.

Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) from 1909-1929 to locate and mark successive pioneer trails from east to west across the United States, and to have built on this alignment a memorial highway, the National Old Trails Road, one of the first modern transcontinental automobile roadways to traverse the nation (Figure 49).¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, the D.A.R. would mark the National Old Trails Road, a landscape as hallowed to the organization as the nation's battlefields, with replica *Madonna of the Trail* monuments in order to signify the highway's commemorative purpose (Figure 50). In examining the National Old Trails Road, this chapter recognizes and explores for the first time the fascinating and profound role that the automobile, early road travel and the patriotic tourism boom referred to as "See America First," played in the emergence of the image of the pioneer as an important national symbol in the early-20th century.

The Daughters of the American Revolution was founded on 11 October 1891. As the name of the organization suggests, it was a hereditary society comprised of women who traced their ancestry to participants in the American Revolution. The D.A.R. was established along with a rash of other Northeastern-based hereditary societies in the late-19th century. At a time when immigration to the United States was creating an increasingly diverse population with new citizen alliances based upon common ground such as labor and ethnicity, such societies sought to unite and ally large numbers of Anglo-Saxon members in a bid for social, cultural and political authority based upon neo-nativism, one's ability to connect her or his genealogy to the founding

¹⁵⁵ The development of the National Old Trails Road occurred simultaneously with the evolution of the other major transcontinental road from this period, the Lincoln Highway. While boosters of the Lincoln Highway to this day proclaim it to be the nation's first transcontinental highway built for the automobile, its claim to this title may actually be rather dubious. For example, work on the National Old Trails Road began in 1909, several years before the Lincoln Highway, which was conceived in 1912. Both roads appear to have been fit for travel, albeit with a considerable number of rough portions, by 1915. The point here is not to now boost the prospects of the National Old Trails Road, but rather to point out its obscure standing relative to the importance it played in the history of early automobile travel in the United States. Though there is a large literature on the Lincoln Highway, the standard source is Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1989).

of the nation.¹⁵⁶ This idea for a new world aristocracy was popular. The D.A.R. grew quickly from a regional, northeastern-based organization with a membership of 450 in 1891, to a national organization with a membership of 80,000 by 1911.¹⁵⁷ By April of 1904 the organization had begun to anchor itself firmly as a national institution by laying the cornerstone for a headquarters building in Washington, D.C., with local chapters springing up across the entire nation.¹⁵⁸

The D.A.R. was propelled by a strong sense of mission. To keep the fires that fueled the spirit of independence of their ancestors burning in the hearts of their fellow countrymen and women in the 20th century, they promoted patriotism, an individual citizen's emotional bond to the nation-state, through programs in education and historic preservation. The mainstays of D.A.R. activism were the teaching of devotion to the American flag and lessons on the heroes of the American Revolution. They were also perhaps the most ardent monument makers of the early-20th century, assiduously conforming to the D.A.R. Constitution, which called for "the acquisition and protection of historical spots--and the erection of monuments," as a means of fixing the memory and spirit of American patriotism in the public realm.¹⁵⁹ Within a nation whose citizenry was composed of patriots and whose landscape was marked by past feats of patriotism, the D.A.R. imagined itself as a civil religious elite based upon an inheritance rooted in the American independence movement. Coinciding the exponential growth and geographic expansion of the organization's membership, the campaign to locate and mark the National Old Trails Road, and in so doing bring the pioneer western expansion of the nation into the orbit of American patriotism, was the most ambitious historic preservation and monument-making

¹⁵⁶ Margaret Gibbs, *The D.A.R.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Press, 1969), p. 25.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁵⁹ "The *Madonna of the Trail*," *DAR Magazine* (July 1929): 399, cites this passage from the D.A.R. Constitution.

endeavor of the early D.A.R. period, and it continues to stand out as the most ambitious undertaking of its kind ever tackled by the organization.

The campaign to construct the National Old Trails Road grew out of the modest effort of a group of Missouri D.A.R. members led by a Mrs. John Van Brunt. In 1909, this local Missouri group enlisted the financial support of the State of Missouri in locating and marking the route of the Santa Fe Trail through the state. This effort caught the attention of the Missouri State Chapter of the D.A.R., which immediately became active in orchestrating the marking of historic trails, as well as in lobbying for the construction of modern automobile roads on the footprints of these trails. After successfully advocating for the building of a cross-state automobile highway along the historic Boone's Lick Road and Santa Fe Trail, the Missouri D.A.R. set its sights on the ambitious road-building project described in the United States House of Representatives in 1912 by its Kansas City Representative A.P. Borland as "...a National Ocean to Ocean Highway over the Pioneer Trails of the nation...making a continuous trunk line on to California."¹⁶⁰ By virtue of this ambitious proposal there was an effort to transform what had started out as an interesting but unremarkable local effort to preserve a memory of pioneering in a regional Midwestern setting by a local chapter of the D.A.R. in Missouri, into a national undertaking aiming to commemorate the American pioneer on an unprecedented scale.

This bold proposal took a step toward success when the campaign for this national memorial highway was adopted as a national priority by the National Society of the D.A.R. in

¹⁶⁰ National Society, D.A.R., *[Report of the] Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress*, 1929, p. 176. The D.A.R.'s National Committee on the National Old Trails Road reported on the progress of the Road annually to the Continental Congress. The report to the Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress, being the first after the National Old Trails Road was dedicated in 1928, furnished a detailed summary of the commemorative effort from its early days in 1909 up to the present. This and subsequent D.A.R. annual reports to the Continental Congress cited in this chapter are housed at the D.A.R. Library, Washington, D.C., Americana Collection (hereinafter D.A.R. Library, Americana Collection). My thanks also to Pat Stanford, a member of the California State Chapter of the D.A.R., who generously furnished to me photocopies of National Society, D.A.R. materials from the California State D.A.R. collection.

1912. Consonant with the standard operating procedure for any concerted D.A.R. undertaking, a Committee was formed, this one called the National Old Trails Road Committee, which was tasked with spearheading all facets of this commemorative effort. While the formation of this Committee signified the bumping up of this expansive endeavor from a regional to a national undertaking, the project maintained a strong Midwestern streak with Miss Elizabeth Gentry, former head of the D.A.R. Good Roads Committee in Missouri, named as the first Committee chair. The establishment in 1913 of the Missouri-based National Old Trails Road Association, headed by future United States President Harry S. Truman of Independence, Missouri, to assist the D.A.R. in the campaign to construct the national commemorative highway, fixed the organizational framework that would be necessary to carry out the project, and it assured that the country's heartland, the place that gave birth to the idea for the highway, would play a leading role in the effort.¹⁶¹

The D.A.R. plan for implementing its National Old Trails Road project called for locating and linking through the construction of a modern roadway five distinct historic alignments traversing the United States through twelve individual states. The five historic alignments were as follows: 1) Washington Road, also known as Braddock's Road, running through the state of Maryland and into western Pennsylvania; 2) The National or Cumberland Road, which made its way from Cumberland, Maryland to St. Louis, Missouri; 3) Boone's Lick Road, taking off from St. Louis and heading west to Old Franklin, Missouri; 4) the Santa Fe Trail, which headed southwest from Kansas City into the state of New Mexico; and 5) the Old Spanish Trail, running from the terminus of the Santa Fe Trail in New Mexico through Arizona and into California. The D.A.R. assumed responsibility for researching and identifying the location of historic trails

¹⁶¹ Ibid. For the reference to Truman see, Fern Ioula Bauer, *The Historic Treasure Chest of the Madonna of the Trail Monuments* (Springfield, Ohio: John McEnaney Printing, 1986), p. 116.

as well as for devising a means by which to mark the road for commemorative purposes, while the National Old Trails Road Association assumed responsibility for generating the enthusiasm and means to construct the actual roadway. All of this work was organized on a state by state basis, with state D.A.R. chapters in each state through which the road passed taking responsibility for the historical and commemorative work in its state, and with the National Old Trails Road Association rallying state and local road building clubs which flourished in number at this time due to the burgeoning interest in the automobile as an affordable and liberating means of transportation.¹⁶²

The extant materials that I have been able to locate tell only the bare essentials about the actual construction of the National Old Trails Road. After the National Old Trails Road Association was established in 1913 to assist the D.A.R. by “[promoting] the construction of an Ocean-to-Ocean Highway of modern type worthy of its memorial character,” the D.A.R. in 1914 printed a map to promote the alignment it wished the road to follow (Figure 49).¹⁶³ The next year the Chairman of the D.A.R. National Old Trails Road Committee reported to the D.A.R. Continental Congress of 1915 that the main highway across the continent was open across its entire distance.¹⁶⁴

It appears that in having the National Old Trails Road built, the D.A.R., with the assistance of the National Old Trails Road Association, was able like the Missouri chapter before

¹⁶² The most informative source on the D.A.R. campaign to build the National Old Trails Road is the book referred to in the previous note written and published by D.A.R. member, Fern Ioula Bauer, *The Historic Treasure Chest*, 1986. My thanks to Peggy Flook, member of the Lagonda Chapter of the D.A.R. in Springfield, Ohio, for bringing this book to my attention. There exists on the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration web site, two informative studies on the National Old Trails Road, both by Richard F. Weingroff, *The National Old Trails Road Part I: The Quest for a National Road* (last updated February 6, 2004 as of this writing) and *The National Old Trails Road Part II: See America First in 1915* (last updated as of April 27, 2004 as of this writing). These are located at <www.fhwa.gov/infrastructure/history/htm>.

¹⁶³ “The *Madonna of the Trail*,” *DAR Magazine* (July 1929): 400.

¹⁶⁴ D.A.R. Library, Americana Collection, National Society, D.A.R., [*Report of the*] *Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress*, 1929, p. 177.

it to channel existing enthusiasm and resources for road building into its effort.¹⁶⁵ Though the D.A.R. lobbied hard for federal support of the National Old Trails Road, setting out to have the United States Congress formally establish this route as the country's National Highway, and attempting for the first time in the modern era to have a road built with federal aid, I have found no evidence that the Federal government ever came forth with such support.¹⁶⁶ Rather, the construction of the roadway appears to have been accomplished on a state-by-state basis, with private interests such as Chambers of Commerce, State Automobile Clubs and Auto Manufacturers, probably in league with state governments as was the case with the Missouri state highway, accomplishing the task.¹⁶⁷ In this chapter I am less interested in the process by which the National Old Trails Road was constructed than I am in the commemorative purpose of the road, the way that it came to be imbued as a national symbol. While the roadway appears to have been complete and fit for travel by 1915, the D.A.R. process of deciding how to mark the road so as to imbue it with a commemorative purpose lasted until 1929, when the D.A.R. dedicated the last of the *Madonna of the Trail* monuments it erected along the road. It is to this commemorative effort that we shall now devote our attention.

The D.A.R. always imagined that the National Old Trails Road would be marked as a way of indicating the road's commemorative purpose. After all, the erection of monuments for the purpose of creating a fixed representation of American patriotism in the public realm was at the heart of the D.A.R.'s mission. One way, perhaps the most effective way, of fixing the

¹⁶⁵ The interest and enthusiasm for road building in this era, particularly of roads with a commemorative character, cannot be overestimated. Road-building associations, formed by coalitions of business and commercial, auto industry, and government interests, sprung up all across the nation. The National Old Trails Road was simply part of this emerging tide.

¹⁶⁶ D.A.R. Library, Americana Collection, National Society, D.A.R., *[Report of the] Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress*, 1929, pp. 176-178.

¹⁶⁷ This is precisely how the Lincoln Highway Association organized itself to build the Lincoln Highway. See, for example, *The Complete and Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*, Third Edition (Detroit, MI: Lincoln Highway Association, 1917). My thanks to friend and colleague Andrea "Renny" Lucas for providing me with an original version of this publication, a gift that came from her mother's extensive collection of rare books.

commemorative, patriotic purpose of the National Old Trails Road, would be through the marking of the road in some conspicuous fashion. But the marking of more than 3,000 miles of roadway proved an enormous challenge to the organization, one that took more than 20 years, and several reincarnations, to accomplish.

The initial idea was to mark the road by painting red, white and blue bands on telephone poles along the road. The Chairman of the National Old Trails Road Committee reported in 1913 that accordingly, “Many miles of this marking was accomplished by the D.A.R. women with their paint-pots and brushes, and motorists used the slogan, ‘Follow the Flag of the D.A.R.’”¹⁶⁸ In 1917, probably due to the realization that maintaining the painted banners was a larger job than members could manage, the D.A.R. determined that the road should be marked in a permanent fashion. A standard design of a 1’x 2’ cast iron sign to be mounted on a 5’ post and to be painted red, white and blue with the D.A.R. insignia at the top was developed. Though the original intention was to place these signs only along the National Road portion of the National Old Trails Road, from Cumberland, Maryland to St. Louis, in 1920 it was decided to organize this marking campaign on a state-by-state basis, and to have the signs placed at one-mile intervals along the entire transcontinental route. (Figure 51).¹⁶⁹

In 1924, with the organization still struggling to raise the \$30,000 necessary to erect the 3,050 markers along the National Old Trails Road route, a Mrs. John Trigg Moss assumed the Chair of the National Old Trails Road Committee, and immediately set about reformulating the marking effort in a manner that would ultimately end in the successful dedication and commemoration of the National Old Trails Road. At its 1924 congressional meeting, the National Society of the D.A.R. accepted Moss’ resolutions to scrap the existing marking effort

¹⁶⁸ D.A.R. Library, Americana Collection, National Society, D.A.R., *[Report of the] Thirty-Eighth Continental Congress*, 1929, p. 176.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

and to adopt a new plan, “To erect in each of the twelve states through which the National Old Trails Road [passed]...one marker of dignified and pretentious proportions to cost approximately \$1,000 each.” By 1926, a fundraising campaign with members asked to pledge \$.10 each had raised more than the \$12,000 necessary to produce the markers. National Old Trails Road Chair Moss announced at the 1926 congressional meeting that she would next set about developing a design for the 12 markers. In 1927 she returned to the national meeting seeking and receiving approval for the *Madonna of the Trail* design.¹⁷⁰ The commemorative effort was brought to a climactic conclusion with the dedication of identical *Madonna of the Trail* monuments between May 30, 1928 and April 19, 1929 in each of the twelve states through which the road passed (Figure 52).

With the *Madonna of the Trail* monument Moss had struck upon the right chord. The National Old Trails Road, after all, was intended to commemorate the pioneering western expansion of the United States. As the Kansas Congressman A.P. Borland had put it at the inception of the National Old Trails Road campaign, the goal was to build a “National Ocean to Ocean highway over the Pioneer trails of the nation.” Yet earlier efforts to mark the road, the painting of red, white and blue bands on telephone poles, and the signing of the road with mileposts, while impractical, also failed to effectively express the commemorative purpose of the road. Towering 18 feet above the roadway, the statue Moss conceived of in league with her son, an art and architecture graduate of Princeton University, and August Leimbach, a sculptor from Moss’ home town of St. Louis, expressed in a conspicuous fashion the commemorative purpose of the road: to honor the sturdy pioneers who braved untold hardships to establish new homes in the wilderness, in the process helping the United States realize its potential as a continental nation (Figure 50).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 179-180.

Though to Moss, her son and the artist Leimbach goes exclusive credit for designing the *Madonna of the Trail* monument, the association of the figure of the pioneer woman with the National Old Trails Road was not an invention of theirs. At the beginning of the undertaking, in 1913, the D.A.R. National Old Trails Road Committee successfully petitioned *The Century* magazine to use as its symbol and for promotional purposes an image which had appeared in the magazine that was entitled the *Madonna of the Prairies* (Figure 53). After some quibbling over whether or not the D.A.R. would pay a fee for use of the image, the magazine granted the organization unrestricted use of the image at no charge. The D.A.R. retitled the image *Madonna of the Trail* and used it henceforth as its symbol.¹⁷¹ While representing the identical theme, the magazine image and the monument design confront us with an interesting and instructive contrast, one that serves as a starting point for beginning to consider the meaning and significance of the *Madonna of the Trail* as a public monument.

While she is depicted out on the trail, presumably crossing the rough wilderness, the figure from the magazine illustration is the essence of genteel feminine beauty, not at all harried by the primitive conditions of her epic adventure. Indeed, she is somehow shielded from that adventure, achieving a kind of transcendence from it. She inhabits an interior, domestic space, bathed in a soft light filtering through the canvas of the wagon. With her plump baby on her lap sleeping, her eyes gently downcast, one arm resting at her side and the other comfortably wrapped around the child, she and the babe form a solid pyramidal shape reminiscent of the solid Madonna and Child forms of Italian Renaissance painters such as Raphael (Figure 54). With well-groomed hair, a delicate profile, a rich array of clothing, and cup of milk and crust of bread resting still on small a table, the image represents a primitive form of ideal feminine and domestic beauty. Appearing near at hand is the left shoulder of the father, taut as it guides the

¹⁷¹ Miss Elizabeth Butler, "National Old Trails Road Department," *DAR Magazine* (December 1913): 733.

wagon across the route. While physically close to the mother and child, the father inhabits an entirely different sphere. The halo-like opening of the canvas separates and shields the interior, feminine sphere, from the exterior, male sphere, a public sphere where the rough and tumble of the wilderness route is close at hand and immediate.

The *Madonna of the Trail* monument designed by Moss and erected in each of the twelve states through which the National Old Trails Road passed is a fascinating and significant departure from *The Century* image. The pioneer mother in the monument has stepped outside of the interior, domestic comfort of the wagon train and dwells in the wilderness landscape that in the magazine image remained exclusively a male domain. She doesn't ride in relative comfort as did the previous pioneer mother, but rather she strides forward under her own power, trampling a thistle, symbol of the untamed wilderness, in the process. She is a square-jawed, sturdy figure who can, if circumstances dictate, take care of herself and her children. The large rifle she carries at her side insures this. Unlike the previous figure, therefore, who was purely feminine in attribute, this pioneer mother has been assigned attributes that were traditionally associated with male figures. That this female figure carries a weapon is particularly striking and virtually without precedent in the realm of public sculpture. Indeed, whereas *The Century* image continues the practice of representing the female solely based on the attribute of motherhood through the figure poses and demeanor of the Madonna and Child tradition, the pose and demeanor of Moss' *Madonna of the Trail* is a radical departure, modeled instead on the male standing soldier that emerged after the Civil War (Figure 55).

Coming to grips with the hybrid gender quality of the *Madonna of the Trail* will be a recurrent theme in the remainder of this chapter. As a starting point, one way of comprehending the adoption of male attributes in this figure is to consider that the *Madonna of the Trail*, unlike

The Century image, was designed to be a large-scale, permanently installed public sculpture. As it developed in the United States and elsewhere, the tradition of public sculpture was exclusively a realm for the representation of great male leaders and male heroic action. Up through the 19th century, the image of George Washington and then the standing Civil War soldier dominated representation in the public realm. While female allegorical figures had appeared in public sculptures since ancient times, the *Madonna of the Trail* and other public sculptures of pioneer women from the 1920s marked a turning point in the tradition of public sculpture. For the first time in the United States significant numbers of public monuments would represent and recognize female figures for the deeds they had done rather than as passive symbols of one or another abstract concepts. Because these monuments grew out of a tradition dominated by the heroic male figure and were to be placed in the male-dominated public realm where women had only just enfranchised themselves through the right to vote, it is only logical that they would mimic to some degree the established tradition.¹⁷²

The *Madonna of the Trail* was in fact one of a number of monuments to commemorate the heroic deeds of pioneer women in the public realm at this time. Indeed, at the same time that Moss, her son, and Leimbach were designing a female figure that, but for her dress, could be mistaken for a man, a nationwide competition was held to arrive at a design for another prominent pioneer woman monument, this one to be erected in Ponca City, Oklahoma. The competition yielded a half-dozen designs in which female figures toted large rifles or battle-axes

¹⁷² The heroic bearing of the *Madonna of the Trail*, along with her lethal weapon, were not entirely without precedent. Two 19th century monuments commemorated Hannah Duston (also spelled Dustin), a female captive taken in 1697 along with her infant child and others from the town of Haverhill, Massachusetts, by an Indian raiding party. As legend has it, after the murder of her infant child, Duston turned the tables on her captors, managing an escape after violently slaying all but two of them. Duston was remembered in two monuments in New England in the 1870s. In an 1874 monument in Boscawen, New Hampshire, she holds a tomahawk in one hand and the scalps of her captors in the other. The town of Haverhill commemorated Duston with a monument in 1879 that played down the violence of the captive's escape. In the Haverhill monument Duston simply holds a small hatchet in one hand.

as well as the familiar children. Of the twelve, mostly awkward, designs vying for the Ponca City commission, James Earle Fraser's was the most explicit and bizarre attempt to reconcile traditionally male and female attributes into a successful public monument (Figure 56). A powerful rifle, the traditional extension of brute male strength, nearly as tall as the female figure herself, rests uncomfortably between the figure's arm and torso. While she carries this traditionally male implement, the figure is also ascribed the attributes of motherhood as she cradles an infant in her arms and raises the child to her exposed breasts as if about to breastfeed. Fraser contorts gender conventions further still by making his female figure a classical feminine beauty, clothing the figure in a flowing sheet reminiscent of classical garb, providing his figure a statuesque form and Grecian facial profile, and imbuing the figure with a titillating quality by softly modeling the breasts.

The Ponca City commission, in the end, was granted to the only design that managed to represent heroism in a traditional way without uncomfortably blending traditional gender features in a single figure (Figure 57). In Bryant Baker's winning design, the figure of the mother certainly demonstrates courage and purpose as she leads her son forward by the hand, but it is the boy who with a relaxed gait in comparison to his mother's frozen shoulders and gaze, confidently clenches his fist, ready to confront the struggles that lie ahead. Though the monument was dedicated to the pioneer mother, the success of the pioneer endeavor in the figure group ultimately rests with traditional male heroism as embodied by the figure of the boy. As Baker himself put it, "I always think of her as a mother, looking with proud eyes on her son. He is to be the man of to-morrow who will achieve the big things she has dreamed about in the prairie schooner and back on the farm she left to go adventuring."¹⁷³ In the way that it upholds traditional male and female gender conventions, the Ponca City pioneer mother monument

¹⁷³ Quoted in Patricia Janis Broder, *Bronzes of the American West*, (New York: H.N. Abrams Press, 1974), p. 277.

shares more in common with the earlier *Madonna of the Prairies* than it does the D.A.R.'s *Madonna of the Trail*. The blending of traditionally male and female attributes in the *Madonna of the Trail* figure is thus not entirely explained by the fact that it was a public monument, for here was an instance where the pioneer mother was honored in the public realm for playing a domestic, supportive role in a patriarchal world.

Our understanding of the *Madonna of the Trail*'s hybrid gender attributes deepens if we think of the monument as a representation of the D.A.R. itself. From its inception, though anti-feminist, the organization had always been interested in female figures who had carried out "male" heroic action.¹⁷⁴ Though the D.A.R. in its early years supported pacifist causes, by the approach of World War I the organization was in the vanguard of those supporting National Defense and the idea of universal military service.¹⁷⁵ By the 1920s the D.A.R. had evolved into a radically conservative organization, supporting an anti-Communist position calling for the bolstering of the military and the persecution of intellectuals, educators, pacifists and reformers in the United States.¹⁷⁶ At the 1925 National D.A.R. Congress, the organization resolved the following, "That the National Society recommended a definite, intensive campaign to be organized in every state to combat 'Red' internationalists and that state regents be asked to appoint a chairman to direct the campaign of 'Cooperation on National Defense.'"¹⁷⁷

Thus, as the D.A.R. was transforming itself from a frivolous to a more activist domestic force in the forefront of a radically conservative movement to fight the enemies from within the country, it produced and placed in the public realm twelve identical images of a hybrid pioneer mother figure, a figure that is as much patriotic citizen soldier as she is pioneer mother. Cast as

¹⁷⁴ Gibbs, *The D.A.R.*, 1969, p. 74.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-107.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

an enabler of capitalist success and alternatively as an Indian fighter in the course of the Kit Carson Monument campaign, the pioneer figure here assumes yet another guise, that of generic citizen-soldier of the nation-state.¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, one St. Louis newspaper at the time referred to the *Madonna of the Trail* as a “memorial to Pioneer Patriots.” Even today, the *Madonna of the Trail* continues to be understood by contemporary D.A.R. members in precisely the same terms. As one D.A.R. member put it, “For over fifty years twelve *Madonna of the Trail* monuments have stood like faithful sentries guarding their assigned historical areas along the heartline of America.”¹⁷⁹

Despite its genesis as the embodiment of the D.A.R. itself, and as fundamentally quirky as the monument is, it is nonetheless important to explore the many significant ways that the *Madonna of the Trail* works against traditional conventions of gender in order to appreciate its importance in the history of public sculpture in the United States and in the history of representations of the conquest of the American West. In the *Madonna of the Trail*, the figure of the mother is indeed the repository of heroism in a traditionally male sense. Not only is she equipped with a rifle, but she wraps the rifle barrel tightly in her strong grip. Whereas the rifles in each of the figure groups from the Ponca City competition were uncomfortably large and unwieldy in comparison to the mother figures (see Figure 56 for one example), the D.A.R. mother, tall, square-jawed, and muscular, presents us with the appearance of an individual who could easily deposit her infant on the ground and fire an accurate shot. The little boy in the D.A.R. figure group, unlike the male hero of the future in Baker’s monument, is afraid and clings

¹⁷⁸ It was not uncommon for pioneers to be accorded the same kind of reverence as war veterans, as evidenced by the commemoration of pioneers along with military servicemen on monuments in Cincinnati, Ohio (*Veterans Memorial Statuary*, Hamilton County Memorial Hall, 1908), Bedford Indiana (*Pioneers, Soldiers and Sailors Monument*, Lawrence County Courthouse, 1923-24), Westford, Massachusetts (*Monument to World War I and Other Conflicts*, 1924) and Marlow, New Hampshire (*Marlow World War I Sculpture*, 1930).

¹⁷⁹ Quotations appear in Baur, *The Historic Treasure Chest*, 1986, p. 95 and p. 1.

tightly to his mother's skirts for comfort and protection. Finally, as she stamps upon the thistle, symbol of the natural wilderness the pioneer tamed, with her massive boot, this figure is a remarkable departure from the virgin land myth, where it was the figure of the male pioneer that traveled into the virgin wilderness, gendered female, and tamed that wilderness.

Due to its assumption of traditionally male, particularly martial, attributes, the *Madonna of the Trail* is a singularly significant public image. But it is important not to forget that the sculpture is a hybrid image. As masculine in physique as she is, though she totes a lethal weapon and is the counterpart of the male standing soldier, the *Madonna of the Trail*, in the end, is still a mother figure. More than that, she is posed with her two children such that the group presents the viewer with an image of family, domesticity, and settlement. This mediating of the image of the patriotic soldier of the nation through the pioneer image of mother and family amounted to a powerful new synthesis. Through the union of patriotism and the pioneer figure, here was a version of national identity that rooted itself in an authentic, neo-native connection to the earth. As Mrs. John Trigg Moss put it in her final *Madonna of the Trail* dedicatory address at Bethesda, Maryland, the pioneers “were willing to pass down the great ‘Homing Trail’ of the Nation, into the land of mystery and romance, of hardship and endurance, and with them they took, not the ammunition wagon and artillery, but herds of livestock and their household goods, implements of the farm land; they took with them their women and children—the guarantee of a future state, the earnest of a permanent settlement, the basis of an American home.”¹⁸⁰

With its emphasis on the peaceful assumption of land ownership of the West, Mrs. Moss' statement points to the fact that the figure of the pioneer, like the figure of the Indian, in serving as the focal point for the creation of a memory of western expansion, emphasized the peace arrived at. In exceptional cases, such as the Denver pioneer monument campaign, violent

¹⁸⁰ “*The Madonna of the Trail*,” *DAR Magazine* (July 1924): 403.

conquest of the West and white-Indian conflict could be emphasized. For the most part, however, with peace on the continent secured, the figure of the Indian and the figure of the pioneer each served as the basis for the construction of American identities rooted in the land in the early-20th century. As the First American, the figure of the lone male Indian rooted the nation in an ancient, aboriginal past. The figure of the pioneer rooted the nation to the land in a different way. Unlike the Indian, the pioneer settled the land, established religion and community, and consequently rightfully assumed title to the continent. The pioneer wasn't the First American. That privilege was accorded to the figure of the Indian. Instead, the pioneer represented the First Family--that which embodied, in the D.A.R.'s inimitable words, "the guarantee of a future state, the earnest of a permanent settlement, the basis of an American home."

In order to appreciate the potency of this image of pioneering and family for American citizens of the early-20th century, the remainder of this chapter shall explore the cultural context within which the National Old Trails Road and the *Madonna of the Trail* must be understood. Having discussed the National Old Trails Road and the *Madonna of the Trail* from the perspective of the D.A.R., at this point I would like to view this commemorative effort through a broader lens. What makes this undertaking even more fascinating and instructive is the way that it coalesced with some of the most significant cultural developments in the United States in the early-20th century: the explosive advance of road and automobile technology, and the related revolution in leisure activity between 1910-1930 as the road vacation under the patriotic touring slogan "See America First" supplanted earlier forms of travel.

In the late-19th and early-20th century period, the United States underwent a boom in the improvement of roads known as the "good roads movement." The proliferation of roads, carried

along by advances in road engineering, bridge building, and road surface technology, was driven by the development of two new technological toys, the bicycle and the automobile. Whereas older roads in the United States, including those preserved by the D.A.R. as part of their commemorative effort, had been constructed for economic, legal, military and migration purposes, these new roads developed as part of an emerging recreational and leisure industry.¹⁸¹ With the saturation of the luxury car market around 1905, auto manufacturers began to target the middle classes by offering more affordable models. Henry Ford manufactured his Model T, for example, the vehicle that transformed the automobile from a novelty of the wealthy to an item of mass consumption, from 1908-1927. As a result, middle-class leisure became increasingly wedded with automobile touring, to the point that by the 1920s the automobile outing and vacation had become national institutions; a new era of tourism was dawning in the United States.¹⁸²

In the late-19th and early-20th century, prior to the emergence of this new form of tourism based on the road and the automobile, what is referred to as heritage or cultural tourism had been the prevailing mode. Practiced by the wealthiest citizens of the nation, cultural tourism was characterized by luxury train travel to specific destinations, the Grand Canyon, for example, that were important symbols of national culture. During this period of cultural tourism, control over amenities and the tourist experience were concentrated in the hands of large corporations such as the Fred Harvey Company. In league with the railroads, the Fred Harvey Company created a tightly orchestrated and consistent tourist experience. The tourist came to expect travel aboard posh train cars that would deliver them directly to Harvey-owned hotels. Having arrived at this luxury abode, tourists were treated to first-class restaurant meals, pampered service at the hands

¹⁸¹ Thomas J. Schlereth, *U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indian Historical Society Press, 1985), Chapter 1.

¹⁸² James J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1975), pp. 24, 156.

of “Harvey girls,” and guided excursions by which they could experience and appreciate the beauty and cultural significance of the particular locale visited. By the 1920s the prevailing mode of tourist travel had shifted. Broader distribution of wealth, the development of the automobile, and the improvement of roads nationwide, democratized tourism in the United States. With these changes in the mode of travel and the demographics of travelers, cultural tourism was supplanted by recreational tourism.¹⁸³

In recreational tourism, the significance of the destination was diminished. People traveled less to make themselves better or wiser due to exposure to significant places, and more to simply get away, to restore vigor back into their lives by escaping the urban environment and experiencing the freedom of movement, the unexpected discovery, the diversity of people and places, afforded by the automobile and the open road. As a result, the journey itself replaced the destination as the main reason for travel. Writing in *Outlook* magazine in 1924 Frank Brunner put it this way, “The automobile has revolutionized the average American’s vacation...It has brought about a renaissance of the outdoors and it has firmly planted a brand new outdoor sport.”¹⁸⁴ Brunner called this sport auto touring. Auto touring was the 20th century’s answer to the tradition of the pilgrimage, the practice of travel as a rite of passage toward renewal. Whereas through cultural tourism travelers sought meaning in the destinations they visited, through recreational tourism travelers sought meaning in traveling itself.¹⁸⁵

D.A.R. involvement in the construction of roads, particularly the National Old Trails Road, represents a significant untold element in the history of this revolution in tourism in the United States. That this female hereditary elite would so immerse itself in road and car culture

¹⁸³ Hal Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998) pp. 23 – 28, discusses this shift in the mode of tourism from the late-19th to the early-20th century.

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151, 166-167.

was very much a sign of the times. In the early-20th century, road travel by automobile served as a liberating force for women, enabling them to break out of the domestic sphere and into the public realm where they could do things for themselves. As women took to driving automobiles they crafted the road into a place of independence, self-sufficiency and vigorous activity.¹⁸⁶ Thus, by spearheading the building of roads upon the nation's historical alignments, the D.A.R. combined the practice of history with the liberating possibilities of the automobile to fashion a role for itself outside the home and in the public realm.

The D.A.R.'s commemorative road activities are best understood when recognized as a manifestation of the nationwide promotion of domestic tourism under the banner "See America First" in the opening decades of the 20th century. The "See America First" slogan originated with commercial boosters in the intermountain West as they attempted to develop the tourist industry in the region. In 1910, it was adopted as the corporate logo of the Great Northern Railway in its bid to draw attention and tourists to one of its prime destinations, Glacier National Park. With the onset of World War I and the closure of the European continent to tourists, the promotion of domestic travel by means of the "See America First" catchphrase took off. The National Park Service, good roads associations, chambers of commerce and touring advocates of all stripes clamored for domestic tourism under the "See America First" banner. At once an advertising campaign designed to nurture the economic well being of communities that stood to gain from domestic tourism, "See America First," by marketing definitive American places and experiences, made of tourism "a patriotic ritual of citizenship."¹⁸⁷ As tourists embraced the notion of patriotic travel, the autoroute became a realm for exploring and defining an American

¹⁸⁶ See Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) and Marguerite S. Shaffer, "Seeing America First: The Search for Identity in the Tourist Landscape," in *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West*, Edited by David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, Forward by Earl Pomeroy (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2001), pp. 180-186.

¹⁸⁷ Shaffer, "Seeing America First," 2001, p. 166.

identity. Accordingly, in his 1919 novel entitled *Free Air*, the chronicle of a transcontinental road trip of a Brooklyn father and his coming-of-age daughter, Sinclair Lewis described the pair's trip west as a "voyage into democracy" where they would encounter the "real" America.¹⁸⁸

With its members part of the auto touring classes, the D.A.R. fully embraced the potential of the road and auto touring as a means of national definition. For the D.A.R., auto touring held the potential for a particular kind of rite of passage and renewal. The D.A.R. believed that by traveling along the same alignments as generations of American pioneers before them, by learning of pioneer deeds through public markers, auto travelers could emerge from their travels with a renewed sense of patriotism, loyalty and citizenship. The National Old Trails Road, for example, could play a powerful role in this endeavor. A National Old Trails Road promotional map claimed that by following this alignment, the auto tourist would be tracing the true course of Manifest Destiny because the route followed the "isothermal line," which the 19th century booster of western expansion William Gilpin had claimed in his *Mission of the North American People, Geographical, Social, Political* (1873) was the most influential geographical axis of American and world civilization. Along the National Old Trails Road route the motorist would associate with a people and a history that possessed an "intense and intelligent energy" and from whom had come "our religion, our sciences, our civilization, our social manners, our arts, our agriculture, our domestic animals, and articles of food and raiment."¹⁸⁹ The D.A.R. believed that by exposing motorists to this authentic American history along roads it could make motorists better, more loyal, citizens.

Thus, while the D.A.R. made up part of the auto touring classes that participated in the emerging travel craze, it also put an enormous amount of effort into promoting and shaping

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 165-193.

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in Schlereth, *US 40*, 1985, pp. 74-86.

recreational auto touring. As the 1932 Report of the Committee on National Old Trails, referring to the D.A.R.'s early efforts put it, the D.A.R. "wanted 'good roads' above all else, but [it] wanted these 'good roads' in course of construction to be built upon the old historic trails...The boulders, tablets and markers of every description that have been erected by [us] number in the thousands, all recording accurately many historical facts that would be lost to the coming generations but for [our] patriotic effort to keep sacred and intact these bits of Pioneer History."¹⁹⁰

This D.A.R. interest in roads created a new form of commemoration, the linear commemorative landscape known today as the memorial highway. The close interconnections between early road building, automobile touring and commemoration have yet to be duly appreciated by scholars. In addition to the National Old Trails Road, the other major transcontinental highway built between 1910-1920, the Lincoln Highway, was similarly steeped with a memorial character. Named in honor of President Lincoln, the Lincoln Highway was marketed for its historic character. Like the National Old Trails Road, it too followed the alignment of historic trails. Official road guides for the highway highlighted its associations with the likes of the Pony Express, the Overland Stage, and the emigrant way west.¹⁹¹ Still with us today in the form of historic roadways managed on the local, regional and national levels, the conception of the memorial highway is indebted in large measure to the D.A.R. and its early efforts. The D.A.R. believed that this form of commemoration as a roadside attraction was more compelling than any previous form, "Never was modern pageant more vivid with historical

¹⁹⁰ D.A.R. Library, Americana Collection, National Society, D.A.R., *[Report of the] Forty-First Continental Congress*, 1932, p. 675.

¹⁹¹ *The Complete and Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*, Third Edition, 1917, pp. 9-12.

interest than the old highways of civilization's march across plain and mountain, and the shadows of the past will always line the Old Trail as the traveler journeys down it."¹⁹²

With its emphasis on travel as a journey of discovery, recreational auto touring gave birth to a fad in travel writing. Touring journals, diaries, travel accounts, novels, manuals, newspaper articles and a myriad of other texts describing travel were published in profusion, much of it written by women embracing the newfound freedom of the road.¹⁹³ To our good fortune, D.A.R. members participated wholeheartedly in this practice. Testimony recorded by D.A.R. road trippers demonstrates the pleasure they derived from auto touring along marked pioneer routes. Examining this testimony is also a way of gauging how the D.A.R. imagined other auto tourists should experience the commemorative roads fashioned by the organization.

In 1913, D.A.R. member Mrs. John Hope Casey Van Brunt recorded the "Patriotic Pilgrimage," as she called it, of a group of D.A.R. members on a four-day road trip dedicating 28 markers along the recently built modern road which was supposed to follow the footprint of the Santa Fe Trail. One senses the excitement and anticipation of Mrs. Van Brunt in her opening entry: "The morning of May 15th we started down the Trail. We met at Westport, the old gate to that great unknown country termed 'The West,' and as I stood there in front of the oldest house in that old town, saw the motors sweep up, flags flying and filled with gay people we thought of the other parties that had crossed its doors and gone out down that valley, some to come back laden with Mexican gold, some to disappear forever from the ken of men."¹⁹⁴ Mrs. Van Brunt, traveling in a vehicle that represented the height of technology and material progress,

¹⁹² "Marking the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri," *DAR Magazine* 5 (1913): 647.

¹⁹³ Shaffer, "Seeing America First," 2001, p. 182.

¹⁹⁴ "Marking the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri," *DAR Magazine* 5 (1913): 642-647.

nonetheless experienced the road trip as imaginatively removed from the present-day.¹⁹⁵ She referred to the modern road as a “Trail.” She and her party met at Westport, significant not as a contemporary landmark but rather the “old gate...to ‘The West.’” She stood in front of the oldest house in an old town, and contemplated earlier parties which had made the journey her party was about to make, thus forging an identification between her party and pioneer parties of the past.

In addition to imaginative ramblings about the physical remains and stories of the past, Mrs. Van Brunt’s daily entries are also peppered with didactic musings such as the following: “To us it was a pleasure trip, to them it was one of toil, of hardship, perhaps [a] battle for life.”¹⁹⁶ Sobering entries such as this one belie Mrs. Van Brunt’s declaration that she was simply on a pleasure trip. She and her D.A.R. mates certainly were having a good time, but they were up to much more than merry-making. Throughout her diary entries, Mrs. Van Brunt referred to herself and her compatriots as “pilgrims.” American flags frequently accompanied them on their route, and towns welcomed them with landscapes festooned in red, white and blue. In addition to being a pleasure trip, therefore, the journey they were on was a sacred rite, replete with the markers of a civic religion. There was a purpose to these imaginative forays into the past; one was to retrace the steps of the pioneers, to contemplate the past, and to emerge from this period of reenactment and contemplation a renewed and better citizen of the nation-state. At the unveiling of the last *Madonna of the Trail* monument to be put in place, Mrs. John Trigg Moss articulated what she hoped the National Old Trails Road experience would inspire in those who journeyed along it,

¹⁹⁵ David Louter, “Glaciers and Gasoline: The Making of a Windshield Wilderness, 1900-1915,” *Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West*, Edited by David M. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long, Forward by Earl Pomeroy (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2001). In this essay about early automobiles and the development of national parks, Louter comes to an analogous finding, describing how the automobile, though an embodiment of the height of technology, nonetheless served as a means by which park visitors were transported to a primitive past to experience wilderness environments.

¹⁹⁶ “Marking the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri,” *DAR Magazine* 5 (1913): 642-647.

“May we dedicate ourselves anew to the great and hallowed ideals of the past, and live true to the Spirit of our Pioneer Forbears...with their abiding faith, *believing in our Nation*, and *steadfastly* upholding her institutions.”¹⁹⁷ This was no doubt the kind of renewal Mrs. Van Brunt and her fellow “pilgrims” experienced after their travels on the road marking the Santa Fe Trail, and the kind of renewal the D.A.R. intended to inspire in auto tourists who traveled the National Old Trails Road and other marked modern roads.

Mrs. Van Brunt’s “Patriotic Pilgrimage” along the Santa Fe Trail demonstrates many of the elements that characterized the new recreational tourism that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s in the United States. The focus of the trip was not a single destination point but rather the experience of the journey itself. That Mrs. Van Brunt kept a daily journal of her travels underscores the fact that meaning was to be derived from the journey rather than from some ultimate destination. Through the National Old Trails Road and other marked automobile roadways, therefore, D.A.R. activism was pitched very much to the tenor of the times. The D.A.R. was fostering a tourist experience that was about the road trip itself at a time when the recreational auto tour was a craze sweeping the country. As discussed above, Mrs. Van Brunt’s own traveling experience was mediated through historical visions of pioneers traveling in covered wagons. Evidence suggests that the broader traveling public that partook in this thoroughly contemporary experience also imagined it as a kind of throwback to an earlier pioneer time.

From 1910 through the 1930s, the automobile was frequently referred to as a stagecoach or covered wagon, and rustic roadside cabins and auto camps, places on the roadside where one could pitch a tent, build a campfire, and stay the night in simple, primitive conditions modeled on pioneering, flourished nationwide (Figure 58). Like Mrs. Van Brunt, one of the conceits that

¹⁹⁷ Quote appears in “The *Madonna of the Trail*,” *DAR Magazine* (July 1929): 404.

motorists relished was an escape to the pioneer past. Touring narratives reveal that this idealization of a simple pioneer American past grew out of the uncertainties middle- and upper-class auto tourists held about the realities of the urban-industrial America in which they lived. They expressed this anxiety by seeking and finding out on the road the real America, a rural nation of small towns, often associated with the American West, where they believed they had discovered the repository of democracy and freedom.¹⁹⁸

Thus, one Letitia Stockett declared in her narrative of a cross-country road trip, “To see the real America go west.”¹⁹⁹ In a similar vein, in *The Family Flivvers to Frisco*, Frederic F. Van de Water’s narrative of his family’s transcontinental trip west he proclaimed that after “five weeks and two days, three originally smug New Yorkers underwent a slow and amazing transformation...at the end of the ordeal they were no longer New Yorkers, but Americans, which, they learned, is something surprisingly and hearteningly different.”²⁰⁰ As was the case for the D.A.R.’s Mrs. Van Brunt, a common element of this encounter with the real America and subsequent personal transformation entailed identification with the American pioneer. Claire Boltwood, the female protagonist in Sinclair Lewis’ *Free Air*, in attempting to extricate the family car from a muddy road became like a “pioneer woman,” according to the narrator, “toiling” on the land.²⁰¹ In another cross-country chronicle, a pair of travelers, in encountering the Rocky Mountains, experienced “a little of the exultation of the soul and the despair of the body that the early pioneers must have felt when they first looked upon that glorious barrier, shimmering like white heat under its covering of eternal snow.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Shaffer, “Seeing America First,” 2001, p. 175.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁰¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 181.

²⁰² Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 183.

The depth of the resonance between the D.A.R.'s efforts to build modern roads along the alignments of pioneer trails and the practices of the general motoring public are fascinating to contemplate. For individuals and families traveling about in automobiles conceived of as covered wagons, spending the night by the campfire along the roadside, imagining themselves as modern-day pioneers, the D.A.R. built and promoted travel along roadscapes which deepened this experience by having motorists tread along the same alignments traveled by pioneers of the 19th century. Even details such as the colloquial inscription on each of the *Madonna of the Trail* monuments, TO THE PIONEER MOTHERS OF COVERED WAGON DAYS, would have spoken directly to travelers motoring about in their modern-day covered wagons.

The D.A.R. was not alone in promoting an escape to a simpler, more primitive America by means of automobile travel. At the same time that the organization was promoting travel along roadways marking pioneer trails, the National Park Service was contemplating the creation of a National Park-to-Park Highway. Along this highway, the motorist would venture from one vestige of pristine wilderness to the next, reenacting the narrative of western expansion and American exceptionalism through national park visits where one would come into contact and experience "primeval nature." Even the Fred Harvey Company, which had perfected tourism through train travel in the earlier era of cultural tourism, in the 1920s began to offer Indian Detours, auto excursions into the remote Southwest where the traveler could have a more authentic experience of the American West than by train travel alone.²⁰³

Along roads fashioned by the D.A.R. it was commemorative markers placed along the roadside that made motorists aware of the fact that they were traveling along pioneer routes. These markers could encourage the mediating of the traveler's experience through pioneer

²⁰³ For national parks and automobiles see Louter, "Glaciers and Gasoline," 2001. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 1998, pp. 148-149, 158, discusses the National Park-to-Park Highway and Harvey's Indian Detours.

history further still. As Emily Post's early transcontinental diary indicates, motorists took to the road with an enormous sense of curiosity, "One thing that we have already found out; we are seeing our own country for the very first time!"²⁰⁴ There is clear evidence demonstrating that one of the things motorists were accustomed to seeking on the roadside was historical markers. In his *Diary of a Motor Journey from Chicago to Los Angeles*, for example, Vernon McGill described a section of Kansas road, "In 'seeing America first' along this route, one passes many points of historical interest. Today we passed the stamping ground of the famous scout, Kit Carson."²⁰⁵ Without a doubt, the most interesting D.A.R. marker to consider in this light is the *Madonna of the Trail*. As described above, the *Madonna of the Trail* punctuated the National Old Trails Road at twelve locations across the country. Having now learned of the traveling practices of the white, urban, middle- and upper-class Americans that constituted the auto touring public, we are now prepared to deepen our appreciation of the resonance and significance of this image of the pioneer woman and family for early-20th century citizens.

Given the connection between the automobile, road tripping, and the liberation of American women, it is entirely fitting that the *Madonna of the Trail*, one of the first monuments to commemorate female heroism in the public realm, took its place along the American roadside. Indeed, for women seeking freedom on the road in the early 20th century, the pioneer woman held special significance as a model of sturdiness and independence. Recall that Claire Boltwood in the novel *Fresh Air* imagined herself a pioneer woman as she worked her automobile free of mud. As she headed out on the road the next day Claire was transformed, "she was stronger than she ever had been...she was a woman, not a dependent girl."²⁰⁶ Winifred Hawkrige Dixon and Katherine Thaxter, friends embarking from Boston in 1921 on a

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Shaffer, "Seeing America First," 2001, p. 170.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Quoted in Ibid., p. 181.

transcontinental trip west imagined their travels as a pioneering quest, aiming “to follow the old trails, immigrant trails, cattle trails, trader’s routes.”²⁰⁷ These two examples point to what touring narratives written by women commonly reveal, that experiences of female liberation on the road were mediated through nostalgic images of the frontier West, particularly the American pioneer.

The D.A.R.’s “can-do” *Madonna of the Trail* would thus have spoken forcefully to women seeking liberation on the road. Here was a gender-bending monument representing a mannish, square-jawed figure stepping outside the domestic sphere with a colossal rifle in her grip embedded in a landscape where women of the early-20th century were breaking out of the domestic sphere and crafting for themselves public identities. In the same way that the female *Madonna of the Trail* embodied attributes traditionally assigned to men, women on the road commonly experienced liberation and equality by transgressing traditional gender boundaries. In *Free Air*, Claire Boltwood sat beside a campfire in Yellowstone National Park one evening fretting over whether she would return to her frivolous female ways upon her return to Brooklyn. Milt Daggett, the male companion she had met on the road, assured her she need not fear such a turn of events, “No. You won’t,” he declared, “You drive like a man.”²⁰⁸ Similarly, in *How’s the Road?* Katherine Hulme’s narrative of a transcontinental trip from New York to San Francisco she took with her female friend “Tuny,” the further west the pair travels, the more they retreat from conventions of female appearance and social mores. At one point, Katherine and Tuny encounter and compare themselves to a pair of elaborately made up and turned out women. In contrast to the coiffed appearance of their counterparts, Katherine and Tuny wear with pride their functional garb of soiled knickers, shirts and muddied oxfords, as well as their hair “that had

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Scharf, *Taking the Wheel*, 1991, p. 136.

²⁰⁸ Quoted in Shaffer, “Seeing America First,” 2001, p. 181.

been smoothed down with a bacony hand, that had ridden bare through dust storms and hung over smoke and had sometimes been rudely jammed up against the black greasy housing of [their auto's] underside during various tinkerings.”²⁰⁹

As resonant as the *Madonna of the Trail* would have been with female motorists due to its transgressive gender qualities, the monument would have been equally compelling to auto tourists for the image of home and domesticity that it presented. Scholars have shown, and we have seen in the example of the National Old Trails Road, that auto tourists were inclined to experience their travels the way “See America First” proponents, the D.A.R. included, attempted to fashion them, as patriotic rites of citizenship. Touring narratives reveal an even stronger impulse for auto tourists threatened by certain qualities associated with their urban abodes--increasing numbers of immigrants, racial diversity, civil unrest--to seek on the road feelings of home and community they believed their lives lacked.²¹⁰

One traveler expressed this desire to find home on the road very succinctly, “If the home is where the heart is (and it is) then the Motor Camper who takes wife and children on the camping trip finds home in the car and wherever the car may stop. That place where camp is set up for the night, there is ‘Home’.”²¹¹ The desire expressed by this passage is neatly captured by the camping family illustrated on the cover of a 1925 edition of *Motor Camper and Tourist* (Figure 59). This escape to a simpler way of life was promoted and embraced as a means by which the family might restore its health, happiness, and cohesion.

²⁰⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²¹¹ Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), pp. 68-69.

By means of its unprecedented fusion of heroic patriotism with home, domesticity and family, the *Madonna of the Trail* manifested an uncanny correspondence to auto tourists' twin searches for an American identity as well as a sense of home and security out on the road.

Travel narratives reveal that as auto tourists met up with others on the road motivated by the same impulses, they experienced a renewed sense of community and democracy. Frederic F. Van de Water, whose account contained practical information for those wishing to auto-camp, described "the warming friendliness of neighbors who rested" at the end of a long day on the road. He opined on the "unguardedly friendly, almost family-like air" that characterized the auto-camp. Van de Water expressed appreciation for the open expanse of the American landscape, but he was most taken by the American people he encountered, "The scenery, the vast extent of America have awed and thrilled and lifted us up, but its people have stirred us the most-its dear, kind, friendly people." Van de Water and his family emerged from this experience with a new sense of American identity, "Traveling, as we traveled, through the heart of the nation" he reflected, "brought us a new definition of what constitutes nationality."²¹² For auto tourists thinking of themselves as modern-day pioneers and seeking nation, home, family and community out on the road, it is hard to imagine a better emblem for this heartland nationality than the white, Christian, pioneer mother and her children, the First Family, represented in the *Madonna of the Trail* monument.

The correspondence between the D.A.R.'s National Old Trails Road and the practices and expectations of the auto touring public also encompassed what each ignored out on the American roadside. As they traversed the United States through a variety of geographic regions, auto-tourists believed they were encountering a diverse cross-section of the nation. In point of fact, however, auto-camps, roadside attractions, and the road itself were very homogenous, a

²¹² Quoted in Shaffer, "Seeing America First," 2001, p. 173.

community of white, urban, middle- and upper-class Americans. Ethnic diversity and the increasingly urban-industrial character of the road didn't figure into the idealized image of the nation that auto tourists took away from their travels.²¹³ Likewise, the D.A.R.'s National Old Trails Road promoted a narrow version of history, western expansion and American identity. As evidenced by the *Madonna of the Trail*, an authentic national identity resided in an imagined rural, white, Christian heartland. Though the D.A.R. successfully promoted this narrow version of American identity virtually everywhere it went along the National Old Trails Road, it ran into strong opposition in one community, the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico. A brief exploration of Santa Fe's opposition to the *Madonna of the Trail* serves as a useful ending to this exploration of the National Old Trails Road, throwing into relief the manner in which the commemorative undertaking constructed a narrow version of American identity, and demonstrating once again how in the period from 1890-1930, different publics competed to fashion American identities out of the fabric of the American West.

As the terminus of the Santa Fe Trail, one of the five historic alignments that formed the National Old Trails Road, Santa Fe was the most logical and important place to locate a *Madonna of the Trail* in the state of New Mexico. The D.A.R. anticipated little trouble in siting the monument in Santa Fe. The committee Mrs. John Trigg Moss formed and led across the country visiting towns and cities along the National Old Trails Road where monuments would be located had been met with nothing but enthusiastic acceptance. It came as a surprise, therefore, when in a meeting with Santa Fe city representatives, the D.A.R. was opposed by the strong cultural elite of Santa Fe represented by artist Fred Applegate and writer Mary Austin. Austin didn't mince words in criticizing the D.A.R., "The so-called pioneer woman monument, does not represent the real pioneers of this region at all. The real pioneers were Spanish people, and they

²¹³ Ibid., p. 175.

have not been consulted or represented.”²¹⁴ Moss was reportedly so infuriated with this opposition that she interrupted the city council meeting, met briefly with her committee, and returned only to inform the gathering that New Mexico’s *Madonna of the Trail* would be awarded to Albuquerque, the other town vying for the monument. The monument was unveiled and dedicated in Albuquerque’s McClellan Park on September 27, 1928.²¹⁵

In her criticism of the D.A.R., Austin had hit upon a salient point. The D.A.R. had not consulted with the community of Santa Fe, nor any other community along the National Old Trails Road where it had intended to locate a monument. In having the National Old Trails Road and the *Madonna of the Trail* monuments installed, the D.A.R. was able to liberally impose its version of history and memory in the public realm. For economic reasons, and because the D.A.R. was promoting a widely accepted version of history, the organization encountered widespread support. In Santa Fe, the D.A.R. encountered an elite citizenry that on its turf matched and indeed surpassed the D.A.R.’s ability to act in the public realm. Austin and Applegate and the elite group of which they were a part, and other cultural brethren who came before them, had crafted Santa Fe into a world apart from the mainstream United States, an alternative borderland space where a Spanish-Indian ambiance prevailed in contrast to Anglo-America.²¹⁶ It was a place where Indians sold their crafts in the central plaza, where buildings were made of adobe, where Spanish rites and festivals were still performed, where the natural and built environments complemented each other to richly express the seemingly timeless regional Southwest. For Austin, Applegate, and other artists and writers of their ilk, regionalism represented a space from which to construct an authentic American identity outside what they perceived as the homogenizing influence of mass culture in the United States. In their view, the

²¹⁴ Quoted in Helen Peters, “*Madonna of the Trail*,” *New Mexico Magazine*, (December 1993): 53.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains*, 1998, pp. 81-112.

introduction of the *Madonna of the Trail* into Santa Fe would thus not only taint the Spanish-Indian ambiance of the town with an impure Anglo touch. The D.A.R. effort to consolidate the whole history of western expansion into a single narrative of white pioneering settlement, and to have this narrative embodied by the same generic monument in virtually every region of the country, also represented the homogenizing forces that the regionalists believed were leading to the decline of American culture.²¹⁷

As different as these two versions of American identity were, they emerged from similar impulses. Ironically, Applegate and Austin were not native to Santa Fe, but rather urban expatriates transplanted from the eastern United States. In this regard, they shared some of the same motivations as the urban auto tourists with whom we have become so familiar in this chapter. Disenchanted with the version of America they came to experience in eastern cities, auto tourists searched for and seemed to find an authentic national identity in the pioneer America they discovered out on the road. The search for Santa Fe transplants also ended in the American West. But Applegate and Austin despised the leveling effects that the D.A.R.'s patriotic national culture had on American identity. For them, an authentic identity resided not in nationalizing the American West, but rather in emphasizing the West's regional distinctiveness and difference. Like the Colorado Society of Pioneers, who contested the impulse to employ the tragic but heroic Indian as a nationwide symbol of the country's western heritage, thus pointing to the limitations of this symbol as a focal point of public memory, the regionalists of the Southwest, in contesting the *Madonna of the Trail*, charted the boundaries beyond which the American pioneer ceased to resonate as a focal point of public commemoration in the late-19th and early-20th century.

²¹⁷ For a discussion of how Applegate and Austin saw their version of regional American identity in competition with the mainstream American identities of mass culture see Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), pp. 182-191.



Figure 50. August Leimbach, *Madonna of the Trail*, 1927.

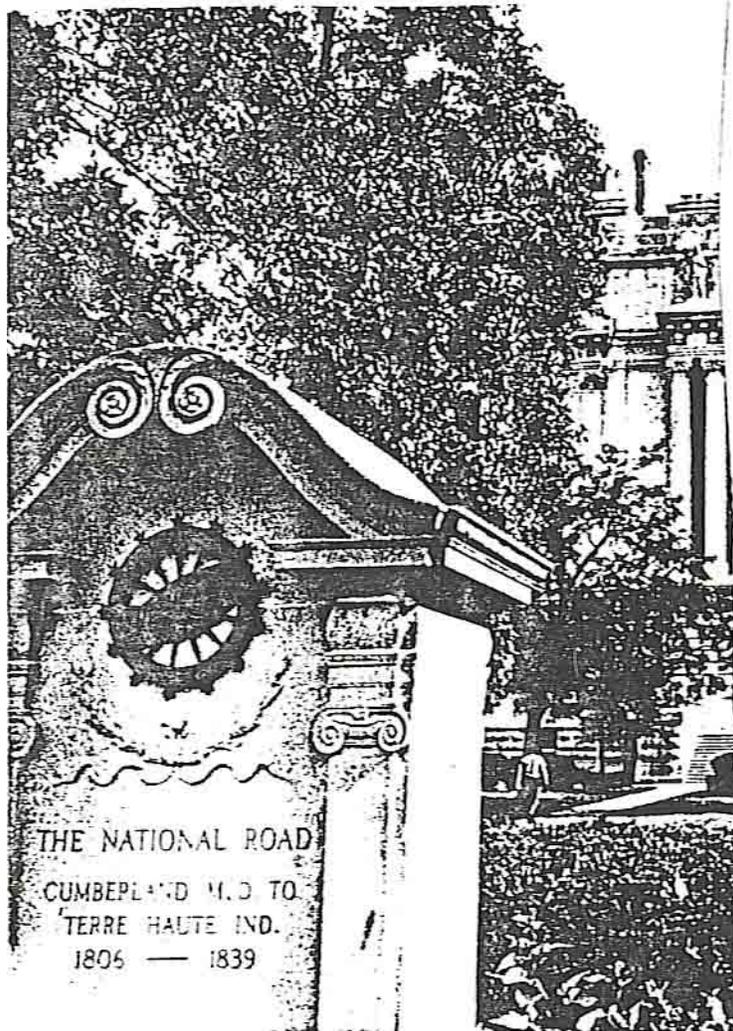


Figure 51. One of several types of markers along the National Old Trails Road.



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Bethesda, Maryland | 7. Lexington, Missouri |
| 2. Washington, Pennsylvania | 8. Council Grove, Kansas |
| 3. Wheeling, West Virginia | 9. Lamar, Colorado |
| 4. Springfield, Ohio | 10. Albuquerque, New Mexico |
| 5. Richmond, Indiana | 11. Springersville, Arizona |
| 6. Vandalia, Illinois | 12. Upland, California |

Figure 52. Locations of *Madonna of the Trail* monuments along the National Old Trails Road.



Figure 53. *The Century*, "Madonna of the Prairies," c. 1913.

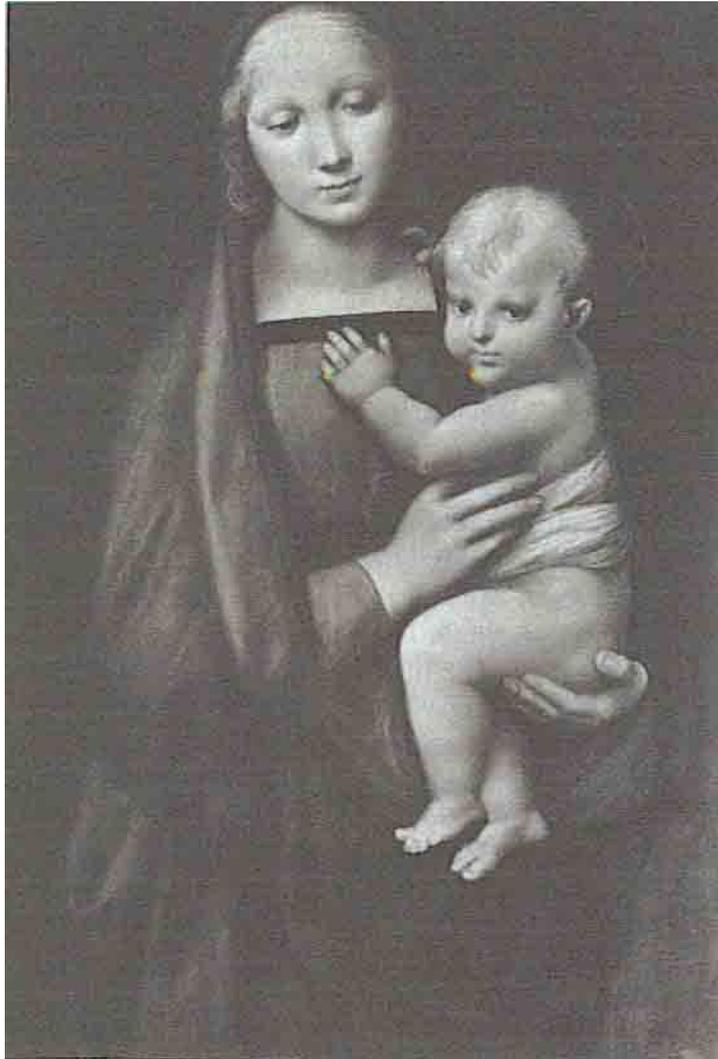


Figure 54. Raphael, *Madonna del Granduca*, c. 1505.



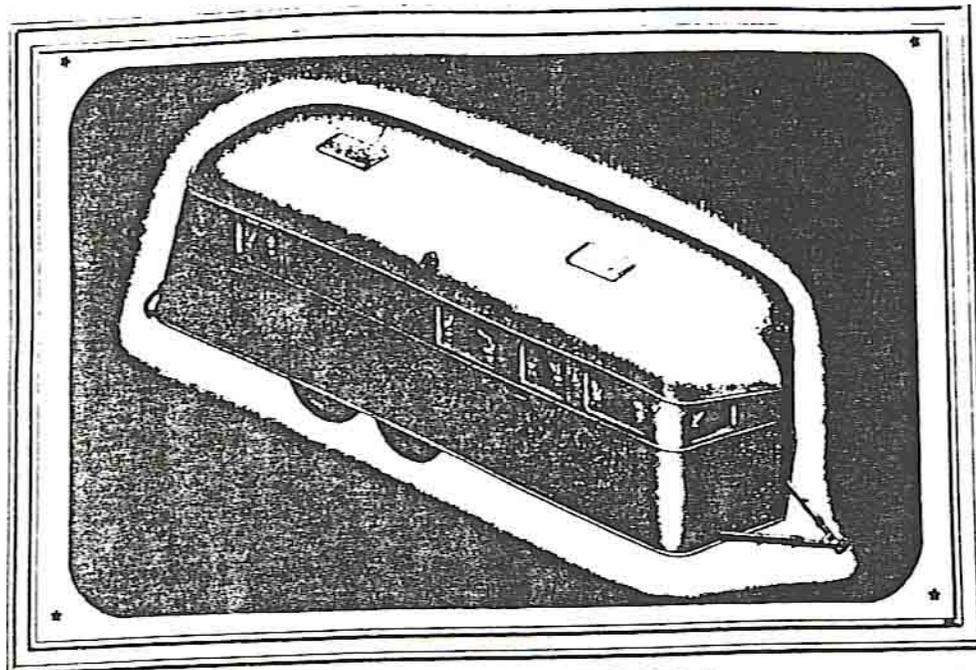
Figure 55. Richard Morris Hunt and John Quincy Adams Ward, *7th Regiment Memorial*, 1869-74.



Figure 56. James Earle Fraser, *Pioneer Mother*, 1927.



Figure 57. Bryant Baker, *Pioneer Mother*, 1927.



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Figure 58. The New Covered Wagon Custom Coach, 1937.

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Figure 59. Cover, *Motor Camper and Tourist*, 1925.

6. EPILOGUE: RED POWER

From 1890–1930, many individuals and groups participated in the creation of a public memory of western expansion--officials of the Federal government, myriad elite groups, the era's finest sculptors, even interested members from the public at large. Despite the central role of the image of the Indian, native people played a very small role in the creation of this public memory of western expansion. Native people participated in commemorations primarily as models for sculptors, if such can be considered participation. Iron Tail, one of the models for the Indian Head nickel, presumably approved of the design of the nickel, similar as it was to other souvenir images in which we know Iron Tail took pride. By-and-large, however, native people did not have a public voice independent of whites in the era from 1890–1930. Those whites who advocated for Indian rights in this period were assimilationists.²¹⁸ As a result, monument-makers did not deem it important to seek counsel from native communities that might have had an interest in public commemorations. Indeed, it would have been remarkable and highly uncharacteristic had such consultation been conducted, particularly given the belief that Indians represented a vanishing race. The voices of native people were thus not among those that shaped

²¹⁸ Hazel Whitman Hertzberg, "Indian Rights Movement, 1887-1973," in *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, Volume 4, William C Sturtevant, General Editor, and Wilcomb E. Washburn, Volume Editor (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988) p. 305.

the public memory of western expansion. From today's vantage point, it would be difficult and highly speculative to attempt to imagine native responses from the period.²¹⁹

Remarkably, public monuments from 1890-1930 made the Indian a hero in the story of western expansion. As this study demonstrates, without input from native people, western expansion was remembered as an epic during which heroic natives surrendered their lands in the face of a superior civilization, and heroic neo-natives, the pioneers, settled the land Indians left bare. As we witnessed, Indian heroism came with a high price. In the sculptures installed in the public realm by Cyrus Dallin and others, the heroic Indian offered a "signal of peace." According to these monuments, native peoples accepted defeat, ultimately giving up their freedom and lifestyle and placing a final appeal to a higher power for some form of ill-defined intercession. The public memory of western expansion represented Indian heroism as a thing of the past--a quality that vanished along with the demise of traditional tribal culture. Indians who survived into the modern world, "reservation Indians," even in the minds of sympathetic individuals such as Cyrus Dallin, occupied the bottom layer of the social strata of the United States. They didn't roam the prairies freely, sustaining themselves through their craft and cunning, as earlier, heroic, generations had. Instead, they were dependent members of the welfare state, confined to reservation land and supported by government entitlements.

I would like to close this study by fast-forwarding from the 1890-1930 period to the late 1960s. At this point in the nation's history, native people aggressively inserted themselves into the public realm, fashioning for the first time a public political voice that attracted nationwide media attention and forced the Federal government to begin the process of overhauling the nation's Indian policy. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement and the spirit of protest

²¹⁹ Though one can point to campaigns, legal and public, fought by Indians against rights violations as inconsistent with the image of the acquiescent Indian offering peace. For some examples of these campaigns see, *Ibid.*

surrounding the Vietnam War, Indian political activism, which had been percolating out of public view for decades, exploded onto the public scene. Through a series of highly publicized protest actions, the Red Power movement, which ushered in the era of Indian self-determination, was born. What is of particular interest to me about the Red Power movement is the way that images it generated, slogans it expressed, and actions it took, worked in concert to declare an end to the peace announced by European-Americans in the period from 1890–1930. These images, slogans, and actions spoke across the century, laying to rest the image of the acquiescent warrior and resuscitating the image of the defiant warrior. While proving successful in inspiring the movement for Indian self-determination, this strategy permanently transformed the public memory of western expansion that had been cast in bronze earlier in the century.

The overall strategy of the political rhetoric used by Red Power activists was neatly encapsulated in an excerpt from the *Warpath*, the first militant, pan-Indian newspaper in the United States. The *Warpath* was established by a University of California, Berkeley student group called the United Native Americans in 1968. In an article entitled, “The New Indians,” the newspaper’s founder, Lehman Brightman, proclaimed, “The ‘Stoic, Silent Redman’ of the past who turned the other cheek to white injustice is dead. (He died of frustration and heartbreak). And in his place is an angry group of Indians who dare to speak up and voice their dissatisfaction with the world around them. Hate and despair have taken their toll and only action can quiet this smoldering anger that has fused this new Indian movement into being.”²²⁰ By calling their newspaper the *Warpath*, and announcing the death of the “Stoic, Silent Redman,” Brightman and the United Native Americans rejected the conciliatory image of the Indian, reclaiming instead the legacy of a militant Indian past. The image of the conciliatory Indian had been around since the

²²⁰ Excerpt reproduced in, Troy R. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p. 33.

early 19th century. As we have seen, in the period from 1890-1930, through the repeated use of the “signal of peace” theme, this image was cast in bronze in the public realm, subsequently reproduced in mass, and thus permanently ingrained in the social fabric of the nation. In the creation of the public memory of western expansion from 1890-1930, Indian militancy and protest had been largely forgotten. Peace-seeking Indians were accorded the status of heroes. In their battle for self-determination, native people excavated the militant warrior image from the vault of American memory and forcefully thrust it into the public realm as they put to rest the acquiescent Indian. In order to explore how this was done, we shall examine the images, rhetoric, and actions deployed by participants in what were the two most significant public protest actions of the early 1970s, the Alcatraz Occupation in San Francisco Bay and the standoff at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux in South Dakota.

The Red Power movement’s first public statement of Indian militancy was realized with the takeover and occupation of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. From November 20, 1969 – June 11, 1971, a pan-Indian group made up of an alliance between Indian student activists and established leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area Indian community and calling itself Indians of All Tribes, Inc., occupied and inhabited Alcatraz Island. Those who participated in the occupation were not native Californians. Rather, they were some of the 15,000-20,000 native people who had been moved from Indian reservations to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Federal government’s termination and relocation policy.²²¹ Adam Nordwall, one of the architects of the occupation, wryly referred to this federal effort as the government’s attempt to “get out of the Indian business.”²²² The termination policy was a

²²¹ Ibid., p. 9.

²²² From *We Hold the Rock*, a 1997 National Park Service documentary film about the occupation which runs on a continuous loop at Alcatraz Island, which is now a unit of the urban national park, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

reversal of New Deal Indian Policy, which had fostered tribalism. Termination was the latest effort to break up the communal ownership of reservation land, do away with tribal sovereignty, remove people from reservations, and assimilate them into mainstream society.

When termination and relocation were set in motion by House Concurrent Resolution 108 of the United States Congress (1953), Indian reservations, as they always had been, were suffering from extreme poverty and associated social problems. As a result, many native people moved to urban areas with the promise of federal aid in the form of financial support, job training and educational opportunity. Soon after moving to urban areas, however, most native people found themselves divorced from government support and living in the same impoverished conditions they had sought to leave behind at the reservations. In response to these alienating conditions, native people in urban areas formed social networks and meeting places where they attempted to maintain a sense of tradition and remedy the social ills that plagued them. Through these social networks, individual alienation was transformed into collective disillusionment. Joined with the spirit of protest of the 1960s, this discontent was expressed in the public realm in the form of pan-Indian activism.²²³

On October 28, 1969, the San Francisco Indian Center, the biggest of such meeting places in the Bay Area serving an estimated 30,000 native people, burned to the ground. This tragedy gave rise to the spirit that led to the Alcatraz Occupation. Before dawn on November 20, 1969, a force of seventy-nine Indians, which included students, married couples and children, landed on Alcatraz and started the nineteen-month occupation. At the time of the Alcatraz Occupation, the former military fortification and notorious federal penitentiary in the middle of San Francisco Bay was excess federal property under the administration of the General Services Administration. The Island had been the stage for several smaller-scale native protest actions in

²²³ Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 1996, pp. 6-15.

the 1960s. As this major occupation got underway, the City of San Francisco was entertaining proposals for private redevelopment of Alcatraz. In a typical inversion of colonial narratives, Indians of All Tribes, Inc. set forth a Proclamation claiming the Island by right of discovery. In the Proclamation, Indians of All Tribes, Inc. offered to sign a treaty with the United States government by which the organization would gain title to the Island for \$24.00 in glass beads and cloth. The Proclamation went on to spell out how Indians of All Tribes, Inc. saw Alcatraz in the future, with plans for training, educational and museum facilities, all dedicated to native people. In the nineteen months that it was occupied, as many as 400-500 native people lived on Alcatraz at certain times. Thousands of native people traveled to Alcatraz, in pilgrimage fashion, to step foot on the Island and claim a part in the protest action.²²⁴ While it did not represent the birth of Indian radicalism, Alcatraz marked a turning point where a radical point of view received widespread attention in the United States for the first time.²²⁵

Immediately upon hearing of the occupation, President Nixon's White House removed the General Services Administration from any responsibility for the matter and assumed jurisdiction. In order to avoid bloodshed, the White House chose not to send in law enforcement officers to put down the occupation. Instead, the Federal government played a waiting game, refusing to negotiate with the protestors and gradually cutting off supplies of food and water. The occupation received widespread and enthusiastic public support initially, and was even a cause celebre, with notables such as the rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival donating a supply boat. With the passage of time, however, the novelty of the occupation waned and media attention grew sparse. Conditions on the Island became grave, and internal conflict replaced the earlier spirit of solidarity. With the Alcatraz lighthouse damaged to the point that it ceased to

²²⁴ Ibid., pp. 49-78.

²²⁵ Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), p. 35.

function as an aid to navigation, and the public safety of those sailing in San Francisco Bay seriously threatened, armed federal marshals landed on Alcatraz on June 11, 1971, removing the final fifteen occupiers.²²⁶

Even as Alcatraz was occupied, it was imagined as a public monument (Figure 60). In a pen and ink illustration entitled, “Alcatraz the Idea and Alcatraz the Island Must Always be in Harmony,” which appeared in the *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes Newsletter*, the rocky outcroppings of the Island’s topography have been sculpted into the shapes of Indian heads.²²⁷ The inspiration for this image was no doubt Mt. Rushmore, where the heads of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt had been carved into the Black Hills, sacred land to many of the tribes inhabiting the High Plains region. Depicting Indian heads carved into land taken by Indian activists without regard for federal law, this pen and ink illustration imagined Alcatraz as a West Coast version and counterweight to Mt. Rushmore. As Mt. Rushmore was a permanent reminder to native people of the occupation of traditional Indian lands by European-Americans, the carving of Indian heads into Alcatraz was imagined here as a permanent way of remembering the fight of native people for self-determination by the militant takeover of a piece of federal real estate. While pointing to the possession of federal land, the image also highlights the Red Power movement’s reclaiming of Indian imagery to suit native purposes. Particularly in the two profiled Indian heads, one recognizes traces of James Earle Fraser’s Indian Head nickel of 1913. Unlike the nickel, however, where the Indian represented the First American and thus signified the national identity of the United States, here the male Indian body is used to signify an Indian racial identity and history.

²²⁶ From National Park Service documentary film, *We Hold the Rock*, 1997.

²²⁷ *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes Newsletter* 1:2 (February 1970): 3. Image reproduced in, Robert A. Rundstrom, “American Indian Placemaking on Alcatraz, 1969-1971,” in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, Special Edition: Alcatraz Revisited: The 25th Anniversary of the Occupation, 1969-1971* 18:4 (1994): 206.

This illustration imagined Alcatraz as a traditional memorial in sculpted stone. In fact, the political language of the occupation was of a more ephemeral type. Political graffiti and slogans, the adornment of personal clothing, and bodily gestures and actions, not traditional stone, were the means by which Indian activists on Alcatraz and elsewhere communicated to the contemporary public and, as it would turn out, across the ages. As John Trudell, one of the student leaders of the occupation who would eventually go on to head the American Indian Movement later put it, “this was body politics.”²²⁸ There is a growing literature on the history of the Red Power movement.²²⁹ One aspect of the movement that has gone unremarked upon, however, is the imagery that Red Power activists created as part of their struggle for self-determination, and the role that this imagery played in this struggle.

We have seen how a public memory of western expansion was created in bronze and stone in the period from 1890-1930. In these concluding pages, we shall explore how through political graffiti, slogans, and bodily gestures, Indian activists contested and transformed this public memory of western expansion in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A common feature of political revolutions is the destruction of public monuments and the appropriation and reinterpretation of symbols representing the previous political and social order to suit the revolutionary ideology.²³⁰ Because the public identity and history of native people had for centuries been represented by others, in the revolutionary struggle for self-determination, it was particularly significant, indeed essential, for native people to take command of the images and

²²⁸ From National Park Service documentary film, *We Hold the Rock*, 1997.

²²⁹ Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, 1996, and Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 1996, are two prominent, book-length, examples. Many of the other works cited in this chapter also make up part of this growing body of literature on the Red Power movement.

²³⁰ For a recent example, recall media images from Iraq from the year of 2003 showing Iraqi citizens toppling monuments to Saddam Hussein in the wake of the fall of the Bathist regime due to the invasion of the country by American and British military forces.

concepts by which they and their histories were understood in the United States. The imagery and slogans employed during the Alcatraz Occupation begin to demonstrate how this was done.

As soon as they took the Island, occupiers began to cover building surfaces, inside and out, with political graffiti. The imagery and slogans used in association with the occupation of Alcatraz Island richly illustrate the Red Power movement's rejection of the conciliatory Indian and resuscitation and valorization of the militant warrior as a principal strategy for accomplishing self-determination.²³¹ As we have seen, in monuments from the early 20th century, the figure of an Indian proffering a peace pipe was one way of signifying the end of Indian resistance to white encroachment on native lands and the triumph of European-American civilization in the New World. At Plymouth Rock, recall, the Wampanoag chief *Massasoit*, as he offered a peace pipe to the pilgrim settlers, was accorded the sculptural attributes of the greatest hero in all of western art, Michelangelo's *David* (see Figure 10 in Chapter 2). In Red Power imagery, the end of peace was signified as the proffered peace pipe was replaced by the broken peace pipe (Figures 61 and 62). Broken peace pipes like the one painted on a former military building on Alcatraz or the one displayed on the embroidered coat of an occupation participant announced the end of the symbolic peace which had been declared in monuments such as *Massasoit* and which had stood uncontested throughout the 20th century up to the point of the Red Power movement.

The broken peace pipe was a call to Indian militancy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as was the naming of a radical newspaper the *Warpath*. These rhetorical flourishes also pointed to a

²³¹ In 1972, soon after the occupation, Alcatraz, along with other former military lands in the San Francisco Bay Area, came under management of the National Park Service in the then-newly established urban national park called the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Today, much of the political graffiti covering buildings on Alcatraz are preserved as a testament to the occupation. The graffiti, though currently in a state of deterioration, has been carefully inventoried and documented by John Noxon and Deborah Marcus (Noxon), *Inventory of Occupation Graffiti 1969-1971, Alcatraz Island, Golden Gate National Recreation Area* (San Francisco: National Park Service, Western Region, 1979).

candid reconsideration of the history of western expansion--one that emphasized, rather than downplayed, the history of conflict. Despite 18th and 19th century policies aimed at displacing Indians from their homelands through peaceful means, the settlement of the United States by European-Americans was underwritten by the rifle as much as the peace treaty. In the period from 1846-1890, an entire military strategy and infrastructure of forts was established in the western United States to safeguard settlement from Indian resistance. Yet, in the wake of this violent period, the public memory of western expansion had focused not on the conflict that characterized expansion but rather on the theme of peace that had been secured.

Accordingly, western expansion, unlike the Civil War, was remembered less through the figure of the United States military soldier and commanding officer, and more through the peace-seeking Indian and the pioneer mother, harbingers of domesticity and peace. The Indian was embraced as a symbol of the nation, the First American, effectively erasing the memory of all the Indian tribes that actually fought the United States. Red Power political slogans of the 1960s and 1970s, in contrast, brashly highlighted the military conflict that characterized western expansion. Slogans that recurred on the walls of buildings on Alcatraz such as, "Custer had it coming" and "Custer was no good," were typical evocations of this candidness about the armed conflict that characterized western expansion (Figure 63). While emphasizing conflict, these particular statements attempted to revise the memory of Custer. Conventionally remembered as the victim of an atrocious Indian massacre, these statements instead cast Custer as a casualty in a just fight to preserve one's homeland and way of life.

The symbol most commonly used to express renewed Indian militancy on Alcatraz and elsewhere was the red fist (Figure 64). The raised fist as a symbol of protest emerged out of the

1960s black power movement.²³² The most memorable use of the fist as a symbol of protest occurred in the 1968 Mexico City Summer Olympic Games, when two African-American track and field runners, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, raised their black-gloved fists from the medal ceremony victory podium during the playing of the National Anthem. As the Red Power movement emerged in the late 1960s, Indian activists adopted the raised fist as their own. Ironically, as has been pointed out, Cyrus Dallin's equestrian warrior in *Protest of the Sioux* from 1904 raised a clenched fist of defiance in much the same manner as 1960s and 1970s Indian activists (see Figure 3 in Chapter 2).²³³ As we have seen, however, the provocative theme of the sculpture probably kept Dallin's monument from finding a permanent home in the public realm in the early 20th century. Instead of raising the clenched fist in a gesture that threatened violence, Indians gestured acquiescently in monuments between 1890-1930 (see Figure 9 in Chapter 2). The open hand, not the clenched fist, characterized the attitude of the Indian in the early 20th public memory of western expansion. Young male and female native activists replaced the open hand with the raised fist in the 1960s and 1970s (Figure 65). In so doing, they connected with a warrior tradition that had resisted European-American conquest. Steve Talbot, an anthropologist and Indian activist who supported the occupation put it succinctly in describing occupation participants, "They were young, they were brave, they were warriors, both men and women."²³⁴

In selecting their heroes, these neo-warriors shunned native people who had been remembered, albeit misleadingly, for having welcomed settlement of the continent by European-

²³² The Black Panther Party, an African-American group that emerged in Oakland, California in 1966 advocating a radical political ideology, originated the use of the black fist, also known as the black power salute, as a symbol of black power and unity. For the history of the Black Panther Party see, Mario Van Peebles, Ula Y. Taylor, and J. Tarika Lewis, *Panther: A Pictorial History of the Black Panthers and the Story Behind the Making of the Film*, with a Prologue by Melvin Van Peebles (New York: New Market Press, 1995).

²³³ Rell G. Francis, *Cyrus E. Dallin: Let Justice be Done* (Springville, Utah: Springville Museum of Art and Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1976) p. 43.

²³⁴ Troy R. Johnson, *We Hold the Rock: The Indian Occupation of Alcatraz, 1969 to 1971* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Parks Association, 1997), p. 15. This publication is the counterpart to the National Park Service documentary film of the same title.

Americans, identifying instead with native leaders famous for their resistance to colonization. Soon after the occupation of Alcatraz Island began, a group of activists hung a sign from the national eagle over the entrance to the Island's main prison building (Figure 66). The sign was one of many conspicuous public statements claiming ownership of the Island in the immediate aftermath of its takeover. To the bottom of the statement claiming Alcatraz was attached an image of Geronimo (Figure 67).

In the image, the Apache chief who in the 1880s resisted forced confinement on a reservation, leading to his pursuit through the desert Southwest and his ultimate capture by the United States Army in 1886, is the essence of defiance. He kneels tensely and at the ready for combat. He glares at the viewer proffering a rifle where a Massasoit or other "friendly" Indian might have proffered a peace pipe. After his capture, Geronimo made an income by signing pictures such as this one.²³⁵ In contrast to Pueblo and other Indians of the Southwest who were understood as peaceful and industrious, Apaches were always reputed to be inveterate savages. Images such as this one thus gained their popularity by trading on the irony of this once-fierce warrior now the subject of photographic curiosity. The activists who pasted the image of Geronimo to the prison building at the top of Alcatraz Island in 1969 did so absent any sense of irony. Geronimo had defended the right to live on his native homeland against the United States government with the rifle. He was now the perfect symbol for native people intent on claiming a piece of federal real estate, an act that defiantly rejected the established rule of law in the United States.

Today, Alcatraz Island is indeed a public memorial commemorating its takeover and occupation. But it is not a memorial sculpted in stone as imagined in the *Alcatraz Indians of All*

²³⁵ Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), p. 49 and 150.

Tribes Newsletter illustration. It is a national historic landmark managed by the National Park Service. Alcatraz as a historical site is unusual and significant in that it preserves political graffiti and slogans and the burned out carcasses of buildings as testimony of its place in the history of the Red Power movement. It is only recently that sites of protest have begun to enter into the fold of historic sites, and I know of no other sites that bear testimony to the Red Power movement as effectively as Alcatraz. Though Indians of All Tribes, Inc. failed in its bid to establish permanent facilities on Alcatraz for native people, it did succeed in staging a nineteen-month protest action that garnered sustained attention in the media in the United States and internationally. The Alcatraz Occupation ignited a series of protest actions across the United States in the early 1970s, which culminated with the standoff at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux in South Dakota in 1973.²³⁶ This exploration of the Red Power movement's effort to contest and reframe the public memory of western expansion in the late 1960s and early 1970s must conclude where the exploration of the construction of the public memory of western expansion earlier in the century began, with the end of the Indian Wars of the 19th century, and in particular at the Battle of Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

At Wounded Knee, for the first time the interests of reservation Indians were joined with the interests of the urban Indian movement under the spotlight of the public eye.²³⁷ The standoff was orchestrated by leaders of the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM started in Minneapolis in 1968, and distinguished itself from the many urban activist groups to emerge at the time by rapidly developing into a national organization.²³⁸ Many of those who helped establish the organization, Russell Means, Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt and John Trudell among them, would emerge from the early 1970s as the leading voices of Indian activism for

²³⁶ Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 1996, tell the story of this wave of protest actions.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

years to come. At Alcatraz, the public political rhetoric of Indian activism resuscitated the image of the defiant warrior. According to a recent study of Indian activism of the early 1970s, participants in AIM actually imagined *themselves* as members of a modern-day warrior society whose purpose was to protect Indian communities. AIM's apogee as this modern-day warrior society unfolded over a 71-day period from February 27 – May 8, 1973.²³⁹ During this period, AIM leaders organized a gathering of two hundred native activists at the site of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre on the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux.

AIM had been invited to the reservation by Sioux traditionalists. The traditionalists charged the tribal government led by Richard (Dicky) Wilson and supported by government officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs with corruption.²⁴⁰ While the tribal government and federal marshals who had come to the reservation to quell the internal turmoil were located in Pine Ridge, the Sioux and their AIM allies there to assist the uprising staged a takeover of the reservation community of Wounded Knee. Once federal officials learned of the arrival of a convoy of AIM members at Wounded Knee, federal marshals, FBI agents and the United States Army's 82nd Airborne Division scrambled to surround the area.

The ensuing two months were characterized by high tension and intense media coverage, which brought the events into the living rooms of all Americans. As at Alcatraz, the Nixon administration, now seasoned by several such Indian protests, played a waiting game. It had learned that by avoiding casualties, holding discussions with the protestors and gradually cutting off sources of supply and support, it could string out events such that media attention would wane and the action would come to an end for lack of momentum.²⁴¹ Wounded Knee did not transpire exactly as the government planned. Discussions between government officials and

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 200.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 190-193, 200.

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 194-217.

Indian representatives were carried out, media attention did wane, conditions for the protestors grew increasingly uncomfortable. However, the standoff was also marked by sporadic gun battles, leading to casualties on both sides. Before the siege ended, Lloyd Grimm, a federal marshal, was the most critically wounded individual on the government side, suffering paralysis due to a gunshot wound. On the Indian side, two protestors, Frank Clearwater and Lawrence (Buddy) Lamont, were shot dead in a gun battle on May 8.²⁴² These deaths precipitated the end of the violent standoff. With this shedding of blood, the standoff at Wounded Knee penetrated the national consciousness deeper than any of the other protest actions of the early 1970s.²⁴³ We shall now explore why this was the case.

As the standoff at Wounded Knee transpired, *Time* magazine reported that it was as if “history had been hijacked by a band of revisionists armed with a time machine.”²⁴⁴ *Time* was of course referring to the fact that in 1890 Wounded Knee had been the site of a previous standoff between Indian practitioners of the messianic Ghost Dance religion and the United States Army. A mix of Christianity and traditional Indian religion, the Ghost Dance prophesied the disappearance of the white man and the return to a traditional way of life. In 1889-90, with conditions in Indian Country at their nadir, the Ghost Dance swept from reservation to reservation. On the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations of South Dakota, the Ghost Dance inspired such native defiance that the reservation agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs turned for assistance to General Nelson A. Miles, who ordered troops in.

Miles’ desire to avoid a violent outcome was undone by ill-advised attempts of the reservation agent to apprehend tribal leaders during the height of tensions. First, an effort to sequester Sitting Bull led to a skirmish resulting in the death of the renowned Sioux Chief, seven

²⁴² Ibid., p. 234, 249, 259.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 207.

²⁴⁴ *Time* excerpt reproduced in Ibid., p. 207.

of his followers, and six of the tribal police sent to take him away. On the heels of this first tragic failure, the reservation agent then attempted to take into custody the “non-progressive,” traditionalist leader Big Foot. Again shots rang out. This time, the military forces brought in by Miles unleashed their firepower. The ensuing violence that took place on December 29, 1890 left 146 Sioux killed, dozens of them women and children. On the United States military side 25 were killed. In the long history of Indian–white conflict, Wounded Knee marked the end of armed hostilities between Indians and soldiers of the United States Army.²⁴⁵

What is interesting about the *Time* statement reproduced above is that the magazine perceived that the AIM protesters were armed with more than weapons, and that the protest had to do with something more than addressing the immediate grievances of the Sioux traditionalists living on the South Dakota reservation. AIM was indeed willing to shed blood in making its stand at Wounded Knee on behalf of members of the Sioux tribe disenfranchised by the present tribal government. But in referring to the protestors as “revisionists armed with a time machine,” the magazine perceptively pointed to the symbolic importance of Wounded Knee. The protest was indeed, as has been pointed out, a piece of political theater.²⁴⁶ Over drinks with several other AIM leaders in New York in 1970, Russell Means, the individual most responsible for orchestrating the standoff, who was himself a member of the Sioux tribe, had stated that the Indian movement needed either a major victory or defeat against United States government forces in order to make an indelible mark on American society. The location Means believed held the potential for making the greatest impression was Wounded Knee.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Accounts of the Wounded Knee Massacre appear in Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 253-258, and Robert Utley, “Indian-United States Military Situation, 1848-1891,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-White Relations*, Volume 4, William C Sturtevant, General Editor, and Wilcomb E. Washburn, Volume Editor (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), pp. 182-183.

²⁴⁶ Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, 1996, pp. 207-211.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

Of all the strategies used by Indian activists to shatter the veneer of peace masking the true nature of Indian-white relations in American history, to reclaim the militant warrior tradition from the vault of American memory, and thus to transform the public memory of western expansion, the Wounded Knee siege conceived by Means and others was the most powerful. On his arrival at Wounded Knee as the siege was getting underway, Leonard Crow Dog, one of AIM's spiritual leaders, announced his complete identification with the Sioux of 1890, describing the current events as a reenactment of those events, "We're those Indian people, we're them, we're back, and we can't go any further. Wounded Knee is a place where we can't go any further."²⁴⁸ For native people at the dawn of the self-determination movement, there needed to be a return to Wounded Knee and the late-19th century scene of Indian-white conflict. As other activists had, the Wounded Knee protestors used broken peace pipes, lifted red fists, emphasized the violence of past Indian-white relations in their slogans, and valorized Indian resistance leaders. But they did more. Russell Means and AIM returned to the site of the Wounded Knee massacre intent on transforming the memory of that event. At a community meeting that took place during the siege, Means spoke eloquently about the revisionist intent of the 1973 Wounded Knee standoff, "The white man says that the 1890 massacre was the end of the wars with the Indian, that it was the end of the Indian, the end of the Ghost Dance. Yet here we are at war, we're still Indians, and we're Ghost Dancing again."²⁴⁹ Means understood well how the legacy of western expansion was conventionally understood in the United States. His strategy for overcoming conventional public memory was to reenact and transcend the final scene in the Indian Wars of the 19th century.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 202.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 230.

Indians emerged from the second Wounded Knee proudly defiant, putting to rest the warrior offering a signal of peace, which had been the dominant image through which the rest of America remembered the legacy of western expansion in the wake of the first Wounded Knee at the beginning of the 20th century. This shake-up in the public memory of western expansion provided the conceptual foundation for ending two centuries of policies aimed at terminating Indian tribes and assimilating individual Indians and replacing them with a policy of Indian self-determination. In the era of self-determination, which continues to the present day, tribal landholdings have increased for the first time in the nation's history. Tribal sovereignty has increased with the many additions to the list of Federally-recognized Indian tribes. Through an increasing number of tribal courts and law enforcement agencies, native people have increasingly managed activities on tribal lands. The Federal government has increased funding for Indian affairs, and management positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs have increasingly been occupied by native people. Indian gaming casinos and other forms of economic development have bred financial self-sufficiency. In short, native people are charting their own course without the paternalistic intervention of white Americans for the first time in the history of the United States.²⁵⁰

At a conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration a few years ago, Vivian Hailstone, an elderly California Indian basket weaver of Yurok, Hoopa, and Karuk ancestry amusingly quipped about how it was important for her and her fellow weavers to maintain the warrior tradition.²⁵¹ This was amusing to Hailstone and her associates in attendance because of

²⁵⁰ American Indian Lawyer Training Program, *Indian Tribes as Sovereign Governments: A Sourcebook on Federal-Tribal History, Law, and Policy* (Oakland, CA: American Indian Lawyer Training Program, 1998) pp. 14-21. A friend and professional acquaintance of mine, Ann-Marie Sayers, a Mutsun Ohlone-Costanoan Indian, is fond of saying that in the history of the United States, now is the best time to be a California Indian.

²⁵¹ Workshop run by Vivian Hailstone and Kathy Wallace (Yurok/Hoopa/Karuk), "Basket weaving and Native Plant Management," Society for Ecological Restoration 11th Annual International Conference, September 21-22, Presidio

Hailstone's grandmotherly appearance and because there was no native Californian warrior tradition comparable to the Plains tradition. Nonetheless, for Hailstone and these other weavers, maintaining that "tradition" might mean that in working with federal, state, or local agencies of government, they needed to be assertive in advocating for policies that would enable them to gather traditional plant materials as they always have on public lands under pressure of competing uses. In this way and no doubt in countless other ways the reinvigoration of the warrior tradition which began with the Red Power movement lives on. A central plank of the Red Power movement for self-determination was the reclaiming and reinterpretation of images of Indians that for centuries had been used by non-Indians. This effort, too, continues to this day with the lively debate nationwide concerning the use of Indian images as team mascots. There probably isn't an Indian mascot in any part of the nation that by this time has not been contested. Self-determination thus remains grounded in maintaining authority over images of Indians.

In 1996, participants from the Alcatraz Occupation, with the support of the National Park Service, commemorated the 25th anniversary of the takeover and occupation. The 25th anniversary culminated a wave of historical appreciation about the occupation that included both written and documentary film work. Out of this period of historical inquiry and appreciation, those who had participated in the revolutionary protest at Alcatraz insisted that they be referred to as "veterans," a term traditionally reserved for those who have fought on behalf of the government, not against it.²⁵² Indeed, the return of Alcatraz "veterans" to the "battlefield" of Alcatraz for a state-sponsored celebration and remembrance on the anniversary of the occupation had the ring to it of Civil, World and other war veterans returning to their respective battlefields

of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Sadly, since this conference, Vivian Hailstone has passed away.

²⁵² The wishes of the participants from the occupation were generally granted. See, for example, Johnson, *We Hold the Rock*, 1996, for references to the "Veterans of the Occupation."

in remembrance of their heroic efforts. One wonders if this act of commemorative incorporation signals a conceptual move beyond both the facile peace of the early 20th century and the violent protest of the 1960s and 1970s, and if it suggests that we are at the dawn of a better future for the citizens of the United States, Indian and non-Indian alike.

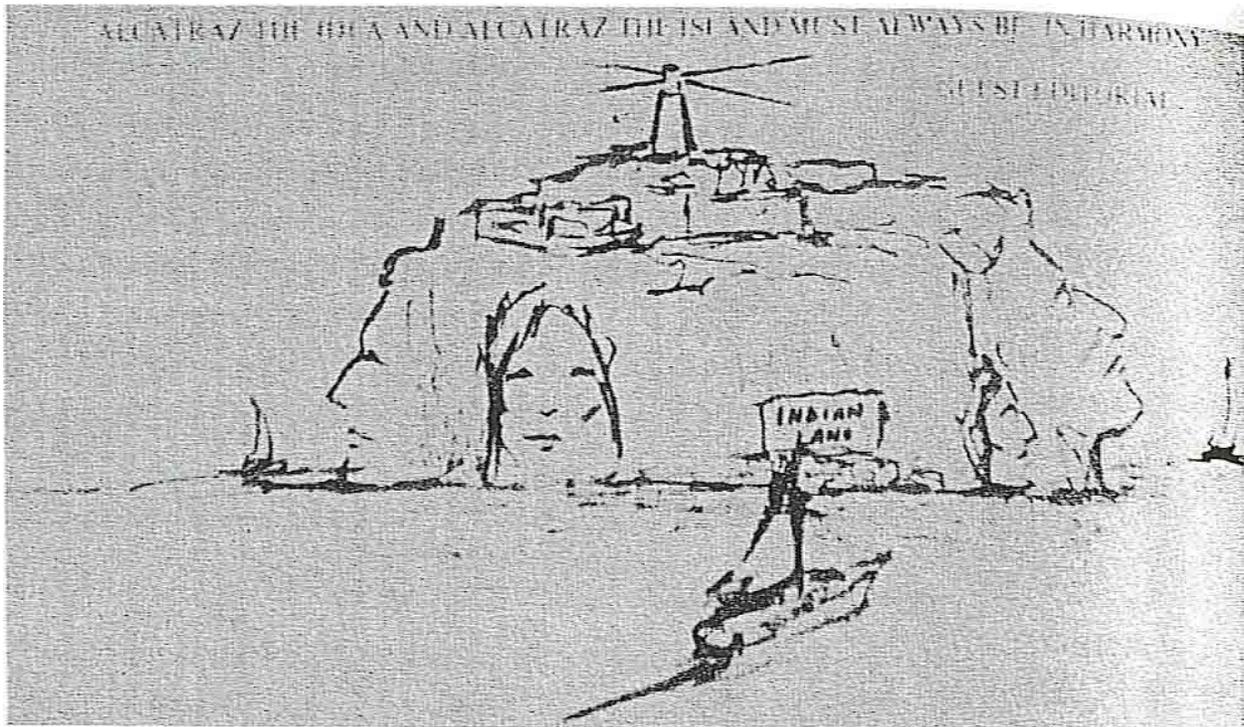


Figure 60. *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes Newsletter*, "Alcatraz the Idea and Alcatraz the Island Must Always be in Harmony," 1970.

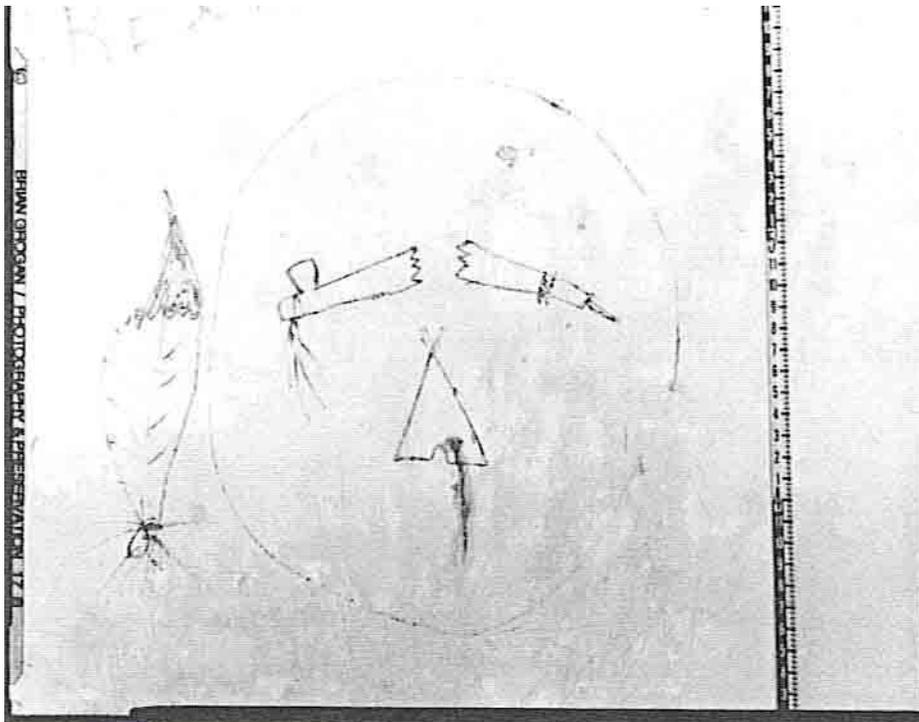


Figure 61. Unknown, *Broken Peace Pipe*, c. 1969-71.



Figure 62. Unknown, *Broken Peace Pipe*, c. 1969-71.



Figure 63. Unknown, *Custer Had It Coming*, c. 1969-71.



Figure 64. Unknown, *Red Fist*, c. 1969-71.



Figure 65. Indian Activists Raising Fists in Red Power Salute, c. 1969-1971.

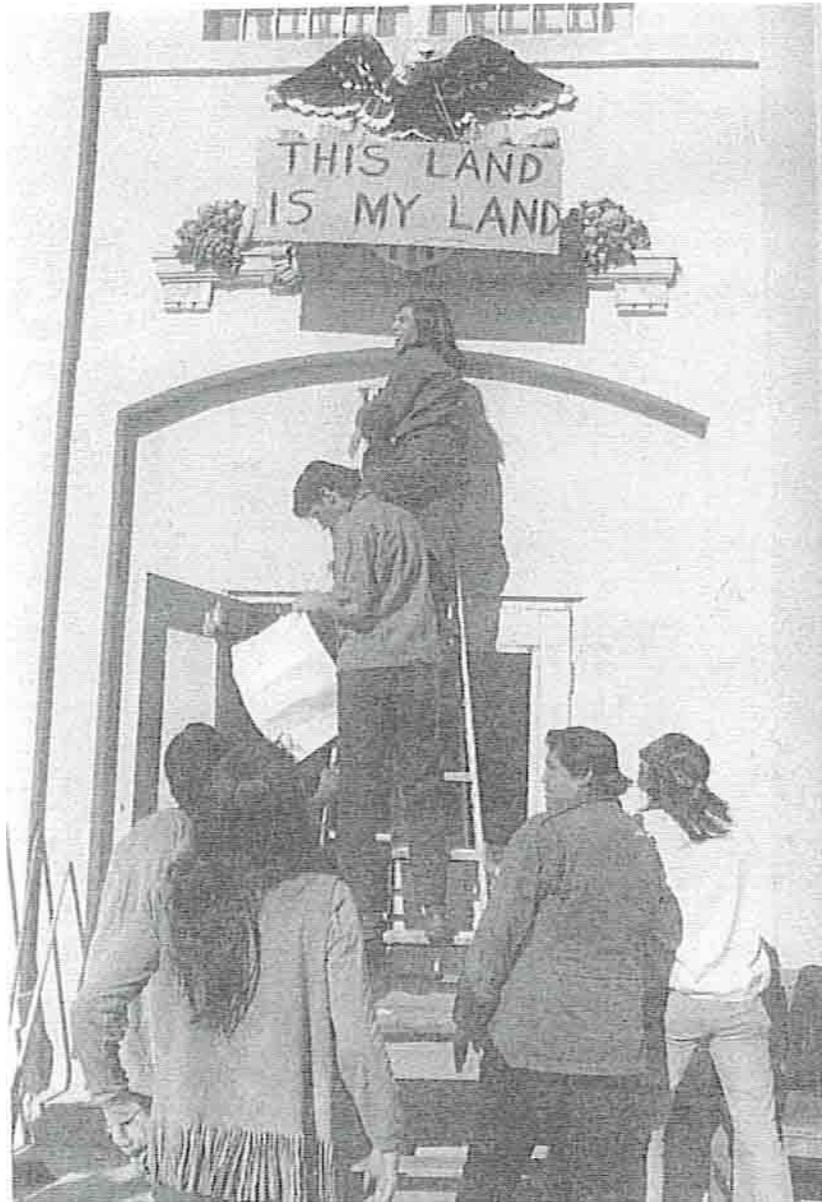


Figure 66. Indian Activists Hanging Protest Sign on Alcatraz Island, 1969.

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