Native American Chic: The Marketing Of Native Americans In New York Between The World Wars

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NATIVE AMERICAN CHIC: THE MARKETING OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN NEW YORK BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

by

EMILY SCHUCHARDT NAVRATIL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2015
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

NATIVE AMERICAN CHIC: THE MARKETING OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN NEW YORK BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

by

Emily Schuchardt Navratil

Adviser: Professor Judy Sund

Focusing on four key figures – Morris de Camp Crawford, John Sloan, Amelia Elizabeth White, and René d’Harnoncourt – this dissertation analyzes museum and gallery exhibitions of Native American art mounted in the United States, particularly New York City, during the interwar period, and documents the immediate and lasting impact these shows and their promotion had on the emergence of “Indian Chic” in women’s fashion and interior design.

In the late 1910s, Crawford, a research editor for Women’s Wear and honorary research associate at the American Museum of Natural History, mounted a campaign encouraging Euro-American designers to seek inspiration in museum collections, particularly Native American production. Crawford’s efforts led to the AMNH’s 1919 Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes; a series of exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum in the 1920s; and Mallinson Fabrics’ 1928 “American Indian Series.” Meantime, Sloan bolstered awareness of Native American art through exhibitions of Pueblo watercolors at the Society of Independent Artists exhibitions in the 1920s, and the groundbreaking Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts in 1931. White, a New York socialite living in Santa Fe, joined Sloan in his efforts, financing the EITA and promoting the incorporation of Native American art into modern Euro-American décor through her New York City gallery and exhibitions of her personal collection. In the mid-1930s, Indian Chic received government backing with the creation of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. As its general manager, D’Harnoncourt promoted Indian art’s suitability as inspiration for
modern Euro-American design in two landmark exhibitions: the Indian Court at San Francisco’s Golden Gate Exposition in 1939 and *Indian Art of the United States* at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1941.

These exhibitions created a sensation that was widely reported in the popular press, and U.S. consumers responded enthusiastically to Indian-inflected and -inspired clothing, accessories, footwear, cosmetics, and household goods and accent pieces. The notion of Native American Chic, created in the 1910s by Crawford and promoted by Sloan, White, and d’Harnoncourt throughout the interwar period, endures today.
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Introduction

This dissertation charts the ways in which the practices of exoticism and commodification shaped presentations of Native Americans\(^1\) and their art in a series of gallery and museum exhibitions mounted in New York City between the World Wars. It focuses more specifically upon the marketing strategies these exhibitions’ organizers used to make Native American “style” chic. I detail the ways in which “Indians” and “tribal art” were constructed for commercial consumption in a series of exhibitions: the *Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes* at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in 1919; the Society of Independent Artists shows and the opening of the Heye Museum in the twenties; the *Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts* at the Grand Central Art Galleries in 1931; several shows at the Brooklyn Museum in the thirties, and finally the Museum of Modern Art’s *Indian Art of the United States* in 1941. To gauge the ramifications of these shows and their promotion in media events and public programming, I have analyzed newspaper and magazine coverage and manifestations of “Native American chic” in popular visual culture – particularly fashion and interior design.

The exhibitions of the teens and twenties, and the Brooklyn Museum shows of the thirties have been largely overlooked by historians of art and culture, while scholarship on the Grand Central Galleries and MoMA shows has focused almost exclusively on their impact on Euro-American\(^2\) artists and collectors, with scant attention to broader cultural ramifications. This dissertation fully documents and details each of the exhibitions, and chronicles their collective and wide-ranging coverage in U.S. print media and impact on U.S. popular culture, consumer

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\(^1\) I use the terms “Native Americans” and “Indians” interchangeably.

\(^2\) I use the term “Euro-Americans” to designate Americans of European descent, as distinct from indigenous peoples (i.e. “Native Americans”).
goods, and design aesthetics. My goal is to understand what was chosen and by whom, and why certain artifacts and styles were privileged over others.

There is a dearth of scholarship on the marketing and reception of exhibitions devoted to Native Americans; the use of Native American object types, motifs and visual idioms to create a “modern” and distinctly American aesthetic; and such objects’ impact on the marketing of consumer goods in this period between the first and second World Wars. My dissertation demonstrates that a substantial number and variety of gallery and museum shows staged in New York City in this period raised awareness of and appreciation for indigenous art in New York City – a hotbed of innovative design – leading to wider incorporation of Native American production into modern U.S. domestic interiors and to take-offs on Native American motifs and materials in furniture and fashion design. In addition to analyzing individual shows and projects, I identify and describe the key components of Native American Chic, my designation for a broad-based trend in American design and consumer culture between the wars – from the incorporation of actual Indian artifacts in Euro-American homes and wardrobes to the appropriation of Native American motifs by Euro-American designers of women’s clothing and domestic goods. Native American Chic – the incorporating, appropriating, and copying of Indian objects, elements, symbols, designs, and silhouettes by Euro-American designers – began in the late 1910s. Marketed to a wide range of consumers, the trend found its most receptive audience among the middle and upper classes, who, as Philip J. Deloria observes in *Playing* 

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3 In the period under consideration, “Indian chic” was confined to women’s clothes, where a “woman-warrior” aesthetic prevailed. It is not until the 1960s that men’s fashion was similarly affected.

4 Interior design emphasized the incorporation of material culture of the Southwest, while women’s fashion focused on appropriations of Plains Indian clothing styles and motifs.
Indian, “had the resources to act on the problems of modernity first.” In the interwar years, avant-garde collectors and artists like Mabel Dodge Luhan as well as middle- and upper-class subscribers to magazines like House Beautiful and Vogue had the means to indulge in Indian Chic, and many escaped the city for an Indian Detour in the Southwest, began wearing playful, “Indian”-inspired vacation clothing, and purchased Navajo rugs to decorate their summer homes. These years, which saw the development and widespread adoption of the trend, are the focus of this study, although latter-day variants of Indian Chic are apparent in both women’s fashion and interior design today.

Elizabeth Hutchinson and Nancy J. Parezo have explored Euro-American interest in Native American material culture prior to World War I and after World War II, respectively. The period between the wars has been treated in J. J. Brody’s and Molly H. Mullin’s studies of Euro-American patrons in Santa Fe and in W. Jackson Rushing’s work on the influence of the 1931 and 1941 exhibitions on Euro-American artists, but none of these scholars focuses on manifestations of enthusiasm for Native America in popular visual culture.


Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds, 1999; Janet Catherine Berlo (ed.), The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting, 1992; and James Clifford, The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art, 1988 – all of which describe ways in which the Other, in various guises, has been constructed and deployed in Euro-American cultural projects.

The marketing and exhibition of Native Americans was not a new phenomenon in the twentieth century; it can be traced to the period just before the time under consideration in this dissertation. From the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (ATSF) and Fred Harvey Company, to the World’s Fairs, and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, Native Americans, their art, and cultures have long been used to attract and market to Euro-Americans. In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific were joined at Promontory Point, Utah. As Marisa Kay Brandt notes, “The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the growing use of Pullman cars came at just the right moment to make leisure travel accessible and appealing for members of the newly emerging middle class. The Santa Fe took notice of the change in its passenger base, once mostly wealthy travelers or settlers moving westward but increasingly leisure travelers including middle-class tourists.”

In 1876, the Fred Harvey Company, a chain of rail station restaurants, was founded; over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it expanded to include hotels and tours. The Harvey Company became an important part of the railroad experience, and its name synonymous with reliability, consistency, comfort and safety. The ATSF and Harvey Company developed a “symbiotic” relationship, relying on Euro-American constructions of Native American life and material culture to craft their corporate identities and a regional

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8 Marisa Kay Brandt, “‘Necessary Guidance:’ The Fred Harvey Company Presents the Southwest” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2011), 32.
character, which they marketed through Indians on display and published representations of Native Americans and their art.\(^9\)

The Santa Fe Railway route was the most direct route from the Midwest to Southern California. Its marketing campaign, begun in 1892, relied heavily on illustrated booklets, but took up a novel subject matter. Michael E. Zega writes, “Whereas railroads traditionally promoted the natural beauty and productivity of the regions through which their lines passed as a means to attract business, only the Santa Fe made Indians central to that appeal.”\(^10\) Their 1898 booklet featured a Navajo blanket and Pueblo pottery on the cover (figure I.1). The Santa Fe Railway calendar for the year 1900 featured Indian portraits painted by Elbridge Ayer Burbank, a Chicago artist (figure I.2). In their marketing strategies, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and Fred Harvey Company, according to Brandt, balanced two competing themes as they attempted to highlight what the company saw as the region’s most interesting attractions. On the one hand, the West’s history of conflict with Native Americans made it seem dangerous to potential visitors; on the other, it was also a major element making the area different from the rest of the country (and thus enticing to tourists). The promotions promised a kind of safe exoticism made accessible by the railroad’s hectic growth in the 1880s…The Harvey Company was able to continue its efforts in extending comfortable accommodations to the Southwest; the restaurants’ similarity probably helped in reassuring customers that their visits would be pleasant as well.\(^11\)

Fred Harvey’s successful expansion continued into the 1920s, with the introduction of Indian Detours in 1926. The Detours extended safe exoticism from the rail station directly to the pueblos. An advertisement in Vogue (figure I.3) promised “the same economy, the same

\(^11\) Brandt, 50.
comfort.” A car and driver took passengers “through oldest America, visiting ancient Indian pueblos and prehistoric cliff dwellings in the New Mexico Rockies, between Las Vegas and Albuquerque.” The spectacle of rampant consumerism that Fred Harvey fostered was captured in John Sloan’s etching, *The Indian Detour*, 1927 (figure I.4), in which a profusion of cars and Euro-Americans radiates from the Native American ceremony taking place in the center of the composition.

While the railroad was bringing people west to Native American pueblos, the World’s Fairs were bringing Native Americans to Euro-American cities. The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia included Native crafts and architecture, but it does not appear that Native American people were themselves included. An etching from the Fair (figure I.5) shows a group of well-dressed Euro-American visitors entering, exiting and peeking into a teepee. A stereograph entitled “Indian Chief Shinomen” (figure I.6) shows a mannequin sporting a headdress, buckskin shirt and leggings, with a blanket over the left shoulder, a quiver full of arrows on its back and a bow at its feet.

The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair was the first such exhibition to put Native Americans on view. This fair, which marked a turning point in the portrayal of Native Americans, featured Indian encampments on the Midway, as well as a Smithsonian-organized ethnological display, which introduced the concept of the “life group.” Ira Jacknis explains, “Although single

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12 Santa Fe Indian Detour advertisement, *Vogue*, November 15, 1926, 22.
mannequins had long presented native costumes and appearance, groups of figures had only been introduced to American ethnological museums at the Chicago World’s Fair. With the assistance of Frank Cushing, William Holmes created several dramatic tableaux for the Smithsonian, and the style was soon popularized by George Dorsey at the Field Museum.15 The display included large glass cases filled with wax figures dressed in native clothing, surrounded by native objects, and engaged in native tasks; several photographs document the ethnological nature of these mannequin displays. These were published in James Wilson Pierce, *Photographic History of the World’s Fair and Sketch of the City of Chicago* (1893), along with the author’s commentaries.

Pierce wrote that one of the “most interesting” scenes (figure I.7) represents a Chippewa shaman in his medicine lodge in the act of writing an incantation on the inner surface of a piece of prepared bark. The shaman is cross-legged and bending over the bark, which he holds in his left hand while he draws his designs with a stick in the right. The old man is surrounded by the tambourine, drum, rattle-box, and other noisy implements of his profession, and his attire is worthy an interested study.16

In response to a tableau in which wax figures cleaned hides (figure I.8), Pierce remarked,

Much has been written of the degradation of the squaw, and this collection gives a vivid illustration of her toilsome life. In one of the larger cases are represented two women dressing hides. Before one, suspended from a pole resting on forked sticks in the ground, is a buffalo hide, and she is laboriously scraping the meat from the inner side with a stick and a piece of stone. The other is kneeling before a hide and tediously pounding it into pliability with a heavy stone club.17

Pierce’s photographs, which show well-dressed visitors leisurely observing the wax figures of Indians at work, document the juxtaposition of the familiar and the exotic that was highlighted at

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17 Ibid., 396.
the 1893 fair. The intriguing conjunction of passive Euro-Americans in modern garb and the active and traditionally attired Native Americans they observe recur in publicity images of twentieth century exhibitions.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders was quite different from the ethnological displays at the 1893 Fair. William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody (1846-1917) scouted for the Army after the Civil War and began his show business career in 1872. The Wild West show, conceived in 1882, was “an outdoor spectacle, designed to both educate and entertain, using a cast of hundreds as well as live buffalo, elk, cattle, and other animals.”18 In 1893, the title was changed from “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” to "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World." The show enjoyed its most profitable single season during the 1893 fair (figure I.9). Over two million people saw the Buffalo Bill Show in Chicago, which featured “‘wild’ Indians acting their savage images,”19 and was located near the Fair entrance. Though Cody’s “Show Indians,” as they came to be known, performed under contract, several other Native Americans appeared in the smaller entertainments that cropped up on the midway without contracts, in violation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs procedures. As L.G. Moses notes in *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*:

Fair officials had originally considered it unseemly to sanction entertainment of such dubious educational or ethnological value, but the midway concessionaires who employed Indians (who most often were identified as famous warriors) enjoyed considerable success. Fair managers ultimately shared in their profits. In American world’s fairs after Chicago, fair managers would incorporate the Wild West shows themselves as major attractions, disguising them on occasion as Indian congresses, each one more elaborate than its predecessors. Even as it

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fought the images the Wild West shows projected, the government became involved in the “Show-Indian” trade. At Chicago, Commissioner Morgan had hoped to contrast ‘long-haired blanket Indians’ (essentially the ‘real Indians’ of the Wild West show) with uniformed and disciplined Show-Indian students drawn from the government schools.\(^{20}\)

This development also can be charted in the “before and after portraits” taken at Carlisle Indian School, which as Hayes Peter Mauro notes, “displayed the Other in his or her allegedly degenerate state before Americanization, and again following its conclusion.”\(^{21}\) Established by an act of Congress in 1879, the Carlisle Indian School was founded by former Army officer Richard Henry Pratt (1840-1924) and conceived of “as a military-style boarding school,”\(^{22}\) tasked with promoting assimilation among Native American youth. Like Commissioner Morgan, Pratt often used the term “blanket Indians” (when referring to new students),\(^{23}\) and that stereotypical Buffalo Bill image of the wild indigene shapes the “before” photograph. The “after” photo shows the same figure post-“Americanization” – dressed in Euro-American clothing and sporting a Euro-American haircut. In *The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle Indian School*, Mauro analyzes these photographs and demonstrates the ways in which Pratt successfully utilized these “before and after portraits” to secure federal funding for the school and to convince Native American leaders to send their children there. David Wallace Adams notes that by the turn of the twentieth century, “Congress had created a network of Indian schools composed of 147 reservation day schools, 81 reservation boarding schools and 25 off-reservation boarding schools,” reflecting “the sublime faith that Americans in general, and reformers in particular,

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22 Ibid., 2.
23 Ibid., 55.
placed in schools as agencies for social cohesion and assimilation.” The Dawes Act of 1887, which called for the allotment of communal Indian lands, was passed in the belief that private land ownership would create industrious, Americanized Indians. In the late nineteenth century, as the Indian Wars came to an end and public sentiment toward Native Americans gradually shifted from the bad Indian to good Indian, assimilation became the dominant government policy.

The 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, in Omaha, Nebraska, included more than 500 Native Americans representing 28 tribes, including the Apache, Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Crow, Flathead, Omaha, Ponca, Santa Clara Pueblo, Sioux, and Winnebago. The most famous Native American to attend was the Chiricahua Apache Chief Geronimo, who as a prisoner of war was a huge draw – and he knew it. E.A. Burbank, whose portraits of Native Americans appeared in the 1900 Santa Fe Railroad calendar, recounted of the train trip to Omaha: “At each station where the train stopped he [Geronimo] got off, mingled with the people on the platform, let them know who he was, and then sold the buttons off his coat for twenty-five cents apiece. Between stations he sewed new buttons back on again. He also sold his hat for five dollars whenever he could find a buyer. He had a reserve supply of hats and buttons in his suitcase.” Geronimo also attended the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis in 1904, where he was paid $100 a month to participate. He had a booth (between

26 E. A. Burbank and Ernest Royce, *Burbank Among the Indians* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1944), 22-23.
those in which Pueblo women ground corn and made bread) where he sold bows, arrows, and photographs for between fifty cents and $2, and autographs for ten cents.\(^{28}\)

At the St. Louis Exposition, the model Indian school and Indian Congress introduced in Chicago were merged into a single attraction. Organizers placed the model school at the center of the Indian Congress, which was itself part of “a grand ethnological village,”\(^{29}\) comprised of indigenous peoples from around the world (figures I.10 and I.11). The director of the Indian school hoped it would demonstrate to visitors that “Indians are ordinarily endowed, physically, mentally, spiritually; that they are not abnormal in any sense; that both boys and girls are well favored; that they can talk; that they can sing; that they can learn; that they are docile and obedient; that they are human. Verily, the St. Louis Indian School may well be called the Hall of Revelation.”\(^{30}\) At these World’s Fairs, Moses remarks, “the image of the vanishing Indian was set beside the aspiring Indian, who through the government’s efforts on behalf of civilization, would also presumably vanish one day into mainstream society.”\(^{31}\) This duality continued into the 1940s, as exhibitions and advertisers introduced Native American elements into ladies’ fashion and interior design, while still marking Native Americans themselves as other.

For Euro-Americans during this period, the attraction of Native Americans themselves did not transfer to their visual culture, examples of which still were placed in the category of ethnological specimens, and exhibited to varying degrees by New York museums. At the turn of the century, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, and Brooklyn Museum (then the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences) all had Native American

\(^{29}\) Moses, 151.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 149.
objects in their collections. While the AMNH and Brooklyn Museum were actively collecting Native American objects through expeditions, such objects were being given to the Metropolitan with little fanfare.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection of Native American objects began with a group of 27 ceramic vessels from New Madrid County, Missouri, given to the MMA in 1879 by Henry G. Marquand. Of the 266 pieces in the Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, donated in 1889, 125 were Native American. Though the MMA began publishing catalogues of the Crosby Brown Collection in 1901, the Oceanic and America volume was not published until 1913.\(^\text{32}\) The Kate Wells Gift of a bowl and cup from Mesa Verde in 1892 (92.2.1 and 92.2.2) and the Mrs. Russell Sage Gift of two Navajo wearing blankets (10.107.1 and 10.107.3) in 1910 rounded out the Metropolitan’s holdings of Native American objects, which saw no expansion until mid-century. The Metropolitan’s 1920 Guide to the Collections does not mention a single Native American object, and none of those known to be housed at the MMA in the early twentieth century appears to have been regularly, if ever, on view. Both the AMNH and Brooklyn Museum, by contrast, were actively collecting and exhibiting Native American objects in the same period.

The oldest hall of the AMNH is the Hall of the Northwest Coast Indians, which opened in 1900. The objects on display were gathered during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897-1902), organized by Museum President Morris K. Jesup (1830-1908) and led by Franz Boas

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\(^{32}\) Frances Morris, *Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, Volume II: Oceanica and America* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1913). It is worth noting that Frances Morris was an Assistant Curator in the Department of Decorative Arts, as the Department of Musical Instruments was created in 1948 and the Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas in 1969.
The AMNH “Collection History” describes the first two decades of the twentieth century as “noteworthy for three major projects that retain their fame and importance even today: on the tribes of the Northwest Coast and Siberia, the Plains Indians, and the archaeology and ethnology of the Southwest. The Northwest Coast and Plains projects featured mainly ethnology while the Southwest research put the greater emphasis on archaeology.” A 1910 photograph of the Northwest Coast Hall reveals its organization; a large Haida canoe full of mannequins was placed in the center aisle, and flanked by rows of carved poles and by glass cases filled with smaller objects. The 1917 Guide to the Nature Treasures of New York City illustrates the museum’s emphasis on the Native American way of life and material culture through the use of figure groups and architectural models (figure I.13), many of which remain seemingly unchanged today.

In the early twentieth century, the Brooklyn Museum, under the guidance of Stewart Culin, stood out in both its collecting and display practices. As Ira Jacknis observes,

Culin’s exhibits were distinctive on several counts. First, virtually all the objects exhibited had been collected on museum expeditions, by a single curator. Second, his displays were opened in a rapid and continual succession, paralleling these expeditions. And finally, throughout his museum career Culin followed a practice of near-total display. When it opened in 1907, the Southwest Hall held 4,703 artifacts, and by the following year Culin could report that ‘practically all’ the Southwestern material was on display . . . As in other ethnological museums of the time, Culin’s objects were part of a larger multimedia assemblage: large and small cases, oil and watercolor paintings, framed photographs and engravings, maps and diagrams, architectural models, mannequins, and specimens and topical

35 The same Dakota woman published in the 1917 guide is on view today.
labels. They were also accompanied by lectures, printed guides, and other publications.³⁶

Brooklyn’s Southwestern Indian Hall (figure I.14) opened to the public on June 1, 1905, followed by the California Hall (figure I.15) in 1909, which subsequently was completed and reopened in 1911. In 1912, the Northwest Coast Indian Hall opened. These halls were located “directly off the Entrance Hall, in the central section, which contained classical casts and modern sculpture.”³⁷ The juxtaposition of classical, modern and indigenous production was not lost on reviewers,³⁸ who compared the objects on view in Brooklyn’s Native American halls to its twentieth century art, marking a shift in the perception of artifacts. Once seen as ethnographic objects, they were, in conjunction with modernist pieces, viewed as art objects in and of themselves. In the mid-1920s Morris de Camp Crawford joined forces with Culin to organize groundbreaking exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum (which will be examined in depth in Chapters Three and Four).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the beginnings of a trend toward incorporating Native American objects in Euro-American homes, most especially in what was known as the Indian corner. The Indian corner set the stage for subsequent shifts in “Indian”-inflected interior design, and advertisements associated with this trend show that textiles were an important feature of such spaces. Indian Trade Blankets, first exchanged with Native Americans as part of the fur trade by the Hudson Bay Company in the late 1700s, were by 1910 being marketed to Euro-Americas for their “cozy corners.” Robert W. Kapoun describes the American Indian Trade Blanket as a “commercially created, machine-woven wearing blanket produced for an American Indian market,” adding that “the trade blanket replaced the hide robes and hand-

³⁶ Jacknis, 32.
³⁷ Ibid., 31, 33.
³⁸ Ibid., 36.
woven blankets previously worn by native people. The development of a market for these blankets parallels the evolution of the Indian people’s cultural existence.”

There were five main producers of Indian Trade Blankets: J. Capps & Sons (founded 1837); Oregon City Woolen Mills (1864); Buell Manufacturing Company (1877); Racine Woolen Mills (1877); and Pendleton Woolen Mills (1896), the best known of the five and only one still in existence. As Charles J. Lohrmann remarks, “Even though the term ‘Indian Blanket’ is misleading in the sense that the origin of the trade blanket itself was from outside the native cultures, the term is appropriate because the trade blanket has become almost completely recontextualized in terms of native cultures.” Ads for the blankets perpetuated the notion that the blankets were of Indian design, by offering “Genuine Indian Blankets for Your Home” (figure I.16) and often featuring images of Native Americans wrapped in them (figure I.17). By 1910, each manufacturer had produced a catalogue that not only “romanticized” the relationship between Indian and trade blanket, but “usually included an illustration of a parlor or ‘Indian room’ in a house of the period.” Some companies, moreover, created fictitious spokespersons, such as the Capps Cozy Corner Girl, who extolled Indian blankets as accessories of a happy life.

The Capps Company called itself “Blanket maker to the Indian tribes,” and in a 1910 ad connected its Indian Trade Blankets to specific Native American groups as well as to the discerning Euro-American consumer: “A generation ago we began making Blankets for the

40 Kapoun with Lohrmann, 39.  
43 Kapoun with Lohrmann, 40-41.
Navajo, Cheyenne, Comanche, Sioux and other tribes. These blankets became famous. The Indian sold them for fabulous prices. To-day they are found in the homes of the most aristocratic people who appreciate the beautiful.”

J. Capps and Sons’ 1911 catalogue features a likeness of Buffalo Bill and quotes him, as saying that “to wrap up in a warm and colorful Capps blanket was to realize ‘a dream of the far prairie and a covered fire.’” As Kapoun writes, Cody’s words here testify not only to the quality of the Capps blanket, but also to the company’s marketing.

Its 1913 catalogue included a photograph showing Buffalo Bill and a group of Indians wearing Capps blankets (figure I.17). In his discussion of the development of campfire and scouting traditions in America, which routinely encouraged practices he calls “playing Indian,” Deloria includes a 1903 photograph (figure I.18) of “Ernest Thompson Seton’s original Sinaway Tribe at Standing Rock Village, Wyndygoul, Connecticut.” Its composition mirrors that of the Capps advertising image, though in place of Buffalo Bill and the Indians, rows of Euro-American boys stand in front of a large tipi, most of them wearing headbands with at least a single feather in them, and some wearing more elaborate headdresses. Several hold bows and arrows. Two of the boys are wrapped in blankets, one of which resembles an Indian Trade Blanket, while the other looks more like a picnic tablecloth. The role of the “Indian” in campfire traditions will be discussed further in Chapter 2, in relation to the gendering of the Indian and its impact on popular tropes and Native American Chic.

Racine Woolen Mills also promoted the cozy corner; its catalogue of 1912 shows a woman lying on a chaise longue in the corner of such a space, reading a magazine and surrounded by “Indian” blankets (figure I.18). The chaise is covered with at least two blankets; a

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45 Kapoun with Lohrmann, 73-74.
46 Deloria, 97.
third blanket covers the woman, so that only her head, shoulders and arms are visible. Five blankets line the walls behind her. The space is thus defined by blankets, and is otherwise almost bare. There is an intimacy to the scene; we imagine her tucked in a corner of the house.

An image from the 1915 Pendleton catalogue⁴⁷ (figure I.19) takes the blanket trend in a new direction. Unlike the Racine image of an intimate corner, windowless and overwhelmed by blankets, the one in Pendleton’s catalogue shows a single blanket incorporated into a décor that is less Indian-dominated. It, too, features a reading woman, but she sits on a bench before a window that looks out to the neighborhood. The bench is blanket covered, but also holds two pillows, which are geometric, but not overtly Indian, in motif. An oval table with a carved pedestal holds several vases, one full of tulips. A glass-fronted bookcase is flanked by an upholstered armchair and a wicker armchair, and the floor is covered by an Oriental carpet. The walls are painted lime green, and the windows curtains feature an earth-toned pattern. Thus the Pendleton blanket is an accent piece that does not overwhelm the room. Now part of an eclectic ensemble of diverse inspirations, it has been removed from the cozy corner – where people lounge by themselves – and brought to the front room of the house, where guests are received and entertained. This shift indicates a reclassification of Native American art in U.S. domestic spaces that soon would be echoed in women’s fashion. Both trends made Native American production more visible in everyday life and in public spaces, and each is examined in depth in this dissertation.

Chapter 1: Morris de Camp Crawford’s Role in Promoting “Indian”-Inspired Fashion

In the late 1910s, Morris De Camp Crawford (1883-1949), a research editor for *Women’s Wear* and honorary research associate at the American Museum of Natural History, initiated a shift in thinking about the connections between museum collections and fashion design. The outbreak of war in Europe created an opportunity for American clothing designers and manufacturers, who had historically followed the lead of their European counterparts, to produce something new. In the belief that museum collections could provide the inspiration for American design teams to institute a truly and uniquely “American” design aesthetic, Crawford launched a movement to foster its development. A textile industry insider with an interest in the history of clothing, he emerged as an important link between museums and the fashion industry, encouraging designers through his writings, design competitions, exhibitions, and loans of museum specimens to manufacturers, designers, and department stores. In the teens, Crawford drew primarily on the collection of the AMNH, which he tirelessly promoted in the pages of *Women’s Wear*.

In the search for a new American design aesthetic, Crawford was open to influence from every corner of the continent, but it is clear from the objects he selected that he was drawn to some Native American cultures more than others and gravitated toward a particular set of motifs characterized by geometric stylizations.¹ Analysis of the Native American objects Crawford chose for illustrations, articles, and specimen loans reveals his preference for objects from broad

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¹ See also Ann Marguerite Tartsinis, *An American Style: Global Sources for New York Textile Design, 1915-1928* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2013). Tartsinis explores Crawford’s Native North American sources (the focus of this study), and expands beyond them, examining museum specimens Crawford selected from Meso- and South America, Siberia, West Africa, Asia, and the South Seas.
geographic areas – the Arctic, Southwest, and Plains – and a preference for geometric abstraction over figurative naturalism. In addition to successfully connecting museums, designers, and consumers, Crawford single-handedly shaped the trends that emerged by showcasing select objects and promoting particular modes of appropriation. Three main trends dominated this period: the appreciation and display of Native American objects in homes and museum exhibitions; appropriations of Native American designs, motifs, and objects on Euro-American clothing and objects (which Crawford championed); and the rise of Native American “inspirations” that drew on stereotypic Euro-American conceptions of “the Indian” rather than on specific cultures or objects. Although Crawford’s work at the AMNH culminated in the 1919 Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes, his campaign would continue in the twenties and thirties under the auspices of the Brooklyn Museum.

Crawford, born in New York in 1883, attended the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Latin School and went on to Williams College. After graduation, he returned to New York, where he worked for H. B. Claflin & Company, a textile jobbing firm, and Lawrence Taylor & Company (agents for the Longdale Mills and W.B. Conrad & Company, cotton convertors). In 1915, he joined Fairchild Publications, which published Women’s Wear, a daily for the fashion industry, as a research editor – a position he held until his death in 1949. That same year, Crawford, who was particularly interested in Peruvian textiles, became acquainted with Charles W. Mead, Curator of Peruvian Antiquities (whom he first met in the galleries of the American Museum of

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Natural History) and became an honorary research associate at the museum. These connections were instrumental in his efforts to promote a new design aesthetic.

The search for a modern “American” aesthetic generally is traced to the years just after World War I, and to the circle of artists around Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), a photographer, editor, publisher, patron and dealer. But already in the war years Crawford was spearheading U.S. tastemakers’ search for new (non-European) sources of inspiration. As Herbert J. Spinden (1879-1967), assistant curator at the AMNH remarked in 1919, the recent wartime destabilization of Europe “closed the old centers of design and threw American manufacturers, who had been humbly following the lead of Europe, upon their own resources,” and created an opportunity for American designers to emerge as trendsetters. Although there was “very little original designing in the United States up to this time,” Spinden noted that developments “on the purely mechanical side” had positioned manufacturers to meet the demand for American made clothing and he credited Crawford and his campaign of contests and exhibitions with encouraging young artists to study “first hand the examples of applied art from all ages and regions in the museums of New York.”

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4 Wanda Corn, The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), xvi; Heather Hole, “‘America as Landscape’: Marsden Hartley and New Mexico, 1918-1924” (PhD. diss., Princeton University, 2005), iii; and Kay Aiken Reeve, “The Making of an American Place: The Development of Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico, as an American Cultural Center, 1898-1942” (PhD. diss., Texas A&M University, 1977), 222.


6 Ibid.
At the turn of the twentieth century, Paris was the center of the women’s clothing trade and most American designs originated there. American retailers, manufacturers and design brokers built branch offices in Europe and sent agents every season to purchase the latest styles, which they brought back to the United States for manufacture. As Spinden observed, the clothing trade in the United States was technologically adept, but relied on Paris for the designs it manufactured. By 1915, according to William Leach, “the clothing trade was America’s third largest, outranked only by steel and oil,” and in New York alone, “fifteen thousand establishments made women’s clothes . . . employing more than five hundred thousand mostly unskilled immigrant women and children at dirt-low wages.”

While modernization in women’s clothing began in the United States after the Civil War, the process “remained largely incomplete well into the twentieth century.” The men’s clothing trade, which relied less on innovation in terms of styles and patterns, modernized more quickly, fueled by the more timeless nature of men’s clothing and its embrace of standardized sizing based on data gathered during the Civil War. When the Union Army hired private manufacturers to make its uniforms, it had provided the industry with measurements for a large segment of the male population so that U.S. manufacturers could “determine which shapes and sizes could fit the largest number of people.” The women’s clothing trade would not have access to similar data until the late 1930s. This lack of standardized sizing, along with the “intricate and tightly

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7 Bernard Smith, “A Study of Uneven Industrial Development: The American Clothing Industry in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries” (PhD. diss., Yale University, 1989), 195-196.
10 Ibid., 99.
fitting vogues”

of women’s fashion, slowed the transition to ready-to-wear for much of women’s clothing. Wendy Gamber notes that “looser garments,” especially shirtwaists and suits, “succumbed to the factory first,” while the “ready-made dress was a relative latecomer; apart from a few largely unsuccessful experiments, it did not get its start until the 1910s,” and even then, it was the loose-fitting dresses that “were more easily adapted to the exigencies of mass production.”12 These sizing issues, coupled with the seasonal cycle of women’s fashion, moved the women’s clothing industry “to small-scale, decentralized, and flexible batch production technology and organization.”13 Small batch production also allowed patterns and designs to be copied as soon as they appeared and style piracy became a serious problem in the industry.14 Although most clothing was manufactured in the United States, the country had no “domestic designers of any reputation,” and U.S. “retailers were forced to reproduce the ‘latest mode’ from Paris.”15 After Germany in 1914 declared war on France, however, U.S. manufacturers scrambled to find locally produced designs.

Crawford’s notion that Native Americans were quintessentially American (hence a perfect inspiration for U.S. designers) was a common perception among Euro-Americans in the early twentieth century. Native Americans were held to make the New World distinct from the Old, or, as Deloria put it, “Indianness lay at the heart of American uniqueness.”16 In constructing a national identity, Euro-Americans liked to trace their history back through the Indian – the

12 Ibid.
13 Smith 1991, 129
14 Indian Chic finds itself at the center of the piracy issue in the twenties when H. R. Mallinson’s incredibly successful “American Indian Series” of 1928 is quickly knocked-off by several manufacturers. See Chapter Three.
15 Smith 1991, 95.
16 Deloria, 37.
original inhabitants of the continent, and therefore the first Americans. This celebration of the country’s Indian heritage was more widespread in the wake of World War I, during which Native Americans provided widespread support for United States military action, serving in “every branch of the service, including the medical corps, military intelligence, and the engineers.” Their participation bolstered the Euro-American view of the Native American as “the real American citizen,” and was “extolled by the Indian Office, by the mainstream press, and by Indians themselves through their newly organized national political associations.”

Although a few all-Indian units were organized, the majority of Native Americans served alongside whites, a decision applauded by proponents of assimilation, including General Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle Indian School, which contributed 205 Indian servicemen to the War. Thomas A. Britten contends that the “debate over segregated Indian units during World War I

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18 Ibid., 287. That being said, in 1917, when the Selective Service Act was passed, “over one third of all Indians in the country were not citizens.” As Thomas A. Britten remarks, the issue of Indian citizenship was “literally a matter of life or death” for Native Americans, since citizenship determined their draft status. As many Native Americans were unsure of their citizenship standing, the Bureau of Indian Affairs turned the matter over to draft boards, who ruled locally on a case-by-case basis. By June 1918, the BIA released guidelines to help draft boards determine Indian citizenship. “The guidelines, which enumerated four criteria were technical: (1) Indians whose trust or restrictive fee patents were dated prior to May 8, 1906, were considered citizens as provided in the Dawes Act of 1887; (2) Indians whose trust or restrictive fee patents were dated after May 8, 1906, and who had received patents in fee for their allotments were citizens by virtue of the competency clause in the Burke Act; (3) every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States who had voluntarily lived apart from his people and had adopted the habits of ‘civilized life’ was considered a citizen; (4) minor children of parents who had become citizens upon allotment, and children born to Indian citizens were also considered American citizens.” By September 1918, 11,803 Native American men had registered, and 6,509 were drafted. Approximately 5,500 registered after September 1918, but the number drafted is unknown. In addition, an estimated 6,000 Native American men enlisted. Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 52, 54, 58-60.
19 Barsh, 282, 279.
helped lay the groundwork for the passage in 1934 of the Indian Reorganization Act\textsuperscript{20} (which is discussed in Chapter 6). “The Indian Office,” he writes, “seized on Indian patriotism as evidence that its assimilation programs had been successful, while Indians themselves publicized patriotism as proof of their readiness for unrestricted citizenship.”\textsuperscript{21} Citizenship came first to honorably discharged Indian veterans in 1919 and five years later was extended to all Indians born in the United States.\textsuperscript{22} This perception of the first Americans’ patriotism burnished their image and put their material culture in a new light just as Crawford’s campaign began.

**Crawford’s Means of Promotion**

In an article published in *The American Museum Journal* in 1916, Crawford described the genesis of the idea of connecting the museum and fashion worlds; he credited the initial concept to Clark Wissler (1870-1947), a curator of anthropology at the AMNH and specialist in Plains culture. Wissler, Crawford wrote, believed U.S. designers “should be interested in the great art of the New World and more generally in the collections that were under his charge,” which to his mind contained “fresh artistic inspiration of great value.”\textsuperscript{23} Crawford noted that he and Wissler “agreed that the only thing necessary was that [designers] should be brought into close contact with the collections and learn how to make use of the American Museum.” Wissler’s campaign began with a lecture series he organized, and Crawford was tasked with rounding up an audience for it. The first talk in the series, given by Crawford himself, covered Peru, the second, given by

\textsuperscript{20} Thomas A. Britten, “American Indians in World War I: Military Service as Catalyst for Reform,” (PhD. diss., Texas Tech University, 1994), iv-v.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 288.
\textsuperscript{22} Indian Citizenship Act of November 6, 1919, Statutes at Large, 41, 305 and Act of June 2, 1924, Statutes at Large, 43, 253.
Wissler, dealt with “the general subject of methods of textile decoration practiced among primitive people and their similarity to modern machine ornamentation.” Spinden delivered a final address on Mexican art and Central American culture.24 These talks were geared toward demonstrating the adaptability of the AMNH collections to textile designs, and were covered extensively in Women’s Wear.25 For instance, a report on Spinden’s lecture noted that those in attendance “took occasion to declare that the art of the Red Man presented a field of remarkable possibilities for all those American designers, artists and textiles men who will avail themselves of it.”26

Crawford later recalled that during the first year of the war, “the editors of Women’s Wear became convinced that the problem of developing new ideas would become more and more difficult. Our accustomed sources of inspiration were closed to us, and the time seemed ripe to develop and utilize native facilities – talents.”27 Thus, he wrote, Women’s Wear gave “practically unlimited space” to their promotion, and published many designs suggested by the AMNH collections. According to Crawford these efforts served “the triple purpose of introducing designers and mills to museum collections, of encouraging designers, and of bringing mills and designers into closer relation.”28

26 “Designers See Big Field in Red Man’s Art: Many in Gathering at Museum of Natural History Say Material Seen Offers Great Possibilities,” Women’s Wear, October 18, 1916.
28 Ibid.
Crawford targeted particular manufacturers and designers: those focusing on women’s clothing, ribbon and fabric design, and milliners. *Women’s Wear* featured illustrations of objects from the AMNH collection, for which Crawford provided exacting captions that draw attention to detail as well as providing cataloguing information that makes many of them identifiable today. In addition, illustrations of modern designs based on AMNH specimens often were accompanied by illustrations of their source material. Finally, Crawford’s AMNH correspondence and loan cards (which usually included accession numbers) have helped me identify objects that designers and department stores borrowed from the museum.

Some of Crawford’s most effective promotion tools were design competitions sponsored by *Women’s Wear* and the textile industry. The rules outlined for such competitions articulate Crawford’s concept and goals:

1. The designs must be taken from some inspiration, either in the public libraries or public museum. The artist is at liberty to depart as far from the original as he may see fit, but the original object or picture from which the idea sprang must be indicated.  
2. The vital part of the idea is to get designs which can be applied to American fabric; therefore, the practical qualities of the design will receive as much consideration as the artistic.\(^{29}\) (my emphasis)

By the middle of 1916, interest in the AMNH Collections had grown, and in his continuing campaign to bring the museum to the attention of designers and manufacturers, Crawford began to “personally conduct” representatives of manufacturers (John Wannamaker, United Piece and Dye Works, H. R. Mallison Company, Cheney Brothers) and department stores (Lord & Taylor, B. Altman) through the galleries.\(^{30}\) His articles in *Women’s Wear* often included quotes from notable people in the fashion industry, whose names often figured in his

articles’ titles,\textsuperscript{31} such as, “Distinct Type of American Textile Art a Good Idea: Jesse Strauss, of R. H. Macy & Co., Inspects Designs Submitted in Women’s Wear Contest and Calls them Excellent.” In the text of that article, Crawford quoted Strauss as saying that “many very interesting motifs have been taken from the primitive art of the New World. This splendid source of inspiration has received too little attention from our style creators. Here, beyond question, is an opportunity to add an entirely new set of ideas to textile art.”\textsuperscript{32} Crawford soon reported that Strauss’s sentiment was echoed by Paul J. Bonwit, president of Bonwit, Teller & Co., in an article entitled “Interest Increasing in Museum’s Garments: Paul J. Bonwit Expresses Surprise and Delight Over Collections in Natural History Archive.” Interviewed after a tour through the AMNH collections, Bonwit remarked: “The Museum of Natural History, as I have often said, is the strongest and most progressive influence in the development of costume design in America.”\textsuperscript{33} His characterization of the AMNH as a bastion of “progressive influence” is rather ironic given that the specimens it collected and displayed, then described as “primitive,” preserve preindustrial cultures that privilege tradition over progress or innovation. Moreover, the


\textsuperscript{32} Crawford, “Distinct Type of American Textile Art a Good Idea.”

\textsuperscript{33} Crawford, “Interest Increasing in Museum’s Garments.”
prevailing view of Native American culture at the time was that it was in decline and on the brink of vanishing altogether.34

Native Americans as the first Americans were viewed as part of a timeless past, unaffected by modern industrial production. This vision was reinforced by Crawford’s promotion of museum specimens that, although sometimes created and collected rather recently, were situated in “history” and “tradition” by virtue of being in a museum. Playing both within and against this notion, Crawford sought to demonstrate that a modern aesthetic could accommodate Native American motifs he characterized as timeless, most especially geometric patterns. The complementarity of primitive and progressive he established would continue to color design discourse, as Euro-American advocates of Indian-inflected design both combatted the notion that Indian art was locked in the past and insisted that their art production remained to a large extent, traditional and “authentic.” In order to infiltrate the closets and living rooms of Euro-American homes, Native American art and the appropriations it inspired had to simultaneously adhere to ideas about the traditional and the modern.

Without well-known American designers to attach their name to his campaign, Crawford relied on manufacturers and department stores to lend brand status to Native-American-style goods. As Louisa Iarocci notes, “By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century the department store had fully emerged as a defining emblem of modernity in the United States – rendered as a professional and popular icon, at once capitalist landmark and leisure retreat.”35

Crawford was able to bring several into his campaign for modern American design, in the mutual hope that the desire for Indian-inspired items would drive traffic to mass retailers. The merchandising of Native American Chic took off in stores catering to upper-class consumers (Lord & Taylor and Bonwit Teller & Co.) as well as those frequented by a range of classes (Macy’s and B. Altman). Its birth coincided with the broad expansion of the department store and the arrival of competition in the form of emerging specialty stores.\textsuperscript{36} Contemporary surveys indicated that female consumers accounted for “around 85 percent of the retail market,”\textsuperscript{37} making a trend aimed specifically at women’s fashion and interior design especially appealing to retailers. An American-based design also would help free U.S. department stores and the manufacturers that supplied them from the expense of maintaining offices abroad and sending buyers and agents there each season.\textsuperscript{38} Indeed, as William Leach observes, “Businessmen needed other institutions . . . to help in the creation of the new commercial order of things.”\textsuperscript{39} Crawford and Native American Chic were thus in the right place at the right time.

In addition to quoting from important figures in the industry, Crawford was fond of citing numbers and statistics; in an article advocating the silk and cotton industries’ alliance with the museum, he wrote, “The silk industry in America amounts to $500,000,000 yearly. Ninety-seven per cent of the silk worn by American women is woven in the United States. It may also be added that the United States uses more raw silk than all of Europe combined.” Nonetheless, he observed, that “decorative ideas have been almost always foreign in origin” – that is, until the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{37} Ibid., 7.
\bibitem{38} Leach quotes a 1902 letter from John Wanamaker to his son Rodman, regarding a recently hired buyer who in her thirty-seven year career at Altman’s “crossed the ocean seventy times.” William Leach, \textit{Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture} (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 96.
\bibitem{39} Ibid., 154.
\end{thebibliography}
war intervened and U.S. designers began to look to “the great collection of primitive American art have largely affected the present styles.” To his mind, this was entirely appropriate, since Native American production was “so intimately, so unquestionably our own, that [it] will serve as a basis for our distinctive decorative arts, and will lend a virile character to all our future creative work.”

Crawford, taking conceptual possession of a body of work he had no role in producing encouraged readers to feel likewise, and to actively co-opt Native Americans, their history, and material culture as “our own,” based on Europeans’ conquest of and dominance on the continent.

Building on the success of the tours he conducted for industry professionals, Crawford started a loan program to allow designers and manufacturers to mull on objects at length and at their own convenience, off site. P.E. Goddard, Curator of Ethnology, was no fan of the loan project, however, and told Crawford, “I do not believe . . . this arrangement will work at all. Such material as this Department will feel willing to loan would not likely be the sort that the designers would want . . . It seems to me a more satisfactory and more workable arrangement would be for the designers to come up here with their assistances and accessories . . . I am anxious to preserve our specimens in proper condition.”

Crawford’s response was to loan specimens that were not unique or irreplaceable, and – at Goddard’s suggestion – to set up “a

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41 Crawford, for instance, requested four jackets from the Asian Ethnographic Collection for loan to Bonwit Teller & Co. A handwritten note on the returned request noted that one of the jackets, “a fine specimen of which we have no duplicate, ought not to be loaned; Frail and unique, already torn!” Goddard to Crawford, August 15, 1917. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
room particularly for the designers,” where objects deemed too fragile and/or unique to travel were made available to industry professionals who wished to study them.  

The following year, at Crawford’s suggestion and under the direction of Stewart Culin (1858-1929), curator of the Department of Ethnology at the Brooklyn Museum, that institution also opened a room for industrial designers. In an article in *Women’s Wear*, Culin was quoted as saying: “A museum, to my mind, is in reality a great research university; one of its important spheres of usefulness is to help artists and through them manufacturers to develop higher forms of industrial art.” The close alignment of their ideas forecast the fruitful collaborations that would occur between Culin and Crawford in the twenties.

Crawford wanted people to be able to handle objects and even put on costumes from the museum collection, a position he publicized in *Women’s Wear* by noting that a “Miss Rosharana,” a dancer he had taken through the collection, tried on some Native American garb. Crawford then cited Rosharana’s remark that “Many of the ideas I see, even in the cut of the garments, I shall adopt in some of my dance costumes and also in what I shall call my ‘civil costume.’” Although the article was unillustrated, a piece Crawford subsequently wrote for *Vogue* features a photograph of the same dancer modeling a Koryak embroidered fur coat from Northern Siberia. In the accompanying text, Crawford observes that when Roshanara put on the coat, “The effect was magical; she actually made the garments live again and gave to them a modern charm and feeling that would never be suspected from seeing them in the cases.”

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42 M.D.C. Crawford to Frederick A. Lucas, Director AMNH, August 13, 1917.
44 For photographs of models wearing museum specimens taken in the AMNH study rooms in 1916, see Tartsinis, 47-53.
46 Mallinson’s named a fabrication, Roshanara crepe, after her in 1922.
*Vogue* article also showed modern outfits that took their inspiration from the museum’s collection, as Crawford again laid out the main tenets of his campaign:

The relation between artist, art industries, and museums should be a very intimate one, and it has for years been the aim of the American Museum of Natural History to bring about such a condition. During the last year, a gratifying measure of success has been attained . . . So far, the use of the original material in the museum has been confined largely to the fabric and costume industries, with the definite aim of creating in America a true appreciation of decoration and a group of artists capable of independent creative effort in the decorative arts.  

Crawford encouraged painters – as well as dancers and designers – to visit the AMNH study room, and in a letter to Wissler, for instance, introduced the painter Fritz Winold Reiss (1886-1953), who “has been able to secure a fine type of Sioux Indian as a model, and is very anxious to be allowed to pose him in some of the garments in the Museum,” so as to paint him in “the correct habiliments of a Sioux warrior.” Some years later, an article for *Arts & Decoration*, Crawford described the way that Reiss, using the museum’s resources, had been able to make a presentable portrait specimen of Yellow Elk, a former circus Indian who was down on his luck and disheveled:

> We dressed him in the war bonnet, the beaded shirt of Flaming Cloud, the not unworthy lieutenant of the great Sitting Bull, once the terror of the plains. The change was instantaneous. Gone was the slouching gait, the hangdog look, the dumb suffering; Yellow Elk, the discharged circus rider, familiar of the grog shop and the gutter, vanished. In his place strode a man and a warrior, resplendent in color, filling the dim halls of the museum with dignity and poise.

Although Crawford’s remarks were not accompanied by illustrations of Yellow Elk’s transformation, three of Reiss’s portraits of him are cited in the 1989 exhibition catalogue, *Winold Reiss: An Illustrated Checklist of His Portraits*, and two are illustrated (figure 1.1).

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48 M.D.C. Crawford to Clark Wissler, November 24, 1917. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.  
*Yellow Elk Version I*, pencil on paper, is a close-up profile view of the sitter, while *Yellow Elk Version III*, pastel, is a half-length in which Yellow Elk’s face is seen in three-quarter view. In each, he wears a scarf, vest and long-sleeved shirt, and sports three feathers at the back of his head. It would seem, therefore, that the version Crawford described was *Yellow Elk, Version II*, mixed media (current location unknown). While nothing in the museum’s current collection database has Flaming Cloud’s name attached to it, Reiss most likely used a Sioux war bonnet with trailer (AMNH 50.1/1196) (figure 1.2) and a Sioux war shirt (AMNH 50.1/1186) (figure 1.3) – both part of the Erastus T. Tefft Collection, which was purchased by the museum in 1910.

In the fall of 1919, Reiss went west to visit the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in Browning, Montana, and stopped briefly in Taos on his way back to New York. Upon his return, he exhibited 35 portraits of Blackfoot Indians at the E.F. Hanfstaengl Gallery (January 1920). In 1927, he again traveled west, to Glacier National Park, Montana, and Watertown Parks, Alberta, where he painted another series of portraits of Blackfoot and Blood Indians; these had been commissioned by Louis W. Hill, Chairman of the Board of Directory of the Great Northern Railroad, and were exhibited in April 1928 at the Belmaison Galleries in John Wanamaker’s Department Store. H.V. Kaltenborn, associate editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, wrote an introduction to the catalogue of the 1928 exhibition, in which he noted that Reiss sought to “preserve for the world a living semblance of a dying race,” and that “in selecting his subjects among the three branches of the Siksika or Blackfeet tribe he has chosen Indians renowned for form and feature.”50 A selection of these portraits was reproduced in the 1932 calendar (figure 1.4) for the Great Northern Railroad.

50 Kaltenborn, np.
Euro-American depictions of Native Americans were by no means a novelty at this time – George Catlin and Karl Bodmer having produced many in the 1830s – but Reiss’s portrayals were notable for a researched accuracy that harked back to that sought by those illustrious forebears – and stood at odds with the hackneyed and stereotypical depictions that prevailed in the late 19th century. (Euro-American appreciation for Native Americans’ depictions of themselves would not emerge until the 1920s.)

**Articles About Museum Collections**

In a 1918 article entitled “Americana” (figure 1.5), Crawford noted “the interest everything American is attracting at this time,” and, for the first time including non-wearable objects in an essay devoted to fashion, illustrated a number of southwestern baskets and pots that, he claimed, “have attracted the favorable attention of some of the leading designers in this city and have already had a pronounced influence on styles.”

Though he had previously noted motifs drawn from such objects, here the objects themselves – a Laguna (Acoma) pottery jar (AMNH H/15210) (figure 1.6) and an Apache basket (AMNH 1/5176) (figure 1.7) – appear alongside garments from the museum’s collection, including an Assiniboine woman’s dress (AMNH 50.1/742) (figure 1.8) that Crawford would later loan to a designer, a Sioux chief’s shirt (AMNH 50/6829) (figure 1.9), and a Sioux, Lakota, Oglala dress (AMNH 50.1/309) (figure 1.10).

When selecting objects of inspiration for designers, Crawford would continue to focus on the sorts of Pueblo pottery and Southwestern basketry first illustrated here, whereas among

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52 Specimens loaned to Mr. Crawford for the use of Miss Steinmetz, January 22, 1919. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
garments, Plains clothing – especially hide pieces adorned with beadwork and/or fringe – remained the most prominent of his wearable selections. Two of the models pictured in Crawford’s “Americana” essay are shown with braided hair and headbands across their foreheads, perhaps to imply that the garments they wear are Native American, worn by Native Americans, rather than modern take-offs modeled by Euro-American models.

Crawford, who had long been interested in Peruvian textiles, was, in the late 1910s, eager to expand the Euro-American notion of “Native American” by including Pre-Columbiana. To that end, his “Americana” essay of 1918 included a poncho-like garment that seems to have been inspired by Meso- or South American tunics. In an article of the following year, Crawford wrote that Pre-Columbian art, if little known at the time, could become an important source of inspiration for U.S. designers.

Little is known really of the rich field of pre-Columbian art in the New World. We have grown accustomed to thinking of primitive American art as confined to crude basketry, beadwork, and a little pottery. As a matter of fact, this is the most limited and the least interesting phase of artistic development in the New World. The very adjectives ‘new’ and ‘old’ as applied to America and Europe are misleading. They refer entirely to the European attitude at the time of the discovery. There were many civilizations in the Americas that were much more ancient and much higher developed, than any civilization in Europe.”

The illustrations for this article (figure 1.11) – in addition to showing a Plains Indian woman, a Haida man, and a Native American of the southwest (the blanket on her loom appears to be Navajo, but her hair, parted and wrapped into buns on either side of her head, suggests the Hopi squash blossom hairstyle) – also include Peruvian, Guatemalan, Arawak and Chiriqui models.

Crawford in this period contributed to a variety of publications; his chief aims (as described in an article for House Beautiful in 1918) were to “incite curiosity” and “induce artists

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54 This same woman appeared in another of Crawford’s articles, “Cotton One of Civilization-Building Implements,” Women’s Wear, June 12, 1919.
to absorb almost unconsciously lessons of good taste and promote their own innate creative faculty.” Casting his net wide, Crawford declared, “I have seen combinations of North American beadwork and Chinese jade carving that have made very presentable decorations on fabrics.” The eclecticism of his taste is made clear by the diversity of objects illustrated in the House Beautiful piece: a coat from northern Siberia, a Rhodian ware pitcher, bark cloth from Fiji, and nine Native American baskets (figures 1.12 and 1.13), one of them a Hoopa grain basket (AMNH 50.1/5984) (figure 1.14) that also was included in the 1919 exhibition. The caption accompanying the baskets declared them “primitive,” yet rich with “fascinating” motifs that “have been widely used by the artists of today.” To Crawford’s mind, such baskets were testimony to his belief that “art is not a matter of costliness or of ostentation.”

Exhibitions

In the late 1910s, Native American style was promoted in a series of exhibitions staged, collaboratively, by Women’s Wear, the AMNH, and the women’s clothing industry. The first of them, a “Special Exhibition of Primitive Costumes,” was organized by Crawford and opened in January 1918 on the fourth floor of the AMNH. Garments from around the world had been selected from the museum’s collection by the staff of Women’s Wear, and were displayed with “a definite idea of serving the garment industry.” Crawford emphasized the exhibition’s “vital importance” by noting, “Specialists can view the garments and get points of interest from them –

55 M.D.C. Crawford, “The Museum’s Place in Art Industry: The Message of the Museum is Primarily to Incite Curiosity and From This Condition of Mind to Induce Artists to Absorb Lessons of Good Taste and Promote Their Own Innate Creative Faculty,” House Beautiful, December 1918, 369.
56 Ibid.
a sleeve here, a collar there. A bit of embroidery, a new silhouette, or a little trick of tailoring, may occur in any garment and is sure to be found somewhere in the collection in such a form to fit every need.” Though he admitted that “perhaps no single garment could absolutely be copied with commercial success,” Crawford felt “every garment will contain one or more ideas that can be easily incorporated in fresh, modern garments.”\(^{58}\) In another article promoting the show, Crawford stated his desire to “let the trade have full benefit of whatever inspiration they may draw from it.”\(^{59}\) An advertisement for the exhibition in *Women’s Wear* (figure 1.15) featured illustrations of seven garments, including two Eskimo pieces (AMNH O/531; AMNH 60.1/4380) (figures 1.16 and 1.17) and a Cheyenne-style “men’s scalp lock shirt” (AMNH 50.1/2385) made of hide, human hair, glass beads, pigment, sinew and cloth (figures 1.18 and 1.19). In the ad, the Cheyenne men’s shirt is modeled by a woman, a crossover commonly seen in Crawford’s selections, but never remarked by him. At the end of the exhibition, the AMNH loaned a group of specimens to Wanamaker’s department store, including an Apache Jicarilla woman’s cape with fringe (AMNH 50/8588).\(^{60}\) As the interest in the Museum’s collections were fostered by exhibitions and Crawford’s essays for *Women’s Wear*, loans to department stores and designers increased.

Crawford found that “the very people whose talents and position place them beyond all apparent need of suggestion have been the readiest to accept new ideas.” He noted, for instance, that the designer E.M.A. Steinmetz felt that many native garments “are ready to be translated into modern materials and placed with little change, on the costume of a modern woman of

\(^{58}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Loan card, January 22, 1918. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
Steinmetz – a designer for Stein & Blaine, Furriers and Ladies’ Tailors – worked in several media, and is best known as an illustrator (most notably for Vogue). A year after quoting her extensively in Women’s Wear, Crawford and the AMNH loaned Steinmetz a group of Plains specimens from the museum’s collection, including a Sioux Brule woman’s dress (AMNH 50.1/314) (figure 1.20). The dress had appeared in Wissler’s Plains Indian Costumes (1915), wherein the author described the introduction of the European trade cloth, which “was substituted for skins in making garments.” Wissler wrote that this new material “had a shape of its own and consequently presented a new problem to the Plains dressmaker.” Thus, “in many cases the bottom of the skirt is cut out to conform to the old style” so that the “original two-skin concept was able to prevail over the introduction of new materials.”

One such fabric, known as Stroud cloth, was a woolen cloth produced in the Stroud area of Gloucestershire; it became an important material for Native North Americans. As Wissler writes, “Stroud cloth replaced animal hides for making clothes: like hide it was waterproof, to a degree, but unlike hide it required no preparation, was easy to cut and sew and to decorate with quillwork and beads.”

Clearly, Native American clothing was not static but evolving – if perhaps not so quickly, as Euro-American clothing did. Yet Crawford’s focus on museum specimens, which privileged age and “tradition” in tandem with the then prevailing notion that Native Americans were vanishing rather than changing and adapting – underplayed permutation. In addition to the

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61 M.D.C. Crawford, “May Exhibit Designs For All Apparel Lines: Museum Display Suggests Possibilities of Primitive Art as Basis for Millinery, Furs, Etc.,” Women’s Wear, January 15, 1918.
62 Specimens loaned to Mr. Crawford for the use of Miss Steinmetz, January 22, 1919. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
Stroud cloth dress, Crawford’s loan to Steinmetz included an Assiniboine woman’s dress, (AMNH 50.1/742) (figure 1.8) and a Northern Cheyenne woman’s coat (AMNH 50.1/532) (figure 1.21), both of which are made of buckskin, beaded and fringed – hallmarks of “the Indian” in the Euro-American mind.

In addition to exhibitions such as “Primitive Costumes,” which were aimed at the general public as well as designers, Crawford helped organize more specialized displays that targeted the industry. In July 1919, for instance, an exhibition of headgear was mounted in response to the Retail Milliners’ Association of America request. The “Exhibition of Hats” (figure 1.22) coincided with the milliners’ annual convention at the Hotel Astor, and included almost twenty items, among them a Yurok basketry cap (AMNH 50/3438) (figure 1.23) made of plant fiber and pigment. As Crawford noted in an essay on the show, “The Indians of California use simple baskets for hats. The one shown is cream-colored, with a woven design in brown and yellow.”

The body of the basket cap shown in 1919 features multiple rectangles and tiled sides. California basketry – both wearable and non-wearable – featured prominently in Crawford’s campaign and interest in it, which gathered steam in the 1920s, would culminate in Sally Victor’s appropriation for modern hats in the forties.

On the heels of the hats exhibition, Crawford wrote an essay encouraging other garment industry associations – blouse, dress, and coat manufacturers – to propose and promote such displays, which, he noted, could bring together similar types of objects from all over the world in a single place. Reiterating his (and the museum’s) commitment to facilitating Native American-
inspired U.S. design, Crawford wrote, “There is nothing within reason (and the interpretation of
the word ‘reason’ is extremely broad), that the museum will not do to foster the movement for
decorative art. Any intelligent scheme that is backed by the interest of large industrial groups
will be carried out.”

One result of his boosterism was the “Exhibition of Blouses,” held in October 1919 in the
Women’s Wear Galleries at 8 East 13th Street, which included loans from both the AMNH and
the Brooklyn Museum. A list of twenty-eight objects lent to that exhibition includes six
eamples of Native American clothing – with an emphasis on men’s clothing from the Plains.
The items on view included a Sioux shirt with fringe (AMNH 50/839) (figure 1.24), made of
hide and adorned with glass beads and metal buttons, and – from Spinden’s collection – a
Blackfeet, Piegan Brave Society bear shirt (figure 1.25), also made of hide and painted (now
AMNH 50/5576). The Southwest was represented by a girl’s dress from Taos (AMNH
50.1/2386) (figure 1.26), made of hide ornamented with glass beads, brass bells, pigment and
sinew, and an Acoma shirt (AMNH 50.1/5063) (figure 1.27) made of cotton cloth and wool yarn.
An article on the exhibition (figure 1.28) includes illustrations of a Sioux, Lakota Oglala dress
(AMNH 50/4358) (figure 1.29), an Eskimo parka (AMNH O/531) (figure 1.16), and coat
(AMNH 60/1139) (figure 1.30), which already had been shown at the “Primitive Costumes”
exhibition in 1918 (and illustrated in Women’s Wear that same year), as well as fourteen other
blouses. In his article on the exhibition, Crawford wrote that “this material is freely offered to

68 M.D.C. Crawford, “Design Department: Recent Millinery Exhibition With Cooperation of
Museums Suggest Similar Exhibits for Blouses, Coats and Dresses,” Women’s Wear, August 8,
1919.
69 List of 28 objects, October 2, 1919, lent for the exhibition. AMNH, Anthropology Archives,
Folder 727.
70 M.D.C. Crawford, “Design Department: Exhibition Showing History and Development of
Blouse to Be Held in Women’s Wear Galleries,” Women’s Wear, September 29, 1919.
the designers to copy draft patterns from or obtain ideas of ornament” and expressed the hope that “their materials shall become useful…in the modern industrial life. We have endeavored to present this collection with the least possible restrictions . . . and will gladly cooperate with any designer or buyer in still further extending their usefulness.”

During the run of the blouse exhibition, Ethel Strong, an executive from the Brooklyn department store Abraham, Strauss & Co., contacted Crawford about creating a window display with museum specimens. In a letter written shortly after the blouse exhibition closed, Crawford told Wissler that “a very important executive” sought a loan of five or six blouses from which she aimed to develop “closely related” modern designs that “will demonstrate the practical usefulness of the movement” by way of a window display pairing AMNH specimens with the garments they inspired. Crawford assured Wissler that the museum would receive credit for the loan and mentioned that the Brooklyn Museum would participate as well. He then expressed his belief that “few education forces are so instantly effective as a well-draped show window. I have long believed that the museums especially certain museums as our own that fortunately have reserve collections, could make great use of certain show-window displays, as the means of the public’s education in the wealth of ideas and interest that is our museum.”

After Strong’s plan went forward, Crawford extolled this “new venture in window dressing” in an article for Women’s Wear in which he described “the newest and smartest

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71 M.D.C. Crawford, “The Blouse is a National Garment in Every Land; Collection in Museum of Women’s Wear Available for Study by Designers in Search of Ideas,” Women’s Wear, October 4, 1919.
72 M.D.C. Crawford to Clark Wissler, October 8, 1919. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
blouses” and the way Strong had shown them alongside the “source of their inspiration.”73 A photograph of the Abraham & Strauss window (figure 1.31) shows the modern appropriations elevated on dress forms, while their corresponding museum specimens, arranged close by, are nearer to the bottom of the window and draped or propped rather than displayed on dress forms or mannequins – a strategy that makes the modern adaptations look more consumer-ready and wearable.74 The window display (figure 1.32) included a “buckskin shirt from the Sioux Indians of North Dakota . . . lavishly ornamented with blue bead work”75 and its modern appropriation, which was described in The Brooklyn Standard Union (figure 1.33): “Made in slate gray Georgette crepe, the wide bands incorporate all the exquisite color sense of men who looked to Nature for all their colorings. Sky-blue, the red of the flaming sun, the green of young corn and the salmon pink of the sunset sky – all these strike their note through these bands in tender accord.”76 The modern blouse has a fringed hem and appears belted at the waist; belting emerged as a common means of adapting museum specimens to modern wear.

Such small, focused exhibitions and the publicity surrounding them set the stage for a large-scale exhibition in the halls of the AMNH, the Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes, staged in late 1919 (figure 1.34). Taking a cue from the Abraham & Strauss window, the AMNH show featured museum specimens and modern derivations exhibited side by side. Crawford’s preview of the show for Women’s Wear noted its dual aim to “show the American

74 Tartsinis (87) observes a similar strategy in the displays of museum specimens and modern adaptations in her discussion of the AMNH’s 1919 Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes.
75 Ibid.
76 “Blouses of Unusual Origin,” The Brooklyn Standard Union, November 10, 1919. Brooklyn Museum Archives (BMA), Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.005], Culin 1.4 1919 (1919/11).
public the splendid progress that American industry has made and also to show the connection
between art history in the documents and the production of today.”77 These goals were formally
reiterated by Spinden in his catalogue essay: “First. To bring to public attention the recent
splendid advances in the industrial decorative art of the United States, especially in textiles and
costumes. Second. To show exactly how these advancements were achieved.” In describing the
scope and design of the exhibition, Spinden noted his and his colleagues’ “hopes to rouse the
public imagination as regards a new phase of Americanization and industrial reconstruction.”78

As a complement to Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes, staff artists from Women’s
Wear gave demonstrations of “how costume designs for modern clothes are made from primitive
documents.” Also on display were costume books, posters and other material associated with the
“campaign of the last five years for a truly national expression in industrial art.”79 The
exhibition attracted 2,700 visitors its first day.80 By special arrangement, the museum was open
evenings from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily, to accommodate those who could not visit during working
hours.81 Articles on the exhibition emphasized its importance to American manufacturers; as a
piece in the New York Tribune put it, “It is not a museum exhibit, but a ‘business show’ before

77 M.D.C. Crawford, “Design Department: Exhibition of Industrial Art at American Museum of
Natural History This Fall,” Women’s Wear, August 4, 1919. In a letter to Crawford, Henry
Fairfield Osborn, the President of the AMNH, emphasized the educational impact of the
exhibition, “The unrivaled collections of primitive designs in the Museum are very stimulating
and are being used largely by the school. Encouragement of original and creative art among our
own people means occupation and income for large numbers of naturally talented boys and girls
in our public school.” Henry Fairfield Osborn to M.D.C. Crawford, November 5, 1919. AMNH,
Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
79 Temporary Exhibits – 1919, AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 16.
80 “Industrial Art Show Attracts Throngs of Visitors to Museum,” Women’s Wear, November 14,
1919.
81 Temporary Exhibits – 1919, AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 16.
all else, a record of the latest in American manufacture.”*82 Spinden, however, insisted that the show also held appeal for the general public. He was quoted by Crawford – in an article in *Women’s Wear* – as saying that “one of the most interesting and inspiring developments” seen in visitors to the show was “the pride they feel, that we in America could have an exhibition of this kind.”*83

The *Exhibition of Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes* was the culmination of Crawford’s work at the AMNH; it also turned out to be their last collaboration. After several contentious letters in 1917, regarding Crawford’s access to various parts of the museum and its collection, relations between Goddard and Crawford temporarily improved, but when the same sorts of objections and disagreements resurfaced during the run of *Industrial Art in Textiles and Costumes*, Crawford tendered his resignation.*84 In a letter to Wissler, he complained,

> The work that I have done and am doing, which is already taking a concrete form, and which in the course of a short time will come to a definite issue with the Board of Education in New York, and the great textile industries and advertising agencies, is distinctly hampered by my lack of access to material. This lack, however, will not, I assure you, interfere with my work, and I only regret that it must be continued under different auspices than in the past.*85

Crawford would go on to pursue his goals at the Brooklyn Museum, and – as he forecast in 1919 – his efforts would continue to bear fruit in women’s fashion and interior design. In addition to successfully connecting museums, designers, and consumers, Crawford almost

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*82 “Dress Designs By Local Men Win High Place,” *New York Tribune*, November 23, 1919. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.005], Culin 1.4 1919 (1919/11).
*83 M.D.C. Crawford, “‘True Democracy in Art Means Good Art for All,’ Says Herbert J. Spinden Speaking of Communal Spirit Displayed at Art Exhibit,” *Women’s Wear*, November 26, 1919. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.005], Culin 1.4 1919 (1919/11).
*84 P.E. Goddard to M.D.C. Crawford, November 12, 1920; Crawford to Goddard, November 16, 1920; Goddard to Crawford, November 17, 1920; Crawford to Wissler, December 16, 1920; Wissler to Dr. F.A. Lucas, December 31, 1920; AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
*85 Crawford to Wissler, December 16, 1920. AMNH, Anthropology Archives, Folder 727.
single-handedly shaped the trends that emerged by carefully guiding designers’ selection of objects of inspiration and suggesting modes of appropriation.
“Indian Chic” in U.S. interior design emerged at the turn of the twentieth century with the “Indian corner” and expanded to other areas of the home – most especially the increasingly popular middle-class “den” – in the early twentieth century. By the late teens, under Morris De Camp Crawford’s influence – and especially in response to his campaign in *Women’s Wear* – Native American modes also began to inflect U.S. fashion. Three main trends dominate women’s fashion and interior design in the period examined in this dissertation – incorporation (of actual and authentic indigenous artifacts and garments), appropriation (take-offs, drawn from close observation of artifacts and garments), and inspiration (Euro-American objects that are loosely based on a generalized “Indian” aesthetic). The strategy of incorporation came out of the “Indian corner” and was restricted to interior design (for predominantly “male” spaces) in the late teens. Native artifacts did not make their way beyond interior design and into fashion until the 1920s, when women began to incorporate authentic pieces of clothing and jewelry into their ensembles. While the vogue in interior design was confined to incorporation and occurred mostly in spaces designed for men, fashion designers tended toward appropriation – the adaptation of cuts, materials and motifs derived from Native American clothing and objects – and focused on female consumers; they produced designs aimed at women and girls in the period under consideration here. Mass-market “inspirations” – also confined to women’s and girls’ wear – followed as “Indian Chic” took off in the late teens.
Gendering the Indian

The Indian corner was a type of “cozy corner.” Born in the mid-eighteenth century, the cozy corner was a small, exoticized space within the home that invited imaginative escape; the first of these inviting nooks were outfitted with pillows and textiles from the Middle East. The Indian corner was a late-nineteenth-century variant that Elizabeth Hutchinson describes as a “widespread home decoration fad that was promoted by illustrated magazines, Indian traders, and urban marketers, including department stores.” Advertising, which played a role in the success of the railroad, also encouraged the adoption of the Indian corner. As Hutchinson writes:

The Native version of the cozy corner was dependent on the development of off-reservation distribution of Native American handicrafts. Native Americans had traded baskets, blankets, apparel, and tools with their non-Indian neighbors since the beginning of European settlement. In some areas, such as Niagara Falls, crafts-people also produced curios to sell as souvenirs to tourists. The marketing of Native American art exploded at the end of the nineteenth century, when traders began addressing urban consumers directly through advertisements, special sales, and mail-order catalogues, enabling them to purchase goods from a wide array of areas without leaving the city.

In her discussion of the photographs of the Indian corner in Joseph “Udo” Keppler’s den that were published in March 1903 in The Papoose (Figure 2.1), Hutchison describes the space as “teem[ing] with Native American artifacts accented by simple furnishings.” A photo of a similar space (Figure 2.2) – reproduced in House Beautiful in 1897 – shows comparable abundance: baskets not only fill the shelves, but are stacked up in front of them as well.

The Indian corner was gendered as male, through associations Euro-Americans placed on Indians and Indian objects, domestic spaces, and the act of collecting. As Elizabeth Cromley notes, at the turn of the twentieth century “both Indians and Indian objects were given gendered

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1 Hutchinson, Indian Craze, 11.
2 Ibid., 20.
properties in the diverse literature that discussed them.” 4 While these gendered assignments were somewhat fluid, the Plains Indians, portrayed in newspapers, popular literature and wild west shows as warlike, were seen as masculine, while the Indians of the Pueblos, heavily promoted in tourist literature, were seen as passive and therefore feminized. 5 These gendered associations, along with the connection between Indians and the natural world, dictated the objects that decorated the masculine spaces of the home, where they served “to represent nature – a nature both noble and savage yet under the white man’s control.” 6 Removed from their original context and repositioned in the spaces of Euro-American men, Native American objects “promised the hope of resisting feminized culture – a resistance aided by women decorators invested in protecting manliness.” 7

In her examination of gendered perceptions of the American domestic interior, Cheryl Robertson suggests another reason that Indian objects, given their common association with the primitive and nature, were deemed appropriate to masculine spaces. She writes that while both genders strove, at the turn of the century, for “the simple life” emblematized by middle-class bungalows, “the male version of the simple life was generally backward-looking, rustic, and combative, in contrast to the female embrace of modern conveniences, streamlined work routines, and efficient management as the essence of a simplified life.” 8

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6 Cromley, 277.
7 Ibid., 279.
8 Cheryl Robertson, “Male and Female Agendas for Domestic Reform: The Middle-Class Bungalow in Gendered Perspective,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1991): 133.
In addition to the gendered associations of Indians and their production, the acts of collecting and displaying Native artifacts also have been described as a gendered practice. In describing the tactics and behaviors employed in the act of collecting in the mid-twentieth century, Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby noted,

Grand scale collecting almost always calls for aggressive and material ambition to a degree uncharacteristic of women, aside from women’s historic economic position. Those who came within hailing distance of collecting giants were women who seemed to exhibit the masculine strain of a highly developed competitiveness, although this in no way detracts from the position of women as amateurs.9

Decades later, Rémy G. Saisselin made a similar observation, writing, “Women were consumers of objects; men were collectors. Women bought to decorate and for the sheer joy of buying, but men had a vision for their collections, and viewed their collections as an ensemble with a philosophy behind it.”10

De-contextualized artifacts lost their original functions when relocated to Indian corners, but was part of a larger process described by Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf, who note, “In assembling . . . objects, ideas or experiences into a collection, the collector grants them non-utilitarian sacred status,” which means that “stamps or coins in a collection are regarded as inappropriate for mailing letters or making purchases.”11 Such erasure of original function, however, was not so prevalent in U.S. interior design as it had been in the collector’s Indian corner. As a widespread vogue of Indian objects took off in the teens, Native American artifacts not only were decoratively displayed, but, increasingly, repurposed for Euro-American life-

11 Belk and Wallendorf, 7.
styles: ceramics served as vases or were incorporated into modern lamps, baskets became wastepaper baskets and food trays. Along with this shift came a shift in the objects’ gendered status. Removed from the displayed collection – so often gendered masculine – to function in the modern home, pottery and baskets became associated with spaces and activities that were gendered feminine.

Thus, as Cromley cautions, “gender assignments to Indian materials were not stable in turn of the century literature; they subtly changed with occasion and time.”

An even more pronounced fluidity is apparent in fashion, where male garments from the Plains routinely spawned take-offs in women’s wear. In the early twentieth century, the parameters of Euro-American menswear were fairly constrained and rigid; as Diane Crane observes, the design of the standard men’s suit, which “achieved its present form at the end of the nineteenth century,” was governed by “strict rules about exactly how a business suit is to be made and worn.”

There was room for novelty, even playfulness, in women’s clothing – both dressy and casual – that did not exist in menswear in the early twentieth century. (It is not until the 1960s that men’s fashion became more malleable.) In addition, women, like Indians, were often construed as “other” in male-dominated society, and this perception made women’s clothing more amenable to whims and exoticism. As Hutchinson remarks, “The discourse of Indian art reinforced contemporary concepts of racial and gender difference. The acceptance that women were essentially different from men and that Indians were essentially different from Euro-Americans reinforce non-Indian men’s patriarchal authority over both women and Indians.”

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12 Cromley, 265.
In a similar vein, Marianna Torgovnick writes that what “struck” her most in her research for *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*, was “the way that gender issues always inhabit Western versions of the primitive. Sooner or later those familiar tropes for primitives become the tropes conventionally used for women.”¹⁵ Helen Carr believes that this native/female vs. white/male binary is one of the reasons that female anthropologists and writers became so preoccupied with Native Americans, writing, “They identified with the position of the Indians, consciously or unconsciously, as abolitionist women had identified with the position of the blacks.”¹⁶ Judy Sund takes a similar view, explaining, “I think women tend to be seen as other/linked to the other, and men as more ‘normative.’ In the case of the Indian Corner, they master the other by possessing it, arranging it and displaying it on their turf, removed from context. Native-American-style fashion, on the other hand, seems to have something to do with masquerade and play, and subsumes the woman, exoticizing her (and perhaps thereby eroticizing her).”¹⁷

Prior to the twentieth century, “playing Indian” had been the domain of Euro-America men – from the Boston Tea Party to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fraternal societies that incorporated Indianness into the construction of their identities, including the Sons of St. Tammany, the Society of Red Men, and the New Society of the Iroquois.¹⁸ The shifting gender

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¹⁷ Email to the author, August 15, 2013. For the roots of this tendency in European discourse on race, see Joanna de Groot, “‘Sex’ and ‘Race’: the Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Cultures of Empire*, Catherine Hall, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
¹⁸ See Deloria for an in-depth discussion of the history of playing Indian.
of Indianness from masculine to feminine – a shift to which Native American Chic contributed – already had begun in the campfire traditions of the early twentieth century. When, in 1901, Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946) founded the youth program that he dubbed the Woodcraft Indians, he shaped its precepts with his own sense of Indianness in mind. Seton, who saw the idealized Native American as a positive model, and his way of life as an antidote to the modern condition, sought to teach “children to appreciate and value nature, and its essence in Indianness.”¹⁹ He believed both boys and girls could benefit from different aspects of Indianness – boys could be “raised to masculinity through contact with Indianized nature,” while girls could “learn the timeless value of female domesticity.”²⁰ Seton’s belief in the power of Indianness was, however, countered by Daniel Carter Beard (1850-1941), who founded the Sons of Daniel Boone (1905) in the conviction that the pioneer perspective provided the best model for young boys, and by Lord Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941), the English founder of the Scout Movement, who looked to the army for a paradigm. Although both Beard and Seton together formed the Boy Scouts of America in 1910, Beard’s pioneers were closer to Baden-Powell’s army officers than Seton’s Indians, and Beard “turned to long-standing symbolic linkages among Indians, nature, and the feminine to undermine Seton.”²¹ In 1915, Seton left the Boy Scouts to re-establish the Woodcraft Indians.

A similar enshrining of Indianness prevailed within the Camp Fire Girls, founded in 1910 by Luther and Charlotte Gulick, and “professionalized in 1912 with the assistance of the Boy Scouts.”²² Deloria notes that the Camp Fire Girls “played Indian with the zeal Seton would have

¹⁹ Deloria, 96.
²⁰ Ibid., 187.
²¹ Ibid., 110.
²² Ibid., 113.
liked to have implanted in boy scouting.” The group was guided by a desire to teach young women to balance work, health, and love – a tenant Indianized as “Wo-He-Lo,” which was the name of their camp on Lake Sebago in Maine. The Gulicks sought to inspire young women to “find new beauty and joy in the simple, common-place things,” and “new love in service.” Much of this service was related to domestic tasks such as cooking, which the Gulicks believed could be simplified and made “stimulating” by adhering to “primitive” ways. By studying “the stories and art of the Indians,” Camp Fire Girls “learned to love to express the poetry of the life about them in the work of their hands.” Each member chose an Indian name from A Book of Symbolic Names for Camp Fire Girls, and each made her own dress, “patterned after the dress of the Indian woman . . . because the lines of the primitive American woman’s dress were simple and becoming to all girls and would not go out of fashion, and it could be made individual without destroying its uniformity.” The dresses, made of “Government Khaki” featured leather fringe and beading and were adorned with symbols chosen by each girl to reflect her character and interests. These dresses were worn with brown moccasins (which could also be beaded), and the girls were instructed to wear their hair in braids or “bound with a bead-band in Indian fashion.” A photograph of Gulick surrounded by Camp Fire girls (Figure 2.3) illustrates the individual choices that could be made beyond the designs and patterns, including the length of

23 Ibid., 111.
24 Ethel Rogers, Sebago-Wohelo Camp Fire Girls (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1915), 36.
26 Rogers, 32.
28 In 1975, the organization became co-educational and today it is know as “Camp Fire.” The online store sells uniforms consisting of red, white, and blue polo shirts and blue and red vests, but a photograph on the website related to the Wohelo Award suggests the khaki dress is also still in use. www.campfireusa.org/wohelo.aspx [accessed July 26, 2014]
29 Ibid., 7.
fringe and its location. In suggesting Indian modes suitable for modern appropriation, Crawford also would draw heavily on the Plains Indian dress, which offered unlimited possibilities for adaptation with its characteristic beadwork and fringe.

**Appropriations in U.S. Fashion**

In the late teens, Native American modes made their mark on women’s fashion primarily by way of appropriation, thanks to Crawford’s earmarking of adaptable indigenous garments, objects and motifs and his promotion of designs based upon them – in numerous published essay and several exhibitions. Crawford routinely cautioned against direct copying, and in the decades between the wars, even closely observed Native American motifs, styles and cuts generally exhibited at least slight manipulations – often in the form of color switching or the restriction or expansion of a motif through selective borrowing or doubling. Appropriations by Euro-American designers made the look mass-producible and consumer-friendly (i.e., modern take-offs are not in limited supply and therefore don’t need to be costly; they can be modified to suit modern taste). U.S. clothing designers often invoked “the Indian” through fringe and beadwork – trims that emerged as the leading markers of Native American chic.

Articles and illustrations, primarily in *Women’s Wear*, both featured museum specimens and modern appropriations. In his selection of museum pieces for appropriation, Crawford focused on objects from the Arctic, Plains, and Southwest – three distinct (if incredibly broad) regions. Though easily differentiated from one another, all three bore hallmarks of “the Indian” and bespoke the exotic other in the Euro-American mind.

The Eskimo pieces Crawford advocated as models for modern take-offs all are long-sleeved, hooded and simply trimmed with contrasting material. The appropriations loosely
recreated the cut of the indigenous garments and their use of contrasting materials to create striking patterns. The original garments’ hood often were rethought as stand-up collars, and belts were usually added. A parka (AMNH O/531) (Figure 1.16) made of intestine, hide, feathers, fur, sinew and beaks, is labeled simply as “Eskimo” in the AMNH collection catalogue, but the location listed in the cataloging information suggests it was made by the Yupik Eskimos. Cream-colored, with horizontal detailing done in dark feathers and beaks on the torso, it was included in both the 1918 “Exhibition of Primitive Costumes” and the 1919 “Exhibition of Blouses” and illustrated in Women’s Wear articles related to both shows. An article published in 1919, in conjunction with the blouse exhibition, shows the parka alongside a modern appropriation (Figure 2.4) described as a “black satin blouse with touches of silver charmingly adapted to evening wear.” A caption notes that the blouse was inspired by a parka made of “seal bladders, trimmed with bits of feathers and fur worn by the Eskimos.” The pattern of the trim is lifted unchanged, but the feathers and fur have been replaced by silver thread.

Although Crawford sometimes selected fur garments for appropriation, these pieces were not used to suggest twists on modern fur coats, but instead inspired designs for dresses and blouses. A girl’s jacket (AMNH 60.1/4380) (Figure 1.17), which is probably Yupik or Inupiat, was included in the “Exhibition of Primitive Costumes.” Its hem is curved and trimmed in fur. Fur also lines the jacket’s cuffs and hood and accents the shoulders and torso, but the hem appears to be several inches thick and is distinct in color and possibly material. It also bears the suggestion of a pattern. This jacket seems to be loosely related to a modern dress that appeared in Women’s Wear in 1919 (Figure 2.5) under the heading “Modern Costume Developed From

Indian Collection, American Museum of Natural History”31 (part of a series that appeared throughout 1919 and paired museum specimens with modern garments to demonstrate their adaptability). The dress in question was not shown with the girls’ jacket described above, but with another museum specimen of similar style. Moreover, the jacket’s heavy weight is at odds with the lightness of the dress, which has sheer sleeves. Yet the placement of the detailing on the shoulder and neckline links them.

Crawford’s selections from the Plains region of North America – mostly women’s dresses and men’s shirts adorned with geometric motifs – are mainly made of hide, and feature the quill, beadwork, and fringe that Euro-Americans equated with Indianness. Crawford’s focus on women’s wear rather than adaptations for modern male consumers is made most obvious by the fact that the men’s garments he promoted were intended to inspire modern women’s fashions – an instance of gender-bending that went unmentioned.

In an article published simultaneously in The American Museum Journal and Women’s Wear32 Crawford completed the circuit from museum to designer to consumer. Noting that Indian-inspired clothing was now “a commercial fact” Crawford showed “a wide range of costume types” that had drawn upon the collections of the AMNH and were then on sale in named department stores. This essay, Crawford acknowledged, was “frankly a fashion article,” that showcased “practical, modern costumes that have been passed upon, executed, and placed on the market by experts . . . a very important development in the costume industry in America.” He proudly noted that “every single garment in the collection was founded on a specimen in the collection of this museum [the AMNH].” Emphasizing the varied nature not only of the

31 Women’s Wear, March 11, 1919.
garments themselves but also of the appropriative processes that spawned them, Crawford wrote that in some instances “the inspiration is perhaps difficult to trace,” while in others it was “quite obvious.” The idea for a black satin evening gown with silken and bead tassels (Figure 2.6) was said to have had its origin in the buckskin thongs of Dakota Indian costumes; the designer’s specific inspiration probably was a Sioux, Dakota woman’s dress, (AMNH 50/2021) (Figure 2.7) that had appeared in two illustrated essays by Clark Wissler and appears to be the inspiration for another illustration in *Women’s Wear*. The buckskin, completely beaded across the shoulder, chest and back, also features small patches of fringe that occur at regular intervals across the front of the skirt. More fringe hangs from the sleeves and the hem. The modern version is even more heavily fringed – with fringe on the sides and back of the skirt – but whereas the Dakota dress has fringed cuffs, that ornament is replaced by a single row of beading on the modern sleeves, which are sheer. The modern dress is shown belted, as the Dakota dress appeared in George N. Pindar’s 1917 *Guide to the Nature Treasures of New York City* (Figure 2.8) and presumably was displayed in the galleries of the AMNH.

Another 1919 issue of *Women’s Wear* showed an outfit (Figure 2.9) said to draw upon a “Dakota Indian Woman’s Costume” – probably the often-illustrated AMNH specimen described above (AMNH 50/2021). In this case, the modern derivative consists of two pieces, the top similar to a poncho (covering the arms without sleeves) and fringed all around. The undulating band that ornaments the one-piece Dakota original has been straightened in the Euro-

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33 Crawford, “Museum Documents and Modern Costumes,” 287.
34 Clark Wissler, “Decorative Art of the Sioux Indians,” *Bulletin American Museum of Natural History* 18 (1904): Plate XLV; and “Structural Basis to the Decoration of Costumes Among the Plains Indians,” *Anthropological Papers of The American Museum of Natural History* 17, part 3 (1916): Figure 1.
36 *Women’s Wear*, January 22, 1919.
American top and the dress’s geometric motifs have been eliminated. The skirt of the modern outfit has fringe and several rows of beadwork at the hem. It is unclear if a third element in the modern outfit – a fur-trimmed cape – is attached to the shirt or is a stand-alone garment. The ensemble – worn with high heels, by a model with an updo – seems intended as evening dress.

A sash “suggested by Dog Dancer, of Second Degree, of the Arapahoe Indian From Plains Area,” is notable because it is a fashionable accessory, rather than full garment, and thus could be used to add an exotic touch to an outfit in which a Euro-American aesthetic prevailed. The original that inspired it (AMNH 50/660) – made of hide, pigment, feather, quill and hair – had been published in A.L. Kroeber, “Symbolism of the Arapaho Indians” (1900). There the author explained, “The four ages of man or periods of life, called ‘hills’ or ‘divides’ of life, are represented by [the sash’s] four white bands, each with four black spaces at equal intervals upon it.” A photograph of a mannequin wearing this Arapaho sash had appeared beside the Dakota dress in Pinder’s 1917 guide (Figure 2.12). As featured in Women’s Wear, the modern adaptation of this sash becomes a top: a doubled version crosses in front of the model’s body, with ends hanging down on both sides. The colors have been altered from the original, the modern appropriation is paired with pants, pointed-toe flats, a black wrap, and a hat.

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37 Two Sioux, Lakota, Oglala Dresses, (AMNH 50.1/309 and AMNH 50/4358). One (AMNH 50.1/309) is illustrated in “Americana” and is also listed as in Crawford’s room at the AMNH in July 1919. The other (AMNH 50/4358) was part of the blouse exhibition and appeared in accompanying articles in Women’s Wear. The loan to Miss Steinmetz, January 22, 1919 included a similar dress in the form of a Northern Cheyenne Woman’s Coat, AMNH 50.1/532. M.D.C. Crawford, “The Blouse is a National Garment in Every Land,” Women’s Wear, October 4, 1919.
38 Women’s Wear, January 22, 1919.
40 Pindar, 32.
Crawford’s selections inspired by the Southwest incorporate motifs drawn from pottery and basketry rather than clothing, but used in modern garments, as well as on ribbons and trims. (Though some of the California baskets Crawford selected came from northern California, they are generally grouped with Southwest basketry.) His article “Museum Documents and Modern Costumes” (discussed above in relation to Plains selections) included a dress of silk voile (Figure 2.13), its patterning “suggested by that on a piece of pottery in the Museum’s collection from the American Southwest.” The geometric shapes printed on the dress suggest the design on the Zuni pottery jar (AMNH, 50/415) shown at the 1919 exhibition and featured in an article by Spinden in *The American Museum Journal* that included illustrations of pottery and basketry alongside modern appropriations on fabric (Figure 2.14). The modern dress is a long-sleeved, belted wrap, worn by a model wearing a hat and high heels. The pottery design has been simplified and manipulated for the dress; curves that seem suggestive of feathers on the jar have been straightened and appear as repeated E-shapes on the dress. The darker band at the lip and base of the pot is translated into the darker band at the neck, cuffs, and hem of the dress. An embroidered design by David Aaron & Co., based on the same jar, remains much truer to the original, reading as a rollout of the design with only slight alterations. The circular shape has been filled in, the color of an L-shaped part of the design has been changed, and the portion of the design that includes the curves discussed above has been shortened.

The Hoopa Grain Basket (AMNH 50.1/5984) reproduced in Crawford’s December 1919 *House Beautiful* article (Figure 1.13) (and included in the 1919 exhibition) also appeared alongside a section of a modern garment from David Aaron & Co. (Figure 2.15) in which one of

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41 Crawford, “Museum Documents and Modern Costumes,” 296.
the basket’s motifs was “applied in leather over silk” and embellished by “beaded outlines and scroll work to fill in the open spaces.”\textsuperscript{43} The modern design appeared under the heading “How the Culture of the American Indian May Become Our Own.” Rather than a complete garment, we see the appropriation as an embroidered band at the edge of the fabric, emphasizing the concept of trim or finishing a modern piece in “Indian” fashion, rather than deriving the lines of the garment itself from a Native American prototype.

**Appropriations of Indian Designs – Interior Design**

Though Crawford’s campaign promoting adaption of Native American designs to modern ones first took off in the fashion industry, its effects were soon felt in the field of home décor and in the manufacture of household goods. The impact of Native American motifs on interior design was first noted in the *American Museum Journal* in 1916. There, an article by Ester A. Coster described the author’s use of adapted Native American motifs to decorate china for the Euro-American table, and went on to envision similar inspirations taking hold in U.S. needlework, leatherwork, metalwork, upholstery and ceramics. “Too many visitors,” Coster wrote, “look upon the Indian exhibits as curious and interesting without appreciating the possibilities of adapting the motives to the modern crafts.” Even as she warned designers to be selective (“as from all primitive art, it is necessary to choose the best”), she insisted that because of its “simplicity and directness of expression,” Native American art, “even where the execution is crude,” was full of “valuable lessons for present-day designers.”\textsuperscript{44} Only one of the Native American objects Coster drew upon was illustrated in her essay, but research in the AMNH

\textsuperscript{43} Spinden, “Creating a National Art,” 636.
collection database reveals several probable inspirations for her designs – some of which copied Native American motifs almost verbatim, others of which involved manipulation and or abbreviation of the originals. Like Crawford, Coster favored geometric motifs from the Plains and Southwest.

The single illustrated Native American object in Coster’s article is a Hidatsa-Mandan parfleche, (AMNH 50.1/5424) (Figures 2.16, 2.18) – or rawhide carrying case – from the North Dakota Plains, which inspired Coster’s design for a china teapot. Noting that such “painted skin bags provide unusually inspiring motives for modern work,” Coster described the design she had co-opted as one of “straight and curved lines, and in shades of green, orange, black, brown and blue.” In her adaptation (Figure 2.17), Coster wrapped the parfleche motif around the teapot, straightening curved lines and simplifying slightly, but otherwise remaining quite true to the original. Though the caption beneath the teapot notes that the coloring has been subdued, it is difficult to determine, from the black and white photo, the extent of this adjustment. Coster’s design for a china tray (Figure 2.19) – adapted from a Sioux, Dakota painted robe (AMNH 50/2067) (Figure 2.20) that belonged to Sitting Bull – replicated the garment’s color scheme, though the lines of the original design were straightened and its spikes made uniform.

In adapting a Sarcee (Tsuu T’ina) beaded belt design from Alberta, Canada (AMNH 50/5928) (Figure 2.21), to a sugar bowl (Figure 2.22), Coster was more transformative, choosing just one portion of the design – the pattern that decorated the straight parts of the belt – and tailoring it to the shape of the modern object as well as modifying the color scheme somewhat. Although the caption accompanying the sugar bowl acknowledges that many “Indian designs use

\[\text{\underline{45} Ibid., 304.}\]
\[\text{\underline{46} Ibid.}\]
only the straight line,“ several of the objects Coster drew her inspiration from contain circles and stylized figurative motifs that she altered or ignored in favor of bold geometric patterns. For instance, a creamer (Figure 2.23) inspired by a Pawnee shirt (AMNH 50.1/926) (Figure 2.24) features a spiked design taken from the shoulders and sleeves of the shirt, whereas the floral motif that decorates the chest of the shirt – and recalls the flowery ornament that is a staple of traditional Euro-American china patterns – finds no place on Coster’s creamer.

Coster’s piece was groundbreaking because until then Native American motifs were used almost exclusively on Indian Trade Blankets, and their placement in the Euro-American home was largely restricted to dens and children’s playrooms. In adapting indigenous motifs to fine china for the dining room, Coster expanded the accepted areas of usage, an idea first suggested by the Pendleton Blanket advertisement of 1915 (see above). In the late teens, the Indian corner aesthetic continued, although interior designers increasingly advocated the showcasing of single objects within modern interiors – though advocating their display in spaces deemed “masculine.” Magazine articles of the time recommended a rather narrow range of objects for incorporation in modern interiors (mainly Pueblo pottery and basketry, and Navajo rugs and blankets) and delimit the sorts of spaces to which such incorporation would be appropriate.

Incorporation of Native American Objects – Interior Design.

The strategy of incorporation – which folded Native American objects into modern Euro-American life – was restricted, in the late teens, to interior design (incorporation would not figure in U.S. fashion design until the 1920s), and, as noted, was further limited to those domestic spaces deemed masculine. Throughout the teens, even articles that advocate the

47 Ibid.
incorporation of indigenous artifacts suggests that only a narrow range of objects was suited to Euro-American domestic space: Pueblo pottery and baskets, and Navajo rugs and blankets.

Rachel Abbott’s article of 1916, “Made in America by Americans: A Plea For The Recognition of American Art,” opened with a quote from Red Jacket: “Brother, our seats were once large, and yours were small. You have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets.” Commenting upon this quote, Abbott took a different tack, noting,

No plea for a revival of Indian handwork…can be based upon sentimental appeal. It is a purely selfish matter. Not what the Indians are losing, but what we are forfeiting is our real concern. We mourn not so much with Red Jacket because the Indians have scarcely any place left to spread their blankets, as with discriminating artists because the Indians are making so few blankets to spread anywhere.

Although war, in Abbott’s opinion, had “made us take account of our own resources,” including “the artistry and craft-skill of the Indian,” she worried that this “valuable inheritance” was “in imminent danger of disappearing, with “cheap speed and commonplace quality . . . crowding out loving thought and painstaking thoroughness.” Native Americans seemed to Abbott to be under the spell of “ten-cent wares are glittering before eyes not properly prepared against their gaudy show.” As an example, she cited the “square-shouldered Sioux medicine-man, dressed in ‘store shirt’ and magnificent tribal trousers,” unaware of their “incongruity,” because his “sense of values has been blurred by white traders until a cheap machine-made product seems to him more valuable than the splendid handwork which he owns.” Abbott warned that “old traditions are falling away before new commercial ambitions,” and declared, “Indian art is doomed unless a

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49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
sense of its unique and vigorous charm can bring about a renaissance of rug and basket making, of pottery, and of beadwork.”

Abbott advocated a more wide-ranging use of Native American crafts in U.S. homes, writing, “Indian work has somewhat mistakenly been relegated to ‘dens’ and ‘mission interiors’ because of its definite individual character,” and noted that “wherever really good, honest, simple furnishings are used, blankets and baskets may be placed with no loss of harmony.”\(^{51}\)

Nonetheless, the illustrations that accompanied her essay seem to reinforce prevailing notions of Indian art’s limited appropriateness. The first (Figure 2.25) shows a “settlement house” (i.e., community center) living room in which one Navajo rug covers a sofa and another – flanked by plain wooden chairs – is laid on the floor. One wonders if the example of a settlement house living room would appeal to the readers of *House Beautiful* or be equated in their minds with their own, private living spaces.

Abbott described the second space illustrated in her essay (Figure 2.26) as “a corner in the home of the ‘Story Teller Man,’ Mr. A. P. Wedge, a special government instructor to the Indians, whose work brings him into contact with every reservation and every tribe of Americans. In a recent nine weeks’ tour in which he covered nine thousand miles, Mr. Wedge found the key pattern rug and Mescalero Apache basket, two of his many treasures.”\(^{52}\)

The photograph contains a rug and six baskets. The baskets are tucked between two doorways in a nook. The image is cropped, we do not see the corners of the rug closest to the photographer, and aside from the corner holding the baskets we see almost no surrounding wall space. This close viewpoint does not allow the viewer to truly situate herself in the space, or understand its connection to the rest of the house. The photograph shows a corner of Wedge’s home, and

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\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 347.
though we see a closed door in the background and an open door to the left-hand side, it is not clear if they lead to other rooms, making this a space commonly traversed by guests, or if the doors are closet doors, and this space is tucked away and rarely seen by guests. Is it a typical “Indian corner” in the home of a specialist, or something new? Was it a decorated space that readers would see as transferrable to their own homes? Even if it were, no information on how to purchase these objects appears in the article – although advertisements for Navajo blankets had begun to appear in *House Beautiful* (Figure 2.27) in 1915. An ad placed by W.S. Dalton offered:

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GENUINE NAVAJO RUGS Direct from the Indian to you. I am a licensed Indian trader, licensed by the U.S. Government living on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Can buy the best rugs direct from the Indian. I guarantee my rugs to be genuine and can place them in your home at prices which will surprise you. Tell me how many you want and about what sizes. W.S. DALTON, Box 277, Gallup, N.M.53
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This same ad appeared in *House Beautiful* every month from April to November 1915, and frequently thereafter.

Whether or not she actually inspired a shift toward Native American objects in the decorating of Euro-American homes, Abbott did make an important point by connecting Native American art to antiquity and to later Western art – an association that was more commonly noted as the century progressed.54 Abbott compared the weaving of Navajo rugs on upright looms to practices employed in Ancient Greece and Egypt, and suggested that “perhaps the squaw who plaited the basket did it in the spirit of Matilda when she fashioned the Bayeux tapestries, to celebrate the exploits of her mighty husband.” By connecting the art of the New World to that of the Old World, Abbott valorized and legitimized it, even as she framed it as

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somehow familiar – a strategy Crawford employed when he organized exhibitions around particular garments and their worldwide permutations, suggesting similarities people may not otherwise have discerned.

Despite Abbott’s complaint that “Indian work has somewhat mistakenly been relegated to ‘dens’ and ‘mission interiors,’”\(^55\) attitudes did not immediately change. Ruth R. Blodgett, in an article entitled, “Come Away and Play: A Little Real House for Both Grown-ups and Children to Play In,”\(^56\) continued to consign Navajo rugs to playhouses and dens, alongside other things that seemed to have no place in one’s “real” home. Blodgett’s article included two photographs (Figures 2.28 and 2.29) of an expansive playhouse in which exposed rafters suggested rusticity and described the playhouse as “the happy resting place for all the mementoes of foreign travel and college days. All those interesting things, which could find no consistent niche in a more formal house, help create here a cosmopolitan and care-free atmosphere.”\(^57\) The objects Blodgett could not envision in a more staid and adult environment included Navajo blankets, Egyptian patchwork, college banners, athletic trophies, curios and funny toys. This eclectic mix of objects found reflection in the playhouse furniture, which, by intention, had “no unity of design.”\(^58\)

**Inspirations**

Part of what often set Crawford and the articles in *Women’s Wear* apart was his ability to be very specific, as a result of his access to the AMNH collection. He often included the exact objects that inspired new designs, and even his generalizations are more specific than most, as he

\(^{55}\) Abbott, 346.  
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 37.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 37.
cites Southwest, Plains, and other particular cultures, as opposed to “American Indian,” a common catchall term of the time that does not acknowledge specific groups and motifs.

Generalizations were more common than precisely sourced inspiration in the teens. For example, in a 1917 issue of *Vogue*, Ernest des Baillets described cold-weather garments including “a navy blue brushed wool sweater, a brown tweed skirt, puttees, moccasins, gloves, socks, and cap of white wool, and a brilliant sash, copied from one made long ago by the American Indians. Models on this page from Abercrombie and Fitch.”\(^{59}\) Between the black and white image (Figure 2.30) and the generalized attribution, it is impossible to know if this sash was inspired by a specific object, geographic area or by stereotypic notions of “Indian” art. Native American motifs become a common addition to women’s winter sports wear in the twenties and beyond, and as moccasins became increasingly popular among Euro-Americans, their origins in Native American culture were frequently (though not always) remarked in articles and advertisements.

Chapter 3: Crawford, Sloan, White, and Mallinson’s “American Indian Series”

The 1920s saw an increase in the visibility of Native Americans and their production in New York through museum displays, special exhibitions, and increasing visibility at commercial galleries that marketed Native American products. Crawford continued his work (now under the auspices of the Brooklyn Museum) by organizing a series of exhibitions with Stewart Culin and – as in the teens – contributing articles to various publications. It was also in the twenties that painter John Sloan (1868-1940) and patron/gallerista Amelia Elizabeth White (1878-1972) emerged as major forces in the promotion of Native American material culture.

Sloan, who began spending summers in Santa Fe in 1919, encouraged the inclusion of watercolors by Native Americans of the Southwest in the Society of Independent Artists (SIA) exhibitions of the early 1920s. These exhibitions were revolutionary in their display of contemporary (rather than traditional) Native American art – produced in a medium with which Euro-Americans were familiar and presented in conjunction with the work of Euro-American artists. As such, the SIA shows were a revelation to New Yorkers, whose main exposure to Native American art had been through museum displays in which objects were treated as ethnological specimens.

In 1922, the same year the Heye Museum of the American Indian opened (with a group of Native Americans in attendance), White – who, though born in the East, had recently relocated to Santa Fe with her sister Martha – opened the Ishauu Gallery on Madison Avenue – the first New York City gallery devoted to Native American art. Through the gallery, White marketed her personal aesthetic and her particular enthusiasm for Pueblo culture, and encouraged

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Euro-American incorporation of Native American objects, from pottery and rugs to clothing and accessories. Both Sloan and White worked to connect the Euro-American consumer to the Native American artist, expanding on the work Crawford had done in aligning museums and the fashion industry. White also was an advocate for Pueblo rights, and was gratified, in the twenties, to see the formation of several Euro-American organizations created to advocate for Pueblo land rights. Efforts by White and Sloan to change popular conceptions of the Indian were evident in the exhibitions of Native American art with which they were involved. At the same time, Crawford’s campaign continued to produce results in the fashion world. In 1927, for instance, H. R. Mallinson and Company brought out its "American Indian Series" of silk designs.

In the 1920s, as the Pueblos of the Southwest were becoming a popular vacation destination and an important source for Indian Chic, the issue of Pueblo land rights emerged and was quickly connected to larger issues regarding Indian rights and culture. As Euro-Americans came into increasing contact with Indians in the Southwest, they found cultures that, as Wanda Corn writes, “had sustained strong identities unassimilated to Anglo-American ways. The Native American and Hispanic populations gave the region a cultural mix and an exoticism that appealed to tastes for the primitive and the antimodern.”

While many were intrigued by this lack of assimilation, others found it disturbing and sought to squelch “Indian ways.” In the early 1920s, controversy surrounding the alleged immorality promoted by Pueblo dance traditions, and concerns raised anew by the Bursum Bill, which sought to resolve Pueblo land rights in ways many deemed unfair, inspired some Euro-Americans – especially women – to create associations to advocate on behalf of Native Americans.

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3 Corn, 251.
Americans in an effort to preserve these distinct cultures. The Bursum Bill, introduced by New Mexico Senator Holm O. Bursum in May 1921, “was intended to settle longstanding title disputes of ancestral Pueblo lands, but its opponents claimed it would strip the Indians of approximately sixty thousand acres.”4 In the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo the United States had agreed to recognize Pueblo land grants from the Spanish crown, as Mexico had done. Rival claims for some of the same lands had resulted in longstanding confusion, which was compounded by the assumption “that the Pueblo Indians had the right to sell their land, and in some cases Pueblo individuals did so, general without tribal approval.”5 This was affirmed by the 1876 U.S. Supreme Court’s Joseph decision, which “defined the Puebos as ‘civilized Indians’ and therefore not wards of the federal government.” In the ensuing decades, legal sales and illegal settling resulted in a dramatic loss of Pueblo lands to non-Indians, and in 1913, the Joseph decision was reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court Sandoval decision, which ruled “that the Pueblo Indians were entitled to the same federal protections granted other Indians – including protections against their land being sold to or settled by non-Indians.”6 The Bursum Bill was devised as a way of quickly settling these claims, but was widely viewed as favoring white settlers, at the expense of Indians, who at the time did not have the right to vote in New Mexico.7

Meantime, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had begun collecting “sworn affidavits and written statements from about a dozen Hopi Indians and seven white observers,” related to “the

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5 Ibid., 382.
6 Ibid.
7 New Mexico Indians gained the right to vote in 1948.
rumored immorality of Pueblo dances.”⁸ These documents became known as the Secret Dance Files and were considered “too obscene to print or send by mail,” so they were passed by hand and “served as one of the major factors” in BIA Commissioner Charles Burke’s Circular 1665 issued in 1921. Circular 1665 was “an order to all BIA superintendents that threatened to ban Indian dances that involved ‘immoral relations between the sexes’ and ‘any disorderly or plainly excessive performance that promotes superstitious cruelty, licentiousness, idleness, danger to health, and shiftless indifference to family welfare.’”⁹ A supplement to the Circular appeared in 1923, with recommendations from a conference of missionaries.

In response to the Bursum Bill and the growing pressure to repress Native American culture represented by the BIA Circular, groups of Euro-Americans created several associations aimed at advocating on behalf of the Pueblo Indians. In 1921, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, established in 1868, created the Indian Welfare Committee. The Eastern Association on Indian Affairs (EAIA) – an organization formed by a group of Euro-Americans in New York in 1922 – was led by Spinden and counted Crawford among its members. That same year that saw the creation of the Indian Arts Fund and the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs in Santa Fe, and the American Indian Defense Association (AIDA). John Collier Sr. (1884-1968), a friend of Mabel Dodge Sterne Luhan (1879-1962), was among the original directors of the AIDA, whose stated goal was to “secure to the American Indian just treatment from the Government and People of the United States and to promote his welfare.”¹⁰ Members

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⁹ Ibid., 179.
included Mary Austin, Alice Corbin Henderson, Margaret McKittrick, Elizabeth Shipley Sergeant, and Henry Fairfield Osborn.

These groups were largely successful in the fight for Pueblo rights. The Bursum Bill was defeated and replaced by the Pueblo Lands Act of June 1924, which received the approval of the Pueblos and the AIDA. The BIA never implemented the measures against Indian dance threatened in Circular 1665 and its supplement. As Robert Fay Schrader writes, organizations “established primarily in response to the crisis over Pueblo lands, prominently affirmed support for preserving and fostering Indian arts and crafts.” Indeed, many of these organizations and their members would play an active role in the promotion of Indian Chic in the ensuing decades.

**Native American Art & the Society of Independent Artists**

The Society of Independent Artists was launched in 1916 in New York, when Walter Pach, Albert Gleizes, Morton Livingston Schamberg, and Marcel Duchamp began to meet at Walter and Louise Arensberg’s Manhattan apartment. The SIA’s motto was “No Jury, No Prizes,” and, in the spirit of inclusiveness, its founders agreed that any artist who paid an initiation fee and annual dues would be given space at SIA exhibitions (where, so as not to privilege one work over another, works were to be hung alphabetically by artist’s name). Pach was involved in every aspect of the SIA. Sloan, who joined the SIA shortly after its founding, was elected its president in 1918, an office he held until 1944.

Around the same time the SIA was launched, Elizabeth Willis DeHuff (1886-1983) founded an art program at the Santa Fe Indian Day School. DeHuff, who had studied at Barnard

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College, in New York City, moved to Santa Fe with her husband John, who after five years at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania was made superintendent of the Santa Fe Indian School in 1918. DeHuff invited young men from the school to paint at her house in the afternoons. They included Fred Kabotie/Naqavo’y ma (c. 1900-1986) and Otis Polelonema (1902-1981), both Hopi, and Velino Shije Herrera/Ma-Pe-Wi (1902-1973) of Zia Pueblo. Edgar Lee Hewett (1865-1958), the Museum of New Mexico’s first director, arranged an exhibition of paintings by DeHuff’s protégés in an “alcove” of that museum in 1919. Mabel Dodge Luhan purchased every work in the show, and from 1920-1924, Hewett provided jobs, studio space and materials to the group of native artists, which by that time included Alfonso Roybal/Awa Tsireh (1898-1955), a Tewa from San Ildefonso.

Though not realized until 1920, the idea of exhibiting Indian watercolors in New York under the auspices of the SIA can be traced to 1918, when Pach – a founding member – pitched it to Edward Robinson, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Pach had become interested in Native American art when he traveled from New York to Santa Fe that year, and became acquainted with the anthropologist/archaeologist Hewett and his circle, which included the painter Robert Henri (1856-1929). (Henri, who had known Sloan since the early 1890s, introduced him to Hewett, who in turn invited Sloan to Santa Fe.)

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14 Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting*, 83.
15 Ibid.
16 Henri met Hewett in 1914 in San Diego, where Hewitt was working on the Panama Pacific Exposition and at Hewett’s invitation, had spent the summers of 1916 and 1917 in Santa Fe. Patricia Janis Broder, *The American West: The Modern Vision* (Boston: Little Brown, 1984), 38.
17 Ibid. 34.
The exhibition of Native American art that Pach proposed to Robinson was declined in 1918, in part “because all our space for temporary exhibitions is taken up for the season,” but perhaps more significantly because the Metropolitan Museum had “entered into an agreement with the American Museum of Natural History some years ago that everything relating to the art of the American Indians we would leave to them.”\(^{18}\) Though there seems to have been no formal (i.e., written) agreement between the Metropolitan Museum and the AMNH, there certainly was an informal, mutual understanding regarding the scope of what each museum would collect and exhibit.\(^{19}\) Although Pach believed that an exhibition of Native American art would lose its point at the AMNH, where works would be viewed as ethnographic objects,\(^{20}\) Robinson felt such work was beyond the scope of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.\(^{21}\) Although Brody claims that it was John Sloan’s exposure to Luhan’s collection that planted the idea for the SIA’s exhibition of Native American works,\(^{22}\) these letters show that the idea was in the air long before Sloan saw the watercolors Luhan owned. Still, his exposure to her collection may have changed the conception of the SIA show – as is suggested by Pach’s statement in 1920 that the exhibition would place “more emphasis on the work of to-day than had been planned.”\(^{23}\) After seeing

\(^{19}\) Conversation and email correspondence with Jim Moske, Managing Archivist, Office of the Senior Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 9 and 10, 2009.
\(^{21}\) In a 1932 letter from Dolly Sloan to Amelia Elizabeth White, related to the dispersal of the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts’ extensive collection of Native American Art (which will be discussed in Chapter 4), Sloan noted that this agreement was expanded at some point to include the Museum of the American Indian. Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, October 27, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
\(^{22}\) Brody, 154.
Luhan’s contemporary watercolors, Sloan and Pach seem to have decided to focus on this unfamiliar body of work rather than on historic objects of the sort found in museums.

Sloan made his first trip to New Mexico in 1919, and after 1920 – when he and his wife Dolly purchased a home there – he routinely spent nearly four months a year in Santa Fe. Sloan biographer John Loughery suggests that Hewett made sure the artist was well set up, because he wanted to encourage others to spend time in Santa Fe.\footnote{John Loughery, \textit{John Sloan: Painter and Rebel} (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 256.} Sloan was given studio space at the Museum of Fine Arts, whereas Native American artists were assigned space in the Museum of New Mexico’s ethnology division.\footnote{Brody, \textit{Pueblo Indian Painting}, 109.} Thus, even as efforts were made to change the general public’s conception of Native American art from ethnological object to fine art, certain divisions continued.

After his first trip to Santa Fe, Sloan wrote to Hewett that he had been “spreading your ideas of the beauty of the Indian culture,” and had “come near to convincing [some] that the cultural center of these USA, is in certain Indian pueblos upon and beneath the ground in New Mexico & Arizona.” In the same letter, Sloan mentioned the possibility of exhibiting Pueblo watercolors at the upcoming SIA show, and requested Hewett’s assistance in sending “a well selected group of works by Indian Artists,” expressing a preference for watercolors, since these, he felt were the “part of the art work of the American Indians which is least known.”\footnote{John Sloan to Edgar Hewett, November 20, 1919. Edgar L. Hewett Collection (ELH), Museum of New Mexico \textit{Fra Angelico} Chavez History Library, Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Box 3, Folder 8.}

A month later, Hewett made plans to visit New York and help Sloan bring about an exhibition.\footnote{Edgar Hewett to Robert Henri, December 13, 1919. ELH, Box 8, Folder 9.} Sloan also had contacted Pach, who wrote to Hewett of his excitement about the
potential exhibition and noted that he had “other projects in mind . . . on a larger scale than is possible at the Independents.” Pach mentioned his forthcoming article on Indian art in *The Dial*, which he hoped would “be judged with some indulgence, as I have had to cope with an almost complete lack to technical knowledge, and have tried to replace it with an expression of enthusiasm for the results achieved in the works.”

After meeting with Sloan and Henri to plan the SIA show, Hewett wrote to Pach in acknowledgement of Pach’s “encouragement of the plan from the beginning.” Having read Pach’s article in *The Dial*, Hewitt pronounced it “just what should be told to the people of this country over and over until the fact is thoroughly into their consciousness that we have a priceless inheritance here of genuinely American culture which we have been blindly destroying instead of fostering.”

The SIA show opened March 11, 1920, at the Waldorf Astoria. The catalogue did not include a list of the Native American watercolors exhibited – which came from the Santa Fe collections of Hewitt, Luhan, and the artist Sheldon Parsons (1866-1943) – but noted that “the names of the artists and the titles of the works will be found attached to the pictures sent to the exhibition.” Two works were reproduced in both the catalogue and Pach’s second article in *The Dial*: Fred Kabotie’s *NA-KA-VO-MA: Hopi Snake Dance*, (figure 3.1) and a picture called *Corn Dance*, attributed simply to a “Pueblo Indian, New Mexico” (figure 3.2). In addition to Kabotie, Crescencio Martinez/Ta-e (1879-1918), Arva Soday and Velino Shije had works in the

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28 Walter Pach to Edgar Hewett, December 22, 1919. ELH, Box 3, Folder 8.
show, but only five of the twenty-odd works on view there can be definitively identified. In addition to *NA-KA-VO-MA* and *Corn Dance*, they included Shije’s *The Legends of the Deer* (figure 3.3), Martinez’s *The Eagle Dancer* (figure 3.4) and *The Procession* by Martinez’s nephew Alfonso Roybal/Awa Tsireh (1898-1955) (figure 3.5).  

Sloan reported to Hewett that “the Indian Drawings are making a great hit – it is interesting to note their attractiveness to both the common public and the connoisseur. Will mail you catalogue as soon as we can get some – the crowd last night exhausted all the printer sent us on first delivery…” An initial review in *The New York Times* remarked that “the Red Men have broken into this display of art, and the work done by the young Indians of New Mexico and Arizona forms one of the most interesting entries of the exhibition.” Two days later a second *Times* review called the Native American works “much more than an entertaining novelty,” remarking the “revelation of a type of art that cannot long endure under existing conditions, and that should be as fully as possible represented in our collections.” The writer for the *Times* cited Pach’s comparison of the watercolors to Egyptian painting in *The Dial*, but wrote that the work on view “more resembles the paintings on Greek Vases in the fifth century, when the vase painter was recording in a vivid and significant idiom lively scenes from contemporary life.”

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31 Edgar L. Hewett to John Sloan, February 12, 1920. Hewett Collection, Box 3, Folder 11. A second letter sent the same day to Sloan noted that the paintings “are properly labeled and with the artist’s name,” but the letter did not mention titles. There is nothing related to the Native American watercolors in the correspondence files or business ledgers in the John Sloan Papers, nor are there photographs of the Society of Independent Artists shows from 1920-22. SP-MP[?] to John Sloan, February 12, 1920. ELH, Box 3, Folder 11. Email correspondence with Heather Campbell Coyle, Curator of American Art, Delaware Art Museum, November 18, 2009 and research by the author in the Sloan Papers, August 2011.


33 John Sloan to Edgar Hewett, March 12, 1920. ELH, Box 3, Folder 11.


Crawford reviewed the SIA exhibition for *Women’s Wear*, noting that its egalitarian exhibition strategy meant that “the few interesting pieces are overshadowed by the horror around them.” “Curiously enough,” Crawford continued, “the work of the finest quality has been done by so-called primitive people. The Pueblo Indian children have contributed a collection of water colors of fine quality.” Though the youngest of the Pueblo artists included were eighteen at the time, they were often described as “children”; the infantilizing of the “primitive” was an age-old Western practice.\(^{36}\)

After pointing out that even in watercolor, “a medium unknown to their ancestors,” the Southwestern artists “have kept the same spirit which we find in the beautiful designs on their pottery, in the old painting on skins, and in their quill and bead work,” Crawford evinced pleasure that “this sense of design is still alive in the Indian children, after all the changes which have come into their lives.” He concluded, “Artists in New York would profit by studying the simplicity in rendering, which expresses the spirit of this great race.”\(^{37}\)

The SIA show was the Society’s fourth annual exhibition, and the first to make a profit; attendance doubled and membership in the SIA grew by a fourth in 1920,\(^{38}\) so it is not surprising that the next year’s show included another group of Southwestern Native American watercolors. What is surprising is the dearth of surviving documentation on the 1921 show, which had been shaped, according to its catalogue, by the “great interest shown by the artists, the public and the critics in this important and little-known phase of American art.”\(^{39}\) No reproductions of works


\(^{38}\) Loughery, *John Sloan*, 256.

\(^{39}\) Society of Independent Artists, foreword to *Fifth Annual Exhibition: No Jury, No Prizes* (New York: The Society, 1921), np.
by Native American artists appear in the 1921 catalogue, nor are individual artists and their works listed. Sloan’s description of the installation (sent to Hewett) does, however, indicate that contemporary works on paper were “grouped…around a hide painting from one of the Missions loaned us by the Brooklyn Museum.”\textsuperscript{40} The loaned work, which Sloan described as a “hide painting,” may have been the early-20\textsuperscript{th}-century Arapaho or Pueblo, Hopi-Tewa, \textit{Buffalo Robe} that had been collected on a 1907 expedition (Brooklyn Museum of Art, 07.467.8224) (figure 3.6). Sloan’s account suggests a conceptual shift that led to a functional piece’s display as “art” rather than artifact. Hung on a wall and surrounded by watercolors, the robe – with its geometric box and border design rendered on hide – would have provided a contrast to the organic forms of the works on paper.

None of the reviews in the \textit{New York Times} mentioned the show’s Native American watercolors or buffalo robe, but a piece in \textit{Outlook} noted, “This year it was still another group of paintings by Pueblo Indians which possessed the power to lift themselves above the disturbing tumult of commonplace disorder.”\textsuperscript{41} Critics routinely complained about the way the SIA shows were hung alphabetically, by artist’s name, irrespective of subject matter or quality. Apparently the \textit{Outlook}’s writer considered the arrangement of the Pueblo watercolors, which were hung together as a group, a happy departure from the SIA norm.

Noting, in a letter to Hewett, that “visitors are utterly charmed” by the Native American works, Sloan floated the idea of offering them for sale. He also mentioned Marsden Hartley’s enthusiasm for them,\textsuperscript{42} news that, Hewett wrote back, “gives me great joy. It helps to establish the idea that the people of our native American race are not to be looked upon merely as

\textsuperscript{40} John Sloan to Edgar L. Hewett, undated letter and two Society of Independent Artist show postcards. Hewett’s reply is dated March, 12, 1921. ELH, Box 4, Folder 3.
\textsuperscript{41} “Independent Art,” \textit{Outlook}, March 16, 1921, 412.
\textsuperscript{42} Undated letter John Sloan to Edgar Hewett, [March 1921]. ELH, Box 4, Folder 3.
Government paupers, nor even as ethnological specimens.” As to selling the works, Hewett was enthusiastic, and recommended that Sloan take orders, being sure to “kindly explain to purchasers that the Indian artists rarely make exact duplicates of anything, and this, I think we wish to encourage.” Soon Hewett was writing, “We shall be glad to have the Indian boys go on with their painting, and that we will take all of their work as heretofore…whatever we do not want to keep ourselves we will find a ready sale for.” There is no record in Sloan’s or Hewett’s papers of actual sales, but Amelia Elizabeth White wrote to Hewett in February 1922 of her happiness that “you can furnish me with the Indian paintings.” White added that “Miss Sergeant had already ordered some from Alfonso which she is going to turn over to my shop,” suggesting that works were put on sale in New York in the early 1920s.

In advance of the 1922 SIA show, Sloan again contacted Hewett, writing that the “works of these boys has become an important feature of our Exhibition and we hope that you can let us have a group of them.” He also requested “a bit of writing from you to be used in the catalogue or in our publicity – you have never let us have your own views about these beautiful works.” In a second letter, written the same day, Sloan responded to a request from Hewett for a “’straight from the shoulder’ criticism of the Art Museum of Santa Fe,” claiming that he found nothing to criticize. Instead, Sloan wrote, “The single instance of your encouragement and help to the young Indian painters and the astonishing results you are getting in their watercolor

43 Edgar Hewett to John Sloan, March 12, 1921. ELH, Box 4, Folder 3.
44 Ibid.
45 Edgar Hewett to Lansing B. Bloom, March 30, 1921. ELH, Box 17, Folder 8.
46 A.E. White to Edgar Hewett, February 27, 1922. ELH, Box 4, Folder 6.
47 John Sloan to Edgar Hewett, January 2, 1922. ELH, Box 4, Folder 6.
drawings (the only 100 percent American Art produced in this country) – is justification enough in itself.”

Hewett had soon chosen 21 watercolors for the 1922 show: “the works of three artists that you already know and one new one, Tonita Pena [Quah Ah (1893-1949)]. The drawings are all work of the past year, none of them having been in your previous exhibitions. I think they show some advancement.” Only two watercolors appeared in the catalogue, *Butterfly Dance* by Kabotie (figure 3.7) and Awa Tsireh’s *Green Corn Ceremony* (figure 3.8). By this time, the inclusion of Native American watercolors in the SIA’s shows apparently was taken for granted; none of the reviews mentioned them, though an article by E. H. Cahill for *International Studio* was accompanied by four illustrated works when reprinted in *El Palacio* (figures 3.9 and 3.10).

In March 1922, Hewett published an article on “Native American Artists” in *Art and Archaeology* that focused on Alfonso Roybal/Awa Tsireh, Fred Kabotie and Velino Shije/Ma-Pe-Wi and acknowledged their art’s promotion by the SIA in three successive shows, one of which was ongoing at the time. “Those who read this article,” Hewett wrote, “and who are so situated as to make it possible, should see the original water-colors in the exhibition during the

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48 Ibid.
49 Edgar Hewett to John Sloan, January 10, 1922. ELH, Box 4, Folder 6. There is no list is attached to the letter, but an undated, untitled list filed later in the same folder, records 21 works by the artists Sloan knew: Fred Kabotie (7 works), Velino Shije (5 works), Awa-Tsireh (7 works) and the “new one” Pena (2 works). Kabotie’s *Butterfly Dance* and Awa Tsireh’s *Green Corn Ceremony* were reproduced in the SIA catalogue and appear on this list.
50 Although the labels have been confused, the article included Awa Tsireh’s *Green Corn Ceremony* (reproduced in the SIA catalogue) and *Women’s Wheel Dance*, and two works by Kabotie: *New Year Fructification Ceremony* and *Hopi Mask Dance*. What exactly was shown beyond the two works published in the catalogue Tsireh’s *Green Corn Ceremony* and *Butterfly Dance* by Kabotie remains unknown. E.H. Cahill, “America has its ‘Primitives:’ Aboriginal Water Colorists of New Mexico make Faithful Record of their Race,” *El Palacio* 12, no. 10 (May 15, 1922): 127-131.
months of February and March.” Hewett’s article was accompanied by eleven illustrations (these give a more complete picture of the kind of works exhibited by the SIA) (figures 3.11-3.21), and Marsden Hartley’s essay, “The Scientific Esthetic of the Redman,” appeared in the same issue.

Hartley’s essay appeared in two parts. The first explored “The Great Corn Ceremony at Santo Domingo,” while the second, published in the September issue, focused on “The Fiesta of San Geronimo at Taos.” Hartley had traveled to New Mexico in June 1918 and attended Pueblo ceremonies, which greatly impressed him. He found the Great Corn Ceremony a “sublime spectacle of pagan splendor” that, he was “certain can not be excelled by any other of the so-called strange races in existence.” Hartley described participants in the ceremony as attired in “skirts of their own weaving, ornamented with red and black and green symbolic patterns in embroidery, finished with long fringes that dangle at the side,” while “the rest of the body was bare to the sun, ornamented with chains of turquoise, chains of silver, superb orange shells inlaid with brilliant turquoises.” His description of The Fiesta of San Geronimo at Taos, focused on the election of the new governor, “by means of the footrace, an ancient institution prevailing at least in this tribe.” Again, Hartley paid close attention to the “twenty or more” participants, whose “strong muscular bodies” were “superbly painted in earth hues” with small eagle feathers affixed to their thighs, arms and breasts and eagle down sprinkled on their heads.

54 Ibid.
to give them speed.\textsuperscript{55} In addition to his two-part essay in \textit{Art and Archaeology}, he described his impressions of the Native American Southwest in \textit{The Dial} and \textit{El Palacio}.\textsuperscript{56} Hartley’s descriptions of these ceremonies and reference to ancient political traditions can be seen as part of the larger campaign to defend and preserve Pueblo culture in the face of the Bursum Bill and BIA threat.

Stuart Davis was another American Modernist artist who was intrigued by Native American watercolors at the SIA. In a notebook entry of April 1922, Davis wrote that when one compared Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Gris, Leger, and Brancusi “with the spontaneous creation of the North American Indian” the European artists seemed “a mixed up crew.” Davis wrote that in the process of looking at “Indian art, it never occurs to one to ask ‘Who did this?’” because the things were not done by ‘artists’ but by men. Each individual had a rounded life. He didn’t sit in a studio all day making ‘art,’ he did everything, including being lazy. The difficulty today is that to take up any profession requires all of one’s energies, a lop-sided race. To go back to the land is no answer because there again you have a specialized human out of touch with the rest of the world. With the ‘savage’ everyone was equal in the sense that they all shared the activities of the community and each one got his portion.\textsuperscript{57}

The date of the entry and the inclusion of two works by Davis in the SIA exhibition\textsuperscript{58} suggest that he saw the Pueblo Watercolors at the Society of Independent Artists show, which ran from

\textsuperscript{57} Stuart Davis Papers, 1911-1966. Notebook 1920-22, reel 3842, frame 75. AAA.
March 11 to April 2, 1922. Shortly thereafter, at the invitation of John Sloan, Davis traveled to
Santa Fe, where he visited pueblos and attended several dances that he found “marvelous.”

In the 1923 SIA show, the work of contemporary Mexican artists (including David Alfaro
Siqueiros, Jose Clemente Orozco and Rufino Tamayo) seems to have taken the place of the
Pueblo watercolors. The decision to include Mexican artists and exclude Americans of the
Southwest may have been due in part to Hewett’s reduced access to Southwestern watercolors.
By 1923, Roybal and Shije visited the Santa Fe Indian School less often, and another onetime
regular, Otis Polelonema, had moved back to Hopi. The SIA may have also hoped to recreate
the buzz of the new that surrounded the 1920 show by featuring unfamiliar artists. A review in
the New York Times noted that the exhibition of 1923 gave the “New York public a chance to
taste the quality of Mexican art of today.”

The SIA shows of 1920-22 not only brought contemporary Native American art to New
York, but also through the subject matter of the watercolors – which focused on dances and
ceremonies – introduced modern urbanites to the ceremonial lives of the Pueblos at the very
moment they came under threat from the BIA. They also established Sloan’s primacy as a
promoter of Southwestern culture and arts production in New York.

**George Gustav Heye and his Museum**

Around the same time that Sloan, Pach and Hewett were organizing the inclusion of
Pueblo watercolors in the SIA exhibitions, George Gustav Heye (1874–1957) was working to

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59 Postcard from Stuart Davis to Myron Lechay, June 12, 1923. James Lechay papers. AAA,
digital ID: 6371.
60 Marlor, 16.
61 Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting*, 120, 129.
realize his own museum devoted to the American Indian. Heye had made his first purchase of a Native American object – a Navajo hide shirt – in Arizona in 1897. A few years later, in 1904, Heye set up the first iteration of his museum in a room at his home at 667 Madison Avenue in New York City. By 1906, he had accumulated more than 10,000 objects, and in September of that year rented rooms for displaying a selection of his holdings in the Knabe building, at Fifth Avenue and 39th Street. In 1908, Heye moved his collection to a building on 33rd Street, and the following year, he loaned materials from his collection to the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania for a period of five years. Eventually his collection found a permanent home in The Museum of the American Indian, at 155th Street and Broadway, the cornerstone of which was laid in November of 1916.63

Heye’s museum opened on November 15, 1922, and its annual report noted that opening day attendance, “in spite of an extremely hard rain storm,” was more than 600 people in the 3 hours it was open (3-6 p.m.).64 According to the New York Times, a “delegation of ten Indians from different tribes” turned up at the opening reception “as a surprise to those in charge. They had journeyed to convey their appreciation for what was being done to preserve records of their race. The unexpected guests came in full native costume, and included Red Eagle, Sheet Lightning, Canoe, White Swan and her daughter Chickadee.”65

The Heye collection occupied three museum floors: the first floor contained objects from the United States and Alaska; the second, “objects of remarkable value, historically”66 and objects from Canada; and the third, Meso- and South American objects. An article in El Palacio

63 “Notes for Museum Archives,” National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center (NMAI), MAI Box 4, Folder 8, np.
64 Annual Report For the Period from April 1, 1922 to April 1, 1923. NMAIA, MAI Box 404, Folder 2.
described “a novel system of installation, introduced for the first time in the United States,”
featuring “drawers which the visitor may pull out,” their contents (“objects . . . arranged
according to the general scheme followed in the visible installation”) on view beneath protective
glass. In addition to the objects in the galleries and the glass-topped drawers, “students and the
research investigators also have access to vast collections in storage. There is not a bit of bone or
potsherd in the whole institution, in fact, which cannot be instantly found for purposes of
comparison and research.”

A series of gallery photographs taken by N.L. Stebbins (1847-1922) in December 1921
illustrate the installation strategy. A case in the west hall of the first floor (figure 3.22) held a
selection of clothing (shirts and jackets for children as well as adults), and shelves of boxes, bags
and bowls. The case was topped by a three-person kayak (since deaccessioned).

A photograph of the west hall on the third floor (figure 3.23) shows the walls lined with glass cases full of
objects, and, at the room’s center, glass cases set atop thirty-six drawers, one of which is open
to demonstrate the accessibility of objects contained within. The west hall of the second floor
(figures 3.24-3.27) was devoted to the Ethnology of California, the Northwest and the Desert
Southwest, and displayed, among other objects, a Tolowa storage basket (012809.000), a Pomo
reed boat (061281.000), and a large Hupa basket (082943.000).

There are no mannequins

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67 Ibid., 137.
68 N.L. Stebbins, First Floor, west hall. December 1921. National Museum of the American
Indian (NMAI), Photographic Collections, P02981.
69 N.L. Stebbins, Third Floor, west hall, December 1921. NMAI, Photographic Collections,
P02969.
70 N.L. Stebbins, Second Floor, west hall, Ethnology of California, the Northwest and the Desert
Southwest, December 1921. NMAI, Photographic Collections, P02970.
71 N.L. Stebbins, Second Floor, west hall, Ethnology of California, the Northwest and the Desert
Southwest, December 1921. NMAI, Photographic Collections, P02972.
visible in early photographs, suggesting that Heye considered the objects’ appearances more important than their functional contextualization.

According to museum documents, Heye’s primary aim was “to afford serious students at the undergraduate and graduate levels every facility for research.”\textsuperscript{72} \textit{El Palacio} reported that, like the AMNH and Brooklyn Museum, the Heye collection was interested in connecting with designers and manufactures. Heye was quoted as saying that “the objects which are assembled here are of great practical value aside from the historical and archeological interest attaching to them.” This “value,” he added, was recognized “by many manufacturers of textiles, who have been sending their designers here before the Museum was officially open, and they inform us that they have found the inspiration for many new designs, which were adapted from what was seen here.” In addition to design inspiration, Heye believed “the textile industry will find data to guide it in dyeing operations, as many of the objects here, centuries old, were dyed with vegetable colors which, to all appearances, are as fresh as they were when first applied.”\textsuperscript{73}

Though Heye did not make as much of an effort or contribution as Crawford did, his interest in acquainting textile manufacturers and designers with his collection is evidenced by his founding of a research facility in the Bronx in 1926, located on Bruckner Boulevard between Middletown Road and Jarvis Avenue (figures 3.28 and 3.29). An article in the \textit{New York Times} reported that among the objects moved from the museum to its research branch were “rare painted buffalo robes, poison arrows (still considered dangerous enough to have made necessary the wrapping of their points), jewels of strange and oddly imaginative settings, prehistoric objects, rocks, pipes, cradles, dresses, blow guns, headgear, masks, weapons, utensils,


\textsuperscript{73} “Museum of the American Indian,” \textit{El Palacio}, 138-139.
implements, idols, totem poles, canoes.” The Bronx annex also included concrete replicas of Indian dwellings, several totem poles, and plantings inspired by Native American gardens (figures 3.30 and 3.31). Its entrance featured two Kwakwaka’waka (Kwakiutl) house posts and a lintel from Fort Rupert, British Columbia (NMAI 7/5487), so even people who did not venture inside the annex were exposed to a glimpse of Native American culture.

Crawford’s Ongoing Campaign

Crawford – now in partnership with the Brooklyn Museum’s curator of ethnology, Stewart Culin – continued to foster design industry interest in Native American production through exhibitions and publications. The “History of the Blouse” exhibition, organized under the auspices of Women’s Wear and the Brooklyn Museum, was held at the headquarters of the United Waist League of America (a garment manufacturers’ organization) in February 1922. The New York Times noted that more than 200 garments were on display, and intended “to show the designers of the league authentic traditional sources of design.” In an article for Women’s Wear, Crawford described the exhibition as “the first time that any industrial association ever seriously cooperated with the museum to show, not only the past history of a special industry, but its future possibilities as well, and begins the practical development of a rich, ever fertile and conveniently located source of inspiration.” In a subsequent article, Crawford noted that after

75 NMAI, Photographic Collections, N21654, N22605.
the exhibition closed the blouses remained “always accessible to the designer and can be seen and studied in the textile study rooms which Mr. Culin has established for this purpose.”

The “History of Cotton,” a traveling exhibition that showcased fabrics from around the world, also was organized by the Brooklyn Museum and the design department of Women’s Wear. After opening at R. H. Macy & Co. in New York, it moved on to department stores in Rochester, Sioux City, and Dallas. Dolls dressed in cotton clothing, a focal point of the display, were illustrated in Women’s Wear (figure 3.32); among them was a figure with waist-length braids, dressed as a “Hopi Indian” in a blanket and skirt, both ornamented with geometric patterns. In an article on the show (figure 3.33), Crawford expressed regret that they had “not been able to send this exhibition to all of the different institutions” that expressed interest in it, by September 1922 the show’s itinerary was expanded to include department stores in Waco, Chicago, Denver, Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, and Boston.

In the mid-twenties another such exhibition, “Cotton: Ancient and Modern” (which included fabric from Arizona and a poster illustrating “Columbus presented with Cotton Yarn by first Natives he met in the New World”), was organized by the Women’s Wear design department, and the Brooklyn Museum (in association with the Eastern Association of Indian Affairs, Women’s Wear and the Daily News Record) sponsored two booths at the National

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80 “Dolls Depicting The Development of Cotton Costumes as presented in History of Cotton Exhibition,” Women’s Wear, February 14, 1922.
81 Crawford, “Store Patrons.”
Merchandise Buyers Fair – one dedicated to cotton and the other to art of the American Indian. The latter booth was titled “An Exhibition of the Decorative Art of the American Indian,” and described by Crawford as a “resume of the American Indian.” In an article for Women’s Wear, Crawford noted that the exhibition would be “one of the most carefully organized exhibitions of this character ever shown outside of a museum,” and would have its own catalogue. There, Crawford wrote of his wish to call “attention to this modest outline of the native arts of the Americans to the end that your respect for their craftsmanship may increase and in the hope that in their vigorous simplicity you may find fresh inspiration.” Though he proclaimed that “we have conquered and largely disinherited the Indians, we are the masters of their material life through superior weapons and through the weight of social organization,” Crawford noted, “We are not his equal in fundamental craft aesthetics,” and asked, “Can we not learn as well as conquer?”

Objects from the Zuni and Navajo dominated the American Indian booth. Zuni items on the checklist include two shields, two masks, and two kachinas. Brooklyn’s Zuni collection had been assembled by Culin between 1903 and 1907; he bought most of the masks and kachinas from Andrew Vanderwagen, “a missionary turned trader” who had commissioned them. In addition to five blankets from Brooklyn’s collection, Culin lent several blankets from his own collection – Navajo, Hopi and Zuni – which were hung on the back wall, laid out on tables and

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arranged on the floor. Three large baskets stood on pedestals, while a fourth was placed on a rug in the center of the booth. Each of the Zuni masks and dolls on view occupied its own pedestal.\textsuperscript{88} An installation photograph of the booth (figure 3.34) reveals some sixteen pots (not mentioned on the checklist) to which Crawford referred simply as “prehistoric pottery of the Southwest.”\textsuperscript{89} In a letter to Culin, Crawford had requested “one or two specimens of Alaskan carving and possibly something from the Plains Indians?” He explained that he had mentioned these groups in an editorial and feared that “some jack-ass is going to walk up to the booth and say ‘Where are them there Alaskan and Plains Indians things?’”\textsuperscript{90} Neither Alaskan nor Plains objects, however, appear in the photograph or on the exhibition’s checklists.

The booth also included “a small but select collection of the modern work of the Indian craftsmen,”\textsuperscript{91} provided by the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs (EAIA). In his catalogue for the American Indian booth, Crawford wrote that the modern objects on view were meant to “call

\textsuperscript{88} Though catalogue numbers were not included in the checklist, some of the objects can be identified while comparable objects collected by Culin for the Museum can be suggested for others. Images of Brooklyn’s Zuni masks are difficult to find, a detail of an image of the Southwestern Indian Hall, c. 1910, reproduced in full in the introduction reveals the different types of masks on view at that time. A photograph of a single mask in the Brooklyn Museum’s collection today (Brooklyn Museum 04.196), gives a more detailed sense of these masks, though it is clear from the installation photograph that the two on display in 1925 did not have anything attached to the side of the mask. Similarly, two Zuni kachina dolls, collected by Culin suggest the types of figures seen at the exhibition (Brooklyn Museum 03.325.4648, 03.325.4653). Though not visible in the installation photograph, Ira Jacknis identified one of the Zuni shields, which was commissioned by Culin as a pair from Jasha-a, in 1903 (Brooklyn Museum 03.325.3504, 03.325.3505). The checklist included three Plains or Micmac chairs, which are visible in the photograph and may have included one with a multicolored star design (Brooklyn Museum, 09.867a-b). The checklist noted the inclusion of a Pomo, boat-shaped basket (probably Brooklyn Museum, 11.694.9083), seen on the floor in the center of the booth and several large storage baskets, arranged on pedestals possibly including one by Jenny Hughes (Brooklyn Museum 07.467.8305).

\textsuperscript{89} Crawford, “…Women’s Wear…Two Booths.”

\textsuperscript{90} M.D.C. Crawford to Stewart Culin, February 5, 1925. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General correspondence [1.4.082] (2/1925).

\textsuperscript{91} M.D.C. Crawford to J. H. Nixon of the National Merchandise Buyers Fair, February 2, 1925. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General correspondence [1.4.082] (2/1925).
attention of the discriminating merchants of America to the fact that such fine specimens of Indian workmanship may still be obtained,” and expressed his hope that “a few far-visioned and broadminded men may undertake the establishment in their concerns of departments of Indian Art, as largely for the satisfaction of their own clients as in the spirit of kindness and justice to the last great living craftsmen in America.” Crawford quoted Amelia Elizabeth White, secretary of the EAIA, as saying, “As the situation now is, these splendid workmen are being exploited for a transient tourist trade.” Like Crawford, White was hopeful that the exhibition would “encourage the discriminating merchant to investigate a subject that we feel both from its sentimental and practical standpoint will be as much in his interest as in that of the Indian.”

Gallery Shows of Native American Art

In addition to promoting his own exhibitions, Crawford regularly drew attention to gallery exhibitions of Native American art in the pages of Women’s Wear. An exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in spring 1922, organized under the auspices of the Museum of Santa Fe, included beaded shirts, buffalo-skin pendants, and a selection of Southwest blankets from Culin’s collection. Louis H. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railroad, loaned an “18-foot Buffalo-hide tepee.” The exhibition also featured jewelry, dolls, beadwork, blankets, and pottery for sale; these had been gathered by Hewett, to be sold “for the benefit of the Indians, returns going to the individual workers.” Crawford encouraged readers to take advantage of

92 Crawford, An Exhibition of the Decorative Art of the American Indian.
93 Crawford, “…Women’s Wear…Two Booths.”
94 M.D.C. Crawford, “To Exhibit Indian Portraits and Landscapes,” Women’s Wear, March 7, 1922.
“the opportunity to buy authentic and distinguished examples of the arts that are of increasing interest.”

The catalogue of the Anderson Galleries show – which *The New York Times* described as “an exhibition of more than usual importance” – included a note by Culin on the Pueblo Indians and one on the Blackfeet by anthropologist George Bird Grinnell (1849-1938). In addition to Native American works, the exhibition featured paintings by W. Langdon Kihn (1898-1959), a Brooklyn-born artist and pupil of Winold Reiss. Alongside landscapes, Kihn showed portraits he made during three months with the Blackfeet and another three months in the Laguna Pueblo. Nine were reproduced in the catalogue, including *Mrs. Wades-In-Water (Akim-so-yi)* (figure 3.35) and *Maria Lewis (Osharanye)* (figure 3.36). The catalogue noted both English and Native names and ages, and in some instances, their positions in society. Mrs. Wades-In-Water, shown in profile and wearing an eagle feather bonnet and a quilled or beaded shirt, was described as a 45-year-old Blackfoot woman. Maria Lewis, a 30-year-old from the Laguna Pueblo, is shown with her eyes closed, and a black and white painted pot from Acoma Pueblo resting on her head. Among her many necklaces is a squash blossom.

In 1924, the EAIA presented a series of lectures on “Indians of the Southwest” at the Colony Club, and in the following year – in addition to lending objects to the “Exhibition of the Decorative Art of the American Indian” – the EAIA organized the “Exhibition of Handiwork of

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96 Crawford, “To Exhibit Indian Portraits and Landscapes.”
98 Mona Hadler notes that the strategy of exhibiting the work of living Native American artists alongside Euro-American artists was later largely abandoned, most notably in the 1984 exhibition *Primitivism and Modern Art* at the Museum of Modern Art. The 1984 exhibition was heavily criticized for including only non-Western works that perpetuated the idea of these cultures as existing in the past, the very idea that promoters of the interwar period fought against in their promotion of contemporary Native American art. Email to the author, June 9, 2014.
Tewa and Hopi” in New York. An article in the *New York Times* reported that the Tewa/Hopi exhibition included paintings, pottery, textiles and “other handicrafts,” and described the paintings on view as “chiefly water-colors, done in a traditional manner by two branches of the Pueblo tribes.” The watercolors, “a collection of pictures of native ceremonial rites gathered by Miss A.E. White,” included paintings of the snake dance, eagle dance and corn dance. The exhibition also featured “old and new examples” of “craftwork” displayed side by side, which were said to highlight “the great artistic possibilities in the Indian race which should not be overlooked and which can make a genuine contribution to American art.”

In an article in *Women’s Wear*, Crawford lauded “the arts and handiwork of two of our last great Indian peoples, the Tewas and the Hopi,” and described the Pueblos as “the highest aboriginal culture developed within the limits of the United States.” Lamenting, with “bitter candor” that “every contact they have had with the self-styled superior white race has been fruitful of evil for them,” Crawford wrote that “these people of our Southwest have much to give us,” in terms of ceramics, fabrics, jewelry “and even in the higher arts of decorative painting,” and urged readers to look beyond “the highly commercial degraded art, patronized by tourists and inspired by white traders in the mere making of meaningless and degraded souvenirs,” to “the actual arts matured in tradition, honored by long acceptance and dignified by the pride and love of craftsmanship.” Nonetheless, Crawford believed Euro-Americans could and should turn Native American aesthetics to profit, as is made clear in his essay’s subtitle: “Encouragement of Ancient Tribes That Can Fashion for U.S. Industry a Beauty and Interest in Material Now so Sadly Lacking Advocated – Says Stores Could Easily Find Profitable Place for Small Collections

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of Their Workmanship.” The illustration that accompanied the article included five different types of pottery, two embroidered bags, two dolls, a knife sheath, a cuff bracelet and a squash blossom necklace.\textsuperscript{103}

The EAIA also sponsored three exhibitions of Native America watercolors at the Ferargil Galleries in the mid-1920s. The first, mounted in early 1926, was reviewed by \textit{The New York Times} in an article titled “Classic Indian Design.”\textsuperscript{104} The \textit{Times} reporter wrote that “splendid as are these designs, they would be even finer had they not been pulled from their original purpose – baskets or rugs or frescoes or whatever such purpose may have been,” and derided the Euro-American’s “erroneous contention that a design on paper is more exalted than is a design on an earthen pot.” The \textit{Times} article concluded with a quote from the art critic and curator Christian Brinton (1870-1942) that also was included in the exhibition catalogue: “The cry for ‘American’ art has been answered. It was answered long before being uttered by transplanted Europeans.”

A year later, Ferargil’s “Pueblo Paintings: An Exhibition of the Art of the American Indian of the Southwest,” included 39 watercolors by Awa Tsireh, Julian Martinez (1897-1943), Oqwa Pi (1899-1971), Fred Kabotie, Tonita Pena, Patricio Toya, Velino Shije, and Santiago Coriz.\textsuperscript{105} Proceeds were earmarked for “health work among the Pueblo Indians.”\textsuperscript{106} Its catalogue featured a reproduction of Tsireh’s \textit{Plumed Serpent} (figure 3.37) on the cover and an essay by Brinton, “American Art,” which opened with the same assertion quoted in 1926 in \textit{The New York Times}. Here, Brinton urged readers to “strive to appreciate and preserve the clean contour and clear colour of the native unspoiled Pueblo,” and wrote of his own appreciation for

\textsuperscript{103} Crawford, “Handiwork of Tewas and Hopi.”
\textsuperscript{105} Ferargil Galleries, \textit{Pueblo Paintings: An Exhibition of the Art of the American Indian of the Southwest} (New York: The Gallery, 1927).
“the truly American art herewith placed before us with such sympathy and taste. I offer my 
congratulations to the discerning vision which divined it, and to a gallery that exhibits not a mere 
parade of names, but something which is the very essence of aesthetic aspiration and 
achievement.”

A third Ferargil exhibition, also titled “Pueblo Paintings: An Exhibition of the Art of the 
American Indian of the Southwest,” opened in December 1927. It featured watercolors by 
Tsireh, Kabotie, Pena, Ma Pe Wi, Oqwa Pi, Santana Martinez and Richard Martinez (1904-1987). 
Again, a work by Tsireh (The Black Lion) (figure 3.38) graced the cover of the catalogue.

New Yorkers’ increasing awareness of and enthusiasm for Native American production 
was fostered not only by this series of exhibitions, but by Amelia Elizabeth White’s Ishauu 
Gallery, which had opened in the fall of 1922. As its proprietor, White emerged in the twenties 
as a tastemaker who made Native American aesthetics chic by promoting their incorporation into 
women’s fashion and Euro-American domestic spaces. A native New Yorker and Bryn Mawr 
graduate, White moved to Santa Fe with her sister, Martha Root White, after World War I, and 
soon conceived the idea of a New York City gallery devoted to Native American art. The Ishauu 
was the first of its kind, and a conduit linking Santa Fe to New York.

White herself amassed an extensive personal collection of watercolors, pottery, rugs, 
jewelry and curios, which she folded into her wardrobe and personal environment. Analysis of 
the objects in her collection reveals an emphasis on modern works from the Southwest and 
Plains, although White bought native objects from around the continent. Her style was 
immortalized in photographs of El Delirio, the White sisters’ estate (built in the 1920s), which

107 Christian Brinton, “American Art,” in Ferargil Galleries, *Pueblo Paintings: An Exhibition of 
the Art of the American Indian of the Southwest* (New York: The Gallery, 1927).
show displays that, in their proliferation of objects, recall turn-of-the-century “Indian corners.”

White, however, did not keep her collections to any one corner of El Delirio, but instead distributed them throughout her home, regardless of the rooms’ functions and decors. For instance, the so-called “New York Library” at El Delirio (figure 3.39), though hung with a crystal chandelier and a European-style portrait, and furnished with velvet-upholstered furniture rather than the Spanish colonial furniture found elsewhere in the house, was full of Native American objects. Moreover, White did not limit herself to the sorts of artifacts one might find in a typical Indian corner (rugs, pottery, baskets), but also displayed kachina dolls, headdresses, weaponry, and utilitarian objects; the photograph of a guest room at El Delirio shows headdresses over the bed and doorway, and both a shield with feathers and a baby carrier mounted on the wall (figures 3.40-3.44). The living room (figures 3.45 and 3.46) had an elkskin painting on the wall, basketry, pottery and pottery lamps, and Hopi dance wands. A view of an office/guest room (figure 3.47) – published in Good Furniture in February 1925 – shows a selection of pottery, pottery lamps and rugs.

White’s correspondence reveals her collecting strategy and connections. In a letter to Hewett dated February 27, 1922 (excerpted above in relation to White’s involvement in the 1922 SIA show), White noted her relief in learning that her “enterprise” had his approval and asked him if “your Museum has any extra material which you would sell me?” She continued, “Mr.

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108 A series of undated photographs from the Catherine Rayne Collection, a 1972 photographic inventory of the estate, and photographs taken by the author at SAR in 2012 illustrate White’s decorating aesthetic, much of which is preserved today.
109 1972 White Estate Inventory Photographs, M&AEW, roll 3.2_22, 23.
110 Catherine Rayne Collection Photographs. SAR AC20.40.
111 1972 White Estate Inventory Photographs, M&AEW, roll 1.1_4.
112 Ibid., roll 1.1_7.
Heye is going to look over his extra stuff . . . My collection would not conflict with collecting for the different Museums, since my stuff would be chiefly modern work.”

While White supported contemporary Native American painters and potters, she emphasized venerable traditions when marketing clothing, jewelry, blankets and curios at Ishauu, specializing in old pawn jewelry, well-worn clothing, and moccasins decorated “in the old patterns.”

From the opening of her gallery, White emphasized Indian jewelry, which seems to have sold particularly well; in Ishauu’s first year, White and her assistant at the gallery, Virginia Cross, sold some $2200 worth of jewelry as opposed to just $156 in paintings. In 1923, Ishauu made less than $250 on paintings, whereas White and Cross sold almost $2500 worth of jewelry, as well as some $870 worth of rugs, more than $800 worth of pottery, and almost $800 worth of curios – though gallery records indicate a net loss of almost $4,000. White’s correspondence from the period suggests that she personally underwrote the gallery throughout the 1920s.

White was quite particular about the quality and types of objects she was willing and able to sell, and often wrote of her distaste for “the commercial or tourist grade of silverware,” which she found too thin to be sold at Ishauu. She found it easiest to sell “the sort of bracelet and ring that the Navajo makes for himself or for other Indians,” and was eager to find “very good belts with conchas,” “old buttons or old bowstring guards,” and “curios” (by which White

114 A.E. White to Edgar Hewett, February 27, 1922. ELH, Box 4, Folder 6.
116 Ishauu Company to International Audit Co., November 16, 1923. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224. A balance sheet from December 1923, lists the categories of objects the gallery stocked, along with the amount in inventory, as follows: “Jewelry $1,529.70; Rugs $1,788.25; Pottery $311.05; Paintings $335.05; Curios, etc. $666.25.”
118 Joseph Schmedding to A.E. White, January 9, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
119 A.E. White to Walter E. Colenso, January 9, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
meant kachinas and other dolls, moccasins, woven mats and wampum) that were “not too dirty.”

Her letters describe the types of rugs and colors that were in demand in New York: Bayeta rugs and old chief’s blankets, preferably in grey and white, as there was “no demand for the colored ones yet.”

Contemporaneous articles and advertisements likewise privilege rugs in neutrals (with the occasional splash of color), and older blankets and rugs that were “warm with age” and had “lovely mellow shades.”

Crawford and White’s shared attitude toward “tourist art” was common during the interwar years and is frequently articulated in exhibition catalogues, articles, and reviews. Both Crawford and White believed that by re-educating Euro-Americans consumers and convincing them that “quality” pieces could still be obtained if one was willing to pay more than “tourist” prices, they could in turn encourage Indians to “return” to “quality” production (as defined by elite Euro-Americans), which would ultimately benefit Native American economically.

Designations of “quality” and “authenticity” in Native American art were (and are) problematic and fluid. “Quality” is always a subjective designation, but in Indian art may relate to materials and care in rendering; Euro-American notions of the authenticity were tied to age and technique, with the greatest value placed on the oldest objects, created by a Native American artisan for Native American consumers in what Euro-Americans perceived to be the traditional way. They viewed tourist art, a loose designation that has been applied to various types of Native American art since at least the late nineteenth century, as something less. Objects produced by Native

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121 A.E. White to Mike Kirk, January 22, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
122 Mrs. [Virginia] Cross to A.E. White, May 14, 1929. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
123 Mrs. [Virginia] Cross to A.E. White, July 9, 1929. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
Americans for sale to non-Indian consumers often were marked by artistic inventions, conflations and hybridities that departed from the traditional in the hope of meeting Euro-American expectations and enhancing marketability. Innovation and novelty were, however, decried by most connoisseurs; there was seemingly no way forward for the Native American artist, other than returning to the past. In his essay, “My Father’s Business,” Odawa artist Frank Ettawageshik, delves into issues of authenticity and the tourist trade, writing that “any modification of old techniques or methods is considered less good, and any innovation is considered to be a symptom of the degeneration of the old culture.” The traditionalist approach to valuation, by no means unique to Native American art, has been widely applied to the art of the Other.

In Native American art, hybridity and invention were only acceptable within the confines designated and approved by Euro-Americans. Navajo and Pueblo silverwork, for example, was a recently developed craft among Southwesterners, “learned from Mexican smiths in about 1870.” Pueblo watercolors, although introduced in 1919 at the urging of Euro-Americans, were “done in a traditional manner.” Repurposing, when initiated or approved by Euro-Americans, such as White’s pottery lamps, does not affect the “authenticity” of these objects. Gallery correspondence related to these lamps noted that the accompanying lampshades were “painted in an Indian design” but there is no mention of the painter or his/her methods.

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126 Jonathan Batkin, *The Native American Curio Trade in New Mexico* (Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 2008), 112.
128 Ishauu Co. to Mrs. R. H. Sellew, March 8, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
suggesting that since these objects met White’s specifications and expectations, these details are irrelevant.

In the eyes of elite collectors, objects made with lowbrow consumers in mind seemed disconnected from “the actual arts matured in tradition,”

defed by Native Americans steeped in that tradition. In catering to Euro-American tourists, Indian artists had, according to Crawford and those in his circle, devalued their artistic output. But as Ettawageshik convincingly argues, so-called tourist art actually reflects “cultural continuity and adaptation,” and “is one of the leading indicators of a strong and sustained cultural existence.”

It is also important to note that tourism – that is, traveling for pleasure – was not a pastime equally available to all. Indian artists, in their creation of objects for sale to outsiders, were already catering to a certain class of Euro-Americans. Still, White and Crawford believed that if Native Americans were to work with a slightly more elevated Euro-American consumer in mind, one with the resources to be more than simply a tourist in their midst, they would find greater satisfaction, both artistically and economically. Thus, issues of authenticity, quality, and the tourist trade – raised continually in the interwar period – soon make their way into government sponsored reports on the condition of the American Indian.

In 1924, in response to public criticisms levied against the government’s Indian policy, which Collier and others held responsible for the deterioration of Native American ways of life, Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work organized the Advisory Council on Indian Affairs, which included Collier and White among its sixty-six appointees. The group presented Work with a series of resolutions that “expressed dissatisfaction with the ability of the government to make any progress on problems in existence for nearly fifty years,” and “unhesitantly encouraged the

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129 Crawford, “Handiwork of Tewas and Hopi.”
130 Ettawageshik, 29.
production of the highest quality Indian basketry, pottery, and blanket weaving.”  

Nothing came of the committee’s recommendations, however, and in 1926, faced with mounting criticism, the Interior Department commissioned the Institute for Governmental Research to survey the Indian Service. Their report, “The Problem of Indian Administration,” also known as the Meriam Report, was published in 1928. Of the “Native Arts and Industries,” the report noted,

The survey staff has been impressed by the possibilities of the development of native Indian art and its application as an enrichment to our industry. Already possibilities in this direction have been demonstrated by private organizations and activities . . . It would seem that, encouraged and developed, it would not only add materially to the economic resources of the Indians, many of whom are in great need, but it would also furnish them the opportunity to make a distinctly Indian contribution to our civilization which would appeal to their very proper racial pride. The possibilities are such that the national government could well afford for several years to retain at least one competent person, who with assistance from temporary specialists could go into the matter thoroughly and determine its possibilities.  

The report concluded that government supervision was necessary and suggested the “Indian Office should include in its program the development of Indian handicrafts,” which would involve “on the one hand the securing of marketable goods and on the other the organization of a market.” Recommending standardization in the “quality of products,” and “genuineness guaranteed,” the report stipulated that articles be: “(1) Characteristically Indian, (2) of good materials, (3) of good workmanship, (4) of good color and design, (5) usable unless intended merely for display, (6) unique or original so far as compatible with the other requisites, (7) tagged with the government’s guarantee of genuineness and quality, and (8) priced fairly.” The report’s authors advocated that the

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131 Schrader, 16.  
132 Lewis Meriam, et al., The Problem of Indian Administration (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), 125.
“development of handicrafts should be a means to an end; namely, the improvement of the economic and social conditions of life.”\textsuperscript{133}

As Robert Schrader notes, “In the struggle to find the most favorable course of action to follow in Indian affairs, the Meriam Report provided a publicly accepted, factual framework upon which to base Indian policy.”\textsuperscript{134} Although the report had little immediate impact, its recommendations began to be implemented once Collier was appointed Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in April 1933. As Jennifer McLerran remarks, “With the particular policies and programs instituted under Commissioner John Collier, the 1930s saw the advent of concentrated federal intervention in the production and marketing of Native American arts and crafts.”\textsuperscript{135} (The impact of this intervention is discussed in Chapter 6.)

**Incorporation of straight Indian objects – Fashion**

An advertisement for the 1922 “History of the Blouse” exhibition in *Women’s Wear* (figure 3.48) documents the international scope of the show. Among the garments showcased are a fringed hide shirt, worn by a model with long braids and a squash blossom necklace (on the left hand side of the image just above center), and a tunic modeled by a woman who wears a headband across her forehead and holds a geometrically patterned basket (on the right hand side just above center).\textsuperscript{136} This image is especially noteworthy for its inclusion of jewelry, which

\textsuperscript{133} Meriam, 651-652.
\textsuperscript{134} Schrader, 21.
signals the beginnings of the trend toward incorporation of Native American pieces into Euro-American wardrobes.\textsuperscript{137}

In the 1920s, White promoted Native American objects’ incorporation in women’s fashion as well as interior design. Like Crawford, she was drawn to fringe and beadwork, to which she added silver accessories. Her success is made clear by an article that appeared in \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} in 1925, describing the “picturesque fashion” incorporating Native American pieces and aesthetics and appropriate to dude ranching, motor trekking, and camping.\textsuperscript{138} An illustration of two women (figure 3.49), each wearing a Stetson hat and holding a horse by the reins, shows one in a fringed and embroidered buckskin shirt and gloves – featuring “a design in Indian beadwork” – and chaps studded with steel. The other model wears a fringed leather vest and gloves, with a beaded belt and goatskin chaps.\textsuperscript{139} Another illustration (figure 3.50) presents a woman in a fringed “cow-girl suit of soft beige leather.”\textsuperscript{140} Three of the objects featured in the article (figure 3.51) came from the Ishauu gallery: a beaded vest – “much admired by dude ranchers” – “an Indian beaded belt” with “gay color and primitive designs,” and a silver belt made of “hand-beaten conches.”\textsuperscript{141}

\textbf{Indian Objects in U.S. Homes}

Drawing on her own decorating style, White advocated a shift away from the Indian corner in Native-American-inflected interior design, and instead advocated the placement of objects throughout the home – sometimes in utilitarian adaptations. Advertisements for Ishauu in

\textsuperscript{137} A similar necklace eventually entered the Brooklyn Museum’s collection: 71.57.2.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 68.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 68, 69.
House Beautiful (figure 3.52) and Vogue (figure 3.53) offered “American Aboriginal Art” and “true Indian handicrafts,” in the form of “pottery suitable for lamps” as well as purely decorative ceramics, rugs and curios. Ishauu also suggested that baskets be used as trash bins.

Several pieces from the Ishauu Gallery (figure 3.54) (including two that appeared in the gallery’s advertising) were featured – without reference to the gallery itself – in the July 1923 House Beautiful column, “Our Fifth Avenue Looking-Glass, Summer Substitutes and Colorful Devices.” The text of the article does not mention the pottery and baskets illustrated, but a caption reminds readers that “good examples of Indian pottery may be found that still show a high standard of native art.” Another caption suggests the repurposing of baskets, noting that the “scrap-basket problem is a troublesome one. Here is a basket of coarse weave and brilliant colors that will be at the same time an ample receptacle and a note of gayety [sic].” The captions reveal an emphasis on “the characteristic Indian designs,” which are described as “unchangeable” and “similar to those that have been made for years.”

Such articles, along with gallery advertising, generated written inquiries and requests for merchandise. Ishauu made an effort to fulfill requests for pots of specific sizes and colors and offered lampshades “painted in an Indian design” to match. Four of these lamps (with unpainted shades) decorate the School of Advanced Research today (figure 3.55), illustrating the different types of pottery as well as various forms of lampshades, each with rawhide stitching at top and bottom.

142 Vogue, January 15, 1923, 16.
143 House Beautiful, May 1923, 466; November 1923, 447; and January 1924, 6.
145 Ibid., 2.
146 Ibid.
147 Mrs. F. H. Medley to Ishauu Co., January 14, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
148 Ishauu Co. to Mrs. R. H. Sellew, March 8, 1924. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.224.
In addition to advertisements and articles about the gallery, public interest was generated by photos of the White sisters’ home, which appeared in magazines and newspapers in the twenties and thirties as part of a larger trend to show the homes of notable people. An article in *Good Furniture* entitled “Notable Spanish-Colonial House Furnishings: In the Home of the Misses White, Santa Fe, New Mexico,” included six illustrations which document White’s decorating style: a combination of Spanish Colonial furniture and Native American objects. Each photograph shows at least one Pueblo pot (two remade as lamps), as well as a rug and drum, but these objects do not overwhelm the rooms. White seems to have deconstructed the traditional Indian corner and scattered its contents throughout the home; a similar aesthetic is seen in photographs of the Taos homes of Ward Lockwood and Mabel Luhan, which were featured in *House Beautiful* (figure 3.56).

Some of these articles read as prescriptive. In his article, “Building Old Houses in New Spain: In Santa Fe, Old Houses Are Being Remodeled and New Ones Built After the Ancient Type,” Edward Dana Johnson took the reader through the steps of finding, remodeling, and decorating an old adobe in Santa Fe. Once having purchased and remodeled, Johnson wrote, the owner intent on authentic refurbishment was obliged to “dicker with the country folk for colonial bedsteads and chairs, carved Spanish chests, and cupboards and tables,” and trek to “the villages of the Pueblos, and garner used blankets, their bright colors softened to lovely mellow shades, their texture exquisite. You obtain decorated pottery, *ollas* and *tinajas*, adorned with cunningly

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149 “Notable Spanish-Colonial House Furnishings: In the Home of the Misses White, Santa Fe, New Mexico,” *Good Furniture*, February 1925, 85-87.
painted symbols from the wealth of Indian mythology and nature-worship.”¹⁵² In accompanying photographs (figures 3.57 and 3.58), showing Sheldon Parsons’s home, White’s restrained approach to interior decorating is contrasted by abundance: Navajo and Pueblo textiles line the floors, hang from the walls, and cover the furniture, while pots line shelves and surround the fireplace.

This “how-to” approach was common to articles about rugs, most of which sought to educate the consumer by offering a history of Navajo rugs along with tips on what to look for when purchasing them. Such articles emphasized age, and warned against cotton-warp and limited color palettes. In an article in *House Beautiful*, Harriet Geithmann stressed the importance of finding a trustworthy source, since “investing in Navajo rugs in American is like investing in jade in China. When one buys from a reputable dealer, one whose guarantee is worth something, instead of some miscellaneous person, red or white, with a flair for romance, one is reasonably safe.”¹⁵³ She underscored the importance of “rugs with a pedigree, ancient lineage”¹⁵⁴ and noted that the “most popular colors in the modern weaves are black, white, and gray, with a dash of red.” These colors, she noted, “harmonize with almost any color scheme.”¹⁵⁵ Discussing the rugs’ potential placement in the home, Geithmann suggested a range of possibilities, from studies, libraries and dens to hallways, stair landings and porches “at the country club or home.”¹⁵⁶ Two years later, an article in *House Beautiful* by Hazel E. Cummin focused on “The Bayeta of the Navaho,” emphasizing “Examples of a Vanished Art, the Memory of which is fast Disappearing” – a piece illustrated (figures 3.59-3.61) exclusively by museum

¹⁵² Ibid., 68.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 610.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid.
¹⁵⁶ Ibid.
specimens though Cummin also described efforts to rehabilitate blanket production for modern consumers. Cummin’s emphasis on age, authenticity, and the need for artistic rehabilitation echoed the sentiments of White and Crawford, and would be advocated throughout the interwar period.

Alongside these articles, the number of advertisements by rug traders in magazines increased, and their offerings expanded to include basketry and pottery – presumably in response to the Ishauu Gallery’s diversity of offerings. Ads run by W.S. Dalton of Gallup, for “Genuine Navajo Indian Rugs and Blankets,” were joined by several others in the pages of House Beautiful. R.M. Bruchman – an Indian shop established in 1903 in Winslow, Arizona – offered genuine Navajo rugs sent on approval. Starting in 1925 and continuing to the end of the decade, Bruchman’s ads (figures 3.62 and 3.64) also offered Hopi pottery and Papago Indian Baskets. Francis E. Lester of Mesilla Park, New Mexico (figure 3.63), advertised, in 1925, a “Personal Introductory Guarantee offer to prove my values, $35 value rug about 3 by 5 feet, natural gray with black, white and some red, by express for only $22.85.” Bolstered by White’s artful example and relentless promotion, incorporation of actual Native American objects eclipsed the objects’ manipulation and repurposing, as well as Indian “inspirations” in interior design in the twenties.

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158 House Beautiful, January 1920, 3
159 R.M. Bruchman, Indian Trader, Established 1903. Winslow, Navajo County, Arizona.” House Beautiful, July 1924, 8; August 1924, 98; September 1924, 197; October 1924, 310; November 1924, 412; December 1924, 554; January 1925, 6; February 1925, 96; and March 1925, 219.
161 Francis E. Lester, Box A, Mesilla Park, N. Mex.” House Beautiful, November 1925, 469.
Mallinson’s – Manipulations, that lead to Inspirations

Crawford, meantime, continued to promote Native-American-inspired clothing in the pages of Women’s Wear, where, in 1919, Culin joined the editorial staff of the design department. Illustrations of suggested manipulations, designs lifted from Navajo blankets and Southwestern pots and applied to Euro-American dresses and tunics (figure 3.65) appeared in Women’s Wear, often timed to coincide with exhibitions of Native American art. In the twenties, waistlines continued to drop as hemlines rose, and women’s clothing was “much freer-fitting and much less formal than ever before.” The playfulness of Indian Chic inspired myriad embellishments for twenties fashion, which could “be summed up in a single garment: the short, straight, figure-skimming, low-waisted chemise frock.” The vogue for geometric shapes that characterizes the twenties, inspired by the discovery of King Tut’s tomb in 1922 and the emergence of Art Deco in 1925, were in keeping with a prominent and well-established aspect of Native American Chic, and fringe, an element that becomes a hallmark of the flapper, was “most suggestive of the Indian” before flappers existed, and long after they had gone out of fashion.

The most important women’s fashion development in the twenties, however, was the H. R. Mallinson & Company’s co-option of Indian motifs for modern fabrics. Mallinson & Company had championed Crawford’s campaign from its inception, creating their first designs

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164 Milbank, 70.
165 Milbank, 72.
166 Mona Hadler, email to the author, June 9, 2014.
based on Indian art in 1917. The culmination occurred ten years later, with their incredibly successful “American Indian Series.” The spring 1928 line (which debuted in November 1927) featured “tribal symbols and characteristics” of the Blackfoot, Sioux, Crow, Zuni, Shoshone, Pomo, Navajo, Iroquois, Comanche, Ute, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Pueblo, Cherokee, and Hopi.

Hiram R. Mallinson (1871-1931) had joined the firm Newitter & Migel in 1897, which in 1915 became the H.R. Mallinson & Company. According to his obituary in the New York Times, “during the period of Mr. Mallinson’s management, his firm became one of the most important silk manufacturing companies in the United States.” The company was perhaps best known for three of their silk-based fabrics: Pussy Willow, Indestructible Chiffon Voile, and Khaki-Kool. Pussy Willow was a “fine warp-faced plain weave with a soft hand” and Indestructible Chiffon Voile was “a dull-finished lightweight sheer . . . woven with the best grade of silk yarns in both the warp and weft.” Khaki-Kool was Mallinson & Company’s “great breakthrough in sport silk . . . a ‘novelty-shantung’ . . . named to take advantage of popular military associations.” The success of his namesake company coincided not only with Hiram Mallinson’s management, but also with a series of American-themed lines created in the mid-1920s. As Madelyn Shaw

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168 See Chapter 1.
169 In 1926, their theme was “National Parks,” in 1928, “Playgrounds of the World,” and in 1929 the “Early American” series.
170 The American Silk Journal XLVI, no. 12 (December 1927): 42.
171 Hopi design was created by Leon Bakst (1866-1924), all the rest by Mallinson’s staff. “Indian Designs Third Mallinson Series,” The American Silk Journal XLVI, no. 12 (December 1927): 44.
174 Ibid., 208.
notes, “At the end of 1928, H.R. Mallinson & Company, Inc. was at its peak,” \(^{175}\) with the second highest net profit since the company went public in 1919.

Walter Mitschke (1886-1972), who had emigrated from Germany in 1890 and trained at Cooper Union, created designs for Mallison’s American Indian series and the two lines that preceded it, the American National Parks series in spring 1927 and the Wonder Caves of America series in the fall of that year. \(^{176}\) Sketches and designs by Mitschke for the American Indian series reveal his close observation of Native American objects in New York museum collections; like Crawford and White, he was most drawn to Plains and Southwest production. A drawing related to Mitschke’s Comanche-inspired pattern includes pencil notations the objects that inspired him, which were related to peyote rites and on view at the Museum of the American Indian collection. Comparing Mitschke’s drawings with the objects themselves illustrates the faithfulness of his depictions, which are overlaid and multiplied on the fabric (figures 3.66, 3.67). \(^{177}\) Another of his designs (figure 3.68) – for “Sioux War Bonnet” fabric – also was based on an object at the then Heye Museum of American Indian; the fabric features an Oglala Sioux headdress, which occurs in repeated rows that overlap, truncating the bonnet’s full length. \(^{178}\) Mitschke’s “Blackfoot Sun Dance” (figure 3.69) design drew on ceremonial objects in the collection of the AMNH; \(^{179}\) a dress in the collection of the Rhode Island School of Design’s

\(^{175}\) Ibid., 189.
\(^{177}\) Niuam (Comanche), Bandolier/shoulder sash and bag for peyote, c. 1900 (NMAI 2/1828) and a Niuam (Comanche), Fan with sun and Morning Star designs, c. 1880 (NMAI 2/1617). Ruth Evelyn Allcott, “The Commercial Application of American Indian Designs” (MS Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1928), featured plates illustrating selections from the Arapaho, Comanche, and Navajo.
\(^{178}\) Museum of the American Indian’s collection (NMAI 11/4619)]
\(^{179}\) Blackfeet, Buffalo Skull (AMNH 50/5719), which appears in the finished design. Blackfoot, The Natoas, or Sun Dance Headdress and the Hairlock Necklace (AMNH 50/5394). The sacred
Museum of Art is made of the resultant silk fabric, and full-page, full-color ads that appeared in *Vogue*\(^{180}\) and *Harper’s Bazaar*\(^{181}\) (figures 3.70 and 3.71) showed a similar one, as well as a dress made from the Sioux War Bonnet fabric. The ad’s background image is a Native American man in an eagle feather headdress, and its copy notes the inspiration of “The Indian – The First American rich in legendary lore and symbolic art.”

An article in the *New York Times* described Mitschke’s designs as representative of “all phases of Indian life, as well as their implements of war, household utensils, insignias, rugs, blankets and even the fancy headgear were reproduced in both small and large designs.” The patterned silk, according to the *Times*, was being used for “parasols, handbags and even shoes” and hats, “either made of silk or trimmed with it,” which “were turned out in small and large shapes.”\(^{182}\)

The *Times* write-up clearly was a response to a spectacular showroom event staged by Mallinson & Co. on November 29, 1927. The invitation – which welcomed guests to “The Mallinson Reservation” – was printed on faux wood-grain paper and featured drawings of Indians and teepees (figure 3.72).\(^{183}\) According to a *Women’s Wear* article, the “Indian rugs which served as decorations and lent a background to the fashion ceremonial came from the home of Walter Clark, sales manager of H.R. Mallinson & Co,” but “the Indian who sang the

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183 BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.146], Culin 1.4 (1927/11).
Indian Love Call was not a real Indian.”¹⁸⁴ The event was well-attended; over half the Women’s Wear article was devoted to the list of industry people from New York and around the country who were on hand for the launch. A second article placed more emphasis on the fabrics themselves, noting, “Indian colorings and strong large patterned designs carried with them an impression of bold decoration and vibrant contrasts of tone . . .” Mitschke’s designs not only graced dresses, but “bathing and beach apparel . . . lingerie and negligees,” and “the range of uses was extended to the details of the costume as well, including such accessories as shoes, hats, bags, and scarfs.”¹⁸⁵

Crawford, writing effusively of the Mallinson fabrics, was quick to point up his own role in their creation:

There is a strongly reminiscent note in the exhibition of the American Indian series of prints by H.R. Mallinson & Co. last night. Many years ago . . . E. Irving Hanson, vice-president of H.R. Mallinson & Co. visited the American Museum of Natural History with me in the effort to make an intelligent practical use of the great collections in the museum – to add a new note to the great industrial art of silk printing. I doubt if any lines of H.R. Mallinson & Co. since then have been entirely free from this influence, although they have never attempted anything as ambitious and far reaching as the present collection . . . Surely of all things which are distinctly ours as a basis for creative effort, the arts of the first Americans stand in the first rank. H.R. Mallinson & Co. are to be complimented on their courage and self confidence.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ M.D.C. Crawford to Stewart Culin, November 25, 1927. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.146], Culin 1.4 (1927/11). “Squaws, Chiefs at Mallinson Silk Pow-Wow: 2,000 Trade Factors Present at Showing of Indian Prints – Turnout Called Record by Firm,” Women’s Wear, November 28, 1927. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.146], Culin 1.4 (1927/11).
¹⁸⁵ “Fashion Showing Introduces American Indian Prints Silks in Spring Costumes,” [Women’s Wear?] clipping dated December 15, 1927. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.147], Culin 1.4 (1927/12), The article also devoted substantial space to naming those in attendance.
¹⁸⁶ M.D.C. Crawford, “Mallinson’s Courage In Offering American Indian Prints Praised,” [Women’s Wear?] clipping dated December 15, 1927. BMA, Culin Archival Collection, General Correspondence [1.4.147], Culin 1.4 (1927/12).
The success of the Mallinson fabrics is documented by the speed with which they were copied by at least four competing manufacturers, who quickly rolled out designs that were much more loosely related to actual Indian art and artifacts. In January 1928, *Women’s Wear* ran two advertisements for dresses in Indian-inspired prints. The ad for “Primitive American Print Dresses portraying the history of the American-Indian,” from the Arnat Silk Company (figure 3.73), included illustrations of seven different patterns: “a colorful feast of intriguing styles.” Like the Mallinson fabrics, these focused on the Southwest and Plains, and each pattern was given an Indian-inspired name: Pueblo Pottery, Iroquois Wampum, Totem Pole, Navajo Blanket, Kiowa Jewels, Pomo Plumes, and Acoma Cliff.187 The other ad, from the Bijou Dress Company (figure 3.74), offered “an extensive group of extremely smart and colorful ‘Indian-Print’ Frocks,”188 though the dresses were not illustrated.

Mallinson & Co. had begun copyrighting their designs in 1915, “in order to safeguard their original ideas by every legal means in their own as well as their customers’ interests,”189 but, as Shaw notes, this did not prevent piracy.190 Still, it did give Mallison the right to sue for copyright infringement. The day after their competitors’ ads ran in *Women’s Wear*, the Mallinson company responded with an ad entitled “Credit Where Credit is Due,” (figure 3.75) which resembled its recent exhibition invitation and featured images of Indians and teepees. The copy noted that the “American Indian Series universally acclaimed the outstanding success of the season was originated, executed and presented” by Mallison & Co,191 and went on to assert the company’s intention to protect their registered legal property.

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190 Shaw, “The Making of H.R. Mallinson,” 180
Some weeks later, another ad run by Mallinson & Co. asserted, “None but the genuine American Indian Prints shall carry the names Navajo-Iroquois-Pomo-Pueblo or any names similar thereto,” according to the stipulation of an agreement between Mallinson and the Arnat Silk Co. Arnat responded with its own ad, acknowledging “disregard” for the Mallison company’s “strict legal rights” and measures to “appropriate to its exclusive use the names of historical Indian tribes.” Declaring Arnat’s lack of need or desire “to trade upon the ideas and advertising of competitors,” the ad showed the same Indian-inspired designs its ads had announced in January, but this time with captions in which the names Pueblo, Iroquois, Navajo, and Pomo had been crossed out.

Bijou continued advertising their “Indian Print Frocks,” which they refrained from naming or illustrating in their ads, and was soon joined by two other companies offering “Indian” designs. An advertisement for Drubin-Lightman’s “Warrior Prints, the Outstanding Dress Offering of the season” (figure 3.76) showed an Indian covered by a blanket decorated with images of stylized feather headdresses, and an ad for “Squaw Print Dresses” by Samuel Altman (figure 3.77) featured two Euro-American models in dresses printed with Indian-inspired motifs.

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Inspirations

In addition to fabrics that played off on the success of Mallinson & Co.’s appropriations, fashion journals of the mid-20s show a number of derivations from Indian garments in women’s winter sportswear. In the winter of 1924-25 Women’s Wear ran a photograph (figure 3.78) of Mrs. A. Davenport in a fringed leather skiing suit that “Savors of Indian Inspiration,”197 The following year, Lucile Buchanan wrote in Harper’s Bazaar that while Parisian modes dictated the sports wardrobes of European women, “Certain Picturesque License, Originating in Our Own North, is Allowed the American Woman.” According to Buchanan, winter sportswear was the “only place in the mode where we [Americans] make any distinction,” thanks to the “particular character of our own North, with its traditional background of Indians and trappers, [which] gives a primitive touch to our winter sports wardrobe.”198 An illustrated example (figure 3.79), described as a “clever trouser-skirt,” was made of whipcord fabric “patterned with vermilon [sic] leather in primitive designs.”199

197 “Skiing Suit at St. Moritz Which Savors of Indian Inspiration,” Women’s Wear, January 2, 1925.
199 Ibid.
Amelia Elizabeth White and John Sloan continued promoting Native American art into the thirties, most notably through the *Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts* (EITA), which opened at the Grand Central Galleries in 1931 and provided a comprehensive overview of Native North American art, performances by San Ildefonso dancers and Navajo sandpainters, and objects for sale. After attracting some 13,000 viewers in New York, the EITA toured the country under the auspices of the College Art Association and was installed at the Corcoran Gallery for the Washington Bicentennial and a group of 100 paintings were sent to the Venice Biennial.¹

In the thirties, articles about Indian art were no longer confined to New York newspapers and magazines aimed at specific audiences; the syndicated articles that accompanied the opening of the EITA in New York and continued as it traveled across the country, resulted in nationwide publicity. Nonetheless, the commercial impact of the EITA was perhaps most evident in New York City department stores, which began stocking and advertising Native American goods, and using appearances by Native Americans to attract customers.

The EITA encouraged the incorporation of Indian objects – in both women’s fashion and interior design – many of them now produced by living artists. In interior design, White—who continued to own and operate the Ishauu Gallery—continued to set the example for incorporation,

¹ Traveling exhibition: 1932: The Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA (January 4-23); Art Museum, Springfield, MA (February 8-20); Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY (March 4-31); Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, NY (April 15-May 15); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA (May 28-June 15); Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH (July 1-31); Milwaukee Art Institute, Milwaukee, WI (September 1-28); Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH (December 1-31). Dates from itinerary of EITA. 1933: Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Joslyn Memorial, Omaha, NE, September-October 1933. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.2. “U.S. Will Enter 100 Paintings in Venice Biennial,” *New York Herald Tribune*. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
with images of her Santa Fe home and New York City apartment appearing in newspapers and
magazine. Meantime, the sorts of appropriations that Crawford had advocated – modern take-
offs on specific museum artifacts – were less visible, eclipsed by the mixing of incorporation and
inspiration in clothing design. For example, Designer Alice Oliver Henderson Evans Rossin
Colquitt (1907-1988) successfully incorporated Native American elements into clothing inspired
by the Southwest, which she sold in her stores in Arizona and New Mexico, as well as in New
York City department stores.

Aims of the EITA

The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts Inc. was founded in 1930, “for the purpose of
stimulating and supporting American Indian artists by creating a wider interest and more
intelligent appreciation of their work in the American public at large, and to demonstrate to the
country what important contribution to our culture the Indian is making.”\(^2\) The organization’s
incorporation documents described its aims “to win the aesthetic appraisal of Indian Art,” and
“awaken public appreciation so as to encourage the Indians to continue to create and develop
their art”\(^3\) – goals it meant to accomplish through a traveling exhibition of the same name. Its
annual report of 1931 elaborated that the exhibition would include “both ancient and modern”
production and would present the objects “as art – not ethnology.”\(^4\) As Molly H. Mullin
observes, the word “exposition” seems to have been borrowed from the realm of world’s fairs
(e.g., The Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago 1893; the Pan-American Exposition, held in

\(^2\) John Sloan and Oliver La Farge, *Introduction to American Indian Art: To Accompany the First
Exhibition of American Indian Art Selected Entirely with Consideration of Esthetic Value* (New
York: The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts, Inc., 1931), np.

\(^3\) The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts Incorporation. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.1.

\(^4\) The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts Inc. Annual Report, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder
AC18.337.1.
Buffalo, NY, in 1901; the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis in 1904) where native peoples were put on display and “used as a foil for industrial progress and treated as exotic objects of curiosity.”

Sloan was president of EITA Inc., and White was the chairman (as well as a major financial backer). Its board included Frank Crowninshield, Oliver La Farge, Dolly Sloan, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Herbert Spinden. The Vice President, Charles Curtis, served as honorary chairman, and Alfred Barr Jr. and Alice Corbin Henderson were on the advisory committee. The exhibition they put together, though “comprehensive” in scope – with objects from the prehistoric to the contemporary and the Arctic to the Plains – leaned heavily toward the Southwest; 370 of the 625 objects listed in the catalogue were Southwest in origin. Jewelry and pottery dominated the exhibition checklist, with 154 and 139 examples, respectively. The organizers felt it was important to demonstrate to the public that private citizens were collecting Native American production. White, though probably the best known example, was not the only one; among the 47 lenders listed in the catalogue of the EITA were several other private collectors, including poet Witter Bynner (1881-1968), who loaned 113 pieces of jewelry and

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6 White donated the rent for the EITA office each year, advanced money which she would later ask be considered contributions and deducted from the amount owed to her. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
7 Several articles made a point of mentioning her work for the EITA as well as her personal collection and personal style. “One Woman Has Made Two Continents See the Beauty in America Indian Art, New York Sun, March 6, 1931. Clipping reprinted in Gregor Stark and E. Catherine Rayne, El Delirio: The Santa Fe World of Elizabeth White (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1998), 73; “Miss Amelia White Calls Meeting of Tribal Arts Group,” New York Evening Post, October 10, 193[?]; Ruth Seinfel, “Indian Exposition Aided by Woman’s Interest: Indian Art as Art Not as Ethnology, Miss White’s Dream,” New York Evening Post, December 1, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
personal adornment.\textsuperscript{8} Six Navajo pieces from Bynner’s collection were included as plates in the catalogue; three silver and turquoise ornaments, two silver bracelets and a silver necklace (figure 4.1). For her part, White loaned 90 objects, including 14 pieces of jewelry.\textsuperscript{9}

The emphasis on the art of the Southwest Indians, which began in the twenties with increased tourism to that region, concern over Pueblo rights, and White’s preference and advocacy, flourished in the thirties. During this period, the image of the Pueblo Indian eclipsed that of the Plains Indian, who had served as the representative image of all Indians in the Euro-American mind since the early 1800s.\textsuperscript{10} The Southwest was where White focused her collecting, for herself as well as her gallery, and her business’s balance sheets show that its most prominent products – jewelry and rugs – were Indian Chic’s biggest sellers. Indian jewelry required no clever repurposing for Euro-American consumption (unlike pottery made into lamps, or baskets transformed to trash receptacles). In addition to being beautiful, it was a ready-to-wear, portable souvenir and perhaps the easiest way to join the Indian craze.

Though most of the historic objects on show were identified by group/region rather than attributed to individual makers, a buffalo hide painting and carved pipe bore specific attribution. The reverse was true of contemporary objects, most of which were listed with their maker’s names and places of origin. Southwestern artists dominated. In an article describing efforts to gather objects for the forthcoming EITA, the \textit{New York Times} quoted Sloan as saying that “since the Southwestern Indians have managed, to preserve more of their native arts than the plains

\textsuperscript{8} Fifty-two sets of earrings, seventeen rings, twelve bracelets, eleven wrist guards, eight pendants, five necklaces, three belts, two belt buckles, two skirt pins, and one concho.
\textsuperscript{9} Forty-eight pieces of pottery, sixteen weavings, fourteen pieces of jewelry, seven paintings, three pipes, one drum, and one silver bridle.
Indians,” he expected “to secure the largest amount of articles, both modern and antique, in New Mexico and Arizona.”\footnote{11} Preservation was a recurrent theme in publicity for the exposition.

Along with the checklist, the exhibition literature included a two-part *Introduction to American Indian Art*. Part I – an overview written by Sloan with Oliver La Farge – included general discussions of the sorts of painting, basketry, weaving, beadwork, pottery, jewelry, and sculpture on view. Sloan and La Farge wrote that the EITA would “give thousands of white Americans their first chance to see really fine Indian work exhibited as art. And it will give the Indian a chance to prove himself to be not a maker of cheap curios and souvenirs, but a serious artist worthy of our appreciation and capable of making a cultural contribution that will enrich our modern life.”\footnote{12} Part II comprised a series of pamphlets written by “leading authorities in the various fields”\footnote{13} these were more focused than the essay by Sloan and La Farge, but, like it, stressed that the objects in question were art. As *The New York Times* reported, all of the authors involved in the project approached the exhibited works in such a way as to “foster for them a greater and more selective demand, so that craftsmen will be able to conserve the finest traditions of their art and incidentally, to better their economic condition.”\footnote{14}

\footnote{11} “To Collect Indian Art,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
\footnote{12} LaFarge and Sloan, *Introduction*, vol. 1, 53.
\footnote{14} “Native American Art,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1931.
In their essay, Sloan and La Farge raised issues of authenticity and cultural purity in objects offered for sale to Euro-American consumers – which may have been crafted with an eye to marketability. Offering advice to those looking to buy Native American goods, they wrote, “One thing may be said with emphasis, for the guidance of any white man who wants to buy something really Indian: be it basket, necklace, robe or bow, if it be not well and truly made, an evidence of fine workmanship, and in good taste, it is not really Indian.”\(^\text{15}\) Indian art that was old/authentic, should also, they felt, be “alive and dynamic.”\(^\text{16}\) On the subject of contemporary production, Sloan and La Farge acknowledged that “the modern Indian artist may not be as orthodox as his ancestors,” but stressed that her/his product “still derives from the traditional forms” and “ancestral pattern.”\(^\text{17}\)

Taking Pueblo watercolors as an example of contemporary Native American art that was adaptive without being inauthentic, Sloan and La Farge explained that its practitioners had made a Euro-American medium their own by approaching it “from their own background” to produce works “as satisfactorily Indian as the beadwork or silverwork which Sioux and Navajo evolved from similar contacts.”\(^\text{18}\) They observed that Navajo weavers after decades of bowing to “pressure from curio-minded white men” had begun to return to the old ways, and “thanks to the growth of a small, intelligent demand, and encouragement from a few traders and outsiders, the art is on the upgrade again.”\(^\text{19}\) In beadwork, Native Americans’ incorporation of American flag imagery and of floral designs derived from the French made it “difficult to draw the line between

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\(^\text{15}\) LaFarge and Sloan, *Introduction*, vol. 1, 9.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 51.
\(^\text{18}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^\text{19}\) Ibid., 19.
what is, and what is not, truly Indian.”

Still, the authors were confident that “good taste” would guide the astute consumer toward wise purchases (and away from degraded “tourist” art).

EITA organizers were not only interested in educating Euro-American viewers and consumers, but also in making Native Americans more aware of and conversant with historic techniques, materials, and patterns. Morris Burge and Margaret McKittrick Burge, Santa-Fe-based field investigators for the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs, had found that most of the older textiles, ceramics and silverwork had left the pueblos and reservations by 1930, so that modern weavers, potters and jewelry makers lacked access to traditional exemplars and had limited knowledge of old techniques and patterns. In a letter to La Farge, Burge wrote, “Since we have been going onto the reservation and to the schools, it is apparent what little possibility there is for the Navajo to actually see any old pattern blankets.” Another Santa Fe resident, the preservationist Margretta Stewart Dietrich, observed, in a similar vein, that the women of Tesuque Pueblo had “lost the location of their old white slip clay” and wondered if anyone could “tell them where it came from.” She, White, and Mary Cabot Wheelwright therefore decided to make old blankets and silverwork from their collections available to the Burges, for display on field trips and loan to schools. The Burges also worked with manufacturers to create “shades and colors needed in dyes for the production of old types of design in Navajo rugs,” which were distributed to modern weavers.

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20 Ibid., 25.
21 Margretta Dietrich to Kenneth Chapman, copy to Margaret and A.E. White, April 17, 1934. M&AEW, Box 2, Folder AC18.048.
22 Morris Burge to Oliver La Farge, March 10, 1932. M&AEW, Box 8, Folder AC18.144.1.
23 Dietrich to Chapman, April 17, 1934.
24 EAIA, Report of Field Investigator, Supplementary to Field Trip Reports for October and November, 1932. Submitted by Margaret McKittrick and Moris Burge. “Reviving the Navajo Blanket.”
As in the twenties, age and tradition remained the best selling points for Native American arts. The best way forward for modern artists was a return to the historic, traditional ways, which, though “primitive,” could be seen to complement modern design. Innovation continued to be left to Euro-Americans, who worked with manufacturers to influence production. Ironically, they viewed their own manipulations of Native American art in positive light, whereas the makers’ own attempts at novelty and diversification were derided as sell-outs to tourists.

Reviews of the EITA exhibition reinscribed such assumptions, by celebrating “traditional forms” and “ancestral patterns,”25 and efforts to create “a greater and more selective demand” in order “to conserve the finest traditions of their art”26 (as determined by a specific group of Euro-Americans) would not only continue but expand.

The EITA in New York

The EITA opened at the Grand Central Galleries in December 1931, with more than 600 objects displayed in seven galleries.27 Margaret Breuning, writing for the New York Evening Post, declared it “impossible to give any detailed account of so large and comprehensive an exhibition, although well displayed and listed.”28 Malcolm Vaughan’s piece in the New York

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25 Ibid., 51.
27 “Indian Art Show Opens Here with Rhoads as a Guest: U.S. Commissioner Previews Exhibition of Old and New Works at Grand Central; Display Fills 7 Galleries; Pottery, Baskets, Rugs, Pictures Among Loan Items,” New York Herald Tribune, December 1, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
28 Margaret Breuning, “Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts Major Event of the Week in Local Galleries,” New York Evening Post, December 5, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5. In a letter to White, Dolly Sloan noted that photographs of the New York installation were sent to the venues to insure proper installation of the show, but none seems to be extant. Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 15, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
American was more critical, Vaughan being of the opinion that the manner in which the materials were arranged “impedes, practically obstructs, intelligent examination.”

Ancient, fairly ancient, rather recent and modern objects are placed side by side; an example mirroring a tribal tendency is displayed next [sic] an example reflecting individual, non-tribal inspiration; the work of one tribe is sufficiently separated from the work of another, and the catalogue – to which one turns in hope of enlightenment – proves a monument of inadequate brevity. These conditions prevail, one is told, in order that the aesthetic appeal of the objects may be emphasized. The purpose defeats itself. The aesthetic faculty functions at lowest ebb when the intelligence is baffled. 29

Nonetheless, Vaughan admitted, “Despite such mental bewilderment, the array remains a delight to the eye.”

An article by Sloan in the Grand Central Galleries Yearbook included a photograph (figure 4.2) of John D. Rockefeller and Walter L. Clark “inspecting a piece of pottery.” 30

Surrounded by objects from the Southwest, Clark holds a pot as Rockefeller looks on. A Navajo weaving hangs on the wall behind a table that is covered by baskets, pots, and a Hopi manta. At least ten more pots are seen on the floor behind the two men, suggesting that the photo was taken before installation of the EITA was complete.

Publicity for the EITA was extensive – so much so that the media hype surrounding the show was the subject of an article in Art Digest as the exposition got under way. There, the author asserted, “Probably never before has an exhibition been given so much space in the newspapers and periodicals. Pages of comment and reproductions were printed.” The extent of the coverage, the author believed, gave “the exhibition even a wider significance than that implied in its purpose,” which was “to enable the Indian to revive his beautiful ancient art

30 John Sloan, “The Exhibition of Indian Tribal Arts,” Grand Central Art Galleries Yearbooks, 1923-1945, reel NGCAG-1, frame 298. AAA.
instead of letting his handicraft degenerate to the standard required by the tourist.” ³¹ Two years later, with the EITA’s tour complete, Dolly Sloan wrote to White, “I measured up the amount of newspaper publicity we have received and it amounts to 812 columns…the best kind of advertising.” ³² Analysis of this publicity reveals several repeated refrains that echoed sentiments expressed in the expo’s catalogue and related material. The material on view was widely touted as of “our soil” ³³ (i.e., truly “American”) and “purely aesthetic” ³⁴ (i.e., “art”) – thus something more than “mere curios or souvenirs.” ³⁵

Walter Pach, who played an important role in the promotion of Pueblo watercolors and their inclusion in the SIA shows of the twenties, now wrote enthusiastically of the EITA, and drew particular attention to works made by artists still “alive and still producing.” Citing ongoing craft traditions in the Southwest, Pach described his encounter with a group of Indians selling pottery at a railroad station in Albuquerque, from whom he bought a bowl that he imagined “to be from excavations revealing the art of some ancient people.” Eager to know more about his purchase, Pach had “asked an old Indian” if he knew anything about the period of the bowl’s creation, how old it was, or when it was made. According to Pach, the Indian replied, “Made? When? Oh, last month, last week.” Thus, Pach observed, “The beautiful thing in my hand (and I have more than once seen Indian works mistaken for Chinese, Egyptian or early Greek) was not of a distant epoch, but of our own time.” In addition to being part of “our own

³¹ “Indian Tribal Arts Exhibition Starts on Long Tour of Nation,” The Art Digest, December 15, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
³² Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, January 21, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.2.
³⁴ “Indian Tribal Arts,” Art News, November 7, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
time,” as well as of “our soil,” Pach wrote, “The art of the Indians, so eloquent of this land, is American art, and of the most important kind.” Restating the importance of the EITA, he noted, “One of the reasons that so few Americans know and appreciate Indian art is that so few have had the opportunity of seeing an exhibition of fine Indian materials.”

Like Pach, C. Norris Millington wrote—in a review of the EITA for The American Magazine of Art—of a general tendency to see Indian art as something of the past rather than an ongoing and evolving practice. For instance, he wrote, “The combination of ‘Indian’ and ‘water color’ doesn’t seem to be reconcilable. Not being a primitive medium the uninitiated think it isn’t Indian. But the paintings are as purely Indian as some prehistoric pot dug out of an ancient cave. They are as purely Indian, except for the medium, as any quillwork or beadwork.” Millington, in line with Sloan and La Farge, wrote that Pueblo watercolors “do not show the slightest trace of foreign or white influence in subject, technic [sic], or treatment. Another striking feature of this native art in water color and tempora [sic] on paper is that it is modern.”

In a syndicated editorial, which appeared in the Boston Herald, art historian F.E. Washburn Freund wrote of the EITA, “It is almost impossible to praise this exhibition and its contents too highly. For what is shown here is, in its entirety, a real revelation.” Freund noted, “So far, scholars and a few enthusiasts knew about this hidden and almost lost folk art which was still living, although under difficulties and constant threats of extinction, not merely at our front door but in our very midst,” and remarked that thanks to the EITA, “We, as a nation, will become conscious that we have had a race of artists in our midst to whom we can turn for help.

36 Pach, “The Indian Tribal Arts.”
and guidance in our strivings for self-expression, and that we, in our turn, can help this race in preserving its tradition and thereby its strength and the very foundation of its art.”

Royal Cortissoz’s review of the EITA for the New York Herald Tribune took a somewhat different tack, stressing Native American exceptionalism and self-sufficiency with remarks including “The Indian has from first to last stood upon his own feet.” Cortissoz wrote that “in essentials he has gone his own way, has been utterly genuine, utterly faithful to the traditions of his race. This gives a delightful unity and flavor to the exhibition. It has an elemental tang, as of an unspoiled people.” In a similar vein, Catherine K. Bauer, writing for The New Republic, declared, “The ingrained discipline and deep familiarity with his own needs and desires which has kept the Indian tradition fresh and alive is only less miraculous, than his ability to take what he wanted from the white man, and to take only what he wanted and knew he could use. Many of the most important Indian arts make use of materials and methods which have been borrowed only recently.” Bauer was impressed by the power of works that “without losing any of their essentially handicraft quality…achieve a certain handsome hardness of style which is the very quality that might be attained by different means in a good machine design – if there were any.”

An article by Ruth Seinfel in the New York Evening Post, subtitled “Indian Art as Art, Not as Ethnology, Miss White’s Dream: Now Realized in Exposition of Which She Is Head Executive,” focused not only on White’s role but also on the importance of the private

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41 Ibid., 192.
collections assembled for the exposition. White was quoted as saying that once EITA Inc. was formed and its members “began to work on the idea of an exhibition of Indian art, treating it as art, not ethnology…a great many people became interested, and the museums and private collectors have sent us their most precious possessions.” The article also included a list of lenders to the exhibition, highlighting Witter Bynner, who “sent two huge cases full of magnificent silver and turquoise jewelry” and Mrs. Herbert Hoover, who, “has a considerable collection” and lent two paintings (figure 4.3) by Tonita Pena, “the only woman Indian painter represented.”

The notion of the Indian watercolors as “purely Indian” and without the “slightest trace of foreign or white influence in subject, technic [sic], or treatment” ran counter to the standards applied to every other Indian-made product at the time and reveals the incredibly successful efforts of Crawford, Sloan, and White to brand Indian watercolors as “traditional” even though the medium had been introduced to the native American community just over a decade earlier, at the urging of Euro-Americans. The promotion of these watercolors can be seen as part of the larger campaign focused on elevating the quality of current Indian production and replacing “tourist” art with fine art, and thus allied to the concurrent effort raise the status of Native American pottery and textiles from artifact to art. Watercolors proved an effective entry point for this re-envisioning of Native American production, since in medium and technique they were familiar to Euro-Americans as fine art. Yet in spite of that familiarity, White and Sloan were able to successfully frame the watercolors as “purely Indian.”

The watercolors thus straddled the traditional/modern divide.

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42 Seinfel, “Indian Exposition Aided by Woman’s Interest: Indian Art as Art Not as Ethnology, Miss White’s Dream.”
43 Millington, 83.
White and Sloan were eager to demonstrate to Euro-American consumers that Indians still existed and still made art. By the early thirties, Indian watercolors became popular with the Euro-American audience for which they were made, and were seen as fine art, thanks to their regular appearances in exhibitions and perhaps most importantly, the SIA exhibitions that placed them alongside Euro-American art. Even as they encouraged and promoted Native American watercolor, however, the EAIA Field Notes make it clear that the organization remained focused on rehabilitating the “traditional” arts of textiles, ceramics, and jewelry.

Native Americans at the EITA

Several of the articles and reviews devoted to the EITA in New York discussed the Native Americans who had traveled to the city to participate in the exposition, bringing northeast urbanites face to face with Indian artists from the Southwest: Atalana Montoya (a former governor of San Ildelfonso), Navajo sandpainters Nez Bitsidee and Ushkay Begay, and Juan Cruz, Maria Martinez, Miguel Martinez, Odam Martinez, Juan Jose Montoya, Oqwa Pi, Tonita Cruz Roybal, Domicio Sanchey, and Awa Tsireh. They arrived in mid-December and spent a week demonstrating sand painting and ceremonial dances.44 In a letter to Herman More, a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Dolly Sloan stressed the Indians’ seriousness of purpose: “These ten men and two women are artists, and we do not feel that we want them entertained or amused or ‘bally-hooed’ through New York City by any of the newspapers, meaning principally the tabloids.”45

45 Dolly Sloan to Herman More, November 25, 1931. Delaware Art Museum, John Sloan Collections, Box 42, Correspondence Folder, 1931-35.
The New York Times reported that the paintings produced at the EITA required a “carload” of sand, which had been collected from the Painted Desert and transported east.\textsuperscript{46} It further noted that Native American custom dictated that sand art be ephemeral: “After one of the sand compositions had been executed at the galleries yesterday afternoon by two Navahos sifting sand deftly through trained fingers, the symbolism of this esoteric art remained as mysterious as before, for the medicine men would not divulge the secret, and at sundown their tribal customs demanded the ‘painting’ be erased.” The Times article emphasized the sacred nature of both the practice of sand painting and the dances performed: “These are religious pictures, it was explained by sponsors of the exposition yesterday; so when painted for white observers here they will not be carried to absolute completion, so that this religious art will not be profaned. Similarly, the dances are religious, and tribal custom restricts the types and number which may be performed for demonstration here.”\textsuperscript{47}

The Native Americans’ presence caused a sensation, and press reports that focused on the Indians themselves tended to emphasize their differences from Euro-Americans, especially as regards appearance, describing in great detail their hairstyles, clothing and jewelry. The Associated Press, for instance, reported, “Most of the men in the group had long tightly bound hair with brightly colored ribbons in two pigtails at either side of their heads. But Juan, who appears to be the youngster of the group, has ‘gone collegiate.’ ‘I like the long hair,’ said Juan. ‘But you see I went to college and they made me cut it off like a regular fellow.’”\textsuperscript{48} This description of Juan’s revised appearance may hint at Euro-Americans’ simultaneous desire for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{46}“Sand From the Painted Desert On Way for Indian Art Exhibit,” \textit{New York Times}, December 6, 1931.
  \item \textsuperscript{47}“Pueblos Perform Tribal Dance Here: Indians in Brilliant Costume Bring Native Rites to City at Exhibit of Their Art,” \textit{New York Times}, December 15, 1931.
  \item \textsuperscript{48}Associated Press, “Indians Have Sense of Humor that Confuses Reporters,” December 15, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
\end{itemize}
indigenes to remain unspoiled by Euro-American culture and, yet, to assimilate. The same article also noted that “Maria Martinez and Tonita Cruz, the two women of the group, picturesque in their colorful costumes and wealth of silver and turquoise, were most discerning of their city sisters, but neither one would exchange places with the white woman. Both are famed potters.”

A photograph (figure 4.4) that appeared in the *Grand Central Art Galleries Yearbook* shows the artists in native dress alongside the expo’s Euro-American sponsors, standing in two rows, before a large rectangular hanging and two carved wooden totem poles. White, Dolly Sloan, Margaret McKittrick and Walter L. Clark are dressed in dark dresses and suits, almost blending into one another in the dark black and white image, while the Native Americans stand out in their eagle feather bonnets, headdresses, fringed pants and layers of jewelry. An article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* included photographs (figure 4.5) of Native American jewelry, as worn by Maria Martinez and an unnamed Navajo woman.

Several articles emphasized the Indians’ impressions of the city, and held suggestions of things lost in translation. An article in the *New York Times* noted that even though “some of the Indians in the group had never before left their reservations, the long trip East and the little they were able to see of the city yesterday did not excite them visibly.” Still, according to the article, “one thing disturbed them – elevators. Both in going up and coming down in elevators at the Hotel Commodore, where they are staying, some of the group put their hands over their eyes.”

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49 Ibid.
50 John Sloan, “The Exhibition of Indian Tribal Arts,” Grand Central Art Galleries Yearbooks, 1923-1945, reel NGCAG-1, frame 300. AAA.
also stated that “one of the white man’s inventions” that “pleased them greatly” was ice cream, “of which they ate quantities on the journey here.”

The Associated Press reported that when the group was asked how they liked New York, Awa Tsireh replied, “Have you ever seen Santa Fe?” Its article noted that “Awa and his friend Juan Jose Montoya, who share a sense of humor that put waggish reporters off their guard, don’t care a whoop about Broadway. In fact they had never heard of the pale face’s happy hunting ground.” Another article, “Worshipping the City,” included the anecdote about Awa Tsireh’s invoking Santa Fe, and observed, “Of course, not all visitors can use that comeback, for not all visitors to the big town have seen Santa Fe themselves; but there is in it a wholesome antidote to the current worship of metropolitan things, people and ways that is worth bearing in mind.”

A more detailed account of the group’s impressions was offered by Oqwa Pi in a radio address delivered in mid-December. He told the WOR audience that it was “really fun” for them to experience a place that the fellow Indians had not seen, and explained, “I and the rest of my people are here in New York City to present ourselves, so that people will know who we are and what we are here for. Also how we make our living. Our principle works are framing and painting pictures and making pottery.” He noted that the expo had been put on by “our white Friends and the Eastern Association of Indian Affairs in order to get the people of our country to understand that there was art in the American Indian . . . They also want you people interested in

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53 Associated Press, “Indians Have Sense of Humor that Confuses Reporters.”
54 “Worshipping the City,” typed on clipping page: “Editorial syndicated throughout the country.” M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
our arts and crafts, that is, our real American Art, that we have here in our own United States for this is what we may call genuine American art…”55

Once returned to the Southwest, the Indians who had traveled to New York were eager to describe their experiences to family, friends and neighbors. In a letter Morris Burge wrote to La Farge from Santa Fe, early in 1932, Burge described the return of Nez Bitsidee and Ushkay Begay to Shiprock, NM, on Christmas Day, “while a Christmas feed, attended by some three hundred Navajos, was in progress.” When asked for a report on “his adventures,” Bitsidee “mounted a box…and addressed the crowd.” According to one of those in attendance, Bitsidee “talked for three hours, describing all that he had done since leaving the reservation, and answering innumerable questions.” He was said to have remarked that “everything he saw was beyond his expectations. He was especially impressed by the battleship and, of course, the ocean. ‘The buildings were taller than the highest pine on the mountains. So many were the people in the streets that it was impossible to tell whether you were coming or going.”56 The letter also revealed that Indians who attended the EITA were paid about $25 apiece for their efforts. 57

Distribution of Exposition Collection

After its run in New York, the EITA traveled to other venues in 1932 and ’33.58 At the expo’s conclusion, its organizers hoped to find a permanent home for some 55 objects – mostly pottery – that had been part of the show.59 Both John Sloan and Walter Pach believed the

56 Morris Burge to Oliver La Farge, February 5, 1932. M&AEW, Box 8, Folder AC18.144.1.
57 Ibid.
58 See Chapter 4, note 1, for list of venues and dates.
59 According to the EITA catalogue, the collection consisted of at least fifty-five objects, of which forty-three were pieces of pottery. Of the forty-three, twenty-nine were modern works
Metropolitan Museum of Art should take on the objects, and to that end Sloan wrote a letter to the Metropolitan’s president, William Sloane Coffin Sr., expressing his colleagues’ “desire to establish a permanent exhibit of American Indian art in a fine arts museum.” Writing on behalf of the EITA’s organizers, Sloan wrote, “We believe it fitting that the Metropolitan Museum of Art designate a room, preferably in the American Wing, in which might be preserved as art, objects, both ancient and modern, of American Indian origin.” He concluded, “Recognition by an institution such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art would be an inspiration to our living Indian artists to maintain the traditions of their race, and incidentally, it would better their economic situation by fostering a demand for fine objects of American Indian art.”

Though Pach also made an appeal to the Met, the idea met with strong resistance from the museum, and John and Dolly Sloan eventually gave up, urging White to “forget the Metropolitan” and found her own museum, “so that the world, when we have all passed on, will know what is the person that made Americans recognize Indians as artists.” The Sloans believed that even if White could not open the museum for several years, she should “immediately get very busy and register” its name – for which they offered suggestions.

including works by Tonita Roybal, Lupita Chaves, Maria Martinez, Cecelia Martinez, Monica Silva and Cruzita Trujilo. Six pieces were from 1900, and eight were listed in the catalogue as “old,” and dated between the 1870-80s. The collection included four pieces of jewelry: a Navajo bracelet, two Santo Domingo necklaces, and a Zuni necklace. A Kiowa drum and seven baskets from the Northwest Coast rounded out the collection.

62 John’s suggestion was “THE WHITE MUSEUM OF AMERICAN INDIAN ART,” but Dolly noted that White could use her initial or anything she chose. They also suggested “WHITE INDIAN ART MUSEUM,” which Dolly felt John was “quite keen” about White using. Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, February 9, 1934. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.4.
Meantime, Sloan was trying to organize an exhibition of Tonita Pena’s paintings at the Whitney Museum of American Art. He believed White should loan a group of Pena’s paintings from her own collection, “without anything at all connected with the Exposition,” in order to “let people know that there are some people collecting Indian art.”63 In a letter to White, however, Dolly Sloan complained that the Whitney “made a rule to show only one-man or one-woman memorial shows.”64 Sloan, therefore, approached the Museum of Modern Art and the Kraushaar Gallery, since, as Dolly explained, it was “more important to have them at a museum or recognized gallery than at the clubs,” because it was “impossible to get the art critics to go to the club shows, unless it would be a loan collection of Rembrandt’s.”65 Eventually, a travelling Pena show, organized by Ishauu and featuring some two dozen works from White’s collection, was seen in Newport, RI; the Currier Art Gallery, in Manchester, NH; Lawrence College in Appleton, WI; the Arnot Gallery, in Elmira, NY; and Cornell University.66 And, while the Whitney had declined to hold a show of her works, that museum purchased Pena’s painting Basket Dance for its permanent collection – at the behest of its director, Juliana Force.67

Sloan also was eager to bring Native American artists back to New York, and, in the wake of the Diego Rivera mural controversy at Rockefeller Center,68 campaigned to have Indian

63 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, January 10, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.2.
64 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, January 18, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.2.
65 Ibid.
66 The Art Association in Newport, RI, September 7-27, 1933; The Currier Art Gallery, Manchester, NH, October 2-30, 1933; Lawrence College of Appleton, WI, December 1-22, 1933; The Arnot Gallery, Elmira, NY, January 1-31, 1934; Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, February 14-March 14, 1934. Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, June 28, 1933, August 11, 1933, September 20, 1933, and Press Release, August 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
67 According to Art Digest, “Mrs. Juliana Force, director of the museum, saw the picture in Venice last Summer, and had it ‘earmarked.’” Clipping, “Whitney Acquires Indian’s Painting, Art Digest, March 15, 1933. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
68 In October 1932, Rivera was commissioned to paint a mural for the lobby of the RCA building at Rockefeller Center. He arrived in New York in March 1933 to begin work on the mural.
artists paint a mural there. Murals by Ma Pe Wi, Oqwa Pi, O-Pa-Mu-Nu, and Tse-Ye-Mu, had been added to the Corcoran venue of the EITA (figure 4.6), were shown at the 1933 Century of Progress exposition in Chicago, and featured in the 1933 SIA show. Early in 1934, Dolly Sloan told Elizabeth White that John Sloan had been invited to have dinner with the building’s architects, who wanted “to consult him about the mural situation,” and planned to “make a strong appeal that the Indians be allowed to cover the space.” Sloan was pushing for Awa Tsireh and Oqwa Pi to paint the murals and Dolly felt he had “a very strong talking point on account of the regret list of the group from the National Academy who are trying to fight against any foreigners, as they call them, doing the work.” She noted that “the National Academy cannot dare to fight the Indian murals, because their organization is formed to fight for American Art and the only American Art, of course, we have, is the Indian Art,” and confided that her husband was “confident that Mr. Nelson Rockefeller is keen about them having Indian murals there, but I understand on account of Rivera’s Fiasco that the Rockefeller family have decided not to express their personal feeling.” In any event, no Native American murals were made at Rockefeller Center.

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entitled, *Man at the Crossroads*. His inclusion of a portrait of Lenin was deemed unacceptable and in May he was told to remove the image of Lenin. Rivera refused to change the mural and was promptly paid for the mural and banned from the site. The mural was covered up and eventually destroyed.

69 Clipping, “Indian Artists Take Up Mural Painting,” *Art Digest*, January 1, 1933. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
70 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, June 15, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
71 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, June 16, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
72 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, July 5, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
Amelia Elizabeth White in the 1930s

In the thirties, A.E. White’s influence extended well beyond the EITA as she continued to lead the campaign for Indian art by example. She lent works from her collection to the Brooklyn Museum, curated exhibitions for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, continued to operate her gallery, and saw to it that Indian art was shown once again at the Society of Independent Artists (SIA) exhibitions. Although White focused her efforts in New York, she lived primarily in Santa Fe, relying on Dolly Sloan and Virginia Cross in New York to run the gallery and promote her collection and personal style. This distance may have actually increased White’s impact in New York – adding a mystique as well as an authenticity to White’s personal style and the gallery inventory, which came directly from the Southwest.73

The show of works from her collection in Brooklyn – Pueblo and Kiowa Indian Drawings from the Southwest (A.E. White Collection) – went on view in February 1930 (figure 4.6). Like the EITA and the traveling Pena show that succeeded it, the Brooklyn show was testament to private individuals’ growing interest and investment in Native American production. But, in addition to works by living artists from New Mexico and Oklahoma, the exhibit included “ethnological pieces from the Museum’s collection illustrating the traditional art of the Pueblo Indians;” as well as copies by Elsie McDougall of some recently excavated “Aztec frescos (circa 1500 A.D.) from Tizatlan near Tlaxcala, Mexico.”74

Most of the Pueblo artists represented at the Brooklyn show were becoming familiar in New York; they included Oqwa Pi, Pena, Awa Tsireh and Ma Pe Wi. An accompanying press release suggested that this exhibit, like others of the thirties, was intended to elevate the Indian

73 Judy Sund, email to the author, February 25, 2014.
practitioner’s status – that is, to “place the Indian in a new light as competent artist.” The same release noted that White’s collection was the result of her astuteness (she “recognized the talent”) as well as “her welfare work among the Indians,” which “encouraged native craftsmanship in better textiles, as well as the most ambitious fields of expression.”

The following year, on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), White curated a booth at the Antiques Exposition at the Grand Central Palace in New York (she already had organized a booth for the BIA at the International Exposition in Seville, Spain, in 1929). A press release stated that the booth would “represent an early American colonial room,” but would incorporate “antique American Indian textiles, pottery, baskets” in order to show “how Indian art objects may be used as interior decoration.” White cast her net wide as she sought both display objects and objects to be offered for sale – particularly weavings, pottery and silver. She asked “Mr. Staples” at Crafts del Navajo in Coolidge, NM, to send “a specimen of Navajo silver, silver box or belt, or both,” and he complied. From the Spanish & Indian Trading Co., White requested the loan of “one or two pieces of old pueblo pottery” as well as small pieces of pottery (“such as ash trays”) to sell, and in a letter to “Mr. Leighton” she wondered if he “would care exhibit the large Navajo rug which you showed me the other day?” In a letter to “Mr. Schweizer,” at the Fred Harvey Co., White requested a “specimen of antique Navajo weaving”

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76 Press Release, American Indian Antiques to be shown at Antiques Exposition. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.  
77 A.E. White to Mr. Staples, February 9, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230. Mr. Staples to A.E. White, February 12, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.  
79 A.E. White to Fred Leighton, February 9, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.
for exhibit, along with “a selection of small, old rugs” she could sell.  

From Wick Miller, who ran the San Ysidro Trading Co., she asked for “6 or 8 silver ash trays like those you sent me last.”

Both an architect’s blueprint of the booth (designed by John Mead Howell) and a color photograph of the booth exist (figure 4.7). The white walls featured decorative molding and the floor was a dark wood. The back wall of the booth contained a decorative fireplace with a mantle, flanked by two open niches/bookshelves that were semicircular on top. White selected the furnishings from Ginsburg & Levy, a Madison Avenue store that specialized in American and English antiques. They included a mahogany center table with two chairs, an easy chair (which appears to be upholstered in pink toile), a lamp stand, and a bookcase secretary with two glass doors. Three blankets were arranged on the floor: a small grey, yellow, green and white runner in front of the fireplace, and two larger blankets in red, black and white, all of which featured black and white stripes. An eclectic collection of decorative objects, placed throughout the room, included traditional baskets and pots, as well as pottery lamps and ashtrays. A beaded vest was draped over one of the chairs, and a large red drum, a canteen, and two belts also were displayed, as were several dolls. In addition to kachina dolls and small ceramics, the buffet held a Hopi tablet, and on the walls next to it were a bow, feathered dance shield, and baby carrier.

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80 A.E. White to Mr. Schweizer, Fred Harvey Co., February 9, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230. Mr. Schweizer, Fred Harvey Co. to A.E. White, February 12, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230. A.E. White to Mr. Schweizer, Fred Harvey Co., February 17, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.


82 M&AEW, Box 30, Folder AC18.385 and M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.

83 Benjamin Ginsburg, Ginsburg & Levy, Inc. to A.E. White, February 17, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.
The Official Guide to Exhibits (figure 4.8), described the booth as a “Display of textiles, baskets, beadwork, pottery, etc., made by the Indians of the United States, arranged as interior decoration by Amelia E. White.”\textsuperscript{84} It noted that the baskets in the booth came from Neah Bay, WA; Mescalero Apache Reservation; Jicarilla Apache Reservation; and the White Mountain Apache Reservation. The beadwork was credited to the St. Francis Mission in South Dakota. The old Navajo blankets had been sent by the Fred Harvey Company and the Fred Leighton Indian Trading Post, the “old pottery” by the Spanish & Indian Trading Company, and the silver by Crafts del Navajo. The “curios,” presumably the kachinas, tableta, and drum, all came from Ishauu. Although modern watercolors had been shown at the booth in Seville in 1929, none were included here.

In turning the booth into a model living room, White deployed “the ensemble setting,” which emerged in the late twenties as what Kristina Wilson describes as “the dominant style of commercial display.”\textsuperscript{85} Wilson connects this trend in U.S. department store product arrangement to the debut of period rooms in the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1924 and the creation of similar rooms at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1929. “Furniture retailers and manufacturers believed that these displays – which ranged from a few items gathered together to fully outfitted model rooms and even multi-room model apartments – were potent sales vehicles.”\textsuperscript{86} Such model rooms showed “how various products could be used in an interior” as well as providing “a coherent picture of a fantasy home that the consumer could acquire in pieces (or in its entirety).”\textsuperscript{87} This shift in department store marketing strategies, from

\textsuperscript{84} Official Guide to Exhibits of the Third International Antiques Expositions, February 27-March 7, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.230.
\textsuperscript{85} Kristina Wilson, Livable Modernism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 17.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
“whole-sale storage rooms” to ensemble displays proved especially important for the rise of Indian Chic, since it not only showed buyers that Indian art was suitable to the modern home, but explicitly demonstrated modes of successful incorporation. Model rooms were prominent features of Indian art exhibitions in the late thirties and forties, as photo spreads spotlighting Indian pieces in the homes of notable people, which served a similar purpose, graced the pages of popular magazines.

Gallery correspondence indicates that White’s Ishauu Gallery continued, until its closure in 1937, to display and sell the same sorts of objects as it had in twenties, though White now fielded more special orders and made more specific requests for object types from both traders and artists. In 1930, White had explored a partnership with Fred Leighton, who operated The Indian Trading Post in Chicago, which sold “rugs, blankets, fabrics, pottery, beadwork, baskets,

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88 In one missive, for instance, Virginia Cross sent a “List for Miss White for things needed at Ishauu’S,” which included “Tobacco jars or cigarette jars (Maricopa and San Ildefonso); Large black plates (about 9 inches in diameter) polished on both sides; Large black decorated plates; Book ends (Rabbit); Small rugs for pillow tops; Small belts; Small rings & others; Old good bracelets; Medium-sized rugs, about 4 by 2 ½ or 4 by 3.” [Mrs. Cross] to A.E. White, May 19, 1930. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.225. In another letter Cross wrote, “We have no more pillow tops nor modern black and grey and brown rugs about 4 or 5 feet long by 2 to 3 feet wide. We don’t need many but we do need a few. A little red or green in them one man was looking for.” Virginia Cross to A. E. White, June 1930. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.225. A letter from the Spanish and Indian Trading Co. to Cross, apparently responding to a specific request, expressed willingness to provide “a rug with the allover birdseye pattern, using the colors you mention, the rug to be 6 ft. 6 in. x 3 ft. wide…The cost of the blanket would be $48.50. This is for a special grade of wool which we find is the most satisfactory, Navajo spun, specially dyed, and Navajo woven.” Norman S. McGee, Spanish and Indian Trading Co., Santa Fe, NM to Miss Virginia Cross, May 12, 1930. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.225. Wick Miller of Southwest Indian Crafts also offered to fill specific requests, noting, “Should you at any time have any old type bracelet that you wished copied, we would be glad to have our Indians do the work.” Wick Miller, Southwest Indian Crafts, San Ysidro, NM, to Ishauu Co., June 21, 1930. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.225.
jewelry, curious objects of art and utility from all the Americas,”90 and billed itself as “a genuine clearing house for the native handicrafts of this new world.”90 In hopes of expanding to New York, and eventually opening a nationwide chain of Indian shops, Leighton had approached the White sisters and Mary C. Wheelwright, all of whom agreed to put $10,000 toward the project.91 In December 1930, Elizabeth White presented Leighton with a formal agreement to consolidate Ishauu with The Indian Trading Post, though in February 1931 she withdrew the offer, citing a potential conflict of interest with the EITA. White felt that people might misunderstand their association and told Leighton that “such a misconstruction would certainly create an unpleasant impression in connection with your business and it might be disastrous to the Exposition. I have, therefore, decided that you had better count me out for the next year or two.”92

Though White left the door open for a future collaboration with Leighton, nothing seems to have come of it, and in late 1933 Dolly Sloan wrote White to report that “Mr. Fred Leighton is opening a gallery of Indian art at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Eighth Street. I do not know what the final title will be but I am going to watch him for infringements.”93 “Vogue’s address book” of December 1935 listed the shop as Fred Leighton’s Indian Trading Post, which offered “American Indian Jewelry and Rugs” alongside “Mexican Glass, Pottery and Toys.”94

Ishauu, meantime, became a retail outlet for a growing cadre of craftspeople and artists from across the country, whom it encouraged to produce work for the growing Euro-American market. In 1931, for instance, the gallery took a consignment of baskets from a group of Yaqui

89 Lectures by Mr. Fred Leighton of the Indian Trading Post, 1932. Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections Department at The University of Iowa Libraries. http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/tc/id/25297/rec/15
90 Ibid.
91 Schrader, The Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 42.
92 A.E. White to Fred Leighton, February 22, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.1.
93 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, November 16, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
Indians in Tucson, who, faced with financial difficulties had turned to the native craft for the first time. A similar request came to the gallery in 1932 from Dorothy Deane, a social worker in Lac du Flambeau, WI, who was “attempting to place the handiwork of the Chippewa Indian women of this reservation in many different high class gift shops in various parts of the country. It has been suggested to me that yours would be a most excellent one in which to place some of the articles.” Although White was sympathetic to Deane’s project (“I am very much interested in what you are doing as it seems to me the real way to help the economic difficulties of the Indians”) she was unimpressed by the items themselves, which Deane described as “genuine buckskin, hand-beaded moccasins and other Chippewa beaded work,” White acknowledged that she was “not very familiar with the Chippewa work so I cannot tell just what you might have,” but – raising the issue of authenticity – she wondered if Deane could send “anything of their own traditional design and workmanship.” Deane replied, “The work which I sent to you was all made by Chippewa women and is authentic so far as both workmanship and design is concerned.” She admitted, however, that “they have in some instances copied southwest designs because those who are not familiar with Chippewa workmanship often find them more attractive. I am trying, however, to keep them to their own traditional designs as much as possible.”

In the fall of 1933, Ishauu not only changed its name to the Gallery of American Indian Art (GAIA), but opened in a new space at 850 Lexington Avenue. A postcard announced its inaugural exhibition at “the first Gallery in the East permanently dedicated to the Arts and Crafts

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95. The Yaqui were represented by a Miss Lindsay Fairfax who wrote to White on their behalf, noting that they “had a hard time getting food this year,” and “as this is their very first attempt at basket making, I thought they needed some encouragement and so put in an order.” Lindsay Fairfax to A.E. White, May 19, 1931. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.226.
96. Dorothy Deane to A. E. White, March 15, 1932. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.226.
97. Dorothy Deane to A. E. White, April 30, 1932. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.226.
of the American Indian.” The opening was reviewed in the *New York Times* by Edward Alden Jewell, who described it as a “miscellaneous exhibition that contains, among other items, paintings, blankets and small objects of craftwork,” though he did single out “a large panel by Tonita Pena.” Jewell quoted White as saying, “It is my idea to give those who have a taste for beautiful things the opportunity to see the best in the modern work of our Indians and the chance to obtain beautiful specimens for themselves.” A few days later, anthropologist Oliver La Farge issued a statement that Jewell printed in the *New York Times*, stating his belief that the Gallery of American Indian Art would provide “a real service, both to the Indians whose work it will represent and to white Americans who appreciate work of the highest order.”

In December 1933, the GAIA held a “Christmas Exhibition of Gifts.” Reviewing it in the *New York Times*, Jewell wrote that it promised “gifts of lasting interest,” the “artistic merit” of which was “not inconsistent with reasonable prices.” Among the items offered were paintings, blankets, jewelry, pottery and baskets, which, according to Jewell, had been made by Tewas, Navajos, Zunis, Hopi and Apache.

Beginning in 1934, and apparently at John Sloan’s suggestion, the GAIA moved away from “miscellaneous exhibitions” and mounted a series of focused shows. Although Sloan had advocated that each exhibition take up a “distinct craft,” in practice they tended to focus on individual artists, cultures or communities (e.g., the watercolors of one artist were displayed

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98 M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.227.
100 Ibid.
104 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, June 15, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
alongside pottery from the same Pueblo). A cycle of publicity accompanied each show as it opened and closed.

In January 1934 the gallery exhibited watercolors by Oqwa Pi alongside pottery from San Ildefonso. In his round-up for shows for the New York Times, Howard Devree called it “an exotic note in the week’s exhibitions.” Devree wrote that Oqwa Pi’s work kept to “the traditional Indian painting – costumes, stiffly decorative figures, clear, bright colors, use of antlers, masks and primitive motifs.” Characterizing the pottery as “remarkable,” Devree described it as “stone-polished and of very pleasing proportions.”

A show mounted at GAIA the following month, titled “First Showing of Paintings by the Zuni Indians,” displayed “old and new Zuni pottery, some of their woven belts, and jewelry.” Dolly Sloan told White that she had been “pleased and surprised” at the publicity both the gallery and the Zuni show received. Devree called attention to it in the Times, noting, “Brightly decorative little water-colors, chiefly of costumed Indians, together with old and new pottery – the work of Zuni tribesmen – comprise the current exhibition at the Gallery of American Indian Art.”

A March exhibition focused on Navajo production, and included watercolors, jewelry and blankets. Dolly Sloan characterized the Navajo watercolors (14 of which were lent by La

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108 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, February 13, 1934. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.4.
111 The actual sales made during the month of March 1934, totaled $212.45. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.227.
Farge) as “unique because they are about things, their homes, their cattle, and the country.” Devree found two of them particularly compelling: “A bucking bronco, by one of the younger artists – who have had little instruction – is especially noteworthy. A formal group composition of women at work, by one of the older painters, is outstanding.” He reported that “strikingly designed silver and turquoise bracelets and other craft work are also on display.”

A spring show at GAIA featured “pictures of children and Indians by Indian artists,” which Devree described as “all very decorative.” Dolly Sloan was soon able to report to White that “both Mrs. Cross and I feel that in the last month there seems to be a little more interest in the Gallery. Some sales and people coming in. I feel that probably the real test of what we will be able to do will come this coming season.” Eager to generate interest and business, and probably inspired by the success of the traveling exhibition of Tonita Pena’s work, they decided, in the fall of 1934, to mount exhibitions devoted to the best-known Pueblo artists.

An October show featured watercolors by Ma Pe Wi alongside Zia pottery. In the *Times*, Devree called Ma Pe Wi “a Pueblo lone wolf of art,” who “against his blank backgrounds presents colorful tribal ceremonies with sure rhythm and bright color.” He one again credited the GAIA with striking “an exotic note in the shows of the week.” A review in the *Herald Tribune* called it “the first collected showing of Indian ceremonial studies made by Ma Pe Wi, one of the pioneers of the Pueblo group of artists at Santa Fe.” Describing him as “one of the most decoratively inclined of the Pueblos,” the writer for the *Herald Tribune* noted, “Ma Pe Wi combines in his water color drawings the technical care and fresh sense of color belonging to

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112 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 5, 1934. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.056.4.
116 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, June 28, 1934. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.
these artists generally.” The review also commended the GAIA for “doing helpful service for the Indian painters under the sponsorship of Miss Amelia White, assisted by Mrs. John Sloan.”

The Ma Pe Wi show was followed by one that showcased watercolors by Awa Tsireh and San Ildefonso pottery. Devree, in reviewing it, asserted, “Awa Tsireh, a San Ildefonso Indian, displays a wider color range and stronger compositional sense than most of his brethren. Totemic birds are outstanding. There are hunters carrying game and obstreperous game pursuing luckless hunters. These little vignettes are delightful and very decorative.”

GAIA ended 1934 with a “Christmas Exhibition of American Indian Arts and Crafts.” Like the Christmas show of 1933, this one was said by The New York Times to feature items “specially selected for suitability as Christmas gifts and with an eye to low prices,” which included “decorative pottery, water-colors by Indian painters, silver and turquoise jewelry, katchinas [sic] and a variety of other objects – exotic notes in the gift field.” Among the watercolors were works by the recently exhibited Ma Pe Wi and Awa Tsireh.

Watercolors also were a focus of the first GAIA show of 1935, which in addition to paintings featured old and modern pots. Devree wrote, “The Indian speaks for himself through a collection of the ollas, bowls, storage jars, platters and other beautifully decorated products of Indian craftsmanship,” and drew attention to Tonita Pena’s watercolors “representing the Pueblo pottery makers at work.” By March, Dolly Sloan reported to White that the GAIA was “fairly stripped of any variety of pictures to hang. The present show looks very beautiful but I had to

118 “Art Notes,” Herald Tribune, October 14, 1934. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder A18.337.5.
use pictures that we have used many times before and following Sloan’s advice, I did not send any notice to the critics.” Nonetheless, sales for March and April were up over the previous year perhaps owing to publicity generated at the SIA, which in 1935 showed four blankets lent by the GAIA.

The May 1935 exhibit at GAIA was less focused than usual, showing “modern Navajo rugs, Navajo and Zuni jewelry, and Zuni children’s water colors.” Devree suggested, “Water-colors, pottery, silver and turquoise jewelry, rugs, linen garments, baskets and a variety of other work by Indians of the Southwest have been grouped to advantage for the Summer exhibition and sale,” but in fact sales fell off as the summer progressed, and in August GAIA made no sales at all, as Sloan and Cross focused on finding a new space.

By fall, GAIA had relocated to 57th Street, and was, according to Dolly Sloan, “taking shape.” She told White that the shop window was “marvelously beautiful,” “the most striking window on 57 Street,” and assured her that it “certainly attracts the eye of the passer-by.” Its reopening, in October was signaled by a postcard announcement of an “Opening Exhibition of Water Colors, Rugs, Pottery and Jewelry Old and Modern,” as the GAIA returned to the

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124 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 26, 1935. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177. *Parnassus* included the previous month’s “Indian Baskets and Water Colors by Awa Tsireh, February 4-28,” and a listing for “Exhibition of water colors, costumes and pipes, March 4-29,” but there do not appear to have been any reviews of the shows. “Calendar of Current Art Exhibitions in New York,” *Parnassus* 7, no. 2 (February 1935): 32; “Calendar of Current Art Exhibitions in New York,” *Parnassus* 7, no. 3 (March 1935): 32.
125 Actual sales made during the month of March 1935 totaling $248.59, while April sales amounted to $372.59.
129 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, October 9, 1935. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.
130 M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.227.
“miscellaneous” format. Devree described the offerings as “water-colors by a number of hither-to unexhibited Indian practitioners in this field and some new things by our old friend Awa Tsireh. Pottery, fabrics, costumes, silver and turquoise jewelry, dolls and a considerable range of other native handicraft work are also shown.”131 Dolly Sloan told White, “The water colors are so different in subject that I believe it will be a grand success. I also believe there may be some sales made.”132

The December show also was broad ranging. Drawn from White’s Collection, it included both Hopi and Pueblo watercolors – some of which had not been previously shown – and, as Devree reported, “silver and turquoise ornaments, feather and textile work, pottery and handicraft objects.”133

1936 opened with an exhibition of new watercolors by Tonita Pena, who would be given another one-woman show later that year.134 Although GAIA’s April show was devoted to Modern Navajo Blankets,135 watercolors were the focus of exhibitions through 1936 and into 1937 (they generally were accompanied by rugs, pottery and jewelry). Ma Pe Wi’s watercolors were shown in March and December,136 and Oqwa Pi was showcased in May and September.137 New watercolors by Awa Tsireh were the subject of GAIA’s October exhibit.138

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132 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, October 17, 1935. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.
In 1937, though watercolors continued to dominate GAIA’s exhibitions, there was a shift from one-person to group shows. In January, for instance, works by Ma Pe Wi shared space with watercolors by Andy Tsihnahjinnie and Tse-ye-Mu. February’s exhibit was “Watercolors by Zuni children and adults,” and in March, drawing again on White’s collection, GAIA showed Oqwa Pi, Awa Tsireh, Tonita Pena, Fred Kabotie, and Leo Guatogue. April’s exhibit was “Watercolors by Julian and Richard Martinez” and in May GAIA mounted “Watercolors by Fred Kabotie, Thomas Vigil and others.” The summer exhibition, which would be the gallery’s last, was the more generic “Watercolors by Southwestern Artists.”

Following the death of her sister Martha on May 30, 1937, White decided to close GAIA and disperse its inventory. In a letter to White, Oliver La Farge wrote, “I am sorry that the Gallery should have continued to be so unprofitable as to require your closing it, but in the circumstances I fully understand your doing so. After all, for a great many years now you have maintained that service to the Indians at very considerable expense to yourself, and it is not reasonable to expect you to continue it indefinitely.”

As Dolly Sloan made efforts to place the GAIA’s holdings, John Sloan documented the dispersal in a series of scrapbooks, which he gave to White. There were a few bumps in the process; both Robert B. Harshe (1879-1938), director of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Herbert

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139 “Calendar of Current Art Exhibitions in New York,” *Parnassus* 9, no. 2 (February 1937): 44.
143 Oliver La Farge to A.E. White, June 23, 1937. M&AEW, Box 6, Folder AC18.110.
Winlock, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, rebuffed Sloan’s overtures. As Dolly Sloan reported to White, “I was sorry about Harshe refusing to accept anything at all, but Sloan informs me after I did all of my best letter writing to Harshe, that he never expected him to accept anything. He thinks he is in the same class as Winlock of the Metropolitan. Sloan thinks he does not even know a good necktie when he sees one.”\textsuperscript{144}

On the other hand, several institutions were happy to benefit from GAIA’s demise. Among the institutions that received objects were the American Museum of Natural History, the Art Students League, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Columbus Museum of Art, the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Newark Museum.\textsuperscript{145} These donations sparked exhibitions and another wave of nationwide publicity for White and Native American art. Dolly Sloan wrote to White, that “[Sloan] amuses me but he is so sincerely happy about having his dream, and yours, come true, for in less than twenty years the directors of the museums have agreed that you both knew what you were doing.”\textsuperscript{146}

As 1937 drew to a close, Dolly reminded White, “you paved the way first for the appreciation in New York.” She also related a conversation she had recently had with Tom Lynn of The New York Times, who assured her he would do “all he can to land the rest of the material in the Metropolitan, but from his observations in touring the country just looking at what the museums were doing in the different cities, that they are doing more constructive work than the Metropolitan ever thought of doing.”\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{144} Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, December 15, 1937. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.  
\textsuperscript{145} M&AEW, Box 14.  
\textsuperscript{146} Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, November 6, 1937. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.  
\textsuperscript{147} Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, December 15, 1937. M&AEW, Box 9, Folder AC18.177.
Native American Art at the Society of Independent Artists

Perhaps encouraged by the success of the EITA, the organizers of the SIA exhibition decided, in 1932, to include Indian watercolors for the first time in ten years. John Sloan still was the president of the SIA, as well as one of its directors. The 1932 exhibition featured a 20-by-30-foot “Indian room” that, in addition to watercolors made by Native Americans (whose names were cited in the catalogue), the SIA showed Navajo blankets, Navajo jewelry, Pueblo pottery (some of it by named artists), and basketry from Arizona and Washington. An accompanying catalogue noted that the organizers wished “to congratulate American Indian artists on their progress since their works of art were first shown at the Independent show in New York City in 1920.”

The catalogue also included related ads (figure 4.9), among them a notice that “Modern American Indian Paintings, Basketry, Blankets, Pottery, [and] Jewelry” selected from the EITA would be on sale at the 1932 SIA exhibition (figure 4.10). The SIA sale was overseen by Dolly Sloan, who “hoped to include “some bird ash trays from the Spanish & Indian,” noting that “They always sell and we could make some money on them.” Dolly wrote to White that “Mrs. Martin and myself will divide the time at the [SIA] exhibition, so that there will always be one or the other of us there. In that way we feel we cannot possibly miss a sale.” “We will not have a great deal of material, but I hope we will be able to place it well. Everything that we have will be for sale, and we have a strong hope that we can bring in some money from this showing.” In the letter, Dolly noted that “Wyatt Davis has promised to take a picture of the Indian Room at

148 Forward to 16th Annual Exhibition of The Society of Independent Artist (New York: Grand Central Palace, 1932), np.
150 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 15, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
the Independents for me, and make me a present of it,” but I have yet to locate a print of this photograph.

The SIA exhibition of the following year, 1933, featured larger-sized Native American works: six murals lent through the EITA, each produced by a single artist. Albert Hardy, Oqwa Pi, Tonita Pena, Awa Tsireh, Paul Tsisue, and Romando Vigil were represented. Dolly Sloan reported to White that “the Independent opened with eight hundred people and the murals are nicely hung and creating a great interest,” and remarked that John Sloan had compared those of Oqwa Pi and Awa Tsireh to Diego Rivera’s murals.152

The 1934 SIA show included “a whole wall of Indian art,” which in Dolly Sloan’s assessment looked “very nice”; Sloan was confident White “would approve of the hanging.”153 The show, however, received little notice as the art world focused instead on continued fallout from the Rivera murals controversy.154 In 1935 Awa Tsireh and Oqwa Pi showed three paintings apiece at the SIA, which also displayed four Navajo blankets on loan from the Gallery of American Indian Art. Described as “modern” in the catalogue, they were not ascribed to particular artists. Writing in *The New York Times*, Jewell described the year’s SIA show as “large, containing 862 catalogued works, exclusive of the usual display of rugs and water-colors by Indian artists from the Gallery of American Indian Art and also not counting the twenty-five paintings by inmates of Clinton prison, which are listed separately.”155

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152 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, April 11, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.2.
153 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, April 12, 1934. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.4.
The Brooklyn Museum

The Brooklyn Museum, which had focused its attentions elsewhere for most of the decade following its 1930 exhibition of Native American watercolors from White’s collection, once again began showcasing Indian art in the second half of the decade. Though mainly focused on paintings, the Brooklyn exhibitions also included works in other media from the museum’s collection. Crawford’s interest had shifted, over the course of the 1930s, to the history of fashion,156 and he did little in this decade to promote the museum’s collections or shape Brooklyn’s exhibitions of Native American art – exhibitions that therefore had much less impact on interior design and women’s fashions than the EITA or the Ishauu/GAIA shows.

The Brooklyn Museum staged The Studio: U.S. Indian School, Santa Fe, New Mexico – an exhibition of more than 100 paintings “by forty-seven young American Indian boys and girls from the United States School, Santa Fe, New Mexico”157 in the spring of 1936 (figures 4.11-4.13). Organized in the hope that it would be “a revelation to elementary and high school teachers and students of painting in the East,” the show also included “a hopi [sic] dance mask, four Siatashe jars and five kachina dolls,” from the Museum’s collection.158 In 1938, the Museum devoted two shows to Native American production: Child Art of the American Indian and American Indian Objects. The children’s art had been assembled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and American Indian Objects included “material not usually shown to the public” (e.g., a Jemez ceremonial flute, a Zuni bull-roarer, a Zuni feather and shell wand, an image of a Zuni

157 Press Release. BMA, Records of the Department of Public Information. Press releases, 1931-1936.01-03_1936, 043. The Santa Fe Indian School was founded in 1890. In 1932, Dorothy Dunn established “The Studio School” there.
158 Ibid.
war god, Hopi ceremonial wands, a Kwakiutl rattle, and two Blackfoot peace pipes).  

Both shows featured related public programming; during the children’s art exhibition “moving pictures on Indian life and art” were shown on Saturday mornings, and *American Indian Objects* coincided with an American Indian Festival, which opened “with a program of music and dance in the Sculpture Court.”

At the close of the decade, Native American objects figured in Brooklyn’s panhistoric and cross-cultural exhibition, *Masks: Barbaric and Civilized*, which ran from October 1939 to January 1, 1940 (figures 4.14-4.18). Divided into five sections (protective masks; industrial and military masks; theatrical masks; death masks; religious and ceremonial masks), the show was billed as “the first general exhibition of masks ever to be presented,” and in a show of cultural sensitivity, a writer for the *Brooklyn Museum Bulletin* explained, “Although ‘Barbaric and Civilized’ suggests a classification under those two headings, no such division will be attempted since it is a question of opinion whether the gas mask of modern civilization is not more barbaric than the animal mask of primitive Africa.”

Although it is not now clear what section of the exhibit they occupied, three beauty masks by Elizabeth Arden were included, and in a press release the company boasted, “The earliest masks in the exhibit are those from the First Century, B.C.; the most recent – Beauty Masks by Elizabeth Arden as used in modern life by women of today.” The beauty masks in the exhibition were shown alongside a display of new make up colors, and a similar display was also on view in the windows of Abraham and Straus.

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159 Press Release. BMA, Records of the Department of Public Information. Press releases, 1937-1939.09-10_1938, 141.
161 Ibid.
another document of the growing connection between native art, retail outlets, and the modern consumer.

The illustrated catalogue of Brooklyn’s masks exhibit (with an essay by Spinden) juxtaposed an Elizabeth Arden “intra-cellular beauty mask” and a Kwakwaka’wakw, Thunderbird Transformation Mask, (Brooklyn Museum, 08.491.8902) (figures 4.15 and 4.16). Likewise, a ceremonial mask from the Iroquois False Face Society, lent by the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, was illustrated alongside a modern theatre mask designed by W.T. Benda (figure 4.17). Other modern masks in the exhibition included a fencing mask, a surgeon’s mask, a baseball catcher’s mask, and a gas mask.

Despite the Abraham and Strauss window, the Brooklyn mask show cannot be said to have had much impact on the rise of Native American Chic. The EITA had included twenty-five masks from the Northwest Coast, Southwest and East, but there were no masks listed in its EITA sales inventory, and while White used Hopi tabletas and headdresses as wall decoration, she did not incorporate masks into her interior design style.
Chapter 5: The Impact of Ishauu and White’s Example in the 1930s

Incorporation in both interior design and in women’s fashion was widely promoted in the thirties, via exhibitions, magazines, newspapers, and department stores. Publicity for the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts expanded the coverage from local and focused features in select journals to syndicated articles that appeared in newspapers across the country. Similarly, the traveling EITA had a retail component that made Indian objects available for purchase in several U.S. cities, fostering an interest among consumers that encouraged department stores to stock Indian-made objects as well. Those who had once been obliged to purchase Native American goods through specialty mail-order traders that advertised in magazines could now personally inspect objects (and, in some cases, the craftspeople who produced them).

In March 1932, three months after the EITA closed in New York, an advertisement for Bloomingdale’s (figure 5.1) announced, “The Indians are Coming!” “Bring your tots to see the Pueblo and Navajo ‘Injuns’ Monday March 7th. They’re real Indians, in their native costumes, working as they have worked for hundreds of years in New Mexico and Arizona! The silversmith, the potter, the weaver, the moccasin maker, the medicine man . . . See them against a background of Indian blankets, silver and handicrafts.”¹ The program of events at Bloomingdale’s also included talks by Wicky Miller – who ran the San Ysidro Trading Post, west of Santa Fe – delivered three times daily.

In a letter to White, Dolly Sloan described a trip to Bloomingdale’s “to see the Indian show and pick up what information we could,” but reported that Miller “certainly has not learned

¹ Bloomingdales’s advertisement. M&AEW, Box 28, Folder AC18.370.
anything from our Exposition.” In addition to watercolors, Sloan wrote, the department store display included “place cards and et ceteras, and when I say ‘etc.,’ I mean just that. They have bows and arrows, moccasins, drums, hundreds of bird ash trays (rather inferior ones) bad Hopi pottery, black pottery is fair, a few good large rugs properly priced, and innumerable bad ones selling from $1.90 up.” The exhibition also featured jewelry, which according to Sloan was “pretty nearly all modern, not bad, but light in weight.” As for the humans on display, she wrote, “They have a place for the sand painter, fenced in with two fences, and it made me feel horrible to see Wick Miller stamping all over it during his lecture, and the six Indians doing their numerous chores.”

Dolly Sloan was shocked by the lack of impact the EITA had had. “After seeing our show in New York and Springfield,” she wrote, “I never thought Indian art could look as rotten as it does at Bloomingdale’s;” she added that she “came away sick.” Her husband, John Sloan, had assured her, however, that the failings of the Bloomingdale’s exhibit provided “all the more reason we must go on and on.” Dolly told White that John felt “it is a very good thing that we can stay right in New York and give another art show of the Indian artists. Of course, our work for them as artists will always be met with these set-backs, but we must keep the goal that you set for them and if possible go beyond it.”

A few days later, in another letter to White, Sloan expanded upon her disappointment “in regard to Wicky Miller with the Indians at Bloomingdale’s,” which struck her as “very, very sad. They are really just being handled like the rest of the mob in New York City who are used to it. Wouldn’t you think that these traders would use some intelligence and realize that we had

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2 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 10, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
pointed the way and for a real financial success for themselves, following us would be the way to get it.”

Miller, she noted, was scheduled to follow the EITA beyond New York to its other venues, “going into the cities where we are showing, and having room in department stores to sell. We know in the case of Wick Miller the materials he had cannot compare with our own, but they are called ‘Indian art’, and they are very, very cheap.”

Apparently convinced that department stores could do better with appropriate guidance, Dolly Sloan considered approaching Wanamaker’s through a contact she had made there, hoping, she told White, that “they will stock up with rugs, baskets, jewelry etc. I have to agree to be able to supply a sufficient number of high quality and am trying to see if they will put up a log cabin and furnish it with the Indian Arts.” Sloan noted, “This man at Wanamaker’s seem’s [sic] to be dead set against the traders, he claims that they had installed a collection of rugs and they were very very bad and they withdrew them from sale and wrote off the experience as a loss.” In hopes of encouraging him to try again, this time with more enlightened support, Sloan “showed him a copy of our Introduction and I also took down a fair group of newspaper clippings and he said, of course, if he could have people like yourself and [John] Sloan and the authorities I spoke of, pass on the rugs before they came to them he felt that it would be all right. He is really interested and I hope it will have good results.”

Sloan’s efforts with Wanamaker’s apparently came to naught, but Virginia Cross seems to have had better success with Macy’s. In a letter to White in mid-1933, Cross reported that Macy’s was doing a show of interiors aimed at showing “how Modern painting can be used in different settings.” She speculated that “they might like to do a similar thing for us later next

6 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, March 15, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
7 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, May 18, 1932. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.1.
8 Dolly Sloan to A.E. White, July 14, 1933. M&AEW, Box 3, Folder AC18.056.3.
winter in regard to the Indian art.” Cross had “gotten the name of the person to approach on the subject, if the idea is anything that would interest you,” and thought “it might be a good thing to do as Macy’s has a very large connection and our things would be very widely seen.” Though no hard evidence of Cross’s follow-through exists, it seems likely that she had a hand in the establishment of Macy’s in-house “Indian Trading Post” some months later (figure 5.2). As Milbank observes, in the 1920s, Macy’s – though “still a bargain center” – “was also acquiring a reputation for better-quality merchandise.” In promoting Indian Chic, a trend aimed mainly at affluent customers, Macy’s looked to further its market share.

Set up in the rug department, Macy’s trading post displayed pottery, watercolors (by Tonita Pena, Oqwa Pi and Awa Tsireh), weavings and “a few selected Hopi Kachinas” that on-staff decorators – “enchanted with the effect of a Navajo or Hopi rug in a modern room, and with the decorative possibilities of the crudely beautiful Pueblo and Hopi pottery” – felt “fit with Contemporary Interior Decoration as deftly as anything concocted by the modern masters of design.” In the letter, Macy’s urged clients, “Tell your friends about the ‘Indian Trading Post.’ It’s a cheerful spot…and prices are low, in traditional Macy Fashion.”

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9 Virginia Cross to A.E. White, July 19, 1933. M&AEW, Box 12, Folder AC18.227.  
10 Undated letter from Macy’s M&AEW, Box 13, Folder AC18.234. Reference to the National Association of Indian Affairs in the letter denotes a date of 1933 or later, as the EAIA was renamed the NAIA that year. The letter also mentions Mrs. John Collier, who was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933-1945.  
11 Milbank, 97.  
12 Ibid.  
Incorporation in Fashion

Championed by White and given pride of place at the EITA, Indian jewelry, primarily Navajo silverwork, was increasingly incorporated into Euro-American women’s fashion in the 1930s. Articles about the Exposition and descriptions of the female artists whose work was on view there – Maria Martinez, Tonita Pena, Tonita Roybal – often drew attention to Native American silver, as did reporting on trend-setting non-Indian enthusiasts such as White. Just as White’s advocacy and example made it increasingly popular to scatter Indian objects throughout the modern home, so White’s embrace of Indian clothing, jewelry and accessories encouraged their move from the dude ranch to urban wardrobes. Indian jewelry and accessories proved especially popular in the thirties, as women relied on accessories to add variety to their wardrobes, which were dominated by clothes that “reflected leaner times” and were “narrow, long and spare” in silhouette, construction and decoration. The thirties also saw two innovations that encouraged slightly more form-fitting silhouettes, in spite of the continued lack of standardized sizing: zippers, a cheaper alternative to hook and eye closures and snaps; and Lastex, “a newly invented elastic substance.” Designers in the thirties also made greater use of belts, which allowed women more control over the fit of a garment. Along with jewelry and other accessories, belts served to enliven the understated thirties silhouette.

A syndicated Associated Press article from 1931, entitled “Junior League Backs Indian In His Artistic Endeavor,” reported, “Among those who are helping to introduce the American Indian as an artist to the American Public are a group of members of the Junior League of New York, who have been wearing Navajo Indian jewelry to further the plans of the Exposition of

14 Milbank, 98.
15 Milbank, 102.
Indian Tribal Arts, Inc." A second Associated Press article from the same year was headlined, “Navajo Jewelry to be Popular in the East: Opening of Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts at New York Expected to Give It Start.” Its author predicted that the opening of the Exposition would make “Navajo Jewelry in all its crude beauty” into a “popular adornment by the young fashionable of the day,” since such pieces “are handsome complements to the rough woolens, the jerseys, and the simply made street and sport ensembles.” This article described ways in which socially prominent young women had made Indian jewelry part of their ensembles, illustrating “the adaptability of silver and turquoise to the present mode in clothes.”

Miss Challis Walker, a prominent debutante, wore a gown of sheer black velvet with a jet turquoise necklace, and a silver belt, bracelet, ring and earrings all made by Navajo Indians. Miss Louisa Munroe wore a brown sports costume and wampum beads, while Miss Elizabeth Calloway wore a red velvet with silver beads, turquoise bracelets and turquoise rings. The jewelry was also shown with a formal gown of purple velvet, an afternoon dress of green chiffon velvet and a sports dress of orange crepe.

*Vogue* also cited well-known names in its reporting on the trend. In a feature called “What They are Wearing,” a *Vogue* staffer wrote, “Miss Elizabeth Thimble (of the Boston Thimbles)…laid out, on the Chinese dresser, a scarf, a great deal of gold jewelry and a piece of Navajo silver with turquoise . . . She has always admitted to herself that she likes clothes that are just a wee bit different.” In another article, “*Vogue* Covers the Country,” readers were pointed toward stores that sold the sort of Native American goods then trending. In Santa Fe, a leading shop was Southwest Arts and Crafts, and in Phoenix, the Skiles Indian Shop carried “Navajo and

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17 Associated Press, “Navajo Jewelry to be Popular in the East: Opening of Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts at New York Expected to Give It Start,” syndicated article, November 22, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
18 Ibid.
19 “What They are Wearing,” *Vogue*, April 1, 1935, 134.
20 “Vogue Covers the Country,” *Vogue*, December 1, 1934, 126.
Zuni hand-wrought silver and turquoise jewellery [sic]; and hand-hammered cigarette boxes and ash-trays, and salad bowls and serving spoons, only one of a kind in design."21 By 1936, a writer for *Vogue* noted that “Navajo jewellery [sic], old or new, must be included in any record of the Southwest’s addition to the decorative arts of our land,” but at the same time cautioned that “a little of it goes a long way on the average American."22

Although Native American garments were eclipsed by the sheer amount of jewelry at the EITA, items of clothing were on view there. In addition to the men’s shirts, Plains dresses, and California basketry caps that were prominent in exhibits of the twenties, the EITA included Navajo women’s dresses and Hopi clothing. White lent a Hopi Dance kilt, a Navajo woman’s two-piece dress, and a Hopi ceremonial shawl, which was reproduced in the Exposition’s catalogue. Women’s fashion soon took cues from the wealth of Southwestern garments on display.

In an article in *Harper's Bazaar*, Peggy Le Boutillier offered suggestions on how to “Dress American” in Navajo blouses, silver concho belts, buckskin boots and moccasins (figure 5.3).23 She noted,

> Not just a few Indian creations are applicable to our Eastern lives; the supply is limitless . . . Already in New Mexico and Arizona we have discovered velveteen blouses of the Navajos, buttoned with silver and lined with calico, which we wear in the country when it is cool indoors; and the knee-length buckskin boots, pliable as silk and richly beaded by hand, which we slip into at night when we change from our ski and tramping clothes.24

Having commented on how “smart” Indian belts made “of oval plaques of silver strung on a leather band” looked “with plain wool dresses,” Boutillier also drew attention to “moccasins

21 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 141.
hand-worked from one piece of skin, which make such decorative and durable country-house slippers.”\textsuperscript{25}

Boutillier’s article includes a photo of a Native American satin cowboy shirt, in black with “loud pink roses,” and an eagle feather bonnet, accompanied by a caption that reads, “The outrageous satin cowboy shirt affected by the Pueblo Indian, ripe to be plucked for the East to wear with gray flannels.”\textsuperscript{26} Another illustration shows two Indians, along with an inset photo of a pair of beaded boots; its caption notes, “From the Indians of Southwestern deserts come knee-length boots of the softest buckskin, to wear with bare legs and short skirts. These are lemon yellow, richly beaded in chartreuse, turquoise, white, and were made by the Sioux for their ceremonial dress.”\textsuperscript{27}

A \textit{Vogue} article from the late thirties, “Fashion: Indian Trading,” (figure 5.4) showed “Indian-made boots of doeskin, silver-buttoned,” and “Pocahontas boots of beaded white doeskin,” available from the Spanish and Indian Trading Company, in Santa Fe.\textsuperscript{28} Cataloguing Santa Fe’s increasing contributions to fashion, \textit{Vogue} included Santo Domingo moccasins “made of calfskin with soles of cowhide. The calfskin is dyed an indescribably attractive red that is the colour of the clay from which the pueblo is built. The moccasins cover the foot well above the ankles and are fastened with the same ubiquitous Navaho silver buttons.” (figure 5.5)\textsuperscript{29}

In addition to the incorporation of Indian clothing and accessories, thirties fashion also saw the mixing of incorporation and inspiration as Euro-American designers brought Native elements into clothing inspired by the Southwest. Le Boutillier, for instance, showcased the

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Sanders, 138.
work of designer Alice Oliver Henderson Evans (1907-1988),\(^{30}\) who sold Native American pieces alongside her own designs, advocating their combination. Whereas designer’s names, in the twenties, were not routinely attached to their designs (as was the case when Mitschke worked for Mallinson), in the thirties the designers behind the fashions – many of them women – were frequently identified and described in the fashion press. Milbank notes, moreover, that “America’s first real crop of designers was predominately female.”\(^{31}\) Several of these women, like Evans, made their mark with Indian-inflected designs.

Le Boutillier noted that Evans “long ago sensed the possibilities of Indian influence in American dress. And she is applying it to the models she creates for her unique, amazingly successful shop, Todas Cosas, in Tucson and Santa Fe.”\(^{32}\) Le Boutillier remarked that while “some native American dress is applicable only to the region of its origin, and has no rhyme or reason elsewhere” other pieces “can successfully be used elsewhere.” One example was “the natural buckskin jacket, long-sleeved, fringed and warm,” which Boutillier considered a practical and “decorative . . . change from a tweed jacket or topcoat – particularly in white.” She also saw a place in the modern woman’s wardrobe for the sorts of intensely hued “silk shirtwaists . . . donned by the cowboys solely to thrill the dudes,”\(^{33}\) albeit in nonurban contexts; these, she wrote, “have great style” and could be “worn respectably at summer resorts or on tropical islands tucked in a plain white skirt.”\(^{34}\)

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\(^{30}\) Evans – later A.O. H. Evans Rossin Colquitt, daughter of the Santa Fe painter and furniture maker William Penhallow Henderson and the poet Alice Corbin Henderson, had been married for ten years to John Evans – the son of arts patron and Southwest enthusiast Mabel Dodge Luhan – with whom she had three children. After their divorce in 1932, she began making clothing to support herself.

\(^{31}\) Milbank, 100.

\(^{32}\) Le Boutillier, 141.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 162.
Harper’s Bazaar featured Evans and her store in a “Resort Shops” column in July 1935, and reported, “Since she was a child she has studied the talents of the Mexicans and Pueblos, and been inspired by the wild colors of the Southwest. She is madly, intelligently devoted to all three.” Todas Cosas, which Evans had opened in 1934, was “once a pueblo in Tesuque, six miles outside of Santa Fe,” but had since become “a real shop prospering gaily there in the desert,” stocked with “blue denim suits, bandana blouses, simple sports cloths, washable evening dresses, sturdy evening coats.”

The article noted that Evans employed locals to help fabricate her designs; both “Mexicans and Pueblos” could be found “sitting in her shop, hammering copper and silver into jewelry and buttons; weaving beads and rope and wool; sewing blouses and coats.”

A contemporaneous article on Todas Cosas that appeared in The New Yorker described an outfit on sale there – a fitted two-piece suit in navy-blue denim, with “red stitching and Indian silver buttons on the tailored jacket,” worn with a cotton blouse in red bandanna print – as “ideal for ranches or camps when you want to dress more formally than slacks allow but a Southampton shirtwaist dress would be out of place.”

In addition to the denim and bandana fashions, Evans designed dresses based on Pueblo clothing, two of which were shown in spring 1936 and described in the Santa Fe New Mexican. “Following her belief that there is much in Indian costumes that can be adapted in general women’s wear, as well as in the native dress of this section which proved so successful in her denim suits, [Evans] has designed a daytime and an evening dress both based on Indian women’s

36 Ibid.
dress that are startlingly successful.” One was a day dress, called El Dia: “a dainty summer frock, peasant style, in a print and plain white sheer material, which as she remarked, would look at home at any pueblo yet the resulting frock proved similar to the Tyrolean, showing the similarity of peasant dress the world over.” Its counterpart, La Noche, was “an evening dress in hand-woven cotton from local looms, a copy of the black ceremonial dresses that the pueblos go to the Hopi reservation to obtain.” The writer noted that while “Indians usually embroider” the sorts of dresses that inspired La Noche, “the gown uses a red colored band instead.” La Noche copied the “off-the-shoulder way of wearing the ceremonials” as well as “the same belted, loose blouse,” and “straight skirt lines.” A hand-woven cape was to be worn over the dress, “the wide band of white forming the largest section in the center, red and black bands at shoulder and hem giving it color. The entire costume is strikingly Hopi to those who know the dress of the Indians, but it can easily be seen how eastern popularity may be achieved for it.”

As Santa Fe historian John Pen La Farge observed, Evans, renowned for her “denim and bandanna fashions,” eventually sold her designs for Todas Cosas all over the country, in “all the best stores: Neiman-Marcus, Best and Company, Lord and Taylor, Magnin’s.” In the spring of 1936, Evan’s denim suit was featured in Women’s Wear (figure 5.6) and was part of a window display of “Americana Fashions,” at Lord & Taylor. The Women’s Wear article included a drawing of several of Evans designs, including a suit “patterned after the railroad engineer’s work suit. The seams are double stitched in contrast and the bandanna blouse carries but another

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38 "El Dia and La Noche, Original Dress Designs of Alice Evans, At Todas Cosas Fashion Show,” Santa Fe New Mexican, April 17, 1936.
39 Ibid. See Hopi Woman’s Ceremonial Blanket or Manta, AMNH 50.1/2039.
American theme.” In an article for The New Yorker, an unnamed author, who found the clothing in Lord & Taylor’s window “charming as well as original,” drew attention to its denim skirts worn “either with three-button fitted jackets or straight-hanging coats like those of the engineers on the Santa Fe. Indian bandanna blouses go with these.”

That fall, an article in Vogue profiled Evans and Edith Nash, “two of the most gifted, style-conscious young women who are designing in the Southwest.” In addition to noting that “this year, several New York shops devoted windows to [Evans’s] denim suits,” the article described the Southwestern-style coats for which Nash (the wife of Taos painter Willard Nash) was becoming known. In her first design, Nash used sheepskin pelts purchased from a Navajo to hand-craft a coat, using saddle thread. That coat, Vogue reported, “was so much admired that more pelts were garnered, cured, cut, and stitched. She designed long coats and short coats, slender fitted coats and loose swagger coats.” Like Evans, Nash used baseball stitching and Navaho silver buttons on her outerwear, including the “rugged reversible coat, ‘Frontier’” (figure 5.7), which Vogue described as “inspired by the New Mexican Indians” and “handsome as a Navaho brave. It’s grey sheepskin on one side, grey suede on the other, with saddle-stitched seams.”

A Vogue fashion spread published in summer 1937, “Action on the Western Front,” (figures 5.8 and 5.9) described the adventures of an editor who had “stream-lined to the Coast on the ‘Super Chief,’ the Santa Fe’s new crack train, and picked these play-clothes on the way. Some hail from Santa Fe; some from California; many can be bought in New York.” Evans’s signature look (denim suit with a red-and-white cotton blouse) was showcased, along with other

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43 Sanders, 134.
44 Ibid.
outfits from Todas Cosas: a dress and bolero with a blue kerchief, and a blue-and-white cotton halter worn with shorts and white denim bolero. A subsequent article in *Vogue* (figure 5.10), “Fashion: Trans-America,” included an image of Santa Fe, “where dude clothes, adobe houses, and Fred Harvey's ‘La Fonda’ monopolize the scene.” A photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Bigelow, identified as New Mexico ranchers, showed clothing from Todas Cosas, and from Best, New York.

**Inspiration in Women's Fashion**

The most notable of inspirations in women’s fashion in the 1930s were adaptations of moccasins for everyday wear. While Indian-made moccasins appeared in magazines and were offered for sale as “durable country-house slippers,” many modern consumers preferred Euro-American takeoffs to authentic Indian footwear. Moccasin-inspired modern shoes were featured in advertisements, articles, and photo spreads throughout the decade (figure 5.11). In marketing them, manufacturers attempted to preserve at least part of the word “moccasin” and traded on popular conceptions of that well-known Indian footwear as comfortable and flexible. The thirties also saw widespread use of Indian terms to describe colors and designate styles.

In early 1932, “Vogue’s Time-Table of Fashions” – a feature that chronicled incoming, arrived and outgoing trends – listed “Moccasin type oxfords” as incoming. A few months later, the magazine ran an ad for “Sportocasins,” which were said to offer “smart women…not only the

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46 “Action on the Western Front,” *Vogue*, July 1, 1937, 40.
47 “Fashion: Trans-America,” *Vogue*, February 1, 1938, 75.
48 Le Boutillier, 141.
49 “Vogue’s Time-Table of Fashions,” *Vogue*, February 1, 1932, III.
most comfortable but also the most practical of all active sports footwear.”\(^{50}\) Sportocasins were available in several colors and styles, some with spiked soles for golf. Though routinely described as “Genuine Moccasins,” the shoes — like Indian trade blankets made in the 1910s — do not appear to have any actual connection to Native Americans. A Vogue “Shop-hound” article that ran in summer 1932 announced discovery of “magnificent golf shoes called Sportocasins,” the manufacturers of which, it reported, “had become interested in the Indian moccasin and its utter freedom; beginning from this point, they perfected a shoe which is exactly right in each part.”\(^{51}\) Enna Jetticks brand shoes soon offered competition, in the Fairway (figure 5.12), a “ventilated moccasin for spectator or active sports,” and the Trixie, an “unlined monk oxford with moccasin toe for ‘spectating,’”\(^{52}\) as did the venerable Walk-Over shoe company, which advertised the Wigwam (figure 5.13).

A Vogue article (figure 5.14) on “Clever Footwork: in the field of sports,” noted that “the Indian moccasin betrays its influence” in Best’s “brown calf with a nice rubber sole.”\(^{53}\) A subsequent piece on “Runabout Shoes,” (figure 5.15) highlighted a “new and very attractive” oxford that was distinguished by a “slight moccasin look around the toe.” That “moccasin note, heretofore confined to sports shoes, is cropping up more and more in street shoes. Small fringed leather tongues of about one inch in length are used with Oxfords and pumps alike.”\(^{54}\) Some five years later, a Vogue spread (figure 5.16) on “College and School Clothes” included the Rhythm Step, “a platform sole on the ever-popular moccasin tie,” and the Sportster “Saddle-Moc,” which

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\(^{50}\) Sportocasins advertisement, Vogue, June 1, 1932, 93; Vogue, June 15, 1932, 78; and Vogue, July 1932, 68.

\(^{51}\) “Shop-hound: Tips on the shop market,” Vogue, August 1, 1932, 60.


\(^{53}\) “Clever Footwork: in the field of sports,” Vogue, February 15, 1933, 56.

\(^{54}\) “Runabout Shoes,” Vogue, September 15, 1933, 68.
was “hand-lasted, made like flexible Indian moccasins.”
A 1938 “Shop-hound” column featured “red calf moccasins” from Bendel’s, characterized as “easy on the eyes and toes.”

**Interior Design**

In the thirties, incorporation was the trend in interior design, encouraged by the EITA itself as well as by reviews, articles about White and her personal decorating style, and images of the homes of other notable people with similar tastes. This is in line with White and the EITA’s desire to show that people were collecting Indian art and displaying it in their homes. In addition to photographs of Indian-inflected homes, reviews of the EITA offered decorating suggestions in syndicated newspaper columns.

An article in the *New York Sun*, devoted to White, discussed the Antiques Exposition and the EITA as well as White’s residences (figure 5.18). Its author praised White as the person behind the Antiques Expo room, “in which American Indian furniture and decorative pieces have been beautifully arranged in a colonial setting.”

Describing that room as but “a very limited demonstration of Miss White’s interest in the art of the American Indian,” the article went on to discuss her home in Santa Fe, which “demonstrates the beauty of Indian decorations in the type of house native to that region.” Photographs of its exterior and interior showed a Spanish colonial cabinet, whose “hawktail motifs on crest and doors are Indian,” along with a “fine Old Spanish mission style cabinet…executed by Indians.” Pottery is visible throughout, and one of White’s famous pottery lamps also can be seen.

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56 “Shop-Hound Makes a Splash,” *Vogue*, June 1, 1938, 104.
57 “One Woman Has Made Two Continents See the Beauty in America Indian Art,” *New York Sun*, March 6, 1931.
58 Ibid.
The *Sun*’s writer stressed, however, that White’s ability to utilize Indian art as interior décor extended beyond the confines of the Southwest, noting that her New York apartment was “full of antique and modern Indian things, placed fittingly in a city setting.” Moreover, White’s New York shop was said to “bring the best of Indian things before the public” and demonstrate “the perfect harmony that exists between Indian decorations and other types of interior decorations, from the antique to the ultra modern.” Commending modern Native American works, the author remarked, “Indian artists and craftsmen are today producing paintings, pottery, textiles, jewelry, costumes and embroideries of extraordinary authoritative beauty and value totally conforming to an unbroken aesthetic tradition originating long before the white man set foot in this country.”

White’s New York apartment also was illustrated in an article in the *New York Evening Post* (figure 5.19) that was headlined “Indian Exposition Aided by Woman’s Interest: Indian Art as Art Not as Ethnology, Miss White’s Dream.” This article emphasized White’s involvement with the EITA, and noted, “You may also see, if you have eyes for anything but the exhibits, a slender woman in simple dark clothes, with a sensitively chiseled face, hovering by a rare piece of pottery or a buffalo-hide painting, perhaps answering a question in a softly modulated voice.” The author related the story of how White had come to collect Indian art and recounted her purchase of the Santa Fe house that she and her sister furnished “with the blankets and pottery and baskets, to say nothing of the exquisitely painted water colors, of their Indian neighbors.” Many of these objects “began to find their way into the trunks that went back to New York when the summer was over, and the apartment at 115 East Fifty-fifth Street has its own share of rare

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59 Ibid.
60 Seinfel, “Indian Exposition Aided by Woman’s Interest: Indian Art as Art Not as Ethnology, Miss White’s Dream.”
Indian pieces.” A photograph of the hallway of White’s apartment was accompanied by a caption reading, “An old Zuni bowl was used as the keynote of the decoration in the hall of Miss Amelia Elizabeth White’s New York apartment. The ceiling was painted with designs taken from the bowl and the rug is a Navajo.” These Indian-derived ceiling motifs constituted a rare instance of Indian inspiration in interior decorating in the thirties (although it may have been done earlier).

In an article for *The New York Times*, (figure 5.20) Walter Rendell Storey described “Indian Decorative Art in a Modern Interior.” An accompanying photo – not specifically mentioned in the article – includes a large basket and a Navajo rug. It is credited simply as “Courtesy Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts, Inc.” but the pottery lamp included suggests White’s hand, and it may have been taken in one of her residences.

Aside from White’s New York apartment, the homes featured in accounts of Native American incorporation in thirties décor all were located in the Southwest. They included the residences of Sheldon Parson, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hamilton, Gerald and Ina Cassidy, and Mabel Dodge Luhan. *House Beautiful’s* “In the Vernacular of the Southwest: A Regional Architecture that is consistent in character because perfectly adapted to local Conditions,” included photographs of the Cassidy, Parsons and Hamilton homes (figures 5.21 and 5.22). The Cassidys’ entrance hall was graced by an altarpiece from an old Santa Fe church, as well as Pueblo pottery and Navajo rugs. The gallery of the Parsons’ house was punctuated by large pots, which also decorated the corner fireplace. Photographs of the Hamilton home reveal a similar emphasis on large pots placed throughout the home.

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61 Ibid.
63 “In the Vernacular of the Southwest: A Regional Architecture that is consistent in character because perfectly adapted to local Conditions,” *House Beautiful*, August 1930, 148-150.
The Cassidy and Parsons homes reappeared in another *House Beautiful* article, “Notes from the Southwest,” alongside photographs of Mabel Dodge Luhan’s house in Taos. The Parsons’ porch featured “Mexican chairs, Indian pottery, and dried peppers,” which were described as “all characteristic features.” The corner fireplace in the Cassidy home was “another common motive [motif] of the old adobe house,” and was accented by Pueblo pottery, a Hopi basketry plaque and a Navajo rug (figure 5.23). Luhan’s main entrance porch in Taos held several large pots, displayed alongside Spanish colonial and Mexican furniture (figure 5.24). Photographs of the Luhan home’s interiors show Indian pottery and weavings in the living room, dining room and studio (figure 5.25).

A contemporaneous syndicated article from the *Newspaper Enterprise Association (NEA)* service was titled “If You’d Have Your Home ‘Earliest American:’ Indians Contribute Picturesque Arts to Modern Interior Decoration.” (figure 5.26) Citing the “growing vogue for the use of all-American, or Indian, tribal art products for interior decorations in American homes,” its author noted that the EITA provided “multitudinous possibilities for striking interior decorations.” Black slate Haida carvings “give a zest to any room and happen to go well with delicate Queen Anne furniture;” Hopi basketry plaques could be “used for sandwich trays or a color spot over a bookcase, fireplace, piano;” and Makah baskets might function as “sewing baskets, waste baskets, library table baskets to catch letters, papers, and so on.” The author remarked, moreover, that there was an Indian pot “for every use conceivable,” from “plates for

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65 Ibid.
66 Photographs of Mabel Dodge Luhan's residences mounted on album page. Mabel Dodge Luhan papers, YCAL MSS 196, Box 105, Folder 2456. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Yale University.
67 “If You’d Have Your Home ‘Earliest American:’ Indians Contribute Picturesque Arts to Modern Interior Decoration,” *NEA Service* article syndicated throughout the country, December 22, 1931. M&AEW, Box 24, Folder AC18.337.5.
salad and dessert, salad bowls, pottery bowls for lamp vases,” and that “Indian rugs are among the most picturesque and most popular of wall hangings, carpets, couch covers.” And, for those who “like modern stuff,” the author suggested “the Indian paintings, reeking with gaudy color, should be a great satisfaction.”

Remarking that Native Americans’ “primitive designs have much in common with our most sophisticated modern motifs.” The NEA writer noted, “The best of these products of Indian tribal art were made primarily for use and turned out to be decorative afterwards, just because the Indians are so artistic in themselves. This insistence on ornamental articles being useful epitomizes the newest modern theories about art.”

In a similar vein, the author of an article published in Christian Science Monitor in 1932, “Tribal Arts for American Homes” (figure 5.27), wrote, “At a time when we are all keenly interested in new decorative ideas for our homes, it is particularly interesting to discover that the art works of the American Indian are admirably suited to most simple interiors.” An accompanying illustration showed a room “of dignified proportions and expansive surfaces . . . Its ornaments are all from the exposition.” These include a Navajo rug on the floor, a hide and beadwork blanket on the wall, a San Ildefonso pot from White’s collection (figure 5.28), a Karok basket from California, and a Kwakiutl octopus dish lent by the AMNH (figure 5.29). The curtains are tied back by two beaded belts, an Eskimo ivory carving of a reindeer stands on the mantle, and a Kiowa ceremonial drum flanks the fireplace.

Also in 1932, an issue of House Beautiful included an editor’s note on the EITA, as well as a feature on Navajo rugs that was illustrated with examples from the Exposition (figures 5.30

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
Denouncing “tourist taste,” this brief essay condemned “rugs which are offered for sale where the casual tourist can find them, rugs which show thunderbirds, swastikas, or disorganized patterns in harsh bold color” – products that “have no relation to the rugs in this exhibition.” Those on view at the EITA – examples of which were published in House Beautiful – featured colors that, “although they may be strong, are pleasing, and they are usually limited to four or five, including black and white; the designs are simple, consisting of the repetition of a few elements.” Though the rugs thus described were photographed in black and white, captions give a sense of their color schemes, which were dominated by black, white and shades of gray, from gray-purple, to gray-tan. The shift in color from “the rather bold Navajo rug . . . suitable to the robust setting of porch, bungalow, den, or Indian room,” to the “variety of soft colorings, - walnut, tobacco, tan, and grayish shades, - with or without touches of bright color,” were said to expand the rugs’ “field of usefulness” in the home.

The following year, House Beautiful ran “Modern and Primitive” (figure 5.32), an article that extolled tin candelabras – “an interesting art of old Mexico now carried on in New Mexico” – and showed them in a modern foyer featuring gray and white wallpaper, a chromium and bakelite table, a black and silver mirror clock, white lacquer chairs with white upholstery and a white woolen rug. On the dining room table, tin candelabras were shown mixed with Indian pottery, including “an ornamented jar, like those in use for hundreds of years, and a new kind of black pottery made at San Ildefonso.”

The emphasis of these reviews on the various functions a single piece of Native American art could have in the modern home speaks to the economic situation in the thirties.

72 “Editor’s Note,” House Beautiful, April 1932, np.
73 “Modern Navaho Rugs, House Beautiful, April 1932, 268.
74 “Modern and Primitive,” House Beautiful, June 1933, 268.
Just as fashion designers and editors of the decade focused on ways in which a simple dress might be transformed by accessories, articles on interior decoration offered suggestions for enlivening a room with singular pieces of Native American art that were not just aesthetically pleasing but functional. In her study of the rise of modernist interiors in the U.S. home, Wilson observes that while the middle-class households of the Depression had limited funds, “they did not entirely eschew the home furnishings marketplace. Instead, because of the self-respect involved in maintaining ‘normal living conditions,’ these housewives attempted to keep their homes looking attractive through occasional purchases and the resourceful reorganization of space.”75 Indian objects could provide an uncommon “zest” that would make their addition stand out, and practical purposes were found for many such objects. Indian art was also promoted as highly adaptable; primitive and modern, ornamental and useful, exotic and quintessentially American, it found its place in a range of interior design schemes, from those comprised of Queen Anne furniture to those centered on chromium and bakelite.

75 Wilson, 15.
Private individuals and associations began advocating for Indians in the twenties, and although the government slowly began to take notice, forming committees and commissioning reports, it was not until the thirties, after the nationwide success of the EITA, that the government revised its Indian policy and took an active role in the promotion of Indian arts and crafts. The appointment of John Collier Sr. as the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the creation of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB), with René d’Harnoncourt (1901-1968) as its general manager were turning points. Encouraged by the success of the 1931 traveling Exposition, and urged on by private individuals – most notably Bay Area collector Leslie Van Ness Denman (1867-1959) – the IACB organized an Indian exhibition at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco. As Indian Chic went national, there was a rebirth of interest in the Plains that marked a shift from the heavy promotion of the Southwest that characterized White’s aesthetic, which dominated in New York.

The Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act), also known as the “Indian New Deal,” was enacted in June 1934 – a little more than a year after Collier’s appointment as the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Its intents were “to conserve and develop Indian lands and resources; to extend to Indians the right to form business and other organizations; to establish a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians; to provide for vocational education for Indians; and for other purposes.”¹ The IRA ended the practice of

¹ The Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act), June 18, 1934.
allotment (as outlined in the Dawes Act of 1887, amended in 1906 by the Burke Act)\(^2\) and provided assistance to groups seeking to regain land lost through allotment. It also provided for tribal self-government.

The Indian Arts and Crafts Board, an agency formed within the Department of Interior to reinvigorate and promote traditional Native American arts, was created in August 1935 through the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of that same year, which sought “to promote the development of Indian arts and crafts and to create a board to assist therein, and for other purposes.”\(^3\) President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill on August 27, 1935 – two days after Congress had adjourned, so no appropriations were made for the IACB until January 1936, when Congress was back in session. Section Two of the bill stated:

> It shall be the function and the duty of the Board to promote the economic welfare of Indian tribes and the Indian wards of the Government through the development of Indian arts and crafts and the expansion of the market for the products of Indian art and craftsmanship. In the execution of this function the Board shall have the following powers: (a) To undertake market research to determine the best opportunity for the sale of various products; (b) to engage in technical research and give technical advice and assistance; (c) to engage in experimentation directly or through selected agencies; (d) to correlate and encourage the activities of the various governmental and private agencies in the field; (e) to offer assistance in the management of operating groups for the furtherance of specific projects; (f) to make recommendations to appropriate agencies for loans in furtherance of the production and sale of Indian products; (g) to create Government trade marks of genuineness and quality for Indian products and the products of particular Indian tribes or groups; to establish standards and regulations for the use of such trade marks; to license corporations, associations, or individuals to use them; and to charge a fee for their use; to register them in the United States Patent Office without charge.

The bill also allowed the Board “to employ executive officers, including a general manager, and such other permanent and temporary personnel as may be found necessary, and prescribe the


\(^3\) Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1935.
authorities, duties, responsibilities, and tenure and fix the compensation of such officers and other employees.”

Identifying and securing the participation of members of the Board proved an arduous and “seemingly interminable” task. Collier tapped Charles de Young Elkus – a San Francisco lawyer who met Collier in 1922 and through him became involved in Indian affairs as he began to collect Indian art – as the general manager, and suggested Amelia White and Mary-Russell Colton (of the Museum of Northern Arizona), join the Board. Elkus in turn nominated William Warner, president of the McCall Company and chairman of the board of the American Woolen Company; Robert B. Harshe, director of the Art Institute of Chicago; and Kenneth Chapman of the Laboratory of Anthropology. When President Roosevelt rejected Warner, Elkus resigned. Collier then drafted a revised list of appointees; Harshe and Colton suggested Alfred V. Kidder, of the Carnegie Institution and National Research Council; Willard W Beatty, the director of Indian education; Lorenzo Hubbell; and the textile designer Ruth Reeves. All but Reeves joined the Board. Although Morris De Camp Crawford initially accepted Collier’s offer to head the Board, Crawford quickly changed his mind, leaving the chairmanship and the position of general manager open.

Collier felt the right person for the job of general manager would have “advertising and specialty merchandising skills,” so he “asked Congress in the first appropriation request to authorize a salary for the general manager which exceeded that of the commissioner himself.” Louis C. West, a businessman from Cleveland, was appointed general manager in July 1935.

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4 Schrader, 114.
5 Charles and Ruth Elkus bequeathed their collection of 1,700 Indian objects (including pottery, jewelry, textiles and works on paper) assembled from 1922-1965 to the California Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1972.
6 Schrader, 119.
7 Ibid.
After he resigned in 1937 to take a position with the Indian Service Division of Education, West was succeeded by René d’Harnoncourt, whom Collier had met some years before in Mexico City.

D’Harnoncourt (1901-1968) was born in Vienna and studied chemistry and philosophy at the University at Grasz from 1918-1921, then spent two years at the Technische Hochscule in Vienna. In 1926, he moved to Mexico, where he bought and sold Mexican antiquities and folk art, and became known as a connoisseur. In 1930, D’Harnoncourt was invited by the National Museum of Mexico and the Carnegie Corporation to organize a comprehensive exhibition of Mexican arts, mounted at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in the fall of 1930. During its run at the MMA, the exhibition – which comprised more than 1,200 objects – drew 25,000 spectators. Sponsored and circulated by the American Federation of Arts, it toured twelve additional cities after it closed in New York.

D’Harnoncourt, who settled in the United States in 1933, as Native American art was becoming increasingly visible and more widely appreciated, soon became a proponent and collector. In addition to teaching art history at Sarah Lawrence College, D’Harnoncourt was director of Art in America on NBC radio and served as assistant to the president of the American Federation of Arts. He was appointed to the IACB as assistant to the general manager 1936. Jennifer McLerran notes that “while Collier’s and d’Harnoncourt’s motivations differed, they shared a common aim. Both sought an expanded market for Native American arts and crafts through promotion of goods that appealed to modern, upper-middle class American consumers.”

In keeping with the work of Crawford, White and the Sloans, both sought to “reverse the common perception of Indian arts and crafts as cheap curios through improvement of quality and

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8 McLerran, 41.
generation of an upscale market. Cultivation of a more moneyed consumer with an educated and ‘refined’ sensibility was crucial to this process.”

In pursuit of this goal, the IACB established standards for Navajo, Hopi and Pueblo silversmithing and Navajo weaving. As Susan L. Meyn remarks, however,

Creating standards of genuineness and artistic quality was a perplexing problem because arts and crafts of the twentieth century differed from those of earlier periods. Some Indians preferred contemporary materials and had access to more advanced technology. Over time some substituted materials, like glass trade beads, became traditional, and needles replaced awls. Indians maintained that trade beads were an acceptable substitute for porcupine quills, the earlier choice for decorating animal skins. At other times Indians themselves, even those living side by side in the southwestern area, questioned one another’s decisions on technology.

At IACB’s first meeting, held in October 1936 in Albuquerque, the Board heard from “representative dealers, traders, so-called ‘manufacturers,’ museum heads, and others who were interested in the preservation of the distinctive Indian silver crafts,” but no Indian artists.

Topics under discussion included the use of sheet silver, the question of whether jewelry created by more than one artist should be considered genuine, and the sorts of stones to be used in approved Indian jewelry (only hand-cut and -polished stones were deemed permissible). In the wake of this first meeting, Collier decided that the government, rather than establishing a minimum standard, should adopt a set of maximum standards, which could better account for the craft process. After two subsequent meetings, the IACB formulated and circulated standards for Navajo, Pueblo, and Hopi silver and turquoise products in March 1937; the government endorsed and would mark as approved only those pieces that had been individually produced and entirely handmade. Some months later, standards for earning a government certificate of

9 Ibid., 28.
11 Schrader, 131.
12 Ibid., 132.
genuineness for Navajo all-wool woven fabrics were released. The IACB believed such
government certifications not only would encourage artists to produce high-quality goods, but
would attract upscale consumers willing to pay more for certified products. In an effort to
further cultivate that high-end market, modern silverwork and Navajo rugs were prominently
displayed at IACB-sponsored exhibitions and their accompanying sales rooms in San Francisco
and New York.

White’s gallery, which had operated at a loss for fifteen years, closed a few months after
the release of the IACB standards. The standards White applied to her gallery stock rivaled the
IACB’s and although several factors led to its closure, one suspects that White was unable to
cultivate a large enough consumer base for the high-end Indian goods to which she confined her
sales. Consumers apparently did not draw so a great a distinction between “tourist art” and “fine”
pieces as learned connoisseurs like White supposed. The former presumably sold well, which is
why Indian artists continued to produce them. Would the cultivation of a high-end market lead
to enhanced or diminished sales figures? Would tourists be willing to spend more for a souvenir,
or would they return home empty handed?

Jonathan Batkin notes that among traders, “Response to the [IACB] program was
mixed.”13 Some felt the program had value and strove to get certifying stamps onto the pieces in
their inventory that met the IACB standards, while others found the stamped inventory did not
sell, and blamed the IACB for not sufficiently publicizing the program. Others noted that the
stamps’ existence had made savvy consumers wary of unstamped pieces. Some Indians also
voiced displeasure with the program, which they felt created impossibly high standards that were
not in line with actual methods of production and the majority of pieces on the market. Some

13 Batkin, 204.
also felt the program favored silversmiths at Indian Schools – whose work was spotlighted at the Golden Gate Exposition – over those working on reservations.\textsuperscript{14}

The IACB standards were not only meant to ensure quality, but to protect Indian-made products from imitation by non-Indians – an issue that emerged in the thirties and continues today.\textsuperscript{15} In 1932, the Federal Trade Commission held hearings related to imitation Indian handicrafts, including a case against the Beacon Manufacturing Company, whose advertising fraudulently suggested their Indian Trade Blankets were made by Indians. That same year, a complaint filed with the FTC against the Maisel Trading Post Company, based in Albuquerque, alleged the “use of misleading and deceptive terms in connection with the sale of certain types of Indian jewelry,” and “unfair methods of competition which were prejudicial and injurious to the public, involving practices which tended to divert trade from and otherwise prejudice and injure respondent’s competitors.”\textsuperscript{16} Although Maisel did employ Indian workers, their jewelry was produced by modern mechanical equipment supervised by non-Indians.\textsuperscript{17} Their advertising, however, suggested these pieces were handmade by Native Americans in the traditional fashion. Schrader summarizes the ruling by the FTC, which recognized the market value of the terms “Indian” and “Indian-made,” which, when “coupled with the world jewelry or other terms descriptive of Indian arts and crafts” had come to imply “hand-fashioned.” Schrader writes that the FTC “ruled that the desire to purchase and retain an article of Indian jewelry was almost entirely destroyed if the ultimate buyer believed or learned that the Indian maker of the article

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} In 2012, the Navajo Nation sued retailer Urban Outfitters for trademark infringement and violating the IACB by selling products labeled Navajo that were not made or associated with the Navajo Nation.
\textsuperscript{16} Federal Trade Commission v. Maisel Trading Post (United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, 1935).
\textsuperscript{17} See Bsumek, “Codifying the Navaho: The ‘Indian-Made Controversy,’” in Indian-Made, 174-207.
\end{footnotesize}
employed machinery in the rolling or fashioning of the silver as partial or entire substitute for hand hammering ornamentation.” By misrepresenting their product, Maisel had undermined the term “Indian-made” and fostered consumer mistrust of products so labeled, “to the detriment of manufacturers and traders of the product.”¹⁸ Therefore, the FTC issued a cease and desist order, with which Maisel refused to comply, resulting in a protracted legal battle.

Misuse of the term “Indian-made” extended well beyond the Maisel Trading Post Company in this period; a 1940 study completed by the anthropologist John Adair (1913-1997) at the request of the IACB found that only 23 percent of the silver marketed as Indian-made was produced on reservations and exclusively by Native Americans.¹⁹ Adair’s findings reveal the variability of “Indian” silver goods (which were increasingly machine made, by non-Indians as well as Native Americans), the production of which seems to have been more hampered than helped by the IACB standards. Although Adair concluded that the best course of action was to eliminate the IACB standards, he nonetheless believed that Indian pieces should be “handmade, well-finished, of substantial weight, with good design and good turquoise.” Batkin observes that at the time of his recommendation “Adair had accrued more knowledge and experience about Indian silver than all but a handful of non-Indians. Nevertheless, his report was ignored.”²⁰ Perhaps it was not so much “ignored” as deemed difficult to act on, for who, in the end, would determine what was “good,” and what was not?

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¹⁸ Schrader, 55.
¹⁹ Batkin, 205.
²⁰ Ibid., 207.
The IACB at the Golden Gate Exposition

The IACB exhibit in San Francisco, which drew an audience of 1.5 million people, occupied an acre and a half and showed arts and crafts produced by Indian artists throughout the United States.\(^\text{21}\) The exhibition had been “organized by the United States Office of Indian Affairs through the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the United States Department of the Interior, at the Request of the United States Commission for the Golden Gate International Exposition,”\(^\text{22}\) but, according to Schrader, “Originally the concept of a large Indian arts and crafts exhibit at the San Francisco Exposition belonged to a small group of San Francisco social figures, most active of whom was Leslie Denman, the long-time supporter of Indian art.”\(^\text{23}\)

Denman, born in Oakland, was a distant cousin of the Roosevelts\(^\text{24}\) and a member of the Northern California Indian Defense Association and the Committee on Indian Arts and Crafts. She and her husband William, a San Francisco lawyer, were also enthusiastic collectors of Indian painting.\(^\text{25}\) Regular visitors to the Southwest, their circle in New Mexico included Luhan and the Hendersons. During her sojourns in New Mexico, Leslie Denman – who spent more time in the Southwest than her husband and collected most of their art – routinely hired a driver “to take her,...

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\(^\text{22}\) Floor Plan of the Indian Court, San Francisco, 1939, Folder 1. Branch Cartographic, IACB.

\(^\text{23}\) Schrader, 164.

\(^\text{24}\) Denman was a distant cousin of Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Her great-aunt was married to Theodore Roosevelt’s great uncle. Tryntje Van Ness Seymour, “William and Leslie Denman: Their Impact on Artists, on Public Policy, and on Intellectual Understanding,” in When the Rainbow Touches Down (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1988), 317.

\(^\text{25}\) Denman bequeathed their collection of paintings by Apache, Hopi, Kiowa, Navajo, Rio Grande Pueblo, and Zuni artists, including Fred Kabotie, Ma Pe Wi, and Awa Tsireh to d’Harnoncourt in 1959, and it is now owned by the IACB.
for a week or two at a time, deep into the reservation country,”¹²⁶ where, in addition to purchasing paintings from trading posts and galleries, bought them from artists she encountered.

The Denmans were friendly with Elkus and his wife, who often traveled the same route through the Southwest; these two couples were primary lenders to an exhibition of Indian art staged by the De Young Museum in December 1934. It was Leslie Denman who subsequently urged both Collier and the San Francisco Exposition planning committee to include Indian art in the Golden Gate Exposition. In May 1935, Denman suggested, in a letter to Collier, that the upcoming Fair provided a perfect opportunity to showcase Indian art.²⁷ In addition to drafting a document entitled “Notes and Suggestions for a Plan for an Indian Presentation,” she tirelessly promoted her idea to organizers, officials, and friends. In December 1936, d’Harnoncourt (who had been sent to San Francisco on IACB business), attended a dinner party planned by Denman: among the other guests were Elkus; Alfred L. Kroeber, a University of California anthropologist; and the architect for the Golden Gate Exposition, Timothy L. Pflueger. Surrounded by her collection of Indian art, Denman’s guests warmed to her plan. A little over a year later, Denman organized a lunch at the White House with President Roosevelt, his wife Eleanor, and d’Harnoncourt; “within weeks, Eleanor Roosevelt visited the offices of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board to view d’Harnoncourt’s visualizations of the Indian exhibition.”²⁸

Writing in *Women’s City* in 1936, Denman promoted “a dramatic and historic presentation of the various archaic, ancient, barbaric, and feudalistic Indian cultures of the Americas” at the Golden Gate Expo, “leading up to and focused upon the survivals today in their

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¹²⁶ Seymour, 320.
¹²⁷ Ibid., 334.
¹²⁸ Ibid., 342.
arts and crafts, their dance and ceremony.” She wrote that such arts and crafts not only “have their roots and their being in the prehistoric worlds of the American continent,” but also and significantly “have a future economic value.” Drawing comparisons between the state of world affairs at the time of the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition, when the world came west “as the great war in Europe closed the gates to European countries,” and the world climate in the mid-1930s, Denman wrote that the moment was right “for us, on this coast, to make a gesture of cooperation and generous understanding to the peoples and natives of the western hemisphere.”

For all her ardent campaigning on behalf of Native American art, Denman preferred that her personal profile remain low, writing (in response to a interview request), “It is my earnest wish not to have any personal emphasis in the idea – please! It would weaken and dissipate its values. Also, there are persons needed in carrying out the plan and who will be more efficient if they appear paramount.” Unlike White, who saw value in publicizing prominent individuals’ enthusiasm for and collection of, Native American art, Denman sought to work behind the scenes and let others take the credit. Her efforts, however, did not go entirely unnoticed; an article in The New York Times noted that, “although the American Indian exhibit is entirely a Federal project, it is an exposition activity in which the women’s board has been vitally interested, particularly through the suggestions of its vice chairman, Mrs. William Denman, who knows her Indians authentically, from Aztec to Zuni, and is an authority on every phase of their history.”

29 Leslie Van Ness Denman, “A Presentation of Indian Cultures and Their Arts,” Women’s City, July 1936, 14.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Seymour, 335.
D’Harnoncourt was officially “in charge of the exhibit” that ran from February to October 1939 in a building designed by Pflueger and known as the Indian Court (figure 6.1).\(^{34}\) Frederic H. Douglas (1897-1956), curator of Indian art at the Denver Art Museum, was listed as the “Director of Education Activities of the Exhibit,”\(^{35}\) and Henry Klumb (1905-1984), who served as the consultant architect, had been tasked with creating “schemes for displaying Indian arts and crafts to advantage in modern home settings.”\(^{36}\) In an article in the *Magazine of Art*, d’Harnoncourt wrote that the exhibition was meant to “show both past and present achievements of these civilizations and will attempt to open new vistas for their future,”\(^{37}\) stressing that the intent was to “do more than show the beauty or the skillful methods of production of individual Indian works of art.” The Indian exhibit, which included some 635 works, aimed, d’Harnoncourt wrote, “to link these objects together in a way that gives the visitor a unified picture of the people who produced them, and some conception of the future possibilities of these people.”\(^{38}\)

The Floor Plan of the Indian Court (figure 6.2) illustrates the path of viewers through the exhibition, which began with a gallery of “maps and history,” (figure 6.3) and ended in a salesroom with two model rooms that illustrated the practical application of Native American art in Euro-American interiors. The galleries in between presented fisherman of the Northwest

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\(^{34}\) The fair reopened in 1940, but d’Harnoncourt and Douglas did not participate due to “other commitments,” and their exhibition was replaced by a new exhibition “still under the auspices of the Office of Indian Affairs,” but “under the control of the United States Commission for the Golden Gate International Exposition.” *Aboriginal Cultures of the Western Hemisphere* (San Francisco: Golden Gate International Exposition, 1940), 1. The new exhibition incorporated a gallery on National Parks along with Mayan and Andean galleries and replaced the Indian market and sales room with a “United States Travel Bureau.”

\(^{35}\) “Aim and Organization of the Exhibition,” San Francisco, Folder 1. Branch Cartographic, IACB.

\(^{36}\) McLerran, 97.


\(^{38}\) Ibid.
Coast, hunters of the Plains, seed gatherers of California, woodsmen of the East, Pueblo farmers, and Navajo weavers, silversmiths, and sandpainters. Of the installation, d’Harnoncourt noted,

The variety of cultures in Indian America that makes the European nations seem almost uniform by comparison will be emphasized by the very architecture of the various rooms. Color scheme, manner of lighting, and the type of display have been chosen in every case to bring out the individuality of the respective culture. It is hoped that in this way the visitor will find himself in a setting that makes it easy for him to approach sympathetically the exhibits of the particular cultural area he is inspecting.

He went on to describe the effects achieved in the Plains Gallery (figure 6.4), which was “very high and wide, flooded with bright but diffused lights. The exhibits and displays are kept low and the walls are constructed to give the illusion of unlimited space.” This feeling was contrasted by the treatment of the Eastern Woodlands Gallery (figure 6.5), which was “designed to give the visitor a feeling of being enclosed, surrounded by a rich variety of forms.”

Several articles focused on the “Hunters of the Plains” gallery, which included a mural of a buffalo hunt, which d’Harnoncourt viewed as the “leit motiv [sic] of the room.” The painting had been made by Long Elk (Calvin Larvie, 1920-1969), an 18-year-old Sioux, photographs of whom, at work on the mural in emphatically “Native” get-ups, appeared twice in the San Francisco Chronicle. In the first (figure 6.6), he is shown close up, wearing an eagle feather bonnet and no shirt. In the second (figure 6.7), he wears a fringed buckskin shirt and pants.

D’Harnoncourt’s groundbreaking installation strategy was applauded by critics and would reappear to even greater acclaim in New York in 1941. Alfred Frankenstein, for instance,

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39 Ibid, 165.
40 D’Harnoncourt, 1939, 167.
41 Larvie would receive a Bronze Star for his service as a scout for the Army during World War II. Patrick D. Lester, The Biographical Directory of Native American Painters (Tulsa: Sir Publishers, 1995), 305-306.
43 “Indian Youth Paints Murals” San Francisco Chronicle, February 27, 1939.
wrote that “as a demonstration of new methods in the display and exposition of art objects the Indian show is a positive knockout, and one that might well inaugurate a new era in museum technique.” Frankenstein found “the arrangement and sequence of the materials are as well knit as a college course, with the esthetic and the anthropological playing splendidly into each other to the complete illumination of the objects shown.” He enthusiastically described the “snowy whiteness” of the Eskimo gallery, the way that the Northwest Coast masks and blankets were lit from below to simulate firelight, and the Plains gallery, where “the fringes and streamers and feather bonnets . . . are here agitated with an artificial wind by General Electric.” (Indeed a note attached to an installation photograph explained that “to increase the feeling of motion in the mural, air streams were directed against the feathers and fringe of these accessories, making them flutter.”) Frankenstein offered “a standing vote of thanks” to d’Harnoncourt, Douglas and Klumb, and noted, “The Museum of Modern Art is now considering turning over its entire building to d’Harnoncourt for an Indian show next year,” which “should do much to spread the gospel over the country.”

In the New York Times, Kathleen McLaughlin, also commented on the environments d’Harnoncourt created in “the cool semi-darkness” of the Northwest Coast galleries (figure 6.8), whose arrangement revealed “how the Alaskan and adjacent tribes had to cope with scarcity of materials, and to wrest a living from an unfriendly land.” McLaughlin noted that d’Harnoncourt “has insisted on elevating the exhibit from a musty museum technique popularly associated with a ‘vanishing’ race. Far from vanishing, the Indians are enjoying a resurgence of

45 San Francisco, Box 4a – Installation Photographs. Textual Records, IACB.
numbers and of skill, which dictates that their contribution to the industrial arts and contemporary life should be conceded its proper place, Director d’Harnoncourt maintains.47

In addition to the groundbreaking display techniques, d’Harnoncourt took a different tack in his inclusion of Native Americans. The organizers made a conscious decision to avoid an Indian Village—a prominent feature in previous World’s Fair expositions where the participants lived on the Midway and were always on display. In San Francisco, Indian participants—who made art in the galleries during the exhibition—were housed at the U.S. Navy Station on adjacent Yerba Buena Island.48 The exhibition included 64 Native Americans from 19 tribes,49 all of them listed by name, occupation and tribe in the “Appendix of Indian Participants and Demonstrators of Tribal Arts and Crafts” in the National Archives.50 The Navajo were the best represented, with nineteen delegates, followed by six Paiute, and five Sioux. Where the EITA included two Navajo sand painters, the Golden Gate Expo had six. Even the list of participants from the Pueblos suggested a shift from the well-known names included in the EITA, of the fifteen Pueblo people at the Golden Gate Expo, only Fred Kabotie and Maria and Julian Martinez had participated in the EITA.

In keeping with the stated goals of the IACB, Indian-made clothing, accessories and decorative objects for the home were showcased. Display cases held modern Navajo rugs; in one of them a small end table evoked the Euro-American home, and an accompanying text panel read, “Beginning about 1890 the Navaho began to make floor rugs to sell instead of weaving blankets

47 Ibid.
48 Schrader, 192.
49 The tribes included Blackfoot, Caddo, Cheyenne, Cochiti, Coeur d’Alene, Haida, Hopi, Navajo, Paiute, Papago, Pomo, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Shoshone, Sioux, Taos, Tesuque, Washoe and Zia.
50 “Appendix of Indian Participants and Demonstrators of Tribal Arts and Crafts,” San Francisco, Folder 1. Branch Cartographic, IACB.
for their own use.” The room devoted to Navajo metalwork featured pieces by “young Navajo silversmiths,” who were “developing new forms in addition to making the old traditional ones.”

Two installation photographs illustrate the exhibition strategy d’Harnoncourt would refine at MoMA. The silver cups, belts, necklaces, cuffs and pins were displayed against a black velvet background in glass cases, as if in a jewelry store window (figure 6.10). From the Navajo silver gallery, the viewer proceeded to the sales room and open market that d’Harnoncourt described as the “last but possibly the most important part of the exhibit,” since they gave “Indian artists of the various tribes…an opportunity to prove to the public not only that the quality of much Indian art is today as fine as it has ever been in the past, but also that Indian art has a place in the contemporary world.”

A “Fabric Counter” (figure 6.11) was set up in the sales room, “since the manual ability of Indian craftsmen is noticeable, even in those regions where the old traditions have been forgotten.” The products shown there were selected on the basis of “high quality and good taste, but not necessarily tribal design.” A photo of the display shows braided belts, blankets, weavings, and dolls. A nearby counter held moccasins (figure 6.12), which according to an IACB document were displayed so as “to make the public discover that moccasins,” were not just exotic souvenirs, but “make decorative and useful slippers of high quality” – an assertion fashion editors had been making for some time.

As White had done in the Antiques Exposition in 1931, d’Harnoncourt set up model rooms at the Golden Gate Expo (figures 6.13 and 6.14), which he would also use once more at

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51 San Francisco, Box 4a – Installation Photographs. Textual Records, IACB.  
52 Ibid.  
53 D’Harnoncourt, 1939, 167.  
54 San Francisco, Box 4a – Installation Photographs. Textual Records, IACB.  
55 Ibid.
MoMA in order to demonstrate the adaptability of Indian art to the Euro-American home. He was eager, he wrote, “to show that contemporary work has a place and fills a need in the twentieth century.”

Like White, d’Harnoncourt’s efforts – in San Francisco, then at MoMA – focused on incorporation. The outline for the Native American arts exhibit in San Francisco called for “several rooms furnished with modern furniture and Indian products,” so as to “demonstrate the value of Indian work in the decorative scheme of the house of today.” The caption for an installation photograph of “Model Room No. 2” (figure 6.14) notes that “The Indian products used in this room come from the Great Plains and from the Eastern Woodlands. The furniture in both model rooms was made in Indian schools but did not aim to appear Indian in style. On the contrary, it was consciously designed in the contemporary white style, to show how well Indian articles fit into modern homes.”

The room thus described was a living room/dining room that included two pieces of pottery (a vase and a bowl), two woven baskets, three textiles (one draped across the dining table, one across the couch and one on the floor beneath the coffee table). A Plains roach headdress was displayed on a stand and an Iroquois cornhusk mask (?) hung on one of the walls.

The other model room, a large living room (figure 6.13), featured three pieces of pottery, a basketry plaque, two weavings (one draped across the sofa and one hung on the wall above the desk), a kachina doll, and large drum. The fireplace was adorned with Indian-made tiles.

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57 While few images of the Modern Living galleries at MoMA exists, photographs made at the Golden Gate Expo, which set precedents for many of d’Harnoncourt’s displays at MoMA, provide clues about the New York installation, discussed in the following chapter.

58 “Outline of a Projected Exhibition of Indian Arts and Crafts at the Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, 1939,” Box 3, Folder 014 – SF Expo Outline. Textual Records, IACB.

59 San Francisco, Box 4a – Installation Photographs. Textual Records, IACB.
D’Harnoncourt requested that at the close of the exhibition, the fireplace be shipped from San Francisco to New York for installation at MoMA.\textsuperscript{60}

Despite the exhibition’s organizers’ focus on marketing, sales were initially slow, which as McLerran writes, “prompted experimentation with display techniques in the sales area.” Once the organizers discovered that “a higher price and the use of display techniques usually reserved for fine art (rather than curio or craft items) caused items to move more quickly,” items from the “trading post” sales area were moved to the sales room devoted to high-end goods.\textsuperscript{61} This shift, along with “the increased public exposure of Indian arts and crafts accompanying the exhibit” and the positive publicity it generated, led to increased sales of Indian arts and crafts nationwide. According to McLerran, IACB-supervised sales of Indian arts and crafts netted $863,267 in 1938, and rose to just over a million dollars in 1939.\textsuperscript{62}

The sales room at the Indian Court offered a variety of Native-American-made jewelry, clothing, furniture and decorative items. While Indian jewelry was readily incorporated by Euro-American women, Indian-made clothing did not appeal so readily as “Indian-inspired” garments; Euro-American consumers seemed uncertain about the ways in which Indian-made trims and accessories – such as the ribbons and belts available at the Fabric Counter – could be incorporated into modern outfits. Perhaps conscious of this reluctance to experiment, D’Harnoncourt would amend his strategy for the MoMA exhibition, hiring a European designer to incorporate Native-made elements into Euro-American designed clothing.

\textsuperscript{60} René d’Harnoncourt to Harry W. Camp, December 13, 1940. Box 27. Textual Records. IACB.
\textsuperscript{61} McLerran, 140.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Fashion and the Golden Gate Exposition

An article in *Vogue* about the Exposition reported, “In the extraordinary Federal Building, with its forty-eight symbolic pillars, you will find yourself spending more time than you planned, poring over (of all things!) an American Indian exhibit. Under the persuasive presentation of Mr. René d’Harnoncourt, the arts and culture of our forerunners take on a new and more personal interest – and somehow the display seems peculiarly correct and decorative against the modern setting.”  

In the same issue of *Vogue*, an ad for Goldwaters in Phoenix offered “the newest desert fashion” from “the Ancient Art of the Indian (figure 6.15)”:

> a dress with “more than 130 Arizona Indian symbols hand printed on pre-shrunk linen and made into the ever popular dirndl.”

The dress was accessorized with a “concho belt, faithful copy designed for us by an Indian silversmith,” and the outfit was completed by a “platform coolee play shoe in linen, exactly matching the dress.”

Though Indian Chic continued to gain national attention in the pages of *Vogue*, San Francisco merchants did not immediately seize on the Indian exhibition for inspiration or marketing. Instead, during the run of the Golden Gate Exposition, the home furnishing and décor store, Gump’s, focused on the Cambodian exhibition, setting up a Cambodian Room in their store and advertising related jewelry and apparel.

The I. Magnin and Co. department store made no mention of the Fair in their ads, which continued to offer imported French and British fashions for California women. In 1940, however, some months after d’Harnoncourt’s exhibition closed, several San Francisco retailers took notice of Indian Chic.

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63 “Golden Gate International Exposition,” *Vogue*, February 1939, 85, 162.
64 Goldwaters advertisement, *Vogue*, February 1939, 30.
The vogue of moccasin-inspired shoes that got underway in the early thirties continued into the first years of the following decade, as articles and advertisements emphasized the softness, stretch and comfort that Euro-Americans associated with Native American footwear. In February of 1940, the San Francisco department store O’Connor Moffatt offered “California Primitives” shoes described as “moccasin types” and given Indian inspired names like “Tom Tom.” An ad (figure 6.16) featured images of the shoes, each pair was accompanied by a drawing of Native Americans. The “Pescador” was flanked by an image of two Indians in a canoe, the “Fuego” by a drawing of a seated woman seen from behind, pottery and teepees all around her. The “Tom Tom” was adjoined by the image of two Native Americans in a Pueblo setting playing the drums. Three months later, the San Francisco shoe store Sommer & Kaufmann offered a moccasin-inspired shoe it called the “Papoose” (figure 6.17).

In the spring of 1940, an article in Vogue entitled “California Primitive” (figure 6.18) showcased a shoe from Saks “modeled after the traditional Indian moccasin.” Its author suggested that “this pliable, thong-laced Oxford of the same clay-coloured leather” would make a “nice addenda for your beige or grey slacks, perhaps.” Several months later, another Vogue article declared, “The moccasin will continue, in its pure form and all its derivatives, to be an outstanding pattern,” and noted, apropos materials, that “suede, kid, doeskin, gabardine, and goat will be good for their softness; crushed kid for its softness, casualness; horsehide or unlined reversed calf for their crudeness.” That season Bonwit Teller was offering moccasins in brown pigskin, as “soft and noiseless as an Indian’s.”

67 O’Connor and Moffatt advertisement, San Francisco Chronicle, February 5, 1940.
68 Sommer & Kaufmann advertisement, San Francisco Chronicle, May 9, 1940.
69 “California Primitive,” Vogue, April 15, 1940, 95.
70 “Spring Shoes Ahead,” Vogue, December 1, 1940, II.
71 “If You Know Her Size,” Vogue, December 1, 1940, 147.
In response to the Golden Gate Expo, Dallas-based department store Neiman Marcus hired French milliner and fashion designer Lilly Daché (1898-1989) and U.S. designer Clare Potter (1903-1999) to develop a line of Indian-inspired clothing and accessories. Their designs were featured in an article in Vogue, published in fall 1940,72 the author of which wrote, “From the Great Southwest came these new American fashions – inspired by the earlier Americans, the Indians. The designs are restrained. The effect, feminine. The background, authentic . . . The designers borrowed skillfully.”73 This essay, and accompanying images (figures 6.19 and 6.20) presented pieces that showed varying degrees of Indianness; as the text noted, “Your Indian-touch might be a colour – buckskin-beige or Indian-red for a lovely simple dress. It might be trimming – Indian-brave feathers on a very feminine hat, for instance; moccasin-fringe on otherwise classic shoes. It might be jewellery – a primitive necklace. In any case, we think you’ll fall in line – Indian file.”74 Vogue showed two pairs of moccasin-inspired shoes; a set of “ceremonial jewellery;” four hat designs; a jacket and dress; and a studded leather belt, as well as a photograph of Native American man in a feathered headdress. The colors of the items included “Indian-red,” “war-paint red,” and “buckskin beige.”75

Also in the fall, the New York-based milliner Sally Victor designed a collection of Indian-inspired hats, probably in response to the Golden Gate Expo and perhaps in anticipation of the MoMA exhibition (which had been announced earlier in the year). The line, which L. Bamberger & Co. promoted with an ad declaring, “Sally Victory plays Indian Chief” (figures

72 “Indian Signs,” Vogue, October 1, 1940, 56-57.
73 Ibid., 56.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., 56, 57.
6.21 and 6.22), featured prominent feather accents.\textsuperscript{76} It attracted little attention that season, but Victor took inspiration from Native American aesthetics again in the spring, and had much greater success – not only because she took a different tack, but also because the spring line basked in the glow of d’Harnoncourt’s much-discussed MoMA show, which will be explored in subsequent chapters.

As things Indian became ever more marketable, advertisers and manufacturers began to seize on Indian terms and phrases to describe products (even non-Indian ones), much as reporters and critics did in headlines related to the Indian Art exhibition. In April 1940, University Frocks offered “Ab-originals” (figure 6.23) that it promised to “cause tall tepee talk;” the dresses featured “pretty American Indian symbols on pastel and navy backgrounds of Enka Rayon crepe, that’ll look grand with (or without!) your Hiawatha tan!”\textsuperscript{77} In the summer of 1940, \textit{Vogue} noted that the fall would bring “the brightest collection of woolen fabrics that autumn has seen in many years,” from a “bright brown, such as the Indians used to paint their bodies,” to “a whole group of Indian colours with a sort of savage, natural quality. You’ll see mossy-green – bright, off-green, like a Kelly-green gone blue – taupey-browns again. And beige, beige, beige.”\textsuperscript{78} And in December 1940, the San Francisco department store H. Liebes & Co. was selling “WAMPUM jewelry made of burnished shells,” (figure 6.24) that looked as if “borrowed from a well-dressed chieftain.” The ad warned that these “bright colored gifts so unique” might make the buyer “turn ‘Indian giver’ and keep them yourself.”\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} L. Bamberger & Co. advertisement. \textit{New York World-Telegram}, August 13, 1940. Sally Victor Collection, Fashion Institute of Technology Archives (FIT). The ad showed two hats, one of which – black wool with green feathers – is now in the Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009.300.6123).

\textsuperscript{77} University Frocks advertisement, \textit{Vogue}, April 1, 1940, 116.

\textsuperscript{78} "The World’s Goods,” \textit{Vogue}, August 15, 1940, 84, 129.

\textsuperscript{79} H. Liebes & Co. advertisement, \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, December 3, 1940.
Cosmetics marketers, also aware of the profitability of the Indian connection in the early forties, used Indian-inspired labels to designate lipstick and nail polish colors. As reported in a “Discoveries in Beauty” column in *Vogue* in summer 1940, “This autumn, we are shading our eyes (in typical redskin pose) to view better Lo, the Poor Indian. From him and his country have come colours that look as new as they are old.” Indeed, an ad for La Cross that ran in *Vogue* that fall (figure 6.25) announced three new nail enamels, dubbed “Arrow Red – a tawny, gold-tinged shade; Chieftain – a strong red to carry muted fabrics; and Indian Sage – a rosy, spicy colour, good with dull, dark, nappy clothes.” Working with La Cross, the lipstick manufacturer Elmo (figures 6.26 and 6.27) had “created Indian-colour lipsticks; namely, Indian Paint Brush – light flame-red; Navajo – vivid and bright; and Pow Wow – a deep shade to go with purples and browns and such.” La Cross dubbed these shades their “Wigwam Colors,” and explained, “These thrillingly beautiful reds are true American Indian colors, borrowed from the very sources which inspired the exciting new Indian fashion trend that is sweeping America.”

Another La Cross ad, in which drawings of “Indian chiefs” flank a Euro-American women’s head, declared, “Lo, the Indians have taken over the fashion scene – and La Cross boldly brings the exciting pow-wow to your fingertips. Pale hands blossom into primal splendor with Wigwam Colors.” A contemporaneous Elmo ad proclaimed, the “Indian Love Call is on Everyone’s Lips” and suggested the reader “let the bold new Indian Love Call Colors make you the loveliest Pocahontas ever.” This verbal image was complemented by a drawing of two Native Americans; the woman, with her back to the viewer, calls across the water to an Indian man who holds a bow and arrow and stands on the opposite shore. Nonetheless, the ad, clearly calling to Euro-

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80 “Discoveries in Beauty,” *Vogue*, September 1, 1940, 98
81 “La Cross Nail Polish advertisement, *Vogue*, November 1, 1940, 121.
82 “La Cross Nail Polish advertisement, *Vogue*, September 15, 1940, 121.
Americans, describes Indian Paint Brush as “Beautiful for blondes.” The darker-haired (if not necessarily darker-skinned) were directed to Navajo, “Striking for brunettes” and Pow-Wow, “Exotic on brunettes.” All its colors, Elmo held, were “brilliantly keyed to the exciting new Indian trend that has captured the American fashion scene.” As the MoMA exhibit got underway, Elmo ran an ad entitled “Indian Chic,” which informed consumers that “fashion endorses the vital beauty of Indian Love Call Lipsticks by Elmo.”

**Interior Design and the Golden Gate Expo**

In the fall of 1940, *House Beautiful* ran a feature focused on American Way, “a group of industrial designers, artists, craftsmen, manufacturers banded together to coordinate and accelerate the art-in-industry movement in America.” The group’s aim was “To lend conscious direction to the contemporary design movement in this country; to develop a more inherently American design expression; to relate design in home furnishings more directly to the American way of marketing and living.” The article featured baskets by Dorothy Ranco for Penobscot Indian Arts and Crafts (figure 6.28).

In conjunction with features that told readers what to buy and where to buy it, *House Beautiful* also ran ads for purveyors of Indian goods. These tended, in the thirties, to put less emphasis on the Navajo blankets that had been the Indian traders’ stock-in-trade (although those ads still appeared occasionally), and more emphasis on basketry – a development that probably was related to the multitude of baskets on view at the EITA, the basket weavers that participated in the Golden Gate Exposition, and to baskets’ widespread promotion in the press as inexpensive

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83 Elmo Lipstick advertisement, *Vogue*, September 15, 1940, 32b.
84 Elmo Lipstick advertisement, *Vogue*, January 15, 1941, 90.
and versatile catch-alls with myriad uses in the modern home. Two “Window Shopping” features that appeared in *House Beautiful* in the later 1930s (figure 6.29 and 6.30) illustrated baskets from Fred Leighton, noting, “It’s nice to have something decorative to hold all those little mending jobs that make life a vale of tears.”$^{87}$ These same baskets, it was said, could be used “for picnics or petit point.”$^{88}$ Advertisements for “Genuine Penobscot Indian Baskets” (“fashioned and woven in the establishment of one of Maine’s best-known basketmakers”) noted the usefulness of these “unusual yet sturdy baskets” in multiple contexts, from indoors by the hearth to outdoors for gardening (figures 6.31-6.33).$^{89}$

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$^{87}$ “Window Shopping,” *House Beautiful*, September 1936, 16.
$^{88}$ “Window Shopping,” *House Beautiful*, June 1939, 12.
On the heels of the success of the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco, d’Harnoncourt was charged with putting together the even larger show held at MoMA in 1941, again in collaboration Douglas and Klumb. Like Crawford and White before him, d’Harnoncourt believed that a good deal of Native American production was amenable to incorporation in fashionable women’s wear as well as interior design, and to that end he decided that a section of the MoMA show would take up “Indian Art for Modern Life,” which complemented the exhibition’s overarching focus on “Living Traditions.” This emphasis stemmed from the exhibition’s perceived contribution to “the government’s present-day program of assisting the Indian toward self-support and toward cultural as well as economic freedom,” and its aims not only “to assist the Indian in the marketing of his arts and crafts and to disprove the mistaken idea that this country has no native art,” but also “to demonstrate that Indian arts and crafts can be the inspiration for modern fashions and decoration, and that the products of contemporary Indian artists are both useful and beautiful.”

The show took over the entire Museum of Modern Art from January through April 1941 (figure 7.1), then went on a yearlong tour of the country. Like the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts held ten years before, Indian Art of the United States garnered nationwide publicity for Native Americans’ material heritage and modern production. Where the EITA had focused

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1 LaRouche, IACB.
2 It traveled across the country to the Gallup Art Center in New Mexico (August 12-September 15, 1941); The Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts (October 22-November 23, 1941); The Lyman Allyn Museum in New London, Connecticut (December 1-29, 1941); the Cleveland Art Museum (January 9-February 8, 1942); the Society of Liberal Arts, Joslyn Memorial in Omaha Nebraska (February 19-March 22, 1942); the City Art Museum of St. Louis (April 1-May 11, 1942); and finally the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art (May 25-June 30, 1942).
on living art of the Southwest, the MoMA show, like the Golden Gate Exposition, was geographically expansive, presenting objects from the Plains, Great Lakes and Eastern Woodlands as well as the Southwest. Chronologically, the exhibition divided into three broad sections, each of which, at MoMA, occupied a single floor of the museum. The third floor was devoted to “Prehistoric Art,” the second floor to “Living Traditions,” and the first floor to “Indian Arts for Modern Life.” Each section was subdivided geographically. The number of objects included in the exhibition is difficult to determine, as the catalogue did not include a checklist, but several press accounts put the figure at more than a thousand.³

Like the Indian Court at the Golden Gate Exposition, the exhibition design for Indian Art of the United States differed radically from those typical at the time, and d’Harnoncourt’s reputation for expert and innovative installations was secured. In a letter to MoMA’s director, Alfred Barr Jr., d’Harnoncourt wrote that the installations he envisioned for the Indian Art exhibit were to be “very contemporary and Fifth Avenue in the best sense of the word,”⁴ and reviews of exhibition as well as installation photographs document achievement of that goal. An article in the trade journal Retailing, for instance, compared the exhibition’s lighting to “the better Fifth avenue windows,” its author noting,

> The intensity of the illumination is constantly varied. There are galleries in which it is clear and evenly diffused. Others are more softly lit. The high spot in dramatics is encountered in a room devoted to masks, where the main area is almost a blackout with

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³ The traveling exhibition probably was smaller; an extant list of objects from MoMA’s Circulating Exhibitions Department had just over 200.

each object standing out in sharp relief in the darkness because of spotlight or concealed troughs, or lights.

Alice Lawton of the *Boston Post* likewise remarked on the exhibit’s “dramatic lighting effects,” which worked in tandem, she wrote, with “brilliantly colored backgrounds” keyed to “hues one notes in Indian work.” Declaring the exhibition spaces “impeccable,” Lawton found it “impossible to speak too highly of the fine installation; it would have been so easy to crowd together groups of allied objects that would have formed just another exhibition. Here, however, only the choicest, most telling, are shown and each one to the best possible effect.”

Edward Alden Jewell was equally impressed with the “truly marvelous installation,” which, though “infinitely painstaking,” was “never in the least labored; intricate, and often – if you choose to consider it so – ‘theatrical’; yet always marshaled in its imaginative flights, always creating an appropriate effect, establishing a helpful atmosphere.”

The installation of MoMA’s Indian Art show seemed especially striking in comparison to displays of such materials at the Heye Foundation and Metropolitan Museum. Remarks by Robert Moses, then NYC Parks Commissioner, sparked an essay in *PM* magazine (figure 7.2); in 1941, Moses released a report in which he called the city’s museums “musty,” and noted, “Their ‘sacred’ atmosphere intimidates . . . not only public officials but the public generally.”

To assess the validity of Moses’s critique, *PM*’s Alan Fisher visited the Metropolitan, the gloomy and cluttered arrangements of which, he wrote, gave him “museum indigestion.” Fisher suggested removing half the objects on display and adding “about 5,000 baby spotlights.” By contrast, he wrote, the Indian Art exhibition at MoMA was “presented and lighted dramatically

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in an atmosphere of warmth and spaciousness.”

Friday took a similar view, comparing the “clever display” at MoMA with the “cluttered” ones at the Heye Foundation (figure 7.3). “By using ballyhoo, weird lighting, and all sorts of ultra-modern display techniques,” the writer for Friday observed, MoMA was “packing in thousands of paying customers – as many as 3,000 a weekend,” whereas the Heye, which housed “the best [Indian Art] collection – the best in the world,” drew “a handful of students and professors who can find their way through a labyrinth of cluttered shelves and overcrowded cases. Almost nobody else knows about it.”

The article was accompanied by a selection of photographs illustrating the contrasting display strategies.

At MoMA, “Prehistoric Art” was divided into five sections: Carvers of the Far West; Carvers of the Northwest Coast; Engravers of the Arctic; Sculptors of the East; and Painters of the Southwest. D’Harnoncourt decontextualized the objects, presenting them as art-for-arts-sake – much as Sloan had done in the EITA exhibition of 1931. Describing his exhibition design in an article in the Magazine of Art, d’Harnoncourt wrote that the “main impression of the prehistoric section…will be of a collection of sculpture and ceramics displayed with classic simplicity in rather severe white-walled rooms.”

An installation photograph (figure 7.4) of the entrance to “Prehistoric Art of the Pacific Coast” illustrates d’Harnoncourt’s strategy. Individual pieces on pedestals and small groupings of works in cases were accompanied by minimal text and no references to the ways they were made or used – in contrast to the usual presentations of such objects in natural history museums.

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10 D’Harnoncourt, Magazine of Art, 1941, 76.
The historic art, on the other hand, was contextualized, a decision which d’Harnoncourt explained to George Heye in a letter: “Since we are interested in showing Indian culture through Indian art, and not Indian art as an end in itself, we can never forget the place of each specimen in its native civilization and must consider many points that would be insignificant in an art-for-art’s-sake display.”¹¹ Thus, the “The Living Traditions” floor was divided into nine sections: Pueblo Cornplanters; Navaho Shepherds; Apache Mountain People; Desert Dwellers of the Southwest; Seed Gatherers of the Far West; Hunters of the Plains; Woodmen of the East; Fishermen of the Northwest Coast; and Eskimo Hunters of the Arctic (figure 7.5).

An installation view of MoMA’s second floor (figure 7.6) shows Navajo blankets and ponchos arranged in a semi-circular gallery. Although the black and white photograph does not show it, paint samples (figures 7.8 and 7.9) and installation plans preserved in the Indian Arts and Crafts Board archives, as well as colored pencil drawings (figures 7.7 and 7.10) in the National Archives, indicate vibrant color schemes here. D’Harnoncourt, in his essay for the Magazine of Art, remarked, “The proportions and color scheme of each room and its display material have been planned to suggest the essence of the physical surroundings in which the culture developed, or of the man-made setting in which the objects were seen and used.” Pedestals in the Navajo gallery were painted “shrimp,” while the back wall and ceiling were done in “sky blue.” The same blue was used on the back wall of the Pueblo gallery, where several pedestals were painted a “yellow earth” color. (figures 7.10 and 7.11) Overall, shades of blue, yellow and red dominated, with greens, brown, black and white as accents.

As for the arrangement of the galleries, d’Harnoncourt wrote, “Objects that are essentially part of a costume or tribal activity for which they were made are usually grouped in a

¹¹ Letter from René d’Harnoncourt to George Heye, October 9, 1940. Reprinted in Rushing, “Marketing the Affinity of the Primitive and the Modern,” 195.
way intended to suggest their original use. Other objects having a strong esthetic value independent of their setting have been singled out and shown one by one, as highlights of the styles of the different areas.” In the section devoted to Hunters of the Plains (figure 7.12) a figure was outlined on the wall, and a roach (i.e., a traditional Plains headdress), breastplate and ceremonial pipe were attached to that two-dimensional rendering. A saddle, parfleche, pipe bags and shields surrounded the silhouette. D’Harnoncourt had done the same grouping at the Golden Gate International Exposition (figure 7.13).

The model rooms, an important feature of the Golden Gate Expo, were recreated at MoMA, but not preserved in installation photographs. The fireplace of Indian-made tiles flanked by chair upholstered in a Navajo blanket is seen in a photo that accompanied an Associated Press article (figure 7.14). The image also features a drum, which served as an end table and held a “polished Papago pottery jar in historic ‘black on red;' and a box of porcupine quills embroidered exquisitely on birchbark by the Chippewas.” Noting that “Indian influence is showing up in 1941 trends of art in the home,” the AP article’s author, Margaret Kernodle, added, “And strangely, it isn’t a cavalcade of gaudy color or weirdly woven materials.” Instead, “the simplicity, the emphasis on basic materials, and the soft, rich colors of the trend-to-be” were “attracting the attention of housewives who see home decorating possibilities at ‘the biggest exhibit of American Indian art’ at the museum.” In a similar vein, a writer for the The Christian Science Monitor observed, “The exhibition seeks to disclose the adaptability of Indian art and fabrics to contemporary fashions and interiors,” adding, “It is to be hoped that any modern

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12 D’Harnoncourt, Magazine of Art, 1941, 76.
13 Margaret Kernodle, “Indian Art Finds A Place In Paleface Drawing Rooms,” AP syndicated article. MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 372.
adaptation will avoid mere savagery of color and design,” by adhering “to the simple beauty of the indigenous art of America, and so help toward a keener appreciation of its qualities.”

The First Lady was among those most strongly convinced of Native American art’s adaptability to modern life. After visiting MoMA shortly after the opening of *Indian Art of the United States*, Eleanor Roosevelt remarked, in her syndicated column, “My Day,” “This Indian exhibition should certainly stimulate production and bring us as consumers, a realization of what we can do to keep the Indian arts and skills alive for future generations.”

As in San Francisco, silverwork was a prominent feature in the MoMA exhibition. The catalogue illustrates several pieces of jewelry (figure 7.15), including a silver “squash blossom” necklace, two silver bracelets, and two silver pins. Three photographs of the MoMA exhibit (figures 7.16-7.18) show that single objects were displayed on black and gray velvet stands and clear plastic tubes, much as they would have been in a store window on Fifth Avenue. Two publicity photographs (figure 7.19) illustrated the range of silver pieces in the exhibition – belts, bracelets, necklaces, pins, as well as cups – all “made exclusively for the white man’s use,” but in keeping with “the fundamental characteristics of the traditional tribal style.”

At the MoMA show, silver jewelry and accessories as well as rugs and art for home decoration were offered for sale. A plan for the “Silver and Furniture Accessories Sales Counter” (figure 7.20), now preserved in the IACB archives, shows that it resembled the moccasin display

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16 A photograph of two silver pins and a bracelet, is accompanied by a caption that identifies them as pieces from the collections of Mrs. Kenneth B. Disher and Mrs. René d’Harnoncourt, “made in 1938 or 1939.”
counter in San Francisco.\textsuperscript{18} Layouts of the “Pottery and Basketry Display” and “Clothing Accessories Display” in “Display Room 5” (figure 7.21) are known through plans and a colored pencil drawing that show a model living room replete with wooden display cases draped with weavings and stocked with smaller items including silver, dolls, pottery, and baskets (figures 7.22 and 7.23).

A “Stock List Catalogue, Sample Room, New York, New York, February 25, 1941”\textsuperscript{19} inventories leatherwork, pottery, silverwork, and textiles sent from a variety of retail outlets and schools (most located in the Southwest). The Sioux Indian Arts and Crafts Shop in Pine Ridge, SD, sent beadwork and quillwork moccasins, the Pueblo Indian Arts and Crafts Market in Albuquerque sent all manner of pottery from 18 different pueblos, and the Arts and Craft Department of the Albuquerque Indian School sent silver pieces ranging from necklaces and bracelets to buckles and buttons.\textsuperscript{20} The Wingate Activity Association of Fort Wingate, NM, the Arts and Crafts Department of the Santa Fe Indian School, and the Pueblo Indian Crafts Market in Albuquerque also supplied a variety of silver pieces.

Several of the items offered at the MoMA exhibition – including a “Cherokee wastepaper basket” pictured in the catalogue (figure 7.24) – were labeled in such a way as to repurpose them for Euro-American use, while others were simply removed from the original contexts to modern U.S. interiors – such as a Hopi shawl shown draped over a modern sofa as a decorative throw

\textsuperscript{18} Each counter had display cases cut into the top, a large glass display case at one end, and a display board on the wall behind it, which ran the length of the counter.
\textsuperscript{19} “Stock List Catalogue, Sample Room, New York, New York, February 25, 1941,” Box 28, Stock Catalogue. Textual Records, IACB.
\textsuperscript{20} Stock list included: Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Picuris, Sandia, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Sia, Taos, Tesuque, Zuni, Canoncito and Puertocito.
Both the Cherokee (wastepaper) basket and the Hopi shawl feature prominently in installation photographs from the Indian Art show’s Los Angeles and St. Louis venues (figures 7.26 and 7.27). Though many of the same objects were shown in the traveling version of the show, they were displayed with much less panache than they had been in New York; photographs indicate that displays in St. Louis and Los Angeles were more cluttered, the objects less artfully deployed than they had been in the model rooms set up in San Francisco and at MoMA.

“Indian Art for Modern Living” – Women’s Fashion

For the MoMA exhibition, the IACB hired the Swiss designer Fred A. Picard (1906-?), who was best known for winter sportswear designed “to utilize the handiwork of American Indian tribes as fashion influences for modern women’s apparel.” Picard, who ran the Sun Valley Sport Shop in Sun Valley, ID, for the Union Pacific Railroad, designed six pieces for the exhibition. As Evans and Nash had done in the thirties, Picard incorporated Navajo silver buttons, but he also drew on materials from the Plains and Eastern Woodlands, expanding and blending sources of Native American inspiration and incorporation.

In a letter to Picard, d’Harnoncourt wrote that he was sending “a collection of Indian-made articles to be used by you as trimmings for modern women’s apparel to be shown in our

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21 I believe this Hopi blanket is now in the collection of the Denver Art Museum, part of a 1953 donation by the IACB, 1953.667.
22 Los Angeles. MoMA: CE Microfilm, roll 21, frame 83; St. Louis. MoMA: CE Microfilm, roll 21, frame 76.
D’Harnoncourt not only promised Picard full credit (in the galleries, exhibition catalogue and any other publications) but exclusivity, assuring him that “aside from pieces designed by you,” the MoMA exhibit would not “show any modern women’s apparel designed to show the use of Indian made trimmings.” Five of Picard’s six pieces for the show incorporated Indian materials: an after-ski suit with Seminole ribbonwork, a short evening cape with a beaded and braided belt from the Osage of Oklahoma, an evening dress with panels of Pawnee ribbonwork, a dinner dress with Chippewa beadwork, and an evening coat with sleeves and shoulders made of Crow leggings and beadwork. A sixth piece, described in the press as the “tepee play suit” lifted imagery from Blackfoot tepees.

Like Evans and Nash before him, Picard was most inclined to include Indian-made elements in Euro-American designs, producing pieces that do not necessarily look “Indian” – especially when compared to Crawford’s manipulations of the late teens and twenties and Mallinson’s Indian-motif fabrics. Anxious to stress that Native Americans’ fine craftsmanship could be transferred to Euro-American designs, Picard told a reporter for the *New York World Telegram* that “just because an Indian woman happens to do the work does not mean that it will be Indian in design.” As a case in point, he mentioned a work he had seen produced by “an old Osage squaw:” a “perfectly beautiful rose worked on a pale blue background” that had “nothing traditional whatsoever about it.”

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24 The IACB provided the “actual Indian made articles to be used as trimmings” and covered the expenses of additional raw materials. René d’Harnoncourt to F. A. Picard, October 21, 1940. Box 26, Organization of Display: Modern World. Textual Records, IACB.

25 Only three pieces were reproduced in the exhibition catalogue, the other three are known only through newspaper articles and reproductions.

Picard’s black wool after-ski suit (figures 7.28 and 7.29), which incorporated Navajo silver buttons and had Seminole cotton patchwork inserted into the bodice of the jacket and the side panels of the pants, was pictured in the Indian Arts catalogue with a caption that read, “The Florida Seminole developed elaborate costumes from fabrics made of narrow strips of colored cotton goods. In many cases these strips are in turn sewed together in many small rectangles and triangles, but in the blouses of the older people the original simple stripes have survived. The bodice of this suit . . . is made from such a blouse.” The suit (now in the collection of the Denver Art Museum, part of a 1953 donation from the IACB; figure 7.30), was exhibited at MoMA in a case at the entrance to the “Indian Art for Modern Living” galleries (figures 7.31 and 7.32).

Picard’s red velvet hooded evening cape (figures 7.33 and 7.34), which incorporated “Osage beaded and braided belts in a wide, vivid band about the hood and in narrow tasseled banding dropping in flying ornamentation from the yolk [sic],” was shown with an emerald green chiffon evening dress with panels of Pawnee ribbonwork (figures 7.35 and 7.36; both are now in the collection of the IACB’s Southern Plains Indian Museum). The cape appeared in a black-and-white photo in the catalogue, with a caption reading, “The combination of beadwork and braiding is often found among the tribes now living in central and northern Oklahoma. The

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28 Douglas and d’Harnoncourt, 191.
30 The other article of clothing seen in the left corner of the case is hard to identify.
32 Email correspondence with Meridith Stanton, Director, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, September 11, 2013.
belt is divided on both ends into narrow tasseled strips that are here seen hanging from the yoke.”

The green evening dress with ribbonwork (figures 7.35 and 7.36) was reproduced in color in the catalogue, accompanied by a caption reading, “Silk ribbon appliqué work in traditional designs has been made by many tribes of the East, the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes region since this material was first made available to them in the eighteenth century. The type of ribbon applied to this dress is made for trimming blankets. Narrower strips are used for leggings and moccasin flaps.” In related articles, this dress’s ribbonwork was sometimes attributed to the Kickapoo, as in a syndicated article, “Putting Indian Sign on Spring Fashions,” that included a photo (figure 7.37) and noted: “The ribbon work, shown on Picard’s chiffon dress at right, was done by the Kickapoo Indians of Oklahoma. Mr. Picard thinks that the Indians may be the answer to American designers’ need for hand-woven materials, beautiful embroidery, and original decorative motifs such as seen on wall panel in the background.”

The other dress in the photo is Picard’s dinner dress, which the article described as “finished with beadwork trimming and a beadwork pocket.”

An article in the Boise Idaho Statesman, “We’re Going Indian,” featured Picard’s white suede evening coat (figure 7.38), as did an article by Rita Swann for the Baltimore News Post. Whereas Swann wrote that the shoulders and sleeves of the coat had been fashioned from a pair

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33 Douglas and d'Harnoncourt, 190.
34 Ibid., 46.
35 “Putting Indian Sign on Spring Fashions,” syndicated article appeared in newspapers across the country. MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 373.
36 Ibid.
37 “We’re Going Indian,” Boise Idaho Statesman, February 2, 1941. MoMA: PI Scrapbooks, roll 12, frame 748.
of “beadwork and leather leggings of the Crow Tribe of Montana,” an article in the *Cleveland Press* described the same components of the coat as inspirations rather than outright incorporations, noting that Picard “borrowed from the beadwork and leather leggings of the Crow tribe of Montana” to design sleeves “in the manner of Indian leggings, of red wool and bordered with richly colored beadwork” [my emphasis]. It is impossible to tell whether incorporation or inspiration actually was used in this coat, since Picard employed both strategies.

Picard’s “tepee play dress” (figures 7.39 and 7.40) clearly was an “inspiration” that got “its shape and brilliant coloring directly from an Indian tepee tent.” A black-and-white photo of Blackfoot tepees in the exhibition catalogue (figure 7.41) does not tell us much about color, but the ornament on the second tepee from the left – a double banded line and strip of white dots on a dark background, with semi-circles along the top of the band – resembles the design on the skirt of Picard’s play suit. An advertisement for the MoMA exhibition that ran in *Harper’s Bazaar* (figure 7.42), included color drawings of the tepee-inspired outfit alongside Picard’s after-ski suit. There the skirt appears predominantly yellow, with red at the hem, and green, orange, and blue at the waist. The ad also shows a Navajo silver button, a piece of Osage taffetà ribbon appliqué work, a piece of striped cotton, and a Blackfoot fur bag – credited to Native

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41 “Smart Set Fashions: Tepee.” MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 419.
42 Douglas and d’Harnoncourt, 127.
American makers with “charming names,” including Mamie Still Smoking, Jo Cloud, and Susie Blowing Fast Around the Corner.\textsuperscript{43}

The garments Picard designed for the Indian Arts show were one-of-a-kind and were not offered for sale. Although they had been commissioned to generate interest and “help to save Indian handcraft,”\textsuperscript{44} Picard worried that if his work inspired “an Indian fashion trend” among “cheap designers”\textsuperscript{45} inferior knock-offs “would kill the Indian trade.” Rather than see the Indians’ “fine work commercialized,” he hoped that Native American craftspeople would be “subsidized so that they could have plenty of time to work on their real arts.” In an interview with The Christian Science Monitor, Picard observed, “Only the very old men and women of the tribes know the secrets of color and patient handwork. If the younger generations are to learn them, they must be maintained during the training period. Otherwise . . . the whole technique will die out and become a lost art.”\textsuperscript{46} Picard put his faith in “a small but steady market of collectors who would consume their output,” and expressed his desire that Native Americans’ production “will never be cheapened, or shoddily copied, or popularized so that it loses its distinction. The art of the American Indian should come into its own.”\textsuperscript{47}

Touching on the tourist versus art market distinction that had been so prominent in literature related to the 1931 Exposition, Picard in 1941 told a New York World Telegram reporter, “A fine piece of Indian handwork – and I don’t mean the tourist junk you find in

\textsuperscript{43}“The American Indian Show: At The Museum of Modern Art,” Harper’s Bazaar, January 1941, 62
\textsuperscript{44}“Is a Smart Swiss The Redskins’ Best Friend?” New York Sunday Journal & American, February 16, 1941. MoMA: PI Scrapbooks, roll 12, frame 760.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
souvenir shops – should be treated like an exquisite example of the jeweler’s art, something to be handed from generation to generation.” Placing his designs in the heirloom category, he continued, “I’ve designed these dresses with this in mind.”

Several of the articles on Picard’s work raised this issue – perhaps at his prompting; a piece in the *Women’s Exchange Review*, for instance, drew a distinction between popular notions of Native American craft (“the bad silver jewelry, pottery and not very attractive weaving which means Indian work to most Americans”) and enlightened aesthetics when it described the “exquisite bits of embroidery, beadwork, and silver buttons and buckles” that Picard incorporated. Another article, dubbing Picard “The Redskins’ Best Friend,” drew a distinction between his work and the sort of “handicrafts . . . Indians have been turning out for tourists because it sold well”: “miniature birch bark canoes, garishly decorated pottery, uninspired silver and turquoise jewelry and bad beadwork.”

Up to this point, appropriations and the inspirations they encouraged had ruled women’s fashion, while incorporation of Indian-made objects flourished in interior décor. The mixing of Native American and Euro-American-made components in fashion that emerged in the thirties and forties often blurred the line between incorporation and appropriation, at the risk of making this distinction in production immaterial – thereby opening the door for non-Indian knock-offs to eclipse Indian-made elements.

Picard, as those before him, railed against the tourist trade, in the conviction – shared by White, Collier, and d’Harnoncourt – that the cultivation of a small, high-quality market would

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48 Worden.
50 “Is a Smart Swiss The Redskins’ Best Friend?”
51 In their ruling against Maisel in the thirties, the FTC noted that that trader’s products had a negative impact on the Indian silver market in the Southwest. Maisel advertised their products as Indian-made, so if the “cheap designers” Picard is concerned with were to similarly market their clothing, it could have a negative impact on Indian handcraft.
prove economically beneficial for Indian artists. Although he did not specify a source of funding, Picard proposed subsidies for Indian artists, so that younger artists could learn from older artists and “continue their handwork despite the pressure of the modern demand for speed.”\textsuperscript{52} If he was looking to the government to step in, his suggestion was ill timed. Picard’s recommendation for subsidies came as Congress began to consider the possibility of terminating federal Indian services.\textsuperscript{53} As Kenneth William Townsend notes, “By 1937, the spirit of reform had waned as congressional leaders increasingly assumed success in meeting [the Meriam Report’s] recommendations. Having accomplished the inferred goals of the IRA, the next logical step was Indian assimilation into mainstream society.”\textsuperscript{54}

Though Picard and his designs generated substantial notice in the mainstream press, two major fashion magazines, \textit{Vogue} and \textit{Mademoiselle}, ignored them in their reporting on the Indian Arts show. \textit{Vogue} not only ran an appreciative article by Frank Crowninshield in conjunction with the MoMA exhibit, but also staged a fashion shoot before a mural by Fred Kabotie (figures 7.43 and 7.44) that was mounted there. Crowninshield, who was enthusiastic about the Modern Living section, where “we see well-designed pottery, jewelry, belts, embroideries, rugs, blankets, fabrics, and shells, all of it in distinguished taste,” remarked, “This handsome and revealing show offers convincing testimony that the art of our ancient Indians (which, since we became a nation, has been lying, literally, under our feet) is not only our oldest cultural manifestation, but one also of a high order of excellence; majestic, elegant, and charged with a mystical and suffusing ardour.”\textsuperscript{55} Yet, in the photos that accompany Crowninshield’s text, Indian Art – in the

\begin{footnotes}

\item[52] B.F.
\item[53] Ibid, 195.
\item[55] Frank Crowninshield, “American Indian Art,” \textit{Vogue}, February 1, 1941, 96-97, 150-152.
\end{footnotes}
form of Kabotie’s mural (a reproduction of those at the Awatovi Ruins in Arizona) – is mere backdrop for models wearing “unmistakably American costumes” that betray no Indian influence. Similarly, a photograph published in Mademoiselle in April 1941 used a Native American object on view at MoMA as an exotic counterpoint to modern Euro-American design; a young woman in “a taffeta town suit with a jersey blouse, all of Celanese rayon” is seen posed before a Haida totem pole in the Indian Art show (figures 7.45 and 7.46). Here, as in the Vogue piece, MoMA’s exhibition was presented as a fashionable destination rather than a place to seek fashion cues.

In an article published in advance of the exhibition, Morris De Camp Crawford predicted, in Women’s Wear, that MoMA’s Indian Art show “and its interpretation through our industries” would “mark a real epoch.” Recalling that “during the first World War, Women’s Wear Daily, suggested the use of these great documents, and many ideas from the arts of the American Indian were represented in American merchandise,” Crawford wrote that he now looked ahead “with confidence to a much wider and a more discriminating use of this material…under René d’Harnoncourt’s sympathetic magic.” But, like the writers for Vogue and Mademoiselle, Crawford made no mention of Picard’s work. His piece featured two photos of Native Americans in native attire (figures 7.47 and 7.48); one shows Mary InKonish, “a Cheyenne Bead Worker of Oklahoma,” wearing an appliqued skirt, a shirt with silver buttons, moccasins and a beaded necklace, while the other shows an unidentified Navajo man in his customary garb.

Women’s Wear subsequently ran an unsigned article, “Indian Art Exhibit Opens at Modern Museum, Rich in Handcraft and Design Inspiration;” the suggestions it offered for

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56 Mademoiselle, April 1941. MoMA: PI Microfilm, Roll 9, frame 410.
58 Photographic Archive, MoMA, IN123.80 and IN123.88.
modern designers suggest Crawford may have been its author. Most of the article was devoted to Native-American art and its potential for modern adaptation, and while a paragraph was given over to Picard’s Indian-inflected fashions, the author pointed designers toward indigenous costume rather than Picard’s display, noting, “Sportswear firms will find the Hunters of the Plains and the Woodsmen of the East groups on the second floor offering new ideas especially where working in leather is concerned.”

**Indians on Display**

Five Native Americans traveled to New York for the opening of the Indian Art exhibition At MoMA in January 1941 – Navajo silversmiths Ambrose Roan Horse and Dooley Shorty, the Hopi painter Fred Kabotie, and two Sioux artists who specialized in porcupine quillwork and beadwork: Nellie Buffalo Chief of Rosebud, SD, and Elsie Bonser of Pine Ridge, SD. – and in March a group of eight Tewas from Tesuque Pueblo arrived to perform ceremonial dances: Martin Vigil (aka Rainbow), and his colleagues When Leaves Are Sprouting, Painted Sun, Corn Leaf, Red Eagle, Red Coral Eagle, Eagledown Feathers and Summer Mountain. In April, Navajo sandpainters Charlie Turquoise and Diney Chilli Bitsoey arrived to work in the galleries, as did Mary Peshlakai, a Navajo weaver, and Tom Katenay, a Navajo silversmith. Though ten years had passed since EITA, and Euro-Americans had become more familiar with indigenes over the course of a decade, articles on the MoMA show often stressed the oddities of its Native

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60 Press Release, January 20, 1941, MoMA.
61 “Indians Perform Ceremonial Dances at Museum in City,” *New York Herald-Tribune*, March 5, 1941.
American participants’ appearances. *The New York Times*, for instance, described the exoticism not only of the sandpainters’ practice but of their garb: “They wear colored velvet tunics belted with silver, a vast amount of turquoise – earrings, bracelets, rings and necklaces – and their shoes are made of single pieces of deer skin, with silver clasps.”

As Oqwa Pi had done in the thirties for the EITA, Charlie Turquoise took part in a radio broadcast while in New York for *Indian Art of the United States*. Unlike Oqwa Pi, who had been asked to speak about his experiences in and impressions of the city, Turquoise’s own voice was not much heard on the program; he offered a few words in Navajo as the program commenced, and chanted as it concluded, but for most of the show Turquoise – though accompanied by an interpreter, Horace Boardman (a government-trading supervisor for the Navajo reservation) – was spoken of rather than with. The otherness conveyed by Turquoise’s Navajo words and chant were verified by the verbal portrait the program’s white host presented to the radio audience: “Friends, Charlie’s very impressive looking, he’s tall and quite handsome; with his bushy black moustache he looks surprisingly young for his seventy-three years, I’d say. Perhaps his most distinguishing characteristics are the large pieces of turquoise he wears attached by a string through holes pierced in his ears. He also wears about six turquoise necklaces and bracelets of silver and turquoise. He’s very much at his ease and his black eyes twinkle just about all the time.” When Boardman was asked if this adornment was “customary,” the interpreter confirmed, “Navajos don’t wear any costumes, but they all wear lots of jewelry,

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64 “America in Transition: ‘The Art of the Navajo Indian,’” ten minute broadcast on the CBS Radio Network, April 8, 1941. Copy in the MoMA Archives.
especially turquoise and silver and velvet or plush shirts and blouses...He didn’t come before the public dressed in feathers, he comes to you just as he is on the reservation.”

When Native Americans didn’t “dress in feathers,” presenting themselves as mainstream rather than exotic, “New Yorkers,” according to an article in the New York Sun, “were frankly disappointed.” Recounting the arrival of “Mrs. Buffalo Chief and Miss Red Rock . . . From South Dakota’s Reservation,” who had come to view the MoMA exhibit (figure 7.49), the Sun’s reporter wondered at the modern attire of the two women, who “admitted that they do possess tribal costumes but wear them only at ceremonies and sometimes at dances. ‘Every one dresses in modern clothes,’ said Miss Red Rock, ‘except perhaps a few of the older Indians who stick to their moccasins and leggings. And the older women do like to wear the colorful, woven shawls in red, blue, green and yellow.’”

Unlike these Indian tourists in New York, those who, like Charlie Turquoise, had work showcased at the Indian Art show found themselves often “on view.” They tended to play their parts in reservation dress rather than urban attire, since, as at the EITA in 1931 and the GGE in 1939, the MoMA exhibit put Native Americans on view in traditional contexts: making art and performing ceremonial dances. Although museum officials displayed a degree of cultural sensitivity – for example, forbidding visitor photographs of and conversations with the sandpainters as they performed this “sacred rite” in the galleries – the publicity images MoMA released emphasize Indian otherness by juxtaposing Native American artists with the exhibition’s Euro-American organizers and public. Whereas the EITA appears to have generated just one image (for the Grand Central Galleries Yearbook) in which Native Americans and Euro-

65 Ibid.
67 Memo from Mr. Wheeler to the entire museum staff, March 18, 1941. MoMA: REG 123.
Americans intermingle (figure 4.4) MoMA’s publicity department distributed several photographs pairing the exotic (in the form of Native Americans, their products and practices) and the familiar (well-known dignitaries and celebrities) that were widely reproduced in the press.

One such photograph shows First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and painter/silversmith Fred Kabotie in front of his reconstructed kiva painting (figure 7.50). Roosevelt, who is heavily and formally attired – in dark coat, fur stole, and elaborate hat – towers over the diminutive Kabotie, whose dark and simple attire is offset by Southwestern silver buttons, necklace and belt, and whose dark head of hair is adorned by a bright bandana, tied in a large bow above his right ear. A similar photo shows poet and southwestern regionalist Alice Corbin Henderson flanked by two of the Tewa ceremonial dancers she and her husband had chaperoned on their trip to New York from Tesuque pueblo. Whereas Henderson wears a full-length gown and a fur coat, the Tewas wear traditional dance costumes, and raise their feathered arms over her head to create a sort of canopy (figure 7.51). Henderson is seen in the same dress and coat in a photo that shows her between two Tesuque women in “ceremonial dress for their tribe’s Buffalo dance” (figure 7.52) – an image reproduced by both The Christian Science Monitor and the New York Sun. Around the same time, several photographs were made of Kabotie and Dooley Shorty posing alongside the cast of the 1941 film “Charley’s Aunt.” The actresses appear in ball gowns, their male counterparts in tuxedos, whereas the dressed-down Indians wear bandanas tied around their heads that find echoes in the women’s hair bows (figure 7.53).

The most widely reproduced image from MoMA’s show – both at the time of the exhibition and in later accounts of Indian Arts of the United States as a milestone of “primitivism” in modern art – was a photo taken by Eliot Elisofon of sandpainters Charlie Turquoise and Diney
Chilli Bitsoey at work as museum visitors observe them (figure 7.54). This image shows Euro-American audience and Native American spectacle separated by a fence—much as they had been at World’s Fairs at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{68}

The distance MoMA enforced between the humans on display and the visitors who watched them apparently was intended to create a zone of sacredness as well as otherness; a memo Monroe Wheeler—MoMA’s director of exhibitions and publications—had distributed to MoMA’s entire staff alerted them to sanctity of the practices on view and set boundaries:

To avoid complications, we must bear in mind that sand painting is a sacred rite in which prayers and chants play an important part. Sand painting, for the Indians, is a mysterious force, and they believe it capable of harm when not properly controlled. Photographs, which the Indians believe make this force permanent, are absolutely forbidden, and if visitors to the galleries are allowed to take photographs, the Indians, according to Mr. d’Harnoncourt, will simply cease their work, and it is extremely difficult to persuade them to resume it. Conversations with the Indians while they work on sand paintings will also disturb them greatly.\textsuperscript{69}

This aspect of the exhibition generated considerable interest among the public and the press corps; an article in \textit{Time} reported that because photographing the act of sandpainting “might make its power dangerously permanent,” museum visitors had been “searched last week for smuggled cameras.” The piece clarified that the much-reproduced photos MoMA had released on sandpainters at work had been made “at certain stages of the painting, before its medicine was too strong to be dangerous.”\textsuperscript{70}

The ceremonial dances performed at MoMA were likewise characterized as sacred; an article in \textit{The Christian Science Monitor}, written by a Native American (?) correspondent, noted that their dances “might seem to the casual onlooker to be simply fanciful exhibitions of more of

\textsuperscript{68} See my Introduction, and Pierce, 434.
\textsuperscript{69} Memo from Mr. Wheeler to the entire museum staff, March 18, 1941.
\textsuperscript{70} “Charley and the Grandson,” \textit{Time}, April 7, 1941. MoMA: PI Microfilm roll 9, frame 443.
less intricate steps, but each has a deep religious significance for the Indians.”\textsuperscript{71} Still, the article’s title, “N.Y. Entertains Indians – and Vice-Versa,” seems to undermine the notion of the dances’ ritual solemnity. Another article describing the Tewas’ performances likewise belied their seriousness of purpose; headlined “8 Pueblos, 6 of Them Braves, Dance Tonight; Their 2 Squaws Won’t Know What It’s All About” – jokingly confided that although all Pueblos learned to sing and dance as children, and both men and women took part in ceremonial dancing, the women “never know what they’re dancing about.”\textsuperscript{72} An article in \textit{The New York Times}, which noted that Tewa dancers “menacingly hopped and gesticulated,” accompanied by “the beat of primitive drums,”\textsuperscript{73} conceded that such efforts were not lost on an audience of schoolchildren for whom the Indians performed: “‘The Eagle Dance,’ preceded by ‘The Buffalo Dance’ and ‘The War Dance,’ evoked no little enthusiasm.” A writer for the \textit{New York Herald Tribune} – who joined a more erudite audience when the Tewas performed for the opening meeting of a four-day institute on “The Future of the American Indian,” described the dances as purposeful (rather than merely amusing entertainments) when performed in context, noting, “The Snow-Bird Dance, designed to produce a heavy snowfall on the Sangre de Cristo Mountains so that melting snow in the spring will provide ample water for the desert pueblo; the Buffalo Dance, for successful hunting, and the Eagle Dance, to drive evil out of the community.”\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{71} Ta-De Win, “N.Y. Entertains Indians – And Vice Versa,” \textit{Christian Science Monitor}, March 8, 1941.
\textsuperscript{72} “8 Pueblos, 6 of Them Braves, Dance Tonight; Their 2 Squaws Won’t Know What It’s All About,” \textit{New York World Telegram}, March 4, 1941. MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 365.
\textsuperscript{74} “Indians Perform Ceremonial Dances at Museum in City,” \textit{New York Herald-Tribune}, March 5, 1941.
From the Indian Perspective

Some 35 years after *Indian Art of the United States*, Kabotie recalled his experiences in New York in an autobiography. His memories of the exhibition and the hubbub surrounding it are both humorous and telling. Clearly, despite the ample research that went into the MoMA show, occasional misunderstandings arose among those who organized the exhibition and those who ended up on exhibit.

Kabotie, who had been commissioned by Harvard’s Peabody Museum to make reproductions of prehistoric murals discovered at the Awatovi Ruins in Arizona, was asked to do similar work for *Indian Art of the United States*, and later traveled to the show’s opening at MoMA at d’Hanoncourt’s request. After departing for New York from Winslow, NM, Kabotie was joined in Gallup by Dooley Shorty, his companion for the trip East. The two men stayed at the YMCA during their two-week stay. At the start of the trip, Kabotie later remembered, “we had no idea how tired of New York we’d be in two weeks.”

The night before the opening, Kabotie and Shorty were invited to a preview party and asked if they owned tuxedos, to which Kabotie replied, “I don’t think so . . . What does that mean?” He wore a brown jacket to the formal affair, and recalled, “Poor Shorty had no coat at all, only the heavy shirt he was wearing. ‘Well, it’s too late to do anything about it,’ our friend said. ‘You’ll just have to go like that.’”

Once there, Kabotie and Shorty were set up with women: “Shorty’s date wasn’t as tall, and I think she was half Anglo, maybe more. But mine was a real Indian,” Kabotie recalled. When offered a drink, Kabotie requested a tomato juice, because “at the time it was a federal offense to

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76 Ibid.
serve an Indian a drink,” although later in the night Kabotie drank alcohol with the assistant commissioner of Indian Affairs.

A few days after the exhibition opened, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt arrived at MoMA to view *Indian Art of the United States*, and d’Harnoncourt asked Kabotie to serve as her guide. Kabotie found her “a little deaf, like I am, and everywhere we went photographers were moving us around and shooting flashbulbs. How could we talk with all that going on? But Mrs. Roosevelt was very kind and gracious. She seemed like a wonderful person, and I wished we could have gotten together for a quiet visit.”

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77 Ibid., 72.
78 Ibid.
Indian Art of the United States was the culmination of everything Crawford, White, and d’Harnoncourt had championed and worked toward for decades, and fashion’s response was immediate and overwhelming – from department stores’ tie-ins to a vogue for broomstick skirts to Indian-inspired advertising. Among the earliest manifestations of the Indian Arts show’s impact were the Indian-evoking hats by Sally Victor seen in Hats Unlimited, which was mounted at the Brooklyn Museum while MoMA’s exhibition still was underway. The Brooklyn exhibition showcased Victor’s line from spring 1941, which took cues from Indian Arts show and received substantial publicity as a result.

Sally Josephs Victor had begun her career in 1912 as a stock girl in the millinery department at Macy’s. Four years later she became chief millinery buyer at L. Bamberger & Co. in Newark, NJ, and by 1932 she was working as the chief designer at Serge, a wholesale millinery house. In 1934, Victor opened her own store at 18 East 53rd Street.¹ In 1940, Victor’s fall line featuring several feathered hats suggestive of the Indian,² received nowhere near the attention that her spring line garnered. Enhanced appreciation for Victor’s hats certainly owed a good deal to the MoMA show, but also derived from the fact that the designer amplified Indianness in her spring 1941 line.

An article in Women’s Wear, describing the hats Victor brought out in 1941 as “inspired by the current Indian exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art,” remarked that the designer had

² L. Bamberger & Co. advertisement. New York World-Telegram, August 13, 1940, see figure 6.21.
“follow[ed] through on her Indian themes of last fall in an entirely different way”\(^3\) In a syndicated column, Amy Forte approvingly noted, “Instead of last fall’s quills and feather-faced brims, the new hats feature Indian appliqués and geometric designs,”\(^4\) and Virginia Pope wrote, in *The New York Times*, that Victor’s spring hats were “not war-whooping feather arrangements; they were good wearable straight-brimmed and off-the-face sailors of ‘tomahawk brown’ baku, with facings and bands that cleverly reproduce the colorings and patterns of the hand-woven materials of the Indians.”\(^5\) The line included six hats with Indian elements: Burden Beanie, Moccasin, Seminole Sailor, and Maize Headdress, as well as two turbans. Four fell into the category of “inspiration,” while the Seminole Sailor involved manipulation of “authentic patterns,” and the Burden Beanie incorporated an Indian basket. Among the colors named in connection with this line, three invoked the Indian, and were described in *Women’s Wear* as “Tomahawk brown, a light, medium tan, Tribal green, a pastel green, and Algonquin blue, also light and gay.”\(^6\)

The issue of authenticity raised in contemporaneous discussions of Picard’s designs also came up in articles on Victor’s hats. In the *New York Post*, Mary Braggiotti noted “authentic Indian designs stitched or appliquéd in brilliant multi-colors, zigzag over crowns and under upsweeping brims,”\(^7\) and a writer for *Women’s Wear* reported that Victor’s decorative motifs were “sometimes identical copies of authentic pieces now on view,” including “designs on

\(^3\) “Moccasin Beret, ‘Burden Beanie,’ Sally Victor Indian Types,” *Women’s Wear*, January 9?, 1941. FIT.
\(^4\) Amy Forte, “Fashion Still Hears Indian Tom-Toms But Stays Within The Reservation,” syndicated article appeared in newspapers across the country. MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 376.
\(^6\) “Moccasin Beret, ‘Burden Beanie,’ Sally Victor Indian Types.”
\(^7\) Mary Braggiotti, “Indians and Old New York Inspire Spring Hat Creations,” *New York Post*, [February 1941]. FIT.
cottons tagged with the Seminole Indian insignia.” Katherine Vincent, writing in the New York Herald Tribune (figure 8.1), cited elements in Victor’s hats that recalled pieces in the MoMA show: “bead work, authentic designs in appliqués, rich color combinations and chiffon or mesh wool streamers that fall over the shoulders in front like an Indian maiden’s braids.” Vincent jokingly added that Victor’s spring collection offered “a whole series of hats designed to break up the most ferocious war dance and keep your painted chief in a happier frame of mind.”

Hats Unlimited was the brainchild of Michelle Murphy, the Brooklyn Museum’s supervisor of education and the curator of its so-called Industrial Division, which had been established in November 1939, with Crawford as its honorary advisor. This new department was intended “to enhance use of the Museum’s costumes and textiles collections,” and Hats Unlimited not only featured modern hats, but dozens of hats from the BMA’s collections. A flyer produced in conjunction with the show (which included 65 hats) boasted of the Brooklyn’s “international collection of fabulous and functional hats and headgear from Asia, Africa, India, Europe, the South Seas and the Americas, in diverse materials and techniques, both used and usable in contemporary industry,” which were available to designers like Victor. These included the Haida wooden helmet (Brooklyn Museum, X378a-b) and “painted basket hat,” the Japanese war helmet and flat lacquered hat, and the women’s silk riding hat of U.S. manufacture that were shown in Hats Unlimited. The show’s featured museum pieces, grouped together in a single large gallery (figure 8.2), were “supplemented by a dozen current and forecast models

8 “Moccasin Beret, ‘Burden Beanie,’ Sally Victor Indian Types.”
9 Katherine Vincent, “Early America Inspires Sally Victor Hats: Indians Provide Motifs for Hats By Sally Victor; Some Even Have Simulated Braids Like Minnehaha’s, Colors Gay as War Paint,” New York Herald Tribune, January 30, 1941. FIT.
10 “Hat Collection.” BMA, Records of the Department of Costumes and Textiles: Exhibitions, Hats Unlimited. [03/03/1941-04/20/1941](1941).
11 See “List of Hats in the Exhibition.” BMA, Records of the Department of Costumes and Textiles: Exhibition, Hats Unlimited. [03/03/1941-04/20/1941](1941).
created for the occasion”\textsuperscript{12} by Victor, which were shown at either end of the room (figure 8.3).

“In many of [Victor’s] models inspiration from a Museum-owned piece is traceable. This relationship is brought out to point up the object of the exhibition, which is to give an idea of the wealth of source material available in the Museum’s collections for designers.”\textsuperscript{13}

Katherine Vincent wrote that Victor’s Burden Beanie (figure 8.4; Day Hat, 1941, MMA, 2009.300.1121) incorporated “an authentic Indian basket of natural-color straw,” from which “heavy orange and brown wool yarn falls over the shoulders like an Indian squaw’s braids.”\textsuperscript{14} In her article for the *New York Herald Tribune* Vincent jocularly suggested that the Beanie’s purchaser “change your name to Princess Laughing Water and be ready for a series of grunts from your favorite warrior.” An unnamed writer for the *Richmond [Virginia] Times Dispatch* informed readers that Victor was not merely inspired by Indian art, but “also actually made hats of Indian wares. Notable among them were several basket hats, worn by Indian women as a base for the burdens which they carry on their heads, but converted by Sally Victor into amusing pillbox hats and given a further authentic look by wool streamers down the sides in imitation of the braids in which a squaw wears her hair.”\textsuperscript{15} In the press, the Burden Beanie is consistently characterized as the sort of hat a “college girl” might wear.\textsuperscript{16}

Victor’s “Moccasin” (figure 8.5; Hat, 1941, MMA, 2009.300.4460), was a beret made of “straw with forward front and long back like an inverted slipper. The curly bangs attached to the

\textsuperscript{12} Hats Unlimited press release, March 8, 1941. BMA, Records of the Department of Costumes and Textiles: Exhibition, Hats Unlimited. [03/03/1941-04/20/1941](1941).
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Vincent, “Early America Inspires Sally Victor Hats.”
\textsuperscript{15} “Lo! The Poor Indian! His Craft Is Turned Into High Fashions,” *Richmond (Virginia) Times Dispatch*, March 6, 1941. MoMA: PI Microfilm, roll 9, frame 372.
\textsuperscript{16} Braggiotti, “Indians and Old New York Inspire Spring Hat Creations.”
hat are of brown wool.”¹⁷ In front, the hat was seamed like a moccasin, and, as Virginia Pope observed in *The New York Times*, its wool bangs were available “in your own or a contrasting hair tint.”¹⁸ An I. Magnin & Co. advertisement (figure 8.6) included an image in which a woman modeling the “Moccasin,” is seen before a backdrop in which a Native American in an eagle feather bonnet is seated in front of a teepee. The ad copy, full of ellipses, reads

Indian lore gives unexpected line, intense color, dramatic design…to newest hats. At Magnin’s…newest hat originals inspired by the life and times of the original Americans! Burden Beanie pattered after an Indian woman’s cap…tomahawk brown, sun-drenched and lively…the beret shaped as moccasins are and adorned with wool bangs…turquoise color beads, intricate appliqued designs…you’re invited to see them.¹⁹

The Seminole Sailor (figure 8.7), also made of straw, was accented at the front by a silver Indian figure set with turquoise, and on top by cotton “in a design of multicolored stripes copied from one of the Indian exhibits as an authentic pattern.”²⁰ Pope characterized it as “inspired by an item in the American Indian exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art.”²¹

The Maize Headdress (figure 8.8) was described in *Women’s Wear* as a small cap of “yellow linen straw, trimmed with a cluster of Indian maize,” “embroidered in wooden beads,” and further embellished with “yellow-green feather leaves.”²² Like the Burden Beanie, the Maize Headdress featured “pigtails” made “of green yarn and derived from the manner in which

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¹⁷ Vincent, “Early America Inspires Sally Victor Hats.”
¹⁸ Pope, “Indian Motifs Used In New Hat Styles.”
²¹ Pope, “Indian Motifs Used In New Hat Styles.”
²² “Early New York…“
the Indian squaws wore their hair.”  

This hat appeared in a Sally Victor advertisement that ran in *Vogue* that spring.  

Articles on Victor’s Indian-inspired hats mentioned, but did not illustrate, two turbans, in one of which “Seminole printed cotton and Seminole maize cloth are coiled together to make a turban. Silver and turquoise pins cling here and there.” Pope described “a low navy chiffon turban with braid streamers falling either side of the face and a simulated bead band encircling it” that put her in mind of “the bead headbands worn by the squaws.”

The Impact on Women’s Clothing

The fanfare surrounding the EITA and GGE encouraged New York department stores to promote the Indian-inspired fashions both showcased. Even before the MoMA show opened, major New York retailers sought to align themselves with the Indian trend it promised to foster. Bloomingdale’s, one of the first department stores to express interest in aligning itself with MoMA, proposed a potential partnership in January 1940 – a full year before *Indian Art of the United States* was mounted. Although the museum entered into no official agreement with Bloomingdale’s or its competitors, New York retailers were quick to devise campaigns to sell the Indian-made and Indian-inspired clothing, accessories and home goods that were trending as the show was organized and mounted.

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23 Ibid.
24 Sally Victor advertisement, *Vogue*, March 1, 1941, 36.
26 Pope, “Indian Motifs Used In New Hat Styles.”
27 A memo from Eliot Noyes to Jere Abbott, noted that “Mr. Hirschman of Bloomingdales would like you to call him if you have a moment. He is interested in seeing if Bloomingdales could tie on to the Indian show in some way. I judge he has in mind that Macy’s put on a bug Mexican promotion at the time of our Mex. show, of course without any sponsorship from us.” Memo from Mr. Noyes to Mr. Abbott, January 3, 1940. MoMA: REG 123.
Some two months before *Indian Art of the United States* opened, Neiman Marcus’s H. Stanley Marcus wrote to d’Harnoncourt to offer “some of the Indian clothes we developed,”28 for inclusion in the exhibition. D’Harnoncourt politely declined, writing, “Since it is the aim of the exhibit to create a new and better market for Indian products, we have had to make a rule to include only that wearing apparel which utilizes as trimmage or accessories material actually executed by Indian craftsmen. You know how terribly interested I am in your Indian-inspired styles, but in connection with our exhibit we must limit ourselves to articles that are at least partially Indian-made.”29

As the MoMA exhibition got underway, in January 1941, Macy’s opened its own “American Indian Show.” An undated clipping from MoMA’s Archives notes that – “synchronized” with *Indian Art of the United States* – Macy’s held its own exhibition of “paintings, Navajo rugs, Pueblo pottery, drums, peace pipes, jewelry, war bonnets and other objects, attractively displayed.”30 Ads for Macy’s make it clear that the objects on view were not simply exhibited, but offered for sale. One such ad (figure 8.9), titled “Macy’s American Indian Show (with a low bow to the Modern Museum),” listed paintings and prints as well as “jewelry, pottery, rugs, a peace pipe, a tom-tom, and a feather headdress,” and stressed, “Everything is for sale, and priced low.”31 Another showed a Macy’s salesman holding a Navajo blanket in front of an Indian family and asking, “Shall I Send It – Or Will You Wear It Home?” (figure 8.10). Accompanying text read, “Here’s a family that really appreciates fine Navajo rugs. We trust you

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28 H. Stanley Marcus to René d’Harnoncourt, November 20, 1940. Box 26, Administration. Textual Records, IACB.
29 René d’Harnoncourt to H. Stanley Marcus, November 23, 1940. Box 26, Administration. Textual Records, IACB.
31 “Macy’s American Indian Show” advertisement, [January 1941?]. MoMA: PI Scrapbooks, roll 12, frame 728.
will too, because we just bought 110 of them from Arizona – to sell, not to keep. Fact is, they ought to go fast, thanks to the Indian exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, which is making Manhattan’s cliff dwellers hanker to possess specimens of good native stock themselves.” Rug-buyers were directed to Macy’s 7th floor, but also encouraged to look in on the 8th, where all manner of Indian goods were offered: “fascinating prints, paintings, jewelry, dolls, wampum beadwork, moccasins, drums, and pottery…Come on up and try on a war bonnet. It will bring out the Sioux and Navajo in you, if anything can.”  

While Macy’s displayed and sold Indian-made objects (the only New York department store to do so in 1941), Lord & Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue joined the fray with Indian inspirations. An article in Women’s Wear Daily reported, in January 1941, “Lord & Taylor is currently making a big window display of turquoise and Indian silver jewelry in connection with promotion of Navajo Indian ‘broomstick’ skirts,” while “Saks-34th Street is advertising Hopi Indian ‘Tribal Art’ jewelry.”

Lord & Taylor’s “Pow-Wow” (figure 8.11) was described in an ad as a “big moon festival dress for dancing under a southern sky, for country weekends, for entertaining at home. Like the dresses worn by Indian maidens in our own great southwest,” the Pow-Wow had a broomstick skirt that was “twist-pleated” of “gay printed blue or yellow cotton” and topped by “a very sheer, very soft white cotton voile blouse. Both banded with eyelet embroidery.”

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“Broomstick” dresses and skirts were to become the rage of the spring season in 1941, in New York and throughout the country. Long, full skirts with multiple tiny pleats made by compressing and twisting the fabric while it was wet were linked to Navajo and Seminole “broomstick” skirts as well as Apache “wickiup” skirts. Both ads and articles that featured such garments emphasized the ease of caring for them; as one advertisement observed, they presented “no laundry problem – just wash, starch, twist and dry.”

During the run of the MoMA exhibit, The Old Mexico Shop in Santa Fe advertised “crinkle-pleated percale” skirts in journals including *Vogue* and *House Beautiful* (figure 8.12). Their ad copy linked these modern garments to “the colorful Wickiup dress of the Apache Indian woman, streamlined for modern wear with band and belt of white eyelet” and produced in multiple colors. Around the same time, Kathryn Mayfield observed, in the *Dallas Times Herald*, “The fashion for these skirts continues to gain in popularity. Its crinkle type of pleating has been most successful in resort clothes and consequently it is really expected to go places this summer.” By early May, as Rita Swann described the impact of MoMA’s Indian Art show on the latest modes, she drew particular attention to “the Seminole broom-stick, pleated cotton dress, so popular in Miami beach this winter.” Such dresses, Swann wrote, were sold “complete with broomstick around which they are wrapped when wet and on which they are allowed to dry,

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37 Old Mexico Shop “Wickiup Skirts” advertisement, *Vogue*, February 1, 1941, 51.
38 Old Mexico Shop “Wickiup Skirts” advertisements, *Vogue*, February 1, 1941, 51; March 15, 1941, 34; April 15, 1941, 26; and May 15, 1941, 90; and *House Beautiful*, April 15, 1941, 11 and May 1941, 34.
giving an impression of rough accordion pleating . . . Fashion predictions are that they will grace
the beaches from Maine to Maryland this summer."

A writer for Women’s Wear Daily saw other possibilities; having recently visited MoMA
and seen “an Indian squaw, in costume, wearing one in cerise rayon satin” the WWD writer was
struck by “how effective this material would be in evening skirts.” A few weeks later, WWD
followed up with a piece that asked, “Where Do We Go From Here On the Broomstick Skirt?”
and recommended the development of a “town” version of this popular “sports item,” urbanized
by way of “dark colors, monotones and dark ‘town’ prints.” Such “city versions,” the article
stated, could be priced higher than their casual forebears, “since most girls are willing to pay
more for a street dress than a play dress.” The main difficulty, according to WWD, would be
“finding fall materials which can be adapted to crinkled effects – fabrics either washable or with
a woven crinkle,” possibly washable velvet.

In addition to Indian-inspired dresses, Lord & Taylor advertised jewelry and accessories,
including pieces “of silver and turquoise, to wear with Pow-Wow…bracelets, necklaces and
rings,” and a “pompadour beret” (offered in a color called “Indian earth”). One Lord and
Taylor ad, published in The New York Times and headlined “Pony Express!” (figure 8.13),

40 Rita Swann, “Fashion Borrows Indian Play Clothes For Summer: Beads, Fringe, Brilliant
Stripes Of Colors Promoted By Uncle Sam,” Baltimore News-Post, May 1, 1941. MoMA: PI
Microfilm, roll 9, frame 418.
41 “Bloomers for Broomstick Skirts…” Women’s Wear Daily, April 30, 1941. MoMA: PI
Microfilm, roll 9, frame 404.
42 “Where Do We Go From Here On the Broomstick Skirt?” Women’s Wear Daily, May 21,
1941, 8.
44 Lord & Taylor advertisement, Vogue, August 15, 1940, 16.
proudly asserted the sort of inauthenticity Picard abhorred as it proffered an “Indian belt, in saddle leather, with huge fake turquoise and metal studs.”

Saks Fifth Avenue also offered silver and turquoise jewelry. According to one of the store’s ads, SFA had gone “back to the Indians for the bright beads on this rayon jersey housecoat,” which was offered in “Pueblo red, pottery blue, white” (figure 8.14). An article in *Women’s Wear Daily* devoted to “Indian Ceremonial Prints in Dresses,” described Saks’s “back to the Indian ceremonial designs” as “inspired by the Museum of Modern Art exhibit,” and explained, “These are crepe dresses in medium allover patterns done in ‘earthy’ multicolors.”

Another dress for sale at Saks was advertised as “Much Wampum Beads on hostess gown of Jerome sheer, a rayon fabric” (figure 8.15).

Along with major department stores, several clothing manufacturers advertised Indian-inspired dresses in the early 1940s, though the “Indianness” of some is difficult to discern. During the run of MoMA’s Indian Arts exhibition, Georgiana Frocks offered a selection of “American Print Ways: that included a design called “Indian Code,” which was described as “nice work in stripes,” and available in “Crater blue, brown honey or Yosemite green grounds” (figures 8.16 and 8.18). The company’s ad showed five similarly cut dresses – with short, puffed sleeves, a button placket, belt and pleated skirt – in a variety of prints. One of them, “Indian Code,” featured alternating stripes: two thick solid ones and a stripe done in a light color that seems to have been animated by an Indian-inspired motif.

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49 Georgiana Frocks advertisement, *Vogue*, February 1, 1941, 56.
Some months later, Lampl Knitwear proclaimed in an ad, “Here’s real Americana from the Indian!” (figure 8.17). The dress it promoted featured the “brightest, grandest colors and motifs for embroidery” and was constructed of “knitted fabric with grand surface interest that looks woven.” The shoulders of the dress were covered with rectangles of embroidery, and the bodice featured three strips of vertical embroidery, in emulation of Native American war shirts.

A writer for Women’s Wear remarked that the MoMA exhibition was a trove of “footwear types which we think suggest design ideas for next winter’s after-ski and winter sports footwear . . . For instance, almost suitable for wear ‘as is’ is the large side-buttoned boot of suede elk, even to its rust color and its three silver buttons, well wrapped around the leg to give protection from the snow” (figure 8.19). Two other ideas for shoes were provided by “the mural paintings of tribal dances,” which showed footwear “with removable leather fringe or fur trimming tying [sic] on, and gold bells for music, if desired.” Painted in “white, red, gold and the dark brown of the fur,” the shoes in the murals appeared “ultra soft, glove-like, appropriate withsoles for outdoor wear, without soles for indoor wear.”

In the spring of 1941, Vogue’s “Shop Hound” column noted that a moccasin available from Kathleen Blakey in Albuquerque “would have startled the Indians with its luxurious ways. You see, it’s lined with fleece. In other particulars, it faithfully follows the moccasin pattern. It’s thong-tied, hand-laced” (figure 8.20). A few months later, California Moccarounds (figure 8.21) boasted shoes as “comfortable as an Indian moccasin and new as next year’s crocus . . . new fall colors such as Rum, Tobacco, Cherry, Butterscotch, Maize, and Dark Blue.”

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50 Lampl Knitwear advertisement, Vogue, September 15, 1941, 134.
52 “Shop Hound,” Vogue, February 1, 1941, 52.
53 California Moccarounds advertisement, Vogue, August 15, 1941, 29.
A *Vogue* photo spread that appeared in February 1941 (figure 8.22) focused on “colour – much of it derived from the paint-box of our own American Indians” – as seen in photographs made in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. One of these photos, titled “Pueblo Brown,” was a paean to “one of the new colours taken straight from America’s landscapes – Pueblo Brown, colour of New Mexican cliff dwellings,” before which poses a woman in a celanese rayon dress and rabbit’s-hair wool coat, of similar hue.  

Among the most popular Indian-inflected color designations were those describing browns and yellows. An ad for Walk Over Shoes (figure 8.23), for instance, offered its “Easi-Gait Slip-on” and “Lariat” models in “Indian tan;”  

Bloch Frères’ line of “Enchanted Forest Print” handkerchiefs (figure 8.24) featured “four giant prints on sheerest linen, banded with black, blue, amethyst, Indian brown;”  

Habitmaker advertised dresses with “Free Action Sleeves” in Indian brown (figure 8.25);  

and Bonwit Teller offered Germaine Monteil dresses (figure 8.26) in “corn-yellow with Indian brown.”  

From Tabak of California (figure 8.27), one could purchase skirts and dresses in “Indian Corn,”  

and Freshy Playclothes (figure 8.28) advertised “Playsuits” in “gay combinations” that combined colors like “Totem Green,” “Chieftain Red” and “Moccasin Gold.”  

An article in *Women’s Wear Daily* (figure 8.29), offered evidence of the success of this marketing tactic in the fact that a Buenos Aires chain store saw their hosiery sales figures rise over 30% with it’s “Sioux”-colored seamless stockings. The article was

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54 “American Fashion on its Own,” *Vogue*, February 1, 1941, 81.  
55 Walk Over shoes advertisement, *Vogue*, February 1, 1941, 6.  
57 Habitmaker advertisement, *Vogue*, August 15, 1940, 149.  
58 Bonwit Teller, Germaine Monteil advertisement, *Vogue*, April 1, 1941, 3.  
60 Freshy Playclothes advertisement, *Vogue*, December 15, 1940, 68.  
accompanied by a photo of a store window that featured an Indian eagle feather bonnet alongside a pair of mannequin legs wearing nylon stockings in “Sioux,” which WWD called “a fancy name for a dark brown shade.”

Names (Pocahontas), words (pow wow) and phrases associated with the Indian also became popular among newspaper writers and admen. A gift guide in House Beautiful suggested, “Be an Indian giver and send someone special this Navajo rug, and then just try to get it back!” A Hill & Dale Shoes advertisement (figure 8.30) in which shoes of various materials and heel heights are arranged around a totem pole encouraged buyers to “Choose Your TOTEM” and noted that their designers had “borrowed the motif from the Indians so that the daughters of America in 1941 may have a newer, gayer walking shoe.” Totem poles also appeared in ad for Sommer & Kaufmann (figure 8.31), which offered shoes with “a real Indian Sign for motif.” An Enka Rayon advertisement (figure 8.32) advised those who were “wary with your wampum” to consider “Hope Reed dresses in Enka Rayon,” which the ad described as “colorful, budget-minded frocks that bloom midst the flora and fauna of Florida.” In the Enka ad there is no clear connection between the product pictured and the Indian-evoking phrase or term (as was the case in the gift guide and the Hill & Dale ad). Instead, Enka Rayon relied on a slang term associated with Native Americans (“wampum”) to trade on the Indian trend.

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64 Sommer & Kaufmann advertisement, San Francisco Chronicle, February 25, 1941.
65 Enka Rayon advertisement, Vogue, February 1, 1941, 26.
The Impact on Interior Decoration

While women’s fashion designers and cosmetic companies were trading on Indian inspiration and terminology, interior design remained focused on strategies of incorporation. In the *New York Post*, Agnes Adams urged readers to visit MoMA, for “the largest and most representative exhibition of Indian art of the United States ever displayed,” and was convinced that “by early next year you’ll be using touches of the American Indian in the decoration of your home.” As evidenced in Macy’s exhibition-related Indian show, rugs were the go-to Indian accent, more popular than any other item among those who sought to add Native American flair to their homes. As Walter Rendell Storey observed in the *New York Times*, “one immediate result” of the MoMA exhibition was that “a prominent metropolitan store is now exhibiting a wide assortment of the newer type, so that an Indian rug can now be found to fit into almost any interior” (figure 8.33). Storey described “new-old patterns,” and his article included the image of a rug inspired by sand paintings. In January of 1941 an I. Magnin & Co. advertisement in *Vogue* (figure 8.34) featured a rug draped over a balcony, and that summer, a *House Beautiful* photo spread on two Colorado “Cabins in the Sky” (figure 8.35) described the way that “Authentic Navajo designs add color to the knotty pine log and board walls and ceilings.” An article in the *Ridgewood [NJ] News* noted, “Quite in tune with the patriotic trend in colors are the red, white and blue chosen by the Navaho in designs woven during their best period of weaving.”

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*House Beautiful*, following up on their feature of the previous fall, in summer 1941 again profiled the group American Way, this time including photographs of artists at work as well as an image of their finished products. “Princess Goldenrod of the Penobscot Indians” was shown employing “an ancient weave which is one of her tribe’s secrets” figure 8.36), an unnamed Santa Clara man (“sponsored” by The Charles Ilfeld Co.) was shown painting a piece of pottery with a yucca fiber brush (figure 8.37), and an unnamed “native of Santa Fe” appeared at a loom (figure 8.38), “from which come McCrossen hand woven textiles, rich in texture and coloring.”71 In the early 1940s, thanks to the nationwide publicity of the GGE and MoMA exhibitions, Native Americans were increasingly visible, not only in exhibitions of and articles on their work, but also in ads promoting it.

Despite its celebration in exhibitions and magazines, Indian incorporation was nowhere near so widespread in U.S. interiors as Indian-inspired clothing was in U.S. retail outlets and closets. This is perhaps because elements of interior décor, such as rugs, are bought to last longer than a season, and – since they are hand-crafted rather than mass produced – are more expensive than a dress, a pair of shoes, or a lipstick.

Just as the First World War provided an impetus for designers to look to the New World for new ideas, World War II, at its outset, prompted calls for truly “American” expressions in culture and art. But after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into the war, attention shifted on every front to the American military, and Indian Chic faded away.

Conclusion

Although Native American Chic never really died, it faded in the forties, mainly because of U.S. entry into World War II and the “changing image of the quintessential ‘American’ in wartime,” as well as a changing role for U.S. women during, who joined the workforce in unprecedented numbers and demanded simple, durable clothing for everyday wear. The war also limited access to raw materials and the playfulness of Indian Chic was perhaps seen as inappropriate for clothing in wartime. The move away from traditional handcraft in favor of mass production and the development of sizing standards for women’s off-the-rack garments, also played a role in the decline. The postwar period saw the emergence of Native designers, including Lloyd Kiva New (1916-2002), a Cherokee artist and designer who opened a studio in Scottsdale, Arizona in 1946, and sold “Cherokee-derived designs” to Neiman Marcus. Alongside Native designers, Euro-Americans continue to co-opt and promote their own versions of Indian Chic today.

In propaganda posters produced by the government, the war effort is mostly made by Euro-Americans. A poster for the Navy Recruiting Bureau (figure C.1) shows two shirtless Caucasians (one seen in classical profile, the other from behind) who “Man the GUNS,” while a U.S. Civil Service Commission poster (figure C.2) features a blonde, blue-eyed woman saluting at a typewriter; the copy reads “Victory waits on your fingers – Keep ‘em flying, Miss U.S.A.” Though virtually invisible in the visual culture of the war, Native Americans joined the war

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1 Sund, email to the author, February 25, 2014.
effort in force. A report produced for the Department of the Defense noted, that although they were eligible for the draft by virtue of the Snyder Act, which gave citizenship to American Indians in 1924, conscription alone does not account for the disproportionate number of Indians who joined the armed services. More than 44,000 American Indians, out of a total Native American population of less than 350,000, served with distinction between 1941 and 1945 in both European and Pacific theaters of war.4

Among them were the Navajo Code Talkers, “a team of marines who used a code based on the Navajo language to befuddle the Japanese military.”5 Dooley Shorty, the Navajo silversmith who participated in the MoMA show, “was one of the original 29 Navajo men assigned to train fellow Navajos in the code.”6 Over 400 Navajo served as code talkers,7 but because the program was classified, they were prohibited from discussing their service upon their return home. It was not until the declassification of the program in 1968 that they began to receive recognition for their contributions during the war.8

A Marine who received more immediate veneration for his participation in the war was Ira Hayes (1923-1955), a Pima Indian who enlisted in the Marines in 1942, and was one of the six men who raised the flag on Iwo Jima. As such, Hayes emerged as “the most famous Indian soldier of the Second World War.”9 As Mona Hadler notes, “Perhaps less well known is the

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6 Ibid.
7 Bernstein, 49.
9 Bernstein, 49.
number of Native Americans who served in the Air Force,” which by war’s end included recipients of “seventy-one air medals and thirty-four distinguished flying crosses, the highest aviation honor.” Native American servicemen may not have been the subject of propaganda posters, but as in World War I, the popular press soon seized on the image of the Indian fighter and, Kenneth Townsend writes, “Terms such as ‘warrior,’ ‘prowess,’ ‘redskin,’ warpath,’ powwow,’ and ‘scalp’ were used with reckless abandon.”

Another factor in Indian Chic’s decline was Native Americans move from traditional to war-time jobs, which led to a decline in the production of Native-American-made clothing, accessories and home decor. In addition to their contribution in the armed forces, Native American men and women also joined the diversified U.S. workforce. As the Defense Department report noted, “More than 40,000 Indian people left their reservations to work in ordnance depots, factories, and other war industries.” According to Townsend, this “movement from reservation to either the armed forces or to urban settings during World War II totaled one-third of the entire Indian population and represented the first mass exodus of Indians from reservations into the surrounding white world.” This migration included 10,000 Navajos, and, as Allison Bernstein remarks, silverwork and textile production “became virtually extinct during the War.” In addition to providing work off the reservation, the war presented the opportunity for Native American women to leave the traditional roles dictated by gender and tribal

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11 Townsend, 135.
12 20th Century Warriors: Native American Participation in the United States Military.”
14 Townsend, 181.
15 Bernstein, 86.
affiliations, and work outside home and reservation.\textsuperscript{16}

As an article in \textit{Indians in the War} (1945) noted, Native American women, “anxious to help out during the war-created manpower shortage . . . made an astonishingly large contribution to their country's needs.” Like their Euro-American counterparts, “thousands of them have left their homes to work in factories, on ranches and farms, and even as section-hands, to replace men who were vitally needed elsewhere. They have joined the nurses' corps, the military auxiliaries, the Red Cross, and the American Women's Voluntary Service.”\textsuperscript{17} In addition, “American Indians also invested more than $50 million in war bonds, and contributed generously to the Red Cross and the Army and Navy Relief societies.”\textsuperscript{18}

The most significant change to the U.S. workforce, however, was wrought by the entry of Euro-American women, who were encouraged by the government to “Get a War Job!” on posters (figure C.3) that reminded them, “Longing won’t bring him back sooner.” By 1944, “37 percent of all women over fourteen held paying jobs; the female labor force had grown by almost half, to a total of 20 million women.”\textsuperscript{19} The following year, “there were 4.7 million women in clerical positions, an increase of 89 percent over 1940, and 4.5 million women serving as factory operatives, an increase of 112 percent. The number of women employed as production workers in durables manufacturing had more than quadrupled, from 340,000 in 1940 to 2,174,000 in 1943.”\textsuperscript{20} Demand for fun weekend and vacation wear – the spaces where Indian Chic flourished – was eclipsed by the need for work clothing. Consumption of inessential garments was

\textsuperscript{16} Townsend, 179.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{20th Century Warriors: Native American Participation in the United States Military.”}
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
restricted, moreover, by wartime rationing. “The impact of the war was seen not only in fabric choices but also in the style and silhouette of the clothing. There was a new simplicity seen in women’s clothing that required designers and everyday women to tap into their imagination and make government mandates fashionable.”

At the same time, the market for handcraft and custom-made clothing shrunk as ready-to-wear clothing became widely available thanks to continued developments in mass production and the devising of sizing standards for women’s off-the-rack garments. The men’s clothing trade was able to create standard sizes after the Civil War, but it was not until the late thirties that similar data was available for the women’s clothing trade. From 1939-1940, the National Bureau of Home Economics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture undertook a survey of body measurements of American women in an effort to “discover key measurements of the female body – that is the important measurements from which other measurements could best be predicted – and then to propose a sizing system based on this discovery.” This study was followed by another, completed by the National Bureau of Standards between 1949 and 1952 at the request of the Mail Order Association of America (MOAA) in order to “devise the shortest possible, useful size notations for garments, which would accommodate the greatest number of female consumers without alterations.”

Despite these significant changes to the market for women’s fashion, the vogue for Indian-inspired clothing and interior design created by M.D.C. Crawford and promoted by White

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and d’Harnoncourt throughout the inter-war period was not completely abandoned. Frederic H. Douglas, who had worked with d’Harnoncourt on the Golden Gate Expo and MoMA exhibitions, continued to promote Indian-inflected fashion, focusing on museum specimens, in much the same manner as Crawford had in the teens (figure C.4).\textsuperscript{24} Douglas developed the idea of an “Indian Fashion Show” in 1941, and – as Nancy J. Parezo notes – “presented [the shows] throughout the United States eight times in 1942 before Douglas was drafted, and more than 180 times between 1947 and his death in 1956.”\textsuperscript{25}

Such shows featured Native American women’s clothing that Douglas selected from specimens held by the Denver Art Museum, which were modeled by Euro-American society women, often members of the Junior League. As Parezo writes, Douglas provided the commentary, using “an interplay of concepts that his audience understood – fashion, antiquity, timelessness, modesty, and beauty – glossed by fashion terminology that he had found in \textit{Vogue}.”\textsuperscript{26} Through the Indian Fashion Show, he supposedly hoped to show Euro-American women that they were not so different from Native American women, who valued well-made, timeless fashions, and that these specimens could provide inspiration for modern clothing and accessories, and by the early 1950s, the Show was almost a full-time occupation for him.\textsuperscript{27}

The most successful of the looks Douglas sent down the runway was "ensemble no. 40, the Navajo 'everyday two-piece dress,' with its 'familiar very full cotton skirt and velvet blouse trimmed with silver buttons.'”\textsuperscript{28} The full skirt of the dress drew on the prewar popularity of the broomstick skirt and its silhouette became the basis for the Squaw Dress, which debuted

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Parezo, 1999, 245}
\footnote{Ibid., 244-245.}
\footnote{Ibid., 248}
\footnote{Ibid., 258.}
\footnote{Ibid., 259.}
\end{footnotes}
alongside museum specimens loaned by Douglas at Gimble’s Department Store in Philadelphia in the fall of 1954.

As Indian Chic began to come back into style, the situation for Native Americans, which had changed significantly during the war, was considerably altered anew. In the postwar years, “most of the forty thousand Indians who relocated to urban centers during the war and the majority of Native American veterans now migrated back to their pre-war homes, and reservations strained to provide for them.” 29 Native American came back from war convinced by their experiences they could determine their own futures, but the reservations to which they returned had seen substantial reductions in funding and services during the war and were ill-equipped to support them. Congress had begun to consider repealing the IRA in 1937 and the war brought considerable cuts in BIA appropriations; a fifteen percent reduction from 1941 to 1942 held for the remainder of the war. 30 In January 1945, Collier resigned as commissioner of the BIA, and in the following year President Truman authorized a reorganization that eliminated forty reservation-based offices and shifted power to urban BIA headquarters. 31 In the wake of this makeover, Bernstein writes, “Integration emerged again as the principal goal of federal Indian policy.” 32 In 1953, the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 108 initiated the termination of federal Indian services; the Indian Relocation Act of 1956 encouraged Native Americans to move from reservations to urban centers.

While the government pursued a policy of Indian assimilation, Native Americans sought self-determination. In 1944, representatives of fifty tribes came together to found the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the first national political organization controlled by

29 Townsend, 216.
30 Bernstein, 66.
31 Ibid., 168.
32 Ibid., 164.
Responding to changes in government policy that seemed to undermine their collective cultural identity, the NCAI was eager to unify Native Americans throughout the United States and promote alliances among tribal governments as Native peoples throughout the nation struggled to preserve treaty and sovereign rights, and ensure tribal members’ quality of life. The NCAI advocated for equal access to the GI Bill for Indian veterans, the passage of the Indian Claims Commission Act, and Indian voting rights in Arizona and New Mexico.

Townsend writes that in the postwar period, the Indian self-determination born of the World War II experiences expressed itself in “conscious and spirited reassertion of their ethnic identity in white America. The path so many chose to follow after 1945 was that leading directly toward a renewed pride in Indian culture and history – the forerunner of the Red Power movement that arose in the 1960s.”

The postwar period also saw the emergence of Native American designers who tapped the Euro-American market to which Douglas played. In 1951, Lloyd Kiva New, a Cherokee born in Oklahoma, became the first Native American to participate in an international fashion show when he presented his collection in Atlantic City. A 1952 piece in the Los Angeles Times, entitled “Going Native,” featured a woman in a one of New’s outfits standing before a cigar store Indian (figure C.5). The copy noted, “This is going to be an Indian summer. The growing influence of the Southwest is responsible for the American Indian theme rampant in current sportswear. This two-piece dress by Lloyd Kiva, of Scottsdale, Ariz. (a Cherokee Indian

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33 Ibid., 112.
35 Townsend, 228.
himself) illustrates the trend. It’s made of cactus-green and desert sand wool with hand-woven trim.”

New is perhaps best known for his handbags (figure C.6), which featured metalwork by Hopi artist Charles Loloma (1921-1991), but he also designed other accessories, as well as garments and textiles. In addition to his collaborations with Loloma, New worked with Andrew Van Tsinhajinnie, a Navajo painter who produced fabric designs, and Hopi artist Manfred Susunkewa, who designed and silkscreened textiles. According to Jessica R. Metcalfe, “New focused on a collaborative approach and created a ‘fashion house’ of sorts that mirrored European fashion companies.”

In 1962, he co-founded the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, with the aim of teaching “Indian boys and girls, just out of school, how to make a living with their own native craft-work. I’d like to put the bead work of the Yuma Indians, and the native fabrics of the Navajo, Hopi, and Sioux into high fashion too!”

The vogue for Indian-inspired clothing and interior design created in the 1910s endures today, as Euro-American designers continue to co-opt and promote their own version of Indian Chic, and fashion magazines still utilize Indian terms in their photo spreads. Perhaps the best-known Euro-American proponent of Native American Chic today is Ralph Lauren. Born Ralph Lifshitz in 1939 in the Bronx, Lauren sells (and lives) a Native-American-chic lifestyle, designing women’s clothing (figure C.7) and home décor that rely heavily on Indian-inspiration.

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His Colorado ranch features tepees that serve as guest accommodations and teem with Navajo artifacts and rugs (figure C.8). Lauren’s Indian Chic design aesthetic is applied throughout the ranch; the Old West saloon room includes Navajo blankets and overstuffed leather couches piled with pillows in similar patterns (figure C.9), so that it is difficult to discern the authentic from the inspiration. The coffee table holds stacks of books on Native American art and culture alongside woven baskets.

Indian Chic remains a staple in women’s magazines. The January 2014 issue of *Vogue* featured a photo spread entitled “Desert Flower: Sasha Pivavarova in Spring’s Western-Tinged Looks,” which noted “Over the horizon of spring walks a new spirit, a movement in the direction of earthiness and handworked embellishment – the craft of the Navajo, the creativity of Georgia O’Keeffe.” But none of the looks in the spread, embellished by silver belt buckles and jewelry by high-end contemporary designers, featured any actual “craft of the Navajo.” As one of the photo captions notes, “While not a Western look per se, this is deeply grounded in the American tradition of tribal jewelry and folkloric patterns established by artists in the 1920s and 1930s as a kind of bohemian uniform” (figure C.10).

Crawford’s vision of museum collections as inspiration for modern design also remains a viable concept in interior design. In 2013, the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe collaborated with West Elm, a furniture and interior decoration store, on a line of five hand-woven rugs inspired by pieces in the MIAC collection. An image on MIAC’s website

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41 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
(figure C.11) features a West-Elm-designed rug and pieces from the collection that inspired it. Although the featured objects are not identified beyond a caption that describes them as simply “historical inspiration pieces from the Museum’s collection,” they appear to be a Cochiti pot, and a basketry plaque, and basket from California.

Following in the footsteps of Lloyd Kiva New, contemporary Native American designers are transforming Indian Chic both in their own rights and through collaborations with Euro-American designers and companies. Native American designers are charting their own courses, mixing traditional techniques and materials with contemporary cuts and styles. Dorothy Grant (Haida) designs clothing, art and jewelry that reflect her strong connection to Haida culture. Virgil Ortiz (Cochiti) promotes Pueblo culture through his pottery, clothing, jewelry and accessories. Designer Sho Sho Esquiro (Kaska Dene, Cree and Scottish) creates couture clothing that mixes bead- and quillwork with recycled fabrics including Pendleton blankets. Orlando Dugi (Navajo) creates hand-beaded clutches and jewelry, as well as evening wear that incorporates feather detailing and hand-beaded collars and bodices.

Collaborations with Euro-American designers and companies are furthering the Native-driven takes on Indian Chic and expanding its reach. Ortiz designed a 2002 line with Euro-American designer Donna Karan inspired by Cochiti designs and is currently working on Indigenous Imprints, a line of carpets and pillows for Aqua Hospitality Carpets. Since 2009,

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Nike’s N7 line has featured designs developed by Native American artists; in 2014 with Peter Boome (Upper Skagit) developed designs for clothing and shoes that reflect his Northwest Coast heritage and raise funds for Native American and Aboriginal youth sports programs.49

Such corporate collaborations with Native Americans are promoted as furthering cultural understanding and fighting against long-standing stereotypes. In 2012, the lifestyle products company Paul Frank launched a collaboration with four Native designers after critical backlash to a “‘powwow’-inspired fashion event,”50 that recalled Mallinson’s public relations strategy for their American Indian Series eighty-four years earlier. The resulting collaboration, Paul Frank x Native Designers, featured a line of t-shirts and accessories designed by Louie Gong (Nooksack), Candace Halcro (Cree/Metis), Dustin Martin (Navajo) and Autumn Dawn Gomez (Comanche/Taos). Native designers today are transforming Native American Chic through designs and collaborations that encourage appreciation for Native Americans’ vibrant material culture.

50 Dr. Jessica R. Metcalfe, “Paul Frank x Native Designers,” Beyond Buckskin, June 18, 2013 http://www.beyondbuckskin.com/2013/06/paul-frank-x-native-designers.html#more [accessed November 5, 2014]
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“The Museum’s Place in Art Industry: The Message of the Museum is Primarily to Incite Curiosity and From This Condition of Mind to Induce Artists to Absorb Lessons of Good Taste and Promote Their Own Innate Creative Faculty.” *House Beautiful*, December 1918, 368-370.

“Design Department: Exhibition of Industrial Art at American Museum of Natural History This Fall.” Women’s Wear, August 4, 1919.

“Hat Display Reflects History and Arts of the World.” Women’s Wear, August 8, 1919.

“Design Department: Recent Millinery Exhibition With Cooperation of Museums Suggest Similar Exhibits for Blouses, Coats and Dresses.” Women’s Wear, August 8, 1919.


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