

RUNNERS OF A DIFFERENT RACE: NORTH AMERICAN
INDIGENOUS ATHLETES AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES
IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Runners of a Different Race: North American Indigenous Athletes and National Identities in the Early Twentieth Century

This thesis explores the intersection of indigeneity and modernity in early-twentieth-century North America by examining Native Americans in competitive running arenas in both domestic and international settings. Historians have analyzed sports to understand central facets of this intersection, including race, gender, nationalism, assimilation, and resistance. But running, specifically, embodies what was both indigenous and modern, a symbol of both racial and national worth at a time when those categories coexisted uneasily. The narrative follows one main case study: the “Redwood Highway Indian Marathon,” a 480-mile footrace from San Francisco, California, to Grants Pass, Oregon, contested between Native Americans from Northern California and New Mexico in 1927 and 1928. That race and others reveal how indigenous runners asserted both Native and modern American/Canadian/Mexican identities through sport, how mainstream societies understood modern indigenous people, and to what extent those societies embraced images of “Indianness” in regional and national identities, economies, and cultures.

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I. INTRODUCTION
STARTING LINES



Figure 1.1. The racecourse along the Redwood Highway. Map created by author.

June 14, 1927

It was not the first time Al Jennings had fired a gun. By his own estimation, he was a surefire shot. But on the morning of June 14, 1927, the lawyer-turned-train robber-turned-actor stood before an enormous crowd and prepared to fire a pistol that was neither his trusted weapon in a raid nor a prop on the silver screen.

Jennings represented a particular strand of “Americanness” — a Romantic outlaw turned against the justice system he had once served; a rugged antihero of the great “Wild West” of bygone days. He had avoided a lifetime prison sentence at the pardon of none other than Theodore Roosevelt, champion of twentieth-century American manhood. Jennings then became a silent film star and authored dime novels starring himself.¹ Men like Jennings had defined the American West for a generation and would continue to represent Western history as a tale of gunslingers, vigilante justice, and the inevitable victory of the purebred white American male.

Surefire shot he was not, according to those who knew him. But gun in hand, he was a guaranteed gambit for drawing an early-summer crowd on this chilly San Francisco morning.

Jennings was the guest of honor at the event. The newspapers advertised his arrival and put his name in the headlines.² But he was merely a starter at a footrace that

¹ Cecilia Rasmussen, “A Badman Who Went Straight--to Hollywood: Outlaw Al Jennings was pardoned by President Theodore Roosevelt and ultimately helped shape the Western film genre,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1995.

² “Former Bandit To Start Frisco-G.P. Marathon,” *The News-Review*, June 10, 1927; “Indians Start 480 Mile Run Here Tuesday: Huge Crowd Turns Out to See Al Jennings Fire Shot Starting Greatest Race,” *Sausalito News*, June 18, 1927.

day – a footrace the likes of which the country had never before witnessed. It was to be a test of raw and extreme human endurance. It was to be a spectacle for a sports-crazed nation. The gunfire would signal the start.

If Al Jennings brought the crowd that day, he was about to hand it off to the eleven men waiting to start their dash down Market Street.

Standing among the other racers, the three Southard brothers breathed the salty bay air and chilly fog into their lungs as they attempted to tune out the bustle of the city and mentally prepare for the race. San Francisco offered very different sights to behold than their forested hometown on the Klamath River near the California-Oregon border. These men were Karuk Indians, members of a tribe that, like so many others across the continent, had deep cultural roots in distance running for practical subsistence and communicational purposes and for rites and rituals.³ But this race wasn't going to be like running in the rocky hills of the Klamath mountains. Tall buildings replaced the view of mountaintops; pavement instead of river and forest paths. The brothers had never before ventured this far from home, and the urban experience came with a healthy dose of sensory overload. But neither John, nor his brothers Gorham and Marion, were in the city to stay and sightsee. In fact, they weren't even there as "John," "Gorham," or "Marion." The race promoters had determined their birth names to be too normal and inauthentic for the spirit of this particular race: an "Indian Marathon" raced over a 480-mile course to Grants Pass, Oregon, along the Redwood Highway. The Redwood Empire Association (REA), the booster organization that organized and promoted the race, opened

³ Peter Nabokov, *Indian Running* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1981), 16.

competition only to runners who could prove one-fourth Indian heritage. So among the three brothers from their home near Happy Camp, California, Gorham became “Rushing Water,” Marion became “Fighting Stag,” and John became “Mad Bull.”

The latter name, especially, didn’t quite fit. John Southard was mild and polite. By all accounts, he was nearly always smiling. Petite even in a line-up of men that averaged little over five and a half feet tall, he was humble and handsome, impressive for his incredible ability to endure pain, but not for his stature or demeanor. A name like “Mad Bull,” invoking something a bit more fiery, would have been better suited to Henry “Flying Cloud” Thomas, another Karuk racer, who reportedly disliked John. Henry, or “Cloud,” as he’d later be called, often wore a furrowed brow and an intense glare. A charged rivalry between the two would unfold over the upcoming stretch of asphalt and gravel.

Seven other Native competitors completed the field. There were four other Karuks, including “Big White Deer”, a man dubbed “Thunder Cloud” who the newspapers identified as a chief, David “Falcon” Huey, and the largest “husky brave” of the group – “Sweek Eagle.”

The California Indians would be racing for recognition on their home turf. That task, however, involved taking on some well-established and experienced runners who had made a long trip to uphold their reputations as masters of distance running: Zuni Indians from New Mexico. A man named Jamon was the youngest Zuni entrant. Chochee was a bit older. And then there was Melika.

The papers reported that Melika had jogged from New Mexico to San Francisco to warm up for the Redwoods race. Thin, sinewy, and dressed in homemade sandals and a headband, Melika was an instant sensation. He looked the part of a “real” Indian by the standards of Northern California’s white residents. But people were most amazed by his age. At fifty-five, Melika was the oldest man on the starting line, although he didn’t seem to take any notice. He was at the pinnacle of fitness no matter how many miles he had logged, and despite the fact that he chain smoked cigarettes when he wasn’t running. Zunis, like their neighbors the Hopi, Navajo, and other Puebloan peoples, were used to and well-known for their very long runs and races.⁴ Running for these groups had historical and cultural significance. Running messengers had even spread plans to carry out the successful Pueblo Revolt against Spanish colonial powers in 1680, a major victory in the history of all Native resistance, globally. But those messengers understood their endeavors according to mythologies that featured running as central to the creation of the Earth and its people. Runners were revered.⁵

Ten o’clock rolled around and the runners made their way to the starting line. Al Jennings raised an old Colt .45 to the sky. It hadn’t quite been a month since Americans on the opposite coast had looked toward the sky to see-off the young pilot Charles Lindberg on his historic solo journey across the Atlantic, rendering him an American hero overnight. Now all eyes were at ground-level, focused on eleven Indians, each technically

⁴ Ernie Bulow, “West by Southwest: Melika and His Brother Tchuchi: The Long-Distance Runner Revisited,” *Gallup Journey*, November, 2014.

⁵ Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 23.

“American” with recently-granted citizenship, but far from the profile Lindberg fit of a white-skinned, light-eyed Anglo Saxon, conquering physical limits with a mixture of bravery and mastery over technology, all the while brandishing an American flag.⁶ The runners came from peoples that were largely decimated and displaced by the encroaching stars and stripes or other European invaders in past centuries. They were not cosmopolitan like Lindberg, nor rough-tough-and-wild like a younger Al Jennings. They were unlikely American celebrities.

Lining up their boxing shoe- or sandal-covered feet, they leaned forward. They each wore a “bib” across their abdomens that displayed their entrant number. One: Rushing Water. Two: Flying Cloud. Three: Fighting Stag. Four: Falcon. Five: Mad Bull. Six: Thunder Cloud. Seven: Sweek Eagle. Eight: Big White Deer. Nine: Jamon. Ten: Melika. Eleven: Chochee. The crowd quieted. Finally, the gun went off.

Indian runners were common players in the great American sports scene of the early twentieth century, which included a robust running culture that straddled class borders and color lines.⁷ The mainstream interest in running wasn’t as deeply rooted in

⁶ The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 finally granted U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans born within the “territorial limits of the United States.” Some Native Americans had previously gained citizenship through marriage or other governmental arrangements, like the provision in the General Allotment Act of 1887 that granted citizenship to those who accepted allotments away from tribal communities in an effort to “[adopt] the habits of civilized life.” Of course, even after the federal government conferred citizenship to all Native Americans, state laws continued to dictate voting practices, and many Natives found themselves isolated from the electoral process.

⁷ Pamela Cooper, *The American Marathon* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 3.

history and identity as the indigenous North American connection to running as a cultural pastime, but the sport was extremely popular and well-respected among other sports like football, baseball, and boxing. Eastern cities in the U.S. were, by that time, home to many dedicated runners and running fans. Well-to-do New Yorkers had established the New York Athletic Club, the first club of its kind in the U.S., in the wake of the Civil War. Over the next twenty years, other major U.S. cities followed suit and created similar athletic clubs. All mirrored those of England: gentlemanly, strictly amateur, and with a special focus on track and field.⁸ Athletes maintained their status as amateurs by not accepting payment for any athletic undertakings, and by so doing they retained eligibility for special races sanctioned by international organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) in the United States. These circumstances often kept the world of sports a province for the elite. But running was different, for it required a lot of grit but virtually no equipment or resources.

Talented runners of modest means and non-Anglo ethnicity competed in more inclusive athletic clubs, most notably New York's Irish American Athletic Club — an organization that extended membership even to non-Irish athletes and had a knack for

⁸ Steven A. Riess, *Sport in Industrial America: 1850-1920*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 53, 57. To be fair, upper-class female participation in some clubs was not altogether unheard of. Though men largely dominated the sports scenes, and though ideas about females' inherent unfitness for physical activity circulated, women of high social standing possessed enough social capital to challenge gender norms without being entirely ridiculed or deemed unfeminine. These early, visible female athletes helped prove false the stereotypes that assumed womanly weakness, although it would be some time before they could join their middle- and working-class counterparts to bring women's sports into a new age. See Riess, *Sport in Industrial America*, 56, 67-69.

producing Olympic champions.⁹ Increased spectatorship for running contests came with the professional marathon craze that followed the 1908 Olympics in London. Organized professional races brought people of all backgrounds to the tiny indoor track at Madison Square Garden and the Polo Grounds further uptown, as well as other urban venues in the Northern U.S., to watch the best marathoners in the world compete for cash prizes. While now denoting an amusingly exact distance of 26.219 miles, “marathon” used to be a fairly loose term, standing in for any distance race that exceeded regular track-event distance. The official distance was established during the time period with which this study is concerned, but “marathoning” in a looser sense was popular well before and after it was defined as an exact distance. The world of running in general was wide-reaching and relatively inclusive, as were its event offerings.¹⁰

Across the country, Native athletes were regular participants in organized marathons. The now-premier Boston Marathon kicked off in 1896 and gained prominence by the 1910s. Native runners placed in the top three finishers in 1901, 1907, 1912, 1913, and 1922.¹¹ Saul Hayne (unknown tribal affiliation), student at Grand

⁹ From 1900 until 1920, the New York IAAC produced Olympic medalists in throwing events, including John Flanagan, Pat McDonald, Paddy Ryan, Martin Sheridan, Matt McGrath, and Con Walsh, who competed for the Canadian Olympic Team.

¹⁰ Races longer than 26.2 miles/42.195 kilometers are now referred to as “ultramarathons.”

¹¹ They were: William Davis (Mohawk), second place in 1901; Tom Longboat (Onondaga), first place in 1907; Andrew Sockalexis (Penobscot), second place in 1912 and 1913; and Albert Smoke (Ojibwe), third place in 1922. This is all to say nothing of Ellison “Tarzan” Brown, the Narragansett Indian from Rhode Island who would win the contest twice in the late 1930s, becoming the first to break the 2:30:00 mark on that course, as well as run in the 1936 Olympics and qualify for the Helsinki Games of 1940 before they were canceled due to the outbreak of World War II. “Boston Marathon Histories: Race Summaries,” *Boston Athletic Association*, accessed January, 2016, <http://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon/boston-marathon-history/race-summaries/1897-1900.aspx>.

Junction Indian School, won the Rocky Mountain Amateur Marathon in 1909 while his Indian School classmate took third; future Olympian Louis Tewanima (Hopi) won a twelve-mile race in New York City allegedly witnessed by one million spectators in 1911; and Philip Zeyouma (also Hopi) bested a field of fifteen-thousand to win the *Los Angeles Times*' 1912 Modified Marathon.¹² Papers reported ahead of time what Native runners viewers should expect to find at the starting lines. The U.S. press even followed Native Canadian athletes, like the famous Thomas Longboat (Onondaga), who after the turn of the century, would come to be considered the best distance runner in the world. The *Los Angeles Herald* lauded Jimmy George (tribe unknown) as the "second Longboat," and also celebrated Albert Smoke (Ojibwe), who ran for Canada in the 1920 Olympic Marathon.¹³

Many Indian boarding school athletes made big showings in footraces, and at least two — Tewanima and Andrew Sockalexix (Penobscot) — represented the United States in the Olympics during the 1910s.¹⁴ And, away from boarding school and official organized competitions in mainstream society, Native Americans continued to revere running and racing in their own communities on their reservations and homelands. Even old Hopi men could beat the boarding school studs like Zeyouma and Tewanima on Hopi

¹² "Indian Wins Marathon: 1,000 Started," *San Francisco Call*, May 7, 1911; *Sherman Bulletin*, April 24, 1912 (quoted in Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Hopi Footraces and American Marathons, 1912-1930," *American Quarterly* 62 (March 2010): 77-101.)

¹³ "Second Longboat Found," *Los Angeles Herald*, November 8, 1909.

¹⁴ As did the legendary Jim Thorpe, Sac and Fox Indian runner for Carlisle Indian School who won the pentathlon and decathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Games.

home turf.¹⁵ Navajos and Apaches continued puberty ceremonies in which adolescent girls ran multiple times daily, for multiple days, to transform bodies and spirits into Navajo and Apache feminine ideals.¹⁶ Hopis articulated a need to race both to win rain from Cloud spirits and to keep bodies and minds in good health.¹⁷ Spiritual, practical, and historical significances were not mutually exclusive — that is how deeply running permeated indigenous life.

Non-Native people noticed Native aptitude for distance running in the 1920s, but focused on the ways in which Indian running interacted with the country's mainstream sport culture rather than Native cultures. In November 1921, the *Los Angeles Herald* suggested, "If the Olympic commissioners want to find an Olympic Marathon runner who can beat the world, it might be a good scheme to look the Indian reservations over." The *Herald* noted the Hopi, specifically, as adept endurance athletes.¹⁸ In 1926, another California newspaper reporting on a Colorado race ran the headline "Redskins Beat Palefaces in Mountain Marathon." "Indians," it reported, "are all ahead of the whites when it comes to long up-hill runs."¹⁹

Only a month before the Redwood Marathon, Hopi Nicholas Quonawahu won a marathon from New York City to Long Beach in an American-record time of 2:27.43.

¹⁵ See Matthew Gilbert, "Hopi Footraces and American Marathons."

¹⁶ Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 139-141.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

¹⁸ Robert Edgren, "Indian Marathoners Great Material for Yank Olympic Team in 1924, Says Edgren," *Los Angeles Herald*, November 26, 1921.

¹⁹ "Redskins Beat Palefaces in Mountain Marathon," *Madera Tribune*, November 15, 1926.

The *Daily News* of Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, noted that after mile twenty, Quonawahu pulled way “from his white-skinned and red-skinned adversaries” — he wasn’t the only Indian in the race.²⁰ In fact, Redwood Marathon runners Melika and Cochee had raced as well.²¹ The *Daily Iowan* called Quonawahu, “One of those aboriginal medicine men who with writhing rattlesnakes between their teeth lead the tribe in the gruesome snake dance,” as well as a “lank-limbed, thin-visaged redskin.” But the article also spoke favorably about Native runners: “We are proud of our scientific methods of athletic training and the great runners who have been developed by means of them. But it would seem rather egotistical for us to attempt to tell the Indians, who have run long distances daily since boyhood over the sun-baked trails of Arizona’s Painted Desert, how to run.”²²

The Redwood Marathon was the first time a cast composed entirely of Native Americans prepared to field a starting line under the auspices and gaze of Anglo-America at large. And the race would ultimately garner more publicity — “Publicity by the suitcase full!” according to the *Sausalito News* — than its creators could have hoped for.²³ At race’s end, even papers in the United Kingdom reported the result, sometimes recounting the winner’s earnings in pounds sterling.²⁴

²⁰ “Hopi Indian Breaks Tape in Marathon,” *Daily News*, May 17, 1927.

²¹ Bulow, “West by Southwest” *Gallup Journey*, November, 2014.

²² “The Natural Athlete,” *The Daily Iowan*, May 20, 1927.

²³ “Shows a Suitcase Full of Publicity,” *Sausalito News*, Nov 12, 1927.

²⁴ *Hull Daily Mail*, Aug. 19, 1927; “End of the Indian Marathon,” *Western Daily Press*, June 23, 1927; *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, June 23, 1927.

The fact that Native runners occupied such a central role in the running scene of the early twentieth century has largely been forgotten or overlooked. It is now hard to imagine a heyday of distance running that rivaled football and baseball in popularity and helped to define American masculinity and national identity. Given the general public's disregard for Native American history, and the stereotypes that continue to define Native culture for outsiders, it is even harder to imagine starting lines dotted with celebrated indigenous athletes, famous for their talent and success in a mainstream sports arena.

This thesis examines the social and cultural positions of those Native athletes — both boarding school runners and non-students — who ran in high-profile competitions in the early twentieth century. These athletes asserted their place in a modern world that sought to exclude them. They at once defined and challenged what it meant to be a man of America, or, in the case of Native Canadians, a man of Canada and the British Empire. Yet they remained Indian. In the early-twentieth-century United States, this meant that in the eyes of non-Natives, they could never be fully separated from certain prevalent stereotypes common at the time and still influential today, like the notion that they were somehow relics of the past — innately different and dependent creatures, destined to vanish by death or assimilation. The athletes and the races provide vantage points from which it is possible to understand the many paradoxes, contradictions, and double standards by which non-Native Americans understood America's indigenous population.

These myths and false modes of understanding inform the story of the Redwood Indian Marathon in complicated ways. At times, participants played the part of “the Indian,” adopting their fake names in a slightly more-than-superficial way, or brandishing

eagle-feather headdresses in the mode of the iconic Plains warrior. Non-Native audiences also played Indian, cheering on the runners with war whoops and drumming.²⁵ Journalists told stories of paternalistic white coaches training the runners “properly” before competition, and depicted images of growing commerce in the region that hosted the race. Allegedly, whites were improving land that had hitherto remained hidden to the world and altogether underdeveloped by its “prior” inhabitants.

The stories in this project take place at the time when the United States and Canadian governments had been implementing assimilationist projects aimed at eradicating Indian culture and replacing it with “civilization.” Governments reallocated native land for farming and forced children to attend boarding schools designed to “kill the Indian to save the man,” at least according to Richard Henry Pratt, founder of Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. They occur in places where mines punctured and railroads covered native lands. The Redwood Marathon took place in a region where settlers and soldiers had carried out state-sanctioned genocide against native communities only a generation before the racers lined up in San Francisco.²⁶

²⁵ In talking about “Playing Indian,” I will be drawing heavily from Philip Deloria’s *Playing Indian*. Deloria’s work traces the phenomenon of white Americans dressing up as and acting in manners such as they perceived Native Americans to wear or act. In the time period with which this thesis is concerned, white Americans appropriated Indianness into such venues as the Boy Scouts of America and the Campfire girls. Native Americans had started to perform white-perceived Indianness in an effort to redefine Indian identity while also running the risk of perpetuating stereotypes. See “Natural Indians and Identities of Modernity” in Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 95-127.

²⁶ Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California’s Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

But Native people endured. Their cultures survived. And those Indians who, like Dakota historian Philip Deloria describes, “belonged to that ‘pacified’ generation of Native people who were supposed, once and for all, to be finally assimilating into the American melting pot or simply dying off” did exactly the opposite and asserted modern Indianness in ways that helped define American national identity and nationalism by and large.²⁷

The case study driving the analysis in this larger project, the 1927 “Redwood Highway Indian Marathon,” was sponsored by the Redwood Empire Association (REA), a Chamber of Commerce organization based in San Francisco but committed to the growth and development of California’s North Coast — the stretch of shoreline between San Francisco and the Oregon border — and Josephine County in Southern Oregon. That organization is an important entity in the narrative, as is the available corpus of newspaper material that depicted popular views of Indianness and Indian people and covered the race. The most important characters in the narrative are the racers. I will refer to them by their fake names, since this is the way the press referenced them and I continually cite newspaper sources, and also because the runners referred to their opponents and themselves in this way in the context of the marathon. The Zuni names were not invented, but I have only been able to learn first names.²⁸

²⁷ Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 112.

²⁸ I recognize the potential problems associated with using false names to represent historical actors that have too often been marginalized or misrepresented. I follow the conventions of the original press coverage of the race, which is also the mode of narration that seems to have lived on in public memory of the event.

Chapter Two of this thesis acquaints readers with the race course: the Redwood Highway through Northern coastal California and into Southern Oregon. The road and the race were both designed with tourism in mind, aimed to attract a new breed of effectively automobilized tourist.²⁹ Of course, roads and tourists, like Anglo-American settlers before them, extended into lands previously controlled and inhabited by Native Americans. In the century preceding the Redwood Marathon, white settlement had altogether reconfigured the native landscape. Among the most forcibly divided and displaced Native groups were the Karuks, the tribe that sent so many runners to San Francisco in 1927. Despite genocide targeting Native Americans during the California Gold Rush, the many who survived adapted to new ways of life, as Native communities across the continent did in reaction to altered landscapes, societies, and economies. To expose some of the ways in which that alteration and adaptation took shape, Chapter Two also compares labor in Happy Camp, California, and Zuni, New Mexico. Both regions had undergone enormous economic change with the coming of various veins of American capitalism. Native Americans adjusted to new labor systems and those labor systems adjusted to them. But Native culture figured into these systems and regional market economies of the Northwest and Southwest differently. While the culture of the Southwest sensationalized and sold “Indianness” — with Indian goods and novelties and through tourism — economic practices in the Northwest largely attempted to erase it. The Redwood Indian Marathon mimicked the Southwestern model and paired tourism with

²⁹ Historian Philip Deloria has written about Americans’ “automobility” in the early twentieth century in *Indians in Unexpected Places*.

displays of indigenous culture and people in order to spark the interest and imagination of white visitors.

More than labor patterns, markets, and landscapes were changing in the early twentieth century, though. Chapter Three examines the role Native Americans, and Native American athletes more specifically, played in the steady emergence of a national identity in the age of the United States' imperial rivalry with Britain. One of the most prominent stages on which that rivalry was set was the Olympic Games, resurrected in 1896. Even before the Olympics and then in important ways throughout the early Games, Native runners represented the United States in international competitive arenas at the same time they were exoticized and exploited at home within U.S. borders. The same was true of Native Canadians.

Contradictions abound. Native Olympic runners after the turn of the century contributed to the American effort in the increasingly heated rivalry with Britain — two nations that continued to carry out damaging policies and actions against indigenous peoples within their reach. For example, colonial officials in Australia as well as the U.S. and Canada forced indigenous children into the state-run “civilizing” boarding schools.

Talented Native athletes that traveled abroad created a fear of nonwhite athletic dominance among white spectators. They were therefore threatening and desirable for both their Americanness and their indigeneity. The same type of dynamic existed with Native Canadian athletes and their home country. Native Canadians faced an added dimension of identity, also being athletes of the British Empire that commanded public adulation once English athletes were out of contention for medals. Native identity

therefore held complex and contradictory meanings across a modernizing North America and in Britain.

But one third of the North American Indian running scene took place below the Rio Grande. Running is a language that can bridge histories of the United States and Mexico — histories that typically don't overlap in scholarly work because of the language barrier. Chapter Four introduces some of the world's greatest indigenous runners: the Rarámuri, or "Tarahumara" people of the state of Chihuahua in Northern Mexico. It examines the intersection of Mexican indigeneity and American indigeneity. Interestingly, the Mexican state encouraged a very different relationship between nationality and indigeneity than the U.S. did. Indigenous running contests in the U.S. and Mexico took extremely similar forms, but much of the reception of the athletes as national representatives was entirely different. The chapter demonstrates these patterns, then focuses mainly on the popular American reaction to both nations' Natives in order to reveal how the American audience crafted an understanding and image of the Tarahumara that definitively distinguished them from American Indians and reinforced Americans' self-image and their image of the place of Native Americans in society — a place largely articulated by the myths foundational to the telling and understanding of the Redwood Marathon.

These myths are examined in Chapter Five, which also tells the story of the end of the race. Especially once the finish line had been crossed, the press coverage of the event, as well as its aftermath, revealed the many underlying racialized assumptions surrounding the participants in the race and the Redwood Empire Association. But even within that

construct, the race had still provided a venue on which Native people capitalized to assert their own rightful, not to mention societally-deemed important place in the modern nation.

The Redwood Marathon achieved a great amount of publicity and inspired a second race the following year along the same route and with the same rules. Chapter Six tells the story of this second race, and how it was marred by foul play. While the 1928 race drew more entrants of more diverse tribal affiliations, it also revealed an ambivalent Anglo-American response that hadn't quite worked its way into the newspaper coverage the year before, or at least a sentiment that seemed to have been laying dormant after the violent racism of previous generations of Californians. The second Redwoods race also coincided with other important events in the larger history of Native running, including the "Bunion Derby," an even longer and stranger ultramarathon over state lines, and the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. Tensions heightened in and around the sport, as the running scene in general edged towards spectacle and away from raw athleticism and fair competition. Exoticism was alive and well even as venues such as these competitions increased the visibility of modern indigeneity. Together, these events reveal the ongoing stereotyping of Native people and the anxiety surrounding athleticism and Native social capital in a modern United States that was supposed to be overwriting Indianness.

An epilogue starts by examining the effect the Great Depression rendered on the Redwoods race and on Native running in the American sports scene. That catalyzing event transformed the layout of multiple realms of both Native and non-Native worlds. It appears at first glance as though the Depression effectively *ceased* Native participation in

high-level American athletics. I argue, however, that Native American running not only persisted in important ways through the remainder of the twentieth century, but even now provides some exciting prospects for the future. In recent decades, Indian running has resurged in multiple forms, and there is every indication that this more uplifting trend will continue to provide various opportunities for Native communities.

There is excellent scholarship on Native American athletes, but very little of it focuses on running, and even less on Native athletes that did not attend government boarding schools. Scholarship that does place running at the center of analysis is often largely the Jim Thorpe story about the famous Sac and Fox and Carlisle Indian School student who won the pentathlon and decathlon at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. Or, where there are historical examples of Indian running, they all but exclusively come from the Southwest among the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, or other Puebloan peoples. This project looks more closely at indigenous running in Native California. It also focuses on the Karuks, who despite being one of the largest tribes in present-day California, were not officially recognized as a tribe until the 1980s. Because they were often divided into different and changing government agencies, early-twentieth century Karuk history has been greatly overlooked by historians who examine that period or region.

Running also offers a useful lens through which to examine important questions about Native Americans and non-Native perceptions of Native people over the course of several centuries, although this thesis only takes up the second half of the nineteenth century through 1928 in its main analysis. Historians have honed in on sports in general as a crucial lens to examine issues of race, masculinity, assimilation, and nationality, but

running is a special case that can steer existing conversations in new directions. Running bridges what is indigenous — an ancient tool for survival and cultural expression — with what was considered strictly modern — a popular marker of racial and national worth. The blending of those two spheres is a central concern throughout this thesis.

I am largely working in the tradition of historian Philip Deloria in discussing Native Americans in modern, popular settings. He discusses several spheres of popular culture, including athletics, in *Indians in Unexpected Places*. In that book, Deloria also discusses the strange ways whites in modern society have incorporated, (mis)understood, and refused Indianness amidst such spheres. Deloria's main focus regarding athletics is football in the boarding school setting, which provided a venue for conversations about American masculinity and civility. He briefly mentions "speed and endurance running" as Indian athletic pastimes with "physical, social, and spiritual significance," and footracing as an early way for Native Americans and white settlers to compete against one another for sport.³⁰ Deloria also devotes a chapter to technology, uncovering how society struggled to cope with the coexistence of Native Americans as symbols of the past and modern technologies, most notably the automobile. That particular relationship becomes a central concern in this thesis as well.

The California setting that grounds much of this story is also a critical site for historical study. Studying Native Americans in twentieth-century California allows for better understandings of the legacy of California's genocide against Native people, and allows for a focus on some triumphs in Native communities rather than offering a

³⁰ Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 115-116.

declension narrative of Native presence. This is not to say that the details of that violent tragedy do not also warrant more careful study, although that task has been taken up in recent works such as Brendan C. Lindsay's *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide* and Benjamin Madley's *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe*, which prove that the term "genocide" is indeed the correct categorization for the settler and state attacks on California Natives during the Gold Rush. Studies of post-genocide Native California are still far more scant than they should be. As historian William J. Bauer, Jr. explains in *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941*, the mythologized Ishi came to represent the general trajectory of Native life and death in later California history. Ishi was a Native American who seemingly stumbled out of the California wilderness in 1911, untamed and unaware of the advances of modern civilization, only to die of tuberculosis a few years later. Bauer's book goes beyond Ishi, to Native lives well into the twentieth century, testimony to the fact that indigeneity and modernity both had a place in ongoing California history. This thesis attempts to continue to fill that void in historical literature of early twentieth century Native California, before California again became a backdrop for better-known Indian history, namely the activism of the American Indian Movement, kickstarted with the occupation of Alcatraz Island from November, 1969, until June, 1971.

As famous as it became at the time, the Redwood Marathons have been all but forgotten virtually everywhere besides the local communities that participated in or

witnessed the events. But the stories are far too important to exist only in distorted forms in archived newspapers or in regional memory. They exemplify the ambivalent notions of Indianness that non-Native Americans held in the early twentieth century. The athletes occupied precarious positions as simultaneous representatives of tribes and the local places or businesses that served as their sponsors, much like native Olympic athletes represented both a marginalized demographic and the nation that marginalized it. The races placed Indians and cars side by side, rewriting basic notions of the modern world that a white audience had to confront directly, and yet did so with great enthusiasm and excitement — a guise of positivity over an issue that evoked much public anxiety. And, the Redwood Marathons offer an excellent starting point to understanding an understudied practice in so many Native cultures that continues to occupy a key role in Native identity and public health. There remains a lot more than athletic victory on the line.

CHAPTER II
THE RACECOURSE: A ROAD THROUGH THE REDWOODS

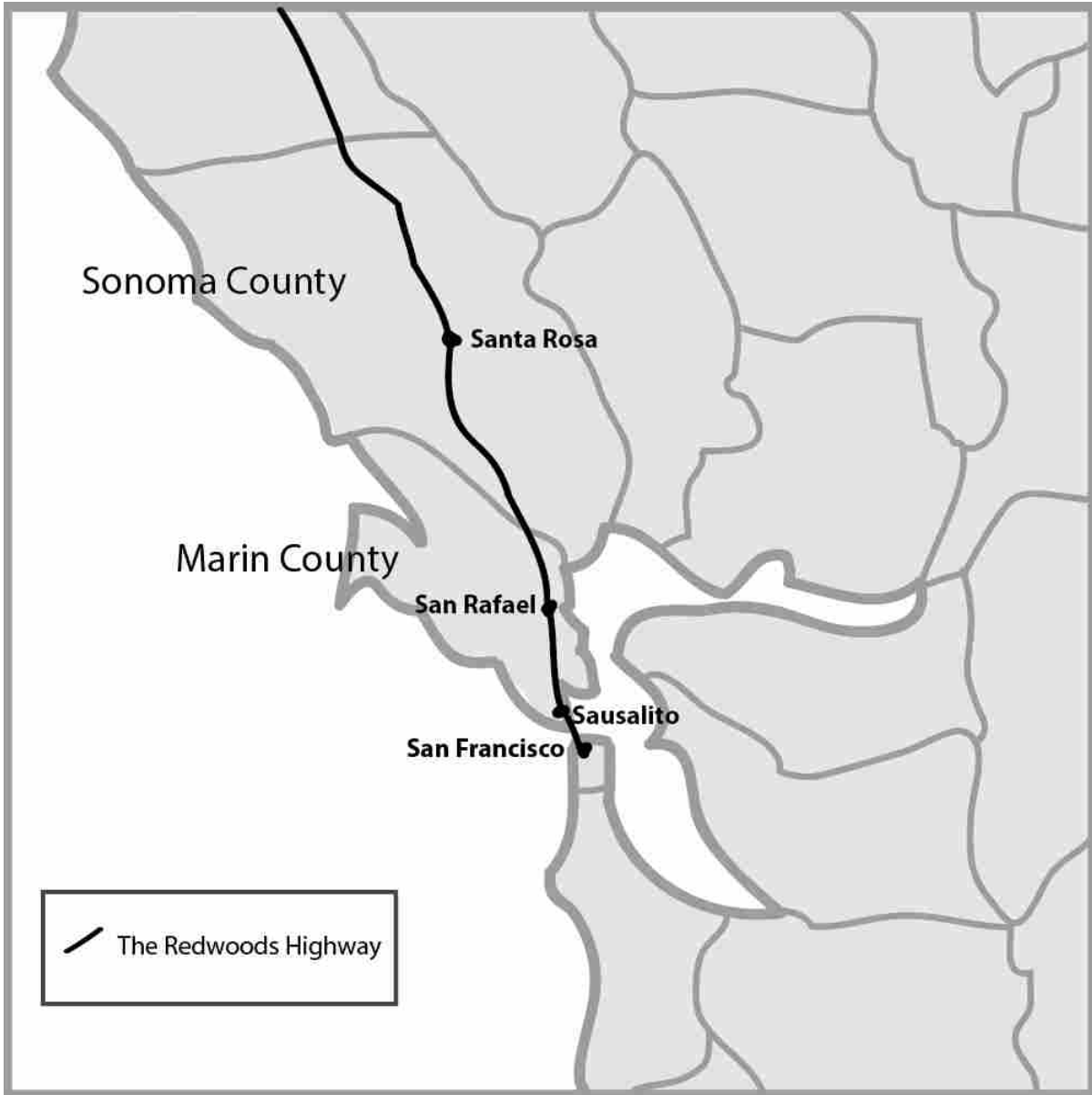


Figure 2.1. The starting line through Sonoma County. Map created by author.

June 14, 1927

There were few rules. Contestants had fifteen days to follow the Redwood Highway north into Grants Pass. They could walk, stop, and sleep as they pleased, but if they left the road, they returned to their point of exit to resume racing. They were to cover every inch of the highway, as fast as possible, on foot.

Even the best sprinters in the world reach peak velocity and start to fatigue within 100 meters, on a rubber track, in ideal race conditions. Yet when the gun went off, the marathon runners bolted down Market Street at top speed, away from the Civic Center where the race had started. Traffic and pedestrians paused to cheer them on. Well over 99% of their work remaining, the runners probably looked winded within the first mile.

They whizzed past the storefronts and spectators through the thick, gray fog. The crisp white uniforms and jet black hair completed the grayscale scene. The group progressed towards the docks at the north end of the city. Faster strides yet. The longest strides covering the pavement belonged to a man the newspapers called “Sweek Eagle,” who stood at 5 foot, 11 inches and weighed just over 160 pounds. He was the Goliath of the group; some of his competitors barely reached his chin.³¹ But he was an anomaly. More often, spectators and journalists commented on Indian runners’ short, choppy strides that were unlike the textbook techniques promoted by white coaches across the Western world — long, reaching strides on the balls of the feet.³²

³¹ “Indians Train Hard for Long Distance Run,” *The Anniston Star*, June 16, 1927.

³² “The Natural Athlete,” *The Daily Iowan*, May 20, 1927; “Tarahumaras to be Taught Modern Running Methods,” *Borger Daily Herald*, Tuesday, April 19, 1927.

It was a straight shot down Market Street. The runners bounded towards the Bay that was coming into view. Then, they stopped.

The runners had reached the top of the peninsula. In 1927, there was no Golden Gate Bridge spanning the strait that connects San Francisco Bay to the Pacific. Bridges and roads were major items on state agendas but they weren't yet ubiquitous even in relatively heavily traveled areas. The men shuffled onto a ferry and caught their breath as the boat carried them north. San Francisco shrunk into the distance, the Zunis creeping ever-further away from their Southwest home, and the California Indians beginning their treks back into familiar territory, but via an unfamiliar route. This was the one and only time they would be permitted to advance by any means other than foot.

But the reprieve was short-lived. The race resumed in Sausalito. The runners filed out, the fields of Marin County a backdrop for the ten-or-so mile hike to San Rafael, where the first cash prize would be awarded to the frontrunner at a checkpoint in town.

In San Rafael, sirens sounded as the runners approached, the way they would continue to blare in each city the runners reached. It was the youngest Zuni, the thirty-two year old Jamon, who came through first and was promised a purse of \$100, to be granted at the race's completion. Running into town first was an investment: runners had to balance the allure of a cash prize for speed with the need to endure hundreds of miles of hills and days of summer conditions. It was a real concern. It had surely been exciting for the viewers in Marin County to watch Jamon, their county representative, put his

name in contention for a lead spot early in the race. But just north of San Rafael, Flying Cloud took over the lead.³³

After logging over fifty miles for Day One, Jamon's blisters got the better of him and he dropped out of the race after reaching Santa Rosa, leaving his two fellow Zunis to take on all the California Indians through the hills and forests. This wasn't Zuni desert running. But some of the Karuks were hurting too. It wasn't Native California, either. The land had been changed not only by the road, but also by the rush into Native land that had happened little over a half-century beforehand. The audience and tourists were all smiles now, but the Redwood Empire had played host to violence and pain in the not-too-distant past.

Race relations in the Northwest and Southwest looked similar in obvious ways: by the 1920s, there were long histories of violent conflict and settler colonialism in both places. Because of that shared past, the Zuni and Karuk racers historically had a lot in common. But Native cultures and the relationship between those cultures and mainstream society differed greatly between the two regions. When the Zunis arrived in California in sandals, ponytails, and earrings, they were probably somewhat used to being seen as exotic attractions.³⁴ The Karuk racers, at least half of them having mixed ancestry, wearing short haircuts and boxing shoes, and coming from wage labor jobs, probably weren't. The economic development of the Redwood Empire and the Southwest near

³³ "Indians Start 480 Mile Run Here Tuesday," *Sausalito News*, June 18, 1927; Lee Torliatt, "Indian Marathons 1920's Runners Go for Cash and Glory," *The Journal of the Sonoma County Historical Society* 2 (1999); 6-9.

³⁴ Bulow, "West by Southwest."

Zuni Township, New Mexico, reveal the different relationships mainstream society in each region remained connected with and understood Indianness.

The Redwood Highway is a central player in the story. It was both a racecourse for the runners and a lifeline for the industries across the developing Redwood Empire, so we begin with the road.

N. C. Coghlan of the California State Legislature opposed the construction of a road “paved with misery and sorrow.”³⁵ His opposition was to no avail. At the same time military advertisements enticed young and hardy American men to line up in the trenches and aid the Great War effort, American convicts lined up to complete public works projects, leased out from state prisons for their labor. They got tucked away in labor camps “in remote mountain districts,”³⁶ the theory being that townspeople needn’t worry about their proximity if they weren’t visible. And, as for the convicts, where was there to run? According to the California Highway Commission, in 1926, “The employment of convicts on the state highway system is justifiable from every viewpoint,” because it kept steady progress on road construction and provided inmates with wages to send home. Plus, the nature of the work allegedly rendered men “hardened to toil” before their release.³⁷ The people in charge had decided that reforms made in the early 1920s to pay

³⁵ “Convict Labor on Roads is Opposed,” *San Francisco Call*, February 23, 1911.

³⁶ *Biennial Report of the California Highway Commission* (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1922), 32.

³⁷ *Biennial Report of the California Highway Commission*, 17.

convicts for their labor and even shorten their sentences cleaned up any misery and sorrow that might stain the road.

Employing convicts and other hired labor, the California Highway Commission steadily worked on paving and connecting swaths of road along the North Coast in the years before the Redwood Indian Marathon.³⁸ The Redwood Highway Association (RHA) issued its articles of incorporation on May 25, 1927, with the main objectives “to bring about the early completion of the Redwood Highway and its main laterals” and “to attract a greater volume of tourists, vacationists and settlers.”³⁹ The fixation on roads made financial sense. Railroads, finally constructed and managed well enough to promote transportation, had made the far West accessible in the 1880s and 90s. But it was a new age — the age of the automobile — that made it possible for larger droves of tourists to venture to the California countryside, so long as there was a path. Even “Silent Cal” Coolidge had something to say on the matter: “Everyone is anxious for good highways.”⁴⁰

Sure enough, as the Redwood Highway developed and expanded, boosters publicized it as a place of majestic wonder. In July, 1923, *Motor Land* magazine, which promoted travel and tourism in the West, raved over the “days of pleasure” and “nights of weird beauty as the campfire gives life to the forest specters that dance and play in the

³⁸ “The Redwood Highway — Building the Road,” *California Highways and Public Works* (July-Aug, 1964) in Hawk, Diane, *Touring the Old Redwood Highway: Del Norte County* (Piercy: Hawk Mountaintop Publishing, 2006, 3.

³⁹ “Articles of Incorporation of Redwood Highway Association,” May 35, 1927, Folder 2: REA minutes (1926-27), Redwood Empire Association Papers, Mendocino County Museum.

⁴⁰ Calvin Coolidge: “First Annual Message,” December 6, 1923. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29564>.

shadows!” It also qualified the Redwood Highway as being, “A road more typical of California than any other route within its borders, a highway that breathes the very spirit of the West in the wide spaces of its vision and in the wilderness of beauty which it opens to the motorist.”⁴¹ And then, of course, there were the trees — the Redwoods that oversaw this empire of wilderness. A Greyhound bus company travel brochure from the 1920s described the “towering Redwoods” as the “undisputed monarchs of [the] scenic Kingdom.”⁴² If this one road defined California, and by extension the West, and ran through a forest likened to empires and kingdoms, it was ostensibly the only road worth taking while vacationing. Pavement didn’t disturb the wilderness, nor did the fumes sputtering out of exhaust pipes spoil the fresh air. But the “pleasure” and “weird beauty” of the “scenic Kingdom” weren’t enough. A stunt was needed to jumpstart more interest in the road and the region.

What the Redwood Empire Association (REA) dreamed up was a self-proclaimed “highly spectacular, yet dignified project”: The Redwood Empire Indian Marathon.⁴³ The marathon, actually the combined length of about eighteen standard marathons, was the first of many publicized ploys to boost the popularity of the Redwood Empire. But the race was different from automobile or bus tours, or the scattered campsites among the trees. The race staged the forest as a backdrop for an event focused on people — Native people — who were rhetorically incorporated into the landscape. In this way, the REA

⁴¹ *Motor Land* (July 1923) in Diane Hawk, *Touring the Old Redwood Highway: Mendocino County* (Piercy: Hawk Mountaintop Publishing, 2001), 78.

⁴² *What You’ll See in Redwood empire* ([n.p.]: Pacific Greyhound Lines, c. 1920).

⁴³ “Report of Manager Secretary,” May 10, 1927, Folder 2: REA minutes (1926-27), Redwood Empire Association Papers, Mendocino County Museum.

attempted to sell the Redwood Empire as a place integrated into the nation's industry and road system, but also home to exotic, natural wonder in the forms of trees, mountains, and people.

Local newspapers helped the cause. On May 7, 1927, the *Sausalito News* reported:

Harry Lutgens, chairman of the Redwood Empire Indian Marathon committee, made the following statement:

“The purpose of the Redwood Empire association in staging this race is to commemorate the glory of the redwoods and to attract attention to the scenic beauties of the Redwood Empire through which the Redwood highway runs. Out of this race will come a keener and more personal interest in the fast-vanishing tribes of Indians who still cling to the haunts of their ancestors.”⁴⁴

Lutgens had been raised in the North Coast region and was deeply committed to his home and the community at large. Growing up, he had observed the “glory of the redwoods” firsthand: the Earth's tallest trees, the rocky coastal cliffs, and the snowcapped mountains. Lutgens' family had been enjoying these “scenic beauties” since his Danish grandfather sailed around Cape Horn to reach California during the Gold Rush. But for being so familiar with and invested in the region, Harry Lutgens certainly misunderstood his indigenous neighbors. He himself was in need of a “keener and more personal interest” in truly native Californians, not just whites that had been born within state borders like himself.

Of course, in invoking the image of “fast-vanishing” tribes, suggesting that American Indians were either doomed or destined to disappear, Lutgens was

⁴⁴ “Tentative Plans Announced for Indian marathon Over Redwood Empire Route,” *Sausalito News*, May 7, 1927.

participating in an age-old false line of reasoning employed by Anglo-Americans to justify their conquest of Native lands and people. Historian Jean O'Brien found local histories from New England in the 1820s in which Anglo-American authors attempted to "write Indians out of existence," asserting time and time again that the "Last of the —— tribe" walked the Earth, and rewriting local histories to have Anglo origins, with prior Native history relegated to the role of illegitimate precursor.⁴⁵ Indian Wars, treaty negotiations, and legislation throughout the nineteenth century left thousands murdered, consolidated others on reservations, and then stuck native children in boarding schools aiming to eradicate Indian culture instead of Indian bodies. The Wounded Knee massacre of Lakotas in 1890 and historian Frederick Jackson Turner's declaration of a concomitantly closed frontier and definitively settled American West solidified the idea that the last decade of the nineteenth century was all but a bookend in Indian history. Famous Western photographer and ethnographer Edward Curtis fueled the myth with his 1904 "The Vanishing Race," which depicted a line of Navajos on horses riding into the distance of the photograph's composition. Movies and books fueled it further. The vicious myth that Indians would soon cease to exist persisted despite the living, breathing evidence to the contrary.

North American Indians had, however, suffered major population crises due to disease and violence. In California and Oregon, the trajectory of settlement had been especially and systematically violent. When James Marshall struck gold

⁴⁵ Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

at Sutter's Mill in 1848, the promise of what lay below the surface of the land determined the course of the history that took place atop it. The famous Gold Rush unleashed waves of settlement and violence that drastically changed the landscape and social fabric of Northern California, and wrought devastation on Native communities.

Apparently, Indians simply weren't vanishing fast enough to please newly arrived miners who wanted Native land but didn't want to compete with Native labor. Historian Brendan Lindsay revealed the ways in which settlers and government officials in California endorsed a genocide of California Indians through the democratic process to secure land rights, or otherwise through a combination of apathy, neglect, and vigilante violence.⁴⁶ In early 1855, newspapers across Northern California reported, "The die is cast, and a war of extermination commenced against the Indians."⁴⁷ Varying sentiment floated around the region about the ethics of such overt violence. One camp was blunt and merciless: "You have but one choice — KILL, MURDER, EXTERMINATE, OR DOMESTICATE AND IMPROVE THEM," read an 1852 letter to the editor in the *Daily Alta California*.⁴⁸ Three years later, the paper concluded, "At any rate, hostilities have now been pushed so far that, in the interest of our

⁴⁶ See Lindsay, *Murder State*.

⁴⁷ "A Battle with the Indians — Thirty Indians Killed," *Daily Alta California*, January 18, 1855. Story originally printed in the *Crescent City Herald*.

⁴⁸ "Indian Reservations — Gov. Bigler's Special Message," *Daily Alta California*, February 9, 1852.

neighboring settlers, it becomes a necessity to drive the Indians from the valley.”⁴⁹

Estimates vary, but compared with the pre-contact population, Native Americans in California had been killed by microbes and bullets in a rate upwards of ninety per cent by the turn of the twentieth century.⁵⁰ In the land of open wilderness and endless imagined miles of easily accessible gold ore, there was not room enough for even a decimated Native population to coexist with white settlers.

This rejection of Natives also rested on the premise that the present Indians were antithetical to modern civilization. The author of the impassioned 1852 letter in the *Daily Alta California* contrasted Natives to the “laboring population” — the ones contributing to the development of California lands according to modern principles, not the ones responsible for “the lands in the State [that] are lying idle, unoccupied, and to agriculture useless.”⁵¹ By this logic, eradicating Indianness meant ushering in modernity that would settle the wasted land and make it productive towards the aims of larger society. Indians not only stood in the way of occupying land, but in the way of spreading the values of

⁴⁹ “A Battle with the Indians — Thirty Indians Killed,” *Daily Alta California*, January 18, 1855.

⁵⁰ Early leading work on California Indian demographics was Sherborne F. Cook’s 1976 revised *The Population of the California Indians, 1769-1970*. He estimated a pre-contact population of about 310,000, which dropped to about 150,000 before the Gold Rush and as low as 20,000 right after it. That would equal a population decimation of nearly ninety-five per cent. Cook assumed that the 1890 and 1900 censuses had undercounted Natives by several thousand. Historians debate his findings to various degrees. Other important works include: Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) and Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁵¹ “Indian Reservations — Gov. Bigler’s Special Message,” *Daily Alta California*, February 9, 1852.

modern civilization. Anglo settlers met that perceived resistance to a new culture with violence.

Amidst California's northern mountains, local Native communities that would eventually send runners to the Redwood Marathon and their neighbors had suffered relocation and genocide as California's settler population boomed and gold was discovered and mined out north of the initial sites. Local histories suggest that ambitious miners probably entered the Karuk village of 'Athithúfvuunupma in the summer of 1850, but were chased out. It took one more year for a larger team of miners to establish a camp there. It was Happy Camp, home to Karuk racers in 1927.⁵²

In reality, it was anything but a happy camp. In the spring of 1852, the *Daily Alta California* reported, "A war of extermination has been declared by the whites against the Indians, and many aborigines have been killed." The article then described murders of both whites and Indians in and around Happy Camp, killed for petty crimes or simply walking by an enemy with a gun in hand.⁵³ White miners raped and enslaved Karuk women. They burned Karuk villages.

Many Karuks fled the villages that became mining camps or small towns during the 1850s, 60s, and 70s in fear of miner brutality. White settlers arguably infiltrated Karuk lands to a greater extent than those of neighboring Native communities because of

⁵² Harry Laurenz Wells, *History of Siskiyou County, California* (San Jose: Rosicrucian, 1971).

⁵³ "Indian Difficulties on the Klamath," *Daily Alta California*, April 5, 1852.

the proximity of gold in the mountains that Karuks historically occupied.⁵⁴ The Klamath River, once flowing rich in the salmon that sustained the many river tribes in the region, was all but empty of the fish, having been pillaged like the land for its resources by Gold Rush migrants. It was a changed landscape, and there was no going back, even as the wave of mining passed in the 1870s and left the region somewhat sparsely populated once more. Several families accepted plots of land offered under the Dawes Act of 1887 that collected and divvied up the land previously acknowledged to be Indian land. But according to local historian Maureen Bell, it was only a handful of families that bought in.⁵⁵ Others relocated to the coast or to agricultural valleys in search of wage work.⁵⁶

Another option for Natives across the West who didn't want to live on homesteads but didn't want to leave their homeland was to live on government sponsored reservations. But the Karuks weren't granted their own reservation, and as a result, they divided between several places. Many were relocated to the Hoopa Valley reservation alongside Yoruk and Hupa Indians. Most moved to secluded spots in their ancestral homelands. And, of course, children were collected and shipped to government boarding schools in other Western and Midwestern states.⁵⁷

As horrific as the Karuk experience was, it was far from an anomaly. Historian Gray Whaley has examined the long colonization and state-making process in western

⁵⁴ See *Indian Nations of North America* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2010) s.v. "Karuk Reservation."; *Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes*, 3rd ed., Carl Waldman (New York: Checkmark Books, 2006) s.v. "Karak,"; *Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia*, Mary B. Davis (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996) s.v. "Karuk."

⁵⁵ Maureen Bell, *Karuk: The Upriver People* (Happy Camp: Naturegraph Publishers, 1991), 118.

⁵⁶ *Indian Nations of North America*, s.v. "Karuk Reservation."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Oregon. Anglo-American Indian agents, travelers, and settlers imagined extermination as a proper tool in traversing and settling in southwestern Oregon, where French fur traders and ongoing interracial warfare had sculpted a reputation for Natives that painted them as wild and bloodthirsty.⁵⁸ Such images justified attacks. Violence between Natives and settlers in Northern California, Southern Oregon, and in the Pacific West more broadly spanned the closing decades of the nineteenth-century. The Mendocino Expedition in Mendocino County, California, ushered in the 1860s. Born out of ongoing vigilante violence, this hunt of Yuki Natives was the deadliest militia assault on California Natives.⁵⁹ In the early 1870s, the Modocs fought the U.S. Army on the border of Oregon and California, not too far from Happy Camp. Further north, Nez Perce Indians fought for ancestral homelands in Oregon and Idaho as late as 1877.

Similar stories exist across the United States by and large, legacies of a settler colonial project that aimed to eradicate the native population entirely while reclaiming land and indigeneity for settlers.⁶⁰ At the same time Natives and settlers or the Army met in violent contests for land and resources in the Northwest, Native nations in the Southwest also battled encroaching Anglos to maintain control over their homelands. The

⁵⁸ Gray Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1890* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 193-194.

⁵⁹ Madley, *An American Genocide*, 276.

⁶⁰ By claiming indigeneity, I am referring to the theory outlined in Jean O'Brien's *Firsting and Lasting*, whereby colonists "[seize] indigeneity...as their birthright," and appropriate the word "native" to reference the earliest white settlers rather than Natives (51). In talking about settler colonialism, I am referring to the theoretical framework offered by Lorenzo Veracini to describe the process and logic by which non-indigenous settlers take over native lands for expansion with the intention to supplant the indigenous population rather than coexist, merge societies, or exploit indigenous labor to support a metropole. See Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

zenith of Comanche power on the southern plains halted U.S. expansion in the mid-nineteenth century and Comanches continued to exert powerful resistance into the 1870s.⁶¹ Apaches suffered a massacre near Camp Grant in Arizona at the hands of Anglos, Mexican Americans, and Tohono O’odam Indians on April 30, 1871. The Camp Grant Massacre revealed the complex racial politics of the borderlands and opened up a national conversation about the implications of such violence.⁶² Of course, these are only a few examples of the horrific violence that took place through the late nineteenth century.

But neither violence, nor any element of destiny or fate, equated to the disappearance of Native peoples. For white participants in popular culture, seeing, evidently, was not believing. The logic demanded that Indians had to be vanishing if civilization was ascending, the latter fact observable in the visibly increasing industry and urbanization taking place. So whether or not Harry Lutgens, a man of California since his birth, truly believed that tribes were accelerating towards extinction when he was interviewed for the *Sausalito News*, uttering the words about a vanishing race of humans was an advertisement for the novelty of the running race that featured them. Who wouldn’t want to catch a glimpse of the last native inhabitants of the continent as they “[clung] to the haunts” of their free and wild ancestors who had been untouched by the burdens of modern civilization?

⁶¹ Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 142.

⁶² Karl Jocoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 3.

And perhaps that “keener and more personal interest” in the Native population could fuel cross-cultural cooperation rather than hostility.

Indeed, the REA incorporated an air of inclusivity in its public rhetoric. “The Redwood Empire Association,” read the organization’s by-laws, “is designed to be a constructive nonprofit, intercounty, intercommunity and interstate organization, supported by the counties hereinafter designated, by municipalities, civic and commercial organizations, banks, transportation companies, hotels, resorts, realty operators, utilities and other governmental business and professional interests, and by individual citizens — all united together to build up and develop the great Redwood Empire.” The first objective listed was to complete the Redwood Highway and other roads. The other objectives centered on attracting visitors to tour or settle.⁶³

The list outlined in this preamble is quite inclusive across the geography of the Redwood Empire. But unification of the various races, ethnicities, and classes in the Redwood Empire was a lofty goal. In 1927, both California and Oregon had miscegenation laws preventing interracial marriage between whites and African-Americans, Indians, and Asians. What started as Chinese Exclusion in 1882, outlawing Chinese immigration to prevent foreign workers from flooding the railroad industry, had expanded to Quota Acts that uniformly prevented large numbers of other immigrant groups from entering the country in the early 1920s. And, of course, the 1920s across the country witnessed a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, this time robed and hooded in white and

⁶³ “By-Laws of the Redwood Empire Association,” July 8, 1927, Folder 1: REA Official Minutes, Fiscal Year 1928-29, Redwood Empire Association Papers, Mendocino County Museum.

including a women's branch that carried out boycotts and spread demonizing rumors.⁶⁴ Oregon's society and politics, which were especially nativist, racist, and anti-Catholic dating back to early settlement, easily absorbed major Klan influence by 1923.⁶⁵ They organized in Northern California as well, in places like Oakland and Richmond.⁶⁶ And in addition to vigilante violence perpetrated by the Klan or otherwise largely targeting African-Americans, a climate of xenophobia also fueled public lynchings of Latinos, Chinese settlers, and Native Americans.⁶⁷ Quite frankly, it was far from a time of cross-cultural camaraderie. The violence was fueled by the close proximity of racial groups, none of which were disappearing, despite the efforts of hostile white supremacists fearing the dilution of their own allegedly pure blood.

By 1920, however, racial boundaries were not even as easily drawn as they once had been, owing to decades of increased intermarriage. Indians of various tribes and various degrees of Indian "blood" frequented or lived in towns, worked for companies or in fields, and sold handcrafted baskets and other goods in a nascent market economy. Robert Lee Southard, father of the men known as Mad Bull, Rushing Water, and Fighting Stag, was a farmer and a homeowner in Happy Camp.⁶⁸ His eight children reportedly did

⁶⁴ As shown in Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

⁶⁵ Eckard V. Toy, "Robe and Gown: The Ku Klux Klan in Eugene, Oregon, during the 1920s," in Shawn Lay ed., *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 155, 160.

⁶⁶ Marta Gutman, *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 306.

⁶⁷ See Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁶⁸ 1920 U.S. Census, Siskiyou County, California, roll, ancestry.com.

not attend school, but at least six could read and write at the time the 1920 Federal Census was taken. Robert Southard was not atypical. Nearly one-fifth of all Native male heads of households, according to the census, were farmers, third on the list of most popular occupations after miners and laborers. The exact data for Happy Camp is as follows.

Table 2.1. 1920 Federal Census data pertaining to labor in Happy Camp.

Happy Camp, Siskiyou County, California	
Population according to 1920 Federal Census	585
Native population	294
Native Male Heads of Households	51
Farmers	10
Miners	17
Laborers	14
Other	4
None	6

In 1920, Happy Camp was almost exactly half Indian, yet it is unclear exactly who counted as such. For example, Robert Southard was one-half Indian, and had been raised and raised his own children according to the principles of the Christian Methodist Church.⁶⁹ In any event, jobs among white heads of households and Native heads of

⁶⁹ Leon L. Loofbourow, *In Search of God's Gold: A Story of Continued Christian Pioneering in California* (San Francisco: The Society of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the Methodist Church and the College of the Pacific, 1950), 212-213.

households were not significantly different: miners and laborers constituted most of the town, although the few engineers and contractors were white.

Happy Camp was also home to several Italian and Greek immigrant families with “alien” naturalization status. Most worked as laborers on public road projects. This all means that the town was largely embedded in the working class, with Native, immigrant, and white American citizens all working for wages, sometimes side by side. The Native men who went into gold mines or tilled fields were not the kind of pure-bred, picturesque Indians visitors would have wished to see. In fact, from a mainstream white perspective, there was probably nothing interesting about these men until some of them were given fake Indian names and invited to run nearly five hundred miles.

Women were almost exclusively listed as unemployed. In traditional Karuk ways of life, however (and this is true of Northern California Native cultures by and large), women were basket weavers, and it is likely that many Native women contributed to family income by selling handmade baskets that went unrecorded by the census enumerator. In fact, according to Maureen Bell, even Karuk men began to weave baskets after the turn of the century to participate in the market economy.⁷⁰ There was certainly a market for Indian goods and “curios,” although any income from basket or other craft sales would have been purely supplemental. Indian families in Happy Camp reportedly owned or leased farms, not stores or trading posts.

The timber industry, though it took off in Happy Camp in a big way decades after the Redwood Marathon, fueled the economy of northwest coastal California after gold

⁷⁰ Bell, *Karuk*, 118.

mining had petered out. The Pacific Lumber Company became the leading producer of lumber in Humboldt County and constructed the town of Scotia as a company town as early as the 1880s.⁷¹ The economy of Humboldt County in general depended on logging for jobs and income. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, fifty plants in Humboldt County alone employed almost five-thousand employees.⁷² Native Americans throughout the Redwood Empire likely worked in this industry in addition to mines.

Industry looked different down in McKinley County, New Mexico, in the township of Zuni. First of all, much of the township was comprised of a large government reservation for Zuni people. Zunis also lived outside reservation borders but close by, along with Navajos and perhaps scattered members of other nearby tribes.

The chart below shows some data for Zuni Township, including the reservation. While the racial divide in Happy Camp was about a 50/50 split in 1920, Natives outnumbered non-Natives nearly nine to one in Zuni, and offered a decidedly Indian culture. Note that there were identified Medicine Men, there was an identified silversmith, plus, shepherding had become part of a Zuni identity, much like it had for Navajos and Hopis. Some Zunis on the reservation had jobs such as teachers and police officers working for the US Indian Service. Like in Northern California, however, the great majority of Zunis were farmers or worked for wages, having integrated themselves into a labor economy steadily since the railroad rolled through in the 1880s.

⁷¹ Hardy Green, *The Company Town: The Industrial Edens and Satanic Mills that Shaped the American Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 43.

⁷² Daniel A. Conford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 152.

Table 2.2. 1920 Federal Census data pertaining to labor in Zuni.

Zuni (Township and Indian Reservation), McKinley County, New Mexico	
Population according to 1920 Federal Census	2561
Native population	2201
Native Male Heads of Households	287
Farmers	225
Miners	2
Laborers	10
Raiser/Herder/Shepherd	18
None	16
Medicine Man	2
Other	14

There are other hints in the census that Native people in towns across the Southwest had more regular access to a sustained market economy than Native people in other regions. Several Indians in Zuni Township identified as “blanket weavers.” These were mostly female heads of houses, wives, or daughters, very much in line with traditional gender roles. There are several possible reasons for this being the case: continued tension between settlers and Natives in California that delayed interracial commerce on a large scale, the proximity and accessibility of the railroad at the end of the nineteenth century, and a dominant cultural interest in specifically Southwest Indian goods, owing to pointed advertising on the part of the tourism and hospitality industries and anthropological expeditions into Zuni territory.

It was the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad that penetrated Native land in New Mexico by the end of the nineteenth century. The line ran directly through Laguna Pueblo, a Native village just under fifty miles west of Albuquerque. After a parley between the secretary of the tribal council in Laguna and the eastern railroad authorities, the two sides struck a bargain: the crew could lay the railroad if the rail company would employ Lagunas as laborers. The agreement continued when the Santa Fe Railway purchased Atlantic & Pacific lines before the turn of the century. In this way, the railroad became an asset to Native communities, providing employment opportunities in a community transitioning out of sustained agricultural subsistence. The railroad both provided these types of wage jobs nearby and carried Lagunas to off-site work opportunities in surrounding cities.⁷³

But the railroad also brought economic opportunity to Southwest Indians beyond Laguna Pueblo because it brought tourists with money to spend on souvenirs, a trend that had only recently taken off during the Victorian Era among the posh middle and upper classes that could afford them. Native merchants, often women, could approach the railcars directly and sell pottery, jewelry, blankets, and baskets while the train stopped to let off passengers.⁷⁴

These were not trivial goods in the eyes of trendy American travelers. A market for “Indian curios” extended beyond the Southwest. Stores in San Francisco competed to

⁷³ Kurt M. Peters, “Continuing Identity: Laguna Pueblo Railroaders in Richmond, California,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 22 (1998):187-189.

⁷⁴ Martin Sullivan, “Foreword,” in Kathleen L. Howard and Diana F. Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest: The Fred Harvey Company and Native American Art* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing Company, 1996)

offer the largest stocks and lowest prices on a variety of goods.⁷⁵ The interest in Native artifacts and art continued right through and beyond the 1920s, which supported a fascination with Indians that encouraged crowds to turn out for the Redwood Marathon.⁷⁶ Navajo blankets were perhaps the most sought-after Indian-produced trade item. Newspapers across the country speculated about the market for blankets alone. “The demand for Navajo blankets has become so enormous,” relayed the *San Juan County Index* in early 1902, “that the actual output of those much prized articles of aboriginal manufacture does not begin to supply the market, says the Philadelphia Post.”⁷⁷ Even though Zunis lived in the midst of the expansive Navajo land, Zuni culture wasn’t overshadowed by its neighbors. Zuni Pueblo itself fueled the interest and imagination of travelers and anthropologists. It was the site of the first federally funded professional anthropological fieldwork and the collection of authentic Indian artifacts for museums in 1879.⁷⁸ Zuni people were able to sell their own goods, among them kachina dolls and pottery, in the market economy as well.⁷⁹

Business owners committed to tourism fueled and exploited the interest in these ethnic places and goods via the railroad industry. Santa Fe Railway advertised “scenes of Indian Pueblos” in their short newspaper advertisements.⁸⁰ The Fred Harvey Company of

⁷⁵ “Navajo Blankets and Indian Curios,” *San Francisco Call*, August 31, 1901.

⁷⁶ “We Handle Only Genuine Indian Curios,” *The Holbrook News*, October 6, 1922.

⁷⁷ “The Blanket Business,” *San Juan County Index*, February 14, 1902.

⁷⁸ Eliza McFeely, *Zuni and the American Imagination* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 8.

⁷⁹ *The Arizona Republican*, November 21, 1896.

⁸⁰ *Sacramento Union*, April 21, 1909.

dining cars and restaurants also opened hotels named after local Native communities. The hotel that the company opened in Gallup, New Mexico, the closest major town to where the Zuni racers lived in 1927, was named “El Navajo.” Of course, that wasn’t exactly an indigenous name, but it wasn’t English and it alluded to a native community with which mainstream vacationers would be familiar.⁸¹ The company even expanded to anthropological tourism, developing an “Indian Department” through which it collected and displayed ethnographical exhibits of Indian and Mexican goods. The subject matter in the collection wasn’t exclusive to the Southwest. Popular items included artifacts like Kwakiutl masks from the Pacific Northwest. But the major site in the country to observe any such items alongside actual indigenous homes was in the Southwest along the railroad.⁸²

There was also a market for Native goods in the Northwest. A 1903 article valued six-inch-diameter Pomo baskets at \$200, roughly \$5,400 in today’s currency.⁸³ Companies and personal vendors advertised collections of Indian baskets for sale into the 1920s.⁸⁴ Yosemite National Park housed a collection of old California Indian baskets that helped make it “one of the notable treasure houses of the United States for the preservation of Indian handicraft.”⁸⁵ The interest in Native culture and specific Native

⁸¹ Howard and Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest*, 87.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸³ “The Indian Basket Industry,” *Los Angeles Herald*, April 1, 1903.

⁸⁴ Advertisement in *Healdsburg Tribune*, February 6, 1922; in *Red Bluff Daily News*, December 6, 1920.

⁸⁵ “Old Indian Baskets Exhibited Yosemite Collection Valued,” *Madera Mercury*, September 30, 1922.

goods was alive and well in California, but there was no coastal rail line that would have carried tourists through large Native villages there. Even when roads were built to bring in tourists, white Americans were hardly interested in seeing Native farmers and miners in Happy Camp, or the many Native cannery and shipping yard laborers along the coast. But something much more primitive, simple, and elemental might sell — something that was both essentially Indian and essentially American — something like endurance running.

Other Native groups who live in areas that became Gold Rush hotspots had similar histories of violence and genocide in the nineteenth century, and continued discrimination in the twentieth century. But only a few decades after settlers committed atrocities, rampaged Native lands, and engaged in outright warfare, California's new population invited tourists to come explore a wilderness unburdened by human history. A push for better roads meant putting the very communities that had suffered warfare on display as tourist destinations and attractions. Anglo-Americans interested in exotic places and people were interested in observing Native lives rather than ending them, as long as those lifestyles looked different than mainstream society.

CHAPTER III

HOMETOWN HEROES: INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND INTERNATIONAL ARENAS

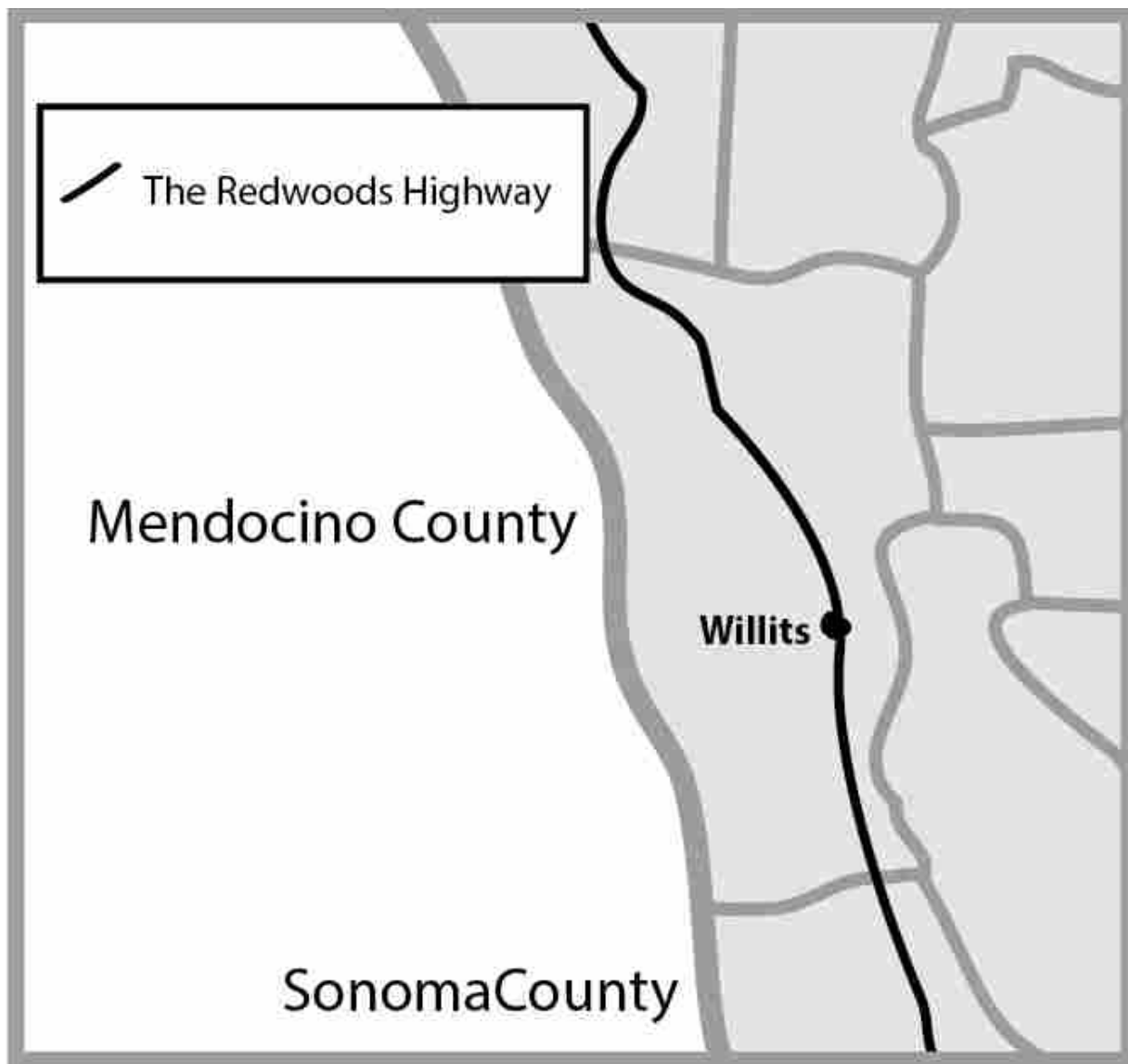


Figure 3.1. Sonoma County through Humboldt County. Map created by author.

Thursday, June 16, 1927: Willits, CA.

Each runner competed “under the colors” of a Redwood Empire town or county, sponsored by local businesses. At least four of the Karuk entrants represented the Oregon Cavemen, a booster organization in Grants Pass, but were sponsored and prepped by the owner of the Happy Camp General Store. Sponsorship for the Zunis was more divided. Jamon ran for “Marvelous Marin” County, Chochee for Humboldt County, and Melika for the town of Willits.⁸⁶

Melika had only to show up for the race to become famous, but when he passed through the town that had adopted him for the duration of the race, it was clearer than ever that Melika had the support of the people. In the early evening of the third day of the event, the runners began reaching the Willits check-in. Mad Bull led the pack, but barely. Flying Cloud was right on his heels.⁸⁷ It had been a good day for Chochee and Melika, too. They had reportedly passed four Karuks that day. They were ready to quicken their pace and reduce their rest, much to the dismay of their trainer, Mike Kirk. He allegedly ceded to their desires to set their own pace after “a wordy battle...in both English and Indian,” later in the night.⁸⁸

But it was all positivity when the people of Willits saw their adopted hometown hero blazing down the road. The roar of the crowd gave way to the sound of the town

⁸⁶ Evelyn McCormick, “1927 race tough test of stamina,” *The Humboldt Historian* (July-August 1987): 4.

⁸⁷ “Mad Bull Still Leads in Indian Marathon,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 17, 1927.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

band that marched out to meet him. While all eyes were on him, he grabbed some dust, threw it in the air, and performed what appeared to be some type of ceremonial prayer.⁸⁹

And so here was a Zuni Indian representing a rural town in Northern California through his pursuit of long-distance racing. For a moment, the race itself became a celebration of that town through a Native ritual. But Melika had never before set foot in Willits, California, and the people of Willits probably had never heard of him before he became their representative in this local contest. Would any fans identify with Melika's post-race life back on the Zuni reservation, or even think of him when he wasn't right in town, putting on a show?

The way the people of Willits related to Melika is much like the way citizens and governments of settler colonial and colonial nations related to indigenous athletes in general. In the age of growing nationalism after the turn of the twentieth century, it was momentarily possible for diverse people to represent the United States of America. This representation was confusing, contradictory, and critical all at once. The sporting world provides appropriate lenses for examining this phenomenon, for it spanned two key venues: the ever-popular World's Fairs and the revival of the Olympic Games as a modern movement. The earliest modern games were held in conjunction with fairs. Those fairs largely highlighted improvements in technology and brainpower, and showcased new theories in anthropology. The Olympics resurged to provide *the* venue for contests of national and racial superiority, and masculinity.

⁸⁹ Torliatt, "Indian Marathons," 8.

In several early modern Olympic Games, the United States sent numerous talented athletes who were celebrated as “Americans” abroad but systematically marginalized for being “Indian” at home. However, the double standard was not a uniquely American paradigm. The same trend existed in Canada, which sent one of the most famous indigenous runners of all time to London in 1908 to compete in the Olympic Marathon in a maple-leaf singlet, after failing to forcibly assimilate him to white Canadian culture. The trend even extended to Great Britain, which was willing to back an Empire athlete of any national affiliation if he or she could beat Britain’s rivals, namely the Americans.

A foray into the careers of several Native runners in the half-century preceding the Redwood Marathon reveals that these athletes negotiated a complicated social position among non-Native spectators that valued the sport of running, the exotic entertainment factor of foreign competitors, and perhaps above all, white supremacy. Native competitors could at once be despicable and desirable for their Indianness and represent both savagery and civilization.

Historians understand how boarding school athletic programs, especially football teams, interacted with an Anglo-American sports scene in ways that fostered rivalry, respect, and racism.⁹⁰ But football did not rule the day. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, running— especially long distance running—captured common interest and popular emotional investment. Exciting and accessible to all classes, foot

⁹⁰ John Bloom, “Athletics and Assimilation,” in *Sport and Culture Series*, vol. 2, *To Show What an Indian Can Do: Sports at Native American Boarding Schools* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1-30; Deloria, “Athletics,” in *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 109-135.

racing provided a straightforward venue for observing (and betting on) tests of human grit and endurance. By the time the eleven Indian men approached the starting line in San Francisco, sports fans and scientists in the U.S. and beyond had already pondered and feared the athletic potential of indigenous runners. What would it mean if dominant societies were not able to dominate in competitive athletic arenas? Did running reveal aspects of race that would upset the strengthening global power structure that fueled British and American imperialism? In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Indian runners complicated notions of race, nationality, and masculinity by existing both within and theoretically beyond the confines of modern civilization. In fact, the earliest example took place right in the heart of Western civilization itself.

It was August, 1861. Louis Bennett meandered through the smog-ridden streets of Victorian London. He was no stranger to large cities, having spent part of the first phase of his professional running career in New York City, but he had never ventured so far from his home on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation in New York State, or from his people, the Seneca. On the reservation, Bennett was better known as “Deerfoot” for his speed and swiftness. He regularly raced his fellow kinsmen, either other Senecas or other Haudenosaunee people, the “People of the Longhouse,” who constituted the Iroquois Confederacy in the Great Lakes region of which the Seneca were a part.⁹¹

⁹¹ Rob Hadgraft, *Deerfoot: Athletics' Noble Savage* (Desert Island ebooks, 2012) Kindle Edition, 220.

Haudenosaunee nations were able to exercise political and social dominance in the eighteenth century partly because of the “Iroquios Trail,” a path across which runners would deliver correspondence between nations within the Confederacy.⁹² Late in the nineteenth century, the skill could translate to cash prizes racing whites, an undertaking that was apparently in high demand at home and overseas.

In London, Bennett was to race the best middle- and long-distance runners that the nucleus of the world’s largest empire had to offer. The press and public instantly ranted and raved over “the Indian,” who was often “attired in his native costume,” delivered war whoops, and performed stereotypical “Indian” behavior before British crowds of rich and poor alike.⁹³ The Prince of Wales even ventured to Cambridge to watch a six-mile race and present Deerfoot with prize money.⁹⁴ But Deerfoot did not attract universal support. There were skeptics, and their skepticism revealed an anxiety over Native athleticism — a concern that would continue to shape spectatorship and stereotypes of what constituted Indianness from an Anglo perspective in the decades to come.

In December, the *Kentish Chronicle* used the Deerfoot example to critique the “morality of the racing and betting world” (popular activities in Britain) and call out a precarious relationship between a white audience and an Indian celebrity. After referring

⁹² See Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 18, 84.

⁹³ “Deerfoot at Grantham,” *Clare Journal, and Ennis Advertiser*, April 17, 1862, 4; Edward S. Sears, *Running Through the Ages* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015), 118-120.

⁹⁴ “Deerfoot at Cambridge,” *Walsall Free Press and General Advertiser*, December 7, 1861.

to Deerfoot as a “so-called ‘Seneca Indian,’” the report continued, “Deerfoot does not belong to the Seneca, or any other tribe. He is of Indian blood, but for generations his forbears have been civilised. Paint, feathers, and wampum are not his natural habiliments ; but have only been assumed to attract the crowds...”⁹⁵ The paper clearly reflected the notion that men and women of Indian descent could not belong to actual Indian nations if their behavior was “civilised.” Items associated with genuine Indianness, like the “paint, feathers, and wampum,” were markers of true Seneca identity, not the identity of this runner who merely called himself a Seneca Indian and occasionally let out war-cries. To support such an act was to buy into a scam. Deerfoot’s success, therefore, could not have been derived from his indigeneity alone. Observers justified his talent by insisting that civilization had at least started to gnaw away at his Indianness.

The paper was partly correct and partly mistaken in its condemnation of Deerfoot. There was a performative element to Deerfoot’s actions, directed by his English manager, George Martin. Deerfoot was exotic and exciting. Papers commented on the attendance of the “fair sex” at races, sometimes expressing concern over “indelacy or impropriety in ‘seeing Deerfoot.’”⁹⁶ But punctuated bursts of speed—a tactic that often broke the British runners—and the novelty of war whoops and chants fostered positive publicity and kept people turning up for races. Even away from the track, the public fixated on

⁹⁵ “The Deerfoot Delusion,” *Kentish Chronicle*, December 14, 1861.

⁹⁶ “Deerfoot at Cambridge,” *Kentish Independent*, December 7, 1861, 2; “Deerfoot and his Matches: From the *Sporting Life*,” *Morning Advertiser*, October 26, 1861.

Deerfoot's "Indian" behaviors. The *Whitby Gazette* ran a bizarre account of Deerfoot's visit to Worcester, during which he was apparently involved in a staged, theatrical scalping of a bar patron after being asked to perform a war whoop. "The Indian, with gaping jaws, uttered a yell so shrill, ear-splitting, and protracted, that it literally cleft all heads," the paper claimed. It continued, "The gentleman who had invited this taste of his quality, clapping his hand incontinently to his auricles, and looking as pale as the blood of a turnip, rushed out of the house..."⁹⁷ Only in the last paragraph of the article, after a description of a public scalping, does the journalist reveal that this was a planned stunt involving props and actors. The allure of Deerfoot's celebrity was his Indianness, even when it was performed, on or off the track.

But performing Indianness did not render Deerfoot un-Indian. He had grown up and would die in a Seneca community and lived according to Seneca rules and rituals.⁹⁸ Paint, feathers, and wampum all would have had very real cultural and ceremonial meaning to him. What white observers in the United Kingdom did not understand was that Native tribes held a place in modernity beyond spectacle and beyond stereotypes. The same article that so vividly chronicled Deerfoot's staged Indian behavior offhandedly referred to "firewater"—alcohol—as "the delight of his race."⁹⁹ The Indian charmed people by his superior athleticism and, before race promoters made him convert to "proper costume," by his visible body. But a fear remained that there was also a

⁹⁷ "Deerfoot and his War-Whoop," *Whitby Gazette*, April 26, 1862.

⁹⁸ Hadgraft, *Deerfoot*, 3571.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

potential for drunkenness and violence in his disposition, simply because he was of Indian descent. Deerfoot's Indianness, therefore, could define his rowdy behavior, but it could not be allowed to define his athleticism.

The scrutiny intensified in 1862, when Deerfoot's English manager turned the European tour into the "Deerfoot running circus," a promotional act in which Deerfoot continually devoured his British competition, famous English runners who had been hired as members of the running troupe.¹⁰⁰ The tour attracted Deerfoot's many fans, who paid to see their favorite exotic celebrity accelerate around a track. Then news leaked of rigged races. The *Liverpool Daily Post* and the *Tipperary Vindicator* in Ireland ran coverage that explained, "...men who could, it is said, have easily beaten Deerfoot were to run into the places fixed for them...always behind the Indian. The plan however failed to draw money and Martin did not pay the salaries he promised, which led to his appearance in the County Court, and the exposure of the Deerfoot scheme."¹⁰¹ These developments made people seriously question the validity of all of Deerfoot's races in Europe. Martin could have been orchestrating a plot from the beginning to sell an Indian celebrity at the expense of deserving Brits. What would happen in a fair race?

A race in early 1863 implied that unaided, even a man and athlete like Deerfoot was perfectly beatable, especially by a trained Brit. After English runner Edwin Mills

¹⁰⁰ Sears, *Running Through the Ages*, 120-121.

¹⁰¹ "The Deerfoot Bubble," *Tipperary Vindicator*, October 24, 1862, 3; "The Deerfoot Bubble," *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 24, 1862.

defeated Deerfoot under unquestionably fair and competitive circumstances, the press reported:

So much for the boastings of Mr. Martin, who pretended that it was impossible for his American to be beaten! We do not, and never have denied the endurance and superior powers of “Deerfoot,” but we have always insisted that Mills could beat him whenever he wished... we cannot help remarking that we feel something like national pride in the success of Young Mills. This little lad beat that be-praised and be-puffed “Deerfoot” as he might have been beaten before, had our English pedestrians possessed proper courage, and manly pride.¹⁰²

The public had their revenge on Deerfoot and Martin for their trickery during the running circus. The “something like national pride” felt by the British would only intensify as the rise of the modern Olympics refocused sports as a proxy arena for imperial rivalries and dominance on the world stage. But the pride went beyond nationality; it was also about masculinity. Proper men—British men—won races. The “Young” Edwin Mills had fulfilled the duties of a British man by beating his “be-praised and be-puffed” Indian adversary. Deerfoot, “decisively beaten,” failed to embody the “proper courage, and manly pride” that could match high British standards.

In fact, this victory of a Brit over an Indian stood in for competition between the two racial groups in general. The paper continued: “Now that ‘Deerfoot’ has been decisively beaten, we shall be relieved probably of the nonsense which has been talked and written about the superiority of ‘savages’ over the civilized ‘palefaces!’”¹⁰³ Though

¹⁰² “The Defeat of ‘Deerfoot,’” *Herts Guardian, Agricultural Journal, and General Advertiser*, January 3, 1863.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

the paper acknowledged the great athletic prowess of Deerfoot as an individual athlete, it denounced the idea of inherent racial athletic superiority. When Mills crossed the line first, he solidified in the minds of the audience that British men should reign as champions, and Indians, even though they entertained refined citizens, should not.

Deerfoot's time in and around England drew to a close in May, 1863. Despite his defeat by Mills, Deerfoot accomplished world records for the one-hour run and at distances of ten and twelve miles before heading home to his family in New York. Those records were indisputable evidence of his prowess as a runner, so he left England having largely repaired his reputation that his scheming manager had inadvertently tarnished. In the States, Deerfoot's career petered out as he got older, although he retained some of his celebrity status.¹⁰⁴ He was invited to serve as a representative of the Iroquois at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, three years before he died. The *Chicago Tribune* reported his presence at the fair among other "strange peoples" living in the Indian Village on site.¹⁰⁵ Alongside other Native American lodgers in specially constructed Longhouses, Deerfoot greeted fair guests and answered reporters' questions with charisma and humor. It was far from the first time Deerfoot had been on display before a white audience.

Deerfoot's career had displayed for the first time how an Anglo audience would relate to an indigenous athlete in the context of the modern world of sport. His time in London had revealed a precarious relationship between what it meant to be civilized and what it meant to be Indian. He had dominated an undertaking that the Brits fancied their

¹⁰⁴ Hadgraft, *Deerfoot*, 3489.

¹⁰⁵ "Race Types at the World's Fair" *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, July 30, 1893.

own realm of expertise, and he represented the United States as well as any other figure could have — his tour was during the Civil War that determined if there would even continue to be the United States. Native athletes-to-come in the United States would soon face that tension in the sporting scene on the home front. Running had defined Deerfoot as a strong Seneca man by the Seneca's own standards but the British press underplayed his masculinity in favor of Edwin Mills'. He had set world records and revolutionized the sport both by popularizing it among a diverse audience in terms of social class and by employing previously unseen racing tactics. But what had really made Deerfoot memorable was not really his athleticism; it was his exoticism.

Exotic "Others" were everywhere in the United States of the early twentieth century. Contested and competing ideas about race and nationality prompted social unrest and heated intellectual discussion. Indigenous and immigrant politics determined domestic affairs while imperialism directed many foreign affairs. But the definitions of racial categories were in intellectual and social flux. Boundaries between groups were important because people made them important, upholding segregation of public facilities and miscegenation laws at the state level, and reinforcing an economic system that demanded an unskilled working class largely composed of minorities. And there to back it all up was science.

A few years after Deerfoot returned home, the scientific community became awash with new theories that had the power to alter society. Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species*, the basis for evolutionary science, had laid a foundation for

theories delving into contemporary social issues.¹⁰⁶ British philosopher Herbert Spencer's idea of "Social Darwinism" took Darwin's biological theory of organisms' development in nature and applied it to human society. In Spencer's articulation, Darwin had posited the principal of the "survival of the fittest," which could explain not only the competition for resources in an ecosystem, but also the competition for social or cultural dominance among human populations. Then came Francis Galton's 1869 *Hereditary Genius*. It proposed eugenics. Perhaps it was possible to breed better humans.¹⁰⁷

To be sure, conversations about race extended far beyond intellectuals. Throughout the nineteenth century, race had moved to a fiery forefront in public consciousness. American xenophobia targeting an influx of immigrants after 1840 fueled the idea that only certain ethnic groups were fit for self-government. This notion created a hierarchy of not only basic racial categories, but also whiteness as a category under which specific ethnic or national groups vied for social standing.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, with the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, many Mexicans suddenly became Tejanos, Nuevo Mexicanos, Californios, and Arizonias. Granted citizenship, which the government

¹⁰⁶ Darwin was a naturalist and his observations were biological, not intended to be applied to human societies. The first edition of his study was: Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

¹⁰⁷ As Galton's ideas developed and his career progressed, he even suggested an intentional effort to breed humans, but the program was entirely voluntary; he did not condone mandatory sterilization nor did he theorize eliminating races from the face of the planet like later eugenicists would. The first edition of his work was: Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869).

¹⁰⁸ Historian Matthew Jacobson discusses this process in his monograph, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

reserved for whites, Mexicans suddenly living within U.S. borders blurred the color line.¹⁰⁹ At much the same time, a three thousand-mile westward trek brought immigrants from Ireland face-to-face with “No Irish Need Apply” postings in places such as New York and Boston. The Irish were not considered white through the heaviest periods of immigration. In fact, some barely considered them human: political cartoons of the era are enough to reveal that unsympathetic cartoons and editors viewed the Irish as apes.¹¹⁰ The Chinese fared even worse. Depicted as rat-like creatures, they were entirely banned from immigrating to the U.S. in 1882 under the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹¹¹

But the ultimate standard of difference remained the “Negro.” Though emancipated from slavery and granted citizenship in the mid-1860s, African Americans continued to face discrimination in voting and marriage laws as well as overt, horrific violence, especially in the South. Ideas about savagery and barbarism on the “Dark Continent” continued to inform American notions of African people through the 1870s as Welsh journalist Henry Stanley journeyed through central Africa and reported home. Discourse surrounding imperial projects in Africa through the early twentieth century kept the rhetoric of inherent difference and primitiveness alive and regularly updated.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ For more information, see Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 46.

¹¹⁰ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy; Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

¹¹¹ The fact that Chinese immigrants were likened to animals is mentioned in Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 158.

¹¹² Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 149-150.

Vaudeville theaters grew in popularity in the U.S. and promulgated stereotypes of African Americans as lazy, uneducated, and buffoonish.

White perceptions of Indians, however, are not so easily categorized. By the time the twentieth century rolled around, the Anglo-American public regarded Native Americans with ambivalence and contradiction, constructing both enviable and deplorable stereotypes. Deerfoot's experience as a scrutinized representative of his race had hardly been unique. Indianness in general possessed malleable social capital, continually invoked and performed by white Americans struggling to define their own identities and assert a fundamental connection to American land.¹¹³ Native Americans themselves elicited emotions from non-Natives ranging from fear to adoration because of their perceived novelty amid and freedom from the confines of modernity. Even in their ancestral homelands, they were considered exotic.

The draw of exoticism is easily observable in World's Fairs and Global Exhibitions hosted in major cities across the Western world like the one Deerfoot had been invited to in 1893. Each of these displays of civilization and technology in the decades leading up to World War I included anthropological exhibits that put living indigenous people on display so that civilized fair patrons could observe the wild people of the world in allegedly natural settings.¹¹⁴ These human zoos attracted attention and praise from visitors who saw aboriginal Australians, native Filipinos, and various African

¹¹³ Historian Philip Deloria provides a comprehensive history of this phenomenon in *Playing Indian*.

¹¹⁴ See Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

tribes reenact their “natural habitats.” American Indians figured prominently in the fair programs, as an eager U.S. population watched colonialism and assimilation projects develop in real time away from the exhibits.

St. Louis, Missouri, hosted the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exhibition in conjunction with the third modern Olympic Games. The games did not yet have the prestige that they would acquire in the coming decade, but athletic clubs and university teams in the United States took them seriously and sent athletes. The blending of an event that advertised Western civilization and one that invited athletes to compete for widespread recognition made sense in the context of the early twentieth century. The Olympic vision included a genuine commitment to sportsmanship and athletic prowess, but it did not yet transcend diverse national or cultural borders. In promoting a specific strand of gentlemanly amateur competition, the Olympics also protected the white male supremacy that ruled the same civilization that the fairs celebrated.

And yet white Anglo Americans and European observers alike noted an apparent natural athleticism displayed by various groups of people they called “savages,” even if these people were supposedly lower than whites on the evolutionary scale. On one level entertaining and on another threatening, this potentially superior affinity for athletics invited scrutiny from “proper” athletes in “real” sports, the way Deerfoot’s abilities had led the British press to denounce the implication that his skills were inherently Indian. As a complement to the Olympic Games, William J. McGee, president of the American Anthropological Association, and James Sullivan, the exposition’s Director of the Department of Physical Culture, organized the “Anthropology Days.” Such a

competition, they proclaimed, would provide revenue for the fair and an opportunity to research native peoples in athletics and modernity.¹¹⁵

The participants had little time to prepare for competition. During these “Special Olympics,” men competed in running, pole-climbing, weight lifting, broad jumping, spear throwing, and several other tests of raw athleticism requiring little to no equipment. Some events mirrored regular Olympic events while others reflected athletic pastimes among the various indigenous communities.

After two days of competition, white observers with a stake in racial science were both disappointed and relieved. The *Spalding’s Official Athletic Almanac* of 1905, edited by James Sullivan, recapped the Anthropology Days. Though the writer judged the event a “brilliant success,” he characterized the competition in the following ways:

“This...is such a ridiculously poor performance that it astonished all who witnessed it.”

“The jumping of the Pigmies, the Ainus, and some of the Indians was really ridiculous.”

“It can probably be said, without fear of contradiction, that never before in the history of sport in the world were such poor performances recorded for weight throwing.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Nancy J. Parezo, “‘A Special Olympics’: Testing Racial Strength and Endurance at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition”, 59- 126 in Susan Brownell, ed., *The 1904 Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: Sport, Race, and American Imperialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

¹¹⁶ James Sullivan, ed. “Anthropology Days at the Stadium,” *Spalding’s Official Athletic Almanac for 1905* (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1905), 251-253.

This “official” report confirmed that the “tales” of the natural all-around ability of the “savage” in athletic feats were false. It also safeguarded the notion that the best athletes on earth had white skin and trained with Anglo coaches. This appeal to racial pride echoed the kind that the British press had expressed when Deerfoot lost to Edwin Mills.

There was some acknowledged praise for certain indigenous competitors as well. *Spalding’s* reported that American Indians had performed the best among competing indigenous populations, due to a higher degree of civilization achieved through exposure to white Americans. Visitors had also gawked at Igorotte pole climbing (which even the writer for *Spalding’s* admitted likely exceeded the abilities of “any trained athlete in America...with years of training.”)¹¹⁷ When expressing praise, however, white observers measured success in comparison to white American athletes. At event’s end, all native athletes had been judged failures on those grounds because their performance numbers did not match the numbers of trained U.S. sports club members or Olympic champions.

Even though there had been a designated arena for indigenous competition, the 1904 Olympic Games were also the first to feature both black and Indian athletes among the various sporting clubs and schools entered in the mock-international affair. Frank Pierce, a Haudenosaunee from the Allegany Reservation in New York, ran the marathon for New York Pastime Athletic Club.¹¹⁸ In the next several Olympics to come—games that would hold serious sway for international power dynamics—North American Indian athletes would play prominent roles in the realm of track and field. Native athletes would

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹¹⁸ Parezo, “A ‘Special Olympics,’” 79-81.

also continue to be subject to popular scientific racial prejudices. The papers may have mentioned tribal affiliations, but the Native Americans running for athletic clubs and the ones pitching the tipis in fake Indian villages definitely represented different versions of Indianness to fair and Olympic patrons. Recall the distinction between Deerfoot and the “real” Seneca. The Anthropology Days had tested the natural athletic potential of “savage” people. But despite the nature of the scientific findings in Chicago, the reports did not stamp out ideas about superior Indian athleticism, especially once a young Onondaga Canadian burst onto the running scene.

The crisp white uniform with the scarlet maple leaf made his skin look all the more bronze in the blazing sun on race day. The many trading cards that featured his picture had introduced the world to Tom Longboat from the Six Nations Reserve in Ohsweken, Ontario. He was the expected winner at the 1908 Olympic Marathon in London. He was tall, fit, handsome, and he ran fast. And there was the age-old stipulation to peak interest and threaten support: he was not white, but he kept winning at an alleged white man’s sport.

Tom Longboat, born “Cogwagee,” grew up in Haudenosaunee territory less than one hundred miles from Deerfoot’s home. He was a member of the Onondaga nation. Brief stints at Canadian boarding schools revealed the fact that Longboat would not let his Haudenosaunee identity be overwritten by white prescriptions: he ran away twice. No one tried to enlist him for a third go, but perhaps they took note of the running.

Longboat became famous in Canada and the U.S. amidst a marathon rivalry that had kicked off with the early installments of the now-premier U.S. distance race, the Boston Marathon. Just after the turn of the century, Canadians (both white and Native) and Americans (including blue-collar European immigrants) alternated in the top spots. Longboat won the race and set a record in 1907, running 2:24.24, a time about five minutes faster than the standing record.¹¹⁹ After the record-breaking performance in Boston, the *Globe* proclaimed, “Never before in the annals of running, either amateur or professional, in this country or abroad, has Longboat’s performance been approached.” By the time the 1908 Olympics rolled around, Canadian and American reporters alike regarded him with awe. Victory at the Olympics over white runners from the U.S. and Britain could prove that Longboat was the best distance runner in the world.¹²⁰

The 1908 games were tense. Drama started during the Opening Ceremonies, in which the hosts forgot to display the American flag along with the other participating nations’ and the American athletes snubbed the king by refusing to bow the flag they carried through the stadium. Sitting in the front row by the finish line of the premier event days later, reporting for the *Daily Mail*, was Arthur Conan Doyle (not yet “Sir”). He, like his kinsmen, hoped to see a British runner enter the stadium and finish the marathon at the head of the pack. If it wasn’t to be a Brit, it must at least be an Empire athlete from South Africa—Charles Hefferon, perhaps—or even the talented Tom

¹¹⁹ “Fastest Marathon Ever Run Won by Longboat,” *Boston Globe*, April 20, 1907.

¹²⁰ David Davis, *Showdown at Shepherd’s Bush: The 1908 Olympic Marathon and the Three Runners Who Launched a Sporting Craze* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books of St. Martin’s Press, 2012), 8.

Longboat representing Canada. As long as it wasn't an American. Britain wouldn't be able to beat the U.S. in total medals no matter what the outcome of the marathon, but a gold in this final event was worth all the others.¹²¹

Except victory did not come to Tom Longboat. He may have been the best distance runner in the world, but he dropped out of the race in London, leaving the podium open for an Irish-American from New York named Johnny Hayes. The implications of the marathon in terms of nationality and race were complex. Britain had to swallow yet another American victory when Hayes blazed across the finish line.¹²² An Irish-American brought the gold home to a city steeped in anti-Irish sentiment. Tom Longboat let down multiple colonizers—his country of Canada that had tried to mandate a boarding school education, and apparently the whole of the British Empire, while England's own athletes couldn't even finish the race. The marathon certainly hadn't been a showdown between "civilized" white men. But no one could unwrite the importance to which they ascribed the marathon ahead of time, which had been touted the "great event" and "blue riband" of the Olympic Games.¹²³

In the years following Longboat's Olympic defeat, he continued to race the best marathoners known to the Western World, including the podium finishers from 1908. He

¹²¹ Davis, *Showdown at Shepherd's Bush*, 4.

¹²² Hayes was actually the second to cross, but track officials had supported the first crosser, Dorando Pietri of Italy, across the finish line, trying to keep the spent runner from collapsing yet again on the track. As a result, Pietri suffered disqualification from the race, although his gutsy performance launched the brave Italian with the curled mustache to international fame.

¹²³ "The Marathon Race," *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, July 25, 1908; "An Exciting Finish," *Cornishman*, July 30, 1908.

again ascended to world-leader status, this time as a professional rather than as an amateur. He beat both Johnny Hayes and Dorando Pietri, the stars of the Olympic marathon, before audiences in the United States. When Longboat ran well or did good “civilized” things, like get baptized and marry his Christianized Indian first wife, the press loved and supported him.

But when he ran into trouble with coaches, displayed any hint of rowdy behavior, or lost races, journalists were not so kind.¹²⁴ Rumors abounded about his drinking and disorderly conduct, continuing the long vein of stereotyping Indians as alcohol-lovers alive even before the time of Deerfoot. Prior to the games, the *Brantford Courier* in Ontario had insisted, “There is no doubt that [Longboat] is a Canadian and we’re proud of him. There is no excuse for not sending Longboat to represent Canada in the big Marathon in England.”¹²⁵ But Canadians never fully embraced him as an equal member of a predominantly white society, especially when he lost races.¹²⁶ This ambivalence between a white colonizing nation and its native inhabitants also characterized the attitude with which the United States would regard a whole set of Indian competitors in the following Olympic Games, this time in Stockholm, Sweden, in the summer of 1912, where two boarding school teammates from rural Pennsylvania would become truly great Americans.

¹²⁴ Davis, *Showdown at Shepherd’s Bush*, 169, 174-175.

¹²⁵ *Brantford Courier*, April 20, 1907 in Davis, *Showdown at Shepherd’s Bush*, 87.

¹²⁶ Davis, *Showdown at Shepherd’s Bush*, 243, 240.

Students at the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, were encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities that reflected the values of modern society. Track and field was a logical option for many students, since they came from cultures that valued and necessitated running and racing, such as the Hopi of the Southwest. But when a skinny Hopi boy named Louis Tewanima approached Carlisle Coach “Pop” Warner for a spot on the track team, he had to beg: his tribe’s fame in distance-running didn’t matter to big-time white coaches with their own training methods. Running was perhaps the only way the adolescent Tewanima could possibly feel at home while being forced to attend an off-reservation boarding school. He persisted and finally got a spot on the team. Pop Warner would never again underestimate Tewanima so severely: he ran the marathon at the London Olympics in 1908 and qualified again for that race and the newly-featured 10,000-meter run in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.

So when the passenger ship SS Finland left New York for Sweden, it was Louis Tewanima’s second time boarding a boat bound for an Olympic Games. This time, he qualified alongside a boarding school classmate, James Francis (“Jim”) Thorpe (Sac and Fox). The two Carlisle athletes were joined by fellow Indian Andrew Sockalexis of the Penobscot people of Maine, who also qualified for the marathon. Perhaps the Native Americans could divide and conquer among the track events they were slotted for, and help rack up points for an American team fixated on beating the British.

First to start competition was Jim Thorpe. Thorpe was not a distance runner. He was a full head taller than his Hopi teammate, thin but with a muscular upper body that

gave away his identity as a football player. But Thorpe's achievement in Stockholm was still a measure of uncanny endurance. First it was the pentathlon, a multi-event competition consisting of the long jump, javelin throw, 200-meter sprint, discus throw, and 1,500-meter run. In 1912, the pentathlon was scored by tallying up each competitor's place-finish across the five events. To place first in each event would produce a perfect score of five. Jim Thorpe finished the competition with seven points. The runner-up scored twenty-one.

A week later, Thorpe took to the track and field again to compete in the other multi-event contest: the decathlon, demanding double the work of his first performance but spread over three days. Event after event, Thorpe placed in the top four, churning out performances that did not match his personal bests, but still proved to be the best in the world for multi-event competition. When he crossed the line ahead of the field in the 1,500-meter run, the final event in the decathlon, he solidified another trip atop the podium to be crowned Olympic Champion.¹²⁷

By the Olympic's end, Thorpe had competed in fifteen track and field events and took home matching gold medals. His dual victory and new world records left no doubt that Thorpe was something truly special in the athletic world. Sweden's King Gustav V shook Thorpe's hand at the Awards Ceremony and told him that he was the greatest athlete in the world.

¹²⁷ For Thorpe's results, see Joseph Oxendine, *American Indian Sports Heritage* (Campaign: Human Kinetics Books, 1988), 217-218.

In the interim, the other track events had taken place. Just after 9:30a.m. on Sunday, July 7, Tewanima crouched at the line in the second preliminary heat of the 10,000-meter race. It was the first time the “10K” was included in the Olympic program, replacing the 5-mile run that had been contested in London. Medals would be earned in the next round, but only the top half of runners would advance and have the opportunity to compete for them. Once the gun went off, the race progressed comfortably. The twenty-four-year-old Hopi rotated the leading position with two other athletes before qualifying for the finals on the coattails of a South African runner who set an Olympic Record ousting Tewanima at the line. Two other American runners advanced out of preliminary heats as well, in addition to several Brits, Swedes, and a small army of talented Finnish athletes.¹²⁸

The American trio and their opponents toed the starting line for the final the next day in front of a crowd of nearly 8,000 spectators. Tewanima wore a bib adorned by a cursive “293” pinned across his abdomen. Only eleven of the fifteen eligible men had shown up for the race, so the competitors had a little more elbow room than they had expected. At the official’s command, they crouched like coiled springs. Then the gun went off.

There was no stopping Hannes Kolehmainen of Finland. He surged ahead immediately, daring trailing runners to challenge him. Fellow Finn Mauritz Karlsson and Great Britain’s William Scott tried to keep pace with the frontrunner but fell back into the

¹²⁸ Erik Bergvall, ed., *The Official Report of the Olympic Games of Stockholm 1912* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widsrand, 1913), 368-371.

rest of the pack by the halfway mark. At that point, Tewanima held the second position, no doubt running “like a shadow” the way he had the day before.¹²⁹ Kolehmainen clocked 31:20.8, crushing the previous Olympic Record by over a minute—an eternity in track time. Tewanima pulled away from nearby runners in the last lap to earn a second-place finish in 32:06.6—an American record that would stand until Oglala Lakota athlete Billy Mills crossed the line to win gold, arms raised, in 1964. As it turned out, both Carlisle boys had opened up competition in 1912 with smashing success.

Tewanima also made his second Olympic appearance in the marathon. Before the race, reigning champion Johnny Hayes, coaching the Olympic marathon squad instead of running on it, fancied the chances of either Indian competitor, but nodded to the fact that Tewanima had “already run two fast 10,000-meter races, which may affect him.”¹³⁰ Tewanima finished sixteenth. Teammate Andrew Sockalexis just missed the marathon podium, finishing fourth in good form.

It had been a strong showing for the American team, which won the most gold medals out of any participating nation and finished in the runner-up position behind the host country for overall medal count. Between the three Indians, several black athletes, and working class members of the Irish American Athletic Club at the games, it certainly appeared as though the U.S. had put forth a team characterized by cross-racial and cross-class inclusion and celebration.¹³¹ And it continued to appear that way back home, where

¹²⁹ Bergvall, *Official Report*, 369.

¹³⁰ “Americans’ Lead in Olympics Grows,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1912.

¹³¹ Riess, *Sport in Industrial America*, 229.

adoring crowds throughout the Northeast received all three Indian Olympians. Sockalexis went home to Maine, where “an automobile bearing [him] and his trainer headed a procession of half a hundred motor cars and a long line of people” celebrating his performance.¹³² The town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, witnessed an even bigger celebration that included a parade, concert, reception, and firework show—“one of the biggest events of its kind ever held” there.¹³³ Letters came from governmental officials, congratulating “the two Olympic winners from the Indian School.”¹³⁴ President Taft referred to Thorpe as the “best kind of American citizen.”¹³⁵

But what did that mean?

Thorpe seemed to be participating in the assimilationist project by attending Carlisle and wearing Team U.S.A. uniforms. He had short hair and good manners. He ran fast, jumped high, and threw far. And he was not a U.S. citizen, per the government that claimed he represented the highest caliber of citizenry. In any event, the glory did not last long.

Seven months after the games, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) launched an investigation of Thorpe’s stint in minor league baseball and determined that rules of amateurism had indeed been violated. Thorpe had been paid a modest sum for his participation during one summer. Though a product of the commitment to honor the

¹³² “Reception for Sockalexis,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1912.

¹³³ “Carlisle to Honor Indians,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1912.

¹³⁴ “Honor Indian Athletes,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1912.

¹³⁵ Oxendine, *American Indian Sports Heritage*, 219.

virtue of sport, amateurism in practice was a mechanism for poverty. Thorpe sent a letter to the AAU, pleading for reconsideration and claiming that he was not aware of the technicalities of the amateurism rules. Such was undoubtedly the case. But the AAU wouldn't budge. Coach Pop Warner, in possession of Thorpe's medals, was forced to return them to the Swedish Olympic Committee so they could be passed along to the men who had earned silver at the games. Thorpe continued to play professional football and enjoy the limelight for another decade, but he would never again see the hardware that honored his greatest-ever athletic undertaking.¹³⁶

Things went differently for Louis Tewanima. After the party in his honor died down, Tewanima headed home to the Hopi reservation. Oddly enough, he wasn't a star in his hometown. Running was Hopi tradition, and Louis Tewanima had been forced to train under the tutelage of a white coach who did not know the Hopi way. Philip Zeyouma, who hadn't attended the games but who had qualified for them, faced this same type of dismissal. When the two young men decided to race each other on the reservation, some older Hopi men jumped in. These men were the true veterans, and they left both Zeyouma and Tewanima, wearing their Sherman and Carlisle shirts, in the dust.¹³⁷ These young athletes, born into a society stocked with serious runners, trained and competed in the Anglo sphere. But as the cases of Deerfoot and Longboat had proven before, dominantly white Western societies would not embrace even the most talented Indian runner as an equal modern man, and definitely not all-but-anonymous Hopi elders that could

¹³⁶ The IOC post-humorously returned the title of Olympic champion in the 1912 Decathlon and Pentathlon to Jim Thorpe in 1982.

¹³⁷ Gilbert, "Hopi Footraces and American Marathons." 88.

seemingly hop in an impromptu race and keep a steady pace for hours. Even though Tewanima had represented the United States abroad and fans across the country knew his name, he remained the “Indian,” or the “Little Indian” in the press for the duration of his running career. If the Hopis also maintained distance between the heart of their community and the Carlisle student, Tewanima was left with only his talent and the other Native Americans of his generation who had been forced to leave their homes and their people and attend boarding school. Tewanima decided to retire from the public running circuit shortly after the Olympics. He returned to Arizona to tend to his sheep and lived out the rest of his days in the fashion of a Hopi man.

In many ways, Native runners encountered the same ambivalence from Anglo societies that Natives of any other circumstances did. Indianness was exotic and invited audiences to observe and scrutinize. But there was something special about running. It provided access to a strand of mainstream society that was both popular and important—sports mattered. And in the early twentieth century, there was no shortage of Indian runners able to deliver head-turning performances in distance races held throughout the United States and Canada. Unlike football and baseball, distance running required very little equipment, personnel, and input from alleged experts. People like Tom Longboat and Louis Tewanima grew up running out of necessity and cultural affinity but found themselves in positions to carry their pastime with them beyond their indigenous communities. They could earn prestige or cash for their efforts. English, American, and Canadian audiences enjoyed watching, the same way they enjoyed observing exotic

people exhibits at global exhibitions. These audiences especially enjoyed when Indian athletes stepped in to settle scores in imperial rivalries, like that between the United States and Great Britain. If any of the colonizing nations could not produce a white, Anglo-Saxon champion, they were more than willing to momentarily embrace a Native and claim victory through shared nationality rather than race.

Running also granted visibility to Native athleticism beyond the sphere of boarding schools and forced assimilationists to grapple with the fact that it was not only white coaching that produced American champions. Of course, many of the most famous Indian runners after the turn of the century did run for boarding school programs, but Deerfoot certainly did not, and Tom Longboat escaped twice. The urban marathon scene always hosted Indian competitors unaffiliated with Indian schools. The Redwood Marathon had nothing to do with boarding schools. Running was and remained a universal sport. It was a bridge between cultures that did not require Indian submission or assimilation.

But the experiences of these runners also reveals the complexity and ambivalence surrounding race, nationality, and masculinity in the period of time when Americans watched the defining stories in their dime novels about rugged mountain men conquering the wilderness become further and further removed from reality. These issues mattered very much in competitive societies primarily ruled by white men. Perhaps sports picked up where frontier exploration had left off and provided channels for preconceived notions of masculinity to be exercised. Either way, predominantly white societies continued to struggle to incorporate Indians into their understanding of their countries and civilization.

It seems that the best Americans, Canadians, and Brits were able to do was to claim indigenous people as kinsmen when it was convenient for the image of American, Canadian, or British identity, and to deny them full entry into such societies when it would mean acknowledging political rights or sharing land.

Even in 1927, more than a decade after the Olympic performances of Jim Thorpe, Louis Tewanima, and Andrew Sockalexis, twenty years since the pinnacle of Tom Longboat's career, and half a century after Deerfoot's races in Europe, Anglo audiences still fundamentally misunderstood and maintained firm stereotypes about Native runners based on race. As Redwood Marathon runners passed through their sponsors' town, participating in an activity that had always been essential to tribal life, they met a white audience that was also participating in a tradition. Spectators both celebrated a shared geography-based identity with indigenous athletes and regarded them as inherently different beings. Such was the dynamic of a nation forged out of settler colonialism. But Canada and the United States only constituted two-thirds of the North American continent, home to North American Indians. Before the public came to know the Karuk and Zuni racers in California, they knew about the Tarahumara.

CHAPTER IV
THE RUNNING WOMEN AND MEN OF MEXICO

March 25, 1927: Austin, Texas

Lola Cuzarare ran towards the finish line in Memorial Stadium not knowing what it was. She was no stranger to racing, but the University of Texas track certainly looked different than the sites of her previous races, which had taken place in the canyons of the Sierra Madres in Chihuahua, Mexico, a place she likely never left until this trip to Texas.¹³⁸ A member of the people that called themselves the Rarámuri (a name approximate to “The Running People”), or “Tarahumara” as they were better known throughout the world, Lola crossed the line and kept going at a steady pace, cheered on by the crowd of over twelve-thousand fans at the third annual Texas Relays. The fourteen-year-old, running barefoot, had just won the first-ever marathon in Austin, and the first all-women’s marathon, period.¹³⁹ She had outlasted her sister, sixteen-year-old Juanita, and Juanita Pacience, age fifteen, both of whom had dropped out, bare feet burning on the hot Austin pavement, when the stadium was all but in sight.¹⁴⁰

A few hours later, two Rarámuri men scrambled into the stadium off of the packed street. The stream of cars and fans pouring onto the course left the runners choking on exhaust fumes and dodging physical obstacles on the homestretch, slowing the steady

¹³⁸ “Tarahumaras Run 84 Miles,” *American-Statesman*, March 13, 1927.

¹³⁹ “Indians Run 83 Miles and Girls Race 26,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1927; “Indians Triumph in 82-Mile Race; Texas Relays Begin,” *The Austin Statesman*, March 25, 1927; writer and editor David Davis cites a 1973 race in Waldniel, Germany as the first all-women’s marathon in *Showdown at Shepherd’s Bush*, 249; The American Amateur Union, the governing body of amateur sports in the U.S., hosted its first all-female marathon in February, 1974. Indigenous races among women had likely been occurring for centuries, but the press celebrated the 1927 race in Austin as an official “marathon,” in line with modern, Western sporting standards.

¹⁴⁰ “Indians Run 89 Miles in Less Than 15 Hours,” *The Kane Republican*, March 26, 1927.

progress the pair had made for the past fifteen hours through wind, heat, and physical ailments.¹⁴¹ José Torres and Tomas Zafiro, sporting wide sombreros, jogged into the stadium just after 6 o'clock in the afternoon to a hero's welcome and an official reception celebrating their eighty-nine mile run from San Antonio to Austin.¹⁴² If the girls were going to be running a full marathon, the meet directors must have reasoned that the men should run three-and-a-half times that far.

The celebration only continued from there. The papers lauded the accomplishments of both sets of runners, claiming that the finishers were, "fresh as daisies" and "unfatigued" at races' end.¹⁴³ Several papers went as far as to call the athletes "sprinters."¹⁴⁴ Merely a month after the Texas Relays, the troupe continued north to answer an invitation to run at the Kansas Relays, a well-established Track and Field Carnival where the top athletic schools, including Haskell Indian School, vied for national titles. This time, the women ran just under thirty miles between Topeka and Lawrence, where the meet was held. The men ran from Kansas City to Lawrence, just over fifty miles. Lola, now more familiar with cinder tracks and roped finish lines, won again. Her countryman José Torres bested the field of his compadres to win the men's race and set a world record for fifty-one miles of six hours, forty-six minutes, forty-one seconds. Seventeen minutes later, Purcell Kane claimed the runner-up position. But Kane

¹⁴¹ "Astounding Run Made," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1927.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ "Tarahumare Indians Run 89 Miles Without Stop," *Indianapolis News*, March 30, 1927; "Tarahumara Runners Set New Endurance Records," *The Evening News*, March 26, 1927.

¹⁴⁴ "Indian Sprinters Cover 89 Miles in Less Than 15 Hours," *Altoona Tribune*, March 26, 1927; "Tarahumara Runners Set New Endurance Records," *The Evening News*, March 26, 1927.

wasn't a Tarahumara. The University of Kansas had decided to enter Southwest American Indians to complete the trek alongside the indigenous Mexicans. Kane was an Apache running for Haskell Institute. His Haskell teammate, Burt Betah (Navajo), had also started the race, but didn't finish. meaning Third and fourth place went to the other Tarahumaras who had entered.¹⁴⁵

These Tarahumara men and women created a sensation in the United States. The men were regarded as basically superhuman and the women at least “considerably better than the average American male athlete,” according to the *Austin Statesman*.¹⁴⁶ The Mexican state watched excitedly as their championed runners elicited awe abroad, and dreamed of displaying Tarahumara running ability in even greater competitive venues. It certainly appeared as though the “cave-dwellers” from “the mountain wilds of Mexico” had taken to mainstream racing.¹⁴⁷ And who, eager spectators wondered, would ever be able to catch the Running People?

This excitement over the Tarahumara came in the months preceding the big start in San Francisco. Starting around that time, the Karuk racers began intensive training. Herbert Garber Boorse, owner of the Happy Camp General Store, routinely leaned out of the window of his 1922 Buick to shout unsolicited advice at the Happy Camp runners who would be competing under his sponsorship come June. It was Boorse who gave the

¹⁴⁵ “Indian Runner Sets a World’s Record,” *New York Times*, April 24, 1927.

¹⁴⁶ “Indian Runners Arrive In Austin At 5 O’Clock This Afternoon,” *The Austin Statesman*, March 22, 1927.

¹⁴⁷ Col. C. J. Velarde, “Tarahumaras: The Last American Cave-Dwellers,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1927; “Indian Sprinters Cover 89 Miles in Less Than 15 Hours,” *Altoona Tribune*, March 26, 1927.

“Indian names” Mad Bull, Flying Cloud, Rushing Water, and Fighting Stag to the men he so enthusiastically “coached.” Training included the athletes dousing themselves in a freezing creek at the crack of dawn and running between Happy Camp and Hamburg, thirty miles east, over mountains, on a daily basis.¹⁴⁸ The runners had obliged, but not without noting a lasting impression of the local merchant: “He was an odd man,” said an elderly Mad Bull years later.¹⁴⁹ And the training — “I could hardly stand it.”¹⁵⁰

Traditional Karuk running was different, but these men were running for and funded by white society, and the sponsors, needing the race to be a success to promote their businesses, took it upon themselves to ensure that the men — the “husky braves” — were properly trained.¹⁵¹ And so they worked away in the hills of Siskiyou County. But the nation needn’t wait until June for Native runners to take on hundreds of miles of American roads. Race promoters and meet organizers could outsource and bring in some real masters of indigenous running from the Sierra Madres. The way in which the American public received those runners revealed a disconnect between American, Mexican, and Tarahumaran ideas about gender, indigeneity, and nationalism, and how those categories intersected. While Mexico hosted a movement that aimed to celebrate indigeneity as a crucial component of essential modern Mexican identity, the United States continued its attempt to kill Indianness through assimilation. Mexico sent up

¹⁴⁸ Torliatt, “Indian Marathons,” 7; “Indians Train For Highway Marathon,” *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, May 28, 1927.

¹⁴⁹ Lee Torliatt, *Golden Memories of the Redwood Empire* (Arcadia Publishing, 2001); 115.

¹⁵⁰ Mad Bull quoted in Lee Torliatt, “Indian Marathons,” 7.

¹⁵¹ “Klamath Indians Prepare for Long Redwood Marathon,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, May 28, 1927.

representatives of a modern state, but the American press interpreted the Tarahumara runners according to familiar American paradigms that safeguarded ultimate athletic dominance for white males and reinforced oppressive stereotypes defining women.

It was not on a whim that Mexican officials sent a handful of athletes to American track meets in the spring of 1927. Running was a universal language through which major countries negotiated character and power, most notably at Olympic Games. Though Mexico wasn't yet a major player in Olympic competition by the mid-1920s, the government certainly wanted it to be, but the games only happened once every four years. In the fall of 1926, Mexico City agreed to host the first Central American Games — a regional athletic competition arranged by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for interim years that would hopefully boost interest in and support for the international Olympic Games.¹⁵² The Central American Games would be a chance to show off rising-star athletes and allow them to gain Olympic-related competitive experience.

As it turned out, the event was somewhere between a success and a flop. Only three countries — including Mexico — sent athletes to muster a grand total of 389 competitors in nine sports.¹⁵³ But the grand finale of the event did get people talking: an exhibition run of three Tarahumara men along a newly-constructed road from Pachuca to

¹⁵² Brazil had hosted a South American Games in 1922 to inaugurate the practice.

¹⁵³ Richard V. McGehee, "Mexico 1926: The Regional Olympics — Birth of the Oldest Child," North American Society for Sport History; Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Mexico City, a distance of about sixty miles. The two finishers were Tomás Zafiro and Leoncio San Miguel, and when they crossed the finish line at the National Stadium in Mexico City, just after noon on November 7, they became national heroes and unofficial record-setters at a distance that far-exceeded the standard marathon, an event that was beloved and revered across Great Britain and in the United States.¹⁵⁴

The popular response to this feat of endurance embodied what would have been considered a contradiction in the United States: the simultaneous championing of both modernity and the continuity of indigeneity. In fact, because sports and running were highly valued by mainstream society, modernity was partially embodied by the indigenous runners. But only partially. Zafiro and San Miguel received material prizes at the finish line. One of those prizes was a modern plow. The Tarahumara already grew crops — in fact, the two men were hesitant to do the run in the first place because it conflicted with harvesting season — but by the standards of Western civilization, they continued to use “primitive forked sticks.”¹⁵⁵ Plows were suggestive invitations into modern society the way middle- and upper-classes envisioned it.

Indeed, conversations about attempting to assimilate the Tarahumara “a la civilización” circulated at the time of the exhibition run, often voicing pessimism over the tribe’s ability to adapt to modernity with or without proper farming equipment. In May of 1926, *El Siglo de Torreón*, a regional newspaper in northern Mexico, insisted that the Tarahumara “[estaron] perdidos” — were lost. The article presented two outlooks. The

¹⁵⁴ Mark Dyreson, “The Foot Runners Conquer Mexico and Texas: Endurance Racing, *Indigenismo*, and Nationalism,” *Journal of Sports History* 31 (Spring 2004); 2.

¹⁵⁵ “Mexican Indians Get Plows For Record 100-Kilometer Run,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1926.

first: “the commission of educators who went to civilize the indigenous Tarahumara completely failed...they found that those wretched people are completely degenerated, and it is impossible to bring them into civilization.” Interestingly enough, this article was under the the section heading, “Comentos Sin Malicia” (“Comments Without Malice”), so the newspaper presented such a suggestion lamentable yet factual.¹⁵⁶ But the notion that converting the Tarahumara to modern ways was a task that had already proven to be impossible was offset by another option.

“On the contrary,” the article continued, “Another report...affirms that the commission was able to have some success and that the Tarahumara are going to form a part of our collective society... and it should be simple to transform them into civilized people.”¹⁵⁷ Clearly there was room for debate about the destiny of the Tarahumara in modern Mexico, and one side eagerly anticipated this “transformation” that would render the indigenous population an integral component of a civilized society. The debate remained open in popular discourse.

The overnight run from Pachuca, during which the indigenous runners were trailed and cheered by a steadily growing parade of both automobiles and horses, provided proof to observers that there was a balance that could be struck between tribal identity and national identity, ancient tradition and modern values.¹⁵⁸ That very idea was already circulating through the government and society following the Mexican Revolution that had ended not a decade beforehand. Post-revolutionary Mexico in part

¹⁵⁶ “Los Tarahumaras Estan Perdidos,” *El Siglo de Torreón*, May 21, 1926. Translation by author.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Dyreson, “The Foot Runners,” 1.

championed a political ideology committed to *indigenismo*, which was in some sense a challenge to outright assimilation that denied value in indigeneity. *Indigenistas*, the vision's disciples, envisioned a mainstream Mexican national identity that incorporated and celebrated certain components of indigenous identity, especially indigenous heritage, and a state that united Mexico's very diverse populations into a functional body politic.¹⁵⁹ But building such a nation required homogenizing Mexico's demographic with an overarching shared value system and understanding of what constituted modernity, and that concept was derived, as it was across the New World and beyond, from European standards.¹⁶⁰ So when the Tarahumara runners traversed the road from rural Mexico to Mexico City, it mattered that they were recognized as both Tarahumara — bearing the blood of the indigenous population that represented the authentic, unique Mexican past — and that in addition to bells and sandals, they wore green, red, and white: the colors of the Mexican flag, and brought home plows to their mountain villages. It was also significant that they ran along a newly constructed road — a mark of modernity just like the Redwood Highway was in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶¹

The difference between American and Mexican receptions was that Mexican *indigenistas*, unlike American assimilationists, did not anticipate nor wish for indigenous Mexicanness to vanish, and Native people did not need the Indian in them to be killed à la the imagined objective of the Carlisle Indian School in order for their essential

¹⁵⁹ Dyreson, "The Foot Runners," 3; Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2004), xvii.

¹⁶⁰ Dawson, "Indian and Nation," xvii.

¹⁶¹ Thor Gotaas, *Running: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 170.

humanity and manhood to be saved. Indigenous blood was essential to the genetic make-up of modern Mexicans.

The doctrine of *indigenismo* was often paternalistic and reenforced ideas about indigenous savagery that would have been familiar to American humanitarians wishing to deliver Indian peoples from their ignorance and sin. But also caught up in the politics of *indigenismo* were the politics of masculinity, and the image of an indigenous man did not necessarily assume inferiority to “civilized” men. The hardy, physical lives of indigenous groups, especially groups known for their athleticism like the Tarahumara, Yaquis, and Seris in northern Mexico, denoted strength and power of Mexican men like the rugged individualist frontiersmen in Zane Grey dime novels and John Ford films did in the United States.¹⁶² One paper deemed Zafiro and San Miguel “dos gallos de mucho pelo,” two well-plumed roosters, a rural-slang term used to commend a feat of masculinity.¹⁶³ Mexican officials shared similar fears to their U.S. counterparts about an upper- and middle-class understood to be effeminate.¹⁶⁴ The type of grit required to best international athletic competition and display Mexican strength, power, and prestige would not be found in those coddled classes. Advocates of a strong Mexican nationality looked to a more rugged male figure to counteract the feminization society faced — the indigenous man — or even better, the indigenous male athlete.

¹⁶² “El Atletismo de los Indios Yaquis Mexicanos,” *El Siglo de Torreón*, November 21, 1927. Translation by author.

¹⁶³ “110 Kilometros En Siete Hora Cuarenta y Cinco Minutos,” *El Siglo de Torreón*, November 9, 1926. Translation by author.

¹⁶⁴ Gotaas, *Running*, 170.

Britain and the United States had already proven that the Olympic Games constituted an excellent proxy arena for contests of masculinity and manliness. Mexico evidently agreed. By the time the cohort of Tarahumara runners raced in Texas and Kansas, Mexico was already petitioning to the IOC to add a 100-kilometer (62-mile) men's race.¹⁶⁵ Such an event would surely highlight Tarahumara — and Mexican — athletic dominance in an event even more grueling than the sensational 26.2-mile standard marathon. And the support of indigenous athletes would not merely be superficial if Mexico could indeed embrace indigeneity as somehow fundamental to Mexican nationalism and project it abroad. State-sponsored Mexican visions of a more inclusive and influential national identity in sports didn't stop with the petition for an Olympic ultramarathon. Officials also sought the addition of a women's marathon to the Olympic program for the 1928 Games in Amsterdam.¹⁶⁶

Neither plea was answered. The 26.2-mile marathon remained and remains the longest distance contested at the Olympic Games. The IOC did not add a women's marathon until 1984. But Mexican ideas of communal worth revealed that the community at large confronted indigeneity and gender in connection to the state differently than did the United States or outposts of the British Empire, at least rhetorically.

If the Mexican state was to some extent able to value the accomplishment of its indigenous women on their own terms (enough to suggest that they deserved their own marathon), the United States treated the success of the female Tarahumara runners mainly

¹⁶⁵ Dyreson, "The Foot Runners," 7.

¹⁶⁶ "Mexican Indian Breaks 100-Kilometer Mark: Women's Olympic Race at Distance Sought," *New York Times*, March 2, 1927.

as foils to American masculinity. Notions of the ability and plausibility of women in sports were developing throughout the 1920s, but women certainly did not enjoy widespread cultural support to undertake athletic endeavors, especially activities as vigorous and high-impact as running.¹⁶⁷

Even if coverage didn't denounce the female Tarahumara runners for undertaking the physical act of long-distance running, it did contextualize their accomplishment in such a way that it redirected attention back to men. An article in the *New York Times* anticipating the Tarahumara races at the Texas Relays opened with an imaginary scenario of a messenger venturing into "the teepees of the Tarahumara" to tell the "Great Chief" that "the White Man of the North was boasting of his speed and endurance in running." When the Chief inquires to know more, the messenger tells him about the standard marathon. The Chief then responds: "We will send the squaws to run that," as if such a distance was so trivial that even a woman could do it.¹⁶⁸ The newspaper presented female running not impressive in its own right but as a taunt targeting American men. Continuing this framework, when confronted with the athleticism of the Tarahumara girls ("girls" because all of them were teenagers) who ran marathon-plus distances in Texas and Kansas, American press coverage framed the accomplishment in terms of what it meant for American male athletes, not female athletes in either country.

¹⁶⁷ University of Massachusetts coach Virginia Evans found that *New York Times* coverage of women's sports increased drastically over the course of the early 1920s, along with other publications devoted to the subject exclusively. Virginia Evans, "Women's Sport in the 1920 Era," presented at the annual meeting of the North American History of Sports, Columbus, Ohio, 1973; Margaret D. Costa and Sharon Ruth Guthrie, *Women and Sport : Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1994), 2.

¹⁶⁸ John Kieran, "Sports of the Times," *New York Times*, March 25, 1927.

Some press coverage even surmised the possibility of the Tarahumara girls (“girls” because they were all teenagers) setting a new outright marathon record regardless of gender.¹⁶⁹ That idea didn’t seem to get much backing. A *New York Times* article insisted that one could “bet a grand piano to a flat note that the Tarahumara squaws will be as far from the record as Portland, Me., is from Portland, Ore.”¹⁷⁰ One needn’t speak the language of musical idioms to decipher that such odds put the girls’ chances of record-setting at next-to-nothing. Sure enough, when the marathon took Lola Cuzarare four hours and forty-nine minutes to complete, over two hours longer than Hannes Kolehmainen’s world record of 2:32.35, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “The girl’s race failed to set a record for marathon runs.”¹⁷¹ Men, it seemed, were safe.

But as long as it was maintained that the female runners couldn’t outrun white men step for step, Americans could report Lola’s accomplishment in a positive light. “Lola Curare’s time while not comparing with the world’s record for the standard Marathon,” read the *Altoona Tribune*, “. . . was considered remarkable for one of her sex.”¹⁷² A condescending tone surrounding femininity took even more overt forms in other papers. The *Evening News* in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, reported that when “Miss Lola Cuzarare had sprinted into the stadium. . . She ran three times around the oval where white college boys are wont to disport themselves just to show that she had not been done

¹⁶⁹ For example, “Indian Runners Arrive in Austin at 5 O’clock This Afternoon,” *The Austin Statesman*, March 22, 1927.

¹⁷⁰ John Kieran, “Sports of the Times,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1927.

¹⁷¹ “Astounding Run Made,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1927.

¹⁷² “Indian Sprinters Cover 89 Miles in Less Than 15 Hours,” *Altoona Tribune*, March 26, 1927.

in by the grind.”¹⁷³ The exact nature of this disportment wasn’t covered, but the rowdy college boys at least made a big enough scene catcalling Lola to be part of the story that made it back to the mid-Atlantic states. Rhetorically tied to any celebration of Lola’s success was that vampire-of-a-caveat, “for a girl,” and even a race that had killed several men who attempted it left room for blatant voyeurism mixed with exoticism, the way the public responded to anthropological exhibits at World’s Fairs.

What was entirely missing from press coverage of the girls race was a discussion of female running records. Conversations about men’s records at both standard marathon and longer distances drove conversations about the Tarahumara pursuits in Texas and Kansas, yet proof that women could finish long-distance races did not introduce a new conversation about the future of female long-distance record setting. In reality, Lola Cuzarare and her fellow female competitors challenged beliefs in the U.S. and beyond about what women could and should accomplish physically. Even as public schools and universities expressed a greater interest in promoting athletics for girls and women, men’s sports and women’s athletics remained decidedly separate venues composed of different games, sports, and events. Advocates called for “teams suited to the age and sex and adapted to the physical capacities of the various types of pupils.” Even among children, there was an understood difference in athletic capacities between genders.¹⁷⁴ A 1925 report out of London suggested that “even the most athletic women cannot exert the same ‘horsepower’ as comparatively ordinary men.” The scientist behind the study prescribed

¹⁷³ “Tarahumara Runners Set New Endurance Records,” *Evening News*, March 26, 1927.

¹⁷⁴ “Schoolgirls Need Athletic Training,” *New York Times*, December 30, 1922.

commitments to “skill and speed, economy and grace” to improve women’s athletic performance, writing off “muscular development” as the dominion of men.¹⁷⁵ The U.S. did not enter a women’s track team in the Olympics until 1928, at which time they became another marginalized group of American citizens circumstantially celebrated for their representation of the Land of Opportunity against foreign athletes. So it was that the men of the world were credited with having the potential to be the planet’s naturally finest athletes.

But it wasn’t a matter of sexism alone. Spectators and journalists had expressed excitement over high-level women’s track and field earlier in the year, following the summer-time Amateur Athletic Union championship meet in Philadelphia. The meet had offered only five running events in the women’s competition: the 50-yard run, 60-yard hurdles, 100-yard run, 220-yard run (featured for the first time), and the 440-yard relay.¹⁷⁶ The number of men’s running events was triple the women’s, and featured distance races of 880-yards, one-mile, and six-miles.¹⁷⁷ But even with the comparatively short program and despite the blazing heat, women posted both American and world records in five events, and matched national or world bests in another four.¹⁷⁸ Yet athletic prowess was contained to the abridged list of track events; no one seemed to be

¹⁷⁵ “Women Lack Men Athlete’s Horsepower; Need Grace to Match Them, Tests Show,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1925.

¹⁷⁶ Louise Mead Tricard, *American Women’s Track and Field: A History, 1895-1980* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996), 108-110.

¹⁷⁷ “Seven Records Fall in U.S. Title Games,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1926.

¹⁷⁸ Tricard, *American Women’s Track and Field*, 108.

anticipating female marathoners, before or immediately after the Texas and Kansas Relays of 1926.

The racial logic of the time must have maintained this disconnect between indigenous athleticism and female athleticism. Indian women could occupy various roles in the American imagination, ranging from the dark and beautiful Indian princess to the savage “squaw.”¹⁷⁹ It seems that Lola Cuzarare and her fellow racers were somewhere in between. She was feminine enough to elicit some special excitement from the college-aged boys in the audience, but her extreme athleticism would have kept her out of the realm of truly desirable femininity from a broadly American perspective that still accepted only a narrow brand of female athlete. And because the runners were indigenous, public perception in the United States would have also been informed by the long-standing stereotypes surrounding Native people as savages, or at least inherently different than white Americans.

The taunting of American men, sexist nods to the Tarahumara women, and lack of interest in groundbreaking displays of female athleticism ultimately reflected an accepted reality of white male dominance. The *New York Times* summed up the situation bluntly and truthfully: “The feminist movement is making progress, but it isn’t that fast as yet.”¹⁸⁰ Questions of female athleticism would remain open and talked about but fundamental reassessment was slow-going.

¹⁷⁹ Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture,” *The Massachusetts Review* 16 (Autumn 1975), 701.

¹⁸⁰ John Kieran, “Sports of the Times,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 1927.

Actually, in many indigenous cultures, running had always been as much the province of women as of men, even if the nature of races differed in distance or ritual meaning. The Tarahumara, for example, came together for enormous social gatherings at both men's and women's races between villages. They betted, feasted, and ran — far.¹⁸¹

And it wasn't just the Running People who encouraged their women to run.

Anthropologists have reported indigenous respect for and encouragement of female runners and races from the Great Lakes to the Great Basin, Northwest coast to Southwest borderlands.¹⁸² The United States simply kept women out of the mainstream long-distance running scene. And even with regards to indigenous running, American journalists depicted the scene as male-dominated. The Redwood Marathon, of course, was all-male, but even though Lola's name decorated press coverage of the Texas and Kansas races, she was always secondary to the impressive “supermen” attempting seemingly impossible distances at record-breaking pace.¹⁸³ No suggestions of gender equality were in sight.

At immediate stake in the American sports scene were instead questions of racial dominance among men. Bringing the Tarahumara up for races was good for the publicity of track and field meets and the entertainment industry more broadly, but it further threatened white male athleticism in the position of the world's leader in superior genetics and athletic prowess. One way around the evidence that Tarahumara men could

¹⁸¹ Fructuoso Irigoyen-Rascón and Alfonso Paredes, *Tarahumara Medicine: Ethnobotany and Healing Among the Rarámuri of Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 90.

¹⁸² Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 140,142.

¹⁸³ “Thousands See Race's Finish at UT Stadium,” *The Austin Statesman*, March 25, 1927.

routinely run distances far longer than white American men were attempting was to suggest that even the great indigenous runners could benefit from modern (read: white) coaching and running methods. Following the Texas Relays, the Associated Press ran a story in the *Daily Herald* of Borger, Texas, headlined, “Tarahumaras To Be Taught Modern Running Methods.” The coach quoted in the article insisted that in order to truly hone Tarahumara potential the runners had to learn three things: “to run on their toes, to wear shoes and to reckon distance.” The article broke down running mechanics, racing philosophies, and mainstream track and field culture, insisting that once the Tarahumara were well-versed in these areas that there would be no stopping them on the world stage.¹⁸⁴ The implication was that their commitment to traditional running techniques and competitive mentalities would ultimately hold them back from the highest caliber of athletic performance.

Some papers outright denied the suggestions that any Indians were truly better runners than their white counterparts, instead casting votes with white supremacy. The same *New York Times* article that downplayed the Tarahumara women also insisted that “there will be some white man hot on the trail before many moons” of a record “Indian braves expect to set.”¹⁸⁵ In other words, just because Tarahumara men were the only men delivering such performances did not mean that they were the only men capable of delivering them. But more common than utter denial was the opposite: admissions that the Tarahumara were simply superior long-distance runners, probably the best in the

¹⁸⁴ “Tarahumaras to be Taught Modern Running Methods,” *Borger Daily Herald*, Tuesday, April 19, 1927.

¹⁸⁵ John Kieran, “Sports of the Times,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1927.

world. Papers credited Tarahumara men with completing tasks “that would kill an ordinary horse,” or exhibiting “human endurance that could be matched by few of their paleface brothers.”¹⁸⁶ Even if destructive to dominant ideas about white supremacy, Tarahumara super-endurance was good publicity with apparently empirical evidence to back it. Plus, sports fans love observing challenges and rivalries.

Of course, white Americans’ perceptions of Tarahumara runners did not come from a willingness to regard foreigners as at least equals. Stereotypes and mythologies of Native people as noble savages fundamentally connected to the earth or gritty, primitive practices like endurance running informed notions of supernatural elements to Tarahumara bodies. A write-up in the *Los Angeles Times* suggested that Tarahumara hardly felt pain at all, evidenced not only by their running abilities but also by the fact that “not one of them seemed to mind in the slightest having a handful of hair pulled at a time” when scientists poked and prodded some Tarahumara for scientific research.¹⁸⁷ Others suggested that “The Tarahumara Indian...has no conception of time or distance,” and indeed painted an image of creatures who hibernate in caves or get “kept in seclusion” until summoned to run great distances.¹⁸⁸ Even though such sentiments didn’t outright condemn the Tarahumara as inferior on the basis of race, they mirrored the

¹⁸⁶ “Indian Sprinters Cover 89 Miles in Less Than 15 Hours,” *Altoona Tribune*, March 26, 1927; “Tarahumara Runners Set New Endurance Records,” *Evening News*, March 26, 1927.

¹⁸⁷ Col. C. J. Verlarde, “Tarahumaras: The Last American Cave-Dwellers,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1927.

¹⁸⁸ “Longest Race in Athletic History Feature of Texas Relay Games,” *American-Statesman*, March 13, 1927; “Runners Will Go 82 Miles in Race at Texas Relays,” *Daily Illini*, February 6, 1927, “Indians Locked Up,” *Borger Daily Herald*, March 24, 1927.

notion that they were inherently anti-modern and served as relics of a bygone age of wilderness and primitivity.

As much as journalists compared the Tarahumara to white athletes, however, they also compared them to tribes living within the boundaries of the United States. Such a position was dangerous: there was already a cultural knowledge that Southwest tribes in general produced talented distance runners. And much of the rhetoric surrounding indigeneity in the U.S. was also used in the context of the Tarahumara — “wild,” “primitive.” But American journalists carefully distinguished between the Tarahumara and “American Indian” tribes. If the Tarahumara were superior to whites in the realm of running, it had to be understood that it was *just* the Tarahumara — not Natives in general.

“The Tarahumara is very much different from the general run of American Indians,” began Col. C. J. Velarde, writing for the *Los Angeles Times*, at once generalizing both the Tarahumara population and also the entire population of Native peoples across the United States. “He is absolutely peaceful, and is known to have never entered into conflict with any one except the Apache, whom he defeated in the early Eighties.”¹⁸⁹ Of course an image of absolute peacefulness diverted from the iconic image in American popular culture of the hostile Indian warrior on the warpath. It is also significant that the article juxtaposed the Tarahumara with the Apache, Natives that featured prominently as enemies in cowboy and Indian movies set in the American West. Horseback warriors, and including the Public Indian Enemy Number One himself

¹⁸⁹ Col. C. J. Velarde, “Tarahumaras: The Last American Cave-Dwellers,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1927.

(Geronimo!), the Apache were stand-ins for hostile Indians by and large.¹⁹⁰ These claims about the Tarahumara in relation to American Indians, especially the Apache, were strictly rhetorical. The Tarahumara had openly resisted Spanish colonialism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sometimes with severe violence, and sometimes by relocating.¹⁹¹ Even in much more recent history, many Tarahumara had revolted during the turbulent years of the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920. Newspapers from 1920 report “uprisings” in the state of Chihuahua led by the famous revolutionary Francisco “Pancho” Villa, and coalitions of indigenous tribes. Among those tribes were the Rarámuri.¹⁹²

It must have been significant that any violence associated with the Tarahumara had not directly concerned the United States government or Army. Indians from Mexico could be “uncivilized” without also being dangerous because they hadn’t and they didn’t continue to hold lands within the U.S. Therefore, their accomplishments did not threaten Americans, as long as Tarahumara athleticism among both men and women was contextualized to be unique to them and not all indigenous people, or in the case of female athleticism, all women.

Of course, also fueling the American cultural fascination with the Tarahumara was exoticism, which was true regarding American Indians as well. But there was a push in

¹⁹⁰ This trend continued well into the twentieth century. One needs only to read movie titles of some famous Cowboy and Indian movies: *Geronimo* (1939), *Apache* (1954), *The Battle at Apache Pass* (1952), *Apache Warrior* (1957), *Apache Territory* (1958).

¹⁹¹ Friedrich Katz, *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 86; Roberto Mario Salmón, *Indian Revolts in Northern New Spain: A Synthesis of Resistance, 1680-1786* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 40-42.

¹⁹² “People are Alarmed,” *El Paso Herald*, April 19, 1920.

some newspapers to articulate that the Tarahumara were *more* exotic — *more* authentically native — than twentieth-century American Indians. “With hair hanging to their shoulders...a real native American element will be introduced into the games,” read the *Daily Illini*, a University of Illinois’ student newspaper, before the Texas Relays. It continued, “Running on the same card with the new type of Indian, such as will be seen in the Haskell institute entries, these courses will present an interesting contrast.”¹⁹³ The “new type of Indian” exemplified by Haskell Institute’s student body wore short hair and regulation-style competition uniforms. They certainly did look different than the long-haired Tarahumara running in sandals or barefoot, with bright-colored homemade garments and wide-brimmed sombreros. Of course, the implication that “real” Native culture was exhibited only by the Tarahumara denied boarding school Indians a place in society that allowed them to be both modern and Indian. The article assumed that adaptations to mainstream American society, whether forced or voluntary, created Indians who were less real or at least less picturesque than Native people who did not or were not made to significantly alter their physical appearances.

This divide existed within the United States among “American Indian” tribes as well, and helped garner interest for the Redwoods race. The Happy Camp Karuks wore shoes and short hair. The Zunis wore headbands over long hair, sandals, and looked altogether “picturesque” according to the news coverage. As newspapers did regarding the Tarahumara, coverage also called attention to the fact that the men would be running

¹⁹³ “Runners Will Go 82 Miles in Race at Texas Relays,” *Daily Illini*, February 6, 1927.

in “a breech clout.”¹⁹⁴ Such were the costumes and behaviors of “real” Native culture, and the most authentic Indian runners.

The Redwood Indian Marathon came on the tail of the Tarahumara runners’ venture into the States. Press coverage did not link the events, though the *Los Angeles Times* reported on the events side-by-side.¹⁹⁵ But the races among the Tarahumara in America and the Redwood Indian Marathon, all occurring within four months of each other, revealed important dynamics of interracial relationships as well as national identities in both the United States and Mexico. Even though *indigenismo* was hardly truly and immediately empowering to Native Mexican people, *indigenistas* related to their nation’s indigenous population differently than American assimilationists related to the indigenous population within the U.S. Tarahumara athleticism was excitedly received, for the most part, in both places, though at home the runners helped to define a national identity and in the United States they were most definitely foreign.

Americans also related to the Tarahumara differently than to many American Indians. The lack of historical conflict with the Tarahumara left space for American fans to enjoy the exotic visitors without having to acknowledge them as part of the ongoing “Indian Problem” at home. Many papers also depicted the Tarahumara as more authentically Indian than Natives in the United States, perhaps with the exception of other Southwest borderlands tribes, for they appeared unassimilated and picturesque. Plus, they

¹⁹⁴ “14 Indian Runners Will Start Race,” *Sausalito News*, June 11, 1927; “Runners Will Go 82 Miles in Race at Texas Relays,” *Daily Illini*, February 6, 1927.

¹⁹⁵ “Astounding Run Made,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1927.

were understood to be a peaceful, quiet people. Across multiple fronts, they did not threaten the Americans that encountered them as spectators.

And, both the Mexican and American states related to indigenous women differently than the indigenous communities from which they came. Neither country offered support for a decisive feminist movement, although the 1920s were certainly a breakthrough decade for women's freedom in general. In the U.S., the decade opened with women's suffrage. There were also smaller-scale liberations at the cultural level: throughout the "Roaring Twenties," fashion grew less restrictive (literally, as women turned away from corsets) and more revealing. Plus, there was a boom in the participation of young women in the "sexual revolution" of the college-age youth in the United States.¹⁹⁶ In Mexico, the recent revolution had provided some visibility for women in the war effort and fueled a wave of feminism that led to the formation of organizations such as the Consejo Feminista Mexicano (Mexican Feminist Council) and the Frente Unico Pro Derechos de la Mujer (United Front for Women's Rights). These groups even took up issues pertaining to the rights of indigenous women, specifically.¹⁹⁷ But when confronted with the athleticism of the Tarahumara girls, the American press seemed more interested in comparing female Tarahumara runners to American men than American women, or even discussing female athleticism in its own right. The only part of the discussed framed in terms of femininity was the avenue many papers took to celebrate Lola for her

¹⁹⁶ Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 282, 262.

¹⁹⁷ Stephanie Evaline Mitchell and Patience Alexandra Schell, eds., *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910-1953* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 25-27; Helen Rappaport, *Encyclopedia of Women Social Reformers* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2001).

accomplishment — it was amazing because she was a girl, and girls didn't run marathons.

The arena of long distance running put these discrepancies on display. The indigenous runners presented American observers with something that had not yet been witnessed there. In order to cope with undeniable running talent, the American press had to construct a cautious narrative of condescending praise for a quaint, primitive group of cave-dwellers who would inevitably be running their way out of modern existence soon enough. The anxiety was also curbed by the fact that after the jaunt, the runners returned to Mexico, where a different state would attempt to determine their fate in the changing world. But all of this thinking about indigenous athleticism came as the Redwood Empire Association prepared to host an even more extreme event than any of the Tarahumara had recently undertaken in terms of total distance. The four-hundred and eighty mile trek would force Americans to confront incredible endurance running from two tribes — Karuks and Zunis — that spectators could not deny were American as well.

CHAPTER V
GRAND PRIZES: POST-RACE REPORT

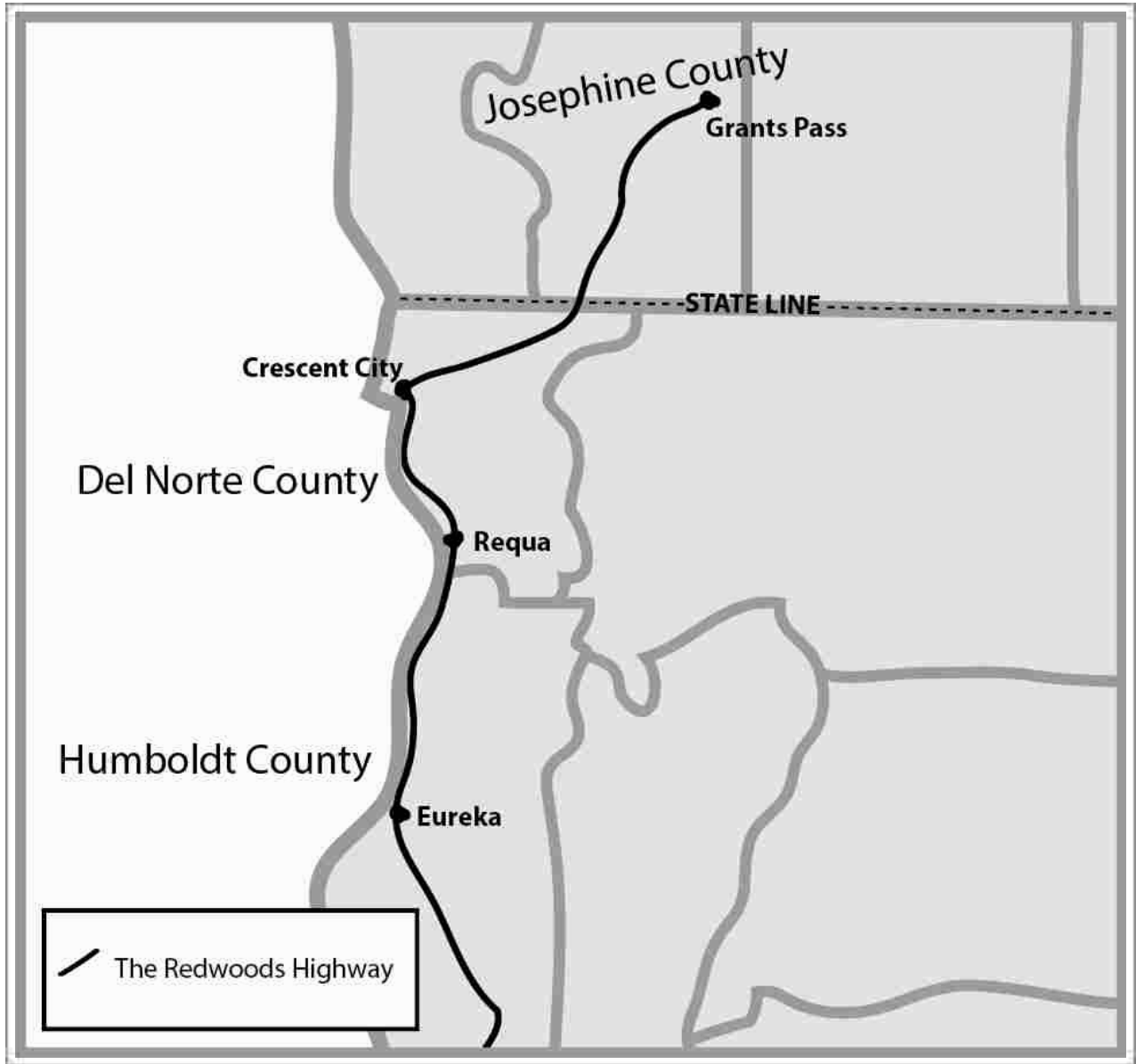


Figure 5.1. Humboldt County through the finish line. Map created by author.

Monday, June 20, 1927

The runners were well ahead of schedule. Race organizers had estimated that it might take about two weeks to finish the race, but in half that time, the front runners were already approaching the state line, forty-two miles from Grants Pass.

Mad Bull was hurting but moving. Newspapers wondered if he may yet be passed by Flying Cloud, who reportedly had still looked strong through Pepperwood, California, the day before, or by one of the Zunis.¹⁹⁸ But the leader made it through Requa before noon, about fifteen miles ahead of his nearest competitor. He had run nearly three-hundred and sixty-five miles in the past seven days, and sixty-two of them just the day before. He was sleeping less and running more now that the end of the race was near, but he wasn't quite there yet. Flying Cloud had clocked seventy miles on Sunday, determined to catch his countryman before the night was up. He had already gained twenty-two miles on Mad Bull in the past twenty-four hours. Melika was another ten miles back, but such was a trivial distance for a seasoned Zuni. By this point, Melika was the only Zuni left. A sprained ankle had knocked Chochee out of contention near Eureka. Blisters had claimed Jamon early on. Spectators still thought "anything might happen."¹⁹⁹

By the time night fell, Mad Bull reached Crescent City, where the Redwood Highway transferred from Route 101 to Route 199, which ran northeast into Grants Pass and the finish line, about ninety miles away. A boost came in Crescent City from a

¹⁹⁸ *Grant's Pass Daily Courier*, June 18, 1927.

¹⁹⁹ "Mad Bull Leads 15 Miles at Sequa, California," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, June 20, 1927.

number of visiting Karuks who had come out from Happy Camp to see-off their friends on the final leg of the journey.²⁰⁰

But there was no time to lollygag. Mad Bull stopped for some desperately needed rest while Flying Cloud and Melika closed the gap, but he was up and on the road again before he could be caught.

Tuesday, June 21, 1927

“Unless they collapse all three will probably push on until they reach the goal at Grants Pass, Ore.,” declared the *Healdsburg Tribune*, speaking of the two Karuks and sole Zuni who led the pack of runners still competing in the marathon. Collapsing wasn’t out of the question. After the concerted effort to catch Mad Bull in the night, Flying Cloud had started to fade. One news report said he was “suffering from increasing lameness.”²⁰¹ Once the highway jutted inland from Crescent City, it began to climb and descend over the Siskiyou mountains into Oregon. The intensity of the race had already claimed Jamon, Chochee, Rushing Water, and Thunder Cloud.²⁰²

Mad Bull crossed the state line at 10:01am. News from the Kirby Checking Station north of the state border reported that he “continued doggedly on his way towards Grants Pass,” about thirty-two miles of the trek remaining.²⁰³ Through the snaking forest

²⁰⁰ Torliatt, “Indian Marathons,” 8.

²⁰¹ “Mad Bull Crosses State Line at 10 This Morning,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 21, 1927.

²⁰² H. G. Ridgway, “Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927.

²⁰³ “Mad Bull Crosses State Line at 10 This Morning,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 21, 1927.

road, he limped along, trailed by his support car. His collarbones protruded above his neckline, and the paper bib revealing his entrant number “5” was crumpled.²⁰⁴ The hours wore on. Flying Cloud crossed into Oregon, then Melika. The rain began to fall. It grew dark.²⁰⁵

In the darkness, surrounded by the tall trees and raindrops, Boorse pulled the car closer so headlights could illuminate the trail ahead that finally exited the forest and continued into town.²⁰⁶

Wednesday, June 22, 1927: 12:18am

The late hour did not deter thousands of excited fans from showing up for the midnight finish. Mad Bull broke through the tape that had been strung across Sixth Street, under the newly erected banner identifying the spot “Finish Line” and the existing banner that touted the Grants Pass motto for enticing visitors: “It’s the Climate.” “Weary and footsore but nevertheless in good physical condition,” reported the *Madera Tribune*, “Mad Bull, fleet footed Karook Indian, completed the 478 miles marathon from San Francisco.”²⁰⁷ There to greet him, according to the *Healdsburg Tribune*, was the entire city of Grants Pass “augmented by hundreds from thru-out the Rogue River valley and

²⁰⁴ (San Francisco: newsreel, 1927), converted to DVD in 2003, Mendocino County Museum.

²⁰⁵ Torliatt, “Indian Marathons,” 8.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ “Gala Scenes Mark Close Indians Race,” *Madera Tribune*, June 22, 1927.

more than a score of Mad Bull's tribesmen." The streets were loud, "all available noise-making instruments were pressed into service."²⁰⁸

Once Mad Bull crossed the finish line, in rushed the Oregon Cavemen, dressed in their smocks and wigs and brandishing their clubs. They hoisted up the marathon champion and paraded him around while he waved at the crowd and lifted the note for Mayor Fox of Grants Pass that he had carried from San Francisco. He handed it off while he was still lifted, panting, spent, and yet somehow, smiling.²⁰⁹ He had completed the race in seven days, twelve hours, and thirty-four minutes.

The *Madera Tribune* would call it "a scene unprecedented since the signing of the armistice closing the World war."²¹⁰ In addition to the prehistoric thespians, Miss Redwood Empire, also known as Little Fawn, "Indian maid...reigning as queen of the Redwood highway," met Mad Bull and "implanted on his cheek a tribal kiss."²¹¹ Little Fawn, referenced in newspapers as either Klamath, Karuk, Hopi, or Hupa Indian, had served as ribbon cutter for highway bridge ceremonies and now as exotic darling of the Redwoods Indian Marathon, for she was "reputed the prettiest Indian girl in the United States."²¹² Also at the finish line were Mad Bull's parents, Robert Lee and Mary

²⁰⁸ "Mad Bull is Winner in Big Marathon Race," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 22, 1927.

²⁰⁹ (San Francisco: newsreel, 1927), converted to DVD in 2003, Mendocino County Museum.

²¹⁰ "Gala Scenes Mark Close Indians Race," *Madera Tribune*, June 22, 1927.

²¹¹ "Mad Bull Wins in Race to Grants Pass," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927.

²¹² "Hopi" was almost definitely a typing error intended to be "Hupa" (also spelled "Hopa"), a regional tribe in Northwestern California, as Karuk or Klamath would have been. Her actual affiliation remains unclear. "Giant Causeway of 'Perpetual' Timber in Built," *Healdsburg Tribune*, October 16, 1926; "Mad Bull is Winner in Big Marathon Race," *Healdsburg Enterprise*, June 22, 1927; "Mad Bull is Victor in Coast Marathon," *New York Times*, June 23, 1927; "Mad Bull Wins in Race to Grants Pass," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927.

Southard. Mad Bull's father "greeted the conquerer with a stoic handclasp" — a gesture both masculine and stereotypically Indian.²¹³ After a little more hoopla, Mad Bull ducked off to sleep. He would recall in later years that when he crossed the finish line, after running nearly five-hundred miles in just over one week's time, "I could have run another 5 or 6 miles, maybe. Maybe not."²¹⁴

8:40am

About ten miles behind Mad Bull at the time he finished was Flying Cloud, who made it into town "lame but game."²¹⁵ He too met some fans and festivities before heading out of the excitement to take a rest. His second place finish would earn him \$500 prize money and a hunger for a rematch.

Now that it was morning, race promoters roused Mad Bull to come back to the finish line and stage his finish in the daylight; the actual finish had not provided the ideal publicity or photographing conditions. He obliged, this time taking to the street shirtless and trotting through the tape. Again, the Cavemen stood behind the line waving their arms and clubs.²¹⁶

²¹³ "Mad Bull is Winner in Big Marathon Race," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 22, 1927.

²¹⁴ Torliatt, *Golden Memories of the Redwood Empire*, 116.

²¹⁵ "Mad Bull Wins in Race to Grants Pass," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927; "4000 Marathon Fans Cheer as Oregon Cavemen's Karook Runner Wins," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, June 22, 1927.

²¹⁶ Lee Torliatt, "Indian Marathons: 1920's Runners Go for Cash and Glory," *The Journal of the Sonoma County Historical Society* 2 (1999), 9.

Figure 5.2. Mad Bull reenacts his finish. Postcard. Used with permission from Grace Hudson Museum, Ukiah, California.



The excitement continued through the day. At half-past-two in the afternoon, Melika came running into town. For some onlookers, this was the grand finish of the entire race. The *Sausalito News* reported that “Melika caught the popular fancy all along the route and probably had more people ‘pulling’ for him than all the other runners combined,” because he was “pleasant, smiling, and” — yet again — “picturesque.” The crowd “accorded him an ovation fully as great as that given Mad Bull.”²¹⁷ It was a rather spectacular finish. Over the final few miles of the course, a fellow Zuni trotted alongside Melika playing a harmonica “to cheer him up.”²¹⁸ Chochee and Jamon cheered him on

²¹⁷ “Mad Bull Wins Marathon Race to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, June 25, 1927.

²¹⁸ “Mad Bull is Victor in Coast Marathon,” *New York Times*, June 23, 1927.

from a trailing car. Melika, “who depended on his gods to carry him through,” and who had slowed his pace considerably before reaching Grants Pass, burst down the homestretch and through the line into the reception that awaited him.²¹⁹

The Rotary club invited the top three finishers to a luncheon where they were awarded their prize money. Mad Bull totaled a purse of \$1,325 between the promised prize money and the bonuses he picked up from individual cities offering small amounts for passing through first. Mad Bull had led since the second day of the race so he had collected quite a few of these supplementary purses. After lunch, Mad Bull took those earnings and cashed in on a new Chrysler 50 with his name — “Mad Bull,” that is — painted on the side.²²⁰ He immediately took his mother and Little Fawn for a ride downtown.²²¹ He had the cash, the car, and the girl. If there was any lingering doubt about an inherent disconnect between Native people and modern society, this moment should have shattered it. What could be more American?

The Aftermath

Mad Bull and the other runners became local celebrities. Actually, not just local. Major papers from coast to coast reported Mad Bull’s victory and the exciting finishes of Flying Cloud and Melika.²²² Even international papers picked up the story of the

²¹⁹ “Mad Bull Wins Marathon Race to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, June 25, 1927.

²²⁰ H.G. Ridgway. “Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927; *Hull Daily Mail*, Aug. 19, 1927.

²²¹ “Mad Bull has Prosaic Name, He Spends His Dough,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927.

²²² “Mad Bull is Victor in Coast Marathon,” *New York Times*, June 23, 1927; “Mad Bull Captures Marathon,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1927.

Redwood Marathon. The *Hull Daily Mail* in England noted Mad Bull's £265 prize and the £210 he spend on the sedan.²²³ The runners made guest appearances at events and celebrations throughout the Redwood Empire following the race, such as an enormous Fourth of July parade in Eureka, to which Mad Bull drove in his new car.²²⁴

The race organizers were thrilled with the results. H. G. Ridgway gave the *Sausalito News* the "inside story" of the race. Ridgway had served as the event's official referee, and had traversed the course what amounted to several times to do the job. He claimed that, "From the time the race started until it was finished the towns and highways were thronged with people making it difficult for a runner to enter a town, as nothing in the sporting world has ever attracted more attention and interest."²²⁵ Ridgway's statement was a bold one, but other sources seemed to agree about the colossal impact and popularity of the race. The *Marin Herald*, under the subheading "Marin County Gains Much From Race," insisted that "Marin county is now being publicized throughout...the United States, as well as in foreign ports, through the media and as a result of the Redwood Highway Indian Marathon." Between newspaper coverage, photographs, and newsreel footage, Clyde Edmondson, the Manager-Secretary of the REA, claimed that "the story of the Redwood Empire Indian Marathon, the Redwood Highway and the communities along the way, reached not less than 80 millions of people scattered

²²³ *Hull Daily Mail*, August 19, 1927.

²²⁴ McCormick, "1927 race tough test of stamina," 6.

²²⁵ "Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass," *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927.

throughout the country.”²²⁶ The communities along the route were obviously happy just to be put on the map, but the Eureka Chamber of Commerce reported huge monetary earnings as well as some visitors-turned-settlers as a result of the attention on the North Coast.²²⁷

With these not-so-modest goals attained, the REA immediately dreamt up plans for a second annual race to take place exactly one year later. Race administrators used the success of the 1927 race to imagine a larger race with higher stakes for the following year. The prize would be higher, and therefore hopefully entice “entries...from all over the world, the Foreign Trade Club having already entered the Australian Bushmen, and others planning to enter the Yaqui Indians of Mexico and the Igoiotes from the Philippines.” After all, “the eyes of the world were centered on the outcome of the world’s greatest marathon that [had] just been brought to a highly successful and satisfactory conclusion.”²²⁸ In just one year, REA members hoped, the event would go from largely local to decidedly international, giving credence to the name *Redwood Empire*.

The scene at the finish line revealed the numerous contradictions surrounding mainstream society’s perspective of Native culture and people. To be fair, the crowd went wild for the men who had just completed a truly remarkable task. Sports fan or not, no one seemed to deny that such a feat was incredible. Newspapers called it “the greatest

²²⁶ Clyde Edmondson, “Indian Marathon Great Publicity Medium Says Edmondson,” *San Anselmo Herald*, June 24, 1927.

²²⁷ McCormick, “1927 race tough test of stamina,” 6.

²²⁸ “Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927.

long distance race in history,” an event that “[stood] without parallel in the annals of sport as a test of human endurance.”²²⁹ But it also got described as a “[fine] competitive test of endurance, stoicism and physical well-being,” perfect for “[luring] the athletes from Indian tribes.” As much as the crowd cheered and celebrated the runners, it understood and objectified them according to destructive stereotypes.

The careful construction of the image of the racers in the newspapers — which excluded their actual voices — worked to reinforce existing perceptions of Native men and women even if the event had a distinctly modern edge to it. While the race offered visibility and even genuine support for Native individuals, it did not do the work of rewriting what constituted essential Indianness in the minds and imaginations of non-Native Americans. In reenforcing stereotypical notions of Native culture and people, the narrators of the marathon also narrated the processes of ongoing colonialism at work on the national scale and in the microcosm of the Redwood Empire.

“Mad Bull” was not the only new title John Southard earned from his performance. As soon as he crossed the finish line, or perhaps long before, journalists dreamed up the images that best encapsulated the altogether normal man with the extraordinary running talent. Most of these titles were intended to be friendly: “champion runner of the red men,” “the Bull,” “the Flying Karook.”²³⁰ But other names did not

²²⁹ “Mad Bull is Winner in Big Marathon Race,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 22, 1927; “Mad Bull Wins Marathon Race to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, June 25, 1927.

²³⁰ “Mad Bull is Winner in Big Marathon Race,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 22, 1927; “Mad Bull Wins in Race to Grants Pass,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, June 23, 1927.

insinuate the image of a great champion. The *Healdsburg Enterprise*, in addition to some complementary nicknames, called Mad Bull “the sturdy little Indian from Happy Camp.”²³¹ This type of polite condescension was typical. Since assimilationists first launched their programs, they had regarded Native people along paternalistic lines. This carried over into sports. Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School, demanded that his pupil athletes be proper amateur athletes — the “pure” brand of sportsman, because that was what was best for them. The same was true of Carlisle football and track coach “Pop” Warner.²³² Of course, government induced paternalism was a huge problem for all Native people across the country in the way that it assumed that what was best for Native communities should be determined by a federal government with a historic aversion to Native culture and a flair for violent racism even as it championed assimilation. The image of “children of the forest” in political rhetoric and literature fueled the myths about Indianness that assumed Native people to be fundamentally incompatible with modern society. To be fair, Mad Bull was a relatively small man, especially after the weight loss that the calorie burning of the constant running had induced. But given the long line of paternalism towards Native people, the image of a “sturdy little Indian” carried the weight of a stereotype.

The infantilizing stereotype of smallness was counteracted by another prevailing stereotype insinuating a characteristic manliness. The “stoic” Indian had certainly become a trope by the 1920s, especially given the popularity of Indian portraits taken by the

²³¹ “Mad Bull Wins in Race to Grants Pass,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, June 23, 1927.

²³² Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do*, 18.

photographer Edward Curtis after the turn of the century.²³³ Perhaps running does require some degree of stoicism: it is a painful endeavor that, in the case of long-distance running, lasts quite a while. Runners would wastefully expend their precious energy giving into emotions other than determination and self-discipline if their goal is to go far and keep up a good pace. But the announcement of Mad Bull's stoicism came in response to his post-finish handshake with his father. The nod to stoicism in Mad Bull and Robert Lee Southard existed within a context of the perceived and imagined universal stoicism of Native people that denied them basic elements of humanity like humor and emotion.

But the most derogatory name reserved for the champion of the 480-mile footrace was also the most obvious: "an Indian." The *Healdsburg Tribune* published an article entitled "Mad Bull Has Prosaic Name, He Spends His Dough," written in response to Mad Bull's purchase of the Chrysler. The car was an important foil for Mad Bull's Indianness. "Although the true name Of Mad Bull... is John Wesley Southard, residents of this city are today ready to admit that Mad Bull is an Indian with Indian ideas." The same article mentions that the Zuni racers took their second-ever train ride back to New Mexico.²³⁴ In suggesting that Mad Bull's purchase was in some way nonsensical and in referencing the Zunis' lack of exposure to trains, the article casually racialized Native people as incompatible with modern technology at some level. Suggesting that the purchase of the care for a good chunk of the prize money was "mad," the newspaper revealed the assumption that Native people were careless money spenders who weren't

²³³ Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Wild Men: Ishi and Kroeber in the Wilderness of Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²³⁴ "Mad Bull Has Prosaic Name, He Spends His Dough," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927.

properly participating in America's consumer culture. The subtitle of the article even more aggressively poked fun at the victor: "First Prize Transferred to Auto Dealer — 'No Walkee.'" Again, the insinuation that a healthy hunk of cash was immediately "transferred" depicted Mad Bull as a careless spender, not to mention the imitation of broken English to frame him as a definite outsider to dominant, English-speaking society. Automobiles, symbols of modernity, were inherently un-Indian, given the way that dominant society imagined Indianness. Yet the act of buying a car, so long as it seemed reckless and wasteful, could be perfectly Indian in the eyes of modern society.

Historian Philip Deloria has explored the relationship between the figure of the Indian, actual Native people, and automobiles and highlighted the contradictions therein. Since non-Natives continued to view Native Americans as antimodern throughout the twentieth century, there remained a tension in the union of Indians and cars. For some observers, Native drivers and car owners may have been proof of progress as told by technology. For example, some missionaries in the early twentieth century viewed Indian use of household appliances and other forms of technology as proof of assimilation. But others exhibited the sentiment observable in the *Tribune* article: that car-buying was, for a Native person, silly and contradictory, given his or her socioeconomic and racialized cultural status.²³⁵

Yet the race promoters had structured the entire Redwood Marathon around the union of cars and Native Americans. For the entire stretch of the Redwood Highway, they had traveled side by side, interacting. The Native runners were there to promote

²³⁵ Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 144.

automobile tourism; their support teams traveled close by in sedans, and drove them into towns and back to the spots where they exited the highway. But the narrative of the race centered on Indian running, not on driving, and running was a simple, non-technological method of travel suited for a race of man that for centuries grew up in the woods or the desert, running down food to hunt or delivering messages between vast networks of villages. Indians and cars emerged as a problematic union, addressed with derogatory humor, only when Mad Bull became the car owner and the highway was no longer under the imagined jurisdiction of white, middle- or upper-class automobile enthusiasts.

Even with his shiny Chrysler that read “Mad Bull” along the side, the runner returned to a working-class life, picking hops near Santa Rosa alongside Flying Cloud. Once a champion always a champion, Mad Bull reportedly won a hop picking contest three months after the marathon, for which he “was decorated with a hop crown as champion picker of the county.”²³⁶ As historian William J. Bauer Jr. revealed, the hops industry “[gave] everybody a job” in and around Mendocino County — jobs with uncompetitive wages and uncomfortable working conditions.²³⁷ Papers did not seem to comment on Mad Bull’s new profession, but it’s unlikely that the public would have thought fancy cars and fieldwork were compatible aspects of the same life.

It had always been exciting for white audiences to imagine Indians like the Tarahumara coming out of caves for races, or the Zunis bringing their sandaled feet

²³⁶ “Mad Bull is Champion Hop Picker at Peterson’s,” *Healdsburg Enterprise*, September 22, 1927.

²³⁷ William J. Bauer Jr., *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California’s Round Valley Reservation 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 89-90.

outside of the desert, or the Karuks coming down from the mountains and into the cities. Young, working class men coming out of poverty for a moment in the spotlight didn't have the same appeal. Indeed, there were ongoing conversations in newspapers about the "poor" and "terrible" conditions of Indian reservations and communities in the Redwood Empire. The Alexander Valley in Sonoma County was home to several reservations criticized for their poverty. The *Healdsburg Enterprise* alluded to "wood cutting and such other day labor as can be secured" that kept the few families alive.²³⁸ When the state proposed a new and improved reservation in the Alexander Valley the next month, the idea was "not a popular thing with the residents of that district." Voters at the proposal meeting in the valley offered a unanimous voice against the project.²³⁹ Lower-class living conditions did not fuel interest in or acknowledgement of Native communities and people, by and large. An award for quick hop picking may have been a quaint celebration of one of the region's leading industries, but the working class did not generally garner the favor of middle- or upper-class citizens.

Instead, the stereotypes that mythologized Native people outside of the markers of modern society intrigued non-Native observers. For example, the celebration of Little Fawn revealed the open exoticism with which mainstream society continued to regard Native Americans and also the gendered lens through which mainstream society celebrated quintessential female Native American figures. A recurring favorite stock character in the imagined narrative of Indian people was the Indian Princess, probably

²³⁸ "Indian Reservations in Terrible Condition," *Healdsburg Enterprise*, February 25, 1926.

²³⁹ "Indians Are Not To Be Welcomed," *The Healdsburg Semi Weekly Sotoyome Scimitar*, March 30, 1926.

originating with the Pocahontas story.²⁴⁰ Young and beautiful (she became the object of white men's desires), Pocahontas saved white colonists from Indian savagery. Many Native women, historical or literary, served the same rhetorical purposes, even if they weren't princesses, per se. Sacagawea is the obvious example, famous for guiding Lewis and Clark through potentially hostile native territory. The best example specific to the Pacific Northwest might be the woman "Winema" who saved the life of a white commissioner during the Modoc War in the early 1870s.²⁴¹ These female figures seemed, in the way their stories were told, to exist more for male settlers and the expansion of white society than for their own communities, and definitely not for the men in their own communities — they even married white men.²⁴² Little Fawn wasn't credited with saving any lives at ribbon cutting ceremonies or race finish lines, but she was a character created by the REA to be beautiful and alluring. Her title, "Miss Redwood Empire," revealed the degree of beauty pageantry constructing her image. She was the twentieth-century reincarnation of the Pocahontas figure.

The figure of the protective, safe, desirable Indian Princess also relates to what historian Vine Deloria called the "Indian-grandmother complex:" white people claiming to have an Indian, usually Cherokee, grandmother — who was apparently often a

²⁴⁰ See Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex"; Heike Paul, *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014), 118.

²⁴¹ Historian Boyd Cothran had studied the figure of Winema closely to trace the way she became an iconic, sexualized familiar figure following the Modoc War, symbolizing the ideal Native woman figure: a savior of settler men. See Boyd Cothran, *Remembering the Modoc War: Redemptive Violence and the Making of American Innocence* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 101.

²⁴² Pocahontas' marriage to John Rolfe is well-known, even if often misrepresented; Sacagawea reportedly married Toussaint Charbonneau, French explorer; Winema (actual name: Toby Riddle) married Frank Riddle, a white settler.

princess as well. Actually, according to Deloria, in the colonial era, settlers reconfigured just about all female Indians as princesses.²⁴³ Perhaps it was a better story than whitewashed colonial ancestry. Perhaps it bore cultural significance for those trying to be genuinely American. In any event, because Little Fawn was “Miss Redwood Empire,” and stood as a figure that was somehow meant to embody the essence of that place, anyone in the region could claim Little Fawn as a symbol of their own identity. In this way she also embodied the logic of the Indian-grandmother complex, but instead of motherliness, her draw was sex appeal.

As a modern Indian princess and emblem of a regional identity, Little Fawn carried the significance of the many Indian princesses and grandmothers before her, but she also updated the stereotype to appeal to a 1920s audience. White audiences did not understand her femininity to be indigenous like the femininity that had been altogether dismissed in relation to the Tarahumara marathon runners. Californians across the Redwood Empire celebrated Little Fawn for her charm and beauty, which incidentally included a bobbed haircut and “Indian” attire with decidedly flapper influences. The beaded headband and feather combination was a perfect mix of the sexy flapper figure and the archetypal movie Indian, whose headband held long, dark wigs on the heads of

²⁴³ Actually, beyond colonial narratives reconfiguring female Indians to be princesses, Deloria suggests that people hundreds of years later continue to go a step further and reconfigure all Indian relatives as women. “Evidently,” he says, “Most tribes were entirely female for the first three hundred years of white occupation.” Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 11.

white actors.²⁴⁴ Such an image satisfied a balance between interest in the foreign and the exotic and familiarity with popular culture and modern femininity.

Figure 5.3. Little Fawn in her role as Miss Redwood Empire, 1926. Newspaper photograph. Used with permission from publisher.



And so the Indian men of the marathon were stoic “braves” yet didn’t understand modern consumer responsibilities and the one maiden was reduced to being fair, royal, and delivering sweet kisses. The newspapers presented versions of archetypical characters rather than modern humans in all their complexity and boredom. The whole race could be viewed through a gendered lens that told the story in terms of prevailing societal mores: running was a man’s sport and running to a man’s side was a woman’s.

²⁴⁴ Neil Diamond, Catherine Bainbridge, and Jeremiah Hayes, *Reel Injun: On The Trail of the Hollywood Indian* (New York: Rezolution Pictures Inc., 2010).

These stereotypes also reveal that the Redwood Indian Marathon should also be regarded as an act of empire. The myths of the noble savage, the stoic Indian, and the Indian Princess all categorize Native Americans into tropes invented by a settler colonial state. Indeed, rhetoric in the aftermath of the race spoke to the level of empire. The aspirations to draw racers from all over the colonized world worked to reinforce the global network of colonialism and establish the Redwood *Empire* (no subtlety there) as the nucleus in which colonized people should gather and compete before an Anglo-American audience. More than one newspaper used the image of “the eyes of the world” fixed on the Redwood Empire to explain the race’s publicity and the newfound external interest in the region.²⁴⁵ Instead of building an industry to extract the land’s resources, the Redwood Empire sought to use the landscape to entice settlers to pour in.

The colonial lens is appropriate to examine the relationship between this microcosmic empire and the indigenous people it encapsulated as well. As much as the runners asserted cultural capital in collectively conquering a feat so far unachieved by white athletes, they had to rely on their actions to speak for them, and those actions were continuously interpreted through colonial stereotypes, like the ones discussed above. As much newspaper coverage as there was to show for the build up to the week-long event, the race itself, and its aftermath, there were almost no efforts to hear from the participants themselves — even Mad Bull, who, by the way, definitely spoke English.

Towards the end of the race, an article in the *Healdsburg Tribune* articulated some of the rivalries between racers in the words of the athletes, albeit brief and nearly

²⁴⁵ “Redwood Marathon,” *Sausalito News*, June 25, 1927; “Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass,” *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927.

meaningless. Chochee, shortly before he was forced to quit, allegedly vowed to “go Eureka damn quick.” Mad Bull’s response: “nothing doing.” The exchange made the sub-headline.²⁴⁶ This lack of statements wasn’t a simple matter of not being able to elicit quotes from busy, exhausted runners. Even after the race, Mad Bull hardly seems to have commented on his experience, and the press presented him as a grown man all but incapable of human speech. One paper quoted him saying he wanted to “maybe get married” rather than continue running marathons. It was the same article that criticized Mad Bull’s spending and described his motivation for buying the car with the “No Walkee” sub-headline, something he almost definitely did not say but that made it into quotation marks nonetheless.²⁴⁷ The other paper to quote Mad Bull after the finish line was the *Daily Courier* in Grants Pass that reported, “Mad Bull’s speech was considerably shorter than Lincoln’s Gettysburg address. He said ‘thank you’, and that was a greater effort for this modest Karook than negotiating miles.”²⁴⁸ Even if Mad Bull was a relatively quiet man (and local historians have seemed to maintain that he was), papers presented his introverted personality as a product of his race. He wasn’t just a humble man; he was a “modest Karook.” Such imagery dovetails with the image of him being a “little Indian,” quiet and “stoic.” By not granting Mad Bull a personality, he remained a character that did one thing: ran. In fact, the running was reportedly more natural for him

²⁴⁶ “‘Mad Bull’ Travels Over 32 Miles in 12 Hours, Still Leads Redwood Marathon,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 18, 1927.

²⁴⁷ “Mad Bull Has Prosaic Name, He Spends His Dough,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 23, 1927.

²⁴⁸ “4000 Marathon Fans Cheer as Oregon Cavemen’s Karook Runner Wins,” *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, June 22, 1927.

than speaking. The media could determine Mad Bull's persona for its own desired imagery.

This is all not to say that the event was wholly negative, exploitive, and controlled by the Anglo promoters and media. The event was designed to be positive, communal, and novel. Even if white spectators' perceptions of the athletes they watched were misinformed by enduring stereotypes, people were excited about and kind towards the men they watched. Years after the race, Mad Bull recalled a spectator in Garberville, which he would have reached at the end of his fourth day, who ran to the curb and gave him an envelope containing three ten-dollar bills.²⁴⁹ Who knows what motivated that onlooker to give away the cash? It could have been anything from pity to solidarity to fandom, but Mad Bull was evidently moved by the gesture, which brought together athlete and fan.

In every town, sirens ushered people onto the streets to voice their support, and they did cheer heartily rather than simply gawk. These moments were not the same as the visits to human zoos at World's Fairs, some of which contained small venues that rendered the subjects largely passive and obviously objectified. The race also wasn't quite like spectating a Carlisle football game against American university teams to determine head-to-head which race was better at America's manliest sport.²⁵⁰ Karuks showed up to participate in the fandom. Counties identified with the runners they

²⁴⁹ "Official Referee Tells Inside Story of Historic Marathon to Grants Pass," *Sausalito News*, July 2, 1927; Torliatt, *Golden Memories of the Redwood Empire*, 116; Torliatt, "Indian Marathons," 8.

²⁵⁰ The best example of this dynamic was the November, 1907 match between the best college football team in the country, the University of Chicago Maroons, and Carlisle Indian School. Carlisle decisively defeated the University of Chicago in Chicago.

sponsored no matter the outcome of the race. The event was not the bridging of two cultures into some utopian society, but it provided space for Native protagonists to dominate a competition that outdid Anglos in the same arena. Basically, the event had been gilded by an air of positivity between California Natives and the Anglo settler population — an image that would have been all but impossible to construct a half-century beforehand. If the Redwood Empire was to expand, it would have to do so through positive images of scenic beauty and social inclusion, rather than violent conquest.

But underneath the problematic progressiveness was a dormant negativity that ultimately could not allow Indians to excel without a concerted effort to halt their progress. The second annual race would host much of the same cast, travel the same route, and entice a lot of the same reactions, but it also revealed racial tension that was too deep to be overcome by local sentiment and an entertainment factor. The stereotypes and isolated incidents of unfriendliness in 1927 were indicative of a larger problem that rested at the heart of settler colonialism: blatant racism. If a desire to boost tourism had been the main motivating factor in the trajectory of the race and the press coverage of it, one could argue that the 1928 race started where the first one had left off. But the rematch quickly became much more emblematic of the ongoing prejudice white society had toward Native Americans.

As the banner said, it was the climate.

CHAPTER VI

THE REMATCH: SPORT VS. SPECTACLE

1928: Preparation

The REA carried through with its ambitions to up the ante for a second race. The *San Bernardino County Sun* reported in March that the chairman of the planning committee had mailed entry blanks “to every Indian reservation in the United States and to Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada.” That being said, the REA apparently expected about forty entrants.²⁵¹

Close to that many signed up. A few withdrew just before the start, like the famous “Hopi threat from the mesas of Arizona,” Nicolas Quonawahu, who had set an American record in the marathon in 1927 in New York and was well-known throughout the country as a top-tier athlete.²⁵² Even without Quonawahu, though, there were enough talented Native runners to capture popular interest.

For those planning to go through with the race, the REA invited them to “put the finishing touches on their training in San Francisco” and “sleep in wigwams” in “an Indian village, complete in every detail...in San Francisco Civil Center on June 7th, one week before the start of the Redwood Empire Indian Marathon.”²⁵³ Indeed, the 1928 race seemed to reveal that the REA had made an even greater effort to conflate and appropriate diverse indigenous cultures and temporality and unabashedly advertise these

²⁵¹ “Entry Blanks Mailed For Redwood Indian \$10,000 Marathon,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, March 22, 1928.

²⁵² “Quonawahu, Hopi, Is Out of Marathon Race,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 12, 1928.

²⁵³ “Marathon Runners to Sleep in Wigwams,” *Marin Herald*, May 11, 1928.

efforts as inclusive and progressive. But not everyone saw the marathon's outward celebration of Indian culture, however misguided, as a worthy agenda. Some were even willing to stage some type of protest.

The race started exactly one year after the first had: Flag Day, June 14, in San Francisco. The gun went off at 10:20am and thirty competitors bolted from City Hall to the ferry. At the last minute, the Shell Company of California had entered a runner. This particular competitor would be complying with all the rules but he wouldn't be competing for the cash prizes so that he could maintain his amateur status. Apparently, he had already had some success as an athlete "in a number of sports and once was an aviator."²⁵⁴ But his identity was intentionally shrouded in mystery, aside from one crucial factor.

He was white.

This contestant, who would be running for the oil company under the name "Paleface Yellowred," probably an allusion to Shell's logo. This runner would have access to a caravan containing "a shower bath, ice chest, bunks and lockers" while other runners had to be driven into towns to find a place to sleep and eat. His challenge wasn't designed to be a fair contest, but it was nonetheless staged as a contest "to match the stamina of the Caucasian with that of the Indian."²⁵⁵

The newspapers pondered the matchup with excitement. Paleface Yellowred showed up in headlines and pictures. Ultimately, though, he'd fail the test. Even with his

²⁵⁴ "Shell Company Enters Runner In Marathon," *Santa Cruz Evening News*, June 15, 1928.

²⁵⁵ "29 Indians, 1 White Man Stat In 482-Mile Coast Marathon," *New York Times*, June 15, 1928.

“scientific training” and expert coaching staff, he was never the runner to watch, especially because all of the podium finishers from the year before — Mad Bull, Flying Cloud, and Melika — were again in the lineup, but this time with almost triple the competition.

1928: The Race

None of the returning contenders took the lead sport for the early stretch of the race. Hopi entrants Arthur Pohnuquaptewa and Dan Comahungnioma took the lead by the time the field passed through Petaluma. Flying Cloud lurked in fifth, and Mad Bull was even further back.²⁵⁶

Later in the day, four Zunis crept up and took over the lead, running ahead of the pace set the previous year by Mad Bull. Flying Cloud and Mad Bull moved up as well, trotting along in fifth and sixth. Pohnuquaptewa and Comahungnioma were right behind them, with returning crowd favorite Melika and Chochee, back for redemption, trailing.²⁵⁷

Flying Cloud took over the lead by the time he approached Ukiah in the early evening of June fifteenth. He was twelve hours ahead of the previous years’ pace, and three hours ahead of second place. Mad Bull’s day hadn’t been so fruitful. The defending champion had been forced to stop and rest when he started suffering severe chafing on his inner thighs. He reentered at night, but the pain didn’t go away. Later, the reports would

²⁵⁶ “Hopi Indian Leads Coast Marathon: Big Race to Grants Pass Starts,” *The Klamath News*, June 15, 1928.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

reveal that Mad Bull had likely been sabotaged. The chafing was a result of foul play. An unknown adversary had gotten ahold of the runner's shorts and dumped some glass shards over them.²⁵⁸ Eventually, Mad Bull pulled out from the race, unable to attempt a repeat victory.

But it would have been difficult to catch Flying Cloud. Even with a bum knee that flared up after reaching Eureka, he avoided getting caught and "flashed across the tape" at the finish line at 10:30am on June 21, setting a new course record of 167 hours and 51 minutes, nine minutes under seven days.²⁵⁹ Little Fawn was again there to greet the winner with a kiss.²⁶⁰ Melika arrived at 6:57pm that night for second place, and "Chief Ukiah" took third just after midnight.

Flying Cloud won \$5,000 for his effort, money he said he wanted to put towards getting an education. Melika vowed to put his \$2,500 towards an automobile and a herd of sheep.²⁶¹ Despite what had happened to Mad Bull, the marathon committee of the REA saw no reason to not have a third go-around in 1929.

The 1927 race had proven that Native Americans were able to accomplish athletic feats of endurance beyond what white Americans were even attempting. It also proved that there was interest and money in staging long running races and displaying Indianness in Northern California, an area that had once aimed to eradicate it. By one viewpoint, this

²⁵⁸ "Legends' Marathons," *Games of Skill, Power and Chance in Native California* (August 14-November 7, 2004), The Grace Hudson Museum, Ukiah, CA.

²⁵⁹ "Flying Cloud Wins Grants Pass Race," *Daily Capital Journal*, June 21, 1928; "Flying Cloud Winner Indian Marathon Race," *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 22, 1928.

²⁶⁰ "Flying Cloud Wins Indian Marathon," *The Times Recorder*, June 22, 1928.

²⁶¹ McCormick, "1927 race tough test of stamina," 7; Torliatt, "1920's Runners Go for Cash and Glory," 9.

was all progressive towards the ends of civil rights. Indians participated in intercultural, modern events that generated revenue; they were therefore useful citizens of the U.S. in the eyes of businessmen. They provided the physical capabilities to perform extreme sporting events and compete in athletics at a high level, both increasing U.S. chances in international competition and adding an air of highly anticipated exoticism to already popular live entertainment. Plus, for Natives themselves, there was economic opportunity and social capital in an undertaking that had been engrained in Native cultures for centuries. Adoring fans, Native protagonists; the story could be sold as such.

But the attention paid to Native athletes, and especially the celebration of their accomplishment, talent, and perhaps natural ability the year before also resurrected anxieties over non-white athleticism which were expressed in 1928. White society within and beyond California grappled with the implications of these Indian celebrities and their accomplishments. The perceived divide between Native culture and modern culture still reigned in the minds of many, and the fact that some of these men had proven themselves to be fine athletes and fair competitors, not to mention prime examples of desired masculinity and manhood, fueled rather than extinguished prejudice towards Native people.

There were isolated hints in 1927 that there was a dark side to spectatorship that was in line with the legacy of settler colonialism, but the race was, overall, an experiment in granting visibility to Native people that was allowed to play out in real time. In 1928, there was time to prepare, whether that meant getting excited for more athletic drama or plotting attempts to direct public notions away from ideas about racial superiority in

running, unless those notions upheld that whiteness was next to greatness. There are several possible reasons for the heightened anxiety and interference. The race had, perhaps, lost some of its novelty after its debut. There was no longer a question of whether or not a feat could be accomplished. It could — much quicker than anyone initially expected, and that was with no experience of the course or the atmosphere of such an event. Could an even faster performance close the case on racial superiority in running? And yet racial superiority in athletics may not have been on the minds of race promoters, who still hoped to increase tourism and settlement in the Redwood Empire. The various agendas regarding the second Redwood Indian Marathon, as well as the developing spectator culture of professional sporting events contributed to a race that was more complex, confrontational, and altogether confusing than the inaugural race.

The 1928 race was a bigger event than what had previously taken place, and the stakes were higher with more entrants and greater prizes. Ditching their eccentric coach and his torturous training methods, Mad Bull and Flying Cloud headed north to the Eugene, Oregon, before the race to train with the legendary track and field coach, Bill Hayward, who had been on the Olympic coaching staff since 1908. Both racers had vested interests in winning the second race. Mad Bull would be fighting to defend his title, and Flying Cloud would be making an even more impassioned effort to capture the

crown he narrowly missed the year before. The men trained on the track at the University of Oregon, developing speed to supplement their lung capacity and endurance.²⁶²

Figure 6.1. Mad Bull, Flying Cloud, and Bill Hayward. Newspaper photograph in *The Eugene Guard*, May 11, 1928. Used with permission from publisher.



But even with the high-caliber preparation of the top returning racers, and the fact that there was a guaranteed fan-base in place from the year before, the press was fighting a battle to legitimize the 1928 Redwood Marathon as a dignified athletic contest and not a mere spectacle. As the Associated Press reported, the event was “intended to be a straight foot race with such things as elapsed time and control stations...Another factor automatically barring many of the pseudo marathoners who toed the starting mark last

²⁶² “‘Heap Big Injuns’ Who Will Compete in Redwood Empire Indian Marathon,” *San Anselmo Herald*, May 18, 1928.

year is the 100 [*sic.*] entrance fee. Only the better class of Indian athlete will compete, making the contest more of a sporting event.”²⁶³ Part of the reason for this articulated effort to define the event within the realm of dignified athleticism and keep out contestants that wouldn’t be in serious contention for a high final standing was because the race’s returning promotor, a man named C. C. “Cash and Carry” Pyle, had recently dreamed up and promoted a scheme that outraged fans of pure American sport. If his name was going to be attached to the Redwood Marathon, the REA and anyone else hoping to benefit from its publicity had some damage control to do first. Step one was maintaining a serious field of competitors who were interested in running day-in and day-out. Mr. Pyle hadn’t taken this precaution when organizing his “First Annual International Trans-continental Foot Race.”

With the success of the 1927 Redwood Marathon came a healthy dosage of zeal for the Redwood Empire and the staff that had promoted the race. Chief among promoters was Pyle, who would eventually be remembered as one of the first sports agents in United States history. Pyle understood the value of athletics alongside the value of entertainment, and merged the two to sell sports as spectacles. Things had gone according to plan with the Redwood Marathon, so Pyle carried through with plans for an even longer, even more spectacular event that would engage runners and fans of running from coast to coast. This project became know as the “Bunion Derby,” a footrace from Los Angeles to New York City.

²⁶³ “30 Indians Await Signal To Start Marathon From ‘Frisco to Grants Pass,” *Roseburg News-Review*, June 13, 1928.

Men came from every corner of the country and beyond (for Pyle had sent advertisements abroad) with wide-ranging ideas about what this race represented. Foreign entrants signed up to reenter the contest for racial dominance. Some surely stood a good chance of winning — Arthur Newton of South Africa held numerous world records at ultra-distances. A troupe of talented Finnish runners also entered, including the brother of three-time Olympic gold medalist Hannes Kolehmainen. Journalists proclaimed that the United States' best shot at the title was Phillip Granville, a “Jamaican Indian” race walker.²⁶⁴ Even if Granville could pull off the victory for the U.S., it would be a bad day for white supremacy indeed. Nicolas Quonawahu, the renowned Hopi runner and American record holder for the marathon, also entered.

But the field was not built from stars alone. Pyle had intentionally offered the opportunity to race, as well as food and lodging to any men willing to pay \$125 to run 3,400 miles. The prize was \$25,000. Given those parameters, a few dozen hardy immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans in low-paying jobs decided to take up the challenge and run for the money.²⁶⁵

Other entrants seemed to roll in off the streets wearing anything from standard track uniforms to business suits. Spectacle surely motivated the more unorthodox approaches, though at least most of the men must have bought into the scheme in the

²⁶⁴ Charles B. Kastner, *Bunion Derby: The 1928 Footrace Across America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 16.

²⁶⁵ Kastner, *Bunion Derby*, 18-19.

hopes of winning the prize. Even a top-ten finish would earn cash: Pyle promised an exorbitant total of \$48,500 for prize giveaways.²⁶⁶

On March 4, 1928, at 3:04pm, the starter detonated a small bomb to begin the race. That dramatic, bombastic (so to speak) start served as a decent metaphor for what followed.²⁶⁷ Order went to the wayside quickly. The field of almost 200 runners took off together, rather than in waves as planned, and crowded the Ascot Speedway in Los Angeles. Newsmen and journalists ran alongside them, scrambling to keep up in the thick mud, courtesy of heavy rainstorms the night before. The race was structured so that a predetermined distance would be covered each day, and the winner would be the man whose total running time was fastest. Most made it through the first day. Miserable, wet weather and steep terrain on days two and three thinned the field. Unfortunately, by the fourth night of the race, in the heat of the Mojave, Kolehmainen was “disabled by swollen arches” and Quonawahu, after leading the pack, “was seized by cramps” and forced to start walking.²⁶⁸ Neither man would finish. And they weren’t the only top contenders to drop out. In fact, a month later, the race had almost completely dissolved. One need only look at the string of headlines running in the *New York Times*: “3 Runners Strike in Distance Derby: Erickson, Lossman and Fegar Say They Are Through Unless Offered Daily Prize Money.” Worse yet: “ANOTHER HIT BY AN AUTO.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ “55 Reach Goal Here in Coast Marathon,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1928.

²⁶⁷ Geoff Williams, “A Run for the Money,” *Runner’s World* 42 (August 2007): 94-100, 123.

²⁶⁸ Kolehmainen Quits In Run From Coast,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1928.

²⁶⁹ “3 Runners Strike in Distance Derby,” *New York Times*, April 15, 1928.

The agreed upon villain behind the chaos was C. C. Pyle, and as rumors of a shortage of funds for the top finishers began circulating, Pyle found himself in deeper and deeper trouble. He had allegedly based his financial numbers off of “assessments” of the towns the race would pass through, but it was up to the local chambers of commerce to decide whether or not to buy in once the race got going. As the race floundered, so did sponsorship.²⁷⁰ But the problems with Pyle went beyond money. By the end of the race, the man had seemingly lost touch with humanity, yelling at the remaining competitors and unmoved by their suffering. It wasn’t even just American journalists slamming him, either. “Runners on the Verge of Mutiny,” a paper out of Bristol read on May 25. The article borrowed a phrase that had shown up recently in the *New York Sun* to sum up the race— “The flop of the century.”²⁷¹ The *New York Times* reported on May 27, the last day of the competition, that “Pyle was angry at the apathy which his athletes showed at the end of their long migration. Some trotted, some limped, some walked as on eggshells...” In response, Pyle shouted at them.²⁷² By the time the enduring troupe of fifty-five runners made it to New York, most people had stopped caring about the whole event.²⁷³ Even with the excitement of the action at the finish line, the tone remained dismissive: “If all goes well the quaint caravan that started in far off California...will trek into Madison Square Garden this evening and, having scampered all the way across the country, will gallop ten extra miles around the Garden for no good reason at all, which is quite in

²⁷⁰ John Kieran, “Sports of the Times,” *New York Times*, May 26, 1928.

²⁷¹ “American Bunion Derby,” *Western Daily Press*, May 25, 1928. BNA.

²⁷² “55 Reach Goal Here in Coast Marathon,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1928.

²⁷³ “Pyle Pays Runners; Only 500 Look On,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1928.

keeping with the spirit of the whole affair.”²⁷⁴ By that point there was no room for redemption. Pyle had missed the mark on his second ultramarathon.

In some ways, though, the race across America had looked similar to the Redwood Marathon that had helped inspire it. For one, the runners raced via Route 66, and the whole race had been designed to highlight that road as a new trek for travelers and tourists. But there was an even more striking resemblance: both races had a Native victor.

Among the working-class hopefuls to enter the race was Andy Payne, a twenty-year-old struggling farm boy from northeastern Oklahoma. Andy and his six siblings were one-eighth Cherokee Indian. The race had revealed some important racial dynamics in the many pockets of the United States. Andy Payne was novel for his Indianness — the papers often remarked that he belonged to a Native nation — yet coverage didn’t seem to harp on his ancestry. He hadn’t grown up on a reservation or attended boarding school. A hint of defensiveness over the politics of racial athleticism came in a *New York Times* editorial following the race: “Breeding and ancestry hasn’t got a thing to do with this boy Andy Payne.”²⁷⁵ This statement could have been a compliment: Andy Payne won the race of his own volition, not because Natives magically possessed some natural advantage. Or, it could have been slightly less complimentary: Indians usually aren’t good runners. In fact, despite the victory of the young Cherokee, the race had actually given way to doubts about Indian running endurance in response to other Native competitors dropping out,

²⁷⁴ John Kieran, “Sports of the Times,” *New York Times*, May 26, 1928.

²⁷⁵ Will Rogers, “Will Rogers Gives Advice To Bunion Derby Winner,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1928.

never mind that by race's end, three-quarters of the competitors had retired early for reasons ranging from toothache to nervous breakdowns.²⁷⁶ Press before the Redwood Marathon declared that the race would respond to "insinuations growing out of the recent cross country crawl that Indians cannot stand the pace of long distance running."²⁷⁷

In any case, as Payne had started to pull ahead, it became clear that although his Indianness might be a problem for white supremacy, it wasn't as big of a problem as blackness was. The race progressed through towns and states wherein segregation laws prevented the race's African American participants from being able to easily find and pay for a place to stay overnight if they didn't want to stay in the traveling dirty bunk tents Pyle was providing. White supremacist Americans and Klansmen routinely terrorized African American runner Ed Gardner and his black coach as Gardner continued to remain in high standing throughout the race, threatening to burn cars and pointing shotguns. The two men routinely weighed the worth of enduring threats of violence in places like Texas, where segregation was strictly enforced.²⁷⁸ But Gardner was too tough to be beaten down, and he and his fellow black racers found support and solidarity from the black community shortly after leaving Texas.²⁷⁹ His ultimate success as the eighth-place finisher sent a message about the endurance of black athletes, over thousands of miles and through an atmosphere thick with oppression and violence.

²⁷⁶ Gotaas, *Running: A Global History*, 125.

²⁷⁷ "Runners Must Travel 480 Miles in 10 Days to Get \$10,000 Reward," *Bismarck Tribune*, June 12, 1928.

²⁷⁸ Kastner, *Bunion Derby*, 84-86.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 89, 92.

Payne had been spared such harshness, perhaps because he was at least one rung up from the bottom in the racial hierarchy. In line with the hometown hero paradox discussed in Chapter Three, Oklahomans went wild for their star and turned out just to catch a glimpse of him.²⁸⁰ But Oklahoma is far from New York: Payne might have been lucky that by race's end, no one seemed to care what happened. The young man wanted only to pay off a mortgage and get married, fair enough American values that potentially critical observers could get behind.²⁸¹

Fresh off of that messy and ill-managed contest, those with stakes in the success of the Redwoods race rushed to distinguish the imminent race with the "late and unlamented trans-continental contest" that had just transpired.²⁸² The Redwood Highway would not play host to such "hippodrome features," instead favoring "strict rules."²⁸³ So aside from the gloating white supremacist running for Shell Gasoline and a race promoter who America collectively hated, the 1928 race proceeded much the same way the previous one had. Runners made their slow and steady ways north from San Francisco, running through tall forests and into busy towns, collecting prize money along the way. Again, cars trailed the runners, sporting banners in support of their guiding racer.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 87-97.

²⁸¹ John Kieran, "Sports of the Times," *New York Times*, May 26, 1928.

²⁸² "30 Indians Await Signal To Start Marathon From 'Frisco to Grants Pass," *Roseburg News-Review*, June 13, 1928.

²⁸³ "Runners Must Travel 480 Miles in 10 Days to Get \$10,000 Reward," *Bismarck Tribune*, June 12, 1928.

²⁸⁴ "A Winner In The 1928 Redwood Highway Indian Marathon," *The Oregon Statesman*, July 22, 1928.

Whenever drivers honked their car's horn to cheer for the runners, the metal beasts let out the tootle of an *awooga* horn that would inspire the first generation of Looney Tunes sound technicians.

But the differences from the year before were significant. The fact that a white man had entered the race meant several things. For one, he was an unofficial entrant, as he wasn't eligible to enter an *Indian* marathon. It also meant that the race became less about displaying and/or celebrating Native athleticism and more about pitting it against white athleticism. As *The Times* of San Mateo, California, reported, "His entrance into the contest gives a new angle to the sporting event — Paleface against Indian." The newspaper also reported that such a challenge was "solely for sportsmanship."²⁸⁵ But with his fancy provisions on hand, he inherently stood an advantage that had simply been purchased.

His entrance also usurped news coverage from legitimate competitors. He made local and Associated Press headlines, and papers marveled at his challenge. The *Santa Cruz Evening News* determined his participation and the "new sporting angle" it represented to be "the thrilling question of which public interest is centered." The newspaper also mused, "Will the white man's scientific training carry him through to victory? Or will the red man nose him out as the result of their heritage of many generations of physical prowess?"²⁸⁶ By articulating the showdown in these terms, the newspaper presented it as a contest of modernity vs. primitivity, with the white man's

²⁸⁵ "Lone White Competes in Indian Trek," *The Times*, June 14, 1928.

²⁸⁶ "Shell Company Enters Runner In Marathon," *Santa Cruz Evening News*, June 15, 1928.

science an exciting challenge to the Native's natural capabilities. This dichotomy fits into the traceable anxiety the white athletic world had continuously felt in response to assertions of superior indigenous athleticism. Several papers even printed the sentiment, "It is hoped Paleface Yellowred will set a new mark for the 480 miles," though they didn't specify who exactly was doing that hoping.²⁸⁷ Not a single paper seemed to insinuate, however, that there were spectators hoping that an Indian competitor would beat him to it.

But Paleface must not have made it very far. The press dropped him when he dropped out, presumably shortly after the start, judging by the complete lack of coverage that followed the excited introduction. Without him, there was no additional white competitor to keep the marathon a match between races of man. Instead of declare the race proof that the white man could not keep up with the Indian when it came to long distance running, the press dropped the issue entirely and continued to report the race as if there had never been a last-minute cry for white supremacy.

When fields were all-Indian, or when a lone white runner caused a big opening scene and then vanished almost instantly, spectatorship seemed to positively respond to Native athleticism and not directly take on the question about how it fundamentally compared to white athleticism. This approach was certainly a step forward from the reports of the Anthropology Days in 1904. There are examples beyond the Redwoods race of white audiences viewing Native running. As part of the 1928 Kansas Relays

²⁸⁷ "'Paleface' is Last Minute Entry in Indian Marathon," *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 14, 1928; "Paleface Runner in Indian Marathon," *San Anselmo Herald*, June 15, 1928; "Lone White Competes in Indian Trek," *San Mateo Times*, June 14, 1928.

(where Tarahumara runners had competed the year before), the meet directors included an “international Indian marathon” between boarding school runners from Haskell and Sherman Institutes. Twenty-year old Harold Buchanan (Winnebago) of Haskell won in 3:04.56, a time the Associated Press and the *New York Times* described as “fairly fast considering the route and adverse weather conditions.”²⁸⁸ The meet directors had invited back Tarahumara runners, since they had caused such a sensation the year before, but the invitation was refused. Apparently, runners stated “that they would gladly consider any race from 80 to 300 miles, but that the regulation marathon distance of 26 miles 385 yards was too short for them to make a proper showing.”²⁸⁹ Especially without the Tarahumara present, the race did not change the face of Indian running in the U.S., but it was another instance of reserved praise for talented Native runners, and it revealed that interest in Native running continued to run strong among white spectators and sports fans.

As long as certain assumptions remained in place, that is. The Redwoods runners, not competing for “civilizing” boarding schools but rather for towns and organizations, continued to be presented as relics of the past — a safe space for runners that might otherwise threaten the athletic hierarchy of the here and now. The foul play contributed to maintaining the status quo. But the trend of asserting a definitive image of modern society separated from Indian culture showed up in less violent ways as well. One of the best examples is in the letter that Flying Cloud carried from the mayor of Healdsburg, California, to the mayor of Grants Pass.

²⁸⁸ “Buchanan Captures Indians’ Marathon,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1928.

²⁸⁹ “Scoff at 26 Miles, But Want to Race 300,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1928.

The *Healdsburg Tribune* printed the message following the race, declaring that “those who have seen the letter state it is one of the finest contributions the gifted pen of the writer [poet Julius Myron Alexander, not the mayor himself] has made to humanity.”²⁹⁰ What the people allegedly loved was a manifesto of the state of stereotyping and appropriation regarding Native America.

The letter, addressed “TO THE BIG CHIEF OF THE NORTH” and “FROM THE BIG CHIEF OF THE SOUTH,” opened by describing the runners as “warriors of our people...Warriors of that other age, Of Nature’s book — a written page.” In just these few lines, Alexander designated the Native men to the role of “warriors,” as they had been seen during the age of Indian warfare in the nineteenth century, and to the past — “that other age,” that had definitely ended; it was already “written.” As long as he relegated Indians to the past, Alexander could speak of them lovingly and of civilization critically, so as to not endorse Indianness as a viable mode of living outside of the past.²⁹¹

So what of the present or future? Alexander insisted, “It is the age of Paleface and the wonders from God are wrought for man into the useful, the beautiful and the sublime.” But even if the world was to be put to ostensibly better use by the powerful white man, “It is good, sometimes, that we delve into the past...[the runners] will give us a lesson in stalwart strength and endurance.” In this sentiment is where destructive

²⁹⁰ “Local Greetings Reach Grants Pass,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 21, 1928.

²⁹¹ Robert F. Berkhofer outlines the type of logic that Julius Alexander and other authors with this taste for Romanticizing Native Americans employed in writing about Native subjects. Once Indians were effectively dealt with, meaning once “sections of the country had eliminated its Indian problem,” whites were willing to alter their perceptions of the Indian as either pitiable or in some cases enviable (he was unchanged by modern civilization) rather than just hostile. See Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

stereotypes meet quasi-compliments. Writing off Native people as objects of the past removes any sense of persisting, relevant humanity. And yet what the runners represented was of great value to modern America: “Physical perfection is a stronghold of the nation, for it begets of manhood and character.” So Native men could embody these values and display them for the benefit of white men in America, but only because the race somehow summoned them from the past, where they would otherwise remain.²⁹²

With Native culture (the way whites perceived it, at least) valued but Native people typically “out of the past,” those cultural values became the inheritance of white Americans and the projected American image. And, to simplify this process of appropriation, white Americans simply conflated all symbols of “Indians” into the generic stock character who was “the Indian.” Harold Buchanan’s, Andy Payne’s, and Flying Cloud’s feats could not knock the accusations that Indian athletes just could not compete in a modern sports arena, simply because that would involve Indian people succeeding according to modern standards. Despite the continued high-profile success of Native runners even in seemingly impossible physical tasks, there remained these obstacles to ushering in increased respect for indigenous athletes, even as they continued to visibly compete.

The Mexican Olympic Committee sent the Tarahumara champion from the 1927 Kansas Relays, José Torres, and fellow Tarahumara Aurelio Terrazas to the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics to run the marathon, convinced that no one in the world could match the stamina of Mexico’s most celebrated indigenous runners. There was apparently

²⁹² “Local Greetings Reach Grants Pass,” *Healdsburg Tribune*, June 21, 1928.

a miscommunication regarding the nature of the race, because when it ended, the Tarahumara both far from podium finishes, they complained about the race being too short — the same claim they made about the Kansas marathon they had refused to attend.²⁹³ Mexico’s dream of Olympic dominance went unfulfilled again. After their defeat in Amsterdam, Tarahumara runners stayed out of mainstream spotlight races for many years to come.

It’s hard to determine whether 1928 was a net-positive or net-negative year for perceptions of Indian runners, or for the high-profile Indian runners themselves, what with Mad Bull’s lap full of glass and the disappointing performances of Quonawahu. That year seemed to simply embody the blatant ambivalence that white America continually demonstrated in relation to Native people, both venerating and rejecting a conflated culture they imagined but didn’t fully understand. A postcard from the award ceremony is a case-in-point. Flying Cloud, the champion, fondles his earnings while donning a feathered headdress that call up the image of the fierce Plains warrior on horseback. Next to him is Little Fawn, the carefully presented bridge between cultures — American in her haircut and roll as event darling, but Indian in her fringe and beads. Under the prize bucket is a wool blanket — likely a “Navajo blanket” from the Southwest sheep herders, or at least designed to look like one. The race had in part been a narrative of intraracial competition; what tribe could outlast the others? But in the way the REA organized it and the press narrated it, the race also reenforced already-held assumptions and understandings of a generic, conflated Indian culture that served in part as a model for

²⁹³ Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 185.

modern white males, in part as a nostalgic heritage that preceded civilization, and in part a way of life best left dead, depending on who was looking.

Figure 6.2. Flying Cloud at finish line with Little Fawn. Postcard.



If the first Redwoods race embodied paternalism and the welcoming cultures of the quaint but developing towns strewn throughout the Northern California and Southern Oregon wilderness, the second race highlighted the legacies of the settler past in the Northwest and the systemic racism and other social ills that permeated towns and cities in

the twentieth century. A white runner attempted to co-op the race, although he didn't come close. Cheating in the form of physically sabotaging the returning champion helped to determine the eventual outcome. And at the finish line, to embrace the Karuk victor, was the wide reach of cultural appropriation. What did the next year have in store?

VII. EPILOGUE

THE CONTINUITY OF INDIGENOUS RUNNING

1929

FIGURE 7.1. Karuk runners prepare for race. 1929. Used with permission from the Grace Hudson Museum, Ukiah, California.



The Redwood Empire Association planned to keep the tradition alive. Despite what had happened to Mad Bull, the event ended in front of a huge crowd and with a new course record. A 1929 report from the general chairman of the Redwood Empire Indian Marathon Committee declared that “The second marathon staged in 1928 brought publicity for the Redwood Empire...far in excess of 1927. The advance publicity in newspapers and over radio stations was at least three times greater in 1928 than in 1927.”

Plus, the runners agreed to come back for more. In the words of the chairman, “It would be a serious mistake to abandon the Marathon for I am sure that it has proven to be the greatest medium for attracting attention to the Redwood Empire that could possibly exist.”²⁹⁴ But the onset of the Great Depression across the United States closed the door on the funds and morale necessary to support a third annual Redwood Highway Indian Marathon.

Still, the two Redwood Indian Marathons had accomplished important work. The REA was delighted with the publicity. Mad Bull and Flying Cloud accessed immediate funds that must have far surpassed what they earned in several months picking hops or farming like so many other men in Happy Camp. Most importantly, the Native runners from Northern California and the Southwest borderlands asserted Native identity in a modern world, stood as emblems of an American regional identity belonging to the Redwood Empire in addition to their Indianness, and they kept alive the visibility of Native American athletes in the mainstream athletic scene. They maintained a cultural connection to running as both indigenous people with long traditions of running for spiritual, ritual, communal, and practical purposes, and as Americans they competed in sports for public entertainment and earned prizes for their efforts. Of course, they did this at a time when the connection between mainstream American society and Native people was unclear: indigenous people were still visible across the continent, yet some seemed to be assimilating while others stuck to traditions that would, people thought, inevitably lead

²⁹⁴ “Report of H. G. Ridgway General Chairman of the Redwood Empire Indian Marathon,” 1929, Folder 4: REA Official Minutes: Fiscal Year 1928-29, Redwood Empire Association Papers, Mendocino County Museum.

to their demise in a modern world that would ultimately refute all that was understood to be primitive.

The fact that runners came from both the Southwest and the Northwest also revealed regional dynamics that help us to compare the place of Indians and Indianness in regional economies and identities. While the United States as a whole demonstrated an interest in the exotic and seemed to make endless use of old stereotypes surrounding Native people, actual Indian people remained off of the public's radar in some places. The "picturesque" Indian wore special clothing and had long hair — the Zunis that either sold pottery and jewelry to tourists in New Mexico or who showed up to race in California fit the bill visually and gained an instant fan following, even though they too came from communities of modern Native laborers. Karuk wage laborers didn't even look the part, until they adopted "Indian" names and ran in the elements for days, even though Karuk baskets continued to be a popular commodity in the trade of "Indian curios." The contradictions, unfortunately, did not entice Anglo Americans to rethink fundamental understandings of Indianness and how it related to modernity. Instead, the exposure to the Native racers reified the problematic stereotypes that had been developing for centuries. Perhaps with continued exposure, the narrative surrounding at least the cast of Native characters that came out for the race each year would have complicated. But the race discontinued and the runners receded from the annual spotlight to cope, like other Americans, with the economic crises in their everyday lives.

But even with the strains of the Depression, Native American runners continued to race at the highest level of competition and assert both Native and American identities in their accomplishments. Ellison “Tarzan” Brown (Narraganset) won the Boston Marathon twice in 1936 and 1939 in dramatic races and finishes. At the societal level, however, running had lost some of the prestige and visibility it had had through the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The legendary Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) reminded the world to watch for astounding Indian runners when he won the Olympic 10,000-meter race in an upset at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics.

The Tarahumara sprang back into action in America before the century was up as well. As a culture of extreme sports and ultramarathons emerged in the Western United States in the 1980s and 1990s, Americans remembered the Running People. Tarahumaras ran against the nation’s most talented ultramarathon runners and beat them in a one-hundred-mile race along trails in Leadville, Colorado, in 1992 and 1994.²⁹⁵ Author Christopher McDougall featured their stories in his bestseller *Born To Run* that would put indigenous North American running back in the minds of an athletically-inclined public audience when it came out in 2010.

But there were always Native American runners in the interim. Two of the most talented cross-country high school teams hail from Navajo Country in Arizona. Filmmaker Brian Truglio released a documentary of the rivalry between the two teams, the Tuba City Warriors and the Chinle Wildcats, in 2010. The film, “Racing the Rez,” reveals how the structure and act of competitive running helped the high schoolers cope

²⁹⁵ Christopher McDougall, *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 66, 104.

with the struggles of reservation life. The filmmaker wanted to present their stories to overturn the both the romanticization and the victimization of American Indians in the twenty-first century.²⁹⁶

New York City filmmaker Henry Lu had a similar idea around the same time. In 2008, he assembled a team and embarked on a nineteen-month filmmaking excursion to Navajo Country where they followed three high school seniors' personal stories of cross-country, track and field, and life amidst high rates of diabetes, suicide attempts, and poverty. The movie, "Run To the East," also came out in 2010.

Sports journalists have also known to watch for Native runners. *Runner's World* magazine has featured several articles pertaining to Native American running culture in the past decade, including articles about challenges facing Native student athletes who have the talent to run at the college level away from home, Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett, and a recent feature of Craig Curley, elite Navajo marathon racer.²⁹⁷ *Ultrarunning Magazine* also ran an article called "In the Beginning: Native Americans," that outlined much of what Peter Nabokov wrote about in *Indian Running*, but with a few added anecdotes and the omission of relevant present-day continuities.²⁹⁸

Native American running was a conversation in the broader sports world as well. *Sports Illustrated* had entered the conversation back in 1980. The magazine put out an

²⁹⁶ Candace Begody, "Tools to Better One's Self: Documentary follows rivalry between Tuba City and Chinle cross-country teams," *Navajo Times*, October 21, 2010.

²⁹⁷ "Challenges & Opportunities for Native American Runners," *Runner's World*, November 1, 2000; Roger Robinson, "Footsteps: Deerfoot," *Runner's World*, October 6, 2008; Joe Kolb; Bruce Barcott, "Native Son," *Runner's World*, April 30, 2015.

²⁹⁸ Andy Milroy, "In the Beginning: Native Americans," *Ultrarunning Magazine*, August 15, 2013.

article “Running to Nowhere” that ventriloquized Pueblo ideas about running, focused on failures, and didn’t seem to insinuate a renewed wave of success for the future. According to Nabokov, the article “raised heckles” down in Pueblo country.²⁹⁹

The outlook needn’t be bleak. Running still provides rich meaning to Native communities in the United States that face severe public health issues and the painful legacy of settler colonialism in their histories. Running is a way to improve the health of bodies and communities while interacting with the land in fundamental and spiritual ways. For example, Cheyenne activists in Colorado have established the Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run in commemoration of the Sand Creek Massacre, an attack carried out by the U.S. Army against a peaceful band of Cheyenne and Arapahoe men, women, and children in 1864. The run spans three days and over one-hundred and fifty miles from the site of the massacre to Denver. Through running, the participants closely interact with the land — the sights where non-Natives imposed dark histories on Native lands. It is fitting that the healing run takes place over Thanksgiving weekend every year: a holiday promoting a false narrative of peace and unity between settler and Native.

There are several other ultramarathons associated with Native people and places, though in the spirit of competition rather than remembrance. Established after the success of *Born to Run*, the “Copper Canyon Ultra” brings together Tarahumara runners and non-Native visitors and raises money to support Tarahumara communities. The “Canyon de Chelly Ultra” advertises an opportunity to “Run with the Navajos” on the Navajo

²⁹⁹ Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 82.

reservation. The profits from entry fees help support “local Native American runners chasing the dream!!!!”³⁰⁰

Indeed, the future may be bright. There is support for Native children in running circles operated by Native people. *Wings of America* is a grassroots program that partners with other organizations and donors to foster “youth development” in Indian Country. Their mission statement explains, “Wings uses running as a catalyst to empower American Indian and Alaskan Native youth to take pride in themselves and their cultural identity, leading to increased self esteem, health and wellness, leadership and hope, balance and harmony.”³⁰¹ Wings offers camps and coaching clinics, and sponsors a high school-age national competition team.

Even the Redwood Indian Marathon that dissolved in 1929 persists in pockets of public memory in California. The North Coast Striders running club in Mendocino County, California, sponsor five- and ten-kilometer road races that commemorate the “Legends of the Redwoods: — the men who raced in 1927 and 1928. Conversations have sprung up over the past few years about joining forces with other local running clubs and Indian tribes to coordinate a larger event, perhaps one that features a relay along an approximation of the original route.”³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Homepage for the Canyon de Chelly Ultra, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.canyondechellyultra.com/>.

³⁰¹ “About Wings,” Wings of America, supported by the Earth Circle Foundation, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.wingsofamerica.org/about-wings/>

³⁰² Conversation with Rodger Schwartz, president of North Coast Striders running club, July 18, 2015.

Karuk runners also remember. In 2011, Crispin McAllister of the Karuk Tribal Council ran a 230-mile loop around ancestral Karuk homelands. While paying homage to the Karuk racers in the Redwood Marathons, McAllister also hoped to raise funds to support local track teams. Someone sent the article local resident Maymie Donahue wrote about his story for the *Two Rivers Tribune* to the White House. First Lady Michelle Obama read it and invited the author and the runner to the White House. This happened as the First Lady launched her Let's Move! in Indian Country program, part of her vision for improving youth health and fitness across the nation.³⁰³

The anecdotes herein are just some of several examples that prove the running remains essential and important for indigenous communities in North America. The wide range of ways in which running is used for healing, health, and recreation suggest that running is as much a tool for navigating modernity now as it was in the 1920s. Mainstream society still harbors ideas about vanishing Indians and Native unfitness for survival. Surely it takes time and willingness on the part of society at large to rewrite such engrained narratives, but if indigenous running efforts remain visible and active in native communities, the ancient pastime might just provide answers in the long run.

³⁰³ Jessie Faulkner, "Story runs all the way to the White House Karuk Tribal member's health campaign catches first lady's attention," *Tri-City Weekly*, May 22, 2012

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