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Urban Indians, Native Networks, and the Creation of Modern Regional Identity in the American Southwest

Cathleen D. Cahill

The West of the Indian . . . and white, of jazz and airplanes.
—George Fitzpatrick, “The First American,”
New Mexico Highway Journal, July 1929, 13.

In 1926, when Tsianina Redfeather (Creek/Cherokee) and Charles Wakefield Cadman produced two performances of their opera at the newly renovated Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles welcomed them with open arms. *Shanewis: The Robin Woman* was a story of modern Native urbanism that spoke to all Americans in the 1920s about the urbanization and changing gender roles reshaping their society. A story provided by Redfeather that Cadman had set to music, the opera follows Shanewis, a young Creek woman who moves to Los Angeles to study singing and is taken under the wing of Mrs. J. Asher Everton, a prominent socialite. Shanewis meets the fiancé of Mrs. Everton’s daughter Amy, Lionel Rhodes, although the young singer is unaware of their relationship. Lionel falls in love with Shanewis and follows her when she returns to her home in Oklahoma. The opera’s second act takes place at a modern powwow on the Fourth of July when Shanewis introduces Lionel to her community. Also attending the powwow is her jealous foster brother, Philip Harjo, who begins to plot against Lionel. In the staging of the powwow in the Broadway production, the tops of tepees could be seen over a canvas fence, while filling the stage were red, white, and blue

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bunting; ponies pulling wagons and automobiles; ceremonial dancers in full regalia; vendors selling ice cream, lemonade, and balloons, and spectators in “holiday attire.” Redfeather insisted that these onstage spectators be diverse, with people of white, Native, and mixed heritage. When Mrs. Everton and Amy arrive from California to inform Shanewis of the betrothal, Shanewis rejects Lionel and Philip Harjo shoots him with a poisoned arrow, ending both the romance and the opera.

Although the opera received lukewarm reviews in New York, in Los Angeles some 40,000 people attended each of the performances, numbers which suggest that this production struck a particular chord.¹ In addition, the recently renovated Hollywood Bowl was the city’s premier cultural institution, one city leaders hoped would establish its credibility as a major regional metropolis. That the Bowl would present an Indianist opera that starred a Native woman soon after reopening further suggests that during the 1920s, some Angelenos briefly imagined a city in which Native people would be highly visible partners in the tourism and entertainment industries. Sharing this optimistic vision, Native artists found that many Anglo-Americans in the city and region were eager to collaborate because Native performers gave their creations authenticity, especially pageants and music. While the onstage appearance of these performers emphasized the ongoing presence of Native people in the United States, most were from tribes that were not indigenous to Los Angeles.

Most studies of urban Indians in the Southwest have focused on individual cities, especially Los Angeles,² and studies of Los Angeles in these decades have tended to focus on the “motion picture Indians” who made up a large part of the city’s Native population.³ Yet a number of talented Native artists saw economic and educational opportunities not primarily in film, but in live performances that allowed them to engage with their audiences directly. An analysis of opera singers like those performing in *Shanewis*, for example, reminds us of the great mobility of Indigenous people who performed in multiple pageants and events. These Native performers sought economic opportunities in the cities of the Southwest and built their careers through their partnerships with boosters, but they also had political agendas. Live performance mattered more to them than motion pictures because it facilitated both of those goals: they were the stars of the show and their performances gave them direct access to their audiences and thus a chance to educate them. As they did so, they helped constitute those very places and create their modern identities.

Their participation in the development of regional pageants and Indian opera was, however, what Hal Rothman’s study of the western tourist industry has called a “Devil’s Bargain.”⁴ As its theorists have demonstrated, settler colonialism requires the elimination of Indigenous people and their claims to land.⁵ Indeed, non-Natives in Southwestern cities in the 1920s and 1930s worked hard to incorporate an “Indian” identity and storied past into their urban spaces while simultaneously erasing the modern Native people who might have claims on resources or a future in those places. Despite Native performers’ efforts to shape the stories and present themselves as modern urban people, both the roles they often played and the narratives constructed by the press constantly worked to erase them. Native performers resisted this in many different ways, but it was often exhausting, difficult work. Nonetheless, their

cultural productions and political activism did shape the cities and region in which they lived and made fundamental contributions to the development of the modern American Southwest.

The transportation networks that were swelling southwestern cities also facilitated Native people's movements between urban places, their communities, and other Native spaces, cities, and towns throughout the nation. Reyna K. Ramirez has shown that cities became hubs within Indigenous geographies and regional urban systems.⁶ Initially by rail, but increasingly by automobile, the networks fueled the tourist industry in which many Native people worked. Boosters jockeying for position looked to build urban and regional identities that would draw visitors. In the American Southwest, non-Native boosters came to see Indians as the key to developing a distinct regional identity.⁷ Such a plan required partnerships with Native performers opening up a space for them to shape the narratives of Indigenous pasts and futures.

This essay focuses on five singers who worked closely with non-Native boosters, musicians, and artists in southwestern cities linked by their performances: Tsianina Redfeather (Creek/Cherokee), Tessie Mobley (Chickasaw), Daniel Simmons (Yakama), Mary Simmons (Cherokee), and Haske Naswood (Navajo/Diné). It is significant that these performers were usually not indigenous to the places in which they were working, but they developed performances that presented "Indians" as central actors, while the ideas behind the stories, songs, and scenes that they helped create were connected and transported by those urban Native networks to many Indigenous homelands.

In 1926 Tessie Mobley Brave, a newly wed Chickasaw woman from Oklahoma, moved to Los Angeles to study music. Tessie was a musician who had played piano since she was six years old and studied voice in college. Only nineteen, she attended school at the prestigious Chickasaw Bloomfield Academy and had recently graduated from the University of Oklahoma.⁸ She moved to the west coast to study with the well-known teacher Emma Loeffler de Zaruba. She was accompanied by her husband, Louis Brave, also nineteen, an Osage man who was rumored to have oil money. Indeed, the census of 1930 listed them both as having "independent income."⁹ The young couple moved to Los Angeles specifically to pursue careers in entertainment. Louis was interested in the motion picture industry and had hopes of a film career.¹⁰

Daniel Simmons arrived in the same decade. Born on the Yakama reservation in Washington State in 1891, Simmons was educated at the federal Indian school at Cushman, Washington. An excellent bass baritone, he began to tour with an opera company and eventually found his way to Los Angeles. He had a growing reputation as a singer and his film breakthrough came in 1923 when he appeared as an "Indian Scout" in *Kentucky Days* using the stage name Chief Yowlachie.¹¹ His wife Mary Simmons, of Cherokee descent, arrived in Los Angeles that same year.¹² Like Tessie Mobley and Simmons, Haske Naswood had a love of singing and performance and had also moved throughout the West before arriving in the city. Born in Shiprock, New Mexico, the Navajo man attended school there before transferring to the Fort Lewis Indian School in Colorado. He began working as a performer for the Southern Pacific Railroad and moved to Los Angeles sometime in the 1920s.¹³ *Shanewis* was

fictional, but clearly it mirrored the experiences of many Native performers who, like other Americans, were drawn to the opportunities and excitement of cities, which by 1920 had become home to the majority of the country.

Before *Shanewis*, Cadman and Redfeather had been collaborating for several years on “Indian Music Talks.” They were working in a musical style that had been evolving for decades. As historians Philip Deloria, Michael Pisani, and John Troutman have argued, it grew from a constellation of factors, including ethnographic endeavors to “salvage” Indigenous music, the use of music in the curriculum of assimilation implemented by federal Indian schools, and white Americans’ efforts to grapple with the place of assimilated Native people in the citizenry. At the turn of the twentieth century, there was an outpouring of sheet music with “Indian themes” that often offered meditations on cross-racial romance as well as a plethora of “war dances.” During the Great War a few years later, composers in search of “truly American” music drew on both this popular sheet music genre and music recorded by ethnomusicologists and combined them into operas. Though not the first, *Shanewis* was the most successful. It debuted at New York’s Metropolitan Opera House in 1918. Redfeather didn’t sing in this performance, but coached the lead singer extensively.¹⁴

In Southern California boosters had successfully used stories about Indians to create compelling (though fictive) histories of the area to attract tourists, including the *Mission Play*, which began in 1912. Romanticizing the Spanish missions and their Indian neophytes, it spun a tale of what Carey McWilliams called the “Spanish Fantasy Past.” By 1926 it was incredibly well-known and had even been licensed by the Los Angeles City Council, but its finances were in disarray. William Deverell has emphasized the *Mission Play*’s role in erasing or whitewashing the Mexican presence in California. He also suggests that observers took note of how the Indian fiesta scene, with “a dozen dance numbers,” was a major crowd-pleaser.¹⁵ Soon there were competing performances focused more specifically on Indians: the *Ramona* pageant, based on Helen Hunt Jackson’s 1884 bestselling novel, debuted in 1923 at Hemet, California, and *Shanewis* had its success at the Hollywood Bowl in 1926. Two months later, the *Mission Play*’s director, L. E. Behymer, suggested that the company offer a second play on alternating nights to raise box office numbers—*Hiawatha*.¹⁶

The growing interest in Indianist performances in the 1920s wasn’t limited to Los Angeles, but, like the story in *Shanewis*, stretched across the region. Ideas moved throughout the Southwest as boosters borrowed heavily from other cities seeking to attract tourists and build their brand through Native performance and Native performers circulated through the region’s many entertainment venues.¹⁷ In New Mexico, for example, Santa Fe revived its Fiesta in 1912 and Gallup created the Intertribal Ceremonial in 1922.¹⁸ In 1923, Tsianina Redfeather, who had also sung in previous years, agreed to sing at both of these New Mexico events. In 1925, she headlined the Fiesta pageant and led the opening parade in Gallup.¹⁹ News of the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial spread quickly. Redfeather certainly told *Shanewis* producer Cadman about her experiences and Gallup’s boosters, especially members of the Kiwanis Club, were also publicizing it through their own networks. They invited clubs from other cities to the annual Intertribal Ceremonial, especially

Albuquerque and Los Angeles. In 1925, among special guests such as scholars and government officials were listed two Native performers—Tsiarina Redfeather and Mohawk singer Oskenonton—as well as New York composer Frederick Jacobi, “writer of Indian music” Robert E. Smith from Visalia, California, and S. Earl Blakeslee of the Chaffey College music department. Most noteworthy for this article’s purposes are the Southwestern boosters and Indian opera aficionados who attended, including the honorary vice president of the Ceremonials, Stella Leviston, a representative of the American Automobile Association; A. A. Cronenwett, a capitalist from Los Angeles; and George S. Woodward and C. B. Harrison of the Southern California Automobile Club of Los Angeles.²⁰

Boosters, as well as members of the Native community in Los Angeles, saw potential in the popularity of Redfeather’s performances and they moved quickly, creating another show for 1927 that fused Indian opera with the spectacle of Gallup’s Ceremonial. This event, which became known as the “Hollywood Bowl Inter-tribal Ceremonial,” also relied on partnerships between Anglo-Americans and Native Americans.²¹ A group of Anglo-Americans motivated by their love of music, their interest in reform, and their own economic investments in entertainment created a nonprofit organization to coordinate the Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial, “the Junta of Friends of the First Americans.” The Junta was chaired by Grace W. Mabee, a well-known socialite and composer of Indianist music; a major booking agent for many of the entertainment venues in the city, L. E. Behymer of *The Mission Play*, served as the business manager; and Mike Kirk, one of the founders of the Gallup Ceremonials and a manager of Native performers, was the director.²² Joining with the Anglo-American coordinators were several Native singers who lived in Los Angeles, including Redfeather, Daniel and Mary Simmons, Tessie Mobley, and Haske Naswood. The singers, several of whom were already prominent, lent their names and voices to the promotional effort and likely had a hand in organizing the performance.

Production of the Hollywood Bowl Inter-Tribal Ceremonial was also furthered by the successful partnership between Mike Kirk and Haske Naswood. Widely known as an “impresario of the Navajos” who could put on a major show,²³ Kirk served as the agent for a large number of Southwestern performers and athletes, mostly Navajo and Pueblo people. Many continued to work with him for years, suggesting he was a fair agent. One article characterized him as someone who “brings in hundreds of Indians, collects the most skilled artisans, the swiftest runners, the master dancers. He collects dramatic Spanish talent, supple dancers, singers with trained voices. He secures oldtime cowboys, horsemen, rough riders. And then with a consummate skill he weaves a drama, a spectacle.”²⁴ Kirk and Naswood were also involved in the Gallup Ceremonial and seem to have worked together to bring Native singers and dancers from New Mexico to performances throughout the Southwest. Though less touted in the newspapers, evidence suggests that Naswood, who worked closely with Kirk for at least a decade, was a key liaison with the Navajo community and helped plan performances. While the Gallup Ceremonial often traded in stereotype, as did most pageants of the day, JoAllyn Achambault has argued that it also depicted Native participants as fully living in the modern world, an unusual departure.²⁵ Naswood and Kirk brought

their skills, experience, and performers to the Hollywood Bowl where they joined Charles Fletcher Lummis and Cadman, who had both written songs for the female lead singing role, played by Redfeather. Daniel Simmons played the male lead, using his stage name, Chief Yowlachie. Those headliners were supported by a large number of Native performers in dances similar to those in the Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial.²⁶

The publicity work of the performers, as well as the report that the motion picture Indians were staying off the job until the ceremonial was finished, suggests that the Native community was involved in the planning and invested in the show.²⁷ Two months before the Hollywood Bowl Inter-tribal Ceremonial they were working at publicity events, such as speaking at a City Club luncheon where “special mention was made of the intertribal ceremonials featuring Indian drama, dances, music, arts, and crafts to be conducted at the Hollywood Bowl.” Despite Anglo-Native partnerships and implicit understanding that Native people could help shape regional identity, the stereotypes evoked in the press worked to exclude them. Though supportive of the event, this newspaper reporter nonetheless joked that “an Indian uprising occurred at the City Club yesterday at noon although the invaders . . . were pacified by hot rolls and rhubarb pie and there were no casualties.”²⁸ This mode of speaking—simultaneously publicizing the presence of Native performers in the city while exhuming the trope of the savage Indian and portraying them as “other”—would be echoed many times.

Articles covering the event continually depicted Indians as savage and warlike people who were out of place in modern urban America. Indeed, descriptions of violent Indians drew upon powerful racial scripts that upheld what Boyd Cothran has termed “American innocence,” justifications for conquest that rested on the notion that settlers were defending themselves from violence, rather than perpetrators of it.²⁹ One article, for example, under the headline “Red Men Dance for Joy on Los Angeles Arrival: Trainload of Indians Enter City” played on exactly those ideas. It described the city as “besieged . . . by a battalion of Indians.” It was a “small army . . . [of] chiefs, medicine men, squaws, dancers and papooses from fifty-two different tribes,” hailing from Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. The city, it concluded, “surrendered without a struggle.”³⁰ Such language did powerful work of claiming place by evoking a past that Anglo-Americans remembered as the justifiable conquest of violent people. It also signaled that in the Southwest traces of that past lingered and tourists could experience the thrill of the final frontier, a place where Indians still lived, but were no longer threatening. They were part of a vanishing race that was foreign and out of place in the modern metropolis.

Ironically, even as the articles’ primary message refused Indians a place in modernity, they also revealed the city’s vibrant intertribal and interracial community. On September 9, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “Haske Naswood, Navajo singer, will arrive at the Santa Fe station this morning with fifty of his tribe to take part in the Indian ceremonials at the Hollywood Bowl.” The article, complete with his picture, suggested readers knew him, noting that he had lived in the city for the past four years, though he returned to the Navajo reservation to sing at the Gallup Ceremonial each summer. At the station Redfeather, Mobely, and Simmons, all Los Angeles residents, greeted the Native visitors. Along with them stood a group of “prominent club women”

involved in the Ceremonial. They planned to entertain their visitors in high fashion with a meal at the Breakfast Club and a luncheon at the Biltmore Hotel with the Rotary Club. Later they would visit a radio show at the Ambassador Auditorium.³¹

While Naswood may have been comfortable in the city, the article asserted that most of his fellow tribal members were not. "At last," it went on, "he has succeeded in persuading the Navajos, including a Hopi snake priest, to come to Los Angeles." The inclusion of the latter further emphasized the image of an exotic and primitive Indian far removed from modernity.³² In reality, many of the performers were quite familiar with the route from their homes to California. For example, among the group were the daughters of Willow Fence of Cochiti Pueblo. Their father had performed at a Shriners convention in Los Angeles two years earlier.³³ Native people had multiple reasons for participating in the Ceremonial. They were workers performing for wages, but it may also have been a chance to celebrate their culture. The federal government had only recently decriminalized Indian dances. Much like the Gallup Ceremonial was acknowledged to be a communal gathering and time for socializing, the opportunity to travel to Los Angeles for the Hollywood Bowl performance also might have facilitated visits with friends and family who lived in the city or were also performers. Indeed, it was reported that the "motion picture Indians" were assisting with the Ceremonial, likely visiting with friends and family.³⁴

For the Native performers, the Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial was an important, if temporary, hub within Native networks. Looking back on the event a few years later, Tsianina Redfeather and Tessie Mobley remembered the Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial as a key moment in their friendship. Redfeather, the featured soloist and older, more experienced performer, took Mobley under her wing. Mobley auditioned for a voice part in the Ceremonial performance, remembering "my friends did me a noble turn by 'daring' me to try out for one of the singing parts," which she received. For the performance she chose the stage name Lou-Sche-Yna, the Chickasaw Hummingbird (she would later change it slightly to Lushanya).³⁵ Redfeather sang accompaniment with Mobley, and their performance received good reviews. One reporter praised Mobley as "a Chickasaw Indian girl, possessed of a singularly resonant and pleasing voice."³⁶ In a 1930 interview with the *Daily Oklahoman*, Redfeather described Mobley as her "protégé" and praised her talent. She wanted to help another Native singer fighting against stereotypes, stating, "They think we cannot do it, that we won't work, and haven't the stamina. We shall show them."³⁷ They worked together again when they returned to Oklahoma in December for a concert at the Ardmore High School Auditorium. When Tessie Mobley sang at home, she dressed in red velvet instead of buckskin and didn't use her stage name.³⁸

Not only a moment of connection and hub-making, the 1927 Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial also had fairly immediate economic and professional significance. It was a big break for Mobley as well as the Simmons, Naswood, and Kirk. Like their Anglo partners, who definitely saw economic possibilities in the performances, the Native performers may have also calculated that the Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial would lay the groundwork for future economic opportunities. Anglo promoters valued Native cultures for their appeal to tourists. Soon after the Ceremonial, Mike Kirk partnered

with others involved in the Hollywood Bowl performances—Behymer, Cadman, and Robert E. Callahan—in a plan to build a permanent theme park in Culver City called the “Ramona Village.” Callahan and partners intended the village to mix entertainment, education, and heritage, with Kirk hired to be director “of the Indian shows.” The park’s plan had many facets, but the centerpiece was to be a 2,000-seat theater in which three plays would be performed: *Ramona*, Cadman’s coauthored Gold Rush operetta *The Golden Trail*, and *Heart of an Indian*, based on Callahan’s sequel to *Ramona*.³⁹

Decidedly oriented toward auto tourists and clearly seeking to divert them from the *Ramona* pageant in the town of Hemet, Callahan argued that their park’s location ensured that twenty to thirty thousand automobiles would pass its gates every day. Callahan claimed the theme park would be dedicated to Native Americans and would have Native artisans on site, much like the Harvey hotels. He hoped that it would be a “permanent institution where we can help preserve the interesting and authentic history of the American Indian.” This group’s interest in preserving Native culture and history, while problematically grounded in static notions of culture, did offer Native people a small window of opportunity to educate the public and push back against federal policies of assimilation and dominant ideas of Indianness.⁴⁰

Although the Ramona Village project never quite got off the ground, the plan suggests this group’s economic motivations for coordinating the Ceremonial event.⁴¹ Indeed, they would work together closely for the next four years as plans for the Ramona Village stalled and ideas spawned in Gallup, Santa Fe, Hemet, and Los Angeles were forged into a mix that boosters transferred to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Aware of the success of Santa Fe’s Fiesta and the Hollywood Bowl and Gallup Ceremonials, as well as the rising number of automobiles moving through, the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce sought an identity for their city. They wanted something that would put them on the map and compete with other urban efforts: “The Mardi Gras helped build New Orleans; the Rose Carnival and Festival drew attention to Portland and Pasadena—but Albuquerque has the Romantic History of the Southwest—a universal magnet of interest.”⁴² They turned to Kirk’s extensive experience to develop a historical pageant for their city and the result was the Albuquerque First American Pageant,⁴³ a four-day extravaganza that took place on the eastern outskirts of Albuquerque.

Kirk, seemingly with input from Naswood, drew heavily on the earlier shows and their co-creators, including many of the same Native actors as headliners: Chief Yowlachie (Simmons), Princess Lushanya (Mobely), Haske Naswood, and Charles Wakefield Cadman, who wrote some of the songs.⁴⁴ Kirk looked to the *Mission Play* and the Santa Fe Fiesta to write a pageant depicting more than four hundred years of historical change that also featured local Hispanic and Pueblo performers. The setting was a “faux-dobe” stage, a “huge Indian communal pueblo village.”⁴⁵ It is worth noting that Pueblo people were increasingly reluctant to participate in the Santa Fe Fiesta’s pageant. By the 1920s, Anglo-Americans and Hispanic Americans were filling most of the Indian roles, but many Pueblo people, including important political figures such as Pablo Abeita, governor of Laguna Pueblo and member of the All Indian Pueblo Council, were willing to work with Albuquerque’s First American Pageant.⁴⁶

Different from most historical pageants that portrayed Indians quietly vanishing after the first act,⁴⁷ the pamphlet for the first year (probably written by Kirk with input from Naswood) instead emphasized survival. Describing the historical changes in the Southwest since contact, it read, “through it all the Indian has maintained his own government, irrigated his own lands, built permanent homes, worshipped through his own religion as he did when the white man found him. . . . He has been of America since before its discovery was even a dream—he is THE FIRST AMERICAN.” It told this history over the course of four days: in the mornings, street parades would “tell the story of the Indian and his handicrafts”; afternoons were set aside for foot races and contests; and the main event took place over three nights. The first evening portrayed “the primitive state” of Indians, the second “the coming of the Spaniard . . . climaxing with the coming of the United States,” and the third “will show the Indian as he is today, his life under modern civilization.” As one article summarized, “The drama opens with the West of the Indian—long before the coming of the Conquistadores. It closes with the modern West—the West of redskin and white, of jazz and airplanes.”⁴⁸ Despite the language used to describe Native people, to include them in the narrative as contemporary participants in the modern West was an astonishing vision unlike the vast majority of historical pageants hustling Indians offstage as the settlers arrived. It also seems different from the strategy of many boosters, who would claim their city’s place on the final frontier by portraying the remaining Indians as on the verge of disappearing.⁴⁹

The publicity material placed Albuquerque squarely in the middle of Indian country; one brochure indicated the distances to various Pueblos with fall feast days and suggested a visit to Isleta Pueblo, “just twelve miles south of Albuquerque.” Boosters celebrated the variety of Native nations and their cultures as ongoing in the present. Indeed, the city verged on claiming to be the “Indigenous Albuquerque” that Myla Vincenti Carpio has labeled it.⁵⁰ One article bragged, “Twenty-five Indian Tongues will be spoken in the coming spectacle”; “The stomping ground of the cast stretches from Yakima, Wash., to Pawhuska, Okla. [*sic*], from southern Colorado to Mexico City.” Native performers were also often named and identified by tribal affiliation.⁵¹ Ultimately, however, the Indian people in the brochures and reports were represented as set apart from the city rather than in it. And in fact, the First American pageant ended after four years of operation partly because city officials balked at a reciprocal relationship with their Pueblo partners, complaining about the funds spent on food for the Indian village where performers camped.⁵²

The pageant materials evidence a tension between recognizing Native people as modern participants and portraying them as timeless and primitive, possibly a result of Kirk and Naswood’s dual authorship. The pageant would be enacted by “surviving members of the race,” the 1931 pamphlet stated. “It embraces the whole story of the American Indian, from the early beginnings of the race down to the present time.” It would feature Native dances and ceremonies, “many of which have been handed down from generation to generation. The performers wear their own brilliant costumes—some with buffalo robes that have been cherished from the time when their grandfathers followed the trailing herds.” The emphasis on the continuity

of tradition reinforced the deep history of the place and Native claims to it; but depictions of “primitive life” were simultaneously used to highlight the modernity of the city as a result of Anglo settlement, as in “the startling strides that mankind has taken since these early days, and how by gradual stages, drudgery and tedious toil have given place to the comforts and conveniences of our present time.”⁵³

Like many other advertising campaigns at the time, Kirk emphasized the city’s modern qualities by placing them in contrast with Native people, who were cast as primitives. The pageant was “a night spectacle, staged with special lighting effects.”⁵⁴ One program boasted that the new electric lights illuminated “the intricacies of primitive dances, some of which are seldom witnessed by alien eyes.” It even included an “official invitation to powwow” written in Navajo and attributed to “Haske Naswood, Navajo Council”: “We Indians are pleased to welcome to our stomping grounds you men and women who have turned night into day.”⁵⁵ In fact, the developers of the First American pageant were so successful in linking the performance to electricity that in 1931 the National Electric Light Association invited them to perform at their Convention and Exhibition in New Jersey.⁵⁶

Left unsaid in the publicity materials was that the Native people in the pageant were also contributing to this modern world. Many danced in the First American not for ceremony, but as laborers in the tourist and entertainment industries; some may also have performed for fun. Levi Kemble, a Ponca baritone who sang in the pageant, was during the rest of the year chief clerk of Albuquerque’s water department.⁵⁷ Their contemporary lives and jobs also brought them into contact with the most up-to-date technologies. For example, Tessie Mobely, who increasingly became the face of the First American pageant, was one of twelve passengers to take the inaugural flight from Albuquerque to Los Angeles—the only woman and Native person. Upon arrival she went to a radio station to advertise the pageant and the city on a live broadcast.⁵⁸

The headlining stars all leveraged their fame from the First Americans into other career opportunities. Lushanya became nationally famous as the star of the show. For example, in 1929 a Louisiana newspaper described Albuquerque as “the home of the First American, annual Indian pageant, the star of which is Princess Lou-Scha-Enya.”⁵⁹ Increased fame brought her new job opportunities. In 1930, the city Perris, California, hired her for their historical pageant, billing her as “Princess Lou-scha-Enya, the nationally known Chickasaw mezzo-soprano, whose splendid work in ‘The First American’ at Albuquerque, N.M., will long be remembered.”⁶⁰ She also garnered opportunities in film.⁶¹ But music remained her first love and she continued to study with the well-known Madame De Zaruba. Her singing schedule was full with presentations to elite city leaders, which suggests that perhaps singing for a live audience gave performers greater control over their material and opportunities to educate. In March, 1931, she sang an aria for the Major School of Acting’s program in Los Angeles.⁶² She appeared as “a soloist at the Long Beach Opera Reading club, at the International Dinner of Los Angeles Opera and Fine Arts club, at the Woman’s Breakfast club at the dedication of the Greek theater,” and later at the Los Angeles Men’s Breakfast club.⁶³ Tsianina Redfeather, for one, was explicit about her art’s educational purposes: “I want to present the Indian as he deserves,” she asserted. She also hoped to offer an



FIGURE 1. Indian Princess Opens Airline, *The Associated Press*, 1929. In 1929 Tessie Mobley (Chickasaw) described as “Princess Lou-Scha-Enya, New Mexican Indian,” took the inaugural Western Air Express flight from Albuquerque to Los Angeles, where she was greeted by Bennie and Jimmie Charre “of the Hollywood Indian Colony.” Although viewers of the photograph may have focused on their Native clothing, the image also emphasizes the modern activities of urban Indians. Photo in author’s possession.

alternative “that is entirely different from that which is represented in cheap fiction and picture dramas.”⁶⁴

Daniel Simmons seems to have cut back on his film work in the 1930s to focus on his singing.⁶⁵ He, too, received offers to perform throughout Southern California and in 1930 he traveled to New York for engagements.⁶⁶ Likewise, in 1930 Haske Naswood was hired for six performances at the Ramona Pageant in Hemet and in 1932 it was announced he would not be returning to the First American pageant that year as he had signed a higher-paying contract with a touring company.⁶⁷ Mobely, Simmons, and Naswood sang in New Jersey for the First American performance at the Electric Light Association convention “over the National Broadcasting chain from their station in New York City.”⁶⁸ This was Mobley’s big break: it was also reported that she met with leading concert bureaus “interested in adding her to their list of artists.”⁶⁹ She was now on her way to a major opera career, having also accepted a fellowship to the prestigious *Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin, but she returned to Albuquerque to perform one more time.

Participating in the First American also opened economic opportunities for Mary Simmons (stage name White Bird), who had a smaller part in the show. By 1929 she had established a successful Indian art shop on Hollywood Boulevard in LA. She sold pieces created by the city’s Indian community and possibly by students from the Riverside Boarding School, and she also procured merchandise during her annual trips to Albuquerque.⁷⁰ Demonstrating the various ways Native people were shaping Los Angeles, the *Los Angeles Times*’ style section acknowledged Mary Simmons’ shop to be a fashionable boutique, although it also emphasizes its exoticism for non-Native Angelenos: “Indians!!—really truly ones at the American Indian Art Shop, 5461 Hollywood Boulevard. Chief Yowlache [*sic*], noted opera singer, and Princess White Bird will greet you in their charming, naïve manner and escort you through this fascinating place.”⁷¹ White Bird was also identified as a unique fashion designer: her “contribution to modern art has been an unusual one. It was she who conceived the idea of making coats out of the Chimayo blankets.” These fashionable Chimayo coats, which drew on Navajo blanket patterns, were made by Hispanic weavers in New Mexico.⁷² Western stars like Tom Mix and Ray Whitely wore the coats and gossip society columnist Yvonne of Hollywood reported that

Artie Mason Carter of Hollywood Bowl fame, wore one of those beautiful hand-woven Indian coats at the Ramona Pageant in Hemet. It attracted a great deal of attention because of its originality and exotic coloring. Others equally attractive may be had at the American Indian Art Shop. . . . Every article in this interesting shop comes directly from the reservations. Princess White Bird and Chief Yowlachie are the presiding geniuses.⁷³

As the Native singers leveraged their growing fame into economic advantages, they developed what Kiara Vigil calls a “pan-tribal political community.” As Vigil and Nicholas Rosenthal have demonstrated, connections between Native performers, other entertainment industry workers, and non-Native artists became rich sites of political activism in Los Angeles. Daniel and Mary Simmons formed an important hub in that

network in the 1920s. Mary Simmons did a great deal to maintain those connections, although historians have primarily mentioned Daniel's role.⁷⁴ In fact, Native women often performed this kind of community-building work in urban areas.⁷⁵ For example, in 1923 Mary Simmons organized "the War Paint Club," a precursor to the Indian Actors Association that initially served to bring together filmmakers with Native actors.⁷⁶ Other articles described her as a "counselor and friend" to Native people, "the little mother of the Hollywood Indians," and the "leader of the Indian colony in Los Angeles."⁷⁷ Not only did Simmons work with Native actors and artisans in the city, but she also was at the center of several important networks throughout the region and knew powerful non-Natives who were themselves artists—among them her close friend Kathryn Leighton, a painter famous for her portraits of Blackfeet people who also painted three portraits of Tessie Mobely—or clubwomen and men interested in the topic of Indian policy reform.⁷⁸

Non-Native artists found such relationships mutually beneficial because the Native performers lent authenticity to their work. None of the partnerships were ever as successful as that of *Shanewis* creators Redfeather and Cadman, but it did serve as a model for many others. As Chief Yowlachie, Daniel Simmons performed music written by non-Native Indianist composers including Clifford M. Cole, Homer Grunn, and coauthors Mabel Stanford and S. Earl Blakeslee.⁷⁹ When Yowlachie's performances received attention from New York music scouts, he brought their compositions to audiences in the eastern US.⁸⁰ One article about Stanford and Blakeslee (who eventually married) noted that he "has been accompanist of Chief Yowlache [*sic*] the great Indian singer and through his association with him and his visits to the [P]ueblos has an unusual insight into the ways of the Indian." People sought out Daniel Simmons for his skill as a singer but also Mary Simmons for her reputation as a dancer and expert on Indian art and fashion: the article reports that Blakeslee's wife, "who assisted her husband," was "dressed in an Indian costume of scarlet buckskin and wore a coat made from a Chimayo blanket by White Bird." In other words, in this instance the presentation on Indian music gained its authority from the Blakeslees' connection to the Native couple. Ironically, however, when Yowlachie starred in the Broadway premiere of *The Sun Dance*, Native writer Zitkala-Sa received no credit for authoring the opera: the only name on the bill was that of William Hanson, her non-Native coauthor.⁸¹

Mary Simmons and her partners also established an Indian policy reform group, which held musical events at which Natives performed Indianist music written by non-Natives in order to raise awareness and funds. Indeed, as we have seen, all the Native performers considered in this article were members of "the Junta of Friends of the First Americans" that coordinated the Hollywood Bowl Ceremonial, and whose chair, Grace W. Mabee, was a composer of Indianist music. Seeing art as a powerful medium through which to influence public opinion, in 1925 Mary helped organize the American Indian Center Association (AICA) "to preserve and develop the Indian's art, music, literature, and handicrafts," which presented an Indian drama by Carlos Troyer titled "Zuniana."⁸² Mutually beneficial networks like these gave them access to powerful and important people. In 1931 the couple also helped promote a one-act opera (*Osceola*) by the founder of the National Women's League for Justice to

American Indians, socialite Marion Campbell (at the time, Campbell was married to Yakama actor Nipo Strongheart; see Andrew Fisher's article in this special issue).

Campbell had initially traveled to the Florida Seminole community in order to research a romantic opera. However, "instead of romance and poetry, she found only misery, poverty, sickness and despair." She then wrote *Osceola* with a different theme, the attempted removal of the Seminole tribe. Members of the Los Angeles Native community, some of whom were officers in the National Women's League for Justice to American Indians, helped Campbell launch a "campaign to awaken interest in the league" with a program of songs from the opera, including the Simmonses, Tessie Mobley, Luther Standing Bear (Sioux), and Strongheart. The same year, in line with the League's first aim to "publish a true history of the American Indian," it sponsored a window display of Native art in the Dyas Department store for the city's 130th anniversary.⁸³ While the Native officers of the League were not indigenous to the Los Angeles area, they resisted the attempted erasures of settler colonialism by insisting on including an Indigenous past into the histories being told of the city and the nation.

Although it was hard to fully control the messages in the press, Mary Simmons used her connections to local reporters to project her ideas about modern Indigenous people. In a 1930 full-page article on Simmons and the other Indians in the "Hollywood group" written by reporter Helen Crane, for example, it is likely that Crane was following Simmons' lead in framing the story as one of successful Native adjustment to modernity. Mary Simmons is given a great deal of column space to address readers, with White Bird's voice opening the article: "Indian contribution to modern life is distinctive, just as that of any other race or nationality is distinctive. . . . So it is with the Indian—the new Indian. He is singing the songs of the world, and painting pictures and writing books and he is bringing to his interpretation the uniqueness of his own people." White Bird described the challenge for contemporary Native people of having to adjust to modern civilization, but she reminded readers, "White men are not the natural heritors of this soil." Crane placed White Bird at the center of a vibrant artistic community of Native youth (mostly men as portrayed in her article): they "gathered at her 'friendly tepee'" or the "co-operative Indian art shop which she is conducting in Hollywood." Crane also gave White Bird the last word in the article and drew her title "A Place in the Sun" from it: "We are illustrating today that the power of the red man to rise above difficult environments is as great as that of any other man. In the past we did it naturally but now we must do it on a scale never dreamed of before. There is a place in the sun that belongs to us and now again we are claiming it."⁸⁴

In interviews, both Tsianina Redfeather and Tessie Mobley make similar points. Tessie Mobley was very aware that she was representing Native people and used interviews to educate her non-Native audience about the history and contemporary concerns of Native people. In a 1942 interview, for example, the reporter described her as "a proudly acknowledged representative of the Redskin people," and wrote, "Whenever she is given an occasion, Miss Lushanya is fond of exploding many popularly held erroneous beliefs about the Indian people. She explains that the tales of their savagery are overdone." She remained proud of her Chickasaw heritage, and projected the image of a modern and cosmopolitan Chickasaw woman. But reporters



FIGURE 2. Party Pow-Wow, *Acme Roto Service*, 1942. This newspaper photograph suggests how Tessie Mobley continued to use her fame as an opera singer to introduce non-Natives to Indigenous traditions while living a thoroughly modern life in her New York apartment. Photo in author's possession.

often added their own interpretation, reframing Indians within the trope of primitive anti-moderns. A *Brooklyn Eagle* reporter described Mobley as “a firm believer in assimilation,” but couldn’t help undermining her modernity by adding, “she is well steeped in Indian lore and clings to numerous health-giving practices.”⁸⁵ Such tensions often surfaced in newspaper writing because what intrigued reporters in the first place was the way Native performers performed their Indianness through the use of their stage names, costumes, and Indigenous knowledge. Performers used their audiences’ expectations to gain an audience while hoping to insert unexpected ideas about Native modernity and the value of Native cultures, but they could not always control the contrary messages reporters added. Moreover, the articles would often undermine the messages of Native performers by recirculating exoticized images and descriptions.

Even Native performers who had close relationships with reporters would hit the limits of this strategy. For example, Lee Shippey’s human-interest column in the *Los Angeles Times* often mentioned the Native community and Mary Simmons in particular. About her store, he wrote that “any day one may find half a dozen Indians sitting around—modern Indians who wear golf trousers and drive motor cars, but sure enough Indians all the same—smoking the peace cigarette.”⁸⁶ He gossiped about their parties, described their union activity, and even noted when they were closing up

shop to go to Albuquerque for the First American performance. Even though Shippey acknowledged their place in the modern city, he had trouble acknowledging that they could be modern themselves. What eventually drove a wedge between the columnist and the Native community, however, wasn't his hesitation about the place of Indians in cities, but his efforts to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Indians, and especially to use the "good" Indians to justify the hardships of the "bad."⁸⁷ Shippey honestly admired Mary Simmons and others, but he used their success to undermine the legitimate grievances of local Native people. In January, 1933 he wrote a disparaging column about the Indigenous people in Palm Springs. After describing them as dirty, lazy complainers, he wrote

Well, White Bird is just the opposite. She always rallies around herself those Indians who really are trying to win respect for their race by honest work and artistic ability. She urges young Indians to quit whining for sympathy and to take advantage of the good schools the government offers them. . . . And she proudly calls attention to those Indians who are doing that very thing, of whom there are a good many in Los Angeles.⁸⁸

This column dismayed Simmons and others in the community and led to a very public disagreement. It is clear that they let Shippey know: "Zowie," he began his next column. "Did we bring a barrage on our devoted head." Although he claimed to have "read carefully the letters of protest which have come to us" and reaffirmed his admiration for White Bird and other Native people in the city, he nonetheless reiterated his claim that Native people mired in poverty on reservations should "snap out of it" and "take their part as American citizens."⁸⁹ While Simmons did vehemently object, ultimately she did not have the same public platform, and Shippey had the last word.

The lives of the Native people here do not fit the standard historical narrative of "primitive" Indians common in the first half of the twentieth century. They flew in airplanes, established style trends, owned businesses, and sang throughout the United States and Europe. They also formed intertribal communities, mentored one another, and insisted that Native people be included in a vision of the nation's future. Many of these activities were, however, predicated upon their participation in industries of tourism and entertainment that sold an image of Indians as anti-modern so as to celebrate the modern qualities of Southwestern cities. Despite that, live opera seemed to offer Indigenous performers more immediate access to non-Native audiences and a chance to personally educate them.

Native people also helped shape the pageants and performances by working closely with non-Native composers, directors, and publicists and promoters. Whenever possible, Native participants inserted Native history and claims to a future in the region. Most of their partners wanted to enhance their own economic position and that of their city, and some had a genuine interest in Native well-being. All promoters and boosters, however, were ensconced within their own cultural biases and ideas of progress. The experiences of Native performers examined in this article encourage us to think further about the choices and constraints Native people faced in the first half of the century. We must keep in mind, however, that we know their stories

because they were “successful” in modern terms. Their lives were covered in newspapers and magazines; reporters took their pictures and asked them for quotes. Following their lives and careers over the course of these pageant years and beyond offers a glimpse into what Philip Deloria has called “the incredibly complex Indian world of the 1920s.”⁹⁰ But we also need to ask how such vibrant and public lives have been erased from the history of our cities. This article seeks to write some of these stories back into our narratives and demonstrate the important role of Native people in shaping the urban West.

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NOTES

1. Michael V. Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 275–277; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 185–86; John W. Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879–1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012); K. Tsianinia Lomawaima, “Blackstone, Tsianina Redfeather,” in *Native American Women: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. Gretchen M. Bataille and Laurie Lisa (New York: Routledge, 2001), 39–40; and “Hollywood Bowl History,” <https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/about/bowl/hollywood-bowl-history/>. It was reported throughout the region: see “Of Music Interest,” *Oxnard Daily Courier*, May 26, 1926, 3.

2. See Joan Weibel-Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Tanis C. Thorne, *The World’s Richest Indian: The Scandal over Jackson Barnett’s Oil Fortune* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Tanis C. Thorne, “The Indian Beverly Hillbillies: Displacement, Rituals of Place, and the First Wave of Urbanization in the 1920s,” *Journal of the West* 46, no. 2 (2007): 75–87; Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); and Kiara M. Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals: Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the American Imagination, 1880–1930* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); see also the UCLA online project “Mapping Indigenous LA,” <https://mila.ss.ucla.edu>. The field of Indigenous urban history has exploded in recent years, especially following Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009). For other Southwestern cities, see Myla Vincenti Carpio, *Indigenous Albuquerque* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University, 2011) and Victoria Haskins, *Matrons and Maids: Regulating Indian Domestic Service in Tucson, 1914–1934* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012). See also Rosalyn R. LaPier and David R. M. Beck, *City Indian: Native American Activism in Chicago, 1893–1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); and James B. LeGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945–75* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005). Kent Blansett’s *A Journey to Freedom: Richard Oakes, Alcatraz, and*

the *Red Power Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018) moves beyond the single city model.

3. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*, 31–48, and Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 234–302.

4. Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

5. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

6. Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 1–4; and Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

7. Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 1997); Erika M. Bsumek, *Indian Made: Navajo Culture in the Marketplace, 1848–1860* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

8. Phillip Carroll Morgan and Judy Goforth Parker, "Lushanya, Songbird of the Chickasaws," in *Dynamic Chickasaw Women*, ed. Phillip Carroll Morgan and Judy Goforth Parker (Sulphur, OK: Chickasaw Press, 2011), 107–9.

9. "Louis Brave," 1930 United States Census, Ancestry.com (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002); see also Thorne, "The Indian Beverly Hillbillies."

10. Morgan and Parker, "Lushanya, Songbird of the Chickasaws," 107–9. Tessie Mobley Brave divorced her husband and dropped the surname "Brave" in 1931; I will refer to her as Mobley.

11. His name appears with multiple spellings, including "Yeolatchie" and "Yowlache." He had acted in three films prior to 1927: *Kentucky Days* (1923), *Tonio, Son of the Sierras* (1925), and *Ella Cinders* (1926); see "Chief Yowlachie," <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0950385/>.

12. See Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*, 40; and Wade Werner, "Real Indians Still Scarce in Hollywood: 'Redskins' in Films Usually Are 'Make-up' Mexicans from LA Streets," *Oakland Tribune*, September 30, 1925. Mary Simmons was described as mixed-blood Cherokee from Texas, though there are few records of her. See "Mary Simmons," 1930 United States Census, Ancestry.com (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002).

13. Steve Lowell, "Gallup Navajo May Make Race for Legislature," *The Albuquerque Tribune*, August 24, 1955, 12.

14. Pisani, *Imagining Native America*, 264; Troutman, *Indian Blues*, 239–42; and Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 183–223.

15. William F. Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 211 and 220.

16. Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 243.

17. Dilworth, *Imagining Indians*; Bsumek, *Indian Made*; Kathleen Howard and Diana F. Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest: The Fred Harvey Company and Native American Art* (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 1996); *The Culture of Tourism, The Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest*, ed. Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003); Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism in Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Phoebe Kropp Young, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

18. Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

19. "Famous Indian Singer to Make Home Here Soon," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 1, 1925, 1.

20. "Ceremonial at Carbon City Is in Full Swing," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 10, 1924, 1.

21. "Society Notes: Indian Affairs Discussed," *Oxnard Daily Courier*, August 23, 1927, 4.

22. "Friendship Plea Made for Indians: City Club Urged to Back Intertribal Ceremonials at Hollywood Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1927, 7; "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial," *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1927, A2.
23. "Mike Kirk and His Navajos Arrive Today," *Prescott Evening Courier*, June 30, 1924.
24. George Fitzpatrick, "The First American," *New Mexico Highway Journal*, July 1929, 13.
25. JoAllyn Archambault, "Indian Imagery and the Development of Tourism in the Southwest," in *Anthropology, History, and American Indians: Essays in Honor of William Curtis Sturtevant*, ed. William L. Merrill and Ives Goddard (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 139–47.
26. "Society Notes: Indian Affairs Discussed," *Oxnard Daily Courier*, August 23, 1927, 4; and "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial."
27. "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial." For a description of the show, see "Many Features to Mark Last of Ceremonies," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1927, 7.
28. "Friendship Plea Made for Indians."
29. Boyd Cothran, *Remembering the Modoc War: Redemptive Violence and the Making of American Innocence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). On racial scripts, see Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).
30. "Red Men Dance for Joy on Los Angeles Arrival: Trainload of Indians Enter City," *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 1927, A2.
31. "Red Men Dance for Joy"; "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial"; "Indian Ceremonials in Bowl," *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 1927, C16.
32. "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial"; Isabelle Morse Jones, "Haske Naswood to Appear at Big Bear," *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1928; and Tisa Joy Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 68–9, 165.
33. "Red Men Dance for Joy"; "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial"; and "Eugene Biscailuz with Group of Cochiti Indians at Gathering of 'Nobles of the Mystic Shrine' in Los Angeles, Calif., 1925," news photograph dated June 1, 1925, *Los Angeles Times* Photographic Archive, <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz0002nfp9>.
34. Wenger, *We Have a Religion*; and "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial."
35. Patterson Green, "Indian Tribal Ceremonial a Real Treat," Lushanya Scrapbook, Chickasaw Cultural Center Archives, Sulfur, Oklahoma (hereafter cited as Lushanya Scrapbook), n.p., September 13, 1927.
36. Edwin Schallert, "Thousands View Bowl Indian Rites," *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1927, part II, 11.
37. Morgan and Parker, "Lushanya," 110; and Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 218.
38. Advertisement, "Princess Tsianina," *The Daily Ardmoreite*, December 12, 1927, 5; and "Tessie Mobley Brave Wins Artistic Triumph Before Large Home Folk Audience," *The Daily Ardmoreite*, December 21, 1930. But later she would sign letters to her mother "Lushy." See "Lushy to 'Mamma Dearest' and 'Dearest Mamma and family,'" n.d., Lushanya Scrapbook. She also signed professional letters as "Miss Lushanya Mobley (known professionally as Lushanya)"; see "Lushanya to Edward Johnson, January 18" [1936], Lushanya Scrapbook.
39. DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 155, Robert E. Callahan, *The Heart of an Indian* (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock/The Grafton Press, 1927); Robert E. Callahan, *Daughter of Ramona: A Heart Appealing Story of Romance, Ambition and Adventure in the West* (New York: Gaines Publishing Co., 1930); *The Golden Trail: Adventures of the Pioneers of '49* (1929), book and lyrics by George Murray Brown, music by Charles Wakefield Cadman.

40. On the Ramona Village plan, see DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 151–59. See also “Indian Village to Rise at Once,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1928, E1.
41. DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 151–59.
42. Advertisement, Purdy Bakeries, Inc., *New Mexico State Tribune*, September 21, 1928, 6.
43. See Ernie Bulow, “Mike Kirk: Entrepreneur and Indian Promoter,” *Gallup Journey*, August 2011, <http://gallupjourney.com/2011/08/west-by-southwest-august-2011/>.
44. See *Albuquerque Journal*, August 18, 1930, and *Albuquerque Journal*, May 28, 1962, 21.
45. “The First American Program,” n.d., Box 1 Folder 6, Grace Thompson Collection, Center for Southwestern Research, University of New Mexico (hereafter cited as CSWR UNM).
46. Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*, 206–7; and “25 Indian Tongues Will be Spoken in Coming Spectacle,” *New Mexico State Tribune*, September 21, 1928, 4.
47. On pageants, see David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).
48. George Fitzpatrick, “The First American,” *New Mexico Highway Journal*, July 1929, 13.
49. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982).
50. Carpio, *Indigenous Albuquerque*.
51. “25 Indian Tongues Will be Spoken in Coming Spectacle.”
52. Adela Caroline Holmquist, “The Public Mind: The Incomparable First American,” *The Albuquerque Journal Sun*, August 30, 1931, 4; and “Costs 40 Cents Daily to Feed Indians,” *Albuquerque Journal*, April 18, 1931, 20.
53. First Americans Program, 1931, Box 1, Folder 6, Grace Thompson Collection, CSWR UNM.
54. Program, n.d., Box 1, Folder 6, Grace Thompson Collection, CSWR UNM.
55. Program, n.d., Box 1, Folder 6, Grace Thompson Collection, CSWR UNM.
56. Program, 1931, Box 1, Folder 6, Grace Thompson Collection, CSWR UNM.
57. Information on Kemble from a 2015 exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum, “Only in Albuquerque,” March 3, 2015, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
58. “Indian Girl Flies in Plane,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 17, 1929, 15; and Lee Shippey, “The Lee Side o’ LA,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1929, A4.
59. *The Times* (Shreveport, Louisiana) September 22, 1929, 23.
60. “‘Mocking Bird’ to Sing,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1930, C8.
61. She was said to have appeared in *The Girl of the Golden West* and had a credited role in an Eddie Cantor vehicle, *Whoopee!* It was said she was personally chosen for that part by Florenz Zeigfield. In 1931 she and her husband, Louis, worked as advisors “on Indian matters” for R-K-O’s massive film *Cimarron*. “Indian Couple Here to Lend Aid on Film,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1930, A5; Betty Kirk, “Soonerland’s Miss America,” *The Sooner Magazine*, 1931, 369; and Will E. Wings, “Hollywood,” *The Nashville Tennessean*, December 28, 1930, 21; and Internet Movie Database page for *Whoopee!* (1930), <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0021549/>.
62. “Opera Bits Presented by Studio: Music School Students and Faculty Seen in Unusual Stage Offering,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1931, B16.
63. Kirk, “Soonerland’s Miss America,” 369.
64. “Tsonianina Will Tour U.S. and Give Concerts,” *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, September 6, 1923, 2.
65. George A. Katchmer, “Yowlachie, Chief,” *A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses* (McFarland, 2002), 410; and Internet Movie Database “Chief Yowlachie” page, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0950385/>.

66. Chief Yowlache to Aid Smith Jubilee," *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1926; "Rich Inventor Succeeds as a Music Writer," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1927; "Programs to Be Given by Homer Grunn," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1929; "Co-Authors of Pageant Feted," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, July 19, 1929; D. J. Waldie, "Flappers and Indians in the Dream City: the Jazz Age Ends in Long Beach," *Lost LA* blog post, October 12, 2017, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/flappers-and-indians-in-the-dream-city-the-jazz-age-ends-in-long-beach>. On New York, see Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1930, 22.
67. "Ramona Play Arouses Much Enthusiasm," *Coronado Journal* April 30, 1930, 10; and "Haske Naswood Going on Tour with Indians," *Albuquerque Journal*, April 20, 1932, 3.
68. Kirk, "Soonerland's Miss America," 369.
69. "'First American' Setting Wins High Praise from Stars Assembled for the Great Cast," *Albuquerque Journal*, June 3, 1931, 5.
70. Tsianina Redfeather was also inspired to help artisans market their work: she stated in a 1925 interview that she was considering making Albuquerque her home and selling Native art. See "Tsianina Will Tour U.S. And Give Concerts," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 6, 1923, 2; "Society," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 11, 1923, 5; and "Famous Indian Singer to Make Home Here Soon," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 1, 1925, 1.
71. Yvonne of Hollywood, "Shopping Hollywood Boulevard: 'Style Center of the World,'" *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1929, 9. See also "Society: Indian Music with Homer Grunn at Piano Enjoyed," *Corona Courier*, April 25, 1928; C. N., "Home, Club and Civic Interests of Women," *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1930, B17; and "Indian Dances Will Feature Club Program," *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1931, B10.
72. Helen R. Crane, "A Place in the Sun," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1930, J5; Crete Cage, "Indian Lore Entertains Clubwomen," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1934, 7; "W.I.C. Music Section Presents Program Fo(r) Mother Club," *Corona Courier*, May 16, 1930, 5; "Amusements: Dance Program Soon," *Corona Courier*, May 16, 1930, 5; *Oxnard Daily Courier*, January 29, 1935; and Olive Gray, "Early Days of California and Los Angeles to Live Again in Downtown," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1931, B4.
73. For Ray Whitley's jacket, see The Autry Museum of the American West's Collection Online, <http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M520077;type=101>; and for a jacket worn by Tom Mix, see "Western Jacket," *kansapedia*, Kansas Historical Society, <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/western-jacket/10249>. Also see Yvonne of Hollywood, "Shopping Hollywood Boulevard"; and Crete Cage, "Indian Lore Entertains Clubwomen," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1934, 7.
74. Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 285 and 234–38; and Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*, 45. See also Larry Smith, "Indigenous Urbanity in Los Angeles: 1910–1930s," at *Mapping Indigenous Los Angeles*, <https://mila.ss.ucla.edu>.
75. *Keeping the Campfires Burning: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities*, ed. Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).
76. "Navajos Here Today for Part in Ceremonial"; Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*, 44. Wade Werner, a motion picture feature editor, clearly credited Mary Simmons with organizing Native performers in Hollywood as soon as she arrived: "When she came here two years ago . . . she marveled that most of the Indians being used in pictures were imitation Indians. She was told the reason that Indians were too hard to find in Hollywood. She wouldn't believe it. . . . She built of a list of active telephone numbers and a "scout" system for reaching those who had no telephones. Gradually the home of White Bird and Yowlachie became a sort of central casting bureau for Indians and later there was organized the War-Paint club, which looks after the interests of Indians in films and furnishes Indian types and extras. Now as many as 150 Indians can be delivered on a set at short notice, and the

list is being augmented by Indians migrating to Hollywood from various states." Werner, "Real Indians Still Scarce in Hollywood," *Oakland Tribune*, September 30, 1925, 30B.

77. Helen R. Crane, "A Place in the Sun," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1930 J5; Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1933, A4; and "Welcome Given to Indian Diva," *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1941, 16.

78. Juana Neal Levy, "Of Interest to Women," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1931, A6; Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 1933; Kirk, "Soonerland's Miss America," 367, 369, 374; and *Independent Spirits: Women Painters of the American West, 1890-1945*, ed. Patricia Trenton (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage in association with the University of California Press, 1995), 57-64.

79. "Chief Yowlache to Aid Smith Jubilee," *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1926; "Rich Inventor Succeeds as a Music Writer," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1927; "Programs to Be Given by Homer Grunn," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1929; "Co-Authors of Pageant Feted," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, July 19, 1929.

80. "Blakeslee Will Get N.Y. Concert Honor," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, November 19, 1930.

81. Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 209; and "W.I.C. Music Section Presents Program for Mother Club," *Corona Courier*, May 16, 1930, 5.

82. "Indians Guests of Lions," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 1925, A5.

83. Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 237; and M. N., "Indians Woes Told by Leader," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1931. On the window display, see Olive Gray, "Early Days of California," *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1931, B4.

84. Helen R. Crane, "A Place in the Sun," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1930, J5.

85. *The Brooklyn Eagle*, May 10, 1942, 5.

86. Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1929, A4; also see "The Lee Side o' LA" columns published in the *Los Angeles Times* editions of May 21, 1932, A4; February 28, 1934; December 18, 1933, A4; and June 21, 1932. Tessie Mobley and her husband Louis Brave were part of that community. See "White Bird," circa 1927, np., Lushanya Scrapbook.

87. Deborah A. Miranda, *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* (Berkeley: Heyday, 2013).

88. Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1933, 14.

89. Lee Shippey, "The Lee Side o' LA," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1933, A4.

90. Philip J. Deloria, "Four Thousand Invitations," *American Indian Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2013), 25-43, 357-358.