Chapter Six

Reduced to Images

American Indians in Nineteenth-Century Advertising

Jeffrey Steele

Stereotypes sell. To this day, consumers recognize the stylized Indian chief on cans of Calumet baking powder and the kneeling Indian maiden on packages of Land O'Lakes butter. The athletic fortunes of the Braves, Indians, Chiefs, Redskins, and Black Hawks are followed by professional sports fans across the country. In the past, images of Indian warriors, chiefs, and maidens helped to market products as diverse as Bow-Spring dental rubber, Hiawatha canned corn, Cherokee coal, Red Warrior axes, and Savage rifles.[1] From the late nineteenth century to the present, numerous manufacturers, promoters, and advertisers have chosen the image of an American Indian to symbolize their products. Although some of these symbols and trademarks were designed as recently as the 1950s, the majority date from the period 1870–1910—the era of warfare and legislation that effectively contained American Indian cultures on the margins of U.S. society.

This containment of cultures is evident in the forms of racialized entertainment that arose in the closing decades of the century. Emerging at roughly the same time, the minstrel show and the Wild West show both reinforced racial stereotypes during an era when the roles of African-Americans and American Indians were rapidly changing. After the departure of federal troops from the South during the 1870s, the civil and voting rights of American blacks became the source of violent contention. With their images of happy slaves and benign songs and dances, minstrel shows helped to perpetuate the myth that the old days of plantation slavery represented the high point in black-white relations. In answer to the more disturbing racial anxieties of the time (such as those expressed in the growing epidemic of lynchings), the images of happy, banjo-playing plantation laborers reassured viewers that "blacks were under control."[2]

In many respects, Wild West shows, with their mock combats showing the defeat of Indian warriors, enacted a similar containment. Maintaining the illusion that American Indians dwelled in regions far removed from eastern urban centers, extravaganzas like "The Wild West: Buffalo Bill's and Doc Carver's Mountain and Prairie Exhibition" constructed "the image of the Plains Sioux as the quintessential American Indian."[3] From the safety of their seats in the grandstand, viewers were

exposed to "Indians as savages from a wild land . . . inimical to civilization"; in one scene, for example, "Buffalo Bill and his cowboys would ride to the rescue of [stagecoach] passengers before Indians could commit their final treachery."[4] It is ironic that such racial myths came into conflict with the official policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which attempted "to break up the reservations and accelerate the transformation of Indians into property owners and U.S. citizens" after the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887.[5] But not surprisingly, the image of assimilated Indians with 160-acre farms was much less appealing to the popular imagination than Buffalo Bill's horse-riding, stagecoach-attacking warriors.

Rather than acknowledging a continuity between their world and that of American Indians, such shows fixed the image of the Indian in time "as if the only true Indian were a past one."[6] In this format, the heroism of Indian braves could be appreciated as a remnant of vanquished and "vanishing" cultures that posed little threat to the hegemony of white civilization.[7] Forcibly removed from any contexts that would threaten the imaginative security of consumers, American Indians (like African-Americans) were being turned into fetishized images that satisfied the hunger for entertainment and disposable commodities.

Contemporaneously with the rise of the Wild West show, images appropriated from native cultures began to appear on advertisements for products found in numerous American households. As "the volume of American advertising increased by more than tenfold" from 1870 to 1900, advertising trade cards became the most important form of mass-market advertising.[8] Produced in the thousands, these postcard-size, lithographed images were widely distributed in stores and as premiums packaged with some products. The "narrative richness" of these cards, limited by little more than the imaginative energies of printers, artists, and manufacturers, is of great interest to the modern historian.[9] A form of what is now known as "printed ephemera," trade cards were given away by merchants, who quickly restocked new cards to feed the growing hunger for images and the commodities they represented.

In a few cases, manufacturers hit upon stable images that solidified into recognizable trademarks; but most often, designs proliferated, as one eye-catching image after another was used to lure potential customers. As chromolithography became the most effective technology for mass-producing images, there emerged a "swelling trade in images" that contributed to what Jackson Lears has characterized as the "rich and complex carnivalesque tradition" operating "in nineteenth-century American advertising."[10] Many products (especially patent medicines) seemed "to conjure up the magic of self-transformation through purchase"—a magical "aura" that was captured by the fantastic "floating signifiers" found on trade cards.[11]

This riot of images, churned out by numerous printers, facilitated the release of racial fantasies that might have been contained in more stable circumstances. Since "advertisers using trade cards were able to avoid the editorial constraints imposed by periodicals and even more public forms of advertising," nothing prevented their producers from digging deep into the mine of racial fantasy.[12] Focusing upon the characteristics of various racial and ethnic minorities, many advertisements created a sense of white, middle-class consumer solidarity at the expense of subordinate

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groups. Although they were not totally without buying power, Irish servants, African-Americans, Chinese Americans, and American Indians were often depicted in demeaning postures and caricatures that reveal the assumption that such individuals stood outside the mainstream of American consumerism. As a result, nineteenth-century trade cards remain to this day the most graphic examples of racial and ethnic stereotypes being used as marketing tools.

On some cards, eye-catching humor (often cartoons at the expense of blacks and the Irish) captured the attention of white consumers. On others, specific product characteristics were highlighted through association with racialized attributes of marginalized groups. Manufacturers of both thread and stove polish, for example, promoted the blackness of their products through images that exploited stereotypes of African-Americans. On one card, an African-American boy riding a spool of

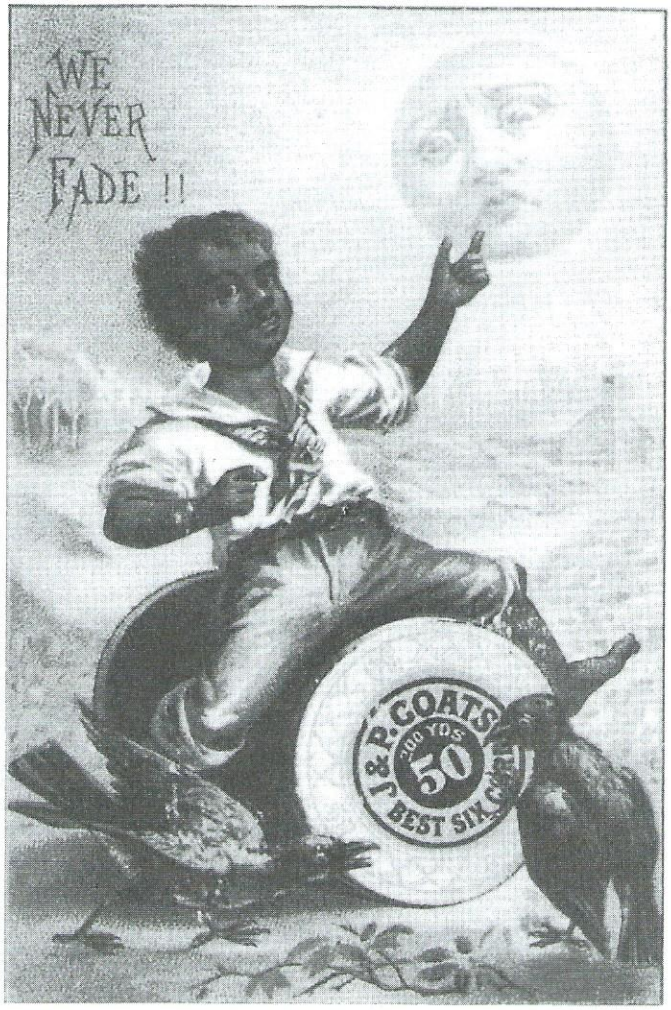

Fig. 6.1. Trade card, J & P Coats "Fast Black" Thread. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

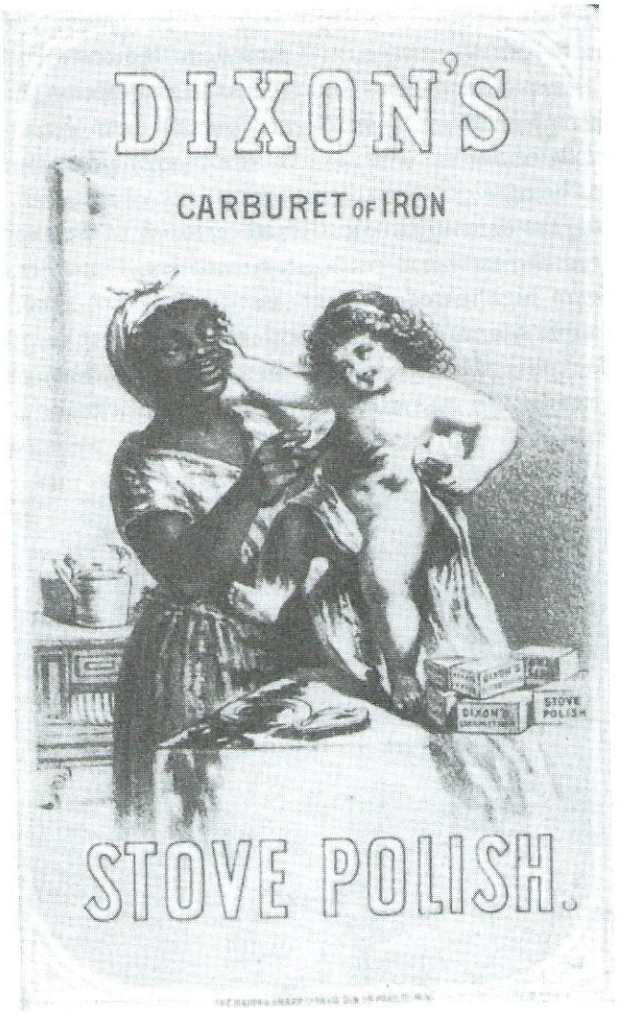

Fig. 6.2. Trade card, Dixon's "Carburet of Iron" Stove Polish, Jos. Dixon Crucible Co., Jersey City, N.J.; printed by Major & Knapp Lith. Co., N.Y. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

"fast black" thread points to a worried-looking sun and proclaims that "We never fade!!" In similar fashion, an image promoting Dixon's black stove polish shows an African-American mammy washing a young white girl who has gotten into the stove polish—a whitening operation that the mammy cannot perform on herself (figs. 6.1, 6.2).

Both images depend upon the exclusion of a racial other whose marginalized presence buttresses the identity of white consumers. The dynamics of this process are perhaps most apparent on a remarkable card produced to market Muzzy's cornstarch: A Chinese laundry worker holds up before a white, middle-class family a freshly starched and ironed shirt, which is so shiny the woman can see her own reflection (fig. 6.3). In this image, we find depicted a mythologized image of identity

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Fig. 6.3. Trade card, Muzzy's C
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construction in which whiteness (we notice that the laundry worker holds up a *white* shirt) depends upon the presence of a subordinate, racialized other. Recently, Toni Morrison has argued that the white imagination depends upon the presence of a racial other in the form of an "Africanist presence"; in her eyes, the most fundamental white American ideals—"freedom . . . autonomy . . . authority"—were "made possible by, shaped by, activated by . . . Africanism, deployed as rawness and savagery."[13] Images of American Indian "savagery" served a similar function, validating the smug self-certainty of nineteenth-century proponents of what is now called "scientific racism": the belief that the different races of human beings exist on an evolutionary continuum ranging from "savagery" through "barbarism" to "civilization."[14]

To explore the role that racial ideologies played in the early stages of product identification and marketing psychology, it is useful to compare images of African-Americans and American Indians on trade cards. Not surprisingly, African-Americans are depicted in a wide variety of occupations, including sports, domestic roles, and public performances; American Indians, by contrast, are found in a narrower range of occupations and activities—imagery that suggests a more alien status in the white imagination. African-Americans, wearing familiar clothing, are often depicted indoors in domestic or vocational scenes, whereas American Indians are almost always shown outdoors in traditional, native attire (for example, moccasins, leggings, and headdresses). It is extremely rare to find black cards that refer to specific historical events; Indian cards, on the other hand, often refer to specific treaties and scenes of warfare, as if the image of the Indian were fixed at a specific time.

According to Robert Jay, in the late nineteenth century, "the Indian was little more than a romanticized abstraction for most white Americans, and was seen firsthand only in medicine and wild west shows, if at all"—a situation that gave

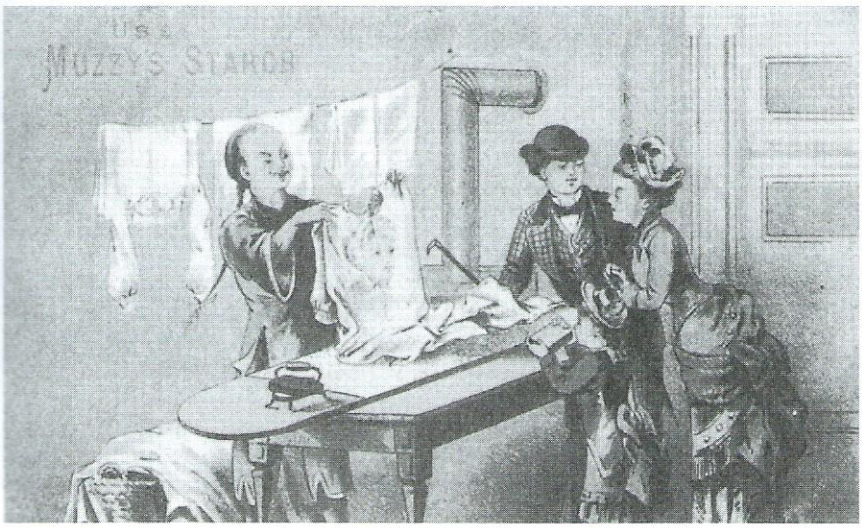

Fig. 6.3. Trade card, Muzzy's Corn Starch. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

Fig. 6.4. Trade card, Dryeas Improved Corn Starch. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

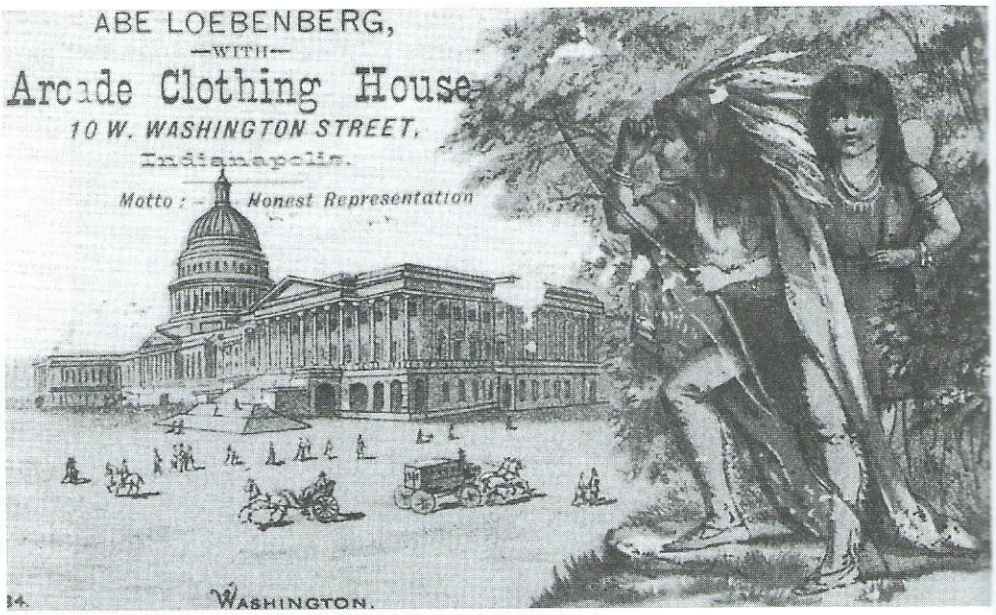

Fig. 6.5. Trade card, Abe Loebenberg's Arcade Clothing House, 10 West Washington Street, Indianapolis. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

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Fig. 6.6. Trade card, "Tip
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Indians an "exotic appeal" that made them "a natural vehicle for advertising."[15] More accurately, those American Indians still remaining east of the Mississippi, many of whom had adopted western dress and manners, had become largely invisible. The Indian maidens and warriors depicted on trade cards belonged to worlds that stood outside those of white, eastern consumers. Either they were located in historical scenes from the past or they were shown in picturesque locales far removed from the domain of middle-class, urban homes. As in the case of picture postcards mass-produced a generation later, such representations created a fictitious sense of "reality" in which contemporary American Indians found little reflection of their daily lives.[16]

For example, an advertisement for Duryeas Improved Corn Starch depicts a scene far removed from eastern cities (fig. 6.4). In the foreground, an Indian man attempts to quiet a bucking horse, which he holds by the bridle. In the background, Indian women near tepees cultivate corn, prepare food, and care for children. Other cards produced during this era illustrate plains Indians hunting buffalo on horseback or fighting with government troops. The clothing on many cards enforces a similar sense of distance. For example, the young man and woman on a card advertising Abe Loebenberg's Arcade Clothing House (fig. 6.5) wear traditional outfits that cut them off from the cosmopolitan world of Washington, D.C., portrayed in the background. On a card advertising Tippecanoe Spring Preparation (fig. 6.6), eight Indians in various types of tribal attire carefully conduct their birch bark canoe through rapids. Their canoe does not tip and presumably, these hardy warriors do not suffer from motion sickness and thus are immune from "dyspepsia," "stomach

Fig. 6.6. Trade card, "Tippecanoe" Spring Preparation. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

Fig. 6.7. Advertising booklet, "The Golden Secret of the 'Oswego,' " Austen's Oswego Bitters, 1882. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

disorders," "feeble appetite," or any of the other disorders of civilization that the Tippecanoe nostrum allegedly cures. In this instance, the advertiser exploits the perceived distance between Indian and white cultures (signified through setting and dress) by the suggestion that "the red man, in his unique communion with nature, possessed knowledge of its curative powers unrevealed to civilized man."[17]

The Kickapoo Indian Remedy was one of numerous patent medicines to exploit the myth that American Indians were more closely attuned to the rhythms of nature. One of the more elaborate variations of this theme is found in a sixteen-page advertising booklet produced to market Austen's Oswego Bitters in 1882 (fig. 6.7), which contains a short story entitled "The Witch-Woman's Revenge; or, the Golden Secret of the Oswego." In a familiar fairy-tale plot, Winona, a beautiful Indian girl, is forbidden by her mother (the "witch-woman") to marry the son of the man who killed her father. Illustrating the way that images of American Indians were fixed in the past, this tale is set in the distant era before the "foot of a white man had trod" the country now covered by the city of Oswego, New York.

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In order to enforce the separation between Winona and her beloved Wanketo, the witch-woman has cast a curse that is rapidly killing all the members of his tribe. Miraculously, a lightning bolt kills the wicked mother, freeing Winona to use her family's herbal lore to save Wanketo's village. Gathering "simple herbs which none has ever thought to use as medicines," she administers the "health-giving" and "life-giving" remedy.

Through some miracle of transmission, the booklet concludes, this remedy has come into the possession of "the well-known firm, W. J. Austen & Co., Oswego, N.Y.": "Gradually its benefits were extended to the whites, and as the Indians faded away before the onward march of civilization the secret passed from their hands into those of the conquering race." "Almost as soon as they had taken the Indians' land," Jackson Lears comments, "white settlers began to claim access to their medical lore."[18] In striking support of such cultural imperialism, this booklet provides a compendium of nineteenth-century racial myths: The Indian characters, existing lower on the scale of civilization, live closer to nature and its secrets; as a 'vanishing' race, Indians yield effortlessly to the "onward march of civilization"; Winona is a "wonderfully beautiful" Indian maiden; her betrothed, "a perfect specimen of forest manhood," exhibits the characteristics of the "noble savage."

Superimposed on this racialized framework is a seductive narrative that exploits nineteenth-century stereotypes of age and gender. The attractive and healthy young couple prosper in their "free and simple lives," while the "withered crone" (Winona's interfering mother) dies. Youth (and, by implication, the sexual energies of youth) conquer in this simple tale that culminates with the marriage of Winona and Wanketo, who become the progenitors of "many generations." Similar associations are found in the trade cards produced to market Indian Queen Perfume. On one card (not pictured here), an attractive Indian woman, standing in the midst of luxuriant foliage, cradles a bow in her left arm as she gathers nectar dropping from a flower into a shell held in her right hand.[19] In an image that "represents the colonized world as the feminine," the exploitable bounties of nature are associated with the eroticized image of a native woman from a dominated race.[20]

Another card advertising Indian Queen Perfume makes even more explicit the conjunction of racialized myths of beauty, nature, and female fecundity (fig. 6.8). A demure-looking Indian woman, with limpid eyes and bowed head, cradles an infant in her left arm, while she holds a magical-looking feathered wand in her right hand. Wearing a cowrie-shell necklace, feathered headdress, and surrounded by luxuriant foliage, she seems the mythical embodiment of nature's maternal, soothing power. In the terms of Jackson Lears, she is a mythical representation of the female source of abundance—a symbol commonly found in nineteenth-century advertising.[21] To complete the picture, a butterfly (a sign of grace or immortality) hovers above her child's head in an apparent blessing.

In somewhat different fashion, male figures are used to symbolize nature's abundance. In an advertisement for a fertilizer called Bradley's Super-Phosphate of Lime (fig. 6.9), an Indian man in traditional dress stands in a field of corn; he holds a (phallic-looking) lance and stares into the distance. Behind him are two corn plants: a short plant with the legend "without phosphate" and a tall plant labeled "with

Fig. 6.8. Trade card, Indian Queen Perfume, Bean & Brother, Philadelphia. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

phosphate." This figure's kingly potency (associated with the generative qualities of Bradley's *fertilizer*) is reinforced by a verse from Ecclesiastes: "The profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field." Significantly, the image on this card is framed by a border that appropriates this regal and generative power for the white-controlled arena of scientific agricultural management (an act that narrows the definition of the earth's "profit" to an idea of commercial gain). "Bradley's Phosphate furnishes the elements of plant-food in proper proportions," this border reads. "By using Bradley's Phosphate you return to the soil the plant-food constituents your crops are constantly taking from it."

Nature's masculine abundance is even more apparent on an 1886 card used to advertise Diamond lawnmowers (fig. 6.10). An example of the popular and Widely used "vegetable people" series, this advertisement depicts a "corned Indian" whose body is an ear of corn; hands and feet, corn husk. Melded with this agricultural motif is the figure of an Indian whose posture, clothing, and staff resemble those

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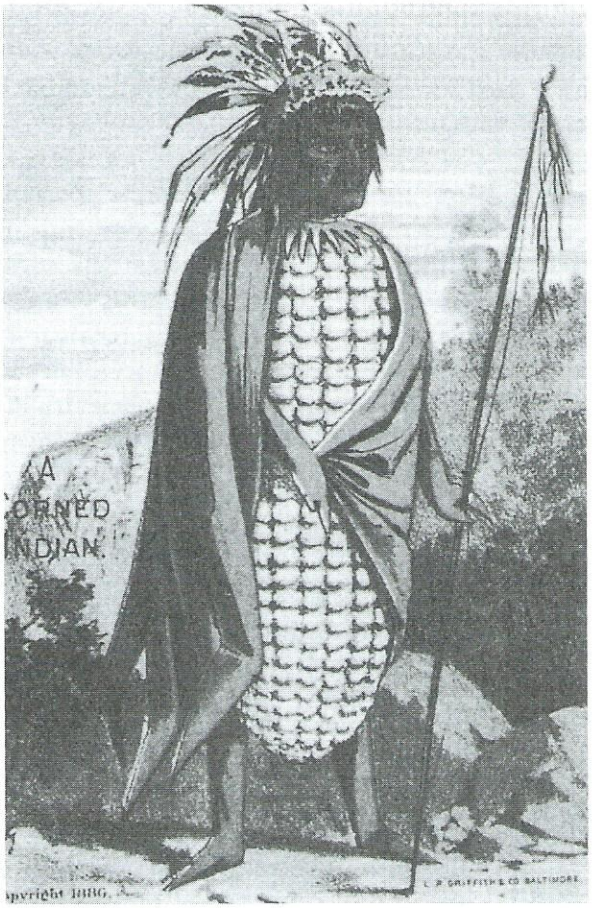

Fig. 6.10. Trade card, "A Corned Indian," Diamond Lawnmowers, C. W. Hackett Hardware Co., St. Paul, Minn.; printed 1886 by L. P. Griffith & Co., Baltimore. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

ing Indian title to land, and establishing strict and fair procedures for its purchase," white settlers "managed to evade regulations . . . through leases of Indian lands," "outright encroachment," and "official fraud."[22] Two hundred years later, in the 1880s, it was easy to use this historical event as a self-congratulatory symbol substantiating whites' "enlightened" policy toward Indians (at least in the East). Why go to the trouble of conquering Indian territories, these cards suggest, when they can be easily appropriated through seemingly fair treaties? On both cards, the "treaties" represented are actually advertisements: for Ayer's Cherry Pectoral and for Enterprise Bone, Shell, and Corn Mills, respectively.

The Enterprise card (fig. 6.11) is especially interesting—both for its graphic design and because of a verse embedded in the center of the card. The text reads:

> In sixteen eighty two, you surely have heard
> How William Penn an honest treaty made.

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All good Indians mourn him still
And remember his proclamation of good will
To use the Enterprise Bone, Shell, and Corn Mill.

In this context, Penn's "honest treaty" commits unwitting Indians to the consumption of the product he is peddling—in an unequal relationship that cements the image of white paternalism. According to this card, "good Indians" know their place and their proper role—to be unquestioning consumers. But in reality this card advertises a form of agricultural technology of little use to the American Indians depicted, who seem to have stepped out of a cartoon world. Their function, it would seem, is to signify an act of consumption that they cannot fill, for more than anything, they seem to be playing with the Enterprise mill.

The visual categories pioneered by Erving Goffman can be applied to this card

Fig. 6.11. Trade card, Enterprise Bone, Shell, and Corn Mill, Enterprise Mfg. Co., Philadelphia; printed 1893 by Donaldson Brothers, N.Y. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

to reveal a number of familiar signs of dominance and subordination. This power differential is reinforced by the placement and posture of the figures: a smug-looking William Penn stands in the background overlooking three Indian figures who seem totally absorbed with (if not amazed by) their new mill. The position of the figures provides an obvious "function ranking": Penn stands in a paternal position of control, "a little outside the physical circle," surveying the entire scene and holding pen and paper (the tools of literacy), while the Indian figures have their attention more narrowly focused on the mill.[23] The playful, even childish, expressions on the faces of the Indian figures express an emotionality and lack of restraint that diminishes their status in contrast to the more staid figure of Penn and suggests their distance from his mastery.[24]

In addition to the portrayal of human figures, this card conveys its message through the conjunction of "multiple planes of meaning" (to use Lears's phrase) that are conjoined but do not meet.[25] The Enterprise mill (a modern machine) belongs to a world distinct from that of William Penn and his seventeenth-century treaty with the Delawares. The effect of this disjunction is to underscore the distance between the world of native culture and the nineteenth-century realm of technological and mechanical power. In another way, the gap between white and Indian cultures is signified by the presence, at the bottom of the card, of an imposing edifice designated the "Electrical Building." As an aspect of the card's design, this building seems out of place. But as a signifier demonstrating the evident "superiority" of white civilization, it bespeaks a kind of economic manifest destiny. The three Indian figures depicted above the Electrical Building are provided with no valid place in a world where such structures exist.

In contrast to treaties, scenes of Indian warfare and violence were an even more popular subject on trade cards. As is to be expected, depictions of Custer's Last Stand made their way onto these advertisements. One unusual card, for example, depicts the "Death of Custer" as part of "Forepaugh's Equestrian Spectacular Tragedy"—evidently a Wild West show staging scenes from recent history.[26] Other cards, which had the merit of not raising unsettling questions about recent U.S. Indian policy, portrayed military scenes from the past. The 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe (fought in Indiana) was featured on an 1883 advertisement for Tippecanoe tonic—a graphic card that depicts a number of Indian warriors in the act of being slaughtered. A sensational scene from the Black Hawk War, identified on the back as "Defeat of Black Hawk and his Indians, 1832," was one of three vignettes of Wisconsin history depicted on an 1892 card for Arbuckle Brothers Coffee (fig. 6.12). Part of a series of fifty cards "giving a pictorial history of the United States and territories," the Arbuckle card is worth closer examination. Both the pictorial elements on the front of the card and the text on the back (a synopsis of Wisconsin history) contribute to a complicated act of racial mythmaking.

The battle scene, occupying the center of the card, is given visual emphasis by the diagonal lines at the left (the French explorers "Marquette and Joliet crossing the portage from the Fox to the Wisconsin River"), a visual element echoed in the position of muskets and arms in the center panel. The right-hand scene, which provides a sense of closure to the design, portrays a party of white tourists in

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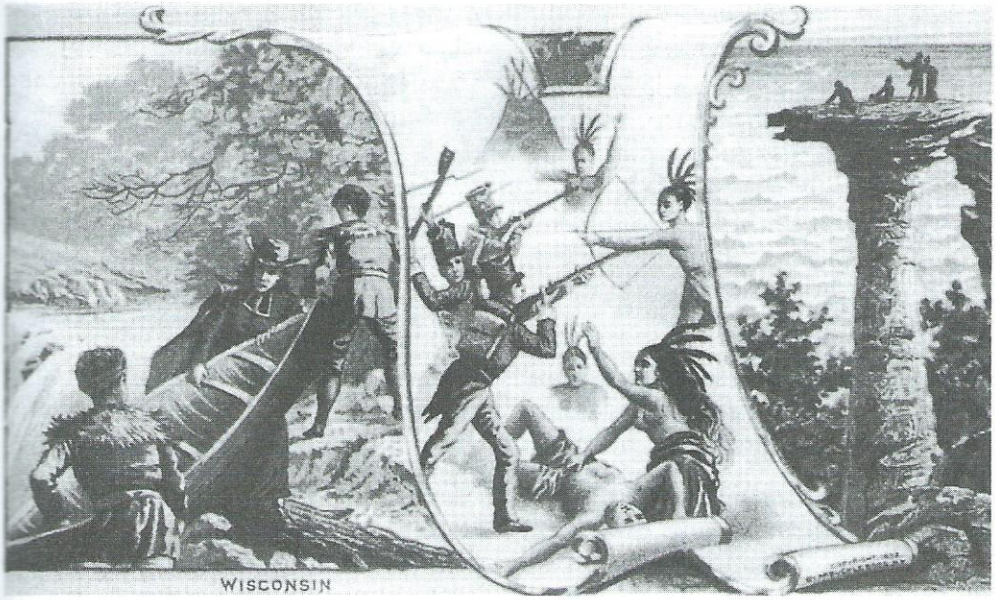

Fig. 6.12. Trade card, Arbuckle Brothers Coffee, Arbuckle Bros., N.Y.; printed 1892 by Donaldson Brothers, N.Y. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

contemporary dress on top of "Stand Rock in the 'Dells.' " Both the left- and right-hand panels place human figures in recognizable natural landscapes, while presenting a visual narrative that stresses the progression from exploration to present-day tourism. In contrast, the center panel stands out from the card as an intrusion; it contains no natural features and seems to have been unscrolled, rolling across and disrupting the narrative of exploration, implied settlement, and tourism. The text on the back of the card reinforces this narrative of "manifest destiny" by asserting that "the Black Hawk War (1832) was an important factor in the opening of the region to public view."

Appealing to consumers' prurient interest, the central panel shows a scene of close combat in which a bare-breasted Indian woman, kneeling over a dead man, raises her arm in a futile effort to stop the killing. Significantly, this image depicts an Indian woman in a state of seminudity that no white woman could occupy.[27] In the visual economy of this advertisement, the American Indian is implicitly identified with this figure, whose state of vulnerable undress seems a sign of "savagery," at the same time that her resistance seems particularly pathetic and ineffectual. The viewer's sympathy is stirred but quickly overwhelmed by the implied message: Here is a powerful emblem of the "vanishing Indian," powerless to resist the white military pressure that was successful in "opening the region [like this female figure] to public view." Just as this eroticized image of an American Indian woman was made available for white-male erotic fantasy, Indians (in general) were reduced to images that could be made to play allotted roles in nineteenth-century fantasies of cultural imperialism.

In different ways, a number of trade cards (some of them illustrating historical subjects) contributed to the argument for "manifest destiny" by illustrating scenes

of savagery and violence. As a group, these cards provide graphic images of "the Indian as . . . alien to the White."[28] A Kickapoo Indian Medicines booklet, for example, depicts a sleeping Indian who dreams of hunting, Custer's Last Stand, and a massacre.[29] In the massacre scene (placed directly beneath the word "Indian"), a number of warriors slaughter and scalp white men, women, and children. The motif of scalping was picked up in even more graphic fashion on a card advertising Taylor's Sure Cure.[30] A sleeping Indian, his gun leaning against him, dreams two scenes: embracing a large, life-size bottle labeled "Fire Water"; and killing a horrified missionary, his tracts scattered at his feet and eyes wide open, who prays for his life. Superimposed on this amazing image is the following verse:

> The Indian dreams of days gone by,
> When he raised hair, his knife for a lever;
> His country is gone, but then he has left
> Taylor's Sure Cure for chills and fever.

In this vision of commercial expansion, the lost lands and violent past of the Indian figure are compensated for by his new "role" as consumer. But in reality, the sleeping Indian is not being presented as a potential customer but rather as a source of entertainment for a white populace whose sense of identity is bolstered by its perceived distance from such "savagery."

Images on two Arbuckle Brothers coffee cards reinforce this stereotype of savagery. The first, part of the series illustrating scenes from state history, depicts as one of three historical tableaux a scene identified on the reverse as "Massacre by the Sioux" in Iowa (fig. 6.13). The explanatory text relates that "in 1830 the Sioux

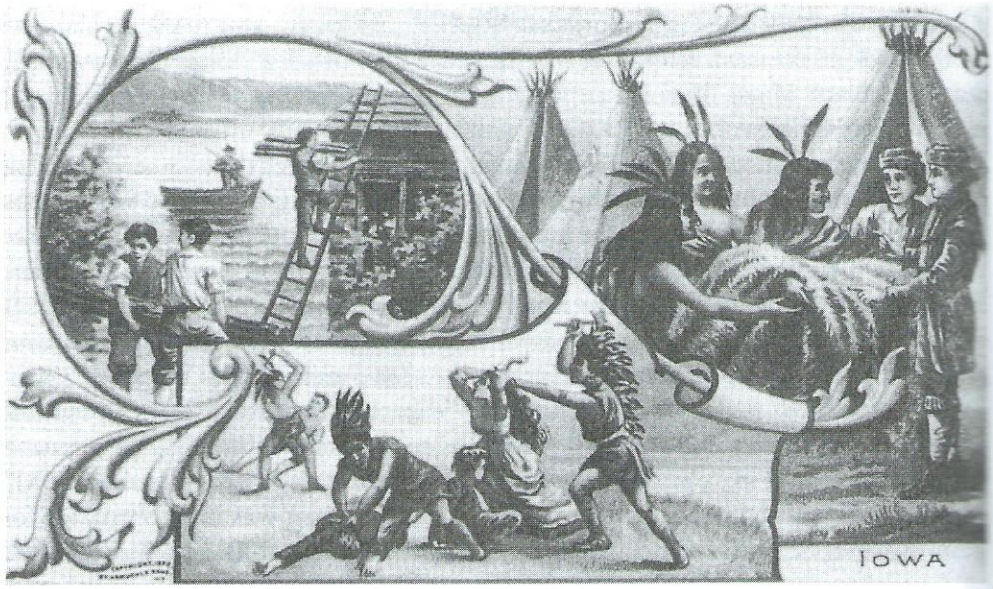

Fig. 6.13. Trade card, Arbuckle Brothers Coffee, Arbuckle Bros., N.Y.; printed 1892 by Donaldson Brothers, N.Y. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

Fig. 6.14. Trade card, Arb
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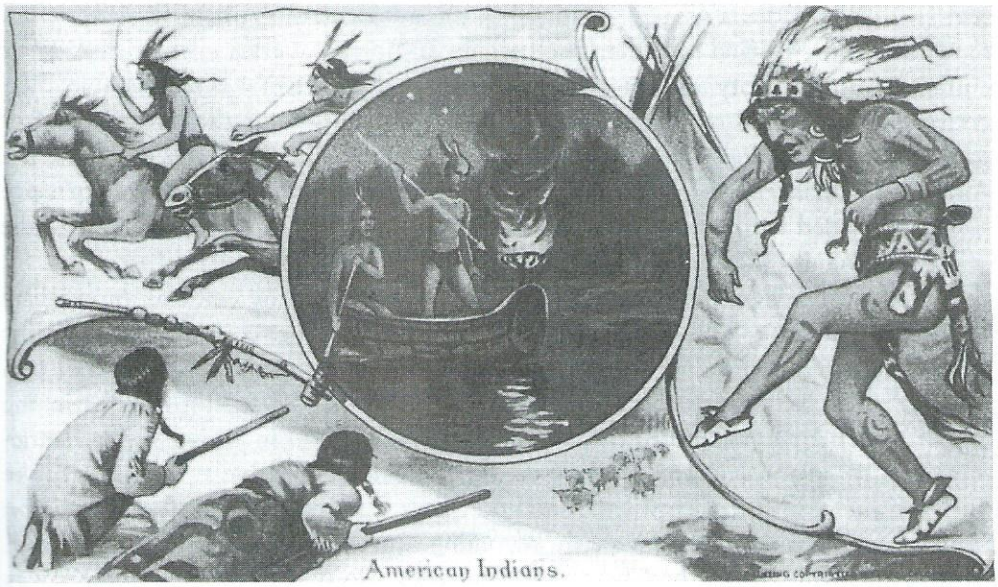

Fig. 6.14. Trade card, Arbuckle Brothers Coffee, Arbuckle Bros., N.Y., printed 1893 by Kaufmann & Strauss. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

annihilated a large party of the Sacs and Foxes (including ten chiefs) on the Mississippi River, near Dubuque." The only problem with this explanation is that the inflammatory image on the front portrays a white family being killed and scalped. Perhaps it was unthinkable for the anonymous artist who drew this scene to imagine anyone other than white settlers as the victims of American Indian violence! The lapse is revealing and eloquently illustrates the ways in which stereotyped images of American Indians took on a life of their own.

The second Arbuckle card (dated 1893), titled "American Indians," is particularly interesting because it is part of an ethnocentric series of fifty cards "giving a pictorial history of the Sports and Pastimes of all Nations" (fig. 6.14). In addition to hunting, spearfishing, and riding, one of these "pastimes" was the war dance. In this illustration, a ceremony related to the cultural survival of American Indian nations (who were subject to constant encroachment and attack from white troops and settlers) is turned into an amusement, as if it were no more serious than the waltz or polka. The text on the reverse continues this vein of cultural chauvinism: "The war-dance, principal of their terpsichorean exercises was more horrible than graceful, and suggested the sanguinary atrocities of bloodshed." The Latinate euphemisms ("terpsichorean," "sanguinary") make a show of disguising the bloody "reality" behind the war dance, as if more direct language would offend the reader's "civilized" sensibilities. But in actuality, these terms (as well as the text as a whole) reveal a colonizing mind-set that uses ornate language as a sign of cultural superiority and presumed distance from "sanguinary atrocities" (as if only American Indians were responsible for savage acts of violence).

Equally revealing is the writer's use of the past tense throughout the explanatory

text (which provides a graphic example of the image of the "noble savage"): "No hardier or more rugged race than the Indians of North America *ever existed*. Their endurance and tenacity *were* more than human, their stoicism *was* remarkable, their courage *shrank* from nothing, and their skill and agility *were* the development of generations of outdoor life." In the scale of cultural evolution, this suggests, the American Indian represented an earlier, more primitive race that had long since been superseded by the "civilized" races of the world, who fit more clearly into the scale of humanity (not being "more than human").

Very few nineteenth-century trade cards escaped from the cultural imperialism of the cards described above. This should not be surprising, considering that most of these cards were produced in the late 1880s and early 1890s, at the end of two decades of active warfare between government troops and Indian nations in the West. After the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, western settlement had rapidly accelerated. Armed conflicts became inevitable as struggles broke out over valuable lands. Between 1866 and 1886, wars were fought with the Teton Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos in Wyoming and Montana; with the Paiutes in Oregon and Idaho; with the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Sioux, Comanches, and Kiowas in the Central Plains; with the Modocs in California; with the Lakota Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos in Montana and Wyoming; with the Nez Percé in the Northwest; with the Bannocks, Paiutes, and Cayuses in Idaho and Oregon; with the Utes in Colorado; and with the Apaches in the Southwest.[31] By 1890, after the conclusion of these armed conflicts, millions of acres of ceded land were being opened up for white settlement throughout the West.

As these wars ended and especially after the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887, the roles of American Indians were rapidly changing. In the eyes of many whites, Indian cultures—vanquished by the U.S. military—had disappeared. Other more enlightened individuals realized that surviving members of tribes would need a new economic foundation for their cultures, since traditional patterns of hunting and food gathering had been destroyed by the numerous wars and the consequent relocation of Indians to reservations. The Dawes Act, with its system of land allotments, represented an attempt to transform American Indians into citizens and farmers. The Salishan author Mourning Dove captured the turmoil of this situation in her posthumously published autobiography:

> My birth happened in the year 1888. In that year the Indians of my tribe, the Colville, were well into the cycle of history involving their readjustment in living conditions. They were in a pathetic state of turmoil caused by trying to learn to till the soil for a living, which was being done on a very small and crude scale. It was no easy matter for members of this aboriginal stock, accustomed to making a different livelihood (by the bow and arrow), to handle the plow and sow seed for food. Yet I was born long enough ago to have known people who lived in the ancient way before everything started to change.[32]

Not surprisingly, very few trade cards illustrated these changing circumstances. One card that did, however, was produced to advertise Keystone Agricultural Implements around 1890 (fig. 6.15). Uncle Sam stands in front of an illustration of

Fig. 6.15. Trade card, Key
Co., Sterling, Ill.; printed c
photo, Jeffrey Steele.

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31. Hal Morgan, *Symbols of*
32. Eric Sundquist, *To Wak*
Cambridge: Harvard Universit
33. L. G. Moses, "Wild West
1887–1914," *South Dakota His*
34. Ibid., pp. 194, 197.
35. Ronald Takaki, *A Differ*
London: Little, Brown,
1880s, considerable sentim
policy reform" (p. 199)

Fig. 6.15. Trade card, Keystone Line of Agricultural Implements, Keystone Manufacturing Co., Sterling, Ill.; printed ca. 1890 by G. H. Dunston, Buffalo, N.Y. Bren-Dor Americana; photo, Jeffrey Steele.

a new disc harrow, which he points out to sixteen male viewers. All of the members of his audience represent recognizable ethnic types, among them Scottish, Irish, German, Scandinavian, Turkish, Chinese, Arabian, and African. Significantly, this family of nations includes an American Indian, who looks on as attentively as the others. In this unusual advertisement, the American Indian is granted space, along with the others, to join in the cultivation of the nation. Although such space rarely appears in nineteenth-century trade cards, its presence in this instance suggests how varied and rich a medium they represent. Advertisers used whatever would help sell their products; and as the nation began to change at the turn of the century, even American Indians (long used as emblems of racial otherness) gained a foothold in the nation's commercial culture. No longer positioned solely as entertaining icons used to symbolize products, they began to gain a role as accepted consumers in their own right.

NOTES

1. Hal Morgan, *Symbols of America* (New York: Viking Press, 1986), pp. 57–59, 61–62.
2. Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 473.
3. L. G. Moses, "Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian, 1887–1914," *South Dakota History* 14 (fall 1984): 195.
4. Ibid., pp. 194, 197.
5. Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown, 1993), p. 234. Moses (cited earlier) notes that "by the end of the 1880s, considerable sentiment against the use of Indians in shows rose among leaders in Indian policy reform" (p. 199).

6. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 67.

7. In a modern example of this viewpoint, Morgan in *Symbols of America* observes that "after the last Indian resistance in the West had been crushed," it "became safe to look back fondly on a great and noble culture that had been largely destroyed" (p. 57).

8. Robert Jay, *The Trade Card in Nineteenth-Century America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), pp. 34, 39.

9. Ibid., p. 60.

10. J. Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), pp. 41, 54.

11. Ibid., pp. 42, 20, 55.

12. Jay, *The Trade Card*, p. 60.

13. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), pp. 38, 44.

14. For a discussion of these matters, see Berkhofer's *White Man's Indian*, chapter 2, under the section " 'Scientific' Racism and Human Diversity in Nineteenth-Century Social Sciences."

15. Jay, *The Trade Card*, pp. 70–71.

16. Patricia C. Albers and William R. James, "Utah's Indians and Popular Photography in the American West: A View from the Picture Post Card," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 52 (winter 1984): 91.

17. Jay, *The Trade Card*, p. 71.

18. Lears, *Fables*, p. 64.

19. Kit Barry, *Reflections: Ephemera from Trades, Products, and Events*, vol. 1 (Brattleboro, Vt.: Iris Publishing, 1993), p. 52.

20. David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 170.

21. Lears, *Fables*, pp. 107, 109.

22. Carl Waldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York and London: Facts on File, 1985), p. 171.

23. Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 32, 39.

24. Goffman discusses a similar dynamic in the advertisements he studies, in which "the female is likely to be exhibiting a more expansive expression than is the male" (p. 69).

25. Lears, *Fables*, p. 153.

26. Kit Barry, *Reflections: Ephemera from Trades, Products, and Events*, vol. 2 (Brattleboro, Vt.: Iris Publishing, 1994), p. 27.

27. One famous example of contemporary standards of erotic display involved a Merrick Thread card depicting a mother playing with two children at the ocean. In its original state, the woman, shown seated on a rock, was depicted with bare breasts, but because of public outcry, the printer was forced to alter the card by covering the offending flesh with extra hair.

28. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, p. xv.

29. Barry, *Reflections*, vol. 1, p. 123.

30. Barry, *Reflections*, vol. 2, p. 173.

31. Waldman, *Atlas*, p. 129.

32. Mourning Dove, *A Salishan Autobiography*, ed. Jay Miller (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 3.