Harry E. "Indian" Miller: Spectacles of Identity in the Early Twentieth Century American Southwest

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HARRY E. “INDIAN” MILLER:
Spectacles of Identity in the Early Twentieth Century American Southwest

By
Courtney Lamb

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Claremont Graduate University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in History.

We certify that we have read this document
and approve it as adequate in scope and
quality for the degree of Master of Arts.

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INTRODUCTION—SPECTACLES OF IDENTITY IN THE EMERGENT SOUTHWEST

Harry Edgar Miller was born into a family of pioneers in the Territory of New Mexico in 1879 and died in a cave on the Arizona/New Mexico border in 1951. Miller was a self-styled historian, archaeologist, writer, philosopher, sideshow impresario, and roadside curio shop owner and zookeeper, but he was above all a showman who performed his life as much as possible in public and in the pages of the newspapers. The choices he made in how to present and promote himself in the different phases of his life reflect important cultural and political shifts in the emergent American West of the early twentieth century. Throughout his life, Miller pursued careers that combined exhibition with entertainment and entrepreneurship. He made his living enacting what this work defines as spectacles of identity—performances or scenes dependent upon markers of ethnographic identity for their visual impact and commercial appeal, For the first three decades of the twentieth century, Miller’s spectacles of identity depended on his presentation of himself as an Apache known as Indian Miller, despite the fact that he had no Apache or Native American heritage. He also helped launch his children, who were born in the Philippines to a Filipino mother, on their own career in spectacles of identity performing in ethnographic exhibitions in carnival sideshows. What this work will demonstrate is that Miller’s adoption of an Indian persona was more than just an idiosyncratic choice from a unique individual. Instead, Miller’s self-stylings and the Miller family’s work in ethnographic exhibitions reflected broader shifts in Western identities in formation during his lifetime. As an entertainer and marketer, Miller stands out for his demonstration of the complexity of identities that defined this burgeoning moment of the American West. His and his family’s self-
presentation reveals the general fluidity and hybridity of early western identities, especially for those engaged in commercial enterprises dependent upon racial and ethnic identity formulations.

Despite limited business success, Miller attained notoriety throughout the West primarily on the strength of his Indian persona. An analysis of his time in New Mexico, Oregon, San Diego, and Arizona reveals how early twentieth century commercial culture was informed by frontier mythology and prompted individuals to form complex identities. Miller’s reliance on an invented persona, and his dedication to his individual version of scholarship and exhibition, seem, at first glance, to place him in the storied tradition of the American huckster—characters like P.T. Barnum, Harry Houdini, Lydia B Pinkham of the Vegetable Compound, and their fictitious counterpart Henry Hill, The Music Man. It stands to reason that a huckster would construct an entirely false persona to bolster his outlandish claims, but Miller grounded his showmanship in the facts of his biography as verified in government documents and military records. The only consistently false assertion about his own past was his Apache parentage, a fake heritage that he only dropped late in life, in the 1940s, when, as this paper will argue, the novelty and commercial power of his persona waned.

The success of the Indian Miller persona in the Southwest during the 1920s and 1930s depended on the economic, political, and cultural conditions that arose out of the tumultuous reorientation of American life that occurred during the fin de siècle transition from the rapid industrialization of the Gilded Age to the social and political reforms of the Progressive Era.¹

The same resultant romanticization of the Wild West that facilitated Harry’s spectacle of identity enabled the concurrent carnival career of Miller’s half-Filipino children and their mother Agunai. In both cases, the targeted audiences (who were also the paying customers) were European-Americans seeking to construct coherent personal and national identities at a time in which racialized identities were the subject of intense debate and were being forcibly shaped by legislation and government policy.² Key legislation regarding citizenship or immigration based on race or nation of origin included the Naturalization Act of 1870, which extended citizenship to people of African descent; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882; the Immigration Act of 1917, which imposed a literacy test and barred Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mexican immigrants while placing no restrictions on those from Western Europe; the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, which effectively banned all immigration from Asia by placing a 2% quota based on 1890 census populations; the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924; and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which granted the right to tribal self-government. These laws and related policies determined basic rights like who was permitted to immigrate, apply for citizenship, own land, homestead, and vote. They forced individuals like Harry E. Miller, Agunai Miller, and their children to make decisions that seem confounding or regrettable by present-day standards. By reconstructing the historical context of the cities and town in which Miller lived, the logic of the Miller family’s decisions comes into focus and serves as a cautionary tale for museum and zoo professionals, entertainers, documentarians, and others engaged in creating or participating in spectacles of identity.
Miller’s first foray into spectacles of identity was his brief and contentious attempt at
serving as impresario of a so-called “human zoo” exhibiting a group of Igorot people from the
Philippines.³ By the time Miller joined the Igorot exhibition trade in 1915, the practice’s heyday
had passed.⁴ Government officials and ethnologists had facilitated the “Igorrote Reservations” of
World’s Fairs like the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St Louis in 1904, thus conferring a
degree of scientific and social legitimacy upon such exhibitions.⁵ The evolving military and
political situation in the Philippines soured the government’s attitude toward these exhibitions
and thwarted Miller’s plans for securing a contract for his troupe for the 1915 Panama Pacific
International Exposition in San Francisco. Nonetheless, public appetite for Igorot spectacles
remained strong enough for private commercial enterprises like carnivals and fairs to absorb the
Igorot exhibition trade into their sideshows at least until the 1930s.

Most of the European-American impresarios who contracted and managed troupes of
Igorots in the first two decades of the twentieth century were, like Miller, military veterans who

³ For the history and legacy of “human zoos” in Europe, America and Japan, see Pascal Blanchard, Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires, ed. Nicolas Bancel et al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

⁴ Government officials, ethnographers, exposition and carnival promoters, and journalists in the United States used various spellings of Igorot until about the 1930s, including Igorotes, Igorot, and Igorottes. The Spanish term Igorote was borrowed from Spanish colonialists.

had served in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine-American War, and/or the Philippine Constabulary posted in Northern Luzon, homeland of the Igorot people. A few of the showman were also, like Miller, father to children born to Igorot mothers. Miller appears to be unique among the impresarios in that his own Filipino children made a career of being exhibited in Igorot carnival sideshows in the United States, Canada, and Cuba. Miller and an Igorot woman named Agunai (also known as Ena) shared four children, three born in the Philippines and one born while on the carnival circuit in Indiana. Agunai and three of her children with Harry spent most of the years from 1916 to 1940 (and perhaps more) working as carnival entertainers. In contemporary archival documents like census records, passports, draft registrations, and newspaper articles, the Miller children were variously identified as white, Filipino, and Indian, indicating the fluid nature of both their self-identity and the perception of their identity by others.

While Agunai and the children performed in traveling carnivals, Harry pursued various careers as a lecturer, writer, and roadside entrepreneur in Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Harry’s careers depended in part upon exhibiting and commercializing his own identity,

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6 Richard Schneidewind was an Army Nurse during the Spanish-American War who stayed on in the Philippines after the war. He exhibited troupes of Igorots in the United States and Europe from 1904 to 1913. He had a son with his Filipina wife Gabina Gabril, who died in childbirth. Their son Richard was raised by his father’s family in Michigan and worked as a Professor of Metallurgy at the University of Michigan for forty years. See the article by the elder Schneidewind’s great-granddaughter Deana Weibel, “Mock Rituals, Sham Battles, and Real Research: Anthropologists and the Ethnographic Study of the Bontoc Igorot in the 1900s ‘Igorrote Villages.’” His son’s obituary is at “Schneidewind, Prof. Richard,” Ann Arbor News (Ann Arbor, MI), February 23, 1970.

Harold L Anfenger served in the Army and the Philippine Constabulary. He partnered with Harry E. Miller on importing a troupe of Igorots in 1914. Miller quickly abandoned his career as a carnival sideshow impresario, but Anfenger made it his life’s work for the next three decades. While living in Bontoc, Anfenger fathered a child named Filomena Anfenger with a local woman named Mary Ayachi. As a young child Filomena immigrated to America in the company of her guardian, an American missionary. Filomena was placed in the Bethany Home for Girls in Ohio and later worked as a file clerk, married, had a family of her own, and died at the age of 80. During the 1920s, her mother Mary Ayachi appeared in sideshows in the United States and Cuba in a small Igorot troupe managed by Harold Anfenger. By 1930, she was working in a candy factory, but I could find no further trace of her.

7 “Igorote Baby Is Born in Dodson Show Tent,” St Joseph Gazette (St Joseph, IN), May 24, 1930. This article about Lula Miller’s son’s birth mentions that her brother South Bend was born while the family was on the road with the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus.
but his identity was entirely fictitious. Miller worked under an assumed persona as a “full-blooded” Apache chief variously known as “Indian Miller” and “Crazy Thunder.” He adopted his Indian Miller identity while living in the Philippines and held fast to it even when put on trial for murdering a white man in Arizona in 1926. He styled his hair in two long, beribboned braids and wore moccasins and tunics familiar from the generic Plains Indians look favored by movie audiences. He bought native wild animals from trappers and relegated them to lives in small cages in his zoos, and he suffered repeated maulings while fondling the captive animals to demonstrate his claims to communion with them. He scavenged for Indian artifacts and created his own makeshift museums, building faux cliff dwellings to recreate authentic indigenous sites located on federally managed land.

Writing about the ways in which the contested and shifting boundaries of identity affected the lives of Miller and his children introduces the question of how to refer to race and identity in this paper. In Sight Unseen, his book on whiteness in the visual arts in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Martin Berger chooses to refer to Americans classified as white by the designation “European-Americans” in order to parallel the terms “Native American” and “African American” and to avoid assumptions about what “white” signifies. Berger’s focus on visual culture is particularly relevant to an examination of spectacles of identity, so his

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8“Although Apache leaders and the conflict of the Southwest are popularly known, it is the Plains tribal iconography of horses, buffalo, war bonnet, and teepees that dominates popular culture representations, serving as a generic model in motion pictures for all Native Americans.” Peter C. Rollins, The Columbia Companion to American History on Film: How the Movies Have Portrayed the American Past (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 162.

11 Martin A. Berger, Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 8. Berger notes that when he needs to further subdivide European-Americans into, say, Protestant and Jewish, “the needed adjectives compel readers to confront the inconsistent and historically contingent nature of racial definition.”
reasoning deserves close attention.\textsuperscript{12} When examining the West and Southwest of the Harry E. Miller’s time, the label European-American also resonates with its geographical and colonial meanings. Locating American whiteness in its European ancestry carries an implicit reminder that white settlement and political and economic power in America relied on the suppression and enslavement of populations that did not originate in Europe. The intertwined historical forces of continental colonialism and the African slave trade were later used to justify the use of military force to enable the territorial spread of the American government westward into the Pacific and Caribbean. Studies of American whiteness reveal complexities of white identity by examining the construction and enforcement of racial hierarchies and their dissemination through popular culture and discourse.\textsuperscript{13} European-Americans placed themselves at the top of the racial hierarchy and thus the social order not just in contrast to indigenous peoples and to people of different skin color but also in contrast to Europeans of the Old World. European-Americans imported their insistence on a racial hierarchy from nineteenth century European intellectuals, especially German Romantics who emphasized the inherent uniqueness and qualities of individuals and peoples.\textsuperscript{14} The racial sciences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were, as


Matthew Frye Jacobson writes, “ever responding to the political imperatives of the slavery question, questions of territorial expansion, and, later, the vexing immigration question, and at the same time creating in their wake new kinds of ‘certainty’ that ‘explained’ slavery, expansion, and the trouble with immigrants.”¹⁵ Whiteness was also coded toward internal ordering of the population. Jacobson examines the period of mass European migration to the United States from the 1840s to 1924 and how the influx of cheap labor from Europe spurred efforts to break whiteness down into sub-hierarchies of scientifically determined white races.¹⁶ Access to the full privileges accorded to whites with American citizenship was subject to scrutiny, debate, and denial, and achieving status as a voting citizen—not just acceptance into American society as a white migrant laborer—was the ultimate prize. Restrictive immigration laws including the 1917 Immigration Act and the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act prioritized white immigrants from Western Europe, which explicitly placed European-Americans at the top of the racial and social hierarchy. The Millers performed in spectacles of identity during the decades that European-American identity was subdivided into hierarchy by national origin, which meant that the Millers’ performances needed to appeal not just to white audiences but specifically to the European-American audiences that possessed the greatest social capital. Therefore, this paper favors the term European-American over the monolithic term white.

The four sections of this paper will analyze the cultural conditions that prompted European-American Harry E. Miller to promote himself as Native American Indian Miller. In order to do so, each section focuses on a defining periods of Miller’s life in the early decades of the twentieth century. The first section, entitled Frontier Family, examines Miller’s childhood

¹⁵ Matthew Frye Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917, 33.
¹⁶ Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race, 39-90.
among his family of pioneers, soldiers, miners, farmers and ranchers in remote areas of the West. The second section, Igorot Family, analyzes Miller's decision to become an impresario of Igorot exhibitions and the subsequent carnival career of his Filipino wife and children. The third section, “Playing Indian,” considers the lecture and writing careers of Indian Miller, Chief Crazy Thunder in the newly burgeoning city of San Diego. Finally, Roadside Spectacle focuses on Indian Miller's time running curio shops and zoos along the new tourist highway Route 66 in Arizona and New Mexico. In each of these four time periods, Harry E. Miller and his family members navigated the complicated territory of American racial identities within an exhibitory context. The ethnographic performance aspect of their careers forced the Miller to adapt their public personas to sociocultural understandings of racial categories, which makes them apt subjects for the study of identity in a commercial context.

FRONTIER FAMILY—PIONEER IDENTITIES ON THE FRONTIER LINE

The concept of the Western frontier has been a defining myth in American culture, widely disseminated in literature, biographies, movies, stage shows, and artwork. This frontier myth has also had a widely commercial application with entertainment long relying on the marketing of multiple Old West archetypes. Buffalo Bill, Billy the Kid, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Davy Crockett were some of the most prominent real people who became potent symbols of a vanished mythological West. Harry E. Miller came of age during the heyday of this mythical formation and adopted his own frontier persona. The concept of the frontier and its impact on conceptions of the American West has been the subject of robust scholarship that revolves around Frederick Jackson Turner's seminal 1893 “frontier thesis” essay, Henry Nash Smith's reevaluation of Turner's thesis in his 1950 work Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and
Myth, and the work of late-twentieth-century New Western History historians like Patricia Nelson Limerick, William Cronon, and Richard White.¹⁷

The idea of Western borderlands as frontiers that must be continually expanded, conquered, and transformed by European-Americans was being developed and promoted during Miller’s childhood in territorial New Mexico. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner famously formulated the frontier myth in his widely influential address “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” delivered to a convention of historians in 1893. Turner was influenced by the notion of the frontier that was explicated in the 1880 United States Census in a detailed report titled “The Progress of the Nation: 1790 to 1880,” written by census superintendent Francis A Walker, a statistician and economist, and geographer Henry Gannett.¹⁸ The report tracks the movement of what the authors call the “frontier line of population.” The writing and maps in the report transform the abstract concept of the frontier into a cartographic reality demarcating settled areas, which are shaded on the maps, from unsettled areas, which are left white on the maps and thus read as empty (Fig. 1). The maps are labeled as “excluding Indians not taxed,” explicitly removing from view people living on Indian reservations and people living outside of American government control, including, for example, nomadic Indian populations and other colonial settlers. This retroactive erasure of indigenous and Spanish and Mexican populations


constructs a frontier concept of “virgin land” waiting to be conquered by the United States. As Henry Nash Smith pointed out, the concept of empty land waiting to be filled and tilled followed in the American tradition of the agrarian “myth of the garden” as promoted by intellectuals like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. The irony, as Richard White notes, was that colonial maps had accurately represented a densely occupied continent. By the nineteenth century, however, western North America was represented as largely empty. Turner built his famous thesis on a stage set by Western maps emptied of people.

Figure 1 Map of the United States from the 1880 Census. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “The Progress of the Nation: 1790 to 1880,” Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census, June 1, 1880.

In Turner’s thesis, the American continental frontier had closed as of 1890 and, in order to America to progress as a society, some other version of the frontier would need to be established. Turner identified the frontier as the place where savagery meets civilization and said that the borderland is what defined American character and drive. “American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier,” Turner wrote, and “this perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character.”

Turner argued that Americans forever needed new lands to conquer because “the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise.” At the time of his speech, homesteading possibilities for European-American pioneers were narrowing. Statehood spread across the West (six new Western territories achieved statehood in 1889-90, then the final four in the next dozen years). Individual homesteading became, after the economic crash and depression of 1893, an era of mergers and acquisitions. Continental expansion ended. The railroads were making remote areas more accessible to just anyone, not exclusive to the adventuresome wagon train pioneer. The frontier had been defined by individualism, private land possession, and military conquest. Historian John Mack Faragher points out that Turner’s thesis was used to justify American imperialism, but that that was not Turner’s intention. In later essays, Turner argued that the new frontiers of American progress would be found in expanded

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21 Turner and Faragher, Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays, 59.
education systems and the pursuit of science. As Faragher notes, Turner’s abstract notion of the frontier, and the idea that the end of the continental frontier marked a historical era, holds up better to present day scrutiny than Turner’s definitions of what counts as “unsettled” land.

Cultural understandings of racial hierarchies were indelibly shaped by frontier mythology, which justified European-American removal and replacement of indigenous peoples as necessary to society’s economic, political, and intellectual progression. Turner’s thesis ignored the racialized violence that characterized European-American conquest of remote borderlands. Instead, Turner cited European-American economic and political milestones on the frontier like the creation of communication and railroad lines, political organizations, land statues, and religious and educational centers. Richard Slotkin pointed this out in his examination of the frontier myth in twentieth-century American mass culture. Slotkin writes about the European-American frontier myth as founded in regeneration and violence, a cycle of separation from their cities and settled areas and regression to primitive outposts, with violence being their path to establishing their own civilization and culture. The ideological separation/regression cycle played out in mass culture in a commercialized version in films, dime novels, literature, Wild West shows, and newspapers and magazines, where, as Patricia Nelson Limerick argues, popular understanding of the frontier have consistently been strong and unambiguous, unaffected by the concerns of historians parsing Turner’s thesis. Mass culture populated the frontier with memorable characters in instantly recognizable costumes who enacted simple storylines, like

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24 Emphasis is Slotkin’s.
long-haired, mustachioed Buffalo Bill in his fringed buckskin and wide-brimmed hat charging after Indian warriors on horseback. The strong storytelling and visual cues of mass culture defined the frontier in the popular imagination and associated frontier ideology with heroism, conquest, and opportunism. Limerick notes that conventional thinking about the frontier analogy as representing “standing on the edge of exciting possibilities” is at its most powerful “in twentieth-century reconstructions of the nineteenth-century experience of westward expansion, reconstructions quite explicitly designed for sale.”25 An analysis of Harry E. Miller’s life confirms Limerick’s assertion about commercialization informed by popular understandings of the frontier but adds a layer of complexity to it. Entrepreneurial desires drove Miller not only to reconstruct the frontier in his products but also to seek out the locations representing the newest incarnation of the frontier, the latest “edge of exciting possibilities.” Miller settled first in the remote northern jungles of the colonized Philippines, then in San Diego as it was growing into a major city newly connected to the East by railroad lines, then in sparsely populated regions of northern Arizona and New Mexico on the edges of Indian reservations and alongside the new national highways. In order to exploit the commercial potential of the new American frontiers, Miller invented an indigenous heritage for himself that played into the mythology of the separation/regression frontier cycle by presenting him as a primitive figure transformed by European-American education into a writer, lecturer, and business owner.

Miller’s childhood was steeped in frontier ideology. Miller was born in 1879, just before the closing of the (European-American idea of) the continental frontier. The two previous generations of Miller’s family claimed and exploited the land of Turner’s kind of frontier—land

from which Native Americans and Mexicans had been moved or removed in order to make room for European-Americans—by engaging in farming, ranching, and mining in newly conquered territories in Colorado, New Mexico, California, and Oregon. Despite his later claims to Indian heritage, Miller's parents were in fact European-American nineteenth century wagon train pioneers and farmers from Vermont and the Midwest.  

Harry's father William Henry Harrison Miller was born in Iowa in 1842 and raised in Missouri, where he reportedly walked thirty miles to enlist in the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. William H. H. Miller served in the army for more than five years, then married fellow Missourian Sarah A Rice. They had two children in Missouri before moving to the Territory of Colorado in 1870, where they had four more children before relocating to the Roswell in the Territory of New Mexico and establishing a farm. Harry was born in Roswell in 1879. Two more sons followed to round out the family of twelve.

Harry’s childhood in southeastern New Mexico took place on a frontier borderland, a disputed space with fluid boundaries that were continually redrawn along racial and ethnic lines and established by violent conflict. Harry’s later choice to create a fluid and hybrid identity for himself reflects the ineffable contours that defined the frontier of his childhood. Harry was born in southeastern New Mexico shortly after European-Americans established dominance over non-tribal lands there. The area had been the home of Comanche and other Indians, who disputed control with nomadic tribes of Apache and with Mexicans, but from the 1870s European-American cattlemen from Texas and New Mexico had taken over. The total population of the

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26. “Obituary, Mrs. Sarah A. Rice,” The Eugene Guard (Eugene, OR), 11, 1909. This obituary says that Sarah and her husband “crossed the plains from Missouri to California by wagon train and from there went to New Mexico in 1877,” but according to Census records, the source must have confused California with Colorado, where the Miller children of that era were born.

United States stood at fifty million in 1880, with only about 120,000 residing in New Mexico. The federal government counted just under 9,772 Indians in the territory who were “not in tribal relations” (meaning those living in the general population, not on reservations).

The cultural constructs that supported the Indian Miller, Chief Crazy Thunder Apache persona were established by newspapers, Wild West shows, and government propaganda during Miller’s childhood, when Apache leader and warrior Geronimo achieved widespread notoriety. Geronimo led a coalition of Apache bands in cycles of retaliatory warfare against the Mexican and American military in northern Mexico and territorial Arizona and New Mexico from the end of the Mexican-American war in 1848 up to his final capitulation to reservation life in 1886. Until his death in 1909, Geronimo was kept as a prisoner of war at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, but the government also exhibited him in numerous world's fairs, including the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha in 1898 and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904. Geronimo was even included in the inaugural parade for President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905, riding on horseback while wearing a feathered headdress. These public spectacles exposed prominent Native Americans leaders and warriors to the gaze of European-American spectators and served a propaganda purpose for the government by confirming and celebrating the subjugation of indigenous populations. Sometimes the exhibited people were able to promote their own ideas about the status and fate of their people. In Omaha in 1898, Geronimo criticized the government’s Indian schools and reservations in an interview with a newspaper reporter, saying, “If an Indian boy goes to school and learns to be like a white boy, he comes back to the

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28 1880 Census
agency, and there is nothing for him to do but put on a blanket and be an Indian again. This is where the government is to blame. When it takes our children away and educates them, it should give them something to do, not turn them loose to run wild at the agency.”

Harry’s adult incarnation as “Indian” Miller—Apache writer, lecturer, and salesman who spoke and wrote about Indian issues and history—followed the pattern established by Geronimo’s fame and exhibitory history. Miller was able to monetize his fictious Indian persona thanks to the example set by the dual nature presentation as both commercialized symbol of Indianness and authentic spokesperson for his people.

Harry’s own family also provided him with examples of how to promote oneself as a pioneer archetype. Harry’s family gained local fame in southeastern New Mexico after moving to the tiny town of Roswell not long after the town’s establishment in 1869. Harry’s father William H. H. Miller had been the first Miller to move to New Mexico, taking advantage of the public lands available for homesteading thanks to the Homestead Act of 1862. He eventually became a member of the first board of county commissioners for Chaves County. Harry’s uncle James M Miller served as a teen courier for the Black Hawk Cavalry in Missouri during the Civil War, then went West to Colorado and tried his hand at mining and prospecting. James followed his brother William to Roswell and became a prominent pioneer sheep ranchman in the Pecos Valley during the time of violent conflicts between cattle and sheep ranchers and the deadly Lincoln

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30. “Future of Indians: Interesting Talk with Geronimo, the Famous Apache Chief,” The Grand Island Daily Independent (Grand Island, NE), October 20, 1898. This article is a reprint from the New York Sun.
County War. James befriended two legends of the Wild West, rancher John Chisum and outlaw Billy the Kid, and later wrote about them in an autobiography.\(^{32}\)

As James’s fame as a sheep rancher rose in New Mexico, William H. H. and Sarah Miller moved their family to a farm they bought in Eugene, Oregon in 1894, perhaps driven by the desire for better water resources than those available in southeastern New Mexico.\(^{33}\) Rural Oregon was an attractive prospect for a pioneering farmer. The transcontinental railroad’s arrival in the 1880s tied the state into the national economy and encouraged the growth of farms (at the expense of cattle ranches) by making it easy to transport their products over long distances.\(^{34}\) The expansion of the railroad led to an influx of migration and a population explosion from 1880-1910. The population increased by 30% in the 1890s alone. The population was overwhelmingly white, and power was concentrated in the hands of European-Americans.\(^{35}\) By the time the Millers arrived in Oregon, homesteading and agriculture had declined in importance.

Miller’s short time living in Oregon occurred just after the rise to fame of the state’s celebrated poet, memoirist and “spectacular character” Joaquin Miller (1841-1913). Born Cincinnatus Hines Miller, Joaquin Miller came to fame in the 1870s and was “arguably the

\(^{32}\) Reproduced as James M. Miller, Carrie Ann Houghtaling, and John LeMay, *The Early Days and Pecos Valley Life of James M Miller: Reminiscences of Billy the Kid and John Chisum* (Roswell, New Mexico: Historical Society for Southeast New Mexico, 2018).

James’s twin sons (Harry’s cousins) also became prominent citizens in New Mexico: Jaffa Miller was the Republican candidate for governor of New Mexico in 1934, and Prager Miller was elected as New Mexico State Senator in 1928.

\(^{33}\) “William H. H. Miller Dead,” *Morning Register* (Eugene, OR), December 17, 1904.


\(^{35}\) Federal Writers’ Project et al., *Board of Control, and United States. Work Projects Administration, American Guide Series* (Oregon: End of the Trail, 1940).
central figure in the early history of western American authorship." Joaquin Miller’s literary reputation has not survived the passage of time, but his talent for personal reinvention and visual branding made him an icon in his day, and he remains an important figure in Old West mythmaking. The parallels between the invented personas of Joaquin Miller and Indian Miller are striking and provide evidence of the marketing power of the frontier archetype. As seen in Figure 2, both men marketed themselves as Old West archetypes adorned with instantly recognizable symbols of frontier mythology—Joaquin’s buckskin and six-shooter, and Harry’s braids, tunic, and moccasins.

Like Harry E. Miller, Joaquin Miller came from a pioneer family that connected him to the real Old West. Cincinnatus Hines Miller’s family moved to Eugene, Oregon in a covered wagon when he was a teenager, and he attended a local college. He had a variety of jobs, lived with an Indian tribe for a short time, and fathered a child with an Indian woman. Cincinnatus started writing and adopted his new name to evoke the fabled Mexican bandit Joaquin Murietta., Joaquin Miller consciously connected himself to the frontier American West, appearing in a western frontiersman costume (cowboy hat, boots, and buckskin) and building his reputation through personal appearances at lectures, readings and dinners in which he reveled in telling entertaining tall tales about himself. As Nathaniel Lewis notes, Joaquin Miller sought to represent the West “as an icon both imitable and authentic,” attaching himself to place as “legitimizing strategy” and gaining influence by capitalizing on the myth of the West. Critics and reviewers openly questioned Joaquin Miller’s claims about himself, but his writings,

including *Songs of the Sierras, Life Among the Modocs*, and the poem *Westward Ho!*, received an enthusiastic response from late nineteenth-century audiences eager for authentic representations of the mysterious West—even if the authenticity was inauthentic. Like Indian Miller, Joaquin Miller retreated from his Old West persona late in life, reinventing himself as a wise, bearded, soberly dressed sage in the mold of Walt Whitman.

The example of Joaquin Miller proved the viability and marketing value of a charismatic author promoting his work by presenting himself in a nearly parodic costume of what the audience expects to see in a Western character type. That members of his audience recognized the hyperbolic theatricality of Joaquin Miller’s persona failed to dent his popularity and may, in fact, have made him more appealing by making him less unpredictable and dangerous than an actual frontiersman. Joaquin Miller’s persona harkened back to a time mythologized in popular culture by writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Davy Crockett, a European-American-centric early-nineteenth century West populated by hunters, trappers, pioneers, cowboys, hostile Indians, and figures like Daniel Boone and Sitting Bull whose actuality had been overwritten by their mythic incarnations. Harry E. Miller’s frontier family represented the next phase of European-American frontier settlement in the late nineteenth century, when military campaigns and government policy had relegated most Indians to reservations and roaming hunters and trappers

38 A 1940 Federal Writer’s Project publication about Oregon history summed Joaquin Miller up this way: “A bit of a charlatan, Miller was a restless, spectacular character, capable of writing an occasional poem with a vigorous lilt.” Project et al., Board of Control, and United States. Work Projects Administration, 111.
39 See Cooper’s famous Leatherstocking Tales series, published between 1823 and 1841 (*The Pioneers, The Last of the Mohicans, The Prairie, The Pathfinder, and The Deerslayer*). Davy Crockett published *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee. Written by Himself* in 1834, a “plain, honest, homespun account” that that burnished his reputation as a plainspoken frontiersman and folk hero (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/37925/37925-h/37925-h.htm, 6). Timothy Flint’s 1833 book *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone, the First Settler of Kentucky* spun tall tales about Boone’s frontier adventures that have been retold in dime novels and popular characterizations ever since. In 1885 Sitting Bull briefly appeared in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows in order to earn money and temporarily leave the reservation where he was held prisoner.
gave way to railroad lines and homesteaders engaged in farming, ranching, mining, or commerce. The dawning of the twentieth century inaugurated the next phase of frontier settlement, focused on overseas territorial possessions, domestic urbanization, and transcontinental transportation infrastructure. If Harry E. Miller sought Joaquin Miller’s notoriety, he would have to find ways to participate in these new frontiers and to appeal to the new commercial cultures they inspired.

Figure 2 Publicity photos of Joaquin Miller (left) and Harry “Indian” Miller (right). Source: Joaquin Miller—H. Meade Bland, “Pacific Short Story Club. The Pacific Short Story Quarterly” (San Jose, Calif, 1918). Harry Miller—“Full Blooded Apache Indian, Soldier of Fortune, Wanderer, Historian, Arrives in San Diego to Finish Gathering Material for Story of Great Southwest,” San Diego Union (San Diego, CA), July 24, 1920.
Miller’s first opportunity to play a part in establishing new American frontiers came via the United States Army. Miller enlisted in the Army in 1898 to fight in the Spanish-American War, then reenlisted in 1900 to join the Second Oregon Volunteer Infantry. President William McKinley had called for a volunteer regiment from Oregon to join the new overseas conflict, and the Second Oregon played a “conspicuous part in the surrender of Manila and the final extinction of Spanish authority in the Pacific Ocean.” Miller was twenty-four years old and a First Sergeant with an “Excellent” rating at the time his discharge. He had listed his occupation as “artist” on his enlistment papers but a few years later found himself part of a storied military company that received a hero’s welcome back home, complete with a reception, banquet, medals from the Governor, and free use of telegraph and telephone company facilities between San Francisco and the soldiers ’Oregon homes. In this way, Miller earned the kind of enduring respect and social capital accorded to his father, a veteran of the Civil War who was honored after his 1904 death with a burial plot in the Grand Army of the Republic section of the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. In the second half of the nineteenth century, veterans of the Civil War established numerous fraternal organizations that memorialized the conflict and its soldiers while also becoming powerful social and political forces that promoted the ideologies of the two sides into the next century—the organizations included the Grand Army of the Republic (established

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41 J.B. Horner, Oregon History and Early Literature (Portland, OR: The J.K. Gill Company, 1931), 279.
42 Horner, Oregon History and Early Literature, 280.
in 1866), the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (1881), the Sons of Confederate Veterans (1896), and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (1894). The Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars, however, spawned few comparable organizations. Anti-imperialists at home fiercely opposed the new role that America assumed after Spain ceded Guam, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippine Islands to the United States in 1898. As Matthew Frye Jacobson notes, the conflicts themselves eventually disappeared from the teaching of American history, breaking the link between the Indian Wars and Manifest Destiny and twentieth century foreign policy and military engagements.\footnote{Matthew Frye Jacobson, \textit{Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917}, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).} Jacobson argues that the erasure of these imperialist wars from American cultural memory was done in order to preserve a national identity rooted in virtue and to justify any use of military force. As a consequence, American politicians and journalists have repeatedly rationalized military actions in foreign countries by framing other nations and people as inferior and worthy of American conquest. In the decades immediately after the wars, another kind of cultural and historical forgetting needed to happen. As Richard White argues, Americans had to transform European-American military conquerors into victims of indigenous violence.\footnote{Richard White, “Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill,” in \textit{The Frontier in American Culture}, 27.} White pointed out that Turnerian Western boosterism meant that the icons of American westward expansion had to be defeats not victories, as in the Alamo and the Battle of the Little Bighorn. This narrative promoted the idea that the American military only acted reactively and righteously, retaliating against barbaric massacres. The language of this narrative is civilization versus savagery, and its subtext is violent racial conflict. Having conquered the Philippine Islands as of 1902, the United States needed to justify the cost, in money and men, of the war and the occupation by casting the Filipinos as savages unable to govern themselves.
The government’s denigration of the Filipinos began while Harry E. Miller was deployed in the Philippines and intensified in the decade after the war. Historian Sean McEnroe’s research into the diaries and correspondence of the soldiers of the Second Oregon Volunteer Infantry is particularly relevant to an analysis of Miller’s identity formation after rising in the ranks from private to 1st Sergeant between 1901-1903. McEnroe found that as the mission in the Philippines changed from fighting the Spanish to fighting Filipino nationalists, the soldier’s notions of the Filipino’s racial identity also changed.\(^4^6\) Whereas the soldiers initially described the Filipinos in fluid terms, comparing them to Central Americans, Indians, Asians, or various mixed races, once the Filipinos became the enemy, the soldiers identified them with only with Blacks and Indians.\(^4^7\) In doing so, they patterned their understanding of Filipinos on the violent and exclusionary model of American race relations, justifying the American military invasion and atrocities against civilians.

President Theodore Roosevelt made the same comparison between Filipinos and Indians, for similar reasons. Roosevelt championed the United States’ altruistic intentions in overthrowing and replacing the Spanish imperialists in the Philippines, wondering if history could “show a single instance in which a masterful race such as ours, having been forced by the exigencies of war to take possession of an alien land, has behaved with the disinterested zeal for their progress that our people have shown in the Philippines.”\(^4^8\) He likened Filipinos fighting for their independence to “hostile Indians in the days when we still had Indian wars,” and assured the


\(^{4^8}\) “A Strong Message from President Roosevelt,” *The Sacramento Bee* (Sacramento, CA), December 3, 1901.
listener that docile and compliant Filipinos and Indians alike will be given “the fullest and amplest consideration.” The reward for Filipino’s docility, Roosevelt concludes, is the development of their natural resources (and, implicitly, the exploitation of their labor) by American businesses.

Roosevelt’s explicit comparison between American Indians, whose resistance to American colonization had effectively met its end at Wounded Knee in 1890, and Filipino nationalists led by Emilio Aguinaldo not only expanded the American frontier overseas but engaged in a rhetorical “lasting” of the Filipino people, especially the rural populations. The term lasting comes from historian Jean M O’Brien, who, in her book *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*, analyzed the narrative strategies that colonial New Englanders used to place Indians permanently in the past and promote a replacement narrative that rationalized the colonial project. By creating narratives that made Indians incapable of modernity, white colonialists relentlessly promoted a narrative of Indian extinction, a lasting that denied that Indians were capable of adaptation and that stripped them of their Indianness as soon as they merged their culture with others or engaged in racial mixing. O’Brien asserts that this results in a “progress narrative wherein racial mixing and cultural dynamism are asserted as the privilege of whiteness.”

Another byproduct of cultural lasting is the creation of an exotic indigenous population that can be exploited commercially while simultaneously being economically and politically marginalized. Miller’s Filipino family and his careers exemplify the complex privileges afforded to whites by the lasting of both Indians and Filipinos. Miller

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created a Filipino family overseas through racial mixing without losing or sacrificing his own status in white American society, and he successfully presented and marketed himself as an Indian without suffering the social stigma or displacement of an actual Native American.

The commercial culture that grew out of the American lasting of Filipinos inspired the creation of ethnographic exhibitions featuring the Igorot people from the Bontoc region of Luzon. Ethnographic exhibitions featuring life-sized dioramas peopled by exoticized humans originated in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Scholars like Pascal Blanchard, Chokri Ben Chikha, and Karen Arnaut have written about the origins, meaning, and consequences of these “human zoos,” the popularity of which proved the enduring commercial viability of exhibiting exoticized humans. Blanchard and his co-writers traced the history of human zoos in the Western world.\textsuperscript{50} They note that these human spectacles emerged along with the cataloging and categorization of the natural world, providing government and commercial exhibitors with a scientific rationale for separating the world into those who are exhibited and those who spectate. The designation of exhibited persons thus confirmed the rightness of colonialism and reassured spectators of their own dominant place in the racial and political hierarchy. German animal trafficker Carl Hagenbeck, founder in 1863 of an influential German zoo and pioneer of a revolutionary method of displaying captive animals in open-air, naturalistic settings meant to imitate, at least visually, the homelands of the captive animals, was also the pioneer of human zoos. Hagenbeck’s success at trapping and removing living natural resources from colonized lands in Africa and trafficking and displaying them in Europe and the United States bolstered the ideological justifications for colonialism, exploitation, zoos, and

ethnographic exhibitions that continue to influence conceptions of zoos and conservation to the present day. By the time Miller’s Filipino family migrated to the United States, government officials and scientists and impresarios like Hagenbeck had successfully tested the concept of ethnographic spectacle for commercial gain in both Europe and the United States.

Hagenbeck first exhibited humans alongside animals in 1875, and the practice quickly spread throughout Europe and the United States through the medium of international expositions. Ben Chichi and Arnault refer to human zoos as “mass media” due to their popularity. Robert Rydell provides an example when writing about the Igorot exhibition at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Expositions in Saint Louis, which “caught the fancy of fairgoers and of the nation to a degree unsurpassed by any exhibit at any fair since the summer of 1893 when Fatima had danced the hootchy-kootchy on the Midway at the World’s Columbian Exposition.” Ben Chichi and Arnault further argue that “the extremely popular mass edutainment of the human zoo laid the basis for a hegemonic narrative of modernity which understood the wonders of technological progress, industrial production and mass consumption in terms of the rapidly developing nation-state and its imperial or colonial aspirations and projects.” The rural Igorot were a perfect subject for this hegemonic narrative.

Ethnographic exhibitions in the United States, moreover, served additional purposes directly related to growing awareness in the late nineteenth century of the precarious status of

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51 Nigel Rothfels takes a critical look at “Hagenbeck’s revolution” in Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). Rothfels demonstrates how Hagenbeck’s naturalistic enclosures “renarrate the captive lives of animals” into narratives of freedom and happiness that sanitize the brutal realities of trapping and life in captivity. (199) His human zoos and circus businesses applied the same (re)narratives to humans.

52 Rydell, All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916, 172. The fact that Igorot troupes continued to earn contracts to perform in “Igorotte Villages” with carnivals and circuses even after the decline of world’s fairs indicates that they in particular were a box office draw at least until the late 1920s.

unique features of the American West. As Ben Chichi and Arnault write, representation in human zoos “seems to be rather ominously linked to extinction in many different guises.” In the United States in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, celebrated works by artists like Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt evinced national pride in the marvelous lands, creatures, and peoples of the West—Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, the bison, and Native Americans. This pride gradually morphed into late nineteenth-century anxiety about the loss or ruinous degradation of these unique American features, which had been crucial to providing the United States with homegrown treasures that could compete with the cultural superiority of Europe. As scholars like Roderick Nash, William Cronon, Harriet Ritvo, and Nigel Rothfels have shown, national parks, zoos, and ethnographic exhibitions all originated in the United States in the late nineteenth-century in part to capture, cage, and display the parts of America that were believed to be vanishing. The staged displays of national parks, zoos, and human zoos isolated specific aspects of nature and humanity from the rest of society and apart from modernity, thus presenting proof that some remnant of the wild past would be preserved in a controlled and managed setting suitable for European-American visitors. The implicit message is that other

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54 This awareness was spurred in part by the near-extinction of American bison due to unrestricted mass slaughter by European-American hunters and tourists. See William T Hornaday, *The Extermination of the American Bison* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1889), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17748/17748-h/17748-h.htm. Hornaday wrote this popular book to rally support for the conservation of bison. Hornaday’s efforts included collaboration with fellow hunter President Teddy Roosevelt and led to the 1888 founding of the National Zoological Park in DC, with Hornaday as director.


56 For example, Thomas Moran’s 1873 painting of the Grand Canyon (“The Chasm of the Colorado”) was considered so sensational and representative of the American West that it was bought by Congress and displayed in the United States Capitol for seventy-five years. It’s now owned by the Department of the Interior and on loan to the Smithsonian.

incarnations of that same nature or humanity, outside of the boundaries of the cage and the stage, are open to exploitation, subjugation, and extinction.

In moving from Northern Luzon to the United States, the Filipino members of the Miller family transitioned into a society primed to accept them as exotic individuals suitable for exhibition. The staged-and-caged displays of Igorot people in American expositions also served to justify the American colonial project in the Philippines. Igorrotte Village exhibitions drew outsized attention even amongst neighboring exhibits of exoticized peoples like Native Americans, Samoans, Hawaiians, or other Filipino tribes like the Negritos or Moros. Newspapers gleefully highlighted three aspects of Igorot culture: their scant attire (usually gee strings for the men, which left the tattoos on their chests and arms in plain sight, and skirts for the women), their dog-eating ritual ceremonies, and their warfare practice of cutting the heads off their defeated foes. Headlines like “Feast on Dog Meat: Igorrote Head Hunters Enjoy Delicacy at St Louis” and “How the People Rush to See the Igorrotes Before They Put the Pants On!” were sometimes accompanied by cartoons depicting the Igorots in the dark-skinned/wide white-lipped/bug-eyed manner of a minstrel, making clear that in the eyes of European-Americans, African Americans and Igorots competed for position at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (Fig. 5).58 Exhibitors like Truman K Hunt played up these provocative storylines, procuring local dogs and insisting that their troupes slaughter and eat them regularly, and frequently referring to the Igorots as headhunters.

58. “Feast on Dog Meat: Igorrote Head Hunters Enjoy Delicacy at St Louis,” The Saint Paul Globe (Saint Paul, MN), April 18, 1904 and “How the People Rush to See the Igorrotes Before They Put the Pants On!,” St Louis Post-Dispatch (St Louis, MO), July 3, 1904. The latter includes two racist cartoons that fill a third of the front page of the paper.
The Igorot people were exotic to Americans, but Americans did not necessarily realize that the Igorots were also exotic to most Filipinos. All of the residents of the Lepanto-Bontoc district accounted for less than 1% of the population of the Philippine Islands. Nonetheless, the United States government facilitated the exhibition of the Igorots in expositions for over fifteen years. Once the terms of that colonial project changed and the United States Congress began instituting aspects of autonomous government in the Philippines, exhibitions of Igorot people appeared in entertainment venues like circuses, fairs, and carnivals that generally did not pretend to serve an educational or scientific purpose. The scholarship on Igorot exhibitions—including notable contributions from Robert Rydell, John C. Putnam, Deana L. Weibel, Patricia O. Afable, and Antonio Buangan—focuses almost exclusively on expositions. Robert Rydell’s foundational work *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* notes that expositions were diverse and heterogenous, but that diversity was “inseparable from the larger constellation of ideas about race, nationality, and progress that molded the fairs into ideologically coherent ‘symbolic universes’ confirming and extending the authority of the country’s corporate, political, and scientific leadership.” The Igorot exhibition at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, 1904, for example, was designed with input from representatives of the United States’ government, military, and scientific elite. The

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59 The 1903 Census of the Philippine Islands listed a total population of 7.6 million, 6.9 million of whom were classified as “civilized”, more than 640,000 as “wild.” The report does not define the terms civilized and wild, but it otherwise refers to the tribes of the Lepanto-Bontoc district as primitive and as savages. The district reported 2,467 civilized and 70,283 wild inhabitants. Bureau of the Census, “Census of the Philippine Islands (1903). Bulletin 1, Population of the Philippines by islands, provinces, municipalities, and barrios, taken in the year 1903,” (Washington, 1904).

60 An exception is Christopher A. Vaughan, “Ogling Igorots: The Politics and Commerce of Exhibiting Cultural Otherness, 1898-1913,” in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. Vaughan writes that Igorrot Villages appeared at sideshows for a decade after their peak at the 1904 St Louis Exposition, but newspaper articles and passport documents suggest that the Miller family and Anfenger’s clients worked in sideshows until at least 1930, in the United States and Cuba.

exposition had its own Anthropology Department, headed by a scientist known for his previous work at the Bureau of American Ethnology. The government’s Philippine Exposition Board organized an exhibit of nearly 1200 Filipino people and was facilitated and encouraged by William Howard Taft, civil governor of the island, President Theodore Roosevelt, and Secretary of War Elihu Root. The Igorot village portion of the Philippine exposition was managed by Truman K Hunt, former lieutenant-governor of the Lepanto-Bontoc province. The involvement of leading scientists and government figures legitimized the ethnographic exhibit as an educational tool for visitors. In accordance with this educational mission, Igorot troupe members in St Louis and other expositions put on demonstrations of weaving, blacksmithing, tree climbing, ceremonial dog-eating, and dancing, but their main job in the “symbolic universe” of the fair was to expose themselves to the European-American gaze for propaganda purposes. By performing selected aspects of their culture on demand for American audiences, the Igorot were presented as living proof of a pre-industrial society that could not attain modernity without the improving influence of American colonizers. The exhibit thus justified the American occupation despite the fact that Igorots represented a tiny fraction of the population of the Philippines.

Harry E. Miller became aware of the popularity and commercial rewards of ethnographic exhibitions during the years he spent living in the Philippines. While Igorot exhibitions were drawing large crowds in the United States, Harry E. Miller was an officer in the Philippine Constabulary assigned to the Northern Luzon area of the Philippines. Miller remained in

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62 Clair Prentice’s book The Lost Tribe of Coney Island: Headhunters, Luna Park, and the Man Who Pulled Off the Spectacle of the Century tells the story of Hunt and his Igorot troupes in detail. Her research into the deals Hunt made with performers, managers, landlords, and carnival owners provided me with valuable clues as to how to find archival evidence of the carnival career of the Millers.

Luzon after resigning his post and lived there until 1914. According to Thomas Arthur Repp, Harry underwent a spiritual awakening in the Philippines, living in a grass and wooden hut where “he had begun to question the western world’s definitions of the words ‘savage’ and ‘civilized, ‘pagan’ and ‘peaceful.’” According to a government report, on the other hand, Miller followed in the footsteps of his pioneer farmer parents and established a large coffee farm in Pingad. At some point, Miller married a Filipina named Agunai. Their first three children were born in the Philippines—May (born 1909), Lula (1912), and Kentis (1913). During Miller’s time living in the Northern Luzon, impresarios Thomas K Hunt and Richard Schneidewind had earned money and notoriety managing Igorot exhibitions at expositions in the United States. By 1914, Miller decided to assemble his own Igorot exhibition troupe, perhaps persuaded by Agunai or other Bontoc friends. This is plausible given that in the last decade others from their region had repeatedly agreed to participate in these journeys. Patricia O. Afable and Antonio S. Buangan both used documentary evidence and interviews with descendants to write about the perspective of Filipinos who participated in ethnographic exhibitions. Afable and Buangan demonstrate that Filipino participants in exhibitions sought adventure, money, American goods, or prestige but often ended up with little of any of that and struggled to return to rural life. Afable also argues that participation in American ethnographic exhibitions led the Igorot to reconstruct their self-identity once back home in the Philippines. The Igorot came to embrace a hybrid self-

66 Thomas Repp writes that Harry and Agunai (also known as Ena) together developed the idea of the circus sideshow. I could find no evidence that Agunai or her young children participated in shows managed by Harry or his associate Harold L Anfenger.
67 Afable, “Journeys from Bontoc to the Western Fairs, 1904-1915: The ‘Nikimalika ’and Their Interpreters.” And Buangan, “The Suyoc People Who Went to St. Louis 100 Years Ago: The Search for My Ancestors.”
identity that incorporated the version of themselves that they had performed in an idealized and decontextualized manner for American audiences: “in their constructions of ‘culture,’ particular objects (‘g-strings’ and other ‘costumes,’ shields, spears, ‘head-axes,’ ‘head-baskets,’ gongs, beads, *Tridana* and *Conus* shell ornaments, textiles, baskets) and activities (‘Bontoc war dance,’ ‘wedding dance,’ ‘headhunting,’ and *cañao* ‘feasts’), more than others, evolved into long-lasting emblems of northern mountain life.”68 The experience of the Igorot demonstrates the influence that American commercial culture and the performance of identity had on the participants’ own sense of self and culture.

The Igorot troupe that Miller assembled in 1914 probably knew what kind of performance would be expected of them in America. By that time, other people from their region of the Philippines had been performing in expositions—and returning back home to tell the tale—for almost two decades. In March of that year Harry took a ship to Hong Kong on his way to United States, traveling with his four-year-old half-Filipina daughter May.69 Figure 3 shows the photo of the troupe that was printed in a Hawaiian newspaper. Miller is pictured in the inset image and referred to as “H.E. (Indian) Miller” but has not yet adopted his later archetypical Indian appearance. The article indicates continuing public interest in a sensationalized version of the Igorot people despite the American government’s new disapproval of Igorot ethnographic expositions. The headline describing them as wild headhunters is undercut by the photograph of the modestly clothed troupe and the child (Miller’s daughter May) held in one man’s arms. Harry’s mission was to transport these twelve Igorot adults to San Francisco for display at the upcoming Panama Pacific Exposition. But by the time Miller left the Philippines, the Philippine

government had moved to control their country’s image in America by cracking down on the export and exhibition of Igorot people. Harry, May, and his twelve-member troupe sneaked onto a ship and made their way to San Francisco the day before the Philippine legislature passed a law to ban the transportation of Bontoc people for exhibition purposes. Miller’s saga continued for a few months, widely reported in newspapers including the *South China Morning Post, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Examiner, Santa Cruz Evening News*, and *Albuquerque Journal*. By this time, Harry had adopted his Indian Miller persona and gained some degree of notoriety—the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that Miller “has lived among the savages for fourteen years, and is known throughout the Orient as ‘Indian’ Miller.” On reaching San Francisco in May, Miller was arrested aboard ship by a United States deputy marshal and charged with kidnapping and with violating article 486 of the Philippines legal code, which prohibited the inducement of minors to leave their parents or guardians. Miller argued that his detention was political in nature, instigated by Filipinos working for independence, who feared that their arguments for self-determination would be undermined in Americans’ minds by the impression given by the rural Igorot. In July, a judge dismissed the case. Miller had successfully smuggled a group of Igorots out of the Philippines, but the government and the scientists from the Smithsonian were no longer interested in Igorot exhibitions.

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70. “Igorote Owners Win Suit; Long Fight is Ended,” *Santa Cruz Evening News* (Santa Cruz, CA), July 10, 1914.
72. *The Penal Code of the Philippine Islands: With Notations of Decisions of the Supreme Courts of the United States and of the Philippine Islands*, Found in Volumes 1 to 15 of the Philippine Reports. Philippines: Bureau of Printing, 1911. From Article 486: “Any person who shall induce a minor over the age of seven years to abandon the house of his parents, guardian, or other person having charge of such minor, shall suffer the penalties of arrest mayor and a fine of not less than three hundred and twenty-five and not more than three thousand two hundred and fifty pesos. Any person who shall kidnap a child under seven years of age and shall fail to give information as to the whereabouts of such child, or to prove that he has released such child, shall suffer a penalty from cadena temporal in its maximum degree to cadena perpetua.
74. “Indian Miller and His Igorot Troupe,” *South China Morning Post (1903-1941)*, July 16, 1914.
Miller and his associate Harold L Anfenger regrouped and secured a contract for his Igorot exhibit with Foley & Burk, the venerable railroad touring carnival company.\textsuperscript{75} Miller and Anfenger’s Igorot troupe spent the winter living on a pier at Venice Beach in California, where they drew enthusiastic crowds two thousand strong. Then they embarked on their carnival career.\textsuperscript{76} At every stop, newspapers promoted the same tropes of savagery that the expositions had introduced more than fifteen years earlier, printing headlines like “Igorote Headhunters To Be Here for The Women’s Club Street Carnival,” and “Dog Gone It! They Must Eat! Poundmaster Reister Supplying Fidos to Keep Visitors from Starving.”\textsuperscript{77} Figure 4 shows a typical example. In the posed publicity photograph accompanying the article, the supposed Chief of Miller’s Igorot troupe pretends to be applying to the mayor of Venice, California for the position of dogcatcher. Igorot participants and their managers knew that the commercial culture of Igorot exhibitions required them to play up the troupe’s scant attire and reported appetite for dogmeat. Although the government and Smithsonian ethnographers had moved on from Igorot spectacles, successful bookings with touring carnivals and circuses proved the enduring commercial potential of Igorot spectacles.

Government officials abandoned Igorot exhibitions because foreign policy imperatives had changed by 1914. Congress debated the question of Philippine self-governance that year, and

\textsuperscript{75} Harold L Anfenger’s long career as a sideshow impresario and owner of a wax museum of Wild West outlaws demonstrates the enduring commercial viability of frontier mythology well into the 1940s. He came from a prominent Denver family and managed the exhibition career of the Igorot mother of his child, amongst many other things. His story, and the story of his half-Filipino child and his child’s mother Mary Ayachi, reflects on important cultural issues of the 1920s, 30s and 40s and would make an interesting basis for further study.

\textsuperscript{76} “Igorote Village Was Big Attraction At Venice Yesterday,” \textit{Venice Daily Vanguard} (Venice, CA), December 7, 1914.

the first elected legislature would be seated in the Philippines in 1916. Igorot leaders agreed to discontinue the dog-eating ritual in 1922, with the Governor assuring them, “You folks are beyond this primitive, stone-age stuff.” The Philippines would gain Commonwealth status in 1935. Despite these political changes, Igorot spectacles continued to draw audiences as part of traveling circuses and fairs in the United States, Canada, and Cuba throughout the 1920s. They retained their commercial power alongside the rise of antimodern sentiments in the first decades of the twentieth century, when primitivism like the rural Igorot culture on display in sideshow tents became a prized aesthetic. T.J. Jackson Lears argues that antimodernists were seeking relief from bureaucratization and secularization as society shifted priorities from entrepreneurial to managerial capitalism. Antimodernists responded to the confusions of society by turning inward and seeking solutions in a personal search for authenticity. Elizabeth Hutchinson locates antimodernist sentiments in the early twentieth century “Indian craze” that fueled European-Americans interest in Native American cultural products. Hutchinson identified “a cultural retreat from ‘over civilized ’urban industrial America and a turn to seemingly preindustrial cultures perceived as more physical, authentic, and direct.” The antimodernist sentiment and attendant fascination with supposedly primitive societies, combined with the racialized sciences that legitimated a racial hierarchy with European-Americans at the top, created the cultural and socioeconomic conditions that made possible the carnival careers of the Miller family as spectacles of identity.

78 “Change In Menu,” The Cincinnati Post (Cincinnati, OH), March 17, 1922.
After Harry dropped his interest in Igorot exhibitions and separated from most of his family, Agunai and the Miller children Kentis, Lulu and Ben worked in carnivals in the United States for the next few decades. They spent the 1920s enacting the lowbrow, popular culture performance of the Igorrotes Village script that had been written by the military, government, and ethnographers the decade before. The passport photograph in Figure 6 shows the family preparing to travel with their manager Harold L Anfenger and fellow performer Oloan to Cuba for a carnival exhibition. They appear in typical American clothes, highlighting the fact that the traditional Igorot attire that they wear on exhibit has become a costume, and that they must perform different aspects of their hybrid identities depending on the context. Later, in the 1930s, the Millers worked as carnival ride operators and managers. A 1924 article in the Indiana newspaper the *Lafayette Journal and Courier* contains a rare glimpse into the Miller family’s carnival career.81 Amongst descriptions of adjacent sideshow attractions on the midway—including the Fatland family, a seven-foot-tall girl, trained lions, high divers, and a recreation of a Chinese opium den—the journalist recommends a visit to the Igorotes Village tent. The Igorot exhibit consists of a family: “Ena is the mother, Lulu, the daughter, and Kentas, South Bend, and Waka, the sons.” The article says South Bend was born six years prior while the family was traveling with the Wallace-Hagenbeck circus.82 The little mother and daughter weave blankets, scarfs and clothing all day long on the crude looms which they have devised. The four children attend school regularly each morning of the year.” This article demonstrates that the popularity and content of Igorot exhibits had changed little since the government-sponsored international

81“Behind the Scenes at the County Fair Shows,” *Lafayette Journal and Courier* (Lafayette, IN), August 14, 1924.
82 I have been unable to determine who Waka was or what happened to him. The father of the family may refer to Oloan, an Igorot brought over in Miller and Anfenger’s original troupe who continued with the latter man and repeatedly traveled to carnivals in Cuba with Ena and her children in the early 1920s.
exhibition days a decade earlier, but the context had changed significantly. At international expositions, Igorot exhibits had been contextualized as living natural history and anthropology subjects and racialized as earlier incarnations of humanity on the evolutionary scale. The exhibits purported to simulate the life of the Igorots back in rural Luzon, in which they wore gee strings, lived in thatched huts, and worked at handicrafts like weaving and pipe-making. When on exhibit, they were ordered to perform mock combat and ritual acts like ceremonial dancing and dog-eating with uncommon regularity. Some troupe members were ordered to demonstrate their ability to climb trees. This compressed version of Igorot activities removed their behavior from the context of daily life and narrated their society as primarily non-industrialized and violent. In the exposition setting, manual craftwork and ritual ceremonies are renarrated and devalued as primitive behavior. The implication was that American influence would change the Filipinos and promote them up the evolutionary ladder. At the carnival, however, Igorot exhibits were classified with freaks, oddities, and daredevils—in other words, as ordinary humans with genetic oddities or dangerous talents. Due to the American government’s more favorable political attitude toward Filipino self-rule, and its attendant lack of interest in using the Igorot as anti-Filipino propaganda, an Igorot troupe of the 1920s fit logically into a commercial culture that both celebrated antimodernism and ostracized physical difference. Carnival culture thus explicitly exploited the duality of spectacles of identity in which othered persons are both prized and denigrated.

The changed context of Igorot exhibitions over time demonstrates that performing a spectacle of identity, especially as a mixed-race person, means developing a fluid identity that is subject to other people’s demands, preconceptions, and desires. Even names become susceptible to new life circumstances, civil servant confusion and creative newspaper copyediting. In archival materials, Agunai is also identified as Ena, Hugona, Agunay, and Babai (Tagalog for “woman”). Lula becomes Lulu, Lu, or Lou. Kentis becomes Quintus or Kentas. Ben was originally known as South Bend (named, as other Filipino babies born on the carnival circuit were, after the town in which he was born). May is known as Mae, Umabesan, Umaybesan, and Charlotte. Official documents further reveal the fluidity of the Miller family’s identities. The Miller children chose among their half European-American, half Filipino, and fully imaginary American Indian identity depending on the circumstances (or perhaps having the choice made for them by census takers and civil servants). The Millers’ records support Peggy Pascoe’s argument that “the legal system does more than just reflect social or scientific ideas about race; it also produces and reproduces them.”  


the 1940 Census, but both men’s draft registration cards of that same year record their race as Indian (given the choice between White, Negro, Oriental, Indian, and Filipino). Ben’s World War II Army enlistment record of 1942, however, records him as Filipino. The array of identities the Miller family members claimed highlights the inherent contradictions and ambiguities of American racial classifications. It also reveals how power dynamics imposed by the dominant European-American culture force members of minority cultures to perform whatever identity is most palatable at a given moment, embracing or rejecting degrees of whiteness as required by economic or social circumstances. The act of performing an identity in turn shapes how individuals identify themselves. Patricia O. Afable writes about how the experience of performing in Western fairs affected the self-perception of the Bontoc people and their descendants once the performers got back home. Kinship groups that considered themselves disparate tribes embraced a joint identity as “Igorot” after performing at American expositions, and they selected the objects that they had made and sold there and the activities that had been part of their ethnographic exhibition performances as “long-lasting emblems of northern mountain life.” As Afable notes, enacting a performance of their lives for European-American capitalist audiences caused the Bontoc people to incorporate the values of that performance back

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into their daily lives in a bid to embody the most modern ways to be. The archival record of the Miller family suggests an incoherence around identity that was caused by the demands of living in a country dominated by debates within the dominant European-American culture about the boundaries of whiteness and the strictures of an invented racial hierarchy.

While most of Miller’s Filipino family adjusted to the ethnographic sideshow carnival life, Harry chose to assume a racialized persona of his own in order to pursue a career in front of the public in the Southwest. Harry E. Miller pivoted away from exhibiting other people and embraced exhibiting himself. Harry had spent the early years of the twentieth century living in the Philippines. By the time he returned to America in 1916, the Indian Wars had ended, and Indian assimilation policies were in full force. European-Americans demonstrated nostalgia for a lost Old West by seeking out Indian artifacts and material goods. Miller presented himself in San Diego as Apache chief Indian Miller in order to capitalize on the heightened interest in Native American culture.
Figure 3 A newspaper article about Miller and his Igorot troupe stopping in Hawaii on their way to California. Source: *The Honolulu Advertiser*, April 25, 1914.
Figure 4 Publicity photograph of a member of Miller’s Igorot troupe with the mayor of Venice, California.

The article credits the photograph to the Los Angeles Herald and the Eyre Powell publicity service.

Source: Venice Daily Vanguard, December 8, 1914.
Figure 5 A cartoon accompanying a front-page newspaper article about the Igorot exhibitions at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. Source: *St Louis Post-Dispatch* (St Louis, MO), July 3, 1904.
“PLAYING INDIAN”—EMBODYING THE INDIAN CRAZE

In the next phase of Miller's adult life, he engaged directly in public spectacle, “playing Indian” for European-American audiences in the Southwest. By the early twentieth century, movies, novels, stage shows, and artwork like Frederick Remington’s popular paintings and sculptures of warring cowboys and Indians exploited Old West mythology and created a new cultural frontier on the borderlands between past and present, myth and reality. Miller mined that cultural frontier as Indian Miller, Chief Crazy Thunder, a historian of the Southwest whose credibility and novelty derived from his supposed Apache heritage. The end of the Indian Wars and the accomplishment of the brutal campaign of Indian removals had led to a nostalgic appreciation of the noble and savage Indian who had been culturally *lasted* and vanished into romantic myth. Adventurer-artists and writers of the nineteenth century like James Fenimore Cooper, George Catlin, Carl Wimar, Karl Bodmer, and Alfred Bierdstadt had accomplished much of cultural work of lasting American Indians, idealizing the noble but doomed Indian in the decades after the War of 1812 in a conscious bid to achieve cultural independence from Europe by "celebrating the Indian, the frontier, and the wilderness that distinguished American from Europe."^92^ European-Americans had come to appreciate a “positive exterior Indian Other, one who represented authentic reality in the face of urban disorder and alienating mass society."^93^ By the 1920s, film Westerns like those of William S. Hart, dime novels, pulp fiction, carnivals and

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expos, and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows had solidified the romantic mythology of the Indian, a people excluded from modernity who could exist authentically in European-American spaces only by playacting their own past.

The United States that Miller had left in 1900 was transformed by the time he settled in San Diego in 1919. America was now an imperial power whose total population included an additional twelve million people in overseas possessions. The domestic population stood at 105 million people, a forty percent increase over just twenty years. The population of California, like that of other Western states, had exploded, from 1.5 million people in 1900 to 3.4 million in 1920. Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico had gained statehood. Additional rail lines, the rise of automobiles, and the growth of post-1890 enterprises like coal, petroleum, lumber, citrus and wool reshaped the land. New industries required new labor, and the influx of migrant workforces and refugees from wartime Europe led to European-American anxiety about the racial composition of the country.94 Congress passed restrictive immigration legislation in 1917 and 1924 that explicitly favored immigrants from Western Europe while barring Asians, Middle Easterners, and Mexicans. The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, meanwhile, granted citizenship to indigenous Americans as part of a campaign of assimilation and erasure of tribal authority that built on the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 and the reeducation programs of the government’s Indian boarding schools. Miller’s presentation of himself as a highly educated ex-Army soldier with two Apache parents played to the European-American preference at this time for fully

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94 See Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race, 41 and Shari M. Huhndorf, Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 66. In the chapter “Manning the New Frontier: Boy Scouts and American Imperialism,” Huhndorf writes about how turn-of-century fraternal organizations “functioned in some respects as a tool of social control over increasingly diverse and unruly populations” and “frequently answered nativist anxieties.” See also Deloria, Playing Indian, 94
assimilated Indians eager to partake in government programs and to contribute to American society from its margins.

The advent of the movie business meant that people around the country saw a dramatized version of the West that further shaped their impression of American Indians. Americans had been familiar with dime novel Indian-fighters since the 1860s, and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, which ran from 1883 to 1913, portrayed European-Americans as valiant underdogs who ultimately triumphed over savage Indians. The movies built on those portrayals but limited their scope. As John Price notes, the vast majority of movies featuring Indians presented those of the Plains and those with an historical reputation for violence, like Apache, Cheyenne, and Comanche. Societies with more passive, non-violent reputations, like the Hopi, are almost never portrayed.\(^{95}\) In addition, as Peter C Rollins notes, “it is the Plains tribal iconography of horses, buffalo, war bonnet, and teepees that dominates popular culture representations, serving as a generic model in motion pictures for all Native Americans.”\(^{96}\) Price points out that most American Indians wore woven robes, not the tailored hide clothing favored by movie costumers.\(^{97}\) When Indian Miller launched his career in San Diego, he presented himself as the Indian that urban European-Americans expected to see, wearing tailored buckskin, moccasins, the occasional borrowed feathered bonnet, and long braids. San Diego’s population had grown by more than 88% since 1910, to seventy-four thousand people, but only about 1% of them were

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Indians. Despite his costume, Indian Miller claimed to be Apache, an evocative designation, but one safe from comparison with genuine tribe members—Apache warriors were familiar from the movies and from news stories about Geronimo, but real-life Apache lived mostly separate from whites in Arizona and New Mexico.

Harry E. Miller was not the first non-Indian to make a living using an Indian persona. In her book *Real Native Genius: How an Ex-Slave and a White Mormon Became Famous Indians*, Angela Pulley Hudson tells the story of a married couple who developed professional Indian personae in the antebellum period to run a religious sect and produce musical stage shows, a medical business, and three joint autobiographies. Hudson notes that the couple’s success “in a wide variety of cultural contexts suggests both the popularity and currency of ideas of the Indian in nearly every corner of antebellum American life,” and that they were aided in their performance by the rapid growth of a new “science” of race based on the cataloging of physical characteristics with the goal of proving white superiority. The fact that Miller successfully promoted himself as an assimilated Indian some seventy years later indicates that commercial culture continued to support incarnations of Native American identity that played to European-American notions of cultural and racial superiority.

Indian Miller’s career in the Southwest started with a series of long articles in the *El Paso Herald* and the *San Diego Union* about the famous sixteenth century Spanish expeditions led by Cabrillo, Coronado, and Fray Marcos de Niza in the Southwest. Miller had traveled to Spain in 1915 shortly after delivering his Igorot troupe to Venice Beach, and he claimed to have

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conducted extensive research in the Spanish archives into the colonial history of the American Southwest. Interest in the links between Spanish exploration and the history of the United States flourished among writers, scholars, and anthropologists after 1898 and the American victory in the Spanish-American War. Richard Kagan argues that the Spanish Craze especially hit those regions formerly under Spanish colonial rule—California, Texas, New Mexico, and Florida. Kagan locates the origin of the craze in the work of writers like Washington Irving, Walt Whitman, Charles Lummis, Adolph Bandolier, and Frank Hamilton Cushing who popularized a romantic notion of the Spanish conquistadors and missions while ignoring or rationalizing the violence and enslavement the colonizers and missionaries inflicted upon Native Americans. Commercial interests, trade, and entrepreneurs stoked the craze as a hook to draw tourists and differentiate Florida and the Southwest from the grand cities of the East. California boosted its reputation by anointing Spanish Friar Junípero Serra as its own sage Founding Father figure on the order of Roger Williams or William Penn. In an address to the 1915 Panama-Pacific Historical Congress held during the Exposition in San Francisco, John F Davis, Grand President of the Native Sons of the Golden West (an organization established in 1875 to promote the Spanish colonial history of California) pointedly stated that Junípero Serra founded his San Francisco Mission the same year as the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Davis valorized the Spanish missions and said the paternal treatment of Indians was to save their souls. He quoted Dr Josiah Royce: “[The friars] cannot be responsible if they were unable in a single

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generation to eradicate in the Indian the ingrained heredity of shiftlessness of all the generations that had gone before. It is a source of high satisfaction that there was on the part of the padres no record of overreaching the simple natives, no failure to respect what rights they claimed, no carnage and bloodshed, that have so often attended expeditions set nominally for civilization, but really for conquest.”  

102 Royce by contrast writes of the Mexican government’s “rapacity and greed.” Charles Lummis likewise dedicated himself to promoting this whitewashed version of the Spanish past, publishing *The Spanish Pioneers* in 1899. Lummis does not stint on his praise for the conquistadors, comparing them favorably to the torpid and timid English and writing that “brilliant discovery, unparalleled exploration, gallant conquest, and heroic colonization followed one another in a bewildering rush.”  

103 Lummis insisted that the only violence that arose in the missions came from the “jealous nature” of the Indians who revolted.

The Spanish Craze and its romanticized version of the colonial-era Southwest served to implicitly deprecate Indians and Mexicans, previous inhabitants of the land who, inconveniently as far as European-Americans were concerned, were still present in the area. Scholars including Philip Joseph Deloria, Shari Huhndorf, Rayna Green, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Leah Dilworth, and Robert Berkhofer have explored the ways in which European-Americans sought to reconcile (anti)modernist ambiguity about a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing society by celebrating and collecting romantic representations of the past. The phenomenon of European-Americans playing Indian, an interest in Indian cultural productions, and the rise of an aesthetic of primitivism in the early twentieth century resulted from this ambiguity. Native Americans could be prized only, as Dilworth says, “as people doomed to vanish or as living relics of the past...a

103 Charles Fletcher Lummis, *The Spanish Pioneers* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1899), 77.
primitive that was a locus for idealized version of history, spirituality, and unalienated labor.”

Turner’s frontier thesis bound European-American identities to Native history and practices by identifying Indians as the predecessor of the pioneer and the pioneer as the predecessor of industrialized civilization. In playing Indian, European-Americans are "connecting to the America that existed before European invasion; they are connecting to the very beginnings of the mythological structure called America.”

Modern, assimilated Indians confounded the European-American notion of the primitive Indian, thus the public demanded that indigenous people themselves "play Indian” when working at expositions and fairs, in curio shops, in Fred Harvey’s Hopi House, in department stores, or posing for artists or participating in pageants.

Harry E. Miller may have modeled his Indian persona on Luther Standing Bear, a Sicangu and Oglala Lakota chief, author, and educator who graduated from Carlisle and performed in Wild West shows and in the movies, beginning with his 1916 screen debut in an movie adaptation of Helen Jackson Hunt’s immensely popular 1884 novel Ramona (see discussion of Ramona below).

As Indian Miller, Harry, like Luther Standing Bear, embodied European-American contradictions regarding Native Americans and questions of identity and authenticity. Miller played Indian by giving lectures in San Diego at events like ladies club meetings, high school graduations, college assemblies, PTA meetings, and meetings of metaphysical societies. His

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105 Huhndorf, Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination, 56.
topics included Indian mythology, “What the Indian Thinks of the White Man,” and why the Indian should be granted citizenship. He presented “native dances and a collection of Indian curios” as a sideshow act at the San Diego spring frolic of 1921, appearing alongside other exotic curiosities like a six-legged cow, a half-woman, and an Egyptian fortune teller. Newspaper articles remarked approvingly that Miller was a full-blooded, educated Indian who was virile and rugged and who delighted by appearing in full native costume. For example, the *Coconino Sun* of Flagstaff, Arizona wrote “Indian Miller is a striking figure of an Indian, well educated and a fluent talker.”

The *San Diego Union* wrote that Miller “has lived the life of an Apache boy of the old days, he has studied at the white man’s universities, he has fought for the United States in the jungle country of the Philippines…. And through it all—study or adventure—he has preserved his identity as an Indian, as an Apache—dignified, silent, keen-eyed and erect. His black hair is braided with colored ribbon, after the fashion of his tribe.”

The journalists’ juxtaposition of Miller’s education with his Indianness indicates that Miller’s branding of himself as an (assimilated) Apache made him more marketable as a lecturer and historian.

Miller attached himself to events in San Diego celebrating nineteenth century author Helen Hunt Jackson, the European-American writer of *Ramona* who was also an activist criticizing government treatment of American Indians. Miller’s choice to identity himself with the *Ramona* story confirmed his (secret) hybrid identity as a European-American who spoke out about Indian rights. *Ramona* takes place in southern California during its time as a Mexican and Spanish colony and tells the story of the doomed love affair of the titular character, the child of a

European-American and American Indian, and an Indian farmhand named Alessandro. Ramona and Alessandro find themselves exiled and made rootless and despised by encroaching European-American settlers. Alessandro is shot to death by an American, and Ramona marries the son of the Mexican ranch owner who raised her. The success of Ramona spawned popular tourist attractions at sites around Southern California that resembled the locations in the novel, including Ramona’s Marriage Place in Old Town San Diego. In September 1920, a local newspaper reported that Miller, “Apache historian of the southwest,” was living at Ramona’s Marriage Place while working on his articles about the history of San Diego and interviewing candidates to play Ramona to his Alessandro in a pageant presentation of the marriage scene.111 In aligning himself with Jackson’s fictional Alessandro, Miller connected his Indian persona to a commercially viable incarnation of Indianness.

Commercial culture demanded that Miller's Indian persona chiefly served to advance European-American interests. As Shari Huhndorf argues, “while those who go native frequently claim benevolence toward Native peoples, they reaffirm white dominance by making some (usually distorted) vision of Native life subservient to the needs of the colonizing culture.”112 Indian Miller's writing and lecture career in San Diego and his subsequent career in Arizona and New Mexico as a roadside curio shop and zoo owner confirms Huhndorf’s argument. Miller branded and marketed his businesses via the spectacle of his Indian persona, enticing European-American consumers and tourists with a version of Indianness that legitimated European-American dominance over the land, culture, and economy. Megan Elizabeth Morrissey refers to

111 “Full-Blooded Apache Indian Preparing for Ramona Play,” San Diego Union (San Diego, CA), September 1, 1920: 22.
112 Huhndorf, Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination, 5.
such performances of assumed racial identities as part of “the elasticity of whiteness,” a way for white people to extend the boundaries of their whiteness and claim other identities for their own symbolic and material benefit.\(^{113}\) Miller’s writings over the years defending Indian culture indicate that he surely saw himself as an Indian ally and activist on the order of John Collier or Helen Hunt Jackson.\(^{114}\) But the effect of his transparent performance was to restrict Indian identity to what European-Americans wanted and needed it to be, and to assume control over a narrative of a culture he could not fully understand.

Harry E. Miller got his first taste of selling products using the Indian Miller persona when he signed on as a mascot, advertising copywriter, and artist for the Spreckles Savage Tire Company in 1921 (Fig. 7). Brothers John D. and Adolph B. Spreckles were instrumental in the growth and early infrastructure of San Diego and owned a business empire operating from their headquarters in the city.\(^{115}\) Along with coal, cement, and railroad concerns, the Spreckles Company financed utilities, banks, railway extensions, and buildings including the Spreckles Theatre Building and the San Diego Hotel. John D Spreckles also owned the San Diego Union, which allowed him to dominate both the medium and the message in the rapidly growing city.

The determination of the Spreckles Company to link their tire business to American Indians served as an attempt to soothe European-Americans ’anxieties about the new automobile mode of transportation by giving it the stamp of approval from Indians, America’s “First


\(^{114}\) See “Indian Tribal Dances Defended by Miller,” Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, AZ), February 10, 1924.

\(^{115}\) For a detailed history of early San Diego that reads like pro-industrialist boosterism and expresses unvarnished gratitude toward John D Spreckles, see Clarence Alan McGrew, City of San Diego and San Diego County: The Birthplace of California (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922).
Ecologists.” Renowned painter of the American West Maynard Dixon, whose romantic works featured elegiac cowboy and Indian scenes, designed posters for the Savage Tire Company and created their mascot “Little Heap,” a drawing of a small Indian boy (Fig. 8). The announcement of Miller supplanting Little Heap rolled out with much fanfare. “From the days of his boyhood in the tribe of the Aravaypa Apaches to his present position with the makers of Savage Tires,” wrote the Los Angeles Evening Express, “Miller has been successively student, soldier, traveler, explorer, historian, and artist.” Now he was also a pitchman.

Miller’s work for the Savage Tire Company explicitly exploited the ambiguous borderline of his persona as a fully assimilated Indian. Indian Miller could promote a simplistic version of Indian culture as long as it conformed to European-American expectations. Here the commodity version of Native American identity merged with the commercial goals of marketing or selling Native American identity. An article in the San Diego Union titled “Visitors Look Over Savage Tire Company” made Miller’s marketing value to the company clear. Spreckels used his newspaper to promote his tire company and used Miller to sanction his company’s appropriation of Indian culture. The article referred to Miller as “Indian Miller, alias Crazy Thunder, a full-blooded Apache who has adopted the company,” and said, “he takes great pride in the factory which…he decided merits its reputation and is a worthy namesake of the Indian people.” The article goes on to note that the company’s general manager is known by the title “Big Chief” and other employees are “the war chief, the medicine man, warriors, and squaws.”

In a similar vein, the advertisements Miller produced for the company were labeled the History Green, “The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe,” 49.
117 San Diego Union (San Diego, CA), January 23, 1921.
118 “Indian, Historian Joins Savage Tire Company’s Forces,” Los Angeles Evening Express (Los Angeles, CA), September 11, 1920.
of the Red Man Series and appeared in newspapers across the West (Fig. 9). For the copy, Miller wrote short narratives of Indian lore with titles like “The Powwow”, “Song of the Coyote,” and “Sioux Treaty of 1865,” and he accompanied them with his own whimsical, primitivist pencil drawings. The writing veered between a pidgin style -- “[The Indian] knew how fire would make the century plant pop rapidly like the fire-wagon of the paleface”-- and the ending sales pitch that tied in the narrative but dropped the dialect”—As [Indians] mastered fires, so has the Spreckels ‘Savage ’Tire Company mastered the finer details of construction that make the mighty Savage Cord.”

Miller’s advertisements appeared weekly in newspapers from August to November 1921 and were so successful that the company was still touting their effectiveness two years later. Indian Miller had had his first taste of successfully monetizing his persona. Soon he left for Arizona to build his own business on the strength of playing Indian for tourists along the new national highway.

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120 Both quotes are from “Smoke Signals,” *The Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, NM), September 21, 1921.
121* Replies to ‘Ads ’Come in 2 Years After Publication,” *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls, MT), July 22, 1923.
Figure 7 Indian Miller in a promotional photograph for the Savage Tire Company. Source: San Diego Union (San Diego, CA), August 21, 1920.
Figure 8 Advertisement featuring the “Little Heap” character created by Maynard Dixon for the Savage Tire Company. Source: Sacramento Bee (Sacramento CA), May 22, 1920.
Figure 9 One of “Indian” Miller’s Savage Tire advertisements, featuring his writing and drawings. Source: 
*Houston Post* (Houston, TX), Aug 3, 1921.
ROADSIDE SPECTACLE—SOUTHWEST IDENTITY TOURISM ON ROUTE 66

Indian Miller left bustling, urban San Diego for places in eastern Arizona on the edge of sparsely populated lands and close to Navaho Indian reservations and the new national highways. This new frontier was accessible to transitory European-American tourists, often from the eastern states, who were ideal audiences for Miller’s commercialized spectacle of Indianness.

East Coast tourists’ interest in the Southwest grew substantially during the early twentieth century, encouraged by new national infrastructure and by popular culture products that assured them that Old West and Indian Wars violence was a picturesque relic of the past. The population of Arizona increased by over 60% between 1910 and 1920, and another 30% between 1920 and 1930. The end of World War I inaugurated the Jazz Age, an era of individualism, silent movies, radio, and automobile travel. In addition to transcontinental railways, early highways and new dirt roads enabled travelers from the Eastern United States to visit ever more remote lands and natural wonders of the West for themselves. The rise of the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology in the preceding decades inspired cultural entrepreneurs like Edgar L. Hewett, founder of the Museum of New Mexico, to be interested in American antiquities and indigenous peoples. The federal government passed the Antiquities Act of 1906 and created National Parks and National Monuments to preserve and study Indian artifacts. The National Old Trails Road, established in 1912, connected Baltimore to

122 Arizona Census population numbers were 204,354 in 1910, 334,162 in 1920, 435,317 in 1930.
California and ran through the northern regions of Arizona and New Mexico. The road was supplanted by Route 66 in 1926, as automobile travel became more commonplace and accessible.

Miller pursued his interest in selling his ideas about history and archeology to tourists at the first stop in his Southwestern career—the Cliff Dwellings at Walnut Creek, just off of the National Old Trails Highway and ten miles from Flagstaff. The Cliff Dwellings are ruins left by the indigenous Sinagua people, who lived there from about 1100 to 1250 A.D. President Woodrow Wilson had designated Walnut Creek a National Monument in 1915, part of the new, preservation ethic of the federal government that grew out of the end of the frontier and concerns over the loss of America’s celebrated Western wilderness. Miller scavenged for artifacts there and offered daily lectures with titles like “Pottery of the Cliff Dwellers” and “My Art as Applied to the Cliff Dwellings.”¹²⁵ He self-published Moccasin, a magazine of his writings, under the names Indian Miller and Crazy Thunder. Miller’s time as a squatter and self-appointed interpreter at the Cliff Dwelling was mentioned by historian William Stoutamire in his analysis of how Flagstaff residents created ties with their neighboring natural and cultural resources in Walnut Canyon. Stoutamire notes that the mostly European-American inhabitants of 1920s Flagstaff who picnicked and pothunted at Walnut Canyon came to assume ownership of the site as part of their imagined heritage and antiquity.¹²⁶ The site’s designation as a National Monument brought federal management but no professional trained staff on site. This opened the door for “someone like ‘Indian Miller ’to espouse, and receive attention for, his almost minstrel-like

¹²⁵ “Indian’ Miller Will Give Series of Lectures at Cliffs,” The Coconino Sun (Flagstaff, AZ), June 23, 1922.
performances.” Stoutamire appears to assume that Miller’s audiences recognized the inauthenticity of his Indianness, but it is unclear if that was the case. Miller’s mentions in local papers, and in archeologist and Museum of New Mexico founder Edgar L Hewett’s respected publication El Palacio, refer to Miller uncritically as an Indian. At any rate, Miller’s short time at Walnut Canyon served as a successful test run for his ambitions as an entrepreneurial site interpreter. Miller moved on to a site that he could control and manipulate to serve his sales pitch.

Miller expanded on his marketing of mythologized frontier identities at his new location. In 1923, Miller married a divorced European-American woman from New York named Margaret Blanch Frobisher. The Millers set up a roadside curio shop and zoo at Canyon Diablo on land Miller leased from a man named Earl Cundiff. Miller named the site Two Guns and hired Chief Joe Sekakuku, a (genuine) Hopi who was an old hand at performing Indian dances for the tourist trade at the famous Fred Harvey Hopi House in the Grand Canyon. Miller’s wife Margaret dressed in Indian style and attested to a fictitious “half-Indian” identity. May, Miller’s half-Filipina teenage daughter, also worked at Two Guns. May was identified as a “full-blooded Sioux” in an article in a San Diego paper about an automobile tour of Arizona that was heavy on opportunities for Indian sightseeing (Fig. 10). May was pictured standing next to Sekakuku,

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128 Stoutamire, Museum of New Mexico, the School of American Research, the Archaeological Society of New Mexico and Santa Fe Society of the Archaeological Institute, “In the Field: Tour of the Cliff Dwellings,” El Palacio 6, no. 1 (1919): 213. The blurb reads: “Harry E. Miller, the Indian historian, who is publishing a history of Arizona, and C B Wilson, artist and photographer of the International Engraving Company, are making a leisurely motor tour of the cliff dwellings, with the intention of writing and illustrating a number of travel brochures for newspapers and magazines on the ancient cultures, buildings, and ruins.”
129 Repp, Route 66: The Romance of the West, 87 and 133. Repp claims that Miller and Sekakuku met while working as supporting players on Western star William S Hart’s silent films. I found no proof of this, but it is plausible as Hart did film in Arizona and Miller was reported to have attended parties with Hart.
identified as “a full-blood Hopi.” The article also describes what they’re wearing: “This picture shows the Indian in the native and ‘flapper’ dress.” In order to compete in the roadside commercial culture of the American Southwest of the 1920s, especially in locations close to reservations, the Millers and Sekakuku needed to meet the expectations of tourists. Leah Dilworth argues that in the early twentieth century the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and the Fred Harvey Company influenced conceptions of the Southwest by “constructing a version of Indian life that reflected and spoke to American middle-class desires and anxieties.”

They presented the Southwest as a tourist-friendly region inhabited by a peaceful, pastoral people. Dilworth’s argument is supported by the Fred Harvey Company’s 1914 travel booklet *The Great Southwest Along the Santa Fe*, which has a section on where to find Apache Indians on their reservations in Arizona and another section promising that Apache Warriors are now “a law-abiding people.” The page on the company’s Indian Building in Albuquerque promises that Indians will be found there weaving blankets or making jewelry or “lounging about the building” in “picturesque costumes.”

The new, accessible pioneer path of the West was the highway, and tourists, informed by frontier mythology, expected to find Indians performing Indianness by the roadside in rural Arizona. The Millers assumed Indian personas and Sekakuku performed Indian dances in order to satisfy automobile tourist expectations.

Frontier mythology also taught tourists to anticipate seeing natural wonders of the West. Indian Miller obliged. He built a network of small cages for his zoo and stocked them with local wild animals he bought from trappers. Miller’s zoos extended the assimilation of nature into European-American culture to animals. Miller’s zoo cages were much smaller than today’s

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133 Harvey, *The Great Southwest Along the Santa Fe*, 42-44.
enclosures, but the essential experience of visitors parading past caged animals is little changed from one hundred years ago. The establishment of zoos in Western cities signaled civic growth and economic power, promoting tourism and providing a leisure activity for the working class. As with Miller’s curio stands, his zoos were low culture versions of the private zoos that had earlier been established in Arizona by railroad and lumber barons.134 The display of native captive wild animals further assured the drive-by tourist that the land they were passing through had been tamed and made safe for European-American notions of civilization.

134 Railroad baron Frank M Murphy established the Murphy Park Zoo in Prescott in 1909. Lumber baron H.G. Bush established the Mesa Zoo in 1923, but it had disappeared by 1933 when he became more interested in advocating for what became the Bush Highway, which runs through Tonto National Forest. The Apache Junction Zoo in Mesa was a roadside attraction in the vein of the Two Guns zoo. It was established in 1923 by cafe owner George Cleveland Curtis. In the 1930s, the Apache Junction Zoo received the first zoo permit issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.
Figure 10 Photograph of May Miller and Joe Sekakuku at Canyon Diablo / Two Guns in Arizona. Source: San Diego Union (San Diego, CA), October 10, 1926.

Figure 11 Harry Miller with one of his zoo’s gila monsters. Source: Barbara or Edwin McKee, Harry Miller with one of his gila monsters at Canyon Diablo east of Flagstaff—May, 1929, NAU.PH.95.48.22, black-and-white photograph, Northern Arizona University, Cline Library, 1929, http://archive.library.nau.edu/digital/collection/cpa/id/6577/rec/2.
A tourist encountering Indian Miller, his Indian artifacts, and his wild animals experienced a domesticated and commodified version of the Old West frontier. The commercial culture of Southwest tourist stops made tourism “the most colonial of colonial economies,” as historian Hal Rothman put it, and “tourist workers quickly learn that one of the most essential traits of their service is to mirror onto the guest what that visitor wants for them and from their place in a way that affirms the visitor’s self-image.”¹³⁵ Rothman calls this mirroring “scripting space.” Rothman describes tourism as an essentially extractive industry, removing authentic objects and experiences from their cultural context and creating simulations for sale to outsiders. The concept of tourism as cultural extraction provides a link between Miller’s earlier ethnographic exhibitions and his roadside businesses. Miller transferred his exhibitory impulses to domestic geography and fauna, reimagining the frontier in the land just beyond the roadside. By collecting and displaying evidence of the geographical frontier, Miller once again put on a performance of conquering the West. By doing so in what Rothman calls “neonative” guise, in which outsiders represent themselves as native (especially in cases where European-Americans cannot or choose not to distinguish between minorities), Miller and his wife and daughter assured tourists that Indians, like his caged animals, posed no threat to the dominance of European-Americans, even on the edge of the imaginary American frontier.

Miller extended the sociocultural scripting to the land near his store. The Two Guns site contained its own authentic Indian ruins, but of a particularly gruesome nature. According to oral history accounts told to Gladwell Richardson, in 1878 a cave near the road had been the site of a retaliatory massacre by Navajos who chased raiding Apache into the cave and suffocated them to

death with fire. After a long, torturous night, the bodies of forty-two Apache and their ponies were abandoned in the cave while the Navajo went off and recounted the story to a white trader. Miller customized the site of the massacre to make it more commercially appealing. He hired Hopi men to build a pueblo-type building on the rim and cliff dweller type walls in the main canyon. Skulls and bones of the dead were propped up within the cave as set dressing. Miller created signs luring tourists to his fictionalized-authentic historic site, which he touted as the Apache Death Cave. Thanks to his existing notoriety, and to the growth and popularity of automobile tourism, Indian Miller’s Two Guns earned recognition as a tourist destination and curiosity.

Miller’s Apache Death Cave combined fact and fiction in a manner familiar to consumers of Old West spectacles. The mythologized representations of the frontier, the Old West, and Indians was so well established, and so strongly reinforced by movies, carnivals, art, and novels, that the lines between fact and fiction could be hard to distinguish in the West in the 1920s. At the same time, many Americans were dissatisfied with government approaches to “the Indian problem.” Zane Grey’s popular novels depicted Indians as victims of European-American greed, betrayal, and neglect. Ramona-themed tourism continued to thrive in southern California. John Collier, who would become the reforming Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the next decade, founded the American Indian Defense Association in 1924 to protect religious freedom and tribal property. The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 granted citizenship to indigenous Americas (though the right to vote remained restricted by state law). During Indian

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136 Gladwell Richardson, “‘Mystery Cave’: Cursed by Evil Spirits,” Arizona Republic (Phoenix, AZ), December 3, 1967.
138 The Ramona Pageant outdoor play has been staged annually in Hemet, CA since 1923.
Miller's time at his real and fake Apache Death Caves, a solemn ceremony honoring the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Little Big Horn took place in Montana, in which cavalrymen reenacting General George Custer's disastrous charge met Cheyenne and Sioux veterans of the battle. Western silent film star William S Hart was invited to speak at the ceremony, blurring the lines between the real and mythological West. The Miller family’s Indian personas and fake ruins arose out of commercial culture and a showbusiness and tourist business logic, but they also had a cultural logic. The Millers gave tourists what they expected and desired from Southwestern sites near real Indian reservations: the thrill of the violent past married to the rapprochement and authenticity of the present era.

Ironically, authentic violence drove the Millers away from Two Guns. Indian Miller’s time in Arizona came to a tragic and sensational end after he was put on trial in June 1926 for the shooting death of his landlord Earl Cundiff. Newspapers in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, California and Montana followed the trial closely. Harry testified that Cundiff showed up armed in Miller’s room and started a fight. After a struggle, Miller shot Cundiff dead. Newspaper accounts of the trial were sympathetic to Miller, portraying him admiringly as calm, gentle, and intelligent, while Cundiff is presented as a violent hothead. Miller’s wife and daughter were called to the stand and their (fictitious) Indian credentials were emphasized in the paper: “Miller's daughter's name is 'Umaybeson 'or 'Month of May. 'Miller is known among his

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139. “Silent Ceremony Honors Memory of Custer’s Men on Little Big Horn Site,” *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, AZ), June 26, 1926.
141. “Motion to Acquit Miller Lost; State Rests Case,” *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson, AZ), June 24, 1926.
tribesmen as Chief Crazy Thunder. Mrs. Miller is one-quarter Mohawk.”142 The careful delineation of race in the midst of a murder trial points to the centrality of race in local social relations, and the sympathetic tone of the articles implies that the entrepreneurial Millers fulfilled the role of “good Indian” to the European-American locals.

Miller was quickly acquitted and resumed his public activities, visiting Phoenix a couple of weeks later, where the paper called him “perhaps one of the best known and most picturesque Indians of Arizona” and quoted him chatting about the animals in his zoo.143 Miller was seriously mauled by one of his zoo’s caged mountain lions in 1931.144 He recovered and soon chased the roadside frontier to a new, more remote location alongside the highway near Lupton, just over the Arizona/New Mexico line.

The final phase of Miller’s life, from the 1930s until his death in 1951, found him repeating past habits but, crucially, abandoning the Indian persona. Miller named his new trading post the Cave of the Seven Devils and erected another small zoo there.145 He also installed fake “Indian ruins” at the mouth of the cave. But Miller was fifty-three years old and starting to recede from public spectacle. Harry E. Miller’s retreat from the Indian Miller persona occurred as newly commissioned national highways like Route 66 and expanded federal control of Southwestern historical sites and natural wonders gradually erased the imaginary frontier borderland. As the cities and towns of the Southwest grew, the New Deal brought federal workers and licensed interpreters out to staff National Parks and National Monuments and

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143. “Indian Miller ’Pays Phoenix Visit; Recalls Story of Pet Gila Monster Which Became Angered And Bit Him,” Arizona Republic (Phoenix, AZ), July 17, 1926.
145. “Indian Miller Sees Visions—Alters Name of Seven Devils,” The Gallup Independent (Gallup, NM), October 5, 1932.
attempt to drown out the “flamboyant hucksterism” of local businesses like Miller’s. As automobile tourism became more popular and Indian populations in the Southwest grew, European-American access to authentic American Indian culture became more commonplace. Miller's Apache persona lost its illusory power.

Miller also stopped playing Indian as the government’s attitudes toward Indians had changed. Census records from 1930 and 1940 serve as proof of the change and its effect on Miller. In 1930, census officials decided to draw more distinct boundaries around race by subdividing the Indian population based on blood and tribe, but the attempt to do so pointed out how fluid identity can be. The 1930 Census had instructed enumerators to record whether the Indian was of full or mixed blood and to which tribe he or she belonged. Indians of mixed Indian and white blood were to be counted unless the person was “regarded as a white person in the community where he lives.” The report includes a chapter classifying Indians “by admixture of blood,” touting the social value of distinguishing assimilated Indians from those “able to maintain purity of blood.” In accordance with their professional personas, Harry E. Miller’s 1930 census entry records him as a full blood Apache, with Margaret Miller’s listed as mixed blood Mohawk.

146 See Lillian Makeda’s 2010 article, which attributes the phrase “flamboyant hucksterism” to Chester Liebs. Makeda’s article about architecture along Route 66 at the Petrified National Monument contains a fascinating account of the fight Miller’s sister Julia Grant Miller waged against the NPS in defense of her business, known as The Lion Farm or Painted Desert Park. Harry and Julia established the initial Lion Farm and Harry supplied the animals. The NPS was alarmed that tourists stopped at The Lion Farm, took in the view of the Painted Desert, wandered among the business’s little array of petrified stumps, and drove off, thinking they had seen all that the national park had to offer.
147 In New Mexico, where the Millers lived, the Indian population grew by 21% in the 1940s, according to a comparison of 1940 and 1950 Census counts.
149 An example of the social value of “purity of blood” counts is cited in the report, which says that full blooded Indians have higher rates of illiteracy and a small proportion of children in school or able to speak English.
By the 1940 census, however, with the Millers now living at the Cave of the Seven Devils in New Mexico, the government’s interest in blood counts had ended. The separate Indian census was discontinued by the government that year. Both Harry and Margaret were marked as White. There were 34,510 Indians living in New Mexico in 1940—6% of the total population of the state and 19% more than had been recorded there ten years earlier. Clearly, the “Vanishing Indian” was by no means vanishing. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934—part of the “Indian New Deal”—instituted a reversal of assimilation policies and of the Dawes Act and granted tribes the right to self-government and management over reservation land and mineral rights. Though Commissioner John Collier rhapsodized over Indian culture’s superiority to modern ways, thus engaging in the kind of romanticizing and primitivism that Miller enacted through his Indian Miller persona, Collier nonetheless prioritized authentic Indian culture. The government’s new attitude toward indigenous people reflected the changed social context of Miller’s performance of Indianness. American Indians had become less exoticized and more recognized as participants in modernity. The inauthentic Indian Miller persona had depended on the perceived incongruity between his education and eloquence and his professed Indian heritage. In the new cultural climate, the persona lost its commercial cachet.

Newspapers no longer reported regularly on Miller’s activities, and when they did, they no longer played along with his persona. An article encouraging tourists to stop at the Seven

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151 Newspaper articles about Miller in the 1920s and 1930s often mentioned his education alongside his supposed Apache identity, which itself was sometimes misidentified. For example, “[Indian Miller is] the highly educated Indian who made those remarkable drawings of…the Chiricahua mountains which his tribesmen of old used to regard with superstitious awe” (“Around Here,” El Paso Herald, March 17, 1926); and “In Lupton, Arizona [travelers] met a full breed Navajo chief whose son, Indian Miller, a world war veteran and highly educated, has devoted his time to the restoration of the relics of his ancestral tribe” (“Find Unique Curios While Touring Middlewest States,” The Van Nuys News (Van Nuys, CA), July 20, 1931).
Devils Cliff Dwellings and zoo noted the trappings of Miller’s showmanship: “Twenty-one miles west of Gallup on Highway 66, a spectacle greets one that looks like a Walt Disney colored picture…. Harry E. Miller, the owner, has the appearance of an Indian and likes to be called ‘Indian Miller. ’A writer and amateur archaeologist, Indian Miller is a friend of the Indian.”

Miller kept writing newspaper articles and self-publishing pamphlets, expounding on his archeological discoveries with a spiritual bent. Miller insisted that the Seven Devils location was the literal site of the famed Seven Cities of Cibola, but confirmation from scholars eluded him. By 1946, Miller had closed his zoo and abandoned his Indian Miller performance after some thirty years. He spent his last years living in his cave with Margaret and twenty-four cats, insisting on the validity of his archeological evidence and his alternate history of the Spanish colonial Southwest.

Harry E. Miller died on December 19, 1951. Obituary headlines referred to him as Two Guns Miller and focused on his latter-day archeological obsession. They tried to sum up his life of spectacle, exhibition, and performance with long lists, referring to him as an Indian trader, archaeologist, writer, animal trainer, and philosopher.

After Miller's death, Margaret Miller sold the Cave of the Seven Devils to the Yellowhorse family, Navajos who own the business to the present day. In the end, Harry E. Miller ceded his legacy to an authentic Native American family.

152. “Indian Miller’s Home Near Cliff Dwelling,” The Gallup Independent (Gallup, NM), August 10, 1940.
153 Miller published thirty “Songs of the Navajo Sea” pamphlets and another entitled “Philosophy of Universality” during this period.
154 Repp, Route 66: The Romance of the West, 91.
CONCLUSION—IDENTITY AND THE EXHIBITION IMPULSE

American frontier mythology valorized violent conquest and rationalized the rhetoric of displacement, replacement, and cultural superiority. It demands that Native Americans and colonized people like the Filipinos cannot be part of modernity unless they accept assimilation and marginalization and perform a version of their culture that appeals to European-American interests. Frontier mythology also associates economic progress with racialized violence and environmental destruction by celebrating military conquests over Native Americans and colonized populations and extolling the subsequent control and transformation of their land. Miller’s partnership with the Savage Tire Company encapsulated this ideology in its advertisements, with “Indian” Miller symbolically ceding the West to paved roads and new technology. The Miller family’s carnival work simulating rural Filipino life in Igorrote Villages likewise appealed to European-American notions of cultural and technological superiority.

Harry E. Miller chased new versions of the frontier through all the phases of his adult life. He invented an Indian persona that invoked frontier mythology, and he pursued cultural collecting and exhibition as an expression of his assumed Indian identity. Miller’s insistence on the supreme validity of his archeological and scholarly insights into Indian and Southwest history recall Baudrillard’s assertion that collected objects “constitute themselves as a system, on the basis of which the subject seeks to piece together his world, his personal microcosm.”156 Collected objects—and people—are divested of function and temporality, claiming authenticity from their removal from the current historical situation—a “present-becoming-future,” in James

Clifford’s phrase. Miller’s Igorot ethnographic exhibitions, and his mingling of authentic and fabricated Indian ruins, created illusions that deprecated past and present in order to overwrite them with a future vision of European-American hegemony. Miller’s intentions are less important than the effect his performance and exhibitions had on the spectator. “The spectator of the realist representation is not supposed to be under the power of the representation,” W. J. T. Mitchell notes, "but to be using representation in order to take power over the world.”157 Tony Bennett argues that museums are an expression of the power of the state, and that they are typically located “in the middle of cities, in specially-designed public spaces that inculcate people within the processes of the state.”158 Bennett’s arguments provides the context for Harry E. Miller’s carnival shows, curio shops, lectures, roadside zoos, and ad hoc museums. Miller's mobile spectacles and performances relocated the messaging of the power of the state to the highway, the traveling fair, and the PTA meeting. They reinforced frontier mythology for early twentieth century European-American spectators, consumers, and tourists by confirming the need to colonize remote and far-flung places and replace the cultures they found there with their own, because their own identity—and thus their own viability as capitalist producers and consumers—depended on it. New generations of Americans can never replicate the mythologized triumphs of the frontier and pioneer past unless new areas of conquest are constantly identified and targeted for colonization and commercial exploitation.

The Filipino Millers provide an example of how participants in spectacles of identity develop fluid identities shaped by the demands of commercial culture. In America, the Millers

performed a version of Filipino life that they had left behind and that the young children may not even have remembered. The confluence of the end of the Turnerman frontier, the rise of ethnography and race science, the popularity and influence of American expositions, American occupation of the Philippines, and Miller’s search for new frontiers to conquer in the mold of his pioneer family produced the economic and cultural conditions that enabled Miller’s Filipino family to making a living exhibiting themselves in carnival sideshows. In the early twentieth century, racial and national identity was a viable subject for spectacle provided it confirmed the white supremacist racial hierarchy that served propaganda purposes for the military, the government, and European-American capitalists like Savage Tire Company owner John D. Spreckles. Ethnographic exhibits in American international expositions in the early decades of the twentieth century exemplified spectacles of identity with a propaganda purpose. Once those authorities lost interest, however, the spectacles of identity still found an outlet in middle-class entertainment venues like fairs and carnivals. The lives of Agunai and her children demonstrate the power of governments, the military, and commercial culture to impose, shape, destroy, and reformulate personal identities and cultures.

Harry E. Miller’s life’s work is now, appropriately enough, archaeological evidence of its own kind, artifacts of the fabled early days of Route 66. Traces of Miller’s life and career still exist in the ruins at Two Guns and in the current Yellowhorse Trading Post in Lupton, AZ. The ruins and the cave in Lupton (Fig. 11) are a mixture of authentic artifacts and Miller’s simulated additions, echoing the mixture of real and fake in his Indian Miller persona. The ruins of Two Guns and the current incarnation of the Cave of the Seven Devils serve as reminders of the consequences and contradictions of appropriating other cultures and chasing a frontier identity. Miller lived his life as an exhibitory expression of the borderlands between savagery and
civilization, the past and the present, and race and identity. Harry and Agunai produced four children who were forced to do the same, but whose path was made more complicated by their inability to draw the protective cloak of whiteness around them at will. By analyzing the Miller family's spectacles of identity, we can recognize their relevance to today's intensely contentious and divisive debates over race, identity politics, historical interpretation, and representation. We can recognize the hybridity and duality that commercial culture imposes on American identity. By doing this, we can decouple American identities from the frontier mentality that inculcates conquest through violence and destruction.

Figure 12 Abandoned zoo cages at Two Guns, Arizona, photographed in 2008. Source: Marcin Wichary, *Untitled*, photograph, Flickr, September 9, 2008, [www.flickr.com/photos/mwichary/2849489513](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mwichary/2849489513). Use license [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/).
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