OSCAR BROUSSE JACOBSON: THE LIFE AND ART OF A COSMOPOLITAN CULTURAL BROKER

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OSCAR BROSSE JACOBSON:
THE LIFE AND ART OF A COSMOPOLITAN CULTURAL BROKER

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OSCAR BROUSSE JACOBSON:

THE LIFE AND ART OF A COSMOPOLITAN CULTURAL BROKER

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with a

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by

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Oscar Brousse Jacobson: 
The Life of a Cosmopolitan Cultural Broker

Advisor: Prof. Sherry Smith

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As a graduate student studying art at Yale, Oscar Brousse Jacobson (1882–1966) pinned his career on the hopes of someday opening an art school in the American West. Jacobson was a Swedish immigrant, but he felt a deep connection to the West because he spent much of his youth on a ranch in Kansas and roamed the greater Southwest by horseback during the late 1800s. Jacobson believed that after he completed his graduate studies in New England, he would eventually return West. He planned to bring great works of art, produce his own paintings, instruct young artists, and foster art appreciation in the underrepresented region. With this dream in mind, he carved out a place for himself among other renowned American artists and art promoters.

Many of the choices he made in his life advanced this vision. He traveled throughout the United States and internationally, speaking with local residents and artists, forging connections that would prove useful later as director of an art school. As a cultural broker between the art world and the public, and especially between Indian artists and white consumers, Jacobson contributed most significantly to the enrichment of Oklahoma and the Southwest. His artistic legacy lives on—today and for future generations—through his advancement of Native American art and art history, public art murals across Oklahoma and Texas, and the University of Oklahoma’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS........................................................................................................................................... vii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS...................................................................................................................................... viii

INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 1  A YOUNG SWEDE’S WESTERN TRANSFORMATION................................................................. 16

CHAPTER 2  JACOBSON OBSERVING: PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR ADVOCACY .. 66

CHAPTER 3  MAKING A NAME .......................................................................................................................... 119

CHAPTER 4  BROADENING HORIZONS: LOOKING WEST, LOOKING EAST ........ 158

CHAPTER 5  THE KIOWA SIX: COMING OUT ON CANVAS ................................................................. 179

CHAPTER 6  GOVERNMENT AWAKENING: THE NEW DEAL............................................................ 250

CHAPTER 7  SOLIDIFYING A LEGACY ........................................................................................................... 282

EPILOGUE  THE JACOBSON HOUSE REMEMEBRS................................................................. 309

CHRONOLOGY...................................................................................................................................................... 312

BIBLIOGRAPHY.................................................................................................................................................. 316
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.1 “A Corner of Fine Arts Studio” ................................................................. 17
Figure 1.2 Oscar Jacobson, Pullman WA, 1914 .......................................................... 18
Figure 1.3 Oscar Jacobson, At the Freezing Point (Vyd Fryspunkten) ......................... 21
Figure 1.4 Oscar Jacobson, untitled, 1895 .................................................................. 26
Figure 1.5 Frederic Remington, The Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill, 1898 .... 31
Figure 1.6 Frederic Remington, The Scream of Shrapnel at San Juan Hill, 1898 .............. 32
Figure 1.7 Oscar Jacobson, Portrait of Birger Sandzén, 1902, ....................................... 35
Figure 1.8 Igorrote Song, 1904 ................................................................................ 44
Figure 1.9 “Geronimo at the fair,” St. Louis 1904............................................................ 47
Figure 1.10 “Kawraw Kotes’ Den” in Oscar Brousse Jacobson’s suite at Yale, 1906 .......... 52
Figure 1.11 Oscar Jacobson as “Mustango,” from New Haven Union, December 22, 1907 ...... 56
Figure 2.1 Oscar Jacobson, Elegy of the Sea (Coast of Sweden), 1923 ........................ 68
Figure 2.2 Hall of Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition, Baltic Reflections. ......................... 70
Figure 2.3 Ester Almqvist, Sawmill in December Sun, 1914 ............................................ 74
Figure 2.4 Oscar Jacobson, Winter Forest in Sweden, ca. 1914 ...................................... 75
Figure 2.5 Peter Adolf Persson, 1862-1914, The Black Temple, ca. 1900 ...................... 75
Figure 2.6 Käthe Kollwitz, Woman with Dead Child, 1903 ........................................... 77
Figure 2.7 Käthe Kollwitz, Death and Woman, 1910 ..................................................... 78
Figure 2.8 Käthe Kollwitz, Riot, ca. 1897 ................................................................... 78
Figure 2.9 Wilhelm Leibl, German, The Chemist J. Jais................................................................. 80
Figure 2.10 Aleksandr Hausch, Fireworks, ca. 1900-1914............................................................ 81
Figure 2.11 Nikolai Milioti, Oriental, ca. 1910 .............................................................................. 82
Figure 2.12 Aleksandr Yakovlev, Landscape with Figures, ca. 1912-1914 ........................................ 82
Figure 2.13 Boris Kustodieiev, The Bath, 1910 .................................................................................. 83
Figure 2.14 Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, The Worker, 1912 ................................................................. 83
Figure 2.15 Nicholas Roerich’s solo room ....................................................................................... 86
Figure 2.16 Nicholas Roerich, Russian, The Palace of Tsar Berendey, 1912 ................................. 87
Figure 2.17 Oscar B. Jacobson, Winter Forest in Sweden.............................................................. 92
Figure 2.18 Gauguin, Faa Ilheihe (Frieze at the PPI), 1898 ............................................................ 96
Figure 2.19 John Singer Sargent, Spanish Gypsy, ca. 1879-1890 .................................................. 97
Figure 2.20 John Singer Sargent, Spanish Courtyard, ca. 1880-1882 ........................................ 97
Figure 2.21 John Singer Sargent, Joseph Jefferson, 1890 ............................................................. 98
Figure 2.22 John Singer Sargent, Nude Study, 1891 ..................................................................... 99
Figure 2.23 John Singer Sargent, Spanish Stable, ca. 1903............................................................ 100
Figure 2.24 John Singer Sargent, Reconnoitering, 1911 .................................................................. 100
Figure 2.25 John Singer Sargent, Henry James, 1913 .................................................................... 101
Figure 2.26 John Singer Sargent, The Sketchers, 1913 ................................................................. 101
Figure 2.27 George Bellow, Polo Crowd, 1910 .............................................................................. 102
Figure 2.28 George Bellow, Excavation at Night, 1908 ............................................................... 102
Figure 2.29 George Bellow Riverfront, 1914 ................................................................................. 103
Figure 2.30 George Bellow, River Rats, 1906 ................................................................................ 103
Figure 2.31 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Nocturne in Black and Gold—The Falling Rocket, ca.1872-1877.................................................................................................................. 104
Figure 3.1 Georges-Pierre Seurat, Evening, Honfleur, 1886 ......................................................... 135
Figure 3.2 Georges-Pierre Seurat, Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor, 1888 ............ 135
Figure 3.3 Oscar Jacobson, Pink Moon, 1916 ........................................................................ 136
Figure 3.4 Oscar Jacobson, A Prayer for Rain, 1916 ............................................................... 137
Figure 3.5 Birger Sandzén, In the Painted Desert, 1915 ......................................................... 138
Figure 3.6 Oscar Jacobson, Grand Canyon, ca. 1920 .......................................................... 139
Figure 4.1 “Broadmoor Art Academy Faculty Attracts Record Crowd Students,” 1924 ...... 161
Figure 4.2 Oscar Jacobson, Olives in Provence, 1925 ........................................................... 164
Figure 4.3 Oscar Jacobson, Chateau des Comtes d’Ucel ....................................................... 165
Figure 4.4 Oscar Jacobson, In Morocco, ca. 1925 ................................................................. 166
Figure 4.5 Oscar Jacobson, Kairouan, Tunis, Africa, 4th Holy-City, Great Mosque, ca. 1925 . 166
Figure 4.6 Oscar Jacobson, Untitled [Man on Camel], 1935 ............................................... 167
Figure 4.7 “Lectures on North Africa by Professor Oscar B. Jacobson” ......................... 171
Figure 4.8 “The Sahara and its People” by Professor Oscar B. Jacobson” ...................... 172
Figure 4.9 Oscar Jacobson, Emerald Lake, No. 1, 1936 ....................................................... 173
Figure 4.10 Oscar Jacobson, Green Mountains, 1936 ......................................................... 174
Figure 4.11 Oscar Jacobson, Trail Ridge in June, 1938 ....................................................... 174
Figure 4.12 Jeanne d’Ucel, Berber Art, 1932, cover illustrations by Oscar Brousse Jacobson . 176
Figure 4.13 Unknown, Navajo, Eyedazzler Blanket, ca. 1885 ............................................. 177
Figure 4.14 Unknown, Algeria, Kabylie region (Leqbayel), Imazighen (Berber) Rug, n.d..... 177
Figure 5.1 Oscar Jacobson and Kiowa Five members, with the exception of Smoky, 1929..... 185
Figure 5.2 Jack Hokeah, Kiowa Feather Dance Prophet and Buffalo Skull, ca. 1930 .......... 187
Figure 5.3 Jack Hokeah, Mural at St. Patrick’s Mission School, Untitled ............................ 190
Figure 5.4 Jack Hokeah, ca. 1929 ................................................................. 190
Figure 5.5 Monroe Tsatoke, ca. 1928 .......................................................... 199
Figure 5.6 Stephen Mopope, ca. 1928, Arthur Silberman ............................ 200
Figure 5.7 Monroe Tsatoke, Messenger Bird Between the Earth and the Grates, n.d.,........ 202
Figure 5.8 Monroe Tsatoke, Water Bird, n.a. ................................................ 202
Figure 5.9 Monroe Tsatoke, Fire Bird, n.d. ...................................................... 203
Figure 5.10 Mopope, Eagle Dance, ............................................................... 206
Figure 5.11 Stephen Mopope, Eagle Dance .................................................... 207
Figure 5.12 Mopope, Flute Player ................................................................. 207
Figure 5.13 Lois Smoky, Arthur Silberman .................................................... 209
Figure 5.14 Lois Smoky, Arthur Silberman .................................................... 209
Figure 5.15 Monroe Tsatoke, The Love Call ................................................... 216
Figure 5.16 Tsatoke, Warrior in Black ........................................................... 217
Figure 5.17 Tsatoke, Medicine Dance ............................................................ 218
Figure 5.18 Hokeah, Hummingbird .............................................................. 219
Figure 5.19 Hokeah, Greeting of the Moon God ............................................. 220
Figure 5.20 Lois Smoky, Family ................................................................. 221
Figure 5.21 Spencer Asah, Self-portrait ......................................................... 222
Figure 5.22 Stephen Mopope, Squaw Dance ................................................ 222
Figure 5.23 Stephen Mopope ................................................................. 223
Figure 5.24 Mopope, Hopi Green Dance ..................................................... 224
Figure 5.25 Tsatoke’s work Portrait of Crow Indian ....................................... 229
Figure 5.26 Stephen Mopope Eagle Dancers ................................................ 241
Figure 5.27 Jack Hokeah, Drummers Singers, 1932 .............................................................. 241
Figure 5.28 Richard Martinez, Santa Fe Indian Boarding School ......................................... 243
Figure 5.29 Julian Martinez, Mural at Santa Fe Indian Boarding School ............................... 243
Figure 5.30 Muralists and Faculty at Santa Fe Indian Boarding School ............................... 244
Figure 5.31 Santa Fe Indian Boarding School ....................................................................... 244
Figure 5.32 Jack Hokeah, untitled mural, n.d. Arthur Silberman ........................................... 245
Figure 5.33 Jack Hokeah, mural, n.d. Arthur Silberman ......................................................... 245
Figure 6.1 Mopope and Auchiah, Kiowa War Dance ............................................................ 265
Figure 6.2 Richard “Dick” West, Grand Council of 1842, 1941 ............................................. 273
Figure 6.3 Steven Mopope, Ceremonial Dance, 1939 ............................................................. 278
Figure 6.4 James Auchiah, Harvest Dance, 1939 ................................................................. 278
Figure 6.5 Woody (Woodrow Wilson) Crumbo, Buffalo Hunt, 1930 ...................................... 279
Figure 6.6 Woody (Woodrow Wilson) Crumbo, Deer (left) and Courting, 1930 .................... 279
Figure 6.7 Woody (Woodrow Wilson) Crumbo, Flute Player, 1930 ....................................... 280
For Mom and Dad.
INTRODUCTION

As a graduate student studying art at Yale, Oscar Brousse Jacobson (1882–1966) pinned his career on the hopes of someday opening an art school in the American West. Jacobson was a Swedish immigrant, but he felt a deep connection to the West because he had spent much of his youth on a ranch in Kansas and roamed the greater Southwest on horseback during the late 1800s. Jacobson believed that after he completed his graduate studies in New England, he would eventually return west. There, he planned to introduce works of art, produce his own paintings, instruct young artists, and foster art appreciation in the underrepresented region. With this dream in mind, he sought to carve out a place for himself among other renowned American artists and art promoters.

Many of the choices Jacobson made in his life and career advanced this vision. He traveled throughout the United States, starting in the 1890s, and by 1914, internationally, speaking with local residents and artists, forging connections that would prove useful later as director of an art school. As a cultural broker between the art world and the public, and especially between Indian artists and white consumers, Jacobson contributed most significantly to the enrichment of the Southwest, defined as Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. His artistic legacy lives on-through his advancement of Native American art and art history, his sponsoring
of public art murals across Oklahoma and Texas, and his contributions to the establishment of the University of Oklahoma’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.¹

Cultural brokers engage in a complex process of negotiation and representation across ethnic or national barriers.² In his case, Jacobson helped bring Native artists into larger national and global markets. Jacobson’s role as intermediary proved valuable to both Native people and consumers of their work, especially patrons looking for something authentically “American.” Jacobson also served as an intermediary between numerous artists of different cultural backgrounds and institutions, such as the federal government. Jacobson adeptly moved among diverse groups, negotiating multiethnic and socioeconomic environments, and responding to cultural cues appropriately. His cosmopolitan background helped shaped his global and inclusive outlook. Examining Jacobson as a cultural broker broadens our understanding of such people and


² Well-documented literature has examined the various experiences for intermediaries during frontier encounters. While Oklahoma in 1915, when Jacobson arrived, was no longer part of the frontier, it was still largely underdeveloped and multiethnic. On the term cultural broker, see Margaret Connell Szasz, ed., Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1994). Szasz describes how cultural brokers worked between cultures and were often consequently alienated from full inclusion in either society. However, Jacobson did not encounter alienation. Various ethnic and cultural groups tended to receive him well. With his pluralistic and cosmopolitan outlook, Jacobson moved between various worlds with relative ease. Jacobson mediated in zones that overlapped Indian and non-Western worlds with Anglo spheres. See also David Rich Lewis, “Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865–1928,” Ethnohistory 38 (Spring 1991): 126. For work that discusses Indians as cultural brokers, see Brian Hosmer, “Reflections on Indian Cultural ‘Brokers’: Reginald Oshkosh, Mitchell Oshkenaniew, and the Politics of Menominee Lumbering,” Ethnohistory 44 (Summer 1997): 493-509. Hosmer argues that to better understand Indian cultural brokers, it is important to “ground our evaluations firmly in local conditions, cultural practices, and expectations” (504.) For other discussion of Indians as cultural brokers, see Clara Sue Kidwell, “Indian Women as Cultural Mediators,” Ethnohistory 39 (1992): 97-107, and Frances Karttunen, Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994). Another important work on “go-betweens” is Richard White’s work, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). While White does not specifically examine cultural intermediaries, he does consider interracial marriage and focuses on early cross-cultural cooperation on a multiethnic frontier and demonstrates how Europeans and Indians accommodated each other’s cultural differences and collaborated in creating a productive zone in the Great Lakes region (1650-1815). In this sense, Jacobson collaborated with different ethnicities to help realize their artistic production.
the historical roles they played. Jacobson looking beyond ethnic zones of interaction, the
crossroads where cultures meet, demonstrates how intermediaries such as Jacobson created a
more inclusive art world.

Serving Jacobson’s role as cultural broker was his ability and inclination to identify with
cultures other than his own. He demonstrated that identities are multifaceted and complex and
that such fluidity can help to smooth cross-cultural relationships. He also showed how one
“imagined” or “reimagined” oneself could be used as marketing strategy.³ For instance, Jacobson
emphasized either his American Western or Swedish roots depending the context and on his
needs. For example, when a Scandinavian organization wanted to show his work as a Swede or
Swedish-American to celebrate that international connection, Jacobson willingly cooperated.⁴
Emphasizing one identity rather than another under certain circumstances could have market
advantages.⁵ The Native artists he worked with understood this, too, and often followed suit.

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³ While attending Yale, Jacobson played up his Western identity. There, he also once acted the part of an Indian
chief, mostly likely a fictitious character, in the play “Sunset.” A couple of years later, when teaching in Minnesota,
he played a Swedish Viking alongside Charles Eastman, a Sioux Indian, who played the role of “vanishing” Indians.
Whites “playing Indian” or “reimagining” themselves as Indians is documented in a large body of literature. To
understand how this phenomenon shaped popular culture and national identity see: Philip Deloria, Playing Indian
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Deloria discusses the long tradition of Indian play, primarily by non-
Indians, and the ways in which this act changed from the American Revolution through the 1990s. Deloria probes
ow American identity has contended with “the Indian” over time, how this identity has changed, and how Native
Americans “participated in white people’s Indian play, assisting, conforming, co-opting, challenging and
legitimating the performative traditions of aboriginal American identity.”(8). Also see Robert F. Berghofer Jr., The
White Man’s Indian: Images of American Indians from Columbus to the Present (New York: Vintage, 1979); Leah
Dilworth, Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past (Washington, D.C.: Smithsoni
Institution Press, 1996); Sherry L. Smith, Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880-1950 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Shari M. Huhndorf, Going Native: Indians in the American
Cultural Imagination (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Erika Marie Bsumek, Indian-Made: Navajo Culture
in the Marketplace, 1868-1940 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008).

⁴ For more on cultural capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1993), 7. Whites such as Jacobson supported the sale of “authentic” arts and crafts by Indian
artisans, both to help indigenous peoples and to bolster creation of a national identity. See Molly Mullin, Culture in
Oklahoma does not play a role in Mullin’s book, but Jacobson and his work with Indian artists, especially painters,
allows Oklahoma to become part of Mullin’s larger Southwest discussion.

⁵ Jacobson’s Swedish roots gave him employment opportunities: three universities noticed him, in part because of a
well-established Scandinavian network that existed in Minnesota, Washington, and at Bethany College in
Lindsborg, Kansas, which resulted in his appointment at the University of Oklahoma.
Jacobson was also a cultural pluralist who valued American diversity. He believed that the rich mosaic of ethnicities and cultures created rich potential for art and for America’s place in the larger art world. Jacobson was aware of the way in which other nations’ governments sponsored art, and he witnessed how this support enriched the cultures of those nations. He wanted to see the United States, his adopted country, have the same sponsorship and take center stage in the global art world. Jacobson urged Americans to celebrate diversity as an asset, rather than something to be opposed and destroyed. Rejecting an ethnocentric outlook, he advocated the development, appreciation, and preservation of a range of American cultures, especially Native arts.

Assimilation policies aimed at Native Americans were beginning to wane by the mid-1910s. Anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, “stressed the diversity of cultures and abandoned the long-established practice of associating culture (singular) with civilizations (Western and European). They integrative wholeness of cultures,” historian Sherry Smith articulated. Cultural pluralists took this a step further as they believed that the rich mosaic of ethnicities and cultures that made up America should be protected and even celebrated, especially Native cultures. However, racial classifications remained intact through the 1920s, even after assimilation policies increasingly came under scrutiny. Jacobson’s ideas about non-Western people, reflecting the changing times, likewise seemed ambivalent, contradictory and unstable. He sometimes

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7 Periodization is the process by which artists and scholars organize and divide styles of art. They look for lines of demarcation by grouping like characteristics, such as iconographic, formal, or thematic qualities. These periods are constructs, but scholars and artists believe that each period is distinct. For more information on periodization see https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/periodization-arts&sa=D&ust=1508269195021000&usg=AFQjCNH1rRQvXVvC7iN2p6FlwUH6n_PgYQ.

8 Smith, Reimagining Indians, 7.
referred to Indians and other groups of people as “primitive.” Other times, he claimed Anglo-Americans had much to learn from non-whites. Evaluating Jacobson’s interactions with and observations of Indians sheds light on larger conceptual trends regarding Native Americans and their place in the United States.⁹

Often entwined with preservationist rhetoric was a preoccupation with cultural nationalism, or the search for America’s unique national culture. Jacobson was a cultural nationalist, joining contemporary artists John Sloan and Marsden Hartley, and writer Mary Austin.¹⁰ He, like most Anglo preservationists, argued that “Indian” culture should be preserved because it provided proof of America’s exceptional cultural heritage and because Indians were the original American artists. Thus, whites appropriated American Indian culture, claiming it as part of the United States’ “usable past,” as well as part of the nation’s thriving creative present.¹¹ Jacobson specifically celebrated Indian artists because they offered the first “truly American” art and understood indigenous art as integral to the “national soul.”¹² Jacobson also admired

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⁹ “Primitives,” as celebrated by twentieth-century cultural modernists, referred to those peoples who were non-Christian, non-Western, nondeveloped, and nonwhite. It is important to note that primitivist rhetoric is neither monolithic nor static, and it shifted based on location and context. For classification of human populations, see Carol Mukhopadhyay and Yolanda Moses, “Reestablishing ‘Race’ in Anthropological Discourse,” American Anthropologist 99, no. 3 (September, 1997): 517-18. For a discussion of the factors that influenced Lewis Henry Morgan’s thinking, see Elisabeth Tooker, “Lewis H. Morgan and His Contemporaries,” American Anthropologist 94, no. 2 (June 1992): 357-75, and Adam Kuper, The Invention of Primitive Society: The Transformation of an Illusion (New York: Routledge, 1988).

¹⁰ All worked with or wrote about Pueblo art in New Mexico. Even Jacobson’s art, regional landscapes, is a type of cultural nationalism, as is ethnic art, including tourist ethnic art, discussed in chapter two. For a deeper look into Jacobson’s own art production, a subject this dissertation does not explore much, see art historian Mark Andrew White’s article “An Artist in the Wilderness: Oscar Brousse Jacobson and Worlds Unconquered,” A World Unconquered, 37-102. Cultural nationalist readings are offered by Wanda Corn, The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935 (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1999); Heather Hole, Marsden Hartley and the West: The Search for an American Modernism (New Haven and Santa Fe: Yale University Press and Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, 2007). As Sherry L. Smith notes, Mary Austin “argued that American Indian expression formed the foundation of a national culture, particularly poetry,” but art was also a part of this expression. See Smith’s chapter “Sisters of the Southwest: Mary Austin and Anna Ickes,” Smith’s Reimagining Indians, 165-186.


¹² Like so many artists Jacobson associated with, John Sloan also became enchanted with the Southwest, especially New Mexico. John Sloan spent the summer of 1918 in Santa Fe and returned almost annually for the next thirty
American Indian work for its inherent artistic merits and believed the art world should seek and encourage Indian artists.

In an unfortunate historical slight, historians have placed an emphasis on Jacobson only for his work with the internationally acclaimed six Kiowa artists who studied at the University of Oklahoma and later became known as the Kiowa Five. While his work with the Kiowa Five is arguably the most significant aspect of his career, Jacobson also had noteworthy influence on Indian art production beyond the Kiowa Five. Indeed, Jacobson left an indelible mark upon the larger Indian art market and interactions with white America.

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Books and articles referenced the previous note do not adequately reflect Jacobson’s contributions. Numerous primary sources exist regarding Jacobson’s greater involvement in promoting Indian art, which have not been fully explored, therefore, authors have often missed his larger historical role in art history. Such overlooked sources include those written by Jacobson, his wife, government officials involved in the Indian art market, and most importantly, interviews and writings by Native people speaking on their own behalf. These and other numerous primary sources are noted in each following chapters and in the bibliography.

Two works that reference important primary sources, include: Arthur Silberman, *100 Years of Native American Painting* (Oklahoma City: The Oklahoma Museum of Art, 1978) and Berlo, “From Indigenous America to North Africa,” *A World Unconquered*, which was published in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition of Jacobson’s career, offers the first critical analysis of his work as both an artist and a cultural figure, which coincided with the centennial of his arrival in Oklahoma in 1915. Anne Allbright, Janet Berlo, and Mark White, *A World Unconquered*. 
Jacobson wanted the art community and the public to view Indian art as “art” not “ethnology,” and this remained an ongoing challenge for him. But he was not alone; Jacobson worked alongside other prominent Indian art promoters. White women played a key role in artistic appreciation and cultural awareness among southwestern Indians during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. Individuals such as Elizabeth White, Mary Austin, and Dorothy Dunn claimed that Indian paintings were worthy of fine art galleries and museums. They argued that art critics should study Indian artworks for their aesthetic value, rather than placing a scientific ethnological emphasis on them. Together, the advocacy of cultural nationalists, preservationists, and cultural pluralists led to a widespread change in attitudes toward art and radically transformed the visual culture of the West, particularly the Southwest. Placing an emphasis on the role Jacobson played in this effort, adds Oklahoma to the already rich literature, which disproportionately focuses on New Mexico.

Of course, Native people did not passively participate in art production. They actively promoted their work. Sometimes Indian artists “played Indian” to non-Indians seeking “authentic” Native American material culture, that is, these artists played up their Indianness and

16 Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters*. Jacobs provides a nuanced discussion of cross-cultural relationships between Anglo-Americans and Pueblos. She emphasizes the gender aspect of promotion and idealization with Pueblos and provides significant context for why Pueblos received such attention during a time of great technical modernization. Also see “Sisters of the Southwest,” in Smith’s *Reimagining Indians*, 165-185. In 1932, Dorothy Dunn directed the art program at the Santa Fe Indian School, often called “the Studio.” She, like Jacobson, was a non-Indian, grew up in Kansas, and was enthralled with Southwest Indian art. Also, during the first couple of years as director, Dunn used paintings from Jacobson’s students, the Kiowa Five, as prime inspiration to model her teaching. Neither Dunn nor her main biographers have credited Jacobson and his students in this role. Dunn, *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Area*, and Bernstein and Rushing, *Modern by Tradition*, 4, 5, 27, 29, 36, 40.

exoticism. This allowed them to earn much-needed income at a time when they had limited employment options. Sometimes tension mounted between Indian artists and white consumers. Purchasers expected “primitive” works while Indians resisted such restraints, wanting freedom to create their own art. Jacobson, however, understood that Indian “culture” sold. So, he encouraged his Native students to emphasize their “Indianness,” but he also encouraged consumers to see and appreciate the modern elements of Indian life and art. He wanted his students to challenge outsiders’ preconceived notions that Indians lacked modernity and intellectual sophistication. His Indian friends and students delighted on such occasions. Sometimes they even turned the tables and publicly mocked non-Indians’ unsophisticated understanding of them.

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18 Bsumek, Indian-Made, 17.
19 Discussions about the World Fair of 1904, in chapter one, and in 1915, in chapter two, elaborate on this point more fully.
20 Once when the University of Oklahoma was hosting a conference full of distinguished Eastern guests, President Bizzell, who knew their Indian “leanings,” asked Jacobson to produce some Indians for a bit of entertainment. Jacobson agreed given that one of them would make the principle speech at the formal banquet. He recalled that “The President seemed disturbed and doubtful of the wisdom of my request, since the hall would be filled with illustrious scholars, educators, etc., but we was game. Came the banquet hour, and, at the honor table, there sits my Indian in his feathered finery, like a bird of Paradise among penguins. There were raised eyebrows everywhere. The distinguished neighbor at his left spoke to him slowly, in pidgin English, in the hope that he might understand the simplest words— and received a typical grunt in reply. Then came the climax. The Indian addressed the servants in scholarly and polished English with the poise of an accomplished orator. The wise men of the East sat with open ears, and open mouths. No wonder! The speaker was Acee Blue Eagle, distinguished painter and former professional entertainer...So few people understand that many Oklahoma Indians are heirs of two cultures, and can appear with equal confidence at a full-dress banquet or an Indian war dance.” Jacobson, “Fred Beaver, Acee Blue Eagle, Allen Houser,” TMs, Folder 47, Box J-13, Western History Collection. The Oscar B. Jacobson Collection at the Western History Collection [Hereinafter cited as WHC], Norman, Oklahoma, from the University of Oklahoma Archives serves as another large source for this dissertation. In WHC, three archival boxes, J-1, J-13, and J-18, hold eighty-nine folders ranging from published documents, government records, and Jacobson’s typed manuscripts. This dissertation is also heavily reliant on this resource. What is found at WHC closely follows the collection at OHS. All material cited from WHC comes from the Oscar B. Jacobson Collection unless otherwise noted.
21 Brousse, “About Indians,” TMs, Folder 5, Box 4, OHS; One illustration of this comes from Kricket Rhoads-Con-ny-w-erdy, a descendant of Kiowa Five artist Stephen Mopope. Kricket Rhoads-Con-ny-w-erdy, who is a powwow circuit dancer and former director of the Jacobson House Native Art Center in Jacobson’s former home in Norman, Oklahoma, shared with me on numerous occasions how Jacobson’s Indian students poked fun at white audiences without the audiences knowing. They tired of being seen as Others. For example, one Kiowa artist would speak in Kiowa to a crowd and another Kiowa artist translated. But what was said and what was translated were two very different things. Speaking in Kiowa, the artist would point at a member in the audience and say something funny about the man, but the translator would say something like, “This man looks very distinguished.” In addition to Kricket Rhoads-Con-ny-w-erdy’s accounts, the, daughter of Jack Hokeah conveyed similar stories in an oral
What troubled Jacobson was that too many white Americans, including Oklahomans, who intended to buy Indian art, looked farther west, especially to tourist centers such as Santa Fe and Albuquerque for their purchases. They identified the reservation Indians of New Mexico and Arizona as more “traditional.” Oklahoma Indians did not live on reservations; they had individual allotments. Many consumers from the late 1800s into the 1930s believed that in order for Indian art to be “authentic” it must be “traditional,” and traditional meant reservation, away from Anglo influences. But Jacobson understood the word *traditional* was more complex. He likely would have agreed with J. C. H. King’s assessment of the loaded term *traditional*: “All cultural systems exist in a constant state of change, brought about both by internal and external forces.” Because cultures are dynamic, *tradition* cannot be static—“traditional” changes as societies evolve. Therefore, “tradition and culture in art,” according to King, “must be seen as a relative term, used, for instance, to compare one situation or object with another, or to describe an art object with respect to a given corpus of related material.” Jacobson sought to broaden

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22 The railroad and Fred Harvey Company contributed significantly to this idea. Leah Dilworth looks at how the railroad played a crucial role in the development of the Southwest and opened the region up to probing white American tourists seeking to experience, even if superficially, “real” Indians. At that time, white Americans viewed Indians as a dying race. The Fred Harvey Company sought to create a “dramatic and entertaining setting for tourists to view American Indian life as it supposedly was lived on the region’s reservations.” The company set up hotels and storefronts along the railroads within the Southwest to tap into the growing tourist industry and to help cultivate an interest in Indian crafts. The company wanted to give tourists an “authentic” Indian experience. Indians participated and sometimes even acted as members of a tribe other than their own. What was important was that the tourists thought they were buying authentic Indian works made by “real” Indians. For more on this, see Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest*. See also Molly Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art and value in the American Southwest* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Bsumek, *Indian-Made*, 32-33, 35.

23 Under the Dawes Act, the federal government broke up tribal land in Oklahoma, previously known as Indian Territory. The intention was to destroy tribal land bases undermine tribal sovereignty and accelerate the process of assimilation. Despite being home to a large percentage of the U.S. Indian population, only one reservation remains in the state compared to New Mexico, where Pueblos and others, retained much of their tribal lands as reservations. Jacobson sought to broaden people’s patronage to include Indians who lived on allotted land, not just reservation Indians of New Mexico and Arizona, which I discuss in chapter five. In reality, all Indians experienced degrees of modernity and cultural blending through trade, technology, urbanization, and policy.

people’s perceptions of what constituted “traditional” and “Indian,” and by doing so, expanded
the Indian market to include more non-reservation Indians.

Because Native artists had to address such complicated cultural expectation and ideas,
while trying to make a living, they had to commodify their image. At times Jacobson helped
them negotiate the process. He encouraged some to perform dances partly because he knew such
dances could increase their art sales. In this way, he participated in the commodification of
Indian images and material culture. Most studies focus on New Mexico, but Jacobson’s case
reveals Oklahomans participated in this practice, as well. It demonstrates how deeply connected
Oklahoma was to New Mexico, the recognized center of Indian art.25

Over time, Jacobson earned the respect of many tribal groups which allowed him to be an
even more effective cultural broker. Kiowas made him an honorary chief in 1928. Other tribes
acknowledged his contributions and friendship in similar ways and sought his advice on a range
of issues. This respect stemmed from his understanding of the strong cultural beliefs surrounding
Indian art production and dances. He let his Indian students work in ways they felt comfortable.
They believed Jacobson represented them with good intentions and had their best interests at
heart. They also knew the power Jacobson wielded in important art circles and among patrons.

25 See Mullin, Culture in the Marketplace; Dilworth, Imagining Indians in the Southwest; Bumek, Indian-Made;
Dunn, American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Area; and Bernstein and Rushing, Modern by
Tradition.
While they considered him a friend, they also knew he was an important connection. Jacobson in turn, understood his patronage of Indian art lifted his own stature.

Jacobson’s work as a cultural broker did not begin or end with Indians. His international travels and visits to various world and international fairs broadened his artistic outlook and allowed him to tap into the larger public for support of the arts and his art school. Most importantly, his position as Director of Art at the University of Oklahoma gave him an important platform from which to shape public opinion. Jacobson introduced Oklahoma to the value of different cultures and art forms. He encouraged audiences to appreciate the unfamiliar, such as Islamic and North African art. He also helped Oklahomans see the value in various art forms, even those they did not understand, such as Post-Impressionism, Futurism, and Cubism.

His vast appetite for life and art encouraged him to develop a bigger, stronger art community. As a result, he heightened art appreciation in Oklahoma.

Jacobson adopted a number of strategies to advance art appreciation. He lectured at OU, throughout the state of Oklahoma, and around the country. This put Oklahoma more in the spotlight, earned recognition for the state, and helped generate funds for Jacobson’s endeavors.

26 For insight on one example of friendship, see Acee Blue Eagle and Jacobson’s general correspondence 1933-75, Boxes 8-11, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. A letter where Blue Eagle asks Jacobson for advice on how to break into the later European market shows that Jacobson continued to help, whenever he could, his friend even two decades after teaching him. Years later, in 1959, when Acee Blue Eagle was deathly sick, Jacobson wrote him words of encouragement and discussed his own near-death experience in 1926 while on sabbatical in Africa and Europe, and told him to remain optimistic. They shared a genuine friendship. Also, in an oral interview with the son of Stephen Mopope, one Indian artist Jacobson worked with, noted that without the aid of Jacobson, many Indian artists in the South were discriminated against, and not permitted entrance into certain establishments. Because of this, Jacobson often accompanied the artists, or wrote on their behalf, to sponsor them throughout the South, such as in Georgia and Alabama. LaQuinta Mopope Santos, interview by Arthur Silberman, 31 January 1982, Folder 8, Box 11, NCWHM.

27 Jacobson lectured on world art. He notably fostered appreciation for North African art and Muslim culture. As a cosmopolitan, he appreciated different aspects of numerous cultures, which I develop more fully in chapters 5 and 6.

He lectured around the country at some of the most important art and education venues, such as
the Art Institute of Chicago and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He also frequented less
notable places, such as small towns and women’s clubs. Regardless of where he went, he always
shared the same message: society benefited from the arts in its various forms.29

By the late 1920s, according to Jacobson and Brousse, a strong market existed in
Oklahoma. Art galleries, including those in New York City, sent important works of art to be
sold in Oklahoma. Jacobson also encouraged Oklahoma oilmen to patronize, collect art, and
make such works available to the public, which would in return bring the spotlight to the oilmen.
His students also spread his teachings, magnifying his message of appreciation, and some of his
Indian art students went on to teach art at Indian schools and colleges.30 He helped create art
clubs and utilized the media culture to publicize art events and production. Through his advocacy
and teaching, the University of Oklahoma became an important art center, and arguably the most
important art institution in the region.

Jacobson started the art collection at OU and significantly expanded it throughout his
tenure.31 When he first arrived, the school lacked an art collection, but by the time he left the

29 Ibid.
30 Acee Blue Eagle established the art department at Bacone Indian University (now known as Bacone College) in
Muskogee in 1935, and directed the program until 1938. Woody Crumbo followed Blue Eagle and joined Bacone
College as Director of Art from 1938-1941, followed by Richard (Dick) West, who directed from 1947–1970. From
1940-1941, James Auchiah taught art at Riverside Indian Boarding School, but stopped to serve in the navy during
WWII. Auchiah went on to serve as a painter at the Installations Section at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, from 1950-1967,
and shortly afterwards joined the Fort Sill Museum as a curator of ethnology, and as an advisor of Indian history.
Due to poor health, Auchiah retired in 1973. J’Nell, Pate, “Kiowa Art from Rainy Mountain: The Story of James
Auchiah,” American Indian Quarterly 1, no. 3 (1974): 193-200. Spencer Asah was an art instructor at the Ft. Sill
Indian school.
31 Jacobson, “Museum of Art,” TMs, Folder 52, Box J-13, WHC; Brousse, “Glimpses,” TMs, Folder 6, Box 4,
OHS. Chapter seven does more to detail and explore the acquisition of this collection and how it contributes to
Jacobson’s legacy.
university (in 1945 as the Director of Art and 1952 as the Director of OU’s Museum of Art), OU had a renowned museum of art and material culture. It included American works by painters such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Stuart Davis and a few works from the members of the Taos Society of Artists. The collection also reflected a range of global cultures, from numerous countries and ethnicities, including North African Berber art and pieces from China, and central and southeast Asia.

Jacobson, too, had some influence over federal policy, at least regarding how administrators allocated New Deal funds to artists, and which artists received appointments to the Public Works Arts Projects and Treasury Relief Art Project, because Jacobson served as technical advisor for both. He had powerful friends and acquaintances in the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., including Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier and Rene d’Harnoncourt, chairman of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. So, Jacobson continued to serve as a cultural broker for his former Kiowa students throughout and after the Depression. He also supported other Indians artists, former OU students, friends, and professional colleagues. D’Harnoncourt, Collier, and Edward Rowan (assistant chief, section of fine arts with the Federal Works Agency), and Inslee Hopper (Division of Painting and Sculpture, Treasury Department) listened to Jacobson’s advice because he had earned the respect of the Southwest Indian
community, was a noted artist in his own right, and was an art director with a national and international reputation. All these attributes validated his expertise in art development.

Furthermore, during both world wars Jacobson demonstrated that artists could contribute to the war effort. Jacobson helped in the propaganda poster program of each war, orchestrated a national level camouflaging effort, and encouraged teaching nurses art, so they could instruct wounded vets and raise morale. These endeavors allowed Jacobson to show a practical side to art development and garner more support for his program at OU.

During his last years at the University of Oklahoma and in retirement Jacobson determined to further advance art in the state and take his professional pursuits to the next level. He published more scholarly works, with the help of his wife Jeanne d’Ucel. His books and articles include *American Indian Painters* (1950), *North American Indian Costumes, 1564–1950* (1952), and “Early Oklahoma Artists,” and “Art in Oklahoma.” Jacobson never stopped advocating for art development, the value of various cultural groups, and appreciation of different artistic styles.

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32 Jacobson was part of a larger cohort that influenced the government regarding Indian policies. Before the onset of the Depression and at the behest of many artists, patrons of Indians, preservationists, and “friends of Indians,” the Institute for Government Research conducted a landmark study on Indians affairs. As historian Sherry Smith notes, “writers produced books for popular audiences that offered new ways to conceptualize Indian people, alternatives to the images that had transfixed Americans for centuries.” Such individuals helped whites see Indians through more sensitive lenses and understand that their “cultural perpetuation would benefit all Americans.” Specifically, Smith discusses how writes Charles Fletcher Lummis, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Mary Austin, and Anna Ikess, all helped lay the groundwork for the Indian New Deal. Through their writings, conversations and friendships with Collier, they played instrumental part in its shaping. See Smith, *Reimagining Indians*, 5, 119- 44, 165-212.

33 Brousse, “Glimpses.”

Oklahoma, specifically at the University of Oklahoma, under Jacobson’s leadership, became a central force in the struggle for art advancement. The state lacked art collectors, art education, and art promotion on a large scale until Jacobson arrived in 1915. By his death in 1966, he had left his mark. While Jacobson did not act alone, he was perhaps the most critical cultural figure in the visual arts in Oklahoma during the first half of the twentieth century. Because of his vision and relentlessness, Oklahoma became an important art center for the development of Native American art.
CHAPTER 1
A YOUNG SWEDE’S WESTERN TRANSFORMATION

In 1911, when Oscar Jacobson was twenty-nine years old and teaching in Pullman, Washington, a fellow Westerner named Krueger, upon learning that Jacobson created and taught art, called into question Jacobson’s manliness and western identity.1 Jacobson’s soon-to-be wife Sophie Jeanne Brousse recalled that “The West, especially Washington State College because of its practical and technical character, looked upon art as a frill, something in the order of a lady’s accomplishment (fig. 1.1). They couldn’t conceive that a truly manly man might make it his career.”2 Like many other Anglo Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Krueger conflated manliness with Western-ness. Jacobson had observed this narrow-mindedness from time to time and grew frustrated by it, yet he viewed such questioning as valuable teaching moments.

Jacobson encountered Krueger when he attended his first faculty reception at the college.3 Krueger, who had served as a cavalry scout in the Philippine campaign, invited Jacobson to join him on a horseback ride. When he asked Jacobson if he rode horses, the painter, who was an accomplished horseman, replied nonchalantly, “a little.” He believed the best way to make someone reevaluate their stereotypes and closed mindedness was through actions rather than words.

1 Sources do not reveal Krueger’s first name. Amy S. Greenberg, Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 280. Sophie Brousse did not include Krueger’s first name in her manuscript. All that is known is that he and his family resided in the area.
2 Sophie Jeanne Brousse later went by the pen name, Jeanne d’Ucel. Jacobson adopted Brousse as his middle name with the two applied for American citizenship in 1912. Brousse “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
3 Ibid.
than words. On the day of this ride, Jacobson understood by the “traces of smiles” on some onlookers’ faces that they, too, doubted that he could keep up on horseback with a “real” Western cavalryman. During their ninety-two-mile ride into Idaho on a warm sunny day, Jacobson outpaced and out-rode his acquaintance and Jacobson indeed proved himself an excellent rider.\(^4\) The day following the ride, Jacobson called on the native Westerner, only to learn he was “spending the day in bed, recuperating.”\(^5\) Brousse added, “Oscar had won his spurs literally and figuratively. He was fully accepted as a Westerner . . . and the standing of art rose

\(^4\) Greenberg discusses what constitutes manhood as it relates to Manifest Destiny and territorial expansion and how the cavalry played in solidifying this image. See Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*. Given Krueger was likely ten plus years older than Jacobson, he may have reflected Victorian ideals of manhood at the time. For a discussion of Victorian ideals of manhood see Daniel Walker Howe, “American Victorianism as Culture,” *American Quarterly* 27 (December 1975): 507-32.

\(^5\) Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
mightily."\textsuperscript{6} His years in the saddle working as a ranch hand paid off and helped him solidify his Western American identity among this crowd.\textsuperscript{7} It is possible that his pencil sketch resulted from this trip \textit{Pullman, WA} (1914; fig. 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Oscar Jacobson, \textit{Pullman WA}, 1914, location unknown

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
An immigrant and an artist, Jacobson may not have seemed like the quintessential Westerner. His life, however, demonstrates that individuals can have multiple identities. He was a painter, rancher, teacher, advocate of cultural pluralism and patron to other artists. He defied stereotypes, both of himself and the later subjects of his art, including Native Americans and Muslims.\(^8\)

Oscar Jacobson, born May 16, 1882, in Västra Eknö, a small island community off the southern coast of Sweden, spent his formative years surrounded by the sea, a landscape starkly different than the Kansas Plains he would later call home.\(^9\) The son of Nils Petter Jakobson and Anne Lena Olofsdotter, the most prominent family in the village, young Oscar wanted for little. Jacobson’s father was a farmer, a furniture carver, and a community leader on the island. News about the outside world rarely made it to the island, as its inhabitants remained mostly secluded from the mainland, but life on the island presented an endless supply of pleasant and adventurous tasks for a boy possessed of unquenchable imagination.\(^10\) Jacobson immersed himself in the natural landscape. This love for nature continued throughout his life and he painted landscapes

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\(^8\) A discussion about Indians and Muslims related to stereotypes is discussed in later chapters.

\(^9\) Jacobson’s official birth name was Anders Oskar Jakobson, according to his baptismal records, but for most of his life he went by Oscar Brousse Jacobson, dropping his first name and taking his wife’s maiden name for his middle (he Anglicized the spelling of his name sometime around 1904 or shortly thereafter, which speaks to how he viewed his identity as primarily American). For clarification reasons he will be addressed only as Oscar Brousse Jacobson. O.R. Landelius, “Oscar B. Jacobson, pedagog och konstnar,” Utlandessvenskarna Forening (a Swedish Magazine with transcription), 11 November 1955, 15; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.

\(^10\) Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Who’s Who in America, 1327-28, Folder 7, Box 4, OHS; O.R. Landelius, “Oscar B. Jacobson, pedagog och konstnar,” 14-16, WHC.
void of human presence and capitalist exploitation.\textsuperscript{11} Although the large family lived on a small plot of land, for the most part, they remained self-sufficient.

The community lacked a professional shoemaker, so every year a man who made footwear visited. The children looked forward to this annual event, and they always “plied him with questions about the big world outside.”\textsuperscript{12} Such interactions with foreign acquaintances helped spark Jacobson’s growing imagination, whereas the lack of modernization on the island helped cultivate Jacobson’s nostalgic views of a “simpler” time when creating things by hand remained a daily part of life.\textsuperscript{13} Also as a young child at school on the island, Jacobson saw his first illustrated book. Nils kept only religious and philosophical books in the house. Possibly Jacobson’s introduction to books helped sparked his interest in the outside world and adventure, whereas illustrated books fostered an interest in art.

Even as a young child, Jacobson often took risks that awed his older peers. At age three, he jumped off his father’s fishing boat without warning. Curious about the possibilities beneath the sea, young Jacobson plunged into the frigid Baltic, although he could not yet swim. His father promptly rescued him. A couple of years later, five-year-old Jacobson, along with his slightly older brother, Ernst, provided his family with another cause for alarm. Together, the two siblings stole a small boat and headed toward Russia for what they envisioned would be an exciting adventure. Luckily they had only journeyed several miles away from shore when local fishermen spotted and retrieved them.\textsuperscript{14} These early experiences set the tone for Jacobson’s life.

\textsuperscript{11} Mark White focused on Jacobson’s artistic career, especially as it related to painting a world “unconquered” by man. See Mark White, “A World Unconquered,” \textit{The Art and Life of Oscar Jacobson}, 37-98. White notes how Jacobson’s upbringing fostered a love for the wilderness, and he quotes Jacobson from a 1948 art exhibition, “It may now be considered old fashioned but I seem to prefer to paint the world unconquered by man, unviolated by human greed, a world untouched by misery and despair.”

\textsuperscript{12} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folders 1-2, Box 4. Evidently, a strong wind took their boat into the open sea, as
as he continued to seek adventure and test limits, both geographical and cultural. As art historian Mark White points out, such adventures “may have also provided the inspiration for one of his earliest extant paintings *At the Freezing Point (Vyd Fryspunkten)* (1901; fig. 1.3). The sea continued to fascinate Jacobson into his mature career.”\(^{15}\)

Figure 1.3 Oscar Jacobson, *At the Freezing Point (Vyd Fryspunkten)*, 1901, collection of Doctors Julia and Derek Irwin

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Life on Västra Eknö was picturesque. Still, Nils worried about his large family’s future on the small and secluded island. Jacobson’s eldest brother, Emil, had already immigrated to the United States and settled in the Swedish community of Lindsborg, Kansas. Emil’s letters to his family spoke positively of the possibilities America offered immigrants. Emil encouraged his father to buy some land there. The Jacobsons were a close family and the idea of reuniting with their eldest son may have also played a role in Nils and Anne’s decision to leave their homeland.

Nils believed that life on Ekno Island handicapped the family’s ultimate chances of staying together. Remaining islanders’ limited career choices and the lack of farmland held potentially devastating consequences for their sizeable family. Jacobson turned eight when his parents immigrated in 1890 to the United States. The Jacobson settled Lindsborg, Kansas. The decision to move from sea to landlocked Kansas devastated young Oscar. He was passionate about the coastal lifestyle.

The Jacobsons arrived in Kansas on Memorial Day 1890, and settled on a ranch, which also served as a small farm, just outside the Swedish community at Lindsborg. They arrived near the end of Swedish influx into the United States. Patterns of Swedish immigration had shifted around 1860. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, Swedish immigrants came to the United States largely for religious and political reasons. The official Lutheran state church clashed with Pietists, who emphasized a personal interpretation of the Bible and held gatherings in private homes. The Lutheran Church, a conservative institution, viewed the individualism of the Pietists as subversive and used its influence to pressure the Swedish legislature, the Riksdag, to ban Pietist meetings. Pietists who had the financial means chose to emigrate to the United States.

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16 Sources do not reveal when Emil Jacobson immigrated to the United States.
17 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1-2, Box 4.
States. In the 1840s, one such group of Pietists settled in Galesburg, Illinois, a town near the western border, near both Iowa and Missouri. The next generation from this settlement moved farther west, settling in Kansas in the 1860s and 1870s.\textsuperscript{19}

By the 1860s, rather than wealthier Swedes fleeing because of religious persecution, small landowners and agricultural laborers led the wave of emigration. A number of factors encouraged farmers to leave Sweden, including industrialization of farm labor (which led to displacement of day laborers), increasing rural unemployment, a cycle of poor harvests and declining agricultural prices, and finally the death knell of small farms: inability to acquire lines of credit. The same wealthy class that had been most likely to emigrate earlier in the century now opposed immigration because as potential laborers left the country, wages for farm labor increased.\textsuperscript{20} While the Jacobsons had been the prominent leading family of Västra Eknö, they too felt the impending strain of diminishing economic and agricultural opportunities for future generations. So, Nils and Anne joined numerous farm families immigrating to the United States.\textsuperscript{21}

Their final destination, Lindsborg, Kansas, then, was already home to a sizeable Swedish-American population. Swedish immigrants from Illinois had settled in Kansas, establishing homesteads in the Smoky Valley region in the 1860s. In 1869, young Lutheran pastor Olof Olsson led a group of immigrants from Värmland, Sweden, who established Lindsborg in the very middle of Kansas.\textsuperscript{22} Today, the town is known as the home of Bethany College, a school

\textsuperscript{19} D. Aidan McQuillan, \textit{Prevailing over Time: Ethnic Adjustment on the Kansas Prairies, 1875-1925} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 89.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{22} Kyle Johnson, “The Organs of Bethany College,” \textit{The Tracker} 55, no. 3 (2011): 16.
steeped in Swedish traditions. The town to this day advertises its Swedish heritage as a way to attract tourists, dubbing itself “Little Sweden, USA.”

Despite the town’s current architecture of faux Swedish-themed half-timbering, ironwork and peaked rooflines, in the nineteenth century, Lindsborg stood as a typical Western community, with Victorian-style storefronts. In the mid-twentieth century, as agricultural income diminished and similar small towns across the Midwest began to disappear, likely due to increasing urbanization following the World Wars, Lindsborg turned to ethnic tourism to stay afloat economically.

After 1890, immigration from Sweden dropped significantly, partly due to the Panic of 1893, as the US economy suffered greatly, and fewer financial opportunities existed. Even without a steady influx of new Swedes, however, Lindsborg remained primarily Swedish. Although the town did have non-Swedish residents, the outskirts and farming areas where the Jacobsons lived, had an overwhelmingly Swedish population and Swedish remained the predominant language. Thus, Jacobson never felt out of place or faced discrimination as an immigrant or a Swede among his fellow Lindsborg residents.

According to immigration historian Aidan McQuillan, Swedes sought to create communities that best reflected their Swedish heritage, at least partly, because surrounding themselves with compatriots helped with the transition from the “Old Country” to the new. Many immigrants found the “turbulent, mobile, atomistic” United States too great a break from the “tightly knit, stable communities” of their previous homes in Europe. Ethnic enclaves provided

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familiarity and solace for immigrants. The Jacobsons fit this pattern. Coming from a small and isolated island, they probably found Lindsborg replicated the small community they had left behind. Furthermore, by coming to Kansas, where Emil already resided, they reunited their tight-knit family.

The Jacobsons were not the tired, poor, “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” They had been a prominent family on Västra Eknö. They came not seeking refuge but opportunity. Westward migration promised Americans, including immigrants, a way to improve their economic circumstances. As McQuillan notes, “the increasing emphasis on materialism and economic individualism was not peculiarly Americans…What was distinctively American was the abundance of cheap land, which accelerated the process.”

Initially, young Oscar Jacobson, uprooted from his coastal home in Sweden, was not interested in land or his family’s prospects in Kansas. Instead, he moped. After a few months of observing his son’s dejected idleness, Jacobson’s father gave him a horse. That lifted the boy’s spirits and almost immediately altered Oscar’s outlook on America. He rode for long hours and developed a great appreciation for the large and open Kansas landscape. Jacobson’s later wife recalled that the two “roamed until little by little, Oscar transferred some of his love of the sea to the long horizons of the Plains.” He found buffalo skulls on the prairie and could identify pioneer wagon trails, reminding him of the settlers who migrated from East to West, moving to or across Kansas decades before his family’s arrival. Within a year of coming to Kansas, Jacobson became proficient with guns, joining a brother on coyote hunts for pay.

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26 McQuillan, *Prevailing over Time*, 108.
27 Emma Lazarus, a native New Yorker, wrote a sonnet entitled “The New Colossus,” in 1883, and later was inscribed in the Statue Liberty.
28 McQuillan, *Prevailing over Time*, 123.
29 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
Eventually saving up enough money, Jacobson purchased another horse, and named the mustang Brady. Brady quickly became Jacobson’s favorite horse and may have become the subject of an 1895 drawing (1895; fig. 1.4).30 This “cow-horse, spirited yet gentle, and most intelligent,” taught a great deal to the young immigrant.31 The horse patiently let the boy practice all sorts of riding tricks and stunts. According to Jacobson’s future wife, Brady “cooperated so well that the two of them virtually constituted a centaur.”32 It seems that for much of the year, Jacobson could ride and explore to his heart’s content, but during harvest time the children helped their parents on the farm, work Jacobson did not like. He much preferred ranching life to farming, and he viewed rounding up cattle as an enjoyable game.33

Figure 1.4 Oscar Jacobson, untitled, 1895, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries

31 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
Although Lindsborg was a farming and ranching community, Jacobson imagined himself pursuing a very different career. Farming required constant attention to chores, which Jacobson disliked. From his youth in Sweden, he retained his love for the illustrations he saw in books and decided to draw and paint. Right after classes ended in summer of 1895, Jacobson sought independence from his parents and support for his growing passion for art and western adventures. Although his older brothers did not approve of this, calling art a “terrible waste of time,” Jacobson, at age thirteen, set his own course. Each summer he ventured a bit further from his Lindsborg home, working as a ranch hand for months at a time, but apparently always returning home in time for school. These early western journeys continued until 1903, the year Jacobson turned twenty-one.

Sporting a strong physique on a six-foot-three frame and capable of tolerating the strenuous work of a hired ranch hand, Jacobson performed his duties well, but did so only as a means for procuring funds for art supplies. He also saved for his college education. With his sketching and painting materials, he roamed the countryside on horseback, searching for new places to capture on canvas and express his developing creativity. He spent months at a time sleeping outside, observing the surrounding beauty. Curiosity often motivated him to ride farther southwest, sometimes into New Mexico and possibly Arizona, and south into Indian or Oklahoma Territory, what would later become Oklahoma. Occasionally, he encountered Indians, mostly the Pueblo, Navajo, and Hopi. He may have initially met Geronimo, a Chiricahua Apache man held captive at Fort Sill, Oklahoma – the place he remained until his death in 1909.

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., Folders 1-2; May Frank, “A New Story,” The Daily Oklahoman, 24 February 1924, p., Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
37 No known early Indian and Western landscape sketchings exist. Later encounters are incorporated into his paintings, primarily beginning in 1915, which are discussed in chapter three, “Making a Name.”
These early encounters fueled a lifelong interest in American Indians.\footnote{Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4. Sources do not reveal exactly where Jacobson went, when, or whom he specifically met, but his wife notes that he ventured into the Southwest, including, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and perhaps Arizona during this period.} It seems apparent from Jacobson’s later writing that he encountered and engaged with numerous Indians of different tribes during this period, but he never gave explicit information on whom he met and the conversations that occurred. He likely interacted with people of Amerindian-Hispanic descent, such as Nuevo Mexicanos and Tejanos, as well.\footnote{Perhaps possible encounters such as these partly explain why Jacobson became a supporter of Hispanic art forms. He eventually fostered friendships among a group of artists collectively known as Los Cinco Pintores during the 1920s.}

These experiences would later help Jacobson authenticate his claim to being a Westerner and “friend” among Indians. Jacobson believed that the Indians he met when he was young sensed that he came as a friend and took “him to their heart.”\footnote{Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4} According to his wife, “he drank in the majestic beauty of the Indian dances and yearned to know what was behind them.” Hoping to gain a glimpse into old Western life, Jacobson read a lot about the West and Indians.\footnote{What exact books Jacobson read is not known. The western frontier became a symbol of the American promise. Frederick Jackson Turner epitomized this with his 1893 address to the American Historical Society, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” Turner delivered his address in Chicago, which was hosting the World’s Columbian Exposition. He waxed poetic about the role the West played, offering upward mobility to those entrepreneurial enough to grab hold of the opportunity. According to Turner, the West was truly democratic; those who worked hard would succeed, regardless of their background. The West was an equalizer.} But nothing compared to real life encounters.

He was not alone in imagining, or “reimagining” Indians or “reimaging” a nineteenth-century West and his fascination started when he was young boy. As art historian Mark White notes, Jacobson “collected clippings of Western Americana that included from reproductions of the work of Charles Schreyvogel and Edwin Deming to programs covers from Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West.” This hobby provides a compelling portrait of Jacobson and of the persona he
created as it reflected his nostalgia for the Old West. Jacobson bought into the various images and representations from paintings, photography, and dime novels, that have contributed to the “imagined West.”

He was not unique in his attraction to the Southwest. Jacobson eventually became part of a larger preexisting group of non-Indians who sought and wrote about Indians. Non-academic individuals such as George Bird Grinnell, Walter Mc Clintock, and Frank Bird Linderman all “constructed identities for Indians.” From the 1880s through the 1930s, they documented their experiences among Indians from the Northwest to the Southwest. They targeted a popular audience. As historian Sherry Smith points out, these figures, “slowly, gradually, but undeniably nudged Anglo-Americans into considering not only their view of Indians, but also Indians’ place in the country … and in the future.” Such writings influenced public opinions and policies pertaining to Native rights. When discussing Linderman, Smith goes on to comment that “without a doubt, strong currents of nostalgia, romanticism, and antimodernism,” informed his approach to Indians. This mirrors Jacobson’s later writings and paintings of Indians and Western landscapes. Although it is not known the extent or depth of Jacobson’s early encounters, they clearly sparked his eventual pursuit of Indians and their cultures.

Smith, Reimagining Indians, 5.
Ibid., 4.
As Sherry Smith notes, “writers produced books for popular audiences that offered new ways to conceptualize Indian people, alternatives to the images that had transfixed Americans for centuries.” Smith discusses Linderman’s participation in the “Anglo-American cultural process of reimagining Indians in the early twentieth century.” Like Linderman, Jacobson also becomes disillusioned by the modern world. At the same time, both men, “did not flinch from engaging in the world,” they inherited. See Smith, Reimagining Indians, 5, 96, 95-144.
Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4. Too, it is highly probable that Jacobson’s love for the Hispanic
Jacobson, in addition to his sojourns into the West during his teenage years, was also influenced by the fact that he came of age during the Spanish-American War which began in 1898. From his teenage years into early adulthood, he envisioned joining Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders.\footnote{Amy S. Greenberg, \textit{Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire}, 280-81. Greenberg briefly alludes to how Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders helped shape the concept of manliness as it relates to military strength. For further reading on Roosevelt see Edmund Morris, \textit{The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt} (New York: Modern Library, 2001).} This cavalry regiment was renowned for its heroic acts, such as its charge up San Juan Hill, and for its horsemanship. Given Jacobson’s proclivity for adventure and equestrianism, it is little wonder that he was enamored with Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders.

Western artist Frederic Remington helped foster a heroic image of Roosevelt that Jacobson and so many others admired.\footnote{Although born in New York, Remington fell in love with and longed for the West: its landscapes, stories—real and imagined—and the mosaic of people that populated it. Unhappy at Yale with his art training, he ventured to the West and for a period worked as a ranch hand. He took various jobs, but above all, he wanted to be an artist and, secondarily, a journalist. (His father had been a wealthy newspaper publisher.) Remington traveled from Canada to Mexico, and later to Cuba, Europe and Africa. His most noted works focus on western and frontier themes. In 1906, while attending Yale, Jacobson visited Remington in his New Rochelle studio in New York. Decades later, Jacobson wrote about Remington with the intent of incorporating a biographical sketch in a book about artists associated or connected to Oklahoma at some point. This book never materialized and Jacobson’s typed manuscript remains unpublished. Jacobson noted, however, that perhaps above all other artists, Remington, “probably expressed best the frontier west with his brush, his chisel and his pen was [sic] an easterner.” This reveals that Jacobson did not think you had be a native from a region or country to represent it well.} Artists, Jacobson realized, could shape public perception.\footnote{Jacobson, Folder 7, Box J-13, WHS.} Remington, a future friend of Roosevelt, first portrayed Roosevelt as a rancher and cowboy by illustrating Roosevelt’s first book, \textit{Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail}, published in 1888.\footnote{Ibid.} At Roosevelt’s invitation, Remington traveled with Roosevelt and the Rough Riders to Cuba during the Spanish-American War. For a short time, he worked as a field reporter artist for the \textit{New York Journal}, a sensational yellow journalism newspaper that sought to justify and
glorify the war and Roosevelt and his men. With paintings such as *The Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill* (1898; fig. 1.5) and “The Scream of Shrapnel at San Juan Hill” (1898; fig. 1.6) Remington dubbed the Spanish-American War as the “the Cowboy’s War,” which is a bit ironic as most of the men fought without their horses. Art historians William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann point out, “the Cowboys’ War was not like the Plains Indian War. Because wily Spanish troops shot at columns of soldiers from ambush.”

Figure 1.5 Frederic Remington, *The Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill*, 1898

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Whether Roosevelt was on domestic or foreign soil, Jacobson admired his bravery and appetite for adventure, and Jacobson would later admire his stance on preservation and conservation. It is likely, too, that Remington’s experience of blending manliness with art possibly inspired Jacobson to embrace a cowboy artist persona. He was too young to enlist and join the regiment, but Jacobson wanted to project a Western Rough Rider persona regardless. At some point in his adolescence he organized the boys of the neighborhood into a riding group,

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53 Mark White convincingly argues that given Jacobson’s “youthful admiration for Theodore Roosevelt’s military exploits, it is not surprising that Jacobson also subscribed readily to similar notions of art, nature, and conservation.” And “Jacobson later echoed Roosevelt’s rhetoric in his desire for ‘a world conquered by man.’” For more discussion on Roosevelt’s influence on Jacobson’s art and his view of conservation see White, “An Artist in the Wilderness,” 37-102.

54 For Jacobson’s admiration of Remington's life and art see Jacobson, TMs, Folder 7, Box J-13 WHS.

55 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
known locally as the Crazy Ridge Wild West Riders. Twenty or so strong, they made quite a show and for several years performed at local fairs and events, receiving great publicity from the local newspapers.56

By the age of nineteen Jacobson had a reputation as a rider and performer. In Kansas, he went by the name “Jake”—and on occasion people referred to him as “Eat-Em-Up-Jake”—and he led a gang of Lindsborg boys called Jacobson’s Rough Riders. The newspaper promoted their appearance at the 1902 Fourth of July celebration, along with Chief Ompolesogalah with his band of “picturesque Indian warriors.” It is not clear if this person was an actual Indian person or a white community member playing Indian. Either way, Chief Ompolesogalah’s presence at the celebration demonstrated that Jacobson and townsfolk romanticized Wild West history.57

While cultivating his Western Rough Rider identity, Jacobson used his summer savings from ranching to attend Lindsborg’s Bethany College.58 He clearly did not intend a life’s work as a rancher or adventurer. Rather, while pursuing dual degrees in business and accounting, Jacobson also seized every opportunity to take art classes offered by Birger Sandzén, a famous artist from Sweden, who was trained under Swede Anders Zorn and French Symbolist Edmond Francois Aman-Jean.

Under Sandzén’s direction, Jacobson eventually opted to switch his major to art.59 Sandzén also introduced Jacobson to modernism. While Jacobson sketched and painted landscapes, he had an early focus on portraits. In 1902 he painted Sandzén’s portrait (fig. 1.7).

The two made long sketching trips into the wilderness and hunting trip together. Considering

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56 Ibid.; *Lindsborg Record*, 2 July 1902, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1 OHS.
57 *The Bethany Messenger*, 1905, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS; According to Jacobson's wife, he thought of his childhood performances as a whole rather "bum," perhaps meaning a bit superficial and boring. Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
58 Jacobson used money he earned working on ranches other than his family's.
only about a ten-year difference in age existed between Jacobson and his mentor, it is not surprising they became lifelong friends and continued corresponding until Sandzén’s death in 1954.\textsuperscript{60} At the closing of the spring semester in 1903, Jacobson earned his bachelor’s diploma in painting, the only diploma granted at the college that year.\textsuperscript{61} Following his graduation from Bethany College, Jacobson worked in the local post office, but the job failed to hold his interest.

Jacobson’s ambition was to study art in Chicago. However, after learning about the approaching 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition (LPE) in St. Louis, also commonly referred to as the 1904 World’s Fair, he decided to go to that city instead. Jacobson viewed this as an ideal opportunity to study art on a large scale and to interact with people from other cultures, a prospect he did not want to miss.

The fair commemorated the United States’ purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 and the Lewis and Clark Expedition which followed. In the century since the Louisiana Purchase, much had changed in the United States. The World’s Fair meant to celebrate this progress while simultaneously promoting a nostalgic view of what had been lost. For instance, the United States had gained a tremendous amount of territory by bringing northern Mexico into its national borders with the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), had connected East to West with the transcontinental railroad (completed in 1869), had emancipated slaves (1865), and passed the Homestead Act that encouraged and aided white migration and settlement of western land (1862).

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folders 1-4, Box 4; Sandzén’s influence and friendship with Jacobson will be discussed in chapter four focusing on Jacobson’s art and art education.
\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Lindsborg Record}, 1 June 1903, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
Figure 1.7 Oscar Jacobson, *Portrait of Birger Sandzén*, 1902, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas
Of course, when the United States acquired the vast Louisiana Territory and incorporated it into its political borders, Native Americans had already lived there for thousands of years and understood this land as theirs. While the French viewed them as tolerable, Americans saw them as a nuisance. They most certainly did not view them as American citizens entitled to certain rights. Their identities hung in flux and changed as a result of non-Native influences.\(^6^2\) However, at the time of the purchase, they still maintained a great deal of power over its 800,000 square miles. But throughout the 1800s, Indians lost most of their land to the American government, through war, forced removal, and consequent white settlement. As the nation’s landmass doubled, the federal government ushered Indians onto reservations where most lived in dire conditions. Their populations dwindled.

Also, during the late 1800s the United States underwent its second industrial revolution, which encouraged urbanization and migrations—primarily from Europe, and then from east to west, but also from Asia to California, as well as northern-bound from Mexico, crossing a new political and territorial border. The number of immigrants coming to America exceeded more than any other time in the nation’s history, and most were from Eastern and Southern Europe, marking a shift from previous waves of immigration coming primarily from western Europe. The

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\(^6^2\) For example, historian Theda Perdue demonstrates how Cherokee women identities changed from the nineteenth to twentieth century. She discusses constructions of gender, and the ways notions of gender evolved as a result of European contact, trade, warfare, the formation of the American Republic, notions of Republican value such as “proper” use and control over land, and concepts of patriarchy. But more importantly, Perdue examines the ways in which women maintained ideas of gender separate from those of men. Women, she suggests, continued to “maintain power and prestige” well after white encroachment of their land. She argues that common Cherokee women, more than men, maintained traditional values, in an ever-changing atmosphere despite internal and external pressure to conform to “American” conceptions of gender roles. Women did adapt to surrounding pressures, but through such accommodations, “women had their own arena of power over which they retained firm control” (9-10). Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 9-10. A rich body of literature pertaining to the fluidity of identities within the Southwestern borderlands exists. See Andrés Reséndez, *Changing Identities at the Frontier, Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Benjamin H. Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
Jacobsons, as noted above, were part of this wave of immigration. In fact, the establishment of Jacobson family’s ranch and the Swedish community in Lindsborg, Kansas, were possible only because of the Louisiana Purchase and the land distribution policies that followed. The LPE meant to celebrate the superiority of the United States, a nation that embraced its manifest destiny as it expanded its borders from Atlantic to Pacific, and a nation that was not only a city on a hill, but a beacon for immigrants around the world to follow to a better life.

With the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, the United States had also increased its landholdings overseas by securing its control of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam. America now stood as a global economic and military power. The designers of the St. Louis World’s Fair intended to explicitly display America’s imperial status, technological and scientific progress and cultural superiority. It celebrated, in other words, the United States as an expanding empire in North America and beyond.

The LPE aimed to educate and entertain fairgoers. According to historians of anthropology Nancy Parezo and Don Fowler, it specifically intended to glorify “America’s increasing control over the world’s natural resources and in particular how business acumen and ingenuity, coupled with scientific and technological know-how, were pushing the United States to the forefront of the industrialized nations.”63 The St. Louis Exposition enticed visitors with entertainment as well as educational exhibitions. It offered a little bit of everything. Nineteenth-century anthropologists hoped visitors would gain a new understanding of how the vast majority of people in the world lived, although they referred to the rest of the world as the “other half.” In 1904 Harper’s Magazine stated it best:

Remember that such a fair as this that St. Louis offers leaves no intelligent visitor where it found him. It fills him full of pictures and of knowledge that keep coming up in his

mind for years afterwards. It gives him new standards, new means of comparison, new insight into the conditions of life in the world he is living in.64

To accomplish this, anthropologists created exhibits that featured peoples from across the world in their “natural” habitats. Anthropologists wanted visitors to experience exotic peoples, whether Igorots from the newly acquired Philippines or American Indians from New Mexico, Arizona, or Indian Territory. Fairgoers could see first-hand, they believed, the superiority of Euro-Americans. Anthropological and evolutionary theory consequently played a critical role in the fair and these types of interpretative exhibits, in particular. Evolutionary theories, especially, guided the growing field of anthropology. Led by ethnologist and social theorist Lewis Henry Morgan, anthropologists established a supposed hierarchy of societies ranging from the savage to the barbarous to the civilized.65 They sought to scientifically reconstruct human prehistory ranking human “races” along an evolutionary path. The exhibit designers at the LPE reflected this belief and intended to explain racial differences and understand what makes one culture different from – and superior or inferior to – another.66 Contemporary anthropologist James Clifford explains that from the mid to late nineteenth century, “culture” referred to a single evolutionary process. The ideal of autonomous individuality was believed to be the natural outcome of a long development that was assumed to be the basic, progressive, movement of humanity.67

Anthropologists at the fair conveyed these ideas to the public by creating living exhibits

66 Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society* (London: MacMillan & Company, 1877). Race is placed in quotes, initially here, to denote that it is a term that is highly problematic, but in the future, race and racial will be used without quotes.
that showcased living people from around the world. They classified different cultures racially and explained the evolutionary process to the public with interpretive labels. This helped people understand the physical and intellectual differences they perceived among those exhibited and themselves.

Fairgoers, visited these living exhibits and met people who participated in them. According to Parezo and Fowler, “these engagements were based on curiosity about the exotic and foreign” and offered “safe adventure through what has come to be called the ‘touristic gaze.’” Typically, viewers noted the “strangeness associated with these living exhibits.” They excited visitors while exhibit designers used anthropology to control their meaning. They did not want attendees to draw their own conclusions concerning living exhibits’ participants, so they provided interpretative scientific labels indicating the participants’ position along the spectrum of evolutionary development. By reading the exhibit labels, fairgoers could predict the future evolutionary process of mankind. These exhibits clearly showed Anglos, especially those from Northern European and American nations, as racially and culturally superior. Of course, making such claims helped justify European and American colonial and imperial power.

With fifty dollars in hand, the twenty-one-year-old Jacobson relocated to St. Louis in the fall of 1903, prior to the fair’s grand opening in May 1904. Because he arrived months early, he witnessed some of the construction and planning of the exposition. Furthermore, he stayed until

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68 Berkhofer, The White Man’s Indian, 51.
70 Parezo and Fowler, Anthropology Goes to the Fair, 9.
71 Ibid., 11.
72 Ibid., 3. Nationalism remained a strong theme throughout the fair, and many nations hoped to recreate and celebrate a nostalgic and glorified past. Ideas about nationalism is develop more chapter three: Nationalism and Modernism: As Expressed through Art, as nationalism is addressed in context of art production.
it closed in December 1904. Acquaintances helped him obtain an appointment as a member of the Jefferson Guards in October 1903. In this police force, he quickly attained the rank of Sergeant.

The St. Louis World’s Fair, however, was most important to Jacobson because it enhanced his interest and appreciation for diverse cultures, not buying completely into cultural ranking. In fact, the fair became a turning point in his life. Not only did Jacobson see and interact with indigenous peoples from all over the world, he also, for the first time, saw art on a truly international scale. He worked for a little over a year at the fairgrounds, taking on different jobs and gaining exposure to ideas about racial classification, western superiority over supposedly less civilized and primitive peoples and nations, and nationalism. All of these ideas influenced his perceptions about the role art should play in society.

After working as a guard for six months, he gained the attention of the Swedish Council, who eventually installed him as the Royal Commissioner of Sweden. Consequently, he oversaw Sweden’s exhibition and served as its curator. This position provided more income and allowed Jacobson to study his craft more intensively because it allowed him to observe art from around the world and meet many of the artists associated with the fair. He engaged with the art carefully and, in time, wrote and gave short lectures about his observations. Since Jacobson retained responsibility for the entire Swedish collection, the experience also helped him acquire new skills, such as packing and displaying art and all the intricacies of managing a traveling exhibit.

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73 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Mary Franks, “A New Story,” The Daily Oklahoman, 24 February 1924, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
74 He received the appointment on the recommendation of Dr. Swenson and from Burton, future U.S. senator; Lindsborg Record, 30 Oct 1903, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
75 Lindsborg Record, 11 March 1904, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
76 His impressions are discussed in chapter two.
77 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Jacobson’s involvement with the Swedish exhibit at the fair and western art encounters will be discussed in chapter two.
Interestingly, as a side job, Jacobson worked as performer and rider for the Wild West shows at the fair. These shows featured many of Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, along with Indians, especially the Sioux, and for a few weeks Will Rogers, also performed. Initially such shows faced opposition from Indian Services and Samuel McCowan, who managed the boarding school section (such schools showed that progress was possible among Indians if removed from their environment), of the fair and was one of Indian Service’s highest ranking educators. McCowan disliked traditional aspects of Indians’ lives and completely believed in the inevitability of assimilation. He, and other like-minded Indian Services personnel, worried that the Wild West shows portrayed Native Americans as barbaric, which would contradict the fair’s message of progress and confuse audience members. While the fair intended to show the “barbarism” of native people, fair organizers also wanted to demonstrate that, with the right oversight, instruction, and environment, Indians could become civilized citizens. They feared Wild West shows would give the illusion that Indians still held onto the days of fighting white advancement and were incapable of progress. A ten-thousand-dollar rental fee for the space and 15 percent of the gross proceeds, however, assuaged fair organizers’ anxieties about the Wild West show’s portrayals of American Indians. They permitted the shows to go on and Indians played a significant role in the performances.

Will Rogers, despite his Native ancestry, performed as a cowboy for at least three weeks. Rather than fighting Indians, however, it appears that he performed rope tricks and even wore a clown nose. Frontiersmen and settlers (i.e., colonizers) appeared along with cowboys and

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78 Indian Services was within the Office of Indian Affairs, which became the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1947. Boarding schools is discussed at length in chapter four: The Kiowa Five: Coming Out on Canvas.

79 Parezo and Fowler emphasize this point throughout much of Anthropology Goes to the Fair, see especially 57-60.
Indians, contributing to the audience’s amusement. Veterans of the Boer War, a war of British imperialism in Africa, joined Rough Rider performers, veterans of the U.S. war in Cuba. These shows did not send indirect messages about frontier life and colonialism but instead explicitly communicated the superiority of whites over Indians and other ethnicities. Jacobson did not document his thoughts on such performances’ portrayals of Indians or colonialism. On the other hand, as a showman, Jacobson delighted in the fact that his performances captivated the attendees. He continued cultivating his western frontier image of cowboy.

The fair, meanwhile, served as a breeding ground for cultural exchange among different groups. Jacobson later recalled it as a place for “liberal education” and reflected how the fair introduced him to “a group of interesting characters.” He found the event “a marvelous adventure, almost like a journey around the world.” He met exotic peoples he otherwise would not know and reveled in the opportunity to learn about them and their cultures “at leisure.” Jacobson, like a majority of fairgoers, became entranced by the “wild Igorots from the Philippines” and visited them often. They must have been likewise smitten. It seemed “they liked him well enough to invite him for one of their dog meat feasts.”

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80 Ibid., see especially 240-41.
81 Jacobson later expressed a sympathetic view towards Indians and thought negatively about governmental policies that displaced them, despite that his family benefited from such policies. In his book Kiowa Indian Art, he talks about Indian exploitation due to “land hungry whites,” and does not shy away from using words like massacre when discussing General George Armstrong Custer. Jacobson’s, Kiowa Indian Art (Nice: Szwedzicki, 1929). More discussion on this in chapters four and five.
82 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Mary Franks, “A New Story,” The Daily Oklahoman, 24 February 1924, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
83 It is unlikely that Jacobson actually accepted this offer. This information and quote came from Jacobson’s future wife, who wrote about Jacobson’s experience sometime later in her manuscripts; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; For discussion on how three women professional photographers portrayed or captured Filipinos at the fair, consult Anne Maxwell, “Framing the Asia-Pacific: The Gerhard Sisters at the St. Louis World’s Fair,” History of Photography, 39, no. 3 (2015): 227-241. Maxwell notes that because of their dog-eating rituals, Igorots were considered the most primitive people not just of the fair, but of the world, and because of this, their presences drew in many curious Americans.
Igorots, a people from northern Luzon, were considered the lowest ethnic category among not only Filipinos but around the world.\textsuperscript{84} Over 1,250 Filipinos participated in the exhibition. When the Spanish colonized the Philippines, they spread Catholicism, but after the Spanish-American War, American Protestants colonized the islands. They pushed boarding school education on the locals. This mirrored contemporary U.S. policy regarding the forced acculturation American Indians during the same period. For the fair, President Teddy Roosevelt and Congress created a commission to design the Philippine living ethnographic exhibit “to introduce Americans to the country’s newest possession” since becoming a global power. Roosevelt and others thought Filipinos in the exhibit would benefit from interacting and observing Americans. They could Americanize and embody real evolutionary progress.\textsuperscript{85}

The Philippine villages (fig. 1.8), collectively known as the Philippine Reservation, drew enormous crowds, larger even than the adjacent American Indians exhibits. Americans apparently loved to view “less civilized” peoples. Given how low Filipinos supposedly were on the evolutionary scale, they were not free to roam around unaccompanied throughout the fair. They could, however, visit with other “ethnic” peoples in the surrounding exhibits where government troops kept them under surveillance and enforced curfew restrictions by enclosing them at night behind tall fences.\textsuperscript{86}

If anthropologists intended that the Philippines exhibit would illustrate peoples in the process of becoming “civilized,” the American Indians’ exhibits represented snapshots of the

\textsuperscript{84} Parezo and Fowler, \textit{Anthropology Goes to the Fair}, 165.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.; Maxwell, “Framing the Asia-Pacific,” 238.
Figure 1.8 *Igorrote Song* (Philippine Reservation in the Department of Anthropology at the 1904 World's Fair), 1904, Missouri History Museum
“before” colonialism and “after” boarding schools’ transformation of Indians. The LPE followed the model set in 1893 with the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. For the 1904 fair, Congress appropriated funds for an Indian building. On one side, selected Indians provided demonstrations of making traditional crafts, while the other side hosted schoolchildren receiving a boarding school education. The “traditional” side appealed more to the average fairgoer since those individuals showed a more “primitive” state of being. Unfortunately sources do not reveal what Jacobson thought about this exhibit. Perhaps his initial encounter with the exposition’s school exhibit left an impression on him. If so, based on his later ideas and actions, it did not seem to have convinced him that Indians should be made in the white man’s image.

Although not as popular as the Igorots, United States–based Apaches drew large crowds at the fair too. Thousands of fairgoers, including Jacobson, saw and interacted with Geronimo, a “star” at the fair. Jacobson claimed that they first crossed paths a few years prior to the

87 The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, located in Pennsylvania, was the first off-reservation government boarding school for American Indian children. For more information about assimilation through education see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995). Adams’s comprehensive study examines Indian boarding schools from 1875-1928. His work looks at “how policymakers sought to use the schoolhouse—specifically the boarding schools—as an instrument for acculturating Indian youth to ‘American’ ways of thinking and living” (ix). This book is a good reference for Indian boarding school information, but it does not focus on one particular school in any meaningful way. It instead provides a general overview of the kinds of experiences that took place among the schools and the policies the schools held. For a discussion on the Dawes Act and how it played out at the fair, see Frederick E. Hoxie, *The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 85-88. More on Indian boarding schools, the Dawes Act, and Indian policy from 1880 through John Collier’s Indian New Deal is discussed in chapter four: Among Indians: Observer turned Patron. 88 Margaret D. Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters*, 165.

89 Brousse, “About Indians,” Folder 5, Box 4; Similar information written directly by Jacobson, “Indian Artists from Oklahoma,” from, “Jacobson, Oscar, ‘Indian Artists from Oklahoma,’” Folder 2, Box 7, NCWHM. An essential source for this dissertation comes from the Arthur Silberman Collection at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum Library (NCWHM), which provides an immense amount of oral interviews regarding Jacobson and information about the Kiowa Five Indians.

exhibition, in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where Geronimo lived as prisoner. In St. Louis, Geronimo resided on the “traditional” side of the exhibit. As a younger man, Geronimo fought western encroachment of whites and the U.S. government tirelessly. Geronimo’s presence symbolized American victory over such foes.

After his capture he sold his image to tourists because they wanted a picture of the “last” Indian warrior. Whites wanted an authentic Indian interaction, not realizing that the Apache warrior was playing a role. Although technically a prisoner of war, Geronimo could walk around freely and interact with tourists and Natives. He could not, however, dance with other Indians because his captors feared that putting on his regalia might bring out “bad emotions.” His captors did not need to worry. The seventy-five-year-old Geronimo preferred to wear European clothing. He often wandered amongst the crowds. He would cut off a button from his jacket to sell to gawking tourists only to later sew new buttons on and make the same sale the following day. He, like most Natives there, sold photographs of himself to whites, and because of his fame, he made a reasonable amount of money doing so (fig. 1.9). Jacobson was among those who took a photo or bought a button. While Geronimo probably perceived Jacobson as nothing more than another fairgoer, Jacobson’s preferred interpretation was that they were friends.91

Jacobson found his encounters with Geronimo fascinating and mentioned their “relationship” years later when we wrote about Indians. Perhaps Jacobson believed his experience with “traditional” Indians authenticated his identity as a westerner. He used it as a selling point for his knowledge about and closeness to Indians. For instance, in his book *American Indian Painters* (1950), Jacobson recalled “I knew the old Apache warrior well in the early years of 1900. He was a fierce-looking old cuss. Once he gave me a photograph, signed. He could sign his name.”92 In actuality, Jacobson bought a commodified image of Geronimo—both literal and figurative—and embraced it as authentic. In another book, *North American Indian Costumes* (1952), Jacobson repeated that he “knew Geronimo very well.” He described him as a “mean looking Indian, but time had mellowed his character, and he was very kind to his family

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and his people.”⁹³ Offering a stereotypical depiction, he recalled that Geronimo “acquired a taste for civilization, had begun to use tables, chairs, dishes, etc. He had also acquired a sweet tooth and was fond of apple pie. No wonder he demanded twice as much as was typical for a “sitting fee” for artists to illustrate him.⁹⁴

Despite the gawking and rude behavior that Geronimo endured, one source claimed that he enjoyed his time at the fair. He observed and talked with Anglo-Americans, and he “brought home a new assessment of white Americans.” He recalled finding them “very kind and peaceful.”⁹⁵ He also had the opportunity to interact with many Natives from other parts of the United States, something he apparently enjoyed much more than conversing with white Americans.⁹⁶

If Geronimo satisfied fairgoers’ curiosities about famous Indian resisters, others brought new attention to Indian artistry. San Ildefonso Pueblos Maria Martinez and her husband, Julian, for example, attended the fair as part of their honeymoon and worked on the “traditional” side of the exhibit demonstrating “traditional” pottery techniques. Although Maria and Julian both received boarding school educations and spoke English, promoters of the exhibit thought that the couple would generate more interest on the “traditional” side because of the type of pottery they produced.⁹⁷ They also had the opportunity to meet Geronimo, but had to converse in Spanish because they “didn’t know each other’s Indian.” The American Southwest was once part of New

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⁹³ Jacobson, *North American Indian Costumes*, 6. It is likely Jacobson exaggerated his relationship with Geronimo as a way to give himself credibility regarding his connections to Indians.
⁹⁴ “Elbridge Ayer Burbank”, J-13 Folder 6, WHC. Geronimo recalled making as much as two dollars a day, and felt satisfied that he saved his earnings for his return home to Oklahoma. (Parezo and Fowler, *Anthropology Goes to the Fair*, 165; Maxwell, “Framing the Asia-Pacific,” 238. 113.)
⁹⁶ Ibid., 115. Years later, Jacobson became acquainted with and promoted the cousin of Houser’s grandfather Geronimo, Allan Houser, a well-known Indian painter and sculptor during the 1930s.
Spain, and later, Mexico, therefore Indians of the region often spoke Spanish because of the Spanish influence. Like Geronimo, the Martinezes became objects of a great deal of gawking, and they coped with this unwanted gaze and mockery first by ignoring the fairgoers and then pretending they did not know English. Later in the evening, when the fair closed for the night, they poked fun at the tourists. Of course, they censored themselves while on display because they wanted to sell their work so they continued to silently endure insults to their culture, appearance, and intelligence.98

As with Geronimo, the Martinezes presented a commodified version of indigenous people. They recognized that to market their authentic pottery to a white audience, they needed to fit the image of “traditional” Indians. The fair once again objectified American Indians and commodified authenticity. It is not known what types of conversation Jacobson had with Indian participants at the fair, but undoubtedly his exposure to the Martinez couple and other artisans helped shape his understanding and appreciation for ethnic and “primitive” works of art.

It is likely that Jacobson used some of his earnings to purchase Indian artifacts and art at the fair. Many indigenous people bought from one another after closing hours when they did not have to project “authenticity,” could interact with one another and take on the role of consumer rather than producer or commodity. The fair’s officials forbade Native participants from having in view of the public anything not “traditionally” associated with their tribe. So, of course,

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98 The Martinezes also worked in a similar venue at the San Diego World Fair of 1915, an exhibit Jacobson also attended. Later the Martinezes became acclaimed potters for their black on black technique and received national and international attention. However at the San Diego fair they produced pottery of a different kind. Pueblos played a key role in Jacobson’s initial interests in Indian art.
exchanges of American dollars took place out of sight of fairgoers. Moreover, the fair’s anthropologists wanted to convey that cultural exchange did not exist among Native people. They were presumably frozen in the past as primitive.99

The fair closed in fall of 1904 and Jacobson, driven to develop his own artwork and make a name for himself, moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in January 1905, where he enrolled in Yale’s graduate fine arts program. Yale’s art gallery was one of the oldest in the nation, exposing Jacobson to an already rich art history. Also, within travel distance to New York’s renowned Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met), Yale’s location proved ideal for a museum enthusiast. Jacobson’s careful study of the media and techniques employed by some of the world’s most celebrated artists on display at the Met helped him grow tremendously in his own creative pursuits.100

At Yale, Jacobson, who had for so long cultivated his image as a Westerner, felt somewhat ostracized by his wealthy New Englander classmates so he roomed with three other young men, all Bethany College alumni, who also hailed from west of the Mississippi—South Dakota, Colorado, and New Mexico. Together they paid homage to their western heritage by decorating their room with memorabilia from both their homes and travels into Indian Territory. They called their living quarters the Kawraw Kiotes den, most likely named after the Kaw tribe that primarily resided in Kansas prior to Anglo settlement. They made friends with other non–New Englanders, too. Fellow student Sinclair Lewis, a native from Minnesota and future prominent American novelist and playwright, made up part of this group, although he did not

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99 This point is emphasized throughout much of Parezo and Fowler’s book, *Anthropology Goes to the Fair.*
100 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
room with them in the Kawraw Kiotes den (fig. 1.10).\textsuperscript{101} At Yale, Jacobson grew quite fond of others referring to him as “cowboy,” though close acquaintances simply called him “Jake,” his self-styled moniker from his Lindsborg Riders days.\textsuperscript{102}

Due to Yale’s costly tuition and board rates, Jacobson and his roommates worked during the summers and picked up odd jobs throughout the year.\textsuperscript{103} Initially, Jacobson worked as a cashier for a “posh” student eating club that allowed him to get a nice meal at the end of his shift, and during football season he oversaw the ushers and ticket takers as field marshal. One summer he worked as a photographer’s assistant, and he saw this as an opportunity to learn about photography, a hobby he continued throughout his life. His favorite job was working for Shubert Theater in New Haven. He saw hundreds of plays and he often got to work as an extra, which meant not only more money, but also an opportunity to rub elbows with renowned actors. The Shubert Theater often served as the “testing stage” for plays bound for New York, and Jacobson

\textsuperscript{101} Years later, as a renowned novelist, Sinclair challenged traditions, conformists, and gender expectations.
\textsuperscript{102} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; \textit{Lindsborg Record}, 27 June 1905, p. Scrapbook Clipping, Box 1 Vol. 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{103} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
cherished performing with noted actors of the time, such as Julia Marlowe, E. H. Sothern, William Faversham, and Forbes Robertson.

At times, however, Jacobson and his roommates did not have enough money to pay for their meals, despite their various jobs. They would often pawn an old .38 army colt and a watch to cover their expenses until one of them earned enough money to retake their possessions. In 1906, Yale School of Fine Arts awarded Jacobson the Henry F. English scholarship, and this
eased his financial concerns.\textsuperscript{104} This freed up time, and Jacobson devoted himself even more to producing art.

An important moment came when in 1907, he exhibited a painting at the New England Paint and Clay Club. His canvas hung alongside James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s portrait \textit{Thomas Carlyle}, John Singer Sargent’s painting \textit{Girl’s Head}, John Lafarge. Also two professors exhibited. Professor John H. Niemeyer displayed two portraits and two landscapes, whereas John Weir’s hung \textit{Monastery and Church of San Francesco} at Assisi, which drew much attention. Jacobson also frequently showed his work at the Randall Studio in New Haven, such as his life-size portrait of Reverend Theodore T. Munger D.D., pastor emeritus of the United Church.\textsuperscript{105}

Jacobson and his Kawraw Kiotes friends acted in western-themed plays. Fellow student Victor O. Freeburg, for instance, wrote one called \textit{Sunset}.\textsuperscript{106} The romantic tragic-comedy seemed to mirror aspects of Jacobson’s youth. The story centered on a Yale student named Tom, a cowboy from Kansas, whose first love had been a Kaw Indian princess named Sunset. Upon learning this, his eastern girlfriend ended their relationship. Heartbroken, Tom returned to his Kansas home and resumed ranching. In general, Tom, like Jacobson, felt out of place in the East, which both found a bit too pretentious for their liking. Back in Kansas, Tom resumed his interest in Sunset, but he discovered that another ranch hand had his eyes on her, as well. The scenes took place primarily on the ranch and the surrounding Indian land, where the two cowboys strove

\textsuperscript{104} Jacobson’s hometown of Lindsborg had predicted he would win the scholarship. \textit{Lindsborg Record}, 27 June 1905, p.; “Yale School of Fine Arts,” \textit{New Haven Journal}, 2 June 1906, p.; “Is Professor in West,” \textit{New Haven Chronicle}, 1 August 1908, p.: Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{105} “Is Professor in West,” \textit{New Haven Chronicle}, 1 August 1908, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{106} After graduation at Yale, Freeburg, a fellow Swede, became a professor at Columbia University and editor of the \textit{Swedish American Review}. 

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for Sunset’s love. They finally decided the best way to settle the matter was to play a round of poker, as it apparently did not matter how Sunset felt.

While this love triangle played out, the ranch owner swore that the nearby Kaw Indians were stealing horses. The owner wanted to retaliate by taking a band of men to go kill Chief Mustango and his fellow Indians. One of the ranch owner’s impulsive young employees decided to kill the chief on behalf of his boss, but Sunset instead took a bullet trying to protect her father. Having lost their love, her suitors shook hands in an act of peace, as cowboys are, of course, “gentlemen.” In the closing moments of the play, the eastern girl comes to Kansas to reconcile with Tom. Having already forgotten about Sunset, the young cowboy returns to the East to get married. In the play, Jacobson, who had previously shown great affinity for playing cowboy, this time acted as Sunset’s father, the Kaw Indian Chief Mustango.

Freeburg set the play in Kansas in 1867, just five years prior to when the government forcefully relocated the remaining members of the tribe, between five hundred and six hundred Kaw, to northern Indian Territory.¹⁰⁷ For whatever reason, the Indian princess and father became Pawnee as Freeburg revised the play throughout the year. The Pawnee also resided in the area. We do not know if this change was at the request of Jacobson, but we do know that Jacobson thought highly of Pawnee. He thought them peaceful and interesting.¹⁰⁸ Considering Jacobson’s influence on the play, it seems likely that Freeburg meant for the Pawnee Indians to be innocent of horse theft and that the rancher framed them in order to justify his own condemnation of the

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¹⁰⁷ “Kanza People,” The Kaw Nation: People of the Southwind, last accessed 22 March 2017, http://kawnation.com/?page_id=72; Preceding the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Kaw controlled much of Kansas with a population estimated over 2,000 and a 20-million-acre domain.

surrounding Indians. It is very likely, then, that Jacobson played the role of the chief with great sympathy.\textsuperscript{109}

The play received much local acclaim, and the Westerners performed it often throughout 1907 into 1908, mostly in New Haven but also in some surrounding towns in Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{110} Newspapers reported that the acting and subject matter captured audience members’ interests. The actors’ obvious familiarity with the “true character of the West” contributed to its acclaim.\textsuperscript{111} The small crew even had an Indian, or part Indian, among them, but interestingly instead of playing the role of the chief or another Pawnee, he took on the part of the owner of the Circle X Ranch who wanted war on Mustango and his tribe. Actor Juan H. Larson was actually one-quarter Sioux from South Dakota and had previously graduated from Yale from the law school.\textsuperscript{112}

Jacobson wore an “authentic” full Indian headdress and reddened his fair Scandinavian skin (fig. 1.11).\textsuperscript{113} One article stated that Jacobson gathered the props from a reservation near his Lindsborg home.\textsuperscript{114} While that may have been true for many of the props, he probably acquired others from the 1904 World’s Fair. Wherever their origins, crowds “appreciated the genuine

\textsuperscript{109} On “playing Indian,” see Philip Deloria, \textit{Playing Indian}.

\textsuperscript{110} “It’s a Far Cry: from New Haven to Crazy Ridge, Kansas, but Herby Hangs a Drama ‘Sunset,’” Advertisement Pamphlet; “‘Sunset’ a Success,” \textit{New Haven Palladium}, 21 December 1907, p.; “‘Sunset’ Scores Success.” \textit{Saturday Chronicle New Haven}, 12 Aug. 1907, p.; ‘Sunset’ was Successful,” \textit{Springfield Union}, 27 December 1907, p; “Christmas at Theater,” \textit{Springfield Daily News}, 25 December 1907, p.; Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS; Other similar articles from several different sources are also in the Scrapbook.

\textsuperscript{111} “‘Sunset,’ A Western Play, Given by Amateurs Makes a Hit,” \textit{New Haven Union}, 22 December 1907, p.; \textit{New Haven Register}, 29 February 1908, p.; Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.

\textsuperscript{112} Sources do not reveal if Jacobson advocated for the role on Mustango or not. Juan H. Larson’s name only appears in the reviews some months after the original starting date, as he replaced another actor, which could explain his assigned role.

\textsuperscript{113} “Real Thing in these Costumes,” \textit{Lindsborg Record}, December 1907, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS; The articles mentions that Jacobson got the headdress at great danger since he stole it from a tipi, but next to the article Jacobson wrote that the claim was a lie; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; \textit{Chronicle New Haven}, 27 January 1908, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.

\textsuperscript{114} “Real Thing in these Costumes,” \textit{Lindsborg Record}, December 1907, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
Western artifacts and Indian regalia on display.” Reviews also lauded Jacobson’s “professionalism” and praised him for his devotedness to his part.\textsuperscript{115}

![Image of Oscar Jacobson as “Mustango”](image)

Figure 1.11 Oscar Jacobson as “Mustango,” from New Haven Union, December 22, 1907, from Oscar and Sophie Jeanne Brousse scrapbooks, volume 2, “1902-1911”

As the play toured Massachusetts, false claims surfaced, including one indicating that Jacobson stole the headdress at great danger. But most likely these stories emerged to generate box office interest in the play and the actors. Ironically, according to Jacobson’s later wife, the actors at first tried to tell the “truth” about the West, but they soon found that few wanted the truth, or whatever the Western actors perceived as an honest portrayal of Western and Kansas

history. So Jacobson and his friends “fed the Easterners the embellishments they wanted. And what fun they had! Even professors held the prevalent ideas of the East concerning the West.”

Some attendees disliked certain visual choices presented in the play. A New Haven, Connecticut, women’s club sent a letter complaining about the nude statues on stage. Without Jacobson’s knowledge, fellow art students responded to the situation by dressing “Venus in chemise and bloomers and Apollo in a vest, collar and tie though sans trousers.” The newly dressed models must have been quite amusing. The following day, according to Brousse,

Professor Niemeyer exploded in class, remarking that the Yale art students were acting like Barbarians from Kansas, [Jacobson’s] blood rose. He marched over to the teacher and said to him “As a Kansas Barbarian I should live up to your opinion and shoot you. I feel like it. At least I demand an apology to the state I come from.” Professor Niemeyer gasped and blushed.

The instructor expressed personal regret and proceeded to compliment Jacobson for his achievements and scholarship, while remarking he wished he had more students from Kansas like him. Jacobson’s reaction demonstrated that he possessed a considerable amount of pride in himself and his state. He would continue to question anything he deemed inappropriate and stereotypical throughout his life.

Jacobson found his years at Yale enjoyable and intellectually stimulating, but at the end of his last semester a mishap occurred as he and his roommates packed their belongings. After a cat outside kept making an irritating noise, one of the boys threw an ink bottle out the window. Instead of hitting the feline, the projectile lit upon an Irish cop. Needless to say, arrests for “being disorderly characters” soon followed for the entire group, as well as one unfortunate

\[116\] Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
\[117\] Ibid.
\[118\] Ibid.
\[119\] Ibid.
\[120\] Ibid.
innocent bystander.\textsuperscript{121} After paying a fine, they all gained their freedom.\textsuperscript{122} Jacobson returned home to Kansas to punch cattle during the summer months prior to the start of the new school year, when he would take up new residence and employment in Minnesota.

Jacobson was hired to head the art department at Minnesota College from 1909 until 1911. He had not yet earned his MA degree in Fine Arts because he had to develop himself as an artist first and gain a reputation, a common practice at the time. Furthermore, Jacobson dreamed of opening an art school in the West. So while Minnesota College sought to open up an art school and believed Jacobson the right person for this goal, Jacobson perhaps saw this as a temporary position, a stepping stone to his own goal.\textsuperscript{123} Upon his arrival, the school’s announcement read, “Professor Jacobson comes to Minnesota College with the culture and refinement of the East and the practical experience of the West.”\textsuperscript{124} The clipping further expressed the hopes that he would play an important role in the institution’s success.

His first semester began in September 1909. Within a year, he created the Jacobson Scholarship to provide one student free tuition after a year of study and proven progress and financial need. Jacobson not only crafted a variety of art classes to teach, he also quickly began securing artworks for the school’s personal holdings.\textsuperscript{125} He used his influence to obtain noteworthy pieces, helping to increase the school’s prestige.\textsuperscript{126} Also, responding to the Scandinavian influence in the community, he discussed “The Rise of a New Art in the

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Lindsborg Record, 18 July 1908, p.; Minneapolis Tribune, July 1908, p.; Lindsborg Record, 16 June 1908, p.; Lindsborg Record, 15 July 1908, p.: Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{124} “Is Professor in West,” New Haven Chronicle, 1 August 1908, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{125} Unknown Minneapolis Source, November 1909, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
Northland.” His work as the curator for the Swedish exhibit at the St. Louis Fair paid started paying off.

He also continued to gain recognition as an artist. Perhaps since an established Swedish immigrant artists patronage network existed, it helps to understand Jacobson’s raid success. As art historian Mary Swanson points out, “The network of patronage, both informal and formal, that supported Swedish-American artists was uniquely vigorous and, although diffuse, was often interconnected.”¹²⁷ He earned commissioned to paint a portrait of President Frank Nelson of Minnesota College. He exhibited two paintings at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific, in Seattle. The Swedish Club purchased his portrait of late Minnesota Governor John A Johnson. He exhibited at the Minnesota State Art Society Exhibition in 1910, and contributed regularly to the *Kansas Magazine*.

In Minnesota, Jacobson continued to participate in plays, such as a large production reflecting on the state’s history, beginning with the alleged arrival of Norwegian Vikings and early interaction with Indians.¹²⁸ The play continued through the centuries, to the point that Indians became almost nonexistent in the state, presumably vanishing altogether. Jacobson played the Viking. Of course, Vikings never came to Minnesota, nor did Indians disappear, but participants and viewers thought otherwise. A well-known Sioux writer, Charles Eastman,

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¹²⁷ Swanson comments that patronage is not about wealthy elites sponsoring art, but that patronage “can be provided by organizations, publications, institutions, urban or rural settings that offer a nurturing environment, and the community of artists themselves.” Specifically, “ethnic leaders and organizations in the lower and middle classes also found a variety of methods to support and encourage their visual artists.” Swedish Anders Zorn (1860-1920) and Carl Larsson (1853-1919) are good examples since both men came from poor families. They found a “niche in social circles because of their abilities, served as an inspiration to young immigrant artists,” such as Sandzén and Jacobson. For a fuller account of Swedish patronage see Mary Towley Swanson, “A Tangled Web: Swedish Immigrant Artists’ Patronage Systems, 1880-1940,” University of St. Thomas, Minnesota: Art History Publications Paper 9, 2004, http://ir.stthomas.edu/arthistory_pub/9, ch. 1, p. 1.

¹²⁸ The play, entitled *Pageant of Minnesota History*, was typical of state and regional pageants of the time, as states looked to celebrate their history and, at least in Minnesota’s case, the end of the presence of Indians in the region. No known sources exist that discuss Eastman’s perception of the play, or his interaction with Jacobson, one of the few leads of the pageant.
played the leading role of Hiawatha early in the play, and he later reappeared in the pageant and played the last Indian in Act VIII, entitled “Passing of the Indian.” The concept of the vanishing Indian was a widely held belief at the time. According to historian Sherry Smith, “One hundred years ago, when the nation’s Indian population was at its nadir and forced assimilation seemed the most logical policy, the majority of Americans assumed that extinction of Indian cultures.” Verses from the play’s scene indicate the same:

For the dominion that man claims is vain,
His lordship of the earth a passing dream,—
A dream the dreamer tries in vain to clasp,
A mist that melts within his futile grasp.

It is not clear why Jacobson did not play an Indian in this production, as many non-Indians did. In fact, it does not appear that Jacobson ever again played an Indian on stage, following his Yale years.

During Jacobson’s tenure at Minnesota College, Jacobson began lecturing and visiting local civic groups, to discuss the role of art in society and different periodizations of art history, including contemporary Swedish art and Impressionism. Throughout the remainder of

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129 In time Eastman became an Indian rights activist, a physician, and national lecturer.
131 "Full text of ‘Pageant of Minnesota history, under the auspices of the Saint Paul institute School of art’," Internet Archive, last accessed 22 March 2017. http://www.archive.org/stream/pageantofminnes00stpa/pageantofminnes00stpa_djvu.txt. For an in-depth discussion of the view that Indians were considered vanishing by the majority of Americans by the mid-1800s into the early twentieth century, see Brian Dippie’s *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991). Indian populations had dwindled significantly since white encroachment on tribal lands, the Dawes Act, and forced assimilation, thereby partly explaining this belief of the vanishing Indian. The writers of the pageant sought to depict this disappearance as being inevitable. Dippie suggests the very idea that Indians were dying off affected the types of policies that the government sought, such as forced acculturations including Indian boarding schools. Based on what was thought to be irrefutable evidence, it became self-perpetuating. While Jacobson played the key roles in the play, he did not view all Indians as vanishing. Some seemed to be diminishing as their tribes had dwindled drastically in numbers, but for many others, he believed that they would continue to makeup an important segment of the American population. The concept of the Vanishing Indian, as it relates to Jacobson and his life, is fleshed out in chapter five: *Among Indians: Observer Turned Patron.*
Jacobson’s career, he gave such public discussions. Despite enjoying aspects of his job, he looked elsewhere for employment.

After serving two years as dean at Minnesota College, Jacobson moved in 1911, to Washington State College, in Pullman, Washington, to teach art. He thought his job might only last for a few months. Large numbers of Scandinavians had settled in this region, but the area’s population remained more diverse than in Lindsborg or Minnesota. In fact, his new employer boasted a 130-member faculty made up of many nationalities. Jacobson noted that while he often got to speak in his native tongue, a moderate form of “King’s English” remained the standard spoken language. After his arrival, observing the sincerity of the residents, he commented, “They shake hands as if they meant it and they all seem to think it fun to be alive.”

As Jacobson launched a campaign to update the art department’s objectives, he simultaneously engaged in self-promotion as an artist. This exposure lent him more credibility as a professor among his peers and students. As his work received publicity, galleries actively sought his pieces for exhibition. At this time in his career, Jacobson still painted some portraits, but started to shift his attention to landscapes, for which he became most noted. Because Yale’s established program had heavily emphasized both art history and portraiture, Jacobson’s early artworks and lectures reflected this particular perspective.

His early exhibits in Minnesota and in Pullman received positive reviews. One article, reacting to several of his paintings but focusing its appraisal on his portrait of a Swedish noblewoman, announced Jacobson had produced “a beautiful piece of work and shows great

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ability.” The reviewer went on to say, his “other paintings are scenes from nature full of beauty and the moodiness of the out-of-doors. His Spring is a joyous thing full of life and motion. The Dirge attracted considerable attention, and received very favorable comment.”\textsuperscript{134} He almost always used titles that provided a sense of place and often even indicated the actual place of artistic inspiration.

Writing about Jacobson growing focus on nature and landscapes, Mark White comments that “Jacobson maintained his attachment to place, often giving his paintings geographically specific titles, yet the landscape always remained a platform for artist invention.” From his appointment at Washington onwards, Jacobson “used the western landscape as a vehicle for emotional and spiritual expression and gravitated increasingly to sites of isolation and hospitality, free of over human influence.” His 1910 painting \textit{Snake River Canon} in southeastern Washington, reinforces Jacobson’s love for nature and wilderness.\textsuperscript{135}

At school, Jacobson assembled traveling art exhibits, something the college had never attempted. He also started a permanent collection for the college and initiated an artists’ association. This club purchased individual pieces “to form the nucleus of an art collection at the college.”\textsuperscript{136} With no readily available funds at his disposal, Jacobson did the manual work himself. Working alone, he unpacked, displayed, and then repacked all the artwork. His wife later recalled, “he was a born collector.”\textsuperscript{137} Due to his experience as the Swedish curator during the World’s Fair, he knew what needed to be done to protect the integrity of the collection. Meanwhile, with what little leisure time he had remaining, Jacobson painted and sketched.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{134} “Art Exhibit Attracts Attention—Portland Artists Send Paintings,” \textit{Evergreen Pullman}, November 1911, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{135} White, “An Artist in the Wilderness,” 42-44.
\textsuperscript{136} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
Within his first few days of residency he encountered Sophie Brousse (1885–1967) of Grenoble, France, a young woman who came to America to pursue her own career. Quite likely, her presence made Jacobson want to establish a more permanent position in Washington. She served as the chair for French literature and also aspired to lecture about her homeland’s history.\textsuperscript{139} Jacobson liked her at first glance and asked a coworker to casually introduce him to the French teacher. Of course, she had also noticed him, partly due to his almost intimidating stature, so she was pleased to make his acquaintance.\textsuperscript{140}

They shared many of the same interests, and both conversed freely about their European heritage. The couple saw each other almost daily, either by crossing paths on campus or because Jacobson concocted some reason for them to meet. After sharing a week together, in the company of friends, on a ranch in Idaho during the Christmas break, the couple decided to get married. Their collective passions for both life and other cultures created a unique and lasting bond.\textsuperscript{141}

Now married to Jacobson, Brousse soon became even more fascinated with the ways of the West. She and a friend rode horses and camped together on the banks of Snake River. During one trip, they met a number of cowboys who invited them to a box party. Brousse very much wanted to accept, but her friend, a “prim and proper Easterner would not think of accepting an invitation from total strangers.” The women declined, but Brousse knew she would always regret not seizing that moment because “it would have been another experience of Western life, and I had no doubt that, for all their rough exterior, these cowboys were gentleman.”\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{139} “Extra,” Unknown Source, n.d., 6, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{140} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
During the same trip, Brousse learned of a nearby Indian camp. Because she had never encountered Indians before, she eagerly welcomed the opportunity to catch a glimpse of them. Again, her friend expressed reticence about joining her expedition, remarking that the “Indians were dirty, unfriendly, etc . . . ” However, Brousse eventually succeeded in coaxing her into coming along:

It was dark when we reached a circular tipi; hearing us, a woman came out of it. We asked her—it was our excuse—if she had any beadwork for sale. While she rummaged around among her few pots and pans, we had a view of the whole family, five or six of them, lying down with their feet towards the center where a small fire dispelled the evening chill. Devoid of glamour as it was, it still thrilled me. Then an incongruous sound intruded; I recognized the loud ticking of a dollar alarm clock hanging from a tent pole. That broke the spell; I could hardly keep from laughing in comic relief.\footnote{Ibid.}

Brousse’s story reveals how non-Native society viewed Indians as “others,” but also reveals how Brousse saw them as relatable.

As faculty members, the Jacobsons took part in a variety of activities at the college and in Pullman. They resided in an unusual apartment that rested on the edge of a cliff where the balconies hung out into space. There, they interacted with other young couples and professors to fill their time. For a Halloween event, they, along with other residents, hosted an elaborate party. The group carefully arranged the decorations and planned the themes. According to Brousse, “the house warming at Halloween was a clever affair that became a legend.”\footnote{“Cliff Dwellers Entertain Faculty at Unique Party,” \textit{Evergreen Pullman}, 30 November 1912, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4, OHS.} As a result of Jacobson’s love for theater, the pair joined a literary club and took part in the production of \textit{Hamlet}. The preparation, including the creation of costumes and learning of roles, demanded much of their time, but after long hours of work, the play received positive reviews.\footnote{Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.} The
couple delighted in each other and in sharing their interests. Their next adventure would be a trip to Europe on the eve of the first world war. In Europe the Jacobsons would see world-class art at the Baltic Exhibition. Jacobson envied how European governments supported and sponsored art to further nation-states’ cultures. The couple also visited their homelands and saw firsthand the devastation of the early months of World War I.
Oscar Brousse Jacobson had established himself as an artist and an instructor in Pullman, Washington. He was at a point in his career where he received accolades and recognition for his art. He worked tirelessly to achieve such renown. To get to this place professionally, he traveled domestically and internationally, attended art shows, and opened avenues of dialogue with peoples from different cultures, countries, and ethnicities. Through his international travels, Jacobson developed a deeper appreciation and understanding of modernism. Through his travels in the Southwest, he built on his childhood interactions with American Indians and developed a deeper appreciation and understanding of their cultures. Furthermore, he became increasingly enamored with Native American art. He remained an observer, but he was not passive. Every art show and every interaction provided an opportunity for him to learn about various cultures’ art and customs and forge relationships he would utilize when he opened his art school.

In 1914, after months of industrious work and careful accumulation of their savings, the newlywed Jacobsons planned to travel throughout Europe, visiting their birthplaces and other areas of interest. Jacobson believed this trip would also serve as an excellent opportunity to study European art in a European context, something he had longed to do for some time. The couple
had no way of knowing that Europe stood poised on the verge of war and their trip would come to an abrupt end.

After rushing off from Pullman, the Jacobsons barely made it to New York in time to catch their liner to Hamburg, where they then ventured to Sassnitz, and then took another small ferry to Malmö, Sweden. On their way, they encountered King Oscar Gustaf Adolf of Sweden, which they believed was an auspicious beginning for an exciting trip to come. As a coincidence, they ran into him again in Malmö. Only after staying a couple of nights in Malmö, they ventured to Uppsala for some sightseeing then traveled to Stockholm, where they visited galleries and saw many paintings.

Jacobson, determined to visit his hometown, finally secured passage on a local’s little “putt-putt” boat, as boats rarely frequented the little island or even knew where it was because thousands of little islands lay off the coast just south of Stockholm. As the small craft plowed clumsily through the rough waves, water continuously sprayed the passengers. After this brutal and wet adventure, the newlyweds landed on Västra Eknö, where Jacobson enjoyed a happy reunion with his old nurse and visited family members on neighboring islands. The couple benefited from the local hospitality while friends and family plied them with questions about America and his family. In return, he was reminded of all his “early exploits and misdemeanors” as a young child. Their days passed quickly as Jacobson showed Brousse his many secret hideouts. While their visit was short, they left a bit of their “hearts on that island.”

Even after all those years, he still felt a deep connection to the sea. After leaving Sweden, he had taken every opportunity to sail, at Yale, Minnesota, and even in land-locked Pullman, Washington. Before leaving the island, he made some sketches so he could later paint the

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1 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
landscape. Mark White suggests that it is likely that his 1923 painting *Elegy of the Sea (Coast of Sweden)* (1923; fig. 2.1) resulted from this trip.

Figure 2.1 Oscar Jacobson, *Elegy of the Sea (Coast of Sweden)*, 1923, University of Oklahoma, Elaine Bizzell Thompson Study Room, University of Oklahoma Libraries

Back on the mainland, the Jacobsons returned to Malmö, where they spent five days at the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö. They originally intended to spend only two days, but they could not pull themselves away from the extensive collection of art, especially its phenomenal modern works. Jacobson’s experience at this exposition had a huge effect upon his ideas about art.

The Baltic Exhibition of 1914 was not a World’s Fair, but the organizers created it in the same vein. It, too, was an arena for displaying the region’s (Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Sweden)

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2 Ibid.
Finland, and Russia) progress regarding industrial expansion, but it also included art. The organizers surprisingly chose to hold the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö, a city of only modest size. Hosting over 3,500 works of art, it became the largest exhibition of its type ever held in the Nordic region. The exhibition displayed art from living artists only, and they must have created the work after 1897. Under these conditions, modern art was prominent at the exhibition.4

The Hall of Fine Arts played a prestigious role in the fair and had a prime location.5 At the edge of the fairgrounds, the Hall of Fine Art stood away from the other buildings. Journalist R. Bengtsson described the hall, in the Karlstads Tidning as a “temple,” set a distance from the rest of the exhibition. This “disfigured seclusion” provided the serenity fairgoers needed to appreciate and contemplate the artwork. Bengtsson noted that “art requires peace and quiet in order to be properly understood, a fact acknowledged by the exhibition.”6 Jacobson, a lover of architecture, despite rarely incorporating it into his own paintings, must have also noticed the building’s distinctiveness and pristine setting, with a lake serving as its backdrop (fig. 2.2). Most importantly, the art within did not disappoint Jacobson or Brousse. In fact, they reflected on it for decades to come.7

Trying to justify a common thread among these Baltic states remained a challenge for its organizers, and sometimes proved altogether unconvincing. Organizers of the exhibition held discussions as to whether or not they could identify a common link, especially as it related to art. When asking themselves, what constituted as Baltic Art, they were divided. Contemporary art historian Karl Wahlin had strong views that such a regional classification was “entirely lacking

7 This is stated numerous times throughout Brousse’s manuscript.
in legitimacy.”\textsuperscript{8} Scholars have since concluded that imposing a common theme proved ineffective.\textsuperscript{9} It must be considered too, that the artists exhibiting did not always work in Baltic countries. Speaking to this, modern day art historian, Martin Sundberg claimed that “the constructed nature of the concept is striking when seen from today’s point of view as well...Paris was still significant as both a destination and a place for production, as is evident particularly in the work of the Swedish pupils of Matisse. German artists from Berlin, Dresden and Munich would have objected to being lumped together under the same umbrella.”\textsuperscript{10}

While the exhibition may have lacked a unifying theme, the ad hoc collection mirrored the diversity of Europe. Artists—and nations—had different techniques, priorities, and

\textsuperscript{8} Martin Sundberg, “The Hall of Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” 22.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 24-25.
aesthetics. The exhibition consequently paralleled Europe more closely than it would have had the fair found a common thread. Sundberg went on to explain why:

Yet the exhibition’s combination of such diverse movements as Swedish national romanticism and the beginnings of modernism - the oscillation between an environmental mysticism and expressionism - mirrors the dynamic that characterised the period rather than any integrated or shared goals. Both established art in the spirit of the fin de siecle and a modernism that had yet to be frozen into a fixed form would be on display in the Hall of Fine Art.11

The exhibit was one of northern Europe’s greatest art exhibits, and the largest up to this point.

Using other fairs as a model, such as the Paris and Chicago World's Fairs, the Baltic Exhibition sought to highlight the industrial and artistic achievements of the region. The nineteenth century had witnessed a lot of cultural change, such as mass immigration, technological advancements, increased imperialism, and more accessible education, and in Europe, “new artistic styles and movements replaced the old with greater frequency than ever before,” art historian Torsten Gunnarsson noted. Therefore art “found broader audiences,” Gunnarsson suggested.12 Since around the turn of the twentieth century, a “spirit of nationalism and love for local landscape united art and literature” for much of Sweden.13 Jacobson took notice of this, not only at the Baltic Exhibition, but a decade earlier at the Swedish exhibition at the St. Louis World’s Fair. “The search for national identity and traditional lifestyles would characterize both European and Nordic painting at the close of the nineteenth century,” commented Gunnarsson.14 Furthermore, the concept of the Baltic zone helped persuade Germany and Denmark to participate. Russia meanwhile wanted to confirm that the fair had enough enthusiasm before committing. Eventually, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Russia all

11 Ibid.
12 Gunnarsson, “From Realism to Expressionism,” 70.
13 Ibid., 76.
14 Ibid., 74.
contributed.\textsuperscript{15} In the upcoming years, Jacobson would join others in becoming increasingly vocal about the connection between art and national identity. He would not only lecture about it among his students and various art circles, but he would also push this idea among the general public as a way to garner support for the arts and those trying to carve out a distinctively American and Western identity.

Opening its doors on May 15, 1914, the fair ran until October. It gained publicity and was well attended until the Great War started late July 1914, which almost halted visitors altogether. Especially because two of the nations participating in the exhibition were at war with one another, the fair became something of a contested space. This disruption also ensured that the fair would not be able to recuperate its expenses because sales went down significantly. For years, most of the art remained in Malmö because transporting the works back to their original countries proved to be too dangerous.\textsuperscript{16}

Jacobson and his wife visited the fair in time to enjoy it without rushing. While curating the Swedish exhibit in St. Louis, Jacobson would have noticed that Nordic and European artists, especially Swedes such as Anders Zorn, Carl Larsson, Gustaf Fjaestad, and Nils Kreuger, looked to cultivate their national identities. At the close of the nineteenth century Nordic artists, particularly Swedes, often looked to the countryside and away from big cities to find their artistic voice. Jacobson did the same. By the turn of the twentieth century, Sweden started to reflect an even stronger national soul than before, and its love for the landscape and literature helped unify its art, which has earned the name National Romanticism. Jacobson saw this in St. Louis, but it became even more apparent at the Baltic Exhibit.

\textsuperscript{15} Calling it a Baltic Exhibition allowed the facilitators to exclude Norway. Apparently, Norway was not welcome after the dissolution of the Union with Sweden in 1905.
\textsuperscript{16} Sundberg, “The Hall of Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” 33.
Jacobson took in all the art on display, but he gravitated towards certain modernist pieces. While much of this work stemmed from Germany, or artists associated with Berlin and Munich, great art centers, or Germans who studied in Paris, Sweden itself had much to offer. Swedish artists had the largest collection of paintings shown in Malmö, and it is likely that Jacobson took particular notice of Ester Almqvist’s work, in part because she was one of the few women artists represented. Almqvist’s painting *Sawmill in December Sun* (1914; fig. 2.3), which she painted in Smaland, Sweden, in 1914, found its inspiration from the countryside. Her work is especially expressive as bright colors dominate the canvas with her application of brushwork. Art historian Torsten Gunnarsson characterized her work as “new, free colour palette with yellow and violet dominating and a particularly expressive and pointillist brushwork rather in the manner of van Gogh.”\(^{17}\) Referring to this painting, art historian Nils-Gösta Sandblad argued in the magazine *Ord och Bild* in 1937, that *The Sawmill in December Sun* reflected a stylistic turning point for Almqvist. Sandblad wrote, “From the atmosphere-laden idyllic scenes to the broader perspectives and clarified colours of impressionist landscapes, Ester Almqvist has reached the point where she is obligated to explode the boundaries of the objective representation of nature to allow her creative urge to be fully expressed.”\(^{18}\) In fact, she studied an illustrated book and gained inspiration from Van Gogh’s signature style, as did Sandzén, Jacobson’s influential former teacher and friend. Jacobson’s painting *Winter Forest in Sweden* (ca. 1914; fig. 2.4), which he painted in the months after returning from Sweden, illustrated these artistic influences. By the 1910s, Jacobson, as Mark White suggests, showed a greater interest in “vigorous, liner strokes in the secondary colors,” and Jacobson increasingly looked to incorporate the “aesthetic

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 82.
\(^{18}\) Ester Almqvist quoted in “Breakthrough in Modernisms,” in *Baltic Reflections*, 157.
thought of Post-Impressionism and other early modernist styles,” into his paintings. As with other modern artists, Jacobson did not attempt to create an exact reproduction, but instead sought “an arrangement of color and form that encourages an emotional and spiritual response.”

Another Swedish artist who sometimes worked in a similar vein and for at least one picture, showed a “pure pointillist style,” was Peter Adolf Persson’s *The Back Temple* (ca. 1900; fig. 2.5).20

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19 Sundberg, “The Hall of Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” 40.
20 Gunnarsson, “From Realism to Expressionism,” 83.
Figure 2.4 Oscar Jacobson, *Winter Forest in Sweden*, ca. 1914, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman

Figure 2.5 Peter Adolf Persson, 1862-1914, *The Black Temple*, ca. 1900, *Baltic Reflections*, 80
While the Jacobson’s unpacked a lot of meaning from the various pieces, some baffled them. Regarding the German rooms, they perceived something dreadful looming in some the art, especially that from German artists.\(^{21}\) Käthe Kollwitz is an iconic figure in German modern art during the early twentieth century, and she produced socially and politically engaging art. It is not certain which of her images hung on the walls at the exhibit, but looking at the type of art she produced at the time, such as *Woman with Dead Child* (1903; fig. 2.6) and *Death and Woman* (1910; fig. 2.7), or even the *Riot*, (ca. 1893-1897; fig. 2.8), might explain some of the Jacobsons’ comments.\(^{22}\) Whereas, German Nouveau artists Thomas Theodor Heine and Rudolf Wilke also displayed works at the exhibition, and regularly contributed caricatures to publications *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend*, satirical Munich magazines which critiqued the monarch and social orders. Although the Jacobsons did not specify exactly what troubled them, they later indicated the outbreak of war did not completely surprised them. Perhaps images from artists such as Kollwitz, Heine and Wilke contributed to this feeling of unease. Because all the art in the exhibition was twenty or less years old, much of the work foreshadowed the imminent war. The forces that would converge in the Great War—nationalism, imperialism, industrialism, militarism, and the like—had informed the artists. Brousse, later writing with the benefit of hindsight, described the German exhibition as displaying “an inner sickness, a paradoxical schizophrenia, along with a mania for the startling and the revolting.” Upon describing the exhibition to some sociologist friends in the United States, Jacobson claimed to “foresee a terrible upheaval.” Brousse wrote these remembrances years after their trip and the Great War;

\(^{21}\) Not much has been written about the German contribution, and identifying artists has been difficult. Known artists include: Dora Hitz, Adam Adolf Oberländer, and Bernhard Hoetger. See Sundberg, “The Hall of Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” footnotes 49, 60, 65 on pages 36-37.

there is no contemporary record of their reactions. However, they saw the impending Great War in the exhibition, and it is likely they would have agreed with art historian Martin Sundberg’s observations:

Many different artistic idioms were brought together in the Hall of Fine Art, and the tensions that characterised the period—between national romanticist twilight painting and the colourful exuberance of expressionism, between the billowing lines of art nouveau and the right angles of cubism—must have been particularly striking to the viewing public.

Figure 2.6 Käthe Kollwitz, *Woman with Dead Child*, 1903, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

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23 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
Figure 2.7 Käthe Kollwitz, *Death and Woman*, 1910, Museum of Modern Art, New York City

Figure 2.8 Käthe Kollwitz, *Riot*, ca. 1897, The British Museum, London
Other visitors and critics also noted that the German room differed from other countries’, but not in the same light as the Jacobsons. While other nations’ rooms were white, Germany opted for golden walls. Sundberg explained the effect: “The wild tumult of their canvases is drowned by the golden shade of the room.”

Perhaps the wall color choice can explain difference of opinions, but it seems that the Jacobson’s read too much into the works when considering Gerred Mark’s 1914 comments when he pointed out that the “German section made visitors feel at home when compared with the Russian works.”

August Brunius also saw something very different than the Jacobsons, since he described German rooms as having ‘order’ and ‘a logic’ to the presentation” prevailed. Artist Wilhelm Leibl’s little portrait *The Chemist J. Jais* (na; fig. 2.9) garnered most attention in the press, and partly since Leibl had passed away in 1900 and exhibiting artists had to be living. According to Gunnarsson, when Stockholm’s Nationalmuseum purchased the work for 77,220 Swedish Krona (3.35 million Swedish Krona today) it caused the “biggest stir” because it represented “the manner of the great old masters.” He goes on to say, “The sale met with curiosity and incomprehension in an era when the market value of art was far lower than it is today. And history has largely borne out of the critics: the reputation Leibl enjoyed at the time has hardly lasted and the painting has acquired a position of relative anonymity in the museum’s collection.”

Given that Jacobson had painted many portraits, he most likely admired this work.

Compared to the German and Swedish exhibits, the Russian section was relatively small, but garnered the “most critical attention and curiosity.”

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26 Sundberg, “The Hall if Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” 37 footnote 54.
27 Ibid.
28 Sundberg, “The Hall if Fine Art at the Baltic Exhibition,” 32.
six rooms, exhibiting in “range of media—mostly paintings, but also watercolours, sketches and a small group of sculptures,” with a total of 248 items on display. Russia, which was on the eve of its revolution, was, according to Brousse, “restrictive under Czarism”; its display was “dynamic, in perfect rapport with the great literature and music of that country.” Partly speaking to the Brousse’s observations about the rebellious elements of Russian art, art historian David Jackson notes:

The impetus towards symbolic, non-naturalistic interpretations (since ‘subjects’ seems unsuited to the ambition of these painters) is characteristic of many of the Russian ‘Baltic’ artists, whose experiments with form and colour were doubtless influenced by their theatrical and decorative designs, which liberated them from the restrictions of ‘fine art’ and its proscriptive criteria.  

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Painter Aleksandr Yakovlev provided some of the “unorthodox and strange but vivacious works,” at the exhibit. Yakovlev had traveled to Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, China and Japan, and his “influences were disparate and International and a blending of exotic indigenous art from global ‘borrowings’ is part of the pedigree of his creative freedom and formal distinctiveness,” comments Jackson. Although Jacobson did not comment on Yakovlev’s work, it must have stirred in interest with him, as well, along with the works of other prominent Russian artists: Aleksandr Hausch Fireworks (1900–1914; fig; 2.10), Nikolai Milioti’s Oriental (ca. 1910; fig. 2.11), Aleksandr Yakovlev’s Landscape with Figures (ca. 1912-1914; fig. 2.12), Boris Kustodiev’s The Bath (1910; fig. 2.13), and Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin’s, The Worker (1912; fig. 2.14), and others.

Figure 2.10 Aleksandr Hausch, Fireworks, ca. 1900-1914, Baltic Reflections, 140
Figure 2.11 Nikolai Milioti, *Oriental*, ca. 1910, *Baltic Reflections*, 141

Figure 2.12 Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Landscape with Figures*, ca. 1912-1914, *Baltic Reflections*, 182
Figure 2.13 Boris Kustodiev, *The Bath*, 1910, *Baltic Reflections*, 145

Figure 2.14 Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, *The Worker*, 1912, *Baltic Reflections*, 147
The Russian exhibit likely affected the Jacobsons and other visitors “as idiosyncratic and diverse in terms of styles and subjects. The stereotype of the Russian mystique and Slavic exoticism was not only confirmed, but intensified,” wrote Jackson. The newspaper *Stockholms Tidningen* noted of Jawlensky and Kandinsky, “We choke before the chaos of color and form. ‘Matisseri’ (Matisse), cubism and futurism compete to outdo each other with screaming colours and angry rhythms.” August Brunius writing in Svenska Dagbladet celebrated that Russians “colours are free from the German artists’ heavy palette,” and the most “talented and uncontrolled of the expressionists is Alekey Jawlensky,” Kandinsky, on the other hand is the most famous and “gives a musical evocation of the essence of Russia.” Other Russian artists also found inspiration for their works from opera and ballet, literature and poetry, and architecture, all of which Jacobson’s wife loved.

One of the fair’s main attractions was the “highly decorative symbolist output of the transcendental theosophist, painter-philosopher and archaeologist,” Russian artist Nikolai Rerikh, noted David Jackson. The artist is more commonly known as Nicholas Roerich. His twenty-eight works occupied one of the six Russian rooms (fig. 2.15), only second to painter Valentin Serov in the next room. Upon leaving the exhibit, above all other artists, Jacobson could not free his mind from Roerich’s works. They shared an interest in learning about religions. Roerich’s works show the influences of Theosophy, Vedanta, and Buddhism, among

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31 Quoted in David Jackson’s chapter, “A Chaos of Colour and Form,” *Baltic Reflections*, 148
32 Ibid.
33 Nicholas Roerich is the way his museum in New York City, spells his name this way.
34 David Jackson, “A Chaos of Colour and Form,” *Baltic Reflections*, 125. For more discussion on Nikolai Roerich’s paintings, in comparison with other Russian artists and refer to pages 142-43 in Jackson’s article. While he was a well-known artist with an established reputation, Roerich’s solo room can partly be explained since he advised, Oscar Gustaf Björck, a Swedish painter and a professor at the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts, and director of the Baltic exhibition. Roerich helped assemble artists from St. Petersburg. Unlike exhibitions of such magnitude, the Russian representation lacked state participation. Artists had to make recommendations.
others, while Jacobson tended to keep these influences out of his paintings. According to art historian David Jackson, the “desire to look East, towards the mystical and exotic, seems a complementary aspect of the symbolist mind, but stemmed also from a long-lasting Russian fascination with the Orient.” Roerich’s work was beginning to reflect this trend by the time of the Baltic Exhibit. Jacobson shared an interest in Eastern arts and cultures, which may have originated at the 1904 St. Louis fair, where China and other Asian countries were well represented.  

The Jacobsons also had a love for set design, and at the exhibit, Jacobson saw the painting *The Palace of Tsar Berendey* (1912; fig. 2.16), which was a stage design for the 1912 theatre production “Snow Maiden by Alexander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky.”  

Jacobson liked Roerich’s paintings so much that upon return to the United States, Jacobson sought out museums, art critics and galleries and tried to arrange an exhibit to expose more people to his art, but Jacobson did so without any success for some years. Jacobson even corresponded with Roerich, and the artists struck up a friendship, at least as much as time and distance allowed. By chance, some years later, the two artists bumped into one another at the

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35 Ibid. Jacobson too, had a strong interests in the Orient, art, music, philosophy and history, and he would teach about these topics in his art history courses in years to come. It is likely that Jacobson interests started back in 1904 at the St. Louis Exhibit, since China, and other Asian countries were well represented. For more discussion on Nikolai Roerich’s paintings, in comparison with other Russian artists and see Jackson’s article, “A Chaos of Colour and Form,” 142-143. Jacobson did not leave a record indicating what he liked so much about Roerich’s work. Jacobson liked Roerich’s paintings so much that upon return to the United States, Jacobson sought out museums, art critics and galleries and tried to arrange an exhibit to expose more people to his art, but Jacobson did so without any success for some years.  

36 At present, it is not known what the two specifically discussed other than Jacobson working to arrange exhibits of Roerich’s work at the University of Oklahoma and for other art circuits as well, but Brousse’s writing indicated that they had a long correspondence over the years, even if “desultory.” By chance, the two artists bumped into one another at the Chicago Art Institute and after catching up, Roerich asked Jacobson to serve as an honorary advisor to Roerich Museum in New York, which had opened in 1929.  

37 Sources do not indicate if Roerich asked Jacobson this on this particular encounter or later in their correspondence. It is not known exactly when the two crossed paths Chicago, but it is likely that it occurred when Roerich was in the United States, and he had an exhibit of his works, which the Chicago Art Institute played an instrumental role in arranging, between 1921-23. The Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York City, does not open until 1929, however, so it is probable that Roerich invited Jacobson to serve as an honorary advisor years later.  

38 Jacobson has more success securing Roerich’s art for exhibition, while at the University of Oklahoma.  

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Art Institute of Chicago and after catching up, Roerich asked Jacobson to serve as an honorary advisor to Roerich Museum in New York, which had opened in 1929.  

Convinced they needed to proceed with their tour of Europe, in spite of growing political and military tensions, the Jacobsons crossed the Baltic Sea to Copenhagen before making their way to Germany. While in Denmark, they learned of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary but failed to realize its inestimable importance until much later. Brousse explained in her memoirs that a political assassination in unassuming Sarajevo seemed

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they had a long correspondence over the years, even if “desultory.”

39 Sometime spelling of his name is Nicholas Roerich, as it is at his museum in New York City. Sources do not indicate if Roerich asked Jacobson this on this particular encounter or later in their correspondence. It is not known exactly when the two crossed paths Chicago, but it is likely that it occurred when Roerich was in the United States, and he had an exhibit of his works, which the Chicago Art Institute played an instrumental role in arranging, between 1921-23. The Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York City, does not open until 1929, however, so it is probable that Roerich invited Jacobson to serve as an honorary advisor years later.
unlikely to pull the whole world into a deadly and destructive war. From Denmark, they traveled to Germany. They found their short stay in Cologne, Germany, unpleasant. Overall, the couple did not believe the Germans welcomed their presence. Walking through the streets, they repeatedly encountered signs warning the path was “Verboten” (forbidden). As the couple passed from Germany to Belgium, to their final destination, France, Brousse observed:

It was interesting to listen to the whistle of the train as it passed from Germany through Belgium to France. The German whistle was loud, assertive, arrogant. The Belgium, although deep toned, exuded good nature and brought to mind a comfortable, easy going burgher. As for the French, quick and high pitched, it had the devil-may-care jauntiness of chant éclair.40

40 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
Brousse’s analogy gives a bit of insight into her perceived perceptions of the nations as they moved closer to declaring war.

After arriving in Paris, the Jacobsons met with Brousse’s sister and attended museums and art exhibitions. Brousse, drawing a parallel to the Baltic Exposition, noticed that a German exhibit “only confirmed our impressions of Malmö,” that something terrible was stirring in the air and the artists could foresee whatever it was.\(^{41}\) Meanwhile, the Louvre presented Jacobson with a wonderful opportunity to study his fields of interest: general art history and modern works.\(^{42}\) He took time and energy to learn about and reassess his opinions on other artists. For example, a retrospective exhibit on Renoir changed Jacobson’s view of the artist. Whereas before he did not think of Renoir as great, he now became convinced of the artist’s brilliance. From here on, Jacobson introduced as many people as possible to Renoir’s work and brought his paintings and his value to the attention to audiences in the United States after returning.

The Jacobsons remained in Paris for about a month and they monitored their time carefully. It helped that most of their friends were away during the summer months. The couple attended few concerts because the days proved too exhausting by nightfall. Eventually, they continued their journey to Lyon, where Jacobson examined additional ancient paintings and a modern art exhibit. They did not specify specific pieces. Shortly afterwards, they boarded a train to Grenoble to visit Brousse’s father and stepmother. What should have been a short trip, however, took much longer than expected. The French government, mobilizing its troops, took over the railways.\(^{43}\)

\(^{41}\) Sources do not indicate which venue held the exhibit or which pieces and artists the Jacobsons viewed.  
\(^{42}\) Evidently at least one or two of Jacobson’s former professors were also in Paris during that summer, which was not uncommon for American artists to travel to Paris and other art centers such as Munich or Berlin to study art. Sources do not indicate which of his previous professors he interacted with in Paris.  
\(^{43}\) Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
For three weeks, the Jacobsons lived in what appeared to be a huge military camp. They saw thousands of French troops in and around the city, since Grenoble, a strongly fortified city, served as one of the centers of military operations in eastern France. Jacobson noticed that “the efficiency of the French officers during the mobilization was wonderful. There was no excitement, no confusion, no noise.” It saddened Jacobson, however, to see how the army demand people's horses, stating that “the most pathetic sights was the thousands of peasants leading their only horse or two to the military headquarters,” since they had so little. They witnessed the execution of German spies. Jacobson recalled, “yet it was difficult to believe it all to be real—that this was actually war.”

Jacobson remembered distinctly, the night before the war on August 2, 1914, the mood in the streets. He summed it up in one sentence, “It was a night of devotion, like a religious meeting, without a sermon.” As they waited amongst the crowds for each day’s news announcements, the Jacobsons personally noted the tense atmosphere. Brousse recalled the day that changed Europe in so many ways and left a profound impact on her and her husband. She remembered finding herself near a bulletin board. “A man called from the rear asking that I read aloud the notice. I could hardly do so; tears strangled me. The last hope had been shattered; it was war...There was no bravado,” Brousse stated, “no histrionics, not even a great show of patriotism apparently; just a deep sadness.” She remembered, “it was this quiet at the moment of war that impressed Oscar most profoundly.”

He wrote:

When the war came, everybody seemed [sic] relieved—relieved that at last the awful suspense of 40 years of spying and cat-like watching of their more powerful neighbor was at an end. We had occasion to speak to many people in all walks of life. All were of the same opinion, nobody wanted war, but everyone felt relieved when it came—“win or

44 Oscar B. Jacobson, “Beginning of the Great War Described by an Eye Witness,” Pullman Washington Herald, September 18th, 1914, front and last page (page number not provided), Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS
45 Ibid.
46 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
lose, let’s have it over with, and let’s live in peace afterwards. If is the fate of our country to be destroyed, let it be now.47

The Jacobsons sympathized with families when the men left to engage in warfare, but they, like many at the time, believed that the war would only last a few months. The realization of the full extent of the war only occurred when they started to see trainloads of injured and dead soldiers arriving in Grenoble. Then they became sickened by the reality of war. The Jacobsons discussed war experiences with the survivors that returned. Despite their love for France, the Jacobsons remained “neutral that is so far as one who has four cousins and an uncle in the French army can be neutral.” While Jacobson felt a deep connection to Sweden, as he wife did to France, they also saw themselves as American, since they just become American citizens. Understandably, the conflict abruptly ended their travels, forcing them to return to the United States. However, this passage turned into quite a challenge. As a result of Brousse marrying Jacobson, she had lost her French citizenship and had to go through a number of bureaucratic hoops to leave the country. When they finally arrived in Paris, it “was like a ghost city.” All available taxis were being used to transport supplies and men to the front line. Eventually, they boarded a small, overcrowded ship for home. Sleeping in separate quarters, they shared their bathroom facilities with other passengers and, since the ship packed so many people on board, they did not have the proper accommodation. It was a miserable journey, and they rationed their food. Aware that the Germans had already begun sinking passenger ships, they remained on edge though their voyage. Finally, the couple landed safely in sweltering New York and met with some friends before making their way to Jacobson’s home in Lindsborg. Oscar finally had the opportunity to introduce his wife to his American boyhood community. By mid-September, after

being gone for close to four months, the couple headed back to Washington to resume their respective posts.48

Once returned, they watched with heavy hearts the developments of the Great War. At the bequest of their friends, Jacobson prepared an article about his and his wife’s experiences in France at the outbreak of the war, which was published in the local newspapers in Pullman and back in his hometown of Lindsborg. He began the article by calling it a “great tragedy wherein seven million men are engaged in murdering one another...In the prime of their life and high-tide perfect health, all of them parts of a massive machinery of organized manslaughter, contending with all the implements of destruction that modern science can devise.”49 Feeling helpless, Jacobson began thinking about what role he should play in the war.50 By November 1914, the Jacobsons and his university sought to raise funds for the Belgian and French people.51

Safely removed from the war raging in Europe, for the most part, university life continued as normal. Still, the couple wanted to change their environment and seek new opportunities elsewhere. Only a short time passed before the Jacobsons decided to move to a different part of the country: Oklahoma. Jacobson had come to believe he could not build the art school he wanted at Washington State College. As a painter, he yearned for more colorful landscapes than the “somber evergreen” of the Pacific Northwest.52 Although Jacobson received teaching offers from schools in the East, he desired a place near the desert. Increasingly over the

50 In time, he realized that artists had something to contribute, but knowing how he could help took another year to discover. At the University of Oklahoma, where he later worked at as art director, he would broker the American government’s wartime message to the general public by administering the creation of propaganda posters for all of Oklahoma and the surrounding states.
51 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
52 Ibid..
past years, Jacobson painted more and more landscapes. After attending the Baltic Exhibition, his exposure to Post Impressionism modernist pieces, also encouraged him to experiment more, as his painting *Winter Forest in Sweden* (fig. 2.17) suggests. He had already begun moving in this direction, however, but their recent European trip inspired him even more. He wanted to be within the Southwest, and it appeared quite obvious the Northwest held no special artistic appeal for him. Therefore he seized the opportunity to take the head position of the University of Oklahoma’s art department when a fellow Bethany College alumnus offered it to him. Since his days at Yale, Jacobson had hoped to open an art school in the West, and at thirty-three years old, this would be his opportunity.\(^{53}\)

![Image of Winter Forest in Sweden](image.png)

Figure 2.17 Oscar B. Jacobson, *Winter Forest in Sweden*

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
On the eve of his first semester at the University of Oklahoma, Jacobson and his wife left Washington and traveled the Southwest, including stops in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. They first arrived in San Francisco to visit the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) and to see a painting of his on display there. After San Francisco, they proceeded south to attend an extension of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Diego, called the Panama-California Exposition (PCE). Rather than a global focus, the San Diego fair honed in on the Southwest and Latin America. Afterward, they journeyed throughout the Southwest before moving to Norman, Oklahoma.

The San Francisco Exposition featured art from numerous countries. As usual, Jacobson made “it an occasion for study,” especially the “art of the Orient and Europe,” Brousse commented.54 Always with his eye on his future art school, Jacobson used the exhibition to study trends in art, but even more importantly, to meet and forge connections with other artists. Due to the Great War, many artists could not return to their European homelands, so the exposition provided an ideal place to remain, socialize, and continue exhibiting their work.

A year had passed since Jacobson attended the Baltic Exhibition and visited Europe. Only recently had modernism been introduced to Americans in a grand way, with the Armory Show in New York, in February, 1913.55 Approximately 300,000 people attended the Armory Show, where they saw the evolutionary development of modernism through connecting links of Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism. (Unfortunately, Post-Impressionism is often the catchall word to describe for Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism, and other forms of modernism.) The Armory

54 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
Show became a turning point for modernism in the United States. Nowhere in the Americas had such an extensive exhibit existed of Post-Impressionist paintings, and it transformed the New York art market. Artists’ works from Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Andre Derain, Albert Marquet and Maurice Vlaminck hung on the walls, and American modernists such as Oscar Bluemner and William Zorach contributed, as well. Most Americans remained in the dark about recent trends among modernist artists, however. Even those who attended the New York show often did not know what to make of such works, as they did not understand artists’ messages or stylistic choices. Art viewers became more baffled when they saw substantial Futurist works at the PPIE.

The PPIE art exhibition may not have been inclusive, but like the Armory Show, it was certainly “large, spectacular, varied,” and it was decidedly “concerned with presenting contemporary innovations in conjunction with their historical antecedents,” art historian Heidi Applegate notes. More importantly as a model for the PPIE, the Armory Show was conceived with the intention of displaying examples of the new movements in art “in a way that would make them understandable to the public. In short, this was a supreme effort to educate American taste.” Likewise, the San Francisco’s PPIE of 1915 wanted to expose attendees to a large spectrum of art, especially modern pieces, and foster appreciation, if not understanding. Some ten million people visited the fine art galleries, exposing themselves to some of the latest currents.

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57 Heidi Applegate, “Staging Modernism at the 1915 San Francisco World’s Fair” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014), 64. For statistics on Armory Show artists included in PPIE see Nancy Boas *The Society of the Six: California Colorists* (San Francisco, 1988).
among artists, especially European. Modernism garnered some support and recognition as a result of the fair, but for the most part, convincing people of its value continued to challenge artists. Promoters realized the challenge average fairgoers faced when trying to decipher modern pieces. In fact, even many art critics remained confused by modernism. Promoters wanted attendees to gain something meaningful from their experiences and see the value in modern art, and since much of the fair focused on learning, they tried to help the general public interpret the collection. They gave tours, lectures, and created numerous guidebooks to help attendees develop art appreciation and understanding for art of all types.58

Modern works made up only a fraction of the exhibition. Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi, and Picabi did not exhibit, despite that they generated the most interests in the Armory Show. With the exception of “Edvard Munch, and a few Hungarian painters,” fairgoers did not see “the most up-to-date examples of European modernism,” noted Applegate. Cezanne and van Gogh each had one painting on exhibit, whereas Paul Gauguin hung two canvases, including Faa Iheihe (Frieze at the PPI) (1898; fig. 2.18). Most of the artwork featured in the PPIE, like for other fairs in general, were more conservative pieces viewers would already feel comfortable with, including Impressionism.59 Traditional works, especially those created by American artists, constituted about half of all the artists of display. Featured painters included John Singer Sargent, who displayed at least eight works in the “One-Man Galleries” which included works such as: Spanish Gypsy (ca. 1879-1890; fig. 2.19), Spanish Courtyard (ca. 1880-1882; fig.2.20), and Joseph Jefferson (1890; fig. 2.21), Nude Study (1891; fig. 2.22) Spanish Stable (ca. 1903; fig. 2.23), Reconnoitering (1911; fig. 2.24), Henry James (1913; fig. 2.25), and The Sketchers (1913;

59 Ibid., 9.
George Bellow also showed eight paintings such as: *Polo Crowd* (1910; fig. 2.27), *Excavation at Night* (1908; fig. 2.28), *Riverfront* (1914; fig. 2.29), and *River Rats* (1906; fig. 2.30). James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s *Nocturne in Black and Gold—The Falling Rocket* (ca. 1872-1877 fig. 2.31), Edmund Tarbell, and Childe Hassam also received favorable coverage. California artists such William Keith, Francis McComas, and Arthur Mathews contributed significantly to the exhibition, given the regional focus of the fair.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ Ibid.
Figure 2.19 John Singer Sargent, *Spanish Gypsy*, ca. 1879-1890, private collection

Figure 2.20 John Singer Sargent, *Spanish Courtyard*, ca. 1880-1882, private collection
Figure 2.21 John Singer Sargent, *Joseph Jefferson*, 1890
Figure 2.22 John Singer Sargent, *Nude Study*, 1891, private collection
Figure 2.23 John Singer Sargent, *Spanish Stable*, ca. 1903, Westervelt-Warner Museum of American Art, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Figure 2.24 John Singer Sargent, *Reconnoitering*, 1911, Pitti Palace, Florence
Figure 2.25 John Singer Sargent, *Henry James*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery, London

Figure 2.26 John Singer Sargent, *The Sketchers*, 1913, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Figure 2.27 George Bellow, *Polo Crowd*, 1910, private collection

Figure 2.28 George Bellow, *Excavation at Night*, 1908, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas
Figure 2.29 George Bellow *Riverfront*, 1914, Columbus Museum of Art

Figure 2.30 George Bellow, *River Rats*, 1906, private collection
Figure 2.31 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Black and Gold—The Falling Rocket*, ca.1872-1877, Detroit Institute of Arts
But it was not these works that garnered most of the stir. Most attendees could easily grasp the message of such paintings. Paintings by Italian Futurists, however, not only confused fairgoers, but even enraged them because they too often failed to understand the artist’s message or see the quality of the work. Jacobson experienced the exhibit differently. It, along with the Baltic Exhibition the previous year, not only helped Jacobson better understand modernism but also fostered his own advocacy of it. He also liked Nude Descending a Staircase, a painting by Marcel Duchamp, which had already gained attention in the Armory Show.

After visiting San Francisco, the couple journeyed south to San Diego. Jacobson and his wife especially enjoyed San Diego because it “was then an adorable little Spanish city; it still had the quiet, rather sleepy charm of a previous age, not yet having been touched by the bustle and noise of naval and commercial progress.” Originally the idea to host a world’s fair in conjunction with the opening of the Panama Canal occurred in San Diego in 1909. City officials and boosters hoped to bring attention to their small city and stimulate outside economic interests for future investments and growth. They believed they could create a city that could compete with San Francisco, California’s largest city and economic center at the time, and they thought the fair would help them accomplish this. Charlie Collier, a local entrepreneur, real estate...

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61 Art historian Heidi Applegate points out that the biggest ongoing challenge at the PPIE “for the exhibition's organizer was one of educating a mass audience, and making modern art understandable and acceptable.” Applegate, “Staging Modernism,” 2. Applegate’s research shows that one of the most common phrases to hear while visiting the Palace of Fine Arts was, “I don’t know anything about art, but I know what I like,” the message being clear that the viewer did not like the Modern art. It is likely Jacobson heard this during his visit to PPIE, and if not there, certainly while attending other Modern art exhibits.


63 Jacobson eventually gave a powerful lecture in St. Louis, which was also published in the American Magazine of Art, about this very subject (see Oscar Brousse Jacobson, “The Meaning of Modernism in Art,” 698. This article was first delivered in a paper presented at the 15th Annual Convention of the American Federation of Arts, St. Louis, May, 1922.). A closer look at what Jacobson said comes in a later chapter about his activism.

64 Albuquerque Morning Journal, 24 August 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
developer, and civic booster served as the director-general of the Exposition. Coinciding the fair with the opening of the Panama Canal helped justify the fair’s geographical focus.

Collier invested his own money in the early phases of the exposition and frequented Central and South American countries to garner support and interest in participating in the fair in order to ensure its success. He wanted this fair to offer something distinctively different, something reflective of San Diego and the new American Southwest, instead of the typical neoclassical architecture found at all other world's fairs. He believed San Diego’s exposition should, instead, represent the history, environment and imagination of the American Southwest. Therefore, the fair’s designers recreated Spanish missions and Mexican ranchos, albeit heavily romanticized versions of such structures.65 Architects and designers reflected the blending of Indians and Spanish on the northern frontier of New Spain, and “erected Renaissance architecture from the seventeenth-century styles of rococo, baroque, and churrigueresque,” historian Matthew Bokovoy noted. The buildings, “vernacular building styles created in South America, mainland Mexico, and New Mexico prior to the mid-eighteenth century by native craftsmen impressed,” the fair architect Bertram Goodhue since “Indian and mestizo artisans had successfully wed indigenous and regional building methods with Spanish decorative styles. The explosion architecture embraced a dual heritage.”66 The San Diego exposition stood apart from other fairs that emphasized the western European roots of the United States.67 The Jacobsons loved this regional and historical distinction.

67 Ibid., 49.
Not all was smooth sailing, however, as just two months after the city announced and passed a resolution for the fair, San Francisco boosters declared they wanted to host a fair, the same year with the same theme, and also to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. San Francisco’s fair supporters tried to convince their cohort in San Diego to abandon their plans, but the latter’s commitment was too strong and the fair proceeded anyway. In the end, both cities held their fairs but with different focuses and strikingly different designs. San Francisco boasted more global participants, while San Diego turned its attention to the Southwest, Mexico, and Central and South America. Whereas over ten million visitors frequented the San Francisco PPIE, only about four million made their way to San Diego PCE. Given that San Diego was the smallest city thus far to host such a fair, these figures were nevertheless staggering. Furthermore, the fair actually generated a profit. Many fair attendees, such as the Jacobsons, visited both fairs.

The organizer of the Panama-California Exposition did not want a repeat of the 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition’s disastrous and inhumane exhibition of Indigenous peoples. Therefore the organizers recruited people who had positive relations with Southwest Native to educate visitors about “Man’s Progress,” the theme of the exhibit. They also hired Santa Fe cultural promoters, Fred Harvey Company service employees, Southwest Museum enthusiasts, and members of the United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institute Entertainment. They would instruct in a way that visitors would find enjoyable, while at the same time, learn something meaningful about human science. As a result, the conditions under

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70 Ibid., 61.
71 Ibid., 49.
which Indians lived and worked were substantially better than they had been in St. Louis. Some even called it comfortable.\textsuperscript{72}

Under the direction of renowned anthropologist Edgar Lee Hewett, the ethnographic southwestern exhibits at the PCE in San Diego likewise promoted cultural relativism and cultural pluralism.\textsuperscript{73} Anthropologists, such as Franz Boas, “stressed the diversity of cultures and abandoned the long-established practice of associating culture (singular) with civilizations (Western and European). They integrative wholeness of cultures,” Sherry Smith articulated.\textsuperscript{74} Cultural pluralists took this a step further as they believed that the rich mosaic of ethnicities and cultures that made up America should be protected and even celebrated, especially Native cultures. Hewett, among some of his contemporaries, embraced both, cultural relativism and cultural pluralism. He led New Mexico’s cultural promotion, as the state wanted to transform their economy and attract tourists. Acting as Director of the School of American Archeology and the Director of the Museum of New Mexico, he had experience in the field, worked in museums, and gained the trust of southwestern Indians, especially the Pueblo. As a cultural promoter, therefore, he was ideal.

Hewett portrayed Native Americans in a more favorable light than any of the previous fairs had done by rejecting that Indians were biologically inferior to Europeans and white Americans. His most significant contribution came from his “particular point of view regarding southwestern Indians.” As Matt Bokovoy points out, Hewitt “believed Native Americans retained a culture and way of life as significant and unique as the classical antiquity of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The Southwest beckoned as Greece, Mesopotamia, and the Orient of

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 49-50.
\textsuperscript{73} For more on cultural pluralism, see Smith, \textit{Reimagining Indians}, 15-16; David A. Hollinger, “Cultural Pluralism and Multi-Culturalism,” 162-66; Margaret D. Jacobs, \textit{Engendered Encounters}, 15.
\textsuperscript{74} Smith, “Reimagining Indians,” 7.
North America.” Hewitt wanted white Americans to respect this American history, and sought to educate fairgoers accordingly.75

Hewett did much of the work preparing and overseeing the exhibits, but he asked Charles Fletcher Lummis to promote the fair. No one was more suited to do this than Lummis, who had written popular books on the American Southwest. *A Tramp Across America* (1892) and *The Land of Poco Tiempo* (1893) discussed the beauty of the region as well as advocated for a cultural sensitivity to the southwestern American Indians. When the majority of white Americans saw Indigenous peoples as “others” who required forced assimilation, Lummis showed respect for their histories and cultures.76 Together Lummis and Hewett ensured attendees of the fair would understand the importance of Spanish and Indigenous peoples of the Southwest.77

According to Bokovoy, Lummis’s Southwest was “an exotic land,” on par with “the Orient or the Nile River Valley in Egypt.” He saw the region as a “land of antiquity” and its peoples as “simple” or “primitive.” Waffling between “praise and disdain,” Lummis believed that the peoples of the Southwest could teach the rest of America “to temper the problems of the industrial age.”78

Perhaps the most popular exhibit at the fair was the Indian Village, but specifically the Painted Desert Exhibit, within the larger exhibit. Designed and overseen by preservationists such as Jesse Nusbaum, members from San Ildefonso built the Painted Desert. Eventually the exhibit housed twenty-eight San Ildefonso Pueblo families. It is quite possible that at the Indian Village,

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75 Bokovoy, *San Diego World’s Fairs*, 64. Jacobson had a similar view, which he expressed a decade later in his work among Indians and in his writing, which is discussed in chapter five: Among Indians.
76 Ibid., 62. For a more in-depth look at Lummis, his role in redefining the Southwest, and his portrayal of the Spanish presence and Indians, see Sherry Smith’s chapter “Charles Fletcher Lummis and the Fight for the Multicultural Southwest, in *Reimagining Indians*, 119-44.
78 Ibid., 62.
Jacobson met or reacquainted himself with the renowned potters Maria and Julian Martinez, who had previously lived and worked at the St. Louis Fair. Unlike at St. Louis, Indian displays at the Painted Desert closely reflected Pueblos’ actual homes on their tribal lands. During the construction process and throughout the fair, Nusbaum demonstrated his concern for accuracy, but he also wanted his Pueblo friends to feel at home, at least as much as they could considering they were on exhibit for gawking tourists. The Painted Desert according to Bokovoy better reflected the Indigenous Southwest, something very different from the “sensationalist Indian villages” at the preceding Chicago fair of 1893 and the St. Louis exposition of 1904, “both little more than Wild West shows.”

This fair, like the others, meant to both educate and entertain fairgoers. At the Painted Desert, southwestern Indians performed dances and staged art demonstrations. Just as in St. Louis, Native Americans “played Indians.” As Bokovoy explained, they participated in a show: “They composed their physical images, their performances, and white understandings of Indians.” Through this carefully crafted performance, southwestern Indians provided “economically useful images” for white consumption and simultaneously were able to “shield their real way of life from white audiences.” Fairgoers witnessed a whitewashed display of culture. Indians on display knew that if they could entice onlookers enough, perhaps they could

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79 Both Martinezes had worked and exhibited at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis. By 1915, Julian Martinez painted in a style that reflected the techniques of the Kiowas. Sources do not suggest that Julian Martinez had any of his paintings on display, but it is highly possible that Jacobson visited San Ildefonso Pueblo later that summer and saw his works there, along with other community members. If not at the Pueblo, then it is likely that he had seen them elsewhere. More on the subject of Indian art styles will be discussed in chapter five: Among Indians.


82 Ibid.
also sell them their arts and crafts, as many travelers liked to take home a bit of their experiences with them, and what better way to do this than to acquire a Navajo rug or Pueblo pottery.

Sometimes the gawking became too much, and Indians working at the fair considered leaving. Concerned with how Indians felt, but also wanting to keep them on display, Nusbaum encouraged Indians’ continued participation by reminding them of the free publicity they received. Maria Martinez of San Ildefonso was unconvinced, however. She asked, “Couldn’t I just stay at home and pay the newspapers” instead of constantly being surrounded by rude and gawking tourists. In the end, the Martinezes decided to stay.83

The Jacobsons became increasingly aware of tourists interactions with Native peoples. At the fair, the Jacobsons witnessed how Anglo-American tourists perceived Indian art and culture and frequently non-Native people’s interactions with Indians infuriated the couple. Not all white tourists admired Indian products and their interactions with Indians demonstrated that they viewed Indians as primitive and “others.” Observing such tourists at the Pueblo exhibit, they “were amused” but “also disgusted, at their supercilious and foolish comments.” Brousse described one such interaction:

The Pueblo man who acted as guide, and who had patiently answered many peculiar queries, must have sensed our sympathy. When a nosy woman, after exposing her ignorance in questions that were not only stupid but insulting, pointed at two Pueblo women painting pottery and came up with this gem ‘Do they always sit like this? I mean on the ground? With their legs stretched straight in front of them? Without moving?’ He

83 Ibid., 115. A transformation began in the late nineteenth century, however, of building Indian objects from “artifact” to “art.” The San Diego Exhibition intended to educate non-Native people that Indians’ works were of quality and high standards. As art historian Elizabeth Hutchinson discusses the period’s “Indian craze” that occurred and fueled a whole industry centered around Indian art objects. She notes that this craze blurred the line between “high” and “low” art, especially since many object produced became fashionable accessories for American homes. For more on this subject see, Elizabeth Hutchinson, The Indian Craze Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). By the 1910s, a growing number of consumers saw these works as art, while museums would classify the same objects as artifacts (Molly H. Mullin, “The Patronage of Difference: Making Indian Art ‘Art, Not Ethnology,’” Cultural Anthropology 7 (November 1992): 395-424).
looked at us and said, gently but firmly ‘When we Indians go to see white people we don’t ask some questions.’

Ultimately, despite Hewett and Lummis’s attempt of showing favorable aspects of Indians and their importance American history and modern day society, the fair remained plagued by notions of white supremacy and the Othering of Indigenous peoples. One thing is certain: Jacobson and his wife used this fair as an opportunity to ask the Pueblos working the exhibit about their homelands in order to prepare for their visit to New Mexico. Jacobson increasingly began moving away from being simply an observer to actively seeking out information through direct involvement with Indians.

This 1915 Southwest trip, then, cultivated an even stronger connection to the Indian world for Jacobson. However, he remained an observer rather than a promoter at this time. At the San Diego Fair and during their subsequent travels through the Southwest, the Jacobsons interacted with American Indians, primarily Pueblos, from numerous villages and made it a point to engage with them concerning history, art, and issues surrounding government policies and land. What they witnessed and who they conversed with shaped their worldviews just as much as fairs and exhibits had. Consequently, they developed a warm appreciation for Indian cultures. Of the many aspects of Jacobson’s life, what his wife referred to as “the Indian one” gave him “the greatest joy.” Having first encountered the Pueblos in his teens when he made his summer Southwestern journeys on horseback, he believed that, even then, he had rapport with Indians. According to his wife, “Indians are keen judges of men; they reserve their supreme contempt for those whites who pretend friendship for them, sensing the sham at once. But when one comes

84 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
85 Brousse makes reference to this but does not provide the specifics of their conversations.
with real friendship, they take him to their heart.” Jacobson wanted to share this part of his life with his wife. She too started to study all things pertaining to Indians by reading books, but most importantly, by having conversations with Indians she encountered.86

Early on, Jacobson learned the importance of humor among various Indians. One humorous moment occurred in Albuquerque while the Jacobsons attended an “old fashioned Western” film. Brousse claimed “the two Indians who sat behind us roared with laughter at the antics of the ‘noble’ white hero whose scalp was coveted by ‘savage’ Indians.” Indians, Jacobson noted on numerous accounts, poked fun at white views of Indians, and often Indians turned the tables without Anglo-Americans even noticing.

Another experience in Albuquerque exemplified Indians’ humor at unwitting whites’ expense. At a depot stop, a train had just arrived from California and paused to let the passengers out to briefly shop or stroll around. There, one could buy Indian rugs, pottery, jewelry, and a whole host of Indian-made products. Vendors hoped the items on display would entice the passenger, as Indian-made objects became increasing popular across the United States, especially in the Southwest.87 According to Brousse, as the passengers emerged, “a large pompous looking personage, smoking a big cigar, waddled back and forth along the train for the sake of his precious health. Smug self-satisfaction and contempt for the rest for rest of the world oozed from

86 Brousse, “About Indians.”
87 Leah Dilworth looks at how the railroad played a crucial role in the development of the Southwest and opened the region up to probing white American tourists seeking to experience, even if superficially, “real” Indians. At that time, white Americans viewed Indians as a dying race. The Fred Harvey Company sought to create a “dramatic and entertaining setting for tourists to view American Indian life as it supposedly was lived on the region’s reservations.” The company set up hotels and storefronts along the railroads within the Southwest to tap into the growing tourist industry and to help cultivate an interest in Indian crafts. The company wanted to give tourists an “authentic” Indian experience. Indians participated and sometimes even acted as members of a tribe other than their own. What was important was that the tourist thought they were buying authentic Indian works made by “real” Indians. For more on this, Bsumek, Indian-Made, 32-33, 35. Bsumek discusses the commodification of Indians and the role the railroad, Harvey Company, and Indians themselves played in this. More on Indian authenticity and playing Indian, by Indians, is discussed in Chapter VI: Among Indians: Observer turned Patron.
him,” she recalled. This particular passenger did not give the works on display even a glance.

“When he reentered his sleeping car and the train got in motion, an Indian who had been leaning against the station wall, apparently oblivious of everything, detached himself and went pacing back and forth as the white man had done.” He had evidently perfected the mannerisms of the traveler, and two of the “pottery venders looked at the Indian. They didn’t even smile; yet one could feel them laughing inside. When the Indian went back to his wall we could almost believe that we had dreamed the whole thing; it was a superlative piece of acting.”88

In Isleta they had one of their most memorable experiences.89 Located in the Rio Grande Valley, thirteen miles south of Albuquerque, the Pueblo Isleta consisted of about 1,000 inhabitants in 1915, primarily Tanoan Pueblos. Upon arrival, the governor of Isleta greeted the Jacobsons. The governor invited them into the Pueblo and his home for lunch, where they met his wife, Maria. Jacobson took this opportunity to understand more about Pueblo culture. Brousse recalled they “learned much from the Governor who was very intelligent and had, besides, a keen sense of humor.” Brousse described “the hospitality of the Pueblos” as “charming.” Already developing a cultural awareness, the Jacobsons did not offer them money for their generosity because they knew that “this would have been an insult.” During this visit, it is very likely that the governor took the opportunity to advocate and express the concerns of his people, but if he did, the Jacobsons did not write about it in such context.90 Learning that the governor and his wife intended to visit Santa Fe the same day they would be there, they planned to meet again, this time in Santa Fe.91

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88 Brousse, “About Indians.”
89 Ibid.
90 Brousse indicated that during this visit, the governor shared a lot with them and they learned a lot, but about what is not known. Very often, however, Jacobson acknowledged that tribal leaders frequently shared their concerns with him, believing that he might in some way help them, or at very minimum, he came as a friend.
91 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
Upon arriving in Santa Fe, the Jacobsons, the governor, and his wife met for more discussion at a restaurant where Anglo people gawked at “Indians eating with Anglos.” At first, Maria did not intend to sit among the others, following Pueblo custom. According to Brousse, Maria “had to be coaxed into accepting.”92 Evidently, the “odd” group caught the other diners and the passersby off guard. Brousse was thankful that the Pueblo couple had their backs to the window so they could not see the “crowd” outside, but is likely that they were still aware of the stares. It is not surprising that the couples dining together in a restaurant received such negative attention. Between the 1880s and 1912, many residents of New Mexico Territory fought for U.S. statehood, which was routinely denied, in part due to the region’s dominant population of “mongrel” Mexicans and “heathen” Indians.93 New Mexico gained statehood in 1912, but regardless, many white residents still thought of Indians as barbaric, and therefore white Americans who sought out friendships with Indians and thought highly of them, as Jacobson did, received negative attention. What others viewed as unusual interactions between whites and Native peoples became typical for Jacobson, who believed his “non-intrusive” presence helped him win over many Indian friends in years to come.94

Also, while in “charming” Santa Fe, the Jacobsons encountered another glaring and memorable example of the disparity between Indians and whites.95 At this particular incident, they struggled with the ways Bureau of Indian Affairs officials promoted Indian arts and crafts at a fair. Brousse recalled the event served as:

92 Ibid.
93 Chris Wilson argues there was an attempt among businessmen and politicians to “Americanize” the New Mexico Territory so that it would be granted statehood; Chris Wilson, The Myth of Santa Fe, 67-74.
94 In this case, it is possible the warm relationship between the Jacobsons and the governor’s family was aided by the fact that the priest at Isleta was French. Because the governor truly liked and respected the priest, who served the community for forty years, he may have been especially partial to Brousse for also being French.
95 This moment helps explains why Jacobson later sought to mentor Kiowa artists when given the opportunity.
a well intentioned project to show the achievements of the Indians—in the white man’s way. Samples of canning, preserving, etc. were convincing and for the best; although there was a total absence of Indian inventions and methods, the wonderful piki bread for instance, and pemmican on which the whites have not been able to improve. But when we came to the arts and crafts section, [Jacobson’s] disgust grew apace before the napkins, pillow slips, etc., embroidered with the best Five and Dime decorative art, stiff, realistic poppies, violets, bowknots and so on.96

Jacobson suddenly became overwhelmed with the perception that the “art work” represented white rather than Indian culture. His obvious agitation caused a representative from the Indian Bureau to come over and inquire whether something was wrong. Jacobson snapped, “It’s a crime to destroy the sure and inborn sense of beauty of Indians and to debauch them to the worst and poorest in white art.” The Indian agent replied “Why! We’re civilizing them.” Even more outraged than before, Jacobson quickly retorted, “Civilizing them! And to think you don’t even realize there’s much you could learn from them.” Jacobson’s wife, in an attempt to calm him, offered, “Wouldn’t it be fine if you could take some young Indians and help them develop their own art?” Jacobson responded, “But what would one do with them afterwards? And what good would it do them in a world unfit to appreciate them?”97 As a preservationist and pluralist, Jacobson believed that America’s greatness relied on the contributions of all its inhabitants—all ethnicities and nationalities.98

96 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
97 Brousse, “About Indians.”
98 Jacobs, Engendered Encounters, 15.
Jacobson insisted that as far as Indians were concerned, tourist art created for a white market did not reflect the genuine value of Indian cultures.\textsuperscript{99} He knew that Indians, especially Pueblos, created high quality art, such as pottery, and wanted tourists to realize and pay for such craftsmanship. His view coincided with the group of women that historian Margaret D. Jacobs’s terms the “Antimodern feminists,” who attempted to preserve the artwork they saw as the epitome of “the vision of the Pueblos,” as well as the aspects of their culture that led to the art. Like Jacobson, the antimodern feminists engaged a two-pronged strategy for preserving “authentic” Indian arts: first, Indians themselves required art instruction, and second, the public needed education in art appreciation, especially for the contribution of Indian art. The antimodern feminists were concerned that by appealing to white tourists’ tastes and expectations, Indian artwork had come to rely on “factory methods,” which led to the “worst possible workmanship.” True artists and art patrons, such as Jacobson, criticized this trend. Art critics remained altogether unaware of true Indian art, seeing only “the endless array of ash trays, candle stick, swastikas, pillow tops, and other atrocities…which confronted the average traveler in Indian country.” Preservationists needed Indians to produce authentic and traditional pieces and needed the public to see and appreciate such artwork.\textsuperscript{100} Jacobson understood the problem all too well.

The Baltic Exhibition, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and Jacobson’s southwestern travels planted the seeds for Jacobson’s own turn toward cultural brokering. Once he began work at the University of Oklahoma, Jacobson turned his attention to building a

\textsuperscript{99} In \textit{The Myth of Santa Fe}, author Chris Wilson provides an in-depth look into the development of Santa Fe as a tourist destination. He specifically notes how some Indians catered toward white consumers who were looking for “authentic” Indian productions.

\textsuperscript{100} Jacobs, \textit{Engendered Encounters}, 155, 162.
reputable art program, one that would gain great national attention within a few short years. Getting the art school to that point, however, took a lot of dedication and was a difficult task. Ready to carve out a reputation for himself, he threw himself into his work like never before. He would draw on all he had learned from the exhibitions he had attended and the artists he had met along the way to create a program that would welcome Indigenous artists.
CHAPTER 3
MAKING A NAME

After teaching for over a decade in Minnesota and Washington and at Bethany College, Jacobson desired a significant change of pace and environment. He kept an open mind to the possibility of working at other universities and received offers from schools in the East. Because he had dreamed of opening an art school in the West, however, Jacobson held out for an enticing offer from a western university.¹ He had to wait only a few years; in 1915 Jacobson accepted a teaching position at the University of Oklahoma (OU). During his tenure at OU, Jacobson served as an educator, lecturer, artist, and art collector. Over his fifty years there, he grew as a national authority on art, and as his prestige increased, so did his impact on the school and its own reputation.

In 1915, Jacobson accepted a teaching position at OU. University president Stratton D. Brooks intended to establish a reputable art school and thought Jacobson the ideal candidate.² The Dean of Fine Arts Fredrik Holmberg, likely played a role in this decision too, seeing that he too was a native Swede, and taught at Bethany College, in Jacobson’s home town of Lindsborg.³

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¹ Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
³ Violinist Fredrik Holmberg fostered musical appreciation and shared a common vision with Jacobson, to put Oklahoma on the cultural map and make it a thriving center for the performing and visual arts. For more on Holmberg see Levy, The University of Oklahoma, Volume 1, 33-34.
According to the *Daily Oklahoman*, the most prominent newspaper in the larger Oklahoma City area, the university had spent months looking for just the right person to transform its art department and believed that with “Professor Jacobson” it “found a man who ranks among the best in the west.”

It boasted that it had recruited someone who had an established reputation in various art circles and “thorough training” including at Bethany College under the tutelage of Birger Sandzén, Yale, and Stockholm and Paris during Jacobson’s recent trip to Europe. The Dean of Fine Arts, OU also publicized Jacobson's awards and extensive exhibitions around the United States. The University of Oklahoma, founded in 1890 and still relatively new, could only offer the incoming professor a small salary, but its location seemed ideal for an artist who favored depicting the Southwest, an essential element of his artistic vision.

OU’s assessment of Jacobson’s prospects for its art school proved correct. He successfully built a prestigious art program in a relatively short time. He employed a variety of techniques to cultivate a nationally recognized curriculum, actively using skills he had previously acquired while also improvising along the way. For thirty years, Jacobson served as the director of the art school, and from 1936 through 1950 he oversaw the university’s museum. Because of Jacobson’s untiring loyalty, diligence, and ingenuity, OU garnered international acclaim for its art program.

While teaching at the University of Oklahoma, and especially in his first decade, Jacobson launched and led a vigorous effort to bring the public into the fold of art appreciation. Jacobson was not alone in his vision to spread appreciation for the arts. Holmberg had done the same with music since his appointment in 1903, and he believed that by fostering public

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4 *Daily Oklahoman*, 25 July 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
5 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
6 O.R. Landelius, “Oscar B. Jacobson, pedagog och konstnar;” many other similar articles are found in the different scrapbooks, Boxes 1-3 Vols. 1-8, OHS.
orchestra appreciation he was “putting the State of Oklahoma on the ‘cultural map.’” Soon after his appointment, Holmberg began “statewide contests—apparently the first to be held anywhere in the United States—in voice, piano, violin, choruses, bands, and orchestras. He also, “organized and conducted the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra in the early 1920s and continued to lead it for many years.” Likewise, sometimes Jacobson displayed his own art, sometimes his students’, and sometimes traveling exhibits to draw the Oklahoma public to view the art. He also took his message—that art improved society and was for everyone—beyond state lines by attending conferences, lecturing at a range of institutions, and giving interviews to the press. His peers from around the country joined him, from the Museum of Metropolitan Art and the Art Institute of Chicago, for instance, and Americans gained significant exposure to art. Eventually the seeds these advocates planted began sprouting. All of Jacobson’s out-of-state work inevitably brought attention to Oklahoma. In hopes of cultivating public interest in art, he emphasized the role art should play in society. In order to fulfill Jacobson’s vision for the public, he needed to show the value in art and have it be accessible in museums, public spaces, and architecture. This, he believed, would enrich individuals’ lives as well as the community.

But in 1915, no one—including Jacobson—knew what the next thirty years would hold. In fact, his move to Norman, Oklahoma, had an inauspicious beginning. Holmberg warned the incoming couple of the school’s limited facilities and emphasized the grand scale of work yet to be completed. The Jacobsons still believed that OU was the right choice for them and moved to

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7 Levy, The University of Oklahoma, Volume 1, 154-155.
8 Ibid., 154.
9 Ibid., 34-35.
Upon arrival, however, their “hearts sank a bit for the town was more primitive than they had expected.” After learning they would need to choose their residence from between the only two hotels in the small town, both of which seemed substandard to the newcomers, they elected to build a house. In the meantime, they stayed a boarding house until Holmberg secured a more suitable, yet far from ideal, house for them to reside until construction on their home finished.

At the behest of President Brooks, Jacobson patterned his plan for his new art program after that of Yale, but with a greater emphasis on art history. Oklahoma, however, had neither the finances nor the urban centers that benefited Yale’s art program. Further, he was essentially on his own regarding faculty support. When Jacobson officially took up the job at the University of Oklahoma, the president appointed him as assistant professor of art. (At the time, art teacher Patricio Gimeno served as the university’s first art teacher; he transferred to the Spanish department in 1916.) Jacobson, however, described his position as “both the head and tail of the department” since he remained essentially alone in his efforts. Later that year he became the official Director of Art.

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10 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” TMs, Box 4 Folder 1, OHS. Jacobson accepted $1,600 as his incoming salary (Levy, *The University of Oklahoma Volume 1*, 281).
11 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” TMs, Box 4 Folder 1, OHS. In 1904, Holmberg felt the same way about his first impressions about OU and tried to turn in his resignation, thinking he made a mistake. First OU President, David Ross Boyd encouraged him to tap into his “pioneer spirit,” thereby convincing him to stay. (Levy, *The University of Oklahoma Volume 1*, 34-35).
12 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
13 Patricio Gimeno was born in Arequipa, Peru, in 1862. His family supported his music and art endeavors at an early age. His father was a Spanish actor-singer, and his mother was Italian. After his father’s sudden death, his mother took him to Spain where he studied art at Valencia Academy. He later moved to Cuba, New York, Lima, San Francisco, and Chicago before moving to Oklahoma to accept an art instructor position. From 1916 until the end of his death in 1940, he taught full time in the Spanish department (Levy, *The University of Oklahoma Volume 1*, 284); Jacobson, TMs, Box J-13, WHC.
14 Jacobson, “Art Exhibitions and Art Schools,” TMs, Folder 60, Box J-13, WHC.
As Oklahoma had attained statehood in 1907, less than a decade prior to his arrival, Jacobson found the lack of funding a serious obstacle to the development of his ideal program. In 1915, his department consisted of only one room in the administration building. It had little equipment for producing paintings, not to mention the absence of sculpting materials and the lack of books needed for teaching art history. Of the eight hundred students enrolled at the university, only twenty-three attended his program. To generate interest in the art school, the department offered free classes and continued to do so over the next several years. This incentive succeeded. By 1920, 255 students enrolled in Jacobson’s program.

Jacobson knew he faced formidable obstacles in organizing the curriculum leading to the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts. The closest public museum of substance was five hundred miles away in St. Louis, so he stressed the importance of acquiring art for the university. “I felt that art students should have the opportunity to see good paintings and sculptures as part of their cultural education,” he explained. However, his early efforts to collect art for the university were “modest indeed,” a direct result of inadequate funding. A few original drawings from the Saturday Evening Post constituted the first items Brooks purchased for the university, but they were not exactly what Jacobson wanted. Despite budgetary problems, Jacobson nevertheless retained high aspirations for the school.

As a way to work within budgetary constraints as well as a way to call attention to the department, Jacobson exhibited his own paintings until others could be acquired. His first solo

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15 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Jacobson, “Art Exhibitions and Art Schools.”
16 The Oklahoma Daily Norman, 19 October 1920. Many years later when Jacobson wrote about the school, he noted thirty-seven art students (Jacobson, “Art Exhibitions and Art Schools”).
17 Jacobson, “Museum of Art.”
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
exhibition took place in October, 1915 and continued this practice of until 1949 when he began hosting his exhibition at his personal home.\textsuperscript{21} He also displayed his paintings at local clubs, schools, and libraries, depicting the Northwest and Southwest landscapes, which quickly received positive public attention.\textsuperscript{22} During class lectures he incorporated his own art collection when specific examples remained non-accessible.\textsuperscript{23} Jacobson exposed his students to as much art as he could because he wanted them to study different genres just as he had had the opportunity to do.

Wherever he traveled, Jacobson thought of ways to advance the University of Oklahoma, and this included leading an aggressive effort to display a large spectrum of art, including both permanent and traveling exhibits. For example, during his recent trip to the Southwest, Arizona and New Mexico, Jacobson had already begun vigorous promotional efforts for OU. While in New Mexico, with the support of his mentor Birger Sandzén, he arranged for a collection of artworks from Eastern artists to travel to Norman, as well as Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Tucson, Phoenix, and other southwestern and midwestern towns.\textsuperscript{24} The exhibition would more likely come to Norman if other nearby towns also showed the works, defraying some of the costs.

Furthermore, only two months after his appointment, Jacobson managed a group of paintings on loan by the American Federation of Arts that amounted to over 50,000 dollars in value. Opening in October, the \textit{Exhibition of Paintings by American Masters} displayed a collection of paintings from more than forty artists. He hoped to stir interest about art among citizens.\textsuperscript{25} As part of the exhibit-related events he gave a public lecture on “The Appreciation of

\textsuperscript{21} Mark White, “A World Unconquered,” \textit{The Art and Life of Oscar Jacobson}.
\textsuperscript{22} “100 Views on Display,” \textit{University of Oklahoma}, 29 October 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{23} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Morning Journal Albuquerque}, 24 August 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{25} “Valuable Collection of Paintings Coming,” \textit{University of Oklahoma}, 16 November 1915, p. Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
Pictures” to a group of noted and influential men attending a Municipal League Convention in Norman that December. Jacobson saw this as an opportunity to get prominent people involved in OU’s campaign for art education, a successful plan that came to fruition some years later.

While OU had already planned this exhibition prior to Jacobson’s arrival, it was his promotional efforts that ensured its success. He had boasted to the press, “It is the finest collection to ever be displayed in the southwest,” and although this claim was hyperbolic, it instilled in readers a sense of urgency to view the exhibition. And it did include the work of well-known artists, such as Ernest L. Blumenschein’s The Violinist, Robert Henri’s Sylvester, a Childe Hassam’s Bridge at Grez (pioneer of American Impressionism), and Bert Phillips’s Drummer of the War Dance, and others. Giving Jacobson’s boosterism even greater credibility, The American Magazine of Art lauded the exhibit’s success, stating, “Oklahoma is waking up,” and largely attributing this to Jacobson’s influence and work. The journal was published by the AFA, which partly explains some of their enthusiasm and, perhaps, overzealous claims.

In addition to statements to the press, Jacobson encouraged a range of advertising techniques by means of handbills and window cards. Local railroads gave special fares to attendees. Jacobson frequently declined to charge an entrance fee, an action designed to ensure that the general public also benefited from his shows. These efforts helped usher in six thousand

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26 “Artist To Talk About Pictures,” The Daily Oklahoman, 10 December 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
27 Ibid. Oilmen’s investments in art is discussed in chapters five and seven.
28 The same article stated that Jacobson was “formerly one of the most popular artists of the Pacific coast,” lending his remarks greater credibility. “Art Collection valued at $50,000,” Daily Oklahoman, 2 November 1915, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS. To see the catalogue for exhibiting artists consult: http://ou.edu/content/fjjma/exhibitions1/past-exhibitions/1910-1919/masters1.html.
29 “Art Collection valued at $50,000,” Daily Oklahoman, 2 November 1915, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
30 A cheap mass advertising tool consisted of window cards, which were often displayed at movie houses in window fronts of shops.
attendees, in a town boasting only five thousand residents. At Jacobson’s suggestion, visitors voted on their favorite pieces, which encouraged them to observe and engage with the works. Of all the art displayed, Taos artist Irving Couse’s *Making Pottery*, an Indian depiction, won the people’s choice award, which did not come as a surprise, considering Oklahoma was just recently Indian Territory and had over forty tribes on state land.

Jacobson meant this exhibit, like many that followed, to be “educative.” Jacobson had noticed at world fairs and exhibitions, especially the fine arts exhibit in San Francisco, that designers went to great lengths to educate fairgoers by creating pamphlets and giving lectures that provided visitors with a deeper understanding of the art displayed. He wanted to replicate this instruction both at the university and throughout the state. In fact, he understood the university and the state were interrelated. To cultivate a strong program at OU, Jacobson realized he needed to spark interest in art throughout Oklahoma. He also knew this required patience and the help of others. Happily, other artists as well as art collectors often assisted him in this endeavor because they had a personal stake in garnering support for their profession.

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31 “Art in Oklahoma,” *The American Magazine of Art* 7, no. 4 February 1916, 159, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
32 Much of the art emerging from the Taos Colony during the 1910s, including Ernest L. Blumenschein, E. Irving Couse, and Joseph Sharp, painted Indians in a non-threatening way, thereby casting them into a heroic and mythical past. Even white Oklahomans looked toward their own Indians as people of the past and not participants of the present. Perhaps voters had a bit of nostalgia for Native people, whose land had just been largely allotted to pioneers only a couple of decades ago. On primitivist and utopian perceptions of the Pueblo people among early twentieth-century Anglo writers, see “Sisters of the Southwest,” in Sherry Smith’s *Reimagining Indians*, 82-105.
33 “Art Collection valued at $50,000,” *Daily Oklahoman*, 2 November 1915, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
34 “Art in Oklahoma,” *The American Magazine of Art*.
35 Artist-activism took place all around the United States during the 1910s-1920s, as many artists collaborated together to cultivate public tastes in art and to encourage the government to see the value in art and to financially back American art development, through development of a national art. During the Jacobsons’ 1915 trip to New Mexico, they probably visited Taos as well, where they became acquainted with many of the colony’s artists, such as Blumenschein, an eventual friend. In subsequent years, Jacobson exhibited with many of the New Mexicans, as well as Sandžen, and they reciprocated. The Jacobsons counted Gerald Cassidy, Frank Applegate, B.J.O. Nordfelt, and Jozef Bakos as their closest friends and colleagues among the Santa Fe art colony, and Jacobson purchased their work for his personal collection and for OU.
One of his strategies to achieve his goals of widening the audience for art appreciation was to develop two clubs beyond classrooms and exhibition halls. Both clubs sponsored a series of lectures from art critics within the state and noted art historians from abroad.\(^3\)\(^6\) One of these organizations, the University of Oklahoma's Light and Shade Club, fell under Jacobson’s guidance in October 1915.\(^3\)\(^7\) This group eventually rechristened itself the Beaux Arts Club. Its goal was to strengthen ties among those who sought to further America’s art development at the university.\(^3\)\(^8\) Jacobson recruited a network of upperclassmen, faculty, and patrons “to promote art for the interests of the University as well as for the mutual benefit of its members, to conduct exhibits and secure lecturers.”\(^3\)\(^9\) As president, he served on the executive committee to oversee its success.\(^4\)\(^0\)

One month later, the American Federation of Arts (AFA), headquartered in Washington, D.C., inducted OU’s club into its much larger organization. The AFA, founded in 1909, boasted some two hundred chapters throughout the United States and around the globe before a decade. No other art organization of its size and national focus existed in the United States.\(^4\)\(^1\) Today, it continues in “promoting the visual arts as a vital component of the nation’s cultural life.”\(^4\)\(^2\) At the time Jacobson began working with it, all the great museums of the country already held membership and many important art societies also joined.


\(^{37}\) The history of the Light and Shade Club is not in Jacobson’s manuscript.

\(^{38}\) “Les Beaux Arts in National Federation,” \textit{University of Oklahoma}, 9 November 1915, 27 Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.

\(^{39}\) “Beaux Arts Club Organize,” \textit{University of Oklahoma}, 15 October 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

But the AFA proved most beneficial to smaller museums and institutions by providing a way for them to secure traveling art exhibits despite inadequate funds. Artists, curators, and educators wanting to host an exhibit wrote to the AFA’s office in Washington, D.C., to place a request. To keep the costs down, the AFA sent exhibits out on a circuit. This way, OU, for instance, would only pay for insurance and the traveling costs from a closer location rather than from D.C. The remaining overhead costs fell to the AFA. To try to recoup part of the expenses, typically the AFA would also send high quality photographic reproductions for sale to the public. Setting a moderate price encouraged exhibition visitors to acquire the reproductions for their homes, offices, and schools. Sometimes original pieces remained in various museums in Europe and at the bigger galleries in the United States, and reproductions circulated instead. While not ideal, it still exposed the general audience to a wide array of art and helped foster art appreciation. By keeping the prices down, the AFA helped “To Make Art Free for Democracy.” By 1918, the AFA had thirty-one different exhibitions at more than one hundred locations throughout the entire United States.43

Member and president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert de Forest, noted in 1919 that despite great efforts in the previous fifty years of exposing art to more people at public museums in larger cities in the East and Midwest, too many people still lacked access to art. According to de Forest, “art still remains a closed book to the greater number of our people...This is a condition that should not continue.” Jacobson agreed that because this situation did not exist in continental Europe, it should not exist in the United States.44 Moreover, as a direct result of joining the AFA, OU successfully secured unique and interesting art exhibits

44 Ibid.
while Jacobson took an active role with the organization by presenting lectures throughout the country and publishing articles about art awareness and appreciation, especially as it pertained to encouragement of modernism.\textsuperscript{45} Again, as Jacobson put himself in the public’s eye, he increased not only his personal reputation but also the prestige of the university.

Whereas the Light and Shade/Beaux Arts club focused on the university community, Jacobson's other sponsored organization, the Association of Oklahoma Artists, focused on state-level outreach to promote the cultivation of the fine arts. This organization was the first art organization in the state to reach beyond the university setting.\textsuperscript{46} Created in Jacobson’s office in 1916, the organization quite simply promoted state artists by arranging exhibitions of their works around Oklahoma and outside the state and helped raise awareness through publicity. Father Gregory Gerrer, Catholic priest, a devoted art patron, and artist and Catholic priest took the position of president, and Jacobson served as secretary. Elected active members could only hold office for one year, and they had to work in the fine arts sector. Associate members consisted of people interested in the objectives of the organization, and Patron members included those able to contribute ten dollars a year to help oversee the organization's goals. Active members paid two dollars whereas Associate members paid one. Members represented various regions of the state and together wrote a constitution detailing their objectives.\textsuperscript{47} They intended to hold regular meetings that offered the membership an opportunity for intellectual and artistic stimulation. They would also sponsor lectures and discussions and thus promote art throughout the state.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} For the organization’s constitution and information on annual exhibitions from 1915 until 1918, see Jacobson, “Association of Oklahoma Artists”, Folder 2, Box J-1 WHC.
\textsuperscript{48} “Association of Oklahoman Artists;”
Members of the Association of Oklahoma Artists, for instance, organized an exhibition for the state fair, awarding prizes for original works, that is, those not yet shown in a previous exhibition. This venue gave OU students and unknown artists alike an opportunity to display their talents.\textsuperscript{49} The organization also held an annual state exhibition, where the top three paintings received medals, and fourth place earned an honorable mention. Only Active members could vote for the official competition, but all attendees could vote on their favorite painting for the “Popular Picture” prize. On occasion, the Association of Oklahoma Artists also collaborated with other fine arts organizations throughout the United States, by inviting guest speakers from various institutions and bringing in traveling exhibits.

Beyond his activities with the Beaux Arts Club and the Association of Oklahoma Artists, Jacobson presented public lectures and presentations throughout the state. In spring 1916, for example, Jacobson lectured at the university on Indian art. Having just spent the previous summer studying and interacting with southwestern Indians, Jacobson claimed that “the Pueblos are the most interesting of any of the tribes....They are industrious and have their own government but their manner of living is the same as it was hundreds of years ago.”\textsuperscript{50} Knowing Jacobson’s interests concerning Indians, OU’s Indian club Oklushe Degataga, which in Cherokee and Choctaw means “Tribes Standing Together,” invited Jacobson to give a presentation on Indian art. (After the late 1920s the organization renamed itself Sequoyah Indian Club to honor the Cherokee who created a set of writing symbols for his tribe).\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} “State Artists Will Exhibit,” \textit{University Oklahoma}, 17 December 1915, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS. This article indicates that participation increased partly because attendees were looking forward to having their opinions heard.
\textsuperscript{50} “Jacobson Lecture on Indian Art,” \textit{University Oklahoma}, 7 March 1916.
This was the first university-based group of its kind in the nation.\textsuperscript{52} When the club organized in the spring of 1914, it “represented in its membership of thirty[,] students of Indian descent, comprising some of the university leaders in the various branches of college activity.” The club intended to aid the advancement of American Indians and eventually create a museum of American Ethnology at OU.\textsuperscript{53} The members displayed pride in their Indian heritage at a time when many Euro-Americans still referred to them as “barbaric” and “primitive.” As evidenced by Jacobson’s comments on Pueblos as unchanging, Jacobson held complicated views on American Indians. While he thought some tribes more primitive than others, he sought friendships with Native peoples and admired much about their cultures, and perhaps that is what Indians saw, as many appeared to like Jacobson and maintained contact.\textsuperscript{54}

In fall 1916, Jacobson presented another lecture for the Sequoyah Indian Club. This one, entitled “The People of the Terraced Houses,” consisted of seventy-five slides. The images showed the homes of Ute Indians and the religious ceremonies of New Mexico and Arizona Pueblo Indians. Jacobson had taken many of the slides himself. By this time, he had already acquired many photographs and lecture materials concerning Indians. He even collected artifacts. In these presentations, Jacobson acted as a cultural broker, speaking on behalf of various Indians that he encountered and discussing their ways of life with white audiences. Interestingly in this case, he spoke mostly to Indians residing in Oklahoma who were proud of their heritage. Indians

\textsuperscript{52} Shreve, \textit{Red Power Rising}, 44.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. By 1927, the club had about 150 members, representing twelve different tribes, nine member of which were full-blood Indians. Members gathered twice a month and tried to preserve their ancestors’ ways before too much cultural blending occurred causing them to lose their “old habits and ways of living.” At the meetings, members sang, danced, discussed Indian autobiographies, and shared legends. They also provided public programming, which included guest Will Rogers, a well-known Cherokee entertainer, who filled the auditorium more than any previous program or guest. The previous year, 1926, the Indian Survey from Washington D.C. accepted the club’s invitation and visited the club (\textit{Sooner Yearbook 1927}).
\textsuperscript{54} “Jacobson Lecture on Indian Art,” \textit{University Oklahoma}, 7 March 1916. Sources do not describe the details of the lecture or the specific thoughts various Indian members had regarding the presentation.
did not see him as threatening, but rather opened up to him on many accounts and trusted his judgment.\textsuperscript{55}

Within a year of his appointment, Jacobson’s expertise in general art appreciation and development gained him prominence, but despite these early successes, the larger art world continued to overlook the talent in Oklahoma. The new state, not yet recognized as a place where people respected and appreciated modern art, seemed an unlikely choice to house, much less showcase, world-class paintings. A gallery in New York only exacerbated this problem when, after Jacobson requested it send examples of modern art, sent an exhibition of antiquated French paintings instead. Jacobson continued to call for newer art in addition to more traditional items. According to Jacobson’s wife, reluctantly, the New York curator sent a few works and found, with great surprise, that they actually sold extremely well, thanks in large part to Jacobson’s untiring work cultivating art appreciation in Oklahoma.\textsuperscript{56} Furthermore, Jacobson, although quite fond of the great masters, did not want his program to focus only on the past. Rather, he realized the importance of being open-minded to new art genres.

Through Jacobson’s multi-faceted work as an art director, collector, lecturer, and artist a new appreciation for art emerged in Oklahoma under Jacobson’s influence. In May 1916, OU’s art department achieved recognition by national standards, meaning the art school assigned

\textsuperscript{55} “Jacobson Will Lecture at Indian Club Tonight” \textit{Daily Oklahoman, Norman}, 21 Nov 1916. What exactly Jacobson said is not revealed in sources. It is likely that these photos showed culturally sensitive subjects, given that he discussed ceremonies with the student club. Numerous sources clearly show that Jacobson earned the respect and confidence of many Indians of numerous tribes. Not only does his wife’s writing suggest this, but Indian sources, including oral interviews, state this as well, which are discussed more in chapter five: Among Indians. Some examples: Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Acee Blue Eagle General Correspondence 1957-75 Box 10 National Anthropological Archives, Washington DC; Gordon Dale Tsatoke, interview by Arthur Silberman, 3 May 1980, transcript, Folder 9, Box 12, NCWHM.

\textsuperscript{56} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4. Brousse did not specify which exhibit or art dealer, and this possibly could have been an embellishment.
enough work to its students to qualify as a rigorous and accredited program—an accomplishment that had previously eluded the school. “It is now catalogued among the art schools of America which give a standardized amount of work,” a journalist noted in celebration of the news. He added, “This is not only the only art school receiving such recognition in the state of Oklahoma, but the only one in the entire Southwest.” The accreditation and consequent favorable publicity allowed Jacobson to obtain more funds to expand the museum.

As Jacobson traveled throughout the country to lecture, he made it a point to reference the University of Oklahoma. As a result, the school rapidly gained national recognition. An article printed in The American Magazine of Art, a Washington, D.C., publication of the American Federation of Art, proclaimed, “Oklahoma is waking up. The schools throughout the state are seeking to take on efficient teachers of art, and progress is being made in many directions. Much credit is due to Mr. Oscar B. Jacobson who is the head of the Department of Art in the University of Oklahoma.” By the end of 1916, enrollment in his program’s classes grew. So popular were they, that students found little room for their supplies and easels.

Jacobson continued to gain more attention. Yale University, during the summer of 1916, awarded him an honorary degree from its School of Fine Arts, an award that only six others had received in the previous fifty years. Strict requirements regulated designated recipients, as those chosen had to have “a thorough college training, this to include a four-year course in Fine Arts, four years of post-graduate work and one year abroad, but he must have also exhibited in

57 “Art School Recognized,” University of Oklahoma, 26 May 1916, p.; Similar source found in The Daily Oklahoman, 28 May 1916, p.: Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS. The journalist did not specify which states constituted the Southwest.
58 “Art in Oklahoma,” The American Magazine of Art, 159.
59 Ibid.
60 Fannie Inez Bell, “An Artist—And Things He’s Done,” The Oklahoma Daily 6, no. 3 (December 1916): 16, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
national exhibitions and established for himself a name in the art world.”61 Shortly after Yale awarded Jacobson this degree, and armed with a growing sense of confidence, Jacobson continued expanding his artistic horizons. He began displaying his work on a more regular basis.62 Also, because of Oklahoma’s central location, Oklahoma would sometimes be classified as the Southwest, Midwest, or West, which gave Jacobson more opportunities to show his work with various regional groups.

During his early years at OU, generally, Jacobson found himself generally lumped together with similar artists for having “‘invented’ a style of painting to interpret correctly this western atmosphere,” referred to as the pointillist school.63 In fact, French painters Georges-Pierre Seurat and Paul Signac had developed the pointillist technique. For this style of painting, small, distinct points of unmixed color are applied in patterns to form an image. Georges-Pierre Seurat’s paintings Evening, Honfleur (1886; fig. 3.1) and Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor (1888; fig. 3.2) are good examples of this style. Jacobson’s former teacher and friend, Sandzén studied under Edmond Aman-Jean, who introduced Sandzén to pointillism. Aman-Jean was closely associated with artists Ernest Laurent and Seurat in promoting impressionism. Sandzén’s early work reflects these influences, as does Jacobson’s early landscapes, beginning in the 1910s with canvases such as Pink Mountain (1916 fig. 3.3) and A Prayer for Rain (1916 fig. 3.4).64

63 Fannie Inez Bell, editor for The Oklahoma Daily, labeled his paintings and approach as pointillist. Fannie Inez Bell, “An Artist—And Things He’s Done,” 16. Bell was the only woman among the fourteen founding editors, and served as the women’s editor. The Oklahoma Daily was founded in 1916.
64 Ibid., 16. For more on Jacobson’s art and influences see White’s article, “An Artist in the Wilderness,” 37-98.
Figure 3.1 Georges-Pierre Seurat, *Evening, Honfleur*, 1886, Museum of Modern Art

Figure 3.2 Georges-Pierre Seurat, *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor*, 1888, Museum of Modern Art
Figure 3.3 Oscar Jacobson, *Pink Moon*, 1916, Kirkpatrick Foundation, Oklahoma City
Figure 3.4 Oscar Jacobson, *A Prayer for Rain*, 1916, McPherson Kansas School District
Like many artists exploring with different techniques, Sandzén and Jacobson moved away from pointillism. As Mark White notes, “the pointillist stippling apparent” in some of Jacobson’s early western landscape eventually, “gradually gave way to a broader stroke and angular approach to form akin to that of Birger Sandzén.” Sandzén’s work once again inspired and shaped Jacobson’s. White argues that Sandzén’s painting *In the Painted Desert* (1915; fig. 3.5), Arizona, influenced Jacobson’s *Grand Canyon* (ca. 1920; fig. 3.6), “with its masses of vibrant color, fluid line, and simple masses.”65 Such work reflects a noticeable shift in artist approaches.

Figure 3.5 Birger Sandzén, *In the Painted Desert*, 1915, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma

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Noted for their focus on the mountains, deserts, and plains of the West, Jacobson and Sandzén used their natural surroundings as a continued source for inspiration. So did members of Santa Fe and Taos art colonies, with whom Jacobson and Sandzén were friendly. In illustrating scenes where little or no vegetation existed, the atmosphere often became the essential element, and Jacobson had a “bold” and “direct method” that was “especially suited” to his western landscapes. At an art gallery in Chicago, a railroad president saw his painting *Grand Canyon* and bought it despite its somewhat lofty price because it reminded him of his travels through Colorado.

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66 *The Daily Oklahoman*, 28 January 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
67 Fannie Inez Bell, “An Artist—And Things He’s Done,” 16; *University of Oklahoma*, 4 March 1916, p. Scrapbook
Western artists, especially those with ties to Lindsborg, Santa Fe and Taos, often exhibited together. Their works circulated throughout the West, specifically Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico, but also on occasion went to Chicago and other cities. Art patrons eagerly awaited their arrival. “It is hoped that this exhibition,” one newspaper writer remarked, “will do something to bring before the people of this country an insight into the really big art which this little group of men are [sic] producing.”

In 1917, Sandzén acted as superintendent of one such exhibition, and working with the local art club, they held the exhibit primarily for educational purposes. They hoped to expose attendees to various styles and subjects. While on the circuit in McPherson, Kansas, some five hundred people attended the exhibition during its opening weekend. The McPherson Daily Republican newspaper reported that Jacobson’s Voices from the Past showed Jacobson at his best with his interpretation of an Arizona Pueblo and was “one of the best loved canvases at the exhibition.” His Sunrise Walpi, a painting of another Pueblo, also garnered a great deal of attention. His work traveled the country, including a stop in Chicago at a Swedish club. Some of these works then circulated elsewhere, such as in Santa Fe at the new Museum of Fine Arts, now known as the New Mexico Museum of Art.

Around this time, The American Magazine of Art published an extremely complimentary review of Jacobson’s paintings, insisting that visitors to Norman, Oklahoma, visit Jacobson’s studio to see his canvases of the Southwest. In these paintings, the critic explained, Jacobson was...

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69 C. J. S., “Southwestern Art Exhibition.”
70 “Art Notes,” The McPherson Daily Republican. The source does not indicate which specific Pueblo Jacobson painted.
72 “Pictures Shown by Lindsborg,” Santa Fe New Mexican, 6 January 1918, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
“portraying in an understanding way the wonderful spirit of the desert, the Pueblos of the Arizona and New Mexico Indians, the Grand Canyon, and the Plains . . . Jacobson’s work is individual and spirited and we may expect much from him during the coming years.” Since their 1915 trip to California, Arizona, and New Mexico, Jacobson’s focus on the Western landscape intensified. During those summer travels, the couple drove to national landmarks and met with locals along the way, which included Indians. White notes that specifically their visit to Acoma, “provided countless opportunities for painting.” On some occasions, Jacobson incorporated people into his works as such as A Prayer for Rain (1916; fig. 3.4), a ceremonial scene. For some years, Jacobson reflected back on that trip and painted new canvases, and ongoing Southwestern trips provide him with new subjects. Viewers of his works often responded well, and by 1917, Jacobson’s fame as an artist advanced, and it helped raise the prestige of OU and Jacobson’s art program.

The year 1917 was also a busy period for Jacobson as a professor. He and his department received more favorable publicity, and the department’s curriculum made headway as well. By June, the school earned approval following national standards to give Bachelor of Fine Arts Degrees, something Jacobson had strived for since his arrival in 1915. In the Oklahoma Musicians Directory, he announced that artists were successfully living and working in the state and that perhaps before long Oklahoma could be “considered an art living commonwealth.”

Also, in 1917, the art department hired Edith Mahier to teach art and work under Jacobson’s direction. Leaving her teaching post in Louisiana, Mahier replaced an OU teacher that left to serve in the military. Jacobson’s affection for Mahier was evident, as was everyone’s

73 C. J. S., “The Oklahoma State Art Exhibition,” The American Magazine of Art 8, no. 5 (March 1917): 204, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
74 “To Give Fine Arts Degree,” The Oklahoma Daily, 8 June 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
75 “Oklahoma Art and History,” Oklahoma Musicians Directory, 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
as she became known as Ely. Jacobson recalled how lucky OU was to get Ely when he stated, “It was a love match between Oklahoma and Ely. ... From the first Ely won the love and confidence of her associates by her infectious enthusiasm; she had the happy faculty of helping unfold the latent possibilities of her students.”

Jacobson continued to look for creative ways to raise money for OU’s art department. One successful endeavor was a history pageant that not only raised funds for the department but also created much publicity for the school. Reviving his interest in theater and stage set design, in February 1917, Jacobson directed an eight-act play with Dean Holmberg. A Pageant of Oklahoma History depicted the state’s history from “Prehistoric,” through the Spanish conquistadores’ arrival, to “Modern Oklahoma.” Many state and regional pageants of the time celebrated their local history, and as in Minnesota’s case, Oklahoma’s pageant depicted the end of Indians’ dominance in the region. Both pageants dedicated an act to the “Passing of the Indian.” The Oklahoma pageant portrayed the evolution—or Americanizing—of Indigenous peoples: a slow procession moving across the state, consisting of “the savage,” an Indian chief, “the half-breed,” and finally Indians headed to college. For Jacobson, the passing of the Indian meant that Indians, specifically in Oklahoma, had already assimilated a great deal into the growing dominant white cultures that surrounded their tribal lands and allotments. On the one hand Jacobson called Indians “primitive,” on the other he mourned their becoming like White Americans.

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76 Jacobson, “Edith Mahier,” TMs, Folder 21, Box J-13, WHC.
77 Jacobson played an instrumental role in this play, but only one or two sources suggested that he wrote it. Most likely he wrote part of it or gave it shape while other faculty members wrote other parts. If Jacobson played a significant role, it is likely he conjured up the idea by reflecting back on his time in Minnesota when he had acted in the play, Pageant of Minnesota History. Mary Mauk, “Oklahoma to Relive Her Past,” Oklahoma Magazine, April 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
78 Unknown Minneapolis source, November 1909, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 1, Box 1, OHS.
79 Mary Mauk, “Oklahoma to Relive Her Past.”
The Oklahoma pageant was a hit among local state residents.\textsuperscript{80} It was a community production with university students acting out the script while Dean Holmberg served as general manager and director of music. Locals also acted in the show. This had the added benefit of encouraging an even wider audience to attend the performance. Marie Mauk, in her article “Oklahoma to Relive Her Past,” about the pageant, noted that “it will be apparent, especially for easterners that the parts of Indians and cowboys will require no make-up,” suggesting that Indians played the parts of Indians.\textsuperscript{81} Jacobson also assisted his class in designing the two backdrops.\textsuperscript{82} The Beaux Club sponsored the event. It then used the proceeds to buy art for the school’s permanent collection, which included two famous statuettes from the 1904 World’s Fair.\textsuperscript{83} With administrative officials, academics, extracurricular clubs, and the local community all involved, \textit{A Pageant of Oklahoma History} brought much-needed funds and exposure to the art department.

Jacobson attended conferences outside of Oklahoma. He gave lectures that addressed not only ongoing issues about promoting art in Oklahoma but also expressed his continued frustrations regarding fostering larger regional art development. He encouraged eastern awareness and appreciation of western art (landscapes, Native American inspirations) as well as national support for encouraging art in other regions beyond the East Coast. He urged eastern

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{The Oklahoma Daily}, 21 March 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
\textsuperscript{81} Records to not reveal how Indians felt about the performance.
\textsuperscript{82} Mauk, “Oklahoma to Relive Her Past;” “Sooner Pageant to be Give in May,” \textit{The Oklahoma Daily}, 22 February 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS. \textit{The Oklahoma Daily} (22 February 1917, p.) states eight acts to be performed: Legend of the Peace Pipe, The Coming of the Spanish, Oklahoma in the Civil War, Indian Territory, The Opening of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Statehood, The Passing of the Indian, and Modern Oklahoma. Another article in \textit{The Oklahoma Daily} (21 March 1917) notes nine acts: Prehistoric period, Spanish, French, Traders and Frontiers Men, Civil War, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, the Passing of the Indian, Modern Oklahoma.
\textsuperscript{83} “Two Famous Statues Given University,” \textit{The Oklahoma Daily}, 4 December 1917, p., Scrapbook Clipping, 1 Vol. 2, Box 1, OHS.
artists and audiences to reconsider the value of western art. In 1919 in a speech he gave at the national convention of the AFA in New York, Jacobson emphasized western art’s importance to American art as a whole.\(^8^4\) He noted easterners had a romanticized view of the West, one centered on cowboys and Indians and gunfights, for example, something he first realized when attending Yale.\(^8^5\) Easterners dismissed western art that did not fit this particular mold, including his own landscapes. He believed the quality of some western artists’ work ranked well with that of easterners, albeit perhaps in a more rugged way.\(^8^6\)

Beyond his belief that western artists had as much talent as eastern artists, Jacobson also questioned the assumption that eastern artists were the epitome of the discipline. Jacobson also believed that, “the westerner is undoubtedly a much truer type of American than his brother on the Atlantic seaboard or in the largest cities,” since so many European immigrants had recently flocked to the country, holding on to their cultures. He claimed, the westerner, is independent, he is democratic, he is apt to brag, he is often too blunt, he is friendly to a fault and likes to pass the time of the day with casual acquaintances. Having but recently been a frontiersman, he often appears crude unpolished, careless in manner and dress. He is essentially an ascendant; he is keen for culture and he sometimes makes the mistake of thinking that he can order it from Sears Roebuck & Co. The differences between the easterner and the westerner are mostly on the surface after all and should not stand in the way of mutual linking and respect.\(^8^7\)

\(^8^4\) “East and West,” *The American Magazine of Art* 11, no. 1 Nov. 1919, 22-26. Often presses republished Jacobson’s lectures in their entirety or sections. The following source is a good example: “Art Blending of East and West,” *Art & Decoration New York*, January 1920, 204-13. Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.

\(^8^5\) For a thoughtful and comprehensive discussion about romanticized Western themes in art and the imagination, see William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann’s book *The West of the Imagination.*


\(^8^7\) Jacobson, “Oklahoma Art and History,” *Oklahoma Musicians Directory*, 1918, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Box 1 Vol. 3, OHS.
Specifically Oklahoma had something special to give American art. He pointed out that a great number of his students were the product of racial and cultural mixing, including Indian blood, especially Cherokee. Oklahoma’s population, Jacobson claimed, embodied America. Mixed with people from all over the country, north, south, east, made Oklahomans distinctively American.\textsuperscript{88}

Jacobson’s point was that westerners were the true bearers of the promises of America—rugged, forced to rely on their own ingenuity. This reflected a bit of nativism. It is also a bit ironic that an immigrant, who married another immigrant, mourned the loss of America to immigrants. But Jacobson had been very young when his family left Sweden, and as a boy he had embraced the frontier life, fashioning himself in the image of a western cowboy. Jacobson believed the West’s natural environment and its indigenous people inspired something distinctively American in art but it was not adequately appreciated. He was not alone in these thoughts. Painter Marsden Hartley and archaeologist Edgar Lee Hewett, for example, also urged American artists to find uniquely American subjects and believed Native Americans could serve

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. If based off of blood quantum alone, then Cherokees makeup the largest tribe in the United States. In Oklahoma, a long tradition of claiming Cherokee heritage exists, sometimes based in reality, while other times, continuing a myth. As an Oklahoman, I have heard the statement, “I am Cherokee” or “my great-great grandmother was Cherokee” countless times, even from those who know nothing about Cherokee history or culture. For more insight to history see Circe Sturm, \textit{Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). In \textit{Blood Politics}, Sturm looks at “how Cherokee identity is socially and politically constructed and how that process is embedded in ideas of blood, color, and race that permeate discourse of social belonging in the United States” (2). She notes that while the U.S. government typically looks at blood quantum over culture when measuring one’s Indianness, most Native Americans view “culture is the litmus test of Indianness. But culture is also subjective so much so that cultural identifications can be as arbitrary as racial ones” (7). Ultimately she argues that, Cherokee culture and identity, are messy, complicated, where “systems of racial classification are simultaneously created, internalized, manipulated, and resisted” (8). Because the Cherokee Nation does not require a minimum blood quantum, people with even miniscule amount of Cherokee blood become registered tribal members. Those who know nothing of Cherokee culture, live far away from tribal communities and do not speak the language, or lack physical markers, can vote within the Cherokee tribe, thereby creating a scenario where Cherokees who possess most, if not all, of “Cherokee markers of identification,” are marginalized by essentially non-Cherokee people.
as muses. Jacobson would eventually work with Indians, yet during his early years at OU, he focused on non–Native American subjects.

Oklahoman artists did not receive enough support, making it hard for them to make a living. Criticizing the state’s presses, Jacobson argued that the media gave too little attention to artists and new exhibitions. Art journals and major metropolitan newspapers from the East and Midwest, however, gave considerable coverage to Jacobson’s speech. I do not wish to give the impression,” Jacobson commented, “that there is no art in Oklahoma, but there are many things needed to help further the development of what we have.” Sponsoring national traveling art exhibitions to cities and towns was one way of encouraging public support for the arts. He acknowledged that certain areas in Oklahoma lacked an appreciation for art because the state’s residents “got rich so fast on oil wells and other industries that they had no time for the assimilation and practice of refinement, such as art, literature and music.” Although this

89 Sascha Scott, “Paintings of Pueblo Indians and the Politics of Preservation in the American Southwest” (PhD diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2008), 97-98. Scott points out a significant difference in Frederick Jackson Turner’s America versus Hartley’s and Hewett’s conceptualization when she writes, “While Turner was clearly speaking to White America, Hewett applies Turner’s ideas about Americanness being rooted to one’s interactions with and rootedness with the land to American Indians.” Jacobson seems to have shared both views.


91 Jacobson, “Oklahoma Art and History.”

infuriated some of Oklahoma’s news sources, they did begin to provide more media coverage of or art-related matters. 93

Jacobson published his controversial AFA speech in the January 1920 edition of Art and Decoration, a New York magazine, under the title, “Art Blending of East and West.” 94 Further, the American Federation of Arts took Jacobson’s advice seriously and began sending more traveling exhibits to the Southwest. The May 1919 edition of The Survey announced such plans. 95 The following month, Life Magazine announced, “After all these years of modest restraint, the American seaboard is at last coming to the rescue of the Middle West. New York, tolerating St. Louis and Kansas City and other hotbeds of commercialism has girded up its loins and is going to do something for Art.” 96 The article went on to discuss how for too long the East Coast had monopolized the art scene. After Jacobson’s speech, the old paradigm shifted. “The spirit of sacrifice is abroad in the land...The Federation of Arts at the Metropolitan Museums has decided to send out art westward to uplift the benighted hordes of Oklahoma,” citing Professor Oscar B. Jacobson as a reason for its decision. 97

Clearly, his message to promote art in the hinterlands, at least, had fallen favorably upon eastern ears. After the annual conference, Robert de Forest, the president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art published an article, “To Make Art Free for Democracy,” that included commentaries by himself, an art promoter from Eugene, Oregon, and Jacobson on this theme. In the article, which appeared in The Survey: A Journal of Constructive Philanthropy, the

93 Sources to support this argument are all throughout Scrapbook Clippings, Vols. 3-5, Boxes 1-2, OHS.
94 Jacobson, “Art Blending of East and West”
95 “To Make Art Free For Democracy,” 301-303.
96 “Pioneers of Health,” Life Magazine, 12 June 1919, 1026, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS. The article does not indicate which states qualify as the Midwest. Typically it is defined as the north-central region of the United States, which often includes, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota. On occasion, Oklahoma is included.
97 Ibid.
contributors all spoke to the benefits of the AFA’s efforts to increase art awareness over the previous few years and called for even greater strides. De Forest offered a national overview of art awareness in the United States and noted how far the country still lagged behind Europe. He believed, “every man, woman and child...has the inherent right to be able to see, at least occasionally, good works of art.” De Forest further claimed, “it is part of the ‘pursuit of happiness’ which our Declaration of Independence declared to be our American birthright.” Much art over the decades had been reserved for private homes and collections, and of those pieces in museums, many had not reached large audiences. Things were improving but needed further momentum. The Federation of Arts had an important role to play in fostering American interests in art.98

Jacobson’s contribution to “Make Art Free for Democracy” focused on Oklahoma and what he had witnessed regarding increased access to works of art over the four years since his appointment at the university. Traveling exhibitions had made art accessible to more remote and less densely populated regions, and he found people flocked more and more to see a range of works. As he put it, “in the olden times New York, London and Paris, seemed a long way off . . . now New York, London and Paris come to us.” He was almost envious of the youth’s opportunity to see such works, something not available to him as a young boy in Kansas.99 “At first the good natives were skeptical and had to be coaxed by careful and judicious advertising,” he wrote, but “the outstanding fact is, we secured results; people came, saw and were conquered.” People no longer needed coaxing to attend art exhibitions. In fact, “if the collections

98 “To Make Art Free For Democracy,” 301-303.
99 Ibid.
do not arrive with the usual frequency, I often have telephone calls asking when the next art exhibit will ‘strike town.’”\(^{100}\) Jacobson’s tireless efforts were paying off.

Not all was rosy, however. Much work still lay ahead. As an artist, Jacobson understood the importance of gaining financial support for one’s work. He noted that in Oklahoma, more efforts to educate the public would continue to improve artists’ financial situations. Seeing how far Oklahoma had come in only a few years gave him reason to be optimistic. He relied on an art metaphor to explain his view. “The spirit of Oklahoma” was a piece of marble of the highest quality. The sculptor was beginning the work of crafting his piece, but most of the marble remained “in the rough.” Jacobson saw that the “artist is ambitious to make it a masterpiece,” but that “he needs encouragement, sympathy and assistance.” Jacobson called on the public to provide that support.\(^{101}\) Cultivating art appreciation throughout Oklahoma would also mean that outside artists would have a better chance of selling their own works there in the future. He added that through the efforts of the American Federation of the Arts, the University of Oklahoma now actively worked to cultivate an interest in art among the general public.\(^{102}\)

Jacobson had worked tirelessly to promote art and educate audiences. Yet after years of teaching and lecturing, Jacobson still encountered hostility toward modern art, which provoked him to speak out. In January 1924, Jacobson published his article, “The Meaning of Modernism,” in *The American Magazine of Art* (he had adapted the article from a May 1922 lecture for the American Federation of Arts). In his essay, he sought to explain the meaning of modernism, its

\(^{100}\) Ibid.

\(^{101}\) Jacobson, “Art Blending of East and West.”

\(^{102}\) “To Make Art Free For Democracy.”
history, and its role in society. Above all, it was a “plea for tolerance and sympathy for both the old and the new” artforms.\textsuperscript{103}

Jacobson did not believe that innovations among musicians, architects, and even scientists should be held to different expectations than visual arts. “Do we demand of the musician; dogs barking, cows mooing, hens cackling, boys swearing? Because these sounds do exist in nature, will an exact imitation of them be music?” Jacobson asked. Unlike with orchestral music, where people can appreciate sounds that are not reflected in nature, art, on the other hand, was expected to mirror nature, “creating an imitation of its likeness,” stated Jacobson. Even scientists, he claimed, are encouraged to experiment. But as Jacobson asserted, “art has nothing to do with things as they are, but as the artist interprets them. It never was the painter artist’s intention to compete with the Creator and never will be.” Modernist artists sought to break the bondage of descriptive art. He referenced the hold that the church once held on art as an example. He suggested that one only needs to look back on the Early Renaissance to see “the endless procession of Madonnas testifies to the ecclesiastical bondage of art.”\textsuperscript{104} Should art represent or express, Jacobson asked. Considering Jacobson thought that the “quality of any particular civilization can best be gauged by the manner in which it has expressed it emotions, by the languages it has devised to express these emotions; the artistic languages of words, sound, movement, form, color and a combination of these,” Jacobson thereby placed a great emphasis on the importance of art conveying emotions. And such expressions of emotions, Jacobson argued, served as a measurement of civilization.\textsuperscript{105}


\textsuperscript{104} Jacobson, “The Meaning of Modernism.”

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 697-698.
Jacobson, like other modernist artists and supporters of modern artworks, referred back to when art was “free from excessive describe qualities,” and when “the finest art grew as a wildflower in what historians prefer to call primitive art,” excellent art in Jacobson’s opinion. Having witnessed a great deal of modernization and modernity, Jacobson, like other modernists, found art free from constraints liberating and “pure art.” To some extent, Jacobson agreed with those arguing that art had always been representative art. Jacobson’s own art largely remained representative because he was conservative in his own modernistic approaches. But Jacobson pleaded that modern artists should not have their “art judged merely because of its representative value.”

From his time at the Baltic Exhibition to the San Francisco 1915 World's Fair and after, Jacobson cringed at hearing the all-too-familiar words, “I don’t know anything about art, but I know what I like.” This often occurred when people could not find meaning in modern works, such as Futurism and Cubism. Over the years, Jacobson grew frustrated by “ridicule” artists endured “by a world that did not care to understand.” Jacobson continued discussing the differences among various “ism” in modernism to provide some understanding to readers. He had learned the value in this at the expos and exhibitions he attended, which had produced and distributed educational pamphlets for attendees. Jacobson began by discussing Eugène Delacroix’s use of color and influence on Impressionists, who “thought of nature as a series of planes of light.” Impressionists broke “away from the formula of the retrograde Classicists” and “were not understood by the world.” Jacobson claimed they “were denounced as ‘enemies of art, who would soon die out.’” Those who “dare” to step outside of the norm experience ridicule. Jacobson discussed, briefly, the contributions of Cezanne, who dove deeper into the science of

106 Ibid.
color and developed his own color theory, Gauguin and his desire to express only pure emotions rather than “aesthetic interpretation of nature,” and noting Matisse, Picasso, Vlaminck, Deria, among others, who “have been charlatans, fools, madmen.” He went on to give insight to what Cubists, Futurists, and Synchronists hoped to accomplish with their artforms, and while viewers might not understand such works, they would at least see the value in it and encourage artists.\textsuperscript{107}

According to Jacobson, “modern art is an unconscious manifestation of something happening here and now, of which the vast majority of mankind seem hardly to be aware.” For Jacobson, an artist is “prophet of the world to come,” even if unconsciously, since artists reflect their period. Jacobson wrote, “art is always prophetic. Whatever modern art is or is not it is not decadent, but it is new, vigorous, powerful, sometimes vulgar force standing on the decay of an old-world order. It is primitive, barbaric, sometimes angry, so is a new age in its youth; therefore why despair of it?”\textsuperscript{108}

Jacobson’s sentiments echoed Arthur Wesley Dow’s 1916 definition of modernism “as an inclusive name applied to the many forms of rebellion against the accepted and traditional.” Dow listed seven “things generally desired by modernists”:

1. Freedom from the restraint of juries, critics, or any law making art body, involving
2. The rejection of most of the traditional ideas of art, even to the denial that beauty is worth seeking. As this seems opposed to the principle of evolution, and is only negative, I do not see how it can be maintained.
3. Interest in the expression of each individual, whether it conforms to a school or not, whether it is agreeable or the reverse.
4. Less attention to subject, more to form. Line, mass and color have pure aesthetic value whether they represent anything or not. Ceasing to make representation a standard but comparing the visual arts with music. Finding a common basis for all the visual arts.
5. Convincing us that there are limitless fields yet unrevealed by art. […]
6. New expression by color, not by the color of things, or color in historic art. Seeking hitherto unexpressed relations of color.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 702.
7. Approaching, through non-applied design and in other methods the creation of new types of design, decoration and craft work.\textsuperscript{109}

When artists failed to connect with audiences, audiences accused them of “excessive individualism.” When this happened, guidebook authors stepped in to serve as translators between artists and the public, which is essentially what Jacobson did with this speech, article, and other lectures.\textsuperscript{110} Despite Jacobson’s encouragement and plea for modernism, his own work always remained somewhat representational, although he did experiment a great deal with color application and brush strokes. Occasionally, Jacobson’s art was called into question.\textsuperscript{111}

Despite producing and promoting art, Jacobson also took pride in his teaching. He encouraged his students’ endeavors, and his students responded to his instruction. Some of Jacobson’s most memorable moments did not happen in the big museum while lecturing on national art, but instead within the walls of a classroom or in the open air on an outdoor sketching trip. Jacobson offered much more than art history and art instruction. He emphasized the utmost importance in studying life and the experiencing beauty that artists could then transmit into their work to create something emotional and memorable. Much of his early instruction mirrored that of his mentor and lifelong friend Sandzén. “Life is more important that art,” Jacobson once commented.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{109} Jacobson was not expressing radical ideas by the time of his address. Predating Jacobson’s address came Arthur Wesley Dow’s article and address, “Modernism in Art” \textit{The American Magazine of Art} 8, 3 (January 1917), 113-116. First delivered as “Modernism in Art” at the annual meeting of the College Art Association in 1916, and published in \textit{The American Magazine of Art} (January 1917). See Patricia Hills, “Modern Art in the USA: Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century” (Upper Saddle River, 2001), 12.

\textsuperscript{110} Applegate, “Staging Modernism,” 75.

\textsuperscript{111} One moment occurred in the 1940s, when Jacobson exhibited the painting \textit{Blue Abyss} of the Grand Canyon at OU. \textit{The Daily Oklahoma Sunday} mistakenly printed it upside down, which confused those who saw the painting in person at the exhibit. “Oscar Jacobson,” Vertical Files, OHS.

As both an educator and a personality, in the short time since his 1915 arrival at OU, Jacobson’s popularity grew. He cared little for a prospective student’s artistic abilities. Instead, he believed art instruction was a worthy endeavor regardless of natural talent. A former student shared his own experience with Jacobson. William Cunningham wanted to take classes with Jacobson, so he spent the night before approaching the professor completing a sketch that demonstrated his artistic ability. When he presented Jacobson with the sketch, the professor never even looked at it. Instead he simply wrote down the courses in which he wanted Cunningham to enroll. Rather than focusing on “mass-producing artists,” Jacobson saw art as beneficial for everyone.

Jacobson seamlessly incorporated art appreciation and art history into his classes. During class sessions, Jacobson roamed around the room and spoke of random things, such as why men were slaves to fashion, but women were not. He put every story into context and also provided a historical interpretation, thus giving lessons on art history as well as art instruction. As he intrigued the listeners with the history of men’s clothing, he evaluated his students’ work. One pupil recalled that students became “accustomed to astonishing bits of philosophy from their instructor.” Jacobson frequently projected the image of an able multi-tasker to all who entered his classroom. It was not uncommon to see him lecturing on an obscure topic while simultaneously correcting students’ drawing technique.

Although many students considered him eccentric, Jacobson’s popularity grew. Only a few years after he began teaching, they piled into the seats and into the halls, where they might

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113 William Cunningham, “A Creative Artist Who Teaches,” Oklahoma Weekly, Norman, 19 November 1924, Vol 1, Box 1, OHS.
114 Barker, “The Swedish Influence on Art in Kansas and Oklahoma.”
115 “Men, Instead of Women are Slaves to Fashion,” Unknown Source, 11 October 1924, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
hear Jacobson’s fascinating stories. His students learned from Jacobson’s tales of travel to Europe, North Africa, and all over the United States, where he met varied people at world fairs.\textsuperscript{116} Whether from his travels or his knowledge of literature, Jacobson had the ability to make his lectures come to life for his students. He could “make it very interesting too like he was just a part of that time and place,” recalled Anita Howard Kramer, a student who had taken numerous classes with Jacobson.\textsuperscript{117} Kramer liked her instructor’s “charming accent”–how he spoke with authority and assertiveness during his lectures–and she thought his insights and difficult exams more than adequately prepared her for group excursions to museums.\textsuperscript{118}

Jacobson made himself available to students both on campus and off often inviting students to his home for social gatherings. This connection with his students had a lasting effect. As one Cunningham explained, students came to think that Jacobson “should be president of the university. That was our idea of an exalted position. What we really meant was that he had become the university to us.\textsuperscript{119} Cunningham summed up what so many of Jacobson’s other students felt:

\begin{quote}
The department of art at the University of Oklahoma must be ranked as a cultural force, with any similar in the world. No state university in America can boast of such a prominent art faculty. No community in the nation stands so much in need of the cultural influence of an art school as does Oklahoma. Perhaps the bringing of such a man as Oscar B. Jacobson to our state will sometime be called the greatest piece of good fortune that has fallen to the lot of the Sooner state.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{116} William Cunningham, “A Creative Artist Who Teaches.”
\textsuperscript{117} Anita Howard Kramer, interview by Arthur Silberman, 26 July 1980, transcript, Folder 25, Box 9, Silberman NCWHM.
\textsuperscript{118} Anita Howard Kramer, interview by Silberman.
\textsuperscript{119} William Cunningham, “A Creative Artist Who Teaches.”
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
All of Jacobson’s speeches and tours would have done little for the art department if the students had not enrolled. It is clear, however, that students appreciated the role that their professor played in building the reputation of the school and in their own lives and careers.

Jacobson alone could not have built such a notable art program, especially given that during this period he often left campus and Oklahoma to lecture around the country. Also, he and his wife had three children, Yvonne Francoise Brousse Jacobson in June 1917, Oscar Andre Jacobson Jr. in December 1919, and Yolanda Helene Brousse Jacobson in May 1921. To handle the growing interest in fine arts, Jacobson increased the art department with full-time faculty. Edith Mahier had joined in 1917. James Brill and Estelle Manon taught for only one year each. Gwendolyn Meux started in 1921. Together, Jacobson, Mahier, Meux formed the core faculty until the mid-1920s. And while never officially a member of the art department’s staff, Brousse often delivered Jacobson’s lectures while he was absent. While she lacked official credentials, she had acquired a great deal of knowledge about art history from Jacobson and their shared travels and studies.

The Jacobsons had arrived in Norman, Oklahoma, in 1915. The decade before had prepared him for his life at the University of Oklahoma. From the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904 to the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö in 1914, from the ivy towers of Yale to the Pueblo villages of New Mexico, Jacobson had observed and learned from artists and Native Americans. He used this knowledge and these interactions when he traveled and lectured on the benefits of and importance of access to works of art. He used this knowledge and these interactions as he built and promoted the art department for the university and as he taught his students about artistic techniques and art history. And as he lectured, and advanced the

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department, and instructed students, his own prestige and the reputation of the school increased. Jacobson made OU and Oklahoma centers of art.
Jacobson had truly made a name for himself on the national art scene—as a lecturer, promoter, and artist. By 1924, he started looking elsewhere to gain inspiration for his own artistic pursuits and sought other opportunities to further his career. In 1924, Jacobson took his family to Colorado to better understand if it was in the family’s best interest to change environment. While he enjoyed his short time working as Director of the Broadmoor Art Academy in Colorado Springs, he ultimately returned to OU.

Jacobson did not have to wait much longer before he had another opportunity to experience new environments and find artist and cultural inspiration: Jacobson received sabbatical for the 1925–1926 academic year. He took his family to Western Europe and Northern Africa, which gave Jacobson the much-needed stimulus he sought. His time away from Oklahoma brought him into contact with interesting and diverse people and their cultural productions. After returning from these trips, Jacobson and his wife acted as cultural brokers by sharing their experiences with OU and the public, through lectures, discussions, and exhibits of Jacobson’s personal art and the art and material culture representing those he encountered in North Africa. Once again, his cosmopolitan outlook enriched his life and those around him, as he acted as an intermediary between various cultures.

With the mounting demands Jacobson endured as art director at OU, he, like many academics, reserved his summer months for himself and his family. The Jacobsons built a cabin
in Colorado and enjoyed the peaceful environment there as a pleasant alternative to the hustle and bustle associated with university life. The couple took excursions, often accompanied by Emily Cushing, the widow of a renowned anthropologist and ethnologist, who also lived among the Zuni for a period of time. Cushing shared many stories with the Jacobsons about her and her late husband’s adventures while living among the Zuni and of other Indians. On the summer, the Jacobson family also frequented New Mexico to visit the Pueblo and Navajo tribes. As Jacobson particularly liked their architecture and art forms, his work reflected this appreciation of Southwestern Native culture. During his summers, Jacobson worked laboriously on paintings because he made only minimal progress on his own art during the school year.

Jacobson, like his mentor and friend, Sandzén, had forged new paths for art education at western colleges. Sandzén had done this for Bethany College in Lindsborg, and now Jacobson did it at OU. Both looked further west, beyond these institutions, to find new stimuli. Perhaps he grew tired of OU, or perhaps Jacobson simply needed a bit of change, but he contemplated leaving the university. Jacobson’s ability to manage and develop a large program had been recognized as early as 1924, and that year he also accepted an invitation to serve as director of the Broadmoor Art Academy in Colorado Springs. The position offered pay close to double his OU salary, and according to his wife, Jacobson “felt he owed it to his family to seriously consider” the move. He used his summer as a way to better understand if this school was a good fit.

1 Brousse, “Glimpses.” Brousse’s memoirs do not reveal the specifics of their conversations, only note that they took many trips together into the mountains, which would have given them ample time for lengthy exchanges. Being very curious about anthropology and Indians in general, the Jacobsons probably viewed these journeys as an opportunity to gain insight into Zuni life during the later 1800s.
3 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
Jacobson liked many aspects of living and working in Colorado. It put him in closer range to the Southwest desert, a location Oklahoma could not compete with. Also, this move shortened the distance between him and the art colonies of New Mexico, but was far enough away that he could keep to himself and not get entrenched in all the gossip and jealousy that, according to his wife, plagued the New Mexico climate.⁴

Following in the footsteps of Sandzén, the academy’s former director, Jacobson led an aggressive program. He was not alone in his efforts, as he oversaw a distinguished faculty that included Sandzén and noted Impressionist Robert Reid.⁵ Jacobson became acquainted with Reid’s work during the Panama Exhibition in San Francisco, where Reid had painted murals for the Fine Arts building. It is likely that Jacobson’s appointment at the academy happened in part of his friendships with Sandzén and perhaps even Reid. Confidence emerged between the artists and sharing ideas became common, according to Brousse, who had herself struck a nice friendship with Reid partly because of his time in France and fluency in the language. In her memoirs, she recorded a typical conversation between the artists. She recalled that Reid once “asked Dad whether he should try to conform to the new mode” of Modernism, but since it was “plainly against his nature[,] Dad encouraged him to do what he was eminently fit to do rather than follow the latest fad.” It appeared to the Jacobsons that Reid became much happier after receiving this advice. One thing that stuck Brousse as amusing was to see “the three painter[s] together. For these imposing 6 footers were the exact opposite of the too usual American conception of artists as pale, weak looking and somewhat sissified creatures” (fig. 4.1).⁶

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⁴ Ibid.
⁶ Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4; Brousse, “Glimpses.”
Jacobson relished the artistic exchange of ideas that Broadmoor Art Academy offered, but the position had limitations, too. This position required him to raise a lot of money to support and grow the program, something he did not enjoy. Despite not being “cut out to bed,” Brousse recalled that Jacobson “was strangely successful in Colorado Springs.” Brousse remember that her husband’s public lectures interested a great deal of businessmen, including one unsuspecting fellow. She wrote that on one occasion, “a leading merchant came to pat” Jacobson “on the back, saying ‘Young man, this is the most interesting talk I have ever heard. I dreaded it and I have made it a point to stay away from artists all my life; but you make sense.’” As Jacobson had hoped, the man “pledged a handsome donation.”

Part of the reason for this new interest in

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7 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
supporting the arts did not derive from the aesthetic value works offered, but instead from the possibility of investing in art for eventual financial gain. Brousse noted that Jacobson discussed the economic values of art. His practical, had [sic.] headed businessmen listeners, understood him when he demonstrated to them that art could and did influence the course of commerce and industry in many way. He showed them how, in Italy for instance, art was taking the place of non-existent natural resources, bring great wealth in tourists attracted by art. He emphasized that a few works of Raphael or Michel-Angelo, if sold, could wipe out the Italian national debt.\(^8\)

Jacobson clearly understood that artists needed patrons and a supportive art market.

The position had other drawbacks that Jacobson did not find ideal. It would not allow Jacobson to take a long summer leave, something he viewed as essential, and the job required him to gather funds to keep the program in good standing. In the end Jacobson stayed at the University of Oklahoma, but he continued assisting the Broadmoor Art Academy on a regular basis. At his suggestion, the institution changed its name to Colorado Springs Arts Center and altered “its scope . . . to include other arts: music, drama, dancing, and, of course, a gallery.”\(^9\) In addition, he provided them with a long-term plan to help with their mission.\(^10\)

In June 1925, Jacobson earned his first sabbatical. He uprooted his family and took them to Western Europe and northern Africa with the ultimate intention of painting the Sahara Desert. Jacobson wanted to “see how the light of the Sahara compared with that of the American Southwest.”\(^11\) In addition, his lifelong interest in African artistry provided extra incentive for this journey. Brousse expressed excitement about the upcoming trip, as she, who liked North African

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\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Ibid.
\(^11\) Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 1, Box 4.
culture and literature, had long intended to study it more seriously. This trip excited everyone in the family.

After landing in Cherbourg, they stopped in Amiens and then Paris. In Paris, he attended another World’s Art Exhibition, The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts. Unlike previous world fairs, the organizers and French government wanted to highlight the new *style moderne* of architecture, interior decoration, furniture, glass, jewelry, and other decorative arts in Europe and throughout the world. The exposition presented for the first time many ideas of the international avant-garde in the fields of architecture and applied arts. Leading nations of the world, except the United States, participated. The exhibit of fabrics, metals, glass, and paintings represented the new age. Nothing was based on tradition. Jacobson studied the displays and photographed many of them in order to convey what he learned for the advancement of his department in the university.

Also in Paris, Jacobson gained exposure to Art Deco. According to Mark White, “the influence, combined with that of Cezanne, would result in a break with Jacobson’s expressionist tendencies of the 1910s in favor of a planar, angular style suitable to the representation of the severe landscapes of both North Africa and the American West.” Oil painting *Olives in Provence* (1925; fig. 4.2) provides “a glimpse of that new direction,” which “acknowledge the influence of Cezanne and van Gogh, both of whom had painted the olive orchards of the region,” commented White.

After Paris, the family went to Tours, where Jacobson passed his driving test. They then drove south, visiting numerous sites, including Loudun, Poitiers, Rocamadours, Montauban,

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12 Ibid.
13 “Artist’s Work to go to East—Jacobson to Try Brush,” *The Daily Oklahoman*, 5 July 1925.
14 For a thorough discussion about Jacobson’s art in North Africa and the lasting impact the sabbatical trip had on his style, see White, “A World Unconquered,” 61-66.
Toulouse, the valley of the Aude River, Andorra, Carcassonne, and the Canal du Midi. They proceeded to Nimes, Grenoble, and Brousse’s ancestral home of Chateau d’Ucel, where Jacobson created *Chateau des Comtes d’Ucel, Southern France* (1925, completed 1958; fig. 4.3).\(^{15}\) The children loved seeing the places their mother often referred to and grew especially fond of the castles that towered before them.

The sabbatical trip also involved an extended stay in North Africa, especially in Algeria, which at the time was under French rule.\(^ {16}\) While encountering rough water crossing the sea to


\(^{16}\) “Jacobson Rates City High In Appreciation of Art,” *The Daily Oklahoman*, 25 May 1925, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
Algiers, their middle child, Oscar Anders Jacobson, surmised they were, in fact, “going over
whales.”17 Upon arrival in Algiers, the family made proper arrangements to secure a villa and
then traveled into the region’s interior. Mark White documented their travels and notes that the
family “also visited Morocco (fig. 4.4) and Tunisia. Islamic culture did have an appeal to the
Jacobsons, and they visited some of the major sites of the Muslim faith, including the Great
Mosque of Kairouan (also known as the Mosque of Uqba) in Al-Qarawan, Tunisia (ca. 1925; fig.
4.5 ). Along the way, the artist had the opportunity to sketch a caravan en route to the Saharan
oases (fig. 4.6).”18

17 Ibid.
18 Allbright and White, “Oscar Brousse Jacobson, Cultural Broker,” 23; Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2,
Box 4. Mark White is responsible for connecting Jacobson’s paintings to his specific travels in our shared article.
Figure 4.4 Oscar Jacobson, *In Morocco*, ca. 1925, Oklahoma City Museum of Art

Figure 4.5 Oscar Jacobson, *Kairouan, Tunis, Africa, 4th Holy-City, Great Mosque*, ca. 1925
The Jacobson family knew to be respectful in all situations and to learn local traditions, traits critical to cultural brokers. They chose clothing that, at least to some degree, reflected their commitment to engage with this foreign society; in an attempt to counter their noticeable appearance, Brousse and Jacobson both wore long muslin linens. Their children attended nearby private schools and spoke French. Jacobson, who worked diligently on his French so that he could communicate with residents more appropriately, encouraged his kids to do the same. The
couple also learned some Arabic so they could convey their wishes to those who knew only that language.\textsuperscript{19}

At the advisement of locals, Jacobson borrowed a gun before journeying into the depths of the desert. During one close call, three men approached Brousse while her husband painted in the distance. The group inquired about the belongings in her car, and their persistence made her quite nervous. After calling to Jacobson, the family quickly got into the automobile and headed away from the strangers. From then on, Jacobson paid more attention to where he took his family and relied on his local friends for their advice.\textsuperscript{20}

During their sabbatical travels, Jacobson and Brousse began acquiring pottery, jewelry, and textiles from the Imazighen (Berber). As expected, the Jacobsons interacted a great deal with Berber culture. Berbers, nomadic Muslims from the North African region, provided the family with a special glimpse into the desert world. At times, following the counsel of the sheik, the elder of a tribe, the adults rode camels and the children mounted donkeys. The Jacobsons most likely did not view themselves as Christians, but the Berbers did not know this. The Berbers warned the family that “camels are cantankerous beasts who can bite viciously; they all have halitosis and they love to spit, on Christians especially.”\textsuperscript{21} Sometimes the animals acted unpredictably and almost threw off their riders.\textsuperscript{22}

Over the course of their many voyages throughout the region, the couple acquainted themselves with the various landscapes and inhabitants. Taking advantage of his sabbatical leave, Jacobson worked daily, completing assorted sketches and about sixty oil paintings of the

\textsuperscript{19} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4; “African ‘Sheik,’” \textit{Norman Transcript}, 22 September 1926, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Box 1 Vol. 3, OHS.
\textsuperscript{20} Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Allbright and White, “Oscar Brousse Jacobson, Cultural Broker,” 23.
That spring, Jacobson displayed some of his recent work, and “the paintings were so well received that he was voted membership in the Societe des Artistes Algeriens et Francais” in 1926. The couple grew quite fond of the local art. Often they went to different archives, libraries, and galleries. At the end of their leave, to reduce the loads of notes they drafted, the couple rented a typewriter and “gave that machine hard usage; for we took turns, Dad and I [Brousse commonly referred to her husband as Dad after the birth of their first born], typing and caring for the youngsters and kept it humming from early morn to late at night.”

Having visited numerous American and European museums, Jacobson noted that, other than in Paris, African art was not well known, but he thought it should be. He admired the traditional styles of the continent, but he also cherished modern works. Jacobson contacted President Bizzell, Brooks successor, and asked him for $1,000 to gather a much-needed collection of African art. Although the school did not initially have the means to purchase such an ambitious gathering, Bizzell was able to set aside funds to help procure several pieces of representative artifacts.

Eventually, Jacobson received $800 and assembled a fine collection of pottery, rugs, weapons, wood, leather, textiles, and art. Because he had familiarized himself with local customs and beliefs and he possessed a certain shrewd business savvy, Jacobson purchased pieces at a minimal price. He and Brousse negotiated at the time “of the waning moon . . .

Moslems believe it is wise for them to be satisfied with what they can get. We took the

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23 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4; “Jacobson Exhibit to be Opened Tuesday,” The Daily Oklahoman, 30 October 1927, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 4, Box 2, OHS.
24 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4.
25 Ibid.
26 “Algerian Art Buying Urged at University,” The Daily Oklahoman, 28 March 1926, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
27 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4.
29 “African Exhibit for University,” Oklahoma Daily, 26 October 1926, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
astonished vendors by storm, concluding the deals before they had time to recover their breath.” Due to time constraints, the couple purchased many artifacts toward the end of their stay. They worked at a feverish pace, labeling and securing every piece for the voyage back to Oklahoma.

Before departing back home, however, Jacobson contracted typhoid. This terrified Brousse, who “knew that Africa presented this danger.” Jacobson’s condition worsened, and death seemed imminent. Too young to understand, little Oscar tried to help his mother feel better by saying, “Never mind! We’ll find you another husband.” Brousse’s memoirs explained that Jacobson’s “fever reached appalling heights many times, and he frequently had spells of delirium.” As the local nurses believed that wine and lemon juice helped his condition, they made sure he took his daily amount. Prohibition would have made this prescription difficult to follow in the United States. After his condition substantially improved, the Jacobsons boarded a ship home on August 14, 1926.

Immediately after arriving home, Jacobson and his wife both began setting up lectures to discuss their trip to Africa and the different cultures they encountered (fig. 4.7 and 4.8). Although Jacobson noted that in certain places in the Sahara Desert society functioned as if in the “Middle Ages,” for the most part, Jacobson was impressed with the modernization of Arabs. The Norman Transcript quoted him as saying, “It is well within the range of possibility

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30 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4, OHS; Jeanne d’Ucel, “Shopping in the Sahara,” The Household Magazine, May 1929, 18, 45, Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
31 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
37 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” TMs, Box 4 Folder 2.
that the center of civilization will be found among the Arabs of Northern Africa after our Western civilization has crumbled.” As Jacobson toured America, he one time managed to have a radio station air a recording he had made of Arabic desert.

Figure 4.7 “Lectures on North Africa by Professor Oscar B. Jacobson,” Brousse, Scrapbook, Vol. 4, Box 1, OHS

38 “African ‘Sheik’ Officer of Religious Ceremony,” The Norman Transcript, 22 September 1926, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 3, Box 1, OHS.
Throughout that first year back, Brousse greatly assisted her husband with his lectures and other duties, as he remained ill. She had read similar material and had visited the same galleries, and she knew her husband’s style and approach well. Together they arranged an exhibition displaying some of his favorite pieces from the newly purchased African artifacts. The event received great reviews, and no other collection like it existed in the nation. Oklahoma and the university had once again gained national recognition for its art.40

Every fall, upon returning to Norman, Jacobson held an art exhibition of his latest creations. After his sabbatical, Jacobson incorporated new techniques into his artwork. This is evident in such works as Emerald Lake, No. 1 (1936; fig. 4.9), Green Mountain (1936; fig. 4.10),

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and *Trail Ridge in June* (1938; fig. 4.11), all of which reflected “the style he had developed upon return from Africa,” Mark White notes.41 This occupied the exhibit space and allowed him significant time to begin prepping for other incoming traveling exhibits.

Figure 4.9 Oscar Jacobson, *Emerald Lake, No. I*, 1936, Oklahoma Arts Council, Oklahoma City

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Figure 4.10 Oscar Jacobson, *Green Mountains*, 1936, Kirkpatrick Foundation, Oklahoma City

Figure 4.11 Oscar Jacobson, *Trail Ridge in June*, 1938, private collection
Furthermore, out of this trip, Brousse wrote an extensive book, *Berber Art*, which the University of Oklahoma Press published in 1932 (fig. 4.12). Jacobson illustrated the cover, endpaper maps, and the headbands for the openings of each chapter. Brousse published under her pen name, Jeanne d’Ucel. While she did often work with Jacobson on publications, perhaps she viewed this use of a nom de plume as a way to earn a name for herself, out from under her husband’s shadow. Art historian Janet Berlo notes that Brousse produced a critical and thoughtful discussion of Berber art, one “that considers the history and the language of Berber people as well as their art.” Berlo goes on to note, “with eyes accustomed to Navajo weaving traditions of the American Southwest (fig. 4.13), the Jacobsons could appreciate both the technical complexity and the magnificent geometry of Berber textiles (fig. 4.14 and fig. 4.15).”

Despite his near-death encounter, the couple thought their time in Africa was one of the best phases of their lives. Brousse noted this extensively in her unpublished manuscripts, while Jacobson lectured across the United States about Arabic culture, history, and art. In several ways, their willingness to engage with other cultures helped prepare them for the most important encounter of their lives, their work among Indian artists.

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44 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 2, Box 4.
Figure 4.12 Jeanne d’Ucel, *Berber Art*, 1932, cover illustrations by Oscar Brousse Jacobson
Figure 4.13 Unknown, Navajo, *Eyedazzler Blanket*, ca. 1885, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; purchase, 1941

Figure 4.14 Unknown, Algeria, Kabylie region (Leqbayel), Imazighen (Berber) Rug, n.d, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; O.B. Jacobson Collection of North African Art
Fig. 4.15 Unknown artist, North Africa, likely Algeria, Rug, n.d., Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman; O.B. Jacobson Collection of North African Art
CHAPTER 5  
THE KIOWA SIX: COMING OUT ON CANVAS

Jacobson’s work with non-Western cultures accelerated after his return from Africa, and Native Americans became the center of his focus. Jacobson, like some other Americans, spent the first decades of the twentieth century looking for “authentic” and “traditional” markers of American culture.¹ Many artists used their work to express, explore, and question ideas about identity, and regional and national ties played an important role in this quest. Jacobson lectured on the subject across the country, trying to find sympathetic audiences and encouraging patronage of American art forms. He believed Americans needed to find their own voices and styles distinctive from those of Europeans. While artists had made some progress on this during his tenure at the University of Oklahoma, collectively the United States, he believed, still lacked unique forms of expression. Jacobson, and others in the arts, understood that United States government did not value the importance of art in American society. For the time being, patronage had to come from elsewhere, and Jacobson rose to the challenge. This began with Kiowa artists. In 1927, Jacobson started an Indian art movement in Oklahoma that eventually blossomed into a larger Renaissance of Southern Plains Painting, which affected Indian art

¹Jacobson, and those like him, are often referred to as cultural nationalists. Even Jacobson’s art, regional landscapes, is a type of cultural nationalism, as is ethnic art, including tourist ethnic art, discussed in chapter two. Cultural nationalist readings are offered by Wanda Corn, The Great American Thing; Heather Hole, Marsden Hartley and the West: The Search for an American Modernism.
creation, education, patronage, and general perception of Native art as fine art on a national level.²

To see Jacobson as a patron of art, including Indian art, and to understand how he fostered a larger patronage for the arts requires us to redefine or broaden our understanding of patronage. While art historian Mary Towley Swanson wrote about patronage systems among Swedish immigrants from the 1880s to 1940s, her definition offers and excellent lens to view Jacobson from and warrants a lengthy quote. She states:

> Patronage conjures grand images of wealthy benefactors protecting and providing for penniless arts, but money is not the only instrument of patronage. Benefactors may also give time and vital encouragement. Patronage can be provided by organizations, publications, institutions, urban or rural settings that offer a nurturing environment, and the community of artist themselves. Broadening our understanding of patronage is mandatory in order to document the increasingly complex panorama of late nineteenth into twentieth century American art. The term ‘patron’ in American art summons up the names of industrialist families—the Rockefellers, McCormicks, Deering, Fricks and others—living in palatial splendor in large American cities while imitating the cultural mores of their European mentors. Ethnic leaders and organizations in the lower and middle classes also found a variety of methods to support and encourage their visual artists.

In this light, Jacobson was a patron, not simply a mentor or encourager of American Indian art, and through his patronage, he fostered an environment that led to a more fruitful Native art market.

Jacobson helped Americans understand that Native works could be fine art and not simply relics or cultural artifacts. He also demonstrated the importance of Indians to modern day American society as well as the past. Jacobson was successful in these endeavors because he gained the trust and friendship of his Native art students and because he utilized his preexisting

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connections and prestige to expose Native art to a larger national and international audience.

Through his patronage, he made a meaningful difference in the lives of Indian artists.

Jacobson, however, did not intend to simply develop regional art. He understood indigenous art as integral to the “national soul,” as did some of his contemporaries, including artists, such as Edgar Lee Hewett, John Sloan and Marsden Hartley, and writer Mary Austin, all working with or writing about Pueblo art in New Mexico. Referring to a Pueblo art exhibition travelling in New Mexico (1919), Chicago (1920) and New York City (1920-22), Sloan claimed it as “the only 100% American art produced in the country.” He had, after all, traveled widely and viewed Native American art and techniques; consequently, he valued its erstwhile unrecognized contribution to the art world. As original inhabitants of the US, Jacobson agreed that Indians contributed something distinctive to national as well as world art production, but he also admired their work for its inherent artistic merit. Such artists should be sought out and encouraged.

Hewett is the one that arranged the traveling art exhibit of Pueblo painters, which included Crescencio Martinez, Awa Tsireh, Velino Shije Herrera, Fred Kabotie, among others. The previous year, Hewett tried to get the American Federation of Arts to sponsor a national traveling exhibition of Pueblo watercolors, but the AFA denied his request because it only wanted to sponsor Indian craft art. It took the AFA another eight years, under Jacobson’s encouragement, to change its position. Individuals such as Hewett and Solan made this possible;

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3 Janet Berlo, “From Indigenous America to North Africa,” 108. As Sherry Smith notes, Mary Austin “argued that American Indian expression formed the foundation of a national culture, particularly poetry,” but art was also a part of this expression. See Smith’s chapter “Sisters of the Southwest” in Reimagining Indians, 174.

4 Quote taken from Janet Berlo’s article “From Indigenous America to North Africa,” 108.
they acted as a larger cohort that brought attention to Native art by calling it fine art and 100 percent American.⁵

After the Jacobsons’ 1915 attendance at an Indian arts and crafts show in Santa Fe, Sophie Jeanne Brousse had encouraged her husband to help Indians develop their art. But not until 1927, after a decade of teaching at OU, did Jacobson pursue the idea. Much had changed for him since that earlier Southwest trip, putting him in a better position to promote Indian art. He had developed a highly ranked national university art program. He had become an art lecturer in demand coast to coast. He had gained international recognition as an artist in his own right. He acquired influence and respect in important art circles, such as in Santa Fe and Taos, and throughout the Federation of Arts circuit, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. He no longer held the pessimistic attitude about helping Indians artists that he had in 1915, when he had wondered, “But what would one do with them afterwards? And what good would it do them in a world unfit to appreciate them?” Now he had the status and determination to create a world which would appreciate them.⁶ He proved extraordinarily successful in this endeavor.

More often than not, art historians tend to criticize white patrons because of the influence they asserted on the creation of Indian art with marketing techniques, such as arranging and promoting public ceremonial dances to bring attention to the art.⁷ Non-Indian attendees, excited by the prospect of seeing “real” Indians perform “real” Indian dances, might pay better prices for Indian art. If no exciting dances took place, the theory went, attendees tended to pass up a

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⁶ Brousse, “About Indians.”
⁷ Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting, Tradition and Modernism in New Mexico, 1900-1930*; Brody, *Indian Painters and White Patrons.*
purchasing opportunity. Therefore, many white patrons, including Jacobson, encouraged performance. By acknowledging the drawbacks of such marketing, it remains likely that without white patronage, development of a national Indian art market would not have been the success it became in the 1920s and 1930s.

Prior to the mid-1920s, Jacobson had pursued Indian art on occasion, but did little to actively encourage the public’s appreciation of this often overlooked genre. This changed in 1926 when Susie Peters, an Indian agent for the Anadarko agency, brought some young Kiowa artists to see Jacobson at OU. He was on sabbatical at the time, but his assistant, Edith Mahier (called Ely), thought that Jacobson would want to meet these artists. Her intuition proved correct. When Jacobson returned from Africa, he examined their sketches and paintings. Jacobson declared their work, “great and fine art.” He also believed it offered something authentically American and presented an opportunity to broaden the spectrum of American art beyond the more well-known and appreciated Euro-American art. The national soul, he concluded, was Native art.

Jacobson intended to keep the Kiowa artists art as “Native” as possible. According to his wife, he encouraged his Indian students to embrace their own cultural heritage. Rather than replicating the work of tens of thousands of white artists, these young artists should set

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9 Art historian Ruth Phillips points out that as immigrants (Swedish-American background of Oscar Jacobson in Oklahoma, Austrian emigre George Swinton in Winnipeg and the Russian-Jewish root of Joseph Weinstein in Montreal,) looked to validate their connections to America, and turned towards Native artists, “on the grounds of a shared desire to affirm a sense of ‘belonging’ to the landscape in which they met as strangers.” How they encouraged and recognized Native artists as producers of fine art, ‘their intellectual commitment to modernism’s universalist ethos was informed by their European art education and cosmopolitan outlook.” See the introduction and Ruth Phillips’s chapter: “The Turn of the Primitive: Modernism, the Stranger and the Indigenous Artist,” in *Exiles, Diasporas & Strangers*, (MIT Press, 2014).
themselves apart through their Indianness. Jacobson advised, “Do what the white artist can’t do; paint in the Indian way; follow the traditions of your ancestors, draw inspiration from the culture and legends of your people. In doing that you will succeed and you will also make a real contribution to American culture.”

Jacobson, of course, realized that outside, non-Indian innovations, such as European produced beads for regalia, weaving materials, and various foodstuffs had long influenced Indian people. So when he used the word “authentic,” he meant it loosely, as he did when implying “tradition.” It would appear that “traditional,” as defined by Jacobson, referred to something that had been passed down at least several generations. It could, however, incorporate modern elements without losing its initial appeal and essence. Native powwows provide a good example of this. They are rooted in pre-reservation life, but are also molded by modern values and needs. As historian Clyde Ellis notes, “powwow culture reflects a considerable fund of cultural capital. It is a deeply complicated institution, simultaneously binding people from different communities, tribes, and traditions together even as it enforces social and cultural codes and relationships that are connected to tribally specific practices.” For Jacobson, however, the fewer modern qualities an item or piece contained, the more “authentic” he considered it. Ideally, Jacobson and other white Americans wanted to preserve aspects of Indian culture that contained few external elements.

In 1927, then, Jacobson began working with a group of Kiowas artists from Anadarko, Oklahoma: Steven Mopope (Qued-koi, Painted Robe, c. 1898/1900–1974), Monroe Tsatoke

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10 Brousse, “About Indians.”
11 Clyde Ellis, A Dancing People: Powwow Culture on the Southern Plains (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 6. Ellis wrote extensively about powwow culture, including the Kiowa artists’ participation in powwows, and interviewed many of their descendants.
12 Ibid.
(Hunting Horse, 1904–1937), Spencer Asah (Lallo, Little Boy, c. 1905/1906–1954), Jack Hokeah (1902–1969), and during the spring semester of 1928, Lois Smoky (Bou-ge-tah, Coming of the Dawn, 1907–1981). Eventually, later that year, James Auchiah (Looking into Lodge, 1906–1974) replaced Smoky. Since the 1950s, the group is commonly referred to as the Kiowa Five, or more recently the Kiowa Six, to include Lois Smoky, the most overlooked member of the group. Jacobson did not coin this term. The group was usually referred to as “the Kiowa Artists.” Since most people today know them as the Kiowa Five, however, this term will be used (fig. 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Oscar Jacobson and Kiowa Five members, with the exception of Lois Smoky, 1929, (left to right): Monroe Tsatoke, Jack Hokeah, Stephen Mopope, Jacobson, Spencer Asah, and James Auchiah. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries

13 Various spelling of Lois Smoky exist, including Louise and Louis, and Smokey for her last name. Also, Tsatoke is often written as Tsa-Toke and Ts-to-ke.
14 When the male artists first became known as the “Kiowa Five” is hard to pinpoint, but it came after Smoky left and included Auchiah. Some people now refer to the group as the Kiowa Six, to include Smoky. Her time at OU was very brief, though in no way insignificant. This aspect of the Kiowa Five’s history is discussed later in the chapter. Jacobson, “Spencer Asah, Lois Smoky, James Auchiah, Jack Hokeah,” TMs, Folder 4, Box J-13, WHC.
Initially, Jacobson was nothing more than a stranger to the young artists, and they had no reason to trust him with their well-being and training. From his past experiences with Indians, Jacobson realized that to be most effective, he had to demonstrate sincerity. Jacobson also knew that many Indian people placed little trust in whites and for good reason. He understood the impediments past policy had created for him:

I had a hard time at first, to get them to even talk to me or to show me their paintings. This is because ever since the Indians were put upon reservations the policy of the government has been to discourage every tendency of their part to preserve their old ideas, ceremonials, dress and habits of living; and to encourage them to dress and think as the whites do; in other words, the government faced them away from the past and gave them the ideas and culture of the white man. So the Indians have been taught that their dances, their paintings, all their ceremonials, are savagery, and this has been drilled into them so persistently that they are shy of showing their art to the whites. They fear the whites will laugh at them.15

Jacobson, then, understood his students’ reluctance to show their work, but he believed in it and would not give up his determination to build up their confidence. He reassured them by admiring their history and their resilience. Unlike the proponents of forced acculturation, he praised their Indianness, stating, “You came from a proud, warlike, haughty people, a great magnificent people.” He wanted them to revel in their Kiowa heritage, to draw on their history for the sake of their art. He encouraged them: “Be proud you are Indians, paint Indians, listen to the stories of your old men of their great deeds, go back into the history of your tribe, and paint what you know best.”16 Such words of affirmation from a white man likely took the Kiowas by surprise. Images like Jack Hokeah’s Kiowa Feather Dance Prophet and Buffalo Skull (ca. 1930

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15 “Untaught Indian Artists Win World Praise for Painting,” Kansas City Star, 16 March 1936, p; “Kiowa Five History 1928-82,” Folder 1, Box 7, NCWHM.
16 Campbell, “With Southwestern Artists.”
fig. 5.2) suggests how serious the students took Jacobson’s words, given that the subject matter of this image was the forbidden Ghost Dance.¹⁷

Figure 5.2 Jack Hokeah, *Kiowa Feather Dance Prophet and Buffalo Skull*, ca. 1930, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman

Their previous educational experiences had not prepared the Kiowa Five for Jacobson’s approach. What they experienced before coming to OU had been quite the opposite. In the 1880s, reformers, such as William Harris (U.S. Commissioner of Education) and Henry Price (Commissioner of Indian Affairs) believed that Indians could assimilate and only the environment separated Indians from whites in terms of progress. Price stated, “Savage and civilized life cannot live and prosper on the same ground. One of the two must die.” Indians needed assistance to speed up social evolution. As historian David Wallace Adams explains,

¹⁷ Maurice Boyd, *Kiowa Voices: Ceremonial Dance, Ritual and Song*, Volume 1, second ed. (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1981), xvii. In this image, “Hokeah that the Kiowa Feather Dancers wore the upright Sacred Feather on their heads as a symbol of membership. The Yellow Cross symbolized the Creator’s power over the four corners of the universe. the Dance ceremony sought the return of the buffalo” (89).
with guidance, Indians could acquire the “attributes of civilization,” such as “individualism, industry, and private property; the acceptance of Christian doctrine and morality, including the ‘Christian ideal of the family’; and the abandonment of loyalty to the tribal community.” Reformers wanted Indians to “become both a producer and consumer of material goods” and seek conquest over nature.  

Reformers, however, could not achieve their goals alone. They needed support for Indian educational reform and found it with former army officer Richard Pratt. Pratt wanted to “kill the Indian but save the man.” By changing the environment, Indians could become “white,” at least culturally, and therefore survive in white-dominated society. Thus, boarding and day schools became another vehicle through which the federal government eroded Indian identity. The federal government boarding schools, initially run by members of Christian denominations, such as Catholics and Methodists, also sought to teach Christian values to Indian children. For decades, schools forbade Indian students to practice and express their own religious or cultural traditions. Teachers stopped them from speaking their native languages, wearing native garments, and illustrating cultural representations in the form of art. Indian experiences at boarding schools undermined cultural sovereignty and created a great deal of pain among students and their kin.

The Kiowa artists all had experienced boarding schools. Like so many other Native children, they could not speak their tribal language, wear tribal clothing, or practice some aspects of their culture. Reformers, using this strategy, aimed to erase Indian identities and integrate them into American society.

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19 Richard Pratt quoted in Ryan H. Wildenthal, *Native American Sovereignty on Trial: A Handbook with Cases, Laws, and Documents* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 26. Pratt was a captain in the US army and fought against Indians in the US-Indian wars. Afterwards he founded and served as long-term superintendent for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The Carlisle School, located in Pennsylvania, was the first off-reservation government boarding school for Native American children. For more information about Otis T. Mason’s views on the environment as it relates to evolution, which he developed in the 1880-90s, see Frederick E. Hoxie, *The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*, 129-31. Also see Adams, *Education for Extinction*.  

188
of their tribe’s culture in school. But they did have the opportunity to sketch.20 And like many, they resisted restrictions and found ways to speak Kiowa, as it continued to remain their language of choice, and they also sang and danced at powwows.21 While the Kiowa artists liked some aspects of their boarding school experiences, such as sports, they also witnessed the erosion of many aspects of their culture, exactly what reformers aimed to accomplish.22

Hokeah was a devout Catholic. His 1929 murals at the St. Patrick Mission School reflect the influence of Christianity in Indian life, including his own. One mural (fig. 5.3) shows a three-building school with Indian children standing with their backs turned on the school, but facing the priests and bishop. Off to each side, Hokeah showed symbolic images of Kiowas Sun Dance. This image blends tradition and Christian influence in the artist’s life. The other mural (fig. 5.4) is of Father Isadore Ricklin, the founder of the school in 1892. Ricklin is standing in the center with one finger pointed in the air, as if he is giving instruction or pointing in god’s direction, and his other hand is gripping a cross. The four Kiowa figures sit and are thoughtfully listening.

Some Kiowas chose the “Jesus Road,” while others selected the “Peyote Road.” Some Kiowas chose both, but at different times in their lives.23

20 The Kiowa artists, except Tsatoke, attended the St. Patrick’s Mission School on the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in western Oklahoma. Sister Olivia Taylor taught art education, where the Kiowas learned about proportion, depth, and horizon. To a certain degree their art production was not forbidden altogether. Later, field matron Susie Peters took the artists to Willie Baze Lane for additional art instruction. Therefore, by the time they reached OU, they had already acquired the basics. The Kiowas’ experiences seem typical for other schools, as well. For an example, see Clyde Ellis, To Change Them Forever: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). Ellis wrote extensively about powwow culture, including the Kiowa artists’ participation in powwows, and interviewed many of their descendants.

21 For general information about resistance see Adams, Education for Extinction, 209-38.

22 Lois Smoky, interview by Arthur Silberman, 27 August 1979, transcript, Box 70 Folder 10, NCWHM; James Auchiah, interview by Author Silberman, 24 December 1972, location SC00325, NCWHM.

23 The book Kiowa Voices is one of a three-part series. It is a product resulting from concerned Kiowa members, such as James Auchiah, Linn Pauahta, George Younkin, and James Twohatchet, about the prospect of future generations not retaining important aspects of tribal history. Also, they wanted to tell their own stories and not have non-Indians serve as the authority of Native history. George Younkin sums up the purpose of the book well: “How would you like for strangers to dig up the remains of your grandparents or parents in the name of scholarship? Or after spending a short time here, write a book about our people and folklore and pose as Kiowa experts with their ‘analysis’ of us? You would not appreciate it if an outsider did this in your home, and neither do we, these culturally insensitive people, despite their good intentions, are not the ones that should tell our story.” Quote taken from Boyd,
Figure 5.3 Jack Hokeah, Mural at St. Patrick’s Mission School, Untitled (Kiowa Sun Dance Symbolism at the Mission School), Indian Arts and Crafts Board, U.S. Department of Interior

Figure 5.4 Jack Hokeah, Untitled (Father Isadore Ricklin, the founder of the school in 1892), ca. 1929, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, U.S. Department of Interior

*Kiowa Voices*, xvii. For Hokeah’s images and meaning, see pp. 100-101. More analysis on the Peyote Road is discussed later in this chapter.
Jacobson wanted to help reverse the erosion of Kiowa culture and help Indian artists document and preserve as much of their history and culture as possible. Further, by producing art pieces for wider non-Native audience, the latter would gain exposure to Indian cultures and see their value. This, in turn, would help Indian people protect, preserve, and perpetuate certain aspects of their tribal ways and artistic traditions. Jacobson held some of these ideas during his early journeys to the Southwest, but he became even more committed to these ideas as time passed.

Realizing Jacobson sincerely wanted to help them develop their art skills, the group of Kiowa artists eventually warmed up to the Swede and art instruction began. Combining his knowledge of Pueblo Indian paintings with the Kiowa calendar drawings (painted on buffalo hides) and ledger drawings (ledger paper from accounting books) of the late 1800s and early 1900s, Jacobson reached the conclusion that a flat style of painting, lacking three dimensional perspective, was authentic to Indians. The Kiowa artists already used this technique prior to their arrival at OU, having been influenced by artists such as Silver Horn (Haungooah), Mopope’s great-uncle. Decades prior to the Kiowa Five’s production of art, Silver Horn was a well-known Indian artist, recognized for his ability to draw pictures on ledger paper and as a great source of Kiowa tribal history. Ledger books with lined paper was a common source of

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24 Brousse, “About Indians.”
25 A small group of Pueblo painters from San Ildefonso, such as Julian Martinez (the husband of the famous potter, Maria Martinez) and Cresencio Martinez, started producing works in the second decade of the twentieth century. Cresencio’s art made San Ildefonso the art center for Pueblo art during that time. His career lasted only two years; he died in 1918. Many similarities appear between Pueblo and Kiowa art, such as art medium and the importance placed on ceremonies, in addition to the lack of perspective and background images, which gave each painting a flat appearance. Pueblos, unlike like Kiowas, however, more often tended to paint other tribal members on their canvases, whereas Kiowas traditionally painted geometric images.
26 Michael P. Jordan, “Twentieth Century Kiowa Painting: Continuity and Innovation” (M.A. thesis, University of Durham, 1999), 47-64. Some Kiowas produced art on ledger paper while held captive by the US government in Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida, due to their resistance of white advancement on their lands. Richard Pratt, of the Carlisle School, interacted with the Kiowa ledger artists before transferring some of them to the Hampton Normal Institute boarding school, evidently by their own desire. Interestingly, given Richard Pratt’s determination not to allow or encourage anything reflecting Indian culture, he gave the warrior prisoners supplies and supported their
paper from the 1860s onward. James Mooney, an American ethnographer, purchased many works, especially Silver Horn’s drawings.

Determined not to let his Kiowa pupils’ artistic ingenuity be “contaminated by the white students,” Jacobson encouraged them to select their own subjects, techniques, and colors although he “urged” them to paint in the traditional Indian style with watercolors. Although Jacobson knew his new students needed guidance in their endeavors, he did not want to stifle their individual styles. For this, the Kiowas needed little convincing. The Kiowa Five, like their nineteenth-century predecessors, drew upon tribal history and their own personal experiences, including tribal dances and religious ceremonies, for subject matter.

The students focused on painting historically accurate scenes that illustrated their heritage, such as music and dance and the different types of regalia worn by their tribe during specific events. At first they produced scenes of solitary figures, something the tribe considered appropriate, but with encouragement and the support of each other, they branched out and incorporated scenes with multiple characters. Usually their paintings depicted male figures posed in a dance position, but on occasion they painted women and domestic pictures. While in attendance, Smoky most often illustrated these types of scenes. The Kiowa Five’s artworks focus on clearly defined forms constructed with masses of unmodulated color, very little shading, and very little definition beyond primary forms. This often emphasizes the figures they painted. Their work, as opposed to the Pueblo artists of the time, demonstrated a great deal of physical movement in their ceremonial dance pictures.

artistic endeavors. To better market their works, the artists refocused their subject from warfare to more tourist-friendly works that depicted nostalgic memories, such as buffalo hunts, because individuals such as Pratt did not want to suggest that Indians still wanted to wage warfare with the US government. Pratt marketed their drawings and sold them, and the prisoners sent their earnings home to their families.

29 As articulated to the author by Mark White in conversation.
Some critics have argued that Jacobson’s insistence that Indian artists not incorporate nontraditional aspects into their work ultimately inhibited the Kiowa Five’s technique. Art historian J. Brody has been most critical of Jacobson regarding this aspect of his patronage. Brody stated that “most of the Kiowa painting” coming from Jacobson’s tenure was of a “formalized, stereotyped quality,” claimed that the Kiowa artists used stencils, and even claimed that “Jacobson’s own paintings have this character.” Brody took on Jacobson directly when he asserts, “The paternalistic racism of the Santa Fe supporters,” including that of the former art teacher Dorothy Dunn of the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School, “was as nothing compared to the Oklahoma attitudes,” claiming Jacobson thought of Native artists as belonging not to a different race but a “different species.”

Brody’s contemporary and fellow art historian and collector Arthur Silberman strongly disagreed with this assessment. He believed that Brody painted an overly simple view of Jacobson’s work among Indian artists and was too critical of the artists themselves. In a letter, Silberman concluded that “J.J. Brodies [sic] unscholarly work is simply polemic.”

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31 Provoked by Brody’s work, Silberman asked numerous students, art teachers, and the Kiowa artists about tracing, and not a single one recalled seeing it, and interviewees even commented on how the artists amazed them with their ability to quickly apply paint to paper with only the slightest, if any at all, pre-pencil sketching. Cedric Marks, oral interview transcript, 1980, Folder 5, Box 11, NCWHM; Dorothy Kirk interview by Silberman, 7 June 1972, Mrs. John Preston (Dorothy Kirk), Folder 10, Box 10, NCWHM.
32 Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons, 121.
33 Arthur Silberman to Dorothy Dunn, 16 March 1969, 93.DDK.051, Dorothy Dunn Kramer Collection, Laboratory of Anthropology, Research and Archives Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico (hereinafter referred to as 93.DDK). Silberman and Dunn wrote each other on occasion, as they had overlapping interests and appeared to become casual friends throughout time. By the time of their correspondence, Dorothy Dunn had worked for decades as a former teacher at the Santa Fe Indian Boarding school of art education and was an authority in Indian art. She responded to Silberman’s letter with equal disgust for Brody’s book. She also mentioned the editor or publisher at the New Mexico Press. Dunn wrote, “The book actually needs no review, for it is self revealing of both stated author and shielded ghost writer, and it carries its own condemnation. It is a case study in the transferal of hatred, first of all. Secondly, it is the product of a man with a dishonest ambition and another man with a truly pitiable trauma.” (Dunn to Silberman, 16 October 1971, 93.DDK.051). Evidently the editor told Silberman, “that the original draft did not look anything like the published book.” Silberman did not know exactly what Dansen meant, but it clear by the letter that Silberman engaged extensively with primary sources and conducted dozens of oral interviews over the course of a decade, all of which suggest a different story than the one Brody put forward. Those interviewed by Silberman
assessment of Jacobson, he wrote, was “really incredible. It is of the world of politics and propaganda not of that of art and scholarship. It may do considerable damage.”

This encouraged Silberman to expand his research on the Kiowa artists and their relationship and training with Jacobson. Silberman was not necessarily a big fan of Jacobson. He never met him, and on most occasions he asked those he interviewed hard questions about Jacobson. He did believe that Jacobson was paternalistic, but nowhere close to the stifling villain Brody presented. Silberman thought the story was more complex.

Silberman discovered that while the Kiowas often had their own place to work at OU, they were encouraged to freely move around other art classes and engage with other students. On some occasions they also attended open-air sketching classes alongside other students and, at least once, participated in a nude art class. Art training did not take place only on campus. Often, the Kiowa artists frequented Jacobson’s home and engaged with his personal collection of art and studied his art books. They learned a great deal from their discussions with Jacobson about art history and sometimes, when they returned to the OU campus, they shared with other students and teachers their new knowledge. Therefore, the Kiowa artists gained exposure to different art genres during their tenure at the university.

included Indian artists (including members of the Kiowa Five as well as later artists who studied at OU) and their descendants, fellow Indian friends, OU art students, Jacobson’s secretary, and Jacobson’s fellow teachers.

34 Arthur Silberman to Dorothy Dunn, 16 March 1969, 93.DDK.051.

35 Silberman Collection, NCWHM. Brody, unlike Silberman, relied on secondary sources, which painted Jacobson as a paternalistic mystic. The crux of Brody’s argument came from a quote misattributed to Jacobson. Brody took part of Jacobson’s writing and combined it with a quote by Arnold Ronnerbeck, a Denver Art critic at the time of the book’s publication. Brody, Indian Painters and White Patrons, 121; Jacobson’s, Kiowa Indian Art, 10. Unfortunately, in the end Silberman, did not produce a book from his immense and thorough research, but instead wrote a series of articles, and so therefore Brody’s position remained largely uncontested until recently. Silberman concluded that the artists had their own styles, and “no attempt was made by Jacobson to tamper with it,” but he did encourage them to not imitated the style of non-Indian students. Silberman Arthur Silberman “Early Kiowa Art,” Oklahoma Today, Winter 1972, 9.

The Kiowa artists were friendly and sometimes interacted with non-Indians on campus, though they largely remained secluded. A fellow art student at the time of the Kiowas’ presence recalled that the Kiowa students chose to largely segregate themselves and focused intensely on their work.\textsuperscript{37} This student explained, “They rarely expressed themselves you know. You couldn’t get an extended conversation as to their work or what they were doing or their reaction to other people’s work,” but he thought them pleasant.\textsuperscript{38} Dorothy Kirk, an art professor at the time, remembered how sensitive and “very moody” the artists could be. She remembered “one time when another non-Native student made one of them mad,” the Kiowa artist “got up and walked out.” Another Kiowa artist had to go all the way to home in Anadarko, where the first student had retreated. He persuaded him to return to campus. Sources do not reveal the specifics. Evidently the Kiowa artist “got over it” and resumed his art training. But as Kirk noticed, the Indian artists were very sensitive, and “sometimes it took a great deal to keep them going.”\textsuperscript{39}

This sensitivity partly explained why Jacobson and Edith Mahier wanted to control the students’ living and working environment. They created a space that did not push or provoke the artists. This showed the Indians respect and genuine interest. Throughout the Kiowa Five’s time at the university, Jacobson insisted that he and Mahier be the only ones to evaluate the Kiowas’ art. When performing such evaluations, they chose their words carefully for they knew the potential for great cultural misunderstanding hung in the balance.\textsuperscript{40} Although it seems that

\textsuperscript{37} Student Cedric Marks got to know the Kiowas’ personalities a little when the Kiowas performed a dance. Years later, Jacobson called on him to return from California, where he was living, to help the Kiowas prepare for a scheduled European powwow performance where the Kiowas would also sell their art. Marks worked with the performers to shorten their dances because full dances tended to be long and monotonous and would lose many non-Native audience members’ attention after a certain point. Jacobson played an instrumental role in the arrangements for Europe, but because of the onset of the Depression, the Kiowas canceled their tour. Cedric Marks, interview transcript, 1980, Folder 5, Box 11, NCWHM.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39} The source does not reveal which Kiowa artist was offended, what was said to him to provoke his departure, nor who went to the reservation to retrieve him. Dorothy Kirk interview by Silberman.

\textsuperscript{40} Brousse, “About Indians.”
Mahier did not have the prior experience that Jacobson did in interacting with Indians, she had worked with Jacobson for some time and had a gentle approach to evaluating work. So, Jacobson trusted her with the tasks of critique and encouragement.\textsuperscript{41}

When Mahier attempted to provide insight on Asah’s work, the Indian student “trembled like a frightened horse.”\textsuperscript{42} Later, Mopope provided Mahier with an even more delicate situation with his drawing of a six-fingered human hand. Mahier pointed to the hand. “Do all Indians have six fingers?” she asked pleasantly. Mopope sprang up and looked intently at his drawing. “Yes,” he replied shortly. “Oh,” was all the comment his instructor made. Mopope took the drawing home and corrected it. Soon after, another one of the artists brought in a drawing of a figure with one arm shorter than the other. Mahier pointed to the short arm and said, “All Indians have six fingers.” The Indian laughed and took his drawing home to change it. Still another time, Tsatoke caught an error in one of his paintings. “Oops!” he cried. “All Indians have six fingers.” After that it became a game.\textsuperscript{43}

Early in their stay at the university, the Kiowas befriended Jacobson and his family. While Jacobson thought that collectively the Kiowa artists had something to contribute to American art and culture, he also acknowledged their different personalities. Each had unique ways of expression art, regalia, dance, music, religion, or folklore. This realization evolved the more he got to know his students. These bonds, largely originating in Jacobson’s home, continued throughout the professor’s life. Jacobson’s residence became an unofficial meeting place.

\textsuperscript{42} Campbell, “With Southwestern Artists.”
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
place for the students. They could gather and discuss any concerns they had or counter any growing homesickness.\footnote{Brousse detailed many visits in their home with the Kiowas. Marks commented that Jacobson’s open-house policy was unusual among professors, distinguishing him from a “traditionalist.” Students not only visited, but Jacobson even permitted them to host parties in his backyard or on the porch. With the Kiowa artists, Jacobson’s good sense of humor and appreciation of Indian humor also helped him connect with Indians and build friendships; not all discussions centered on art. Brousse, “About Indians;” Cedric Marks, interview by Silberman; Dorothy Kirk oral interview by Silberman. The son of Stephen Mopope, LaQuinta Mopope Santos, commented in a 1982 interview, that Mopope and Jacobson often visited one another in each other’s homes, and sometimes LaQuinta was present. He remembers Jacobson speaking “Indian” with his hands, since he knew Indian sign language. Mopope and his son had, “really, really, warm feelings,” towards Jacobson, and mentioned that Jacobson frequented Mopope’s house often, despite being far from Norman. LaQuinta Mopope Santos, interview by Arthur Silberman, 31 January 1982. \footnote{Jeanne d’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma;” Brousse, “Indian biographies dating from the nineteen teens.”} Tsatoke frequently portrayed his respect for the drum, along with other aspects of his heritage, in his art.}

One day Tsatoke, feeling particularly lonesome, arrived at Jacobson’s house. While there, Brousse recalled that he became intensely enamored with a drum:

He had been looking at it the instant he entered; as soon as his innate politeness allowed, he took it and, fondling it as if it were a living creature, he started playing, softly at first, slowly awakening the palpitating rhythms, the throbbing echoes dormant in this thing of hide and wood. And he sang; soon oblivious of us, his eyes turned inward as it were, he sang those primitive but by no means simple Indian chants of complicated rhythms, cries of joy and sorrow as old as the voices of earth, attuned to the cadence of life. For Tsatoke soul is music.\footnote{Brousse, “About Indians.”}

Jacobson’s possession of the drum and other Indian material culture helped foster a connection between the artists and Jacobson’s family. Jacobson’s children interacted naturally with the Kiowa artists, as they did with all of Jacobson’s students who frequented his house. They did not gawk, which might have made the Indians feel objectified.\footnote{Brousse, “About Indians.”} A relationship of reciprocal respect permitted Jacobson to be more effective with his guidance and promotion of their works.

Despite the Jacobsons’ best efforts, however, cultural misunderstandings occasionally occurred. For example, Brousse sometimes requested a certain song. On one occasion, she asked them to chant the music only a single time because it was rather lengthy. The Kiowas, uncomfortable at this prospect, elected to end their visit rather than grant Brousse’s wish. This
behavior puzzled her a great deal. After several failed requests to hear the song, she learned that Kiowas considered singing and drumming this particular song just once taboo. It should be sung four times, a number that is sacred to most Indians. Upon this realization she asked to hear the song in its entirety.\textsuperscript{47} Although the Jacobsons cultivated strong friendships with many Indians, incidents such as this reminded them that they remained outsiders. This motivated them to learn more about Kiowa customs.

Perhaps the two most accomplished of the six Kiowa artists were Tsatoke (fig. 5.5) and Mopope (fig. 5.6). They incorporated their love for music and dance into their paintings. Tsatoke was born near Saddle Mountain. He especially loved always being in the presence of music. As a young child, he enjoyed listening to elders of the tribe sing, and he made it a point to learn scores of songs, in an attempt to help them survive for another generation.\textsuperscript{48} Brousse wrote, “the first time I saw Tsatoke he was singing and drumming at an Indian dance. He painted his face, his barbaric regalia and the fervor of his singing made him appear the traditional bloodthirsty red man of pale face imagining.”\textsuperscript{49} Apart from such stereotypical language, she enjoyed Tsatoke’s company. The Jacobsons got to know him well, and appreciated his musical talents. Tsatoke knew many songs, even from other tribes, prompting Brousse to note, “one of his chief delights is to attend pow-wows in order to hear new rhythms.”\textsuperscript{50} A friend of the Kiowa Five, Charles Tsoodle, who often accompanied them in Gallup, recalled that Tsatoke had “a good voice on top

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} D’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma”; “Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts.”
\textsuperscript{49} D’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma.”
\textsuperscript{50} Brousse, “About Indians.”
\end{flushright}
of the volume” and explained he knew how to pick out the right song at the perfect moment and did not have to stop and think the matter over.51

Figure 5.5 Monroe Tsatoke, ca. 1928, Arthur Silberman, Folder 31, Folder 31, Box 111, NCWHM

51 Charles Tsoodle, interview by Arthur Silberman, 10 December 1989, transcript, Folder 8, Box 12, NCWHM.
Tsatoke learned to sing in a tipi while taking part in the peyote ritual. His art portrayed this lifestyle in quite realistic terms. Kiowas turned to peyote after the government and Christian churches forbid certain religious ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance. An explanation is given by an unidentified Kiowa’s in *Kiowa Voices*:

Stripped of their traditional festivals, their religion became confused and their medicine was gone as a tribal force, even though the Buffalo Cult Medicine men and a few other individuals of great medicine still administered to them. Denied of the ceremony of the Graher (Ghost) Dance with its sustaining hope, illusory or not, the tribal members sought a spiritual anchor.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{52}\) Boyd, *Kiowa Voices*, 103.
Some found sanctuary with the Jesus Road, whereas others turned to Se-ney, the Peyote Road. According to Kiowas, peyote was given to them in a revelation. But this is not only practiced among Kiowas, as tribes in northern and central Mexico have the same legend of peyote and the mescal bush.\textsuperscript{53} Tsatoke started painting as a young child when his mother participated in the Ghost Dance. He painted the buckskin dress she wore. Tsatoke painted many peyote paintings, since he practiced this faith, and was part of the Native American Church, as was James Auchiah. Only members of the Native American Church could participate in peyote meetings.\textsuperscript{54} Tsatoke’s art, such as \textit{The Cormorant} (fig. 5.7) \textit{Water Bird} (fig. 5.8), \textit{Fire Bird} (fig. 5.9), possessed great symbolism and reflected his respect of his ancient spiritual beliefs and the power of peyote.\textsuperscript{55} The messenger bird, Cormorant, linked the physical world to the spiritual world.

Reflecting on this, Tsatoke said:

\begin{quote}
O Cormorant, messenger bird, flying into the unknown to the heart of mystery and power, 
And Father Peyote, eternal symbol, who never grows less, 
See, the Rainbow explodes, unleashing racial memories, and we find our meaning, our identity.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

The importance of peyote in Tsatoke’s work is perhaps more evident than other Kiowa Five artists, although others also participated. In 1957, the book \textit{The Peyote Ritual: Visions and Descriptions of Monroe Tsa Toke}, was produced, which included Tsatoke’s own words regarding the importance of peyote on Indian culture, and his own life.\textsuperscript{57} Tsatoke was an exceptional artist.

\textsuperscript{53} For more on peyote, see, Boyd, \textit{Kiowa Voices}, 103-111.
\textsuperscript{54} Jordan, “Twentieth Century Kiowa Painting.” Anthropologist Michael Jordan interviewed Kiowa elder and former president of the Kiowa chapter of the Native American Church, Nelson Big Bow. In 1995, Big Bow stated, “You got to be in there to do it. But just like telling stories. You write it, there's nothing in it, because you got to be involved (in the Native American Church). But those artist like Monroe Tsatoke, all of them guys they’ve been involved in it and the powwow world and dancing” (47).
\textsuperscript{55} Gordon Dale Tsatoke, interview by Arthur Silberman.
\textsuperscript{56} Boyd, \textit{Kiowa Voices}, 103.
Figure 5.7 Monroe Tsatoke, *Messenger Bird Between the Earth and the Grates*, n.d., *The Peyote Ritual: Visions and Descriptions of Monroe Tsa Toke*

Figure 5.8 Monroe Tsatoke, *Water Bird*, n.a. *The Peyote Ritual: Visions and Descriptions of Monroe Tsa Toke*
Once, when Mahier presented Tsatoke with watercolors, he responded, “I shall give them a good time.” He has given them a good time,” Brousse later commented, “they glow in his paintings, for of all the Kiowa boys he has perhaps the most extensive palette.” Tsatoke was determined to portray his tribe’s history in his paintings. He consulted the elders as he wanted, “to collect many legends” over the summers. He would incorporate these histories into his works. Often considered the best and most progressive, he picked up techniques more quickly than the others. At the height of his career in 1937, Tsatoke died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-two.

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58 D’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma.”
59 Ibid.
60 “Kiowa Five, History, 1928-82,” Folder 1, Box 7, NCWHM.
61 Gordon Dale Tsatoke, interview by Arthur Silberman.
Mopope, whose Indian name means Painted Robe, which Jacobson called “prophetic,” is possibly the best known of the group. As the oldest, born around 1898 or 1900, he remembered the days when Kiowas mostly spoke in their native tongue, even though the secondary schools he attended forbade this practice. The children in Mopope’s tribe nonetheless found ways to keep their language alive. Early in life, he recognized the decline in Indian heritage and a tendency to cater to the white man’s way. This change motivated him to “compile a wealth of information about Kiowa cultural history, which would provide background and inspiration throughout his artistic career.” Mopope was serious about his art. His paintings depicted both the stories elders shared with him and his firsthand accounts of Indian life. Each picture, consequently, took on a symbolic meaning. Jacobson stated that Mopope’s The Medicine Dance was “the finest single figure that Mopope has painted,” and even ranked it “among the very finest in modern Indian art. In every way, it compares favorably with the fine figures the ancient Greeks, painted on their vases; in color and in line, it is the ultimate in refinement and taste.” Jacobson greatly admired Mopope’s wisdom and his focus on maintaining Kiowa traditions.

Dancing was an important part of Mopope’s life. He started dancing as a young child and eventually won national competitions. Writing about Southern Plains Indians, historian Clyde Ellis points out that Indians resisted assimilation policies by ignoring federal agents’ orders to stop dancing. By this time, Indians did not fear agents as they once had and began to openly defy them by holding dancing all over the state and Southern Plains. Ellis stated, “attitudes weren’t the only things changing. Dance styles were also taking on new forms,” such a faster and newer version of fancy dancing (also called “war dancing” and “feather dancing”), which Mopope

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63 “Mopope, Steven, Biographical, 1934-87, Letters to Silberman, 1972,” Folder 4, Box 70, NCWHM.
64 Ibid.
65 Jacobson, American Indian Painters, 17.
played a key role in promoting. It is believed that this new style had its roots in the Wild West shows, when Indian performers were encouraged and rewarded for providing exciting, fast-paced dances. Mopope was part of a powwow circuit, and earned a reputation as one of the best Southern Plains Indian dancers. According to Brousse, “Mopope is not only the best dancer of the Kiowa tribe, he is the champion dancer of all of Oklahoma Indians."66 She told a story she heard about Mopope “arriving at a camp tired one day, another Indian, a Comanche, I believe, was adjudged winner of the first dance. This so stirred Mopope that he danced for three days running, capturing all the prizes.”67

Mopope’s love for dancing frequently appeared in his art. According to Jacobson “his dancers whether single or in superbly balanced groups, fill the page with rhythm and motion.”68 Often Mopope painted the Eagle Dance (fig. 5.10 and fig. 5.11), winning him much acclaim. Brousse recalled seeing Mopope perform this dance and commented that “wings made of eagle feathers give him the appearance of soaring, his powerfully muscled body aways [sic] and revolves portraying the flight, the loves of the king of birds; under his fantastic headdress his naturally haughty face becomes proud and daring.”69 An article titled “Untaught Indian Artists Win World Praise For Paintings,” featured in the Kansas City Star, quoted Jacobson: “Mopope is the champion feather dancer of all the Indian tribes of Oklahoma. I have seen him, in full regalia, as a climax to his dance, stoop and pick up a feather from the ground with his teeth and never

66 D’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma.”
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., Jacobson, “Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts.”
lose the rhythm of the dance. He learned this dance from his father.”  

Clyde Ellis used one of Mopope’s paintings for the cover of his book *A Dancing People* (fig. 5.12).  

Figure 5.10 Mopope, *Eagle Dance*, plate 25, *Kiowa Indian Art*  

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70 “Untaught” is a reference to the lack, or absence, of artistic training the Kiowas received. Stating this, makes their art appear more authentic, and uninfluenced by non-Indians. “Untaught Indian Artists Win World Praise for Paintings,” *The Kansas City Star*, 16 March 1936, p., “Kiowa Five, History, 1928-82,” Folder 1, Box 7, NCWHM.  

71 Ellis, *A Dancing People* (cover).
Figure 5.11 Stephen Mopope, *Eagle Dance*, plate 10, *Kiowa Indian Art*

Figure 5.12 Mopope, *Flute Player*, plate 17, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Lois Smoky had short-lived painting career and pursued a more domestic lifestyle (fig. 5.13 and fig. 5.14). She came from a prominent artistic family, with a focus on beadwork and designs, yet she chose to paint. Before arriving at OU, Smoky painted with oils, but later switched to watercolors since the other artists were using this medium at Jacobson’s urging. Initially, this was a difficult to master, but according to Jacobson, she did considerably well during her short stay at the university. During her five months at OU, Smoky and her mother shared a room together. They lived with Tsatoke, his wife and their two children, along with Mopope and his spouse. Arriving after the first four Kiowa artists, she never quite fit into the group.\textsuperscript{72} The painting of pictures was traditionally a masculine art among the Plains Indians. As Jacobson later explained, “among the boys a certain resentment towards Lois for participating in such an unladylike activity,” existed. He continued, “This resentment found expression in several small unkind annoyances toward her, even to the extent of mutilating her work. This is a curious world!\textsuperscript{73} Jacobson’s use of the word small, does not give enough weight to her situation.

At the time of Smoky’s education, tribal members did not believe women should paint. Thus, as art historian Mary Jo Watson explained, Smoky “veered sharply from tribal traditions by painting figures rather than the geometric forms usually permitted to women.”\textsuperscript{74} Negotiating traditional standards and cultural expectations, she refrained from illustrating ceremonial life, but she did reproduce domestic scenes, often featuring women and children. Yet like the other artists, she selected her own subjects within those boundaries. On occasion, however, she did

\textsuperscript{72} Lois Smoky, interview by Arthur Silberman.
\textsuperscript{73} Jacobson, “Spencer Asah, Lois Smoky, James Auchiah, Jack Hokeah.”
\textsuperscript{74} See Mary Jo Watson, “Kiowa Artists and Oscar Brousse Jacobson,” Exhibition brochure, The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art of the University of Oklahoma, n.d. According to John Anson Warner, “there were feelings among her male counterparts—enforced by the teachings of the elders back home—that females should not engage in painting representational works of art. Such an activity, it was felt was in the male domain. Under some pressure, Smoky quit the program and returned home to raise a family and not paint again.” Smoky denied knowing that the male Kiowa students disliked her presence, although she did recall an incident in which her work brought on the begrudging glances of a classmate.
Figure 5.13 Lois Smoky, Arthur Silberman, Box 111

Figure 5.14 Lois Smoky, Arthur Silberman, Box 111
venture a little outside of her “respective” role by depicting feminine dances. Toward the end of the semester, Smoky sold some works to students and other customers Jacobson solicited.\textsuperscript{75}

Smoky denied knowing that the male Kiowa students disliked her presence although she did recall an incident in which her work brought on the grudging responses of a classmate. While monitoring the progress of the group’s work, Jacobson told Smoky that he particularly liked one of her paintings. Mopope laughed with jealousy. According to her, “He didn’t like me at all.”\textsuperscript{76} Smoky later said Mopope wanted the distinction of being called the best artist of the group and worked hard to earn that. Perhaps part of his behavior can be attributed to his competitive nature as a powwow dancer. In the end, she remembered her time at OU as an enjoyable part of her life, in which laughing and sharing stories often took precedence over intellectual pursuits. She liked the recognition she received as an artist, but never appeared offended at often being overlooked as one of the original members of the Kiowa Five.\textsuperscript{77}

Under Jacobson’s tutelage, the students’ art gained national and international attention. In 1927 he chose thirty-five pieces of their work to exhibit in major fine art venues and museums across the United States and Hawaii.\textsuperscript{78} Later that same year, he also took samples of Kiowa art to the American Federation of Arts Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. Many of the attendees made their way into Jacobson’s room to view the paintings. \textit{The Oklahoma Daily} reported that people distinguished in the fields of museum and art believed the pictures “the most startling and

\textsuperscript{76} Smoky, interview by Silberman.
\textsuperscript{77} Smoky, after the spring semester 1928, left the OU program and returned home. For more on Smoky’s perspective, see Smoky, interview by Silberman, 27 August 1979. I curated an exhibit on Smoky’s work at the Jacobson House: Native Art Center in Norman, Oklahoma. Her daughter played an instrumental role at the opening night, and she mentioned that Smoky, as a Christian, did not focus on the negative. When asked by the audience, she downplayed Smoky’s difficulties at OU, among fellow Kiowa artists.
\textsuperscript{78} “State Indians’ Art to be Shown Nationally,” \textit{The Daily Oklahoman}, 7 August 1927, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 4, Box 2, OHS.
significant things that happened in art on this continent.” Jacobson subsequently created a circuit for the Kiowa Five’s works. Many museums, universities, and schools immediately booked the works for incoming students to see and study.

Dr. Royal B. Farnum, the director of art education for the state of Massachusetts, also attended the 1927 AFA convention. He was the man in charge of the American art exhibit at the First International Art Congress to be held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 7–14 October 1928. The tour subsequently followed in Seville, Paris, and London. He saw the students’ work and wanted the Kiowa art to represent the United States at the international exhibition. Pressed for time, Jacobson quickly compiled a portfolio for the Kiowa students and had it shipped to Europe.

Art—in particular folk art—became a vehicle for unity. Europe and the globe were still reeling from the physical and emotional devastation of the Great War. The purpose of the congress, historian Bjarne Rogan writes, was “to unveil the similarities between peoples [and] not only to present the original aspects of regions, but also, through deep investigations, to discover what the whole of humanity has in common.” In this sense, The Kiowa Five’s indigenous art fit well within the congress’s use of folk art. Organizers of the International Art Congress worked under the League of Nations La Commission Internationale de Coopération Intellectuelle. The commission undertook “responsibility for international co-operation within the field of art, museums and culture, through the establishment of a consulting commission,” Rogan notes. Organizers of the art congress, according to the Belgian journal Neptune hoped that this would serve “an effective tool for universal peace. [Folk] art will increasingly become the

80 Brousse, “About Indians.”
81 In the following years, he became the director of the Museum of Modern Art.
82 Brousse, “About Indians;” “Indians’ Art Work Gains Recognition.”
flower of peace…The aim of the promoters of the Prague congress…is both aesthetic and social, and we would suggest: political.” The congress was indeed political. Attendees included official government delegates from nineteen countries. Since industrialization had freed up workers’ time, the League of Nations wanted to prevent people from redirecting that free time toward heavy political discussions that might lead to tension between nation-states. Instead, congress wanted to encourage people, to take up or continue folk art production as a way to occupy their minds in a positive way. Some critics pointed out that such encouragement would instead provoke people to solidify their ethnic identities, which sometimes remained at conflict with borders of nation-states.

For Jacobson, the response to the art exposition exceeded all expectations. Afterward, the Jacobsons met a woman who had attended the exhibit in Prague. She told them the Kiowa art had been so popular, it had taken her three days to gain entrance into the Kiowa room. Jacobson later received a letter from Tomas Masaryk, the president of Czechoslovakia, asking whether “real” Indians had done the paintings and remarking on the extraordinary beauty the pieces possessed. Due to the success of the paintings, the London magazine Apollo devoted several full-color pages to the Kiowa exhibit, coupled with glowing remarks. In spring of 1929, an article in Southwest Review noted, “the King of Spain wrote to President Coolidge inviting him to send the boys over to his court for a visit,” not realizing that Smoky, the lone woman of the group, also had one piece of art on exhibit. In the United States, articles written in large metropolitan newspapers, such as The New York Times, The Philadelphia Ledger, and The

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84 Ibid., 7-10.
85 Various Scrapbook Clippings, Vol. 4, Box 2, OHS.
87 Campbell, “With Southwestern Artists.”
Chicago Tribune, paid tribute to the students’ success, and all of the papers mentioned the Kiowa’s growing popularity. The American Magazine of Art also devoted a large part of an issue to their work. 88

Capitalizing on their recent success, Jacobson quickly published a book in France on the Kiowas called Kiowa Indian Art, published in English and French. 89 Various works by Mopope, Hokeah, and Tsatoke appeared in this publication, whereas Smoky and Asah only exhibited one work each. Auchiah arrived at the university too late to be included in the portfolio. The portfolio sold for the equivalent of thirty-two American dollars, which was substantial at the time. 90 Seven hundred and fifty were printed and copies made their way to readers in the United States, Europe, and South America. 91

In his introduction, Jacobson provided a quick overview of Kiowa history, including the hardships the tribe had faced as the result of “land hungry whites” who encroached on tribal lands. He referenced that Kiowas numbered 1,300 in 1929. As skirmishes between white colonizers and Indians subsided toward the end of the nineteenth century, white Americans’ views shifted. No longer seeing Indians as a threat, some whites reevaluated their place in US society and its history. As Jacobson put it, “In America as elsewhere it has been the same old story. The Anglo-Saxon smashes the culture of any primitive people that gets in his way and then, with loving care, places the pieces in museums.” He went on to say that his intent was not

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89 Jacobson, Kiowa Indian Art; A couple of years after its publication, Jacobson credited this book for helping generate interest in the Kiowa artists’ work. Jacobson to Charles J. Rhoads, commissioner, Office of Indian Affairs, DC, 27 May 1931, 89KC0.003.1.
90 To put the cost of the book into perspective, art historian Janet Berlo points out that “in 1931 the Chicago Tribune reported that the average businesswoman earned $1500 a year, while the college-educated businesswoman earned $1,700, or $32 a week.” Janet Berlo, Szwedzicki Portfolios: Native American Fine Art and American Visual Culture, 1917-1952 (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati Digital Press, 2008), 28.
91 Ibid.
to aid the Kiowas in their effort to preserve their art and traditions, “but to encourage the further expression of an artistically very gifted race.” He acknowledged that Susie Peters, Mahier, and others also played a significant role in aiding the Kiowa artists. The effort was inevitably collective.

This portfolio shaped public opinion. Jacobson concluded by saying that these artists had contributed significantly to American art and, as evidence that whites were starting to see value in aspects of Native cultures, pointed to Santa Fe Pueblo–inspired architecture. Up to this point, no other publication on contemporary Native American Indian art existed, or on Oklahoma Indian paintings. Only small exhibition pamphlets and articles were in print. This book “served an important reference point on Southern Plains Oklahoma Indian art and Kiowa history and helped to create a template for Southern Plains/Oklahoma Native art.” It also, brought a lot of attention to Jacobson and his teaching of Indian art. Eventually, other aspiring Indian artists sought his mentorship, and saw Jacobson as an important cultural broker, someone that could help them launch their own careers.

The subject matter of the portfolio’s images range from dancing, domestic life, ceremonies, and warriors. The actual plates only receive titles and no specific commentary. A painting of a man and woman, *The Love Call* (fig. 5.15) by Monroe Tsatoke, is on the book’s

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92 In the *Kiowa Indian Art* introduction, Jacobson presented to readers a bit of Kiowa history and how the Kiowas came to reside in Oklahoma, as “the pressure of land hungry whites became so great” that the government went to war with the tribe, and in 1867 they signed the Medicine Lodge Treaty. As a result, the government sent the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes to live on reservations near the Wichita Mountains in western Oklahoma. Jacobson, *Kiowa Indian Art*.
93 Ibid., 8.
94 Ibid., 8.
96 Mark White, note to author.
cover. The man plays a flute while the woman stands slightly to the side behind him. His other images depict dancers and warriors (figs. 5.16 and 5.17). Jack Hokeah’s work occupies seven plates which includes *Hummingbird* (fig. 5.18), and *Greeting of the Moon God* (fig. 5.19). He portrayed his figures from various angles, and his *Hummingbird* is a good example of applying vibrant colors to express the mood of the subject and his love for dancing. Smoky’s only image is *Family* (fig. 5.20). Likewise, Asah, too, only had one work exhibited, which is entitled *Self-portrait* (fig. 5.21). Mopope is represented by sixteen works, the largest of the group. His images also range greatly in subject and include *Squaw Dance* (fig. 5.22), *Kiowa Warrior and Wife*, *Kiowa Singers*, *Kiowa Wedding*, a mother holding her baby in a cradleboard (fig. 5.23), to *Hopi Green Dance* (fig. 5.24), as his images did not always center exclusively on Kiowa life.  

In appreciation of all of Jacobson’s efforts on behalf of the Kiowa Five and his personal respect for their people and culture, in 1928, the Kiowa in Anadarko officially adopted him into the tribe as a war chief, the highest rank and only second white to receive the honor. They gave him the name Nah-go-ey in memory of a great warrior. With approximately two thousand American Indians in attendance (the Kiowa population was about 13000 at the time), the induction powwow was an enormous affair. Although other tribes were present, the Kiowas wanted the dedication dance to be strictly Kiowa. Jacobson, his family, and their domestic worker were the only whites allowed to attend. This was one of Jacobson’s most cherished memories as he acknowledged the honor they bestowed him.

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97 Cross-cultural interactions among other tribes influenced their work and is discussed later in the chapter.
Figure 5.15 Monroe Tsatoke, *The Love Call*, Oscar B. Jacobson, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.16 Tsatoke, *Warrior in Black*, plate 28, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.17 Tsatoke, *Medicine Dance*, plate 27, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.18 Hokeah, *Hummingbird*, plate 2, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.19 Hokeah, *Greeting of the Moon God*, plate 6, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.20 Lois Smoky, *Family*, plate 9, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.21 Spencer Asah, *Self-portrait*, plate 8, *Kiowa Indian Art*

Figure 5.22 Stephen Mopope, *Squaw Dance*, plate 24, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.23 Stephen Mopope, plate 11, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Figure 5.24 Mopope, *Hopi Green Dance*, plate 19, *Kiowa Indian Art*
Jacobson and other promoters of the Southwest and Indians did not work in isolation. They constantly interacted with each other, and their writings reflect their similarities as well as their differences in their approaches and focus.\(^9\) Despite the fact that some of his first interactions with Indians had occurred among the tribes of the southwestern core in New Mexico, Jacobson honed in on Indians residing in Oklahoma, which brought Southern Plains Indians into the larger Southwest Indian art movement.\(^10\) Native Art historian Janet Berlo suggests that part of the reason Jacobson gained such prominence among American Indian art circles was because of his Kiowa portfolio. She writes that the “publication of *Kiowa Indian Art* came at a time when American Indian art of the West and Southwest had been prominent in the public imagination for nearly a decade.”\(^11\) Jacobson’s work followed the efforts of artists Marsden Harley and John Sloan, who promoted Pueblo paintings.

After 1928, Jacobson continued to contribute nationally to Indian art appreciation and to work, alongside other prominent Indian art promoters, such as white middle-class women who played a key role in artistic appreciation and cultural awareness among southwestern Indians during the 1910s, ‘20s and ‘30s.\(^12\) As Jacobson’s association with the Kiowas received wider publicity, he was increasingly sought after on important issues regarding art and Indians. For example, he collaborated with sisters Martha and Amelia Elizabeth White in creating the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts in 1931. The Whites were from New York, but lived in Santa Fe during the summer months.\(^13\) As promoters of Southwest Indian artists, the sisters had particular

\(^9\) Brody, *Pueblo Indian Painting* provides a good overview of this movement.


\(^13\) Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters*. Jacobs provides a nuanced discussion of cross-cultural relationships between Anglo-Americans and Pueblos. She emphasizes the gender aspect of promotion and idealization with Pueblos and
fondness for the Pueblos and wished to help them financially. Elizabeth White opened the first American Indian art gallery in 1922 in New York City. She used her New Mexican connections to promote Indian art in NYC and took her collection of Native art to Europe from 1929-32 for exhibitions.\textsuperscript{104} Jacobson and Brousse decided to visit the sisters when they passed through Santa Fe during one of their regular Southwest sketching and painting trips.\textsuperscript{105} It is not known how the Whites and the Jacobsons met each other, or even if this was their first meeting. Both parties, being preservationist, probably had known of each other for some time. Together the Whites and Jacobsons, along with anthropologists and preservationists Jesse Nusbaum and Kenneth Chapman, and several others interested in the subject of Indian art and preservation, had dinner and exchanged ideas.\textsuperscript{106} Jacobson especially enjoyed sharing a meal with Chapman and Nusbaum, the creators of the Indian Village, “Painted Desert Exhibit,” at the 1915 San Diego Fair. Over dinner, the group drew up rough plans for the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts to take place in 1931. The aim, they decided, was “to present American Indian art as art,” because they acknowledged that most white Americans did not view native art in this way. They believed the art deserved to be displayed alongside European and white American works.\textsuperscript{107} They even saw Native art, including other American folk art, as a type of “indigenous, populist Americanism,” Berlo states.\textsuperscript{108} To help attendees and the press see Indian art as art, classic yet modern, they decided to hold the exhibition in New York City.

\textsuperscript{104} Berlo, “From Indigenous America to North Africa,” 108.
\textsuperscript{105} It is likely this meeting took place during the summer of 1930.
\textsuperscript{106} It is possible that other prominent literary and cultural figures like Mary Austin took part in this meeting. Current sources do not confirm whom attended, however. Austin was connected with the White sisters, Chapman and the eventual president of the expo, John Sloan. She, like Jacobson served as a chairperson, but for the Southwest.
\textsuperscript{107} Hartley Alexander, “The Art of the American Indian,” The Nation, 6 May 1931.
\textsuperscript{108} Berlo, \textit{Szwedzicki Portfolios}, 17.
According to Jacobson’s wife, the group asked Jacobson to serve as chairperson, but he could not because he was getting over a serious illness, possibly associated with typhoid, which he had contracted in Algiers in 1926. Jacobson declined the position because it would be “impossible for him to shoulder the heavy burden of work it entailed.”

He decided instead to assist as a consultant on the advisory committee where he played a particularly strong role in advocating Oklahoman Indians’ representation. He also helped with the overall publicity, as his name carried weight.

Largely, members of the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs and the New Mexico Association of Indian Affairs organized the Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts. The exposition was not meant to be a commercial event. It was privately underwritten. Artists, scientists among other individuals gave their time to organize and publicize it, and collect material. A $50,000 estimated budget was raised by private subscription. Some of the proceeds of the sales helped recuperate some of the expenses. Other than asking for Indian artists to exhibit their works, organizers did not consult the artists in the planning or administration of the exhibit.

The Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts made its debut in New York City on 30 November 1931 at the Grand Central Galleries. On opening day, approximately 650 items filled the venue, all produced by Native artisans. Never before had such a large selection of watercolors been exhibited, with fifty works all together. The contemporary watercolors was new, but also a product of native traditions. Viewers could also see masks, pottery, sculptures, basketry, weaving, beadwork and quillwork. Visitors had the opportunity to purchase many items.

Opening day received an estimated 3,000 visitors. The exposition remained in New York City

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109 Brousse, “About Indians.”
110 Ibid.; “Exposition Indian Tribal Arts to Open in December,” Inter-State Arts, Chickasha, Oklahoma. 1931 (n.d., but sometime between June and November), Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 4, Box 2, OHS.
111 Jennifer McLerran, A New Deal for Native, 55; FWFA RG 75 K-CHS, E 4, 904 “National Arts”
for one month and then toured fourteen cities throughout the country and, later, Europe for the next two years under the organization of the College Art Association.  

Acting together, organizers ensured high visibility for the event. With Jacobson serving on the advisory committee and Elizabeth White working as chairperson on the executive committee, the event received proper publicity prior to its opening. White, in particular, spent a great deal of time and her own resources to ensure a successful turnout and show. Even Jacobson's wife publicized the exhibit, as she had often done regarding Jacobson’s work among Indians. Tsatoke’s work *Portrait of Crow Indian* (fig. 5.25) made the cover of the prospectus for the exposition, a big tribute to the artist. Janet Berlo calls Tsatoke’s work a “powerful miniature portrait,” one which “is arresting in its graphic simplicity, and it seems to anticipate by more than forty years the bold portraiture of T. C. Cannon and Fritz Scholder.”

The magazine *The Art Digest International Studio* gave the exposition extensive coverage. In the August issue, Jacobson wrote, “there will be no excuse for anyone not becoming fully aware of the beauty and importance of Indian art, and living Indian art at that,” because of the exposition’s tour to most major universities and museums nationwide. The next month’s issue outlined the exposition’s purpose when the expo’s president John Sloan stated,

> The art of the American Indian is just beginning to receive its due recognition as one of the world’s great original expressions of design. The average white American, however, still thinks of Indian Art as belonging to the remote past. Realizing the extent to which Indian arts have persisted despite the pressure of an alien civilization, through centuries of vast changes and varying fortunes, down to our own machine age…this extraordinary

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112 McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art*, 55-56. After New York, the exhibition traveled to the Art Alliance in Philadelphia; the Springfield Art Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts; the Rochester, New York, Memorial Art Gallery; the Buffalo, New York, Museum of Science; Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts; the Manchester, New Hampshire, Currier Gallery of Art; Milwaukee Art Institute,; the City Art Museum of St. Louis; the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art; the Portland Art Association in Oregon; the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego; and San Francisco’s California Palace of the Legion of Honor.


persistence of an ancient art is perhaps unique in history. It is at once classic and modern.\textsuperscript{115}

Figure 5.25 Tsatoke’s work *Portrait of Crow Indian*

\textsuperscript{115} Like so many artists Jacobson associated with, John Sloan also became enchanted with the Southwest, especially New Mexico. During the summer of 1918, John Sloan had spent several months in Santa Fe and returned almost annually for the next thirty years. He depicted landscapes filled with Indians and Hispanics. Just as Jacobson did, Sloan became a champion for American Indian watercolors and came to call Indian art “Fine Art” and “true American art.” *The Art Digest International Studio*, September 1931, p., Scrapbook Clipping, Vol. 4, Box 2, OHS.
The same article displayed Auchiah’s *Kiowa Newly Weds* and Hokeah’s *Mother and Child*, and it paid tribute to Jacobson’s “potent influence in the revival of Kiowa art.” The exposition also received international attention. *The Connoisseur*, a London magazine, acknowledged that because of Jacobson’s sponsorship of the Kiowa artists and his recent book, *Kiowa Indian Art*, he “must have stirred the interest of many a collector who had not realized what splendid work was being done by living Indian artists.” A reviewer in the same issue of *The Connoisseur* asserted that Abby Rockefeller’s interest in Indian art, reflected a new trend: “That she should show so much enthusiasm for Indian painting is a remarkably good indication of the seriousness with which patrons of art are taking them at present.” The exposition proved a resounding success, and it served to create a wider awareness of Native art.

Art students, even those with patronage, struggle to make ends meet. Many of Jacobson’s students experienced difficulties in paying tuition and keeping up with living costs and so failed to consistently attend school. This problem especially plagued Indian students. He knew he needed to assist in their financial lives during this crucial time in order to increase their chances of succeeding on a national level as artists. At first, the Kiowa artists needed funds to attend the university and pay for housing. After completing their studies, they continued to seek ways to earn a living as artists and performers. Jacobson played an important role in garnering financial support both at OU and afterwards. While they attended the university, Jacobson secured modest living quarters for the artists. He purchased a number of their paintings himself to

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116 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Seeing the positive feedback the exhibit received, the Bureau of Indian Affairs followed suit. In 1939, it organized the San Francisco Fair, whose focus remained essentially the same as the exposition’s had been. D’Ucel, “Indian Painters of Oklahoma,” “Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts,” Folder 10, Box J-18, WHC. Jacobson, “The Government in Art,” TMs, Folder 50, Box J-13, WHC.
120 James Auchiah, interview by Author Silberman; Gordon Dale Tsatoke, interview by Arthur Silberman; Charles Tsoodle, interview by Arthur Silberman.
provide income to help with living costs, but this fell short of what they needed. Jacobson encouraged friends, fellow teachers, and students to follow his lead to buy their works.

At first, the “not so polished” paintings sold for two or three dollars apiece, mainly to students, but quickly the price rose to five, ten, and fifteen dollars. Pricing depended somewhat on who wanted to buy them, as initially the artists did not determine an agreed-upon price. Art instructor Dorothy Kirk recalled that they just “wanted to give them away as they were happy to be there,” but Jacobson tried to discourage this, partly because they needed the funds to attend OU, but also because he knew how important it is to market one's work as an artist, since at the end of the day, artist had to make an income. During all this, Jacobson helped price the pieces and eventually, he along with the helping staff, such as his secretary and fellow teachers, would not take less than twenty-five dollars for a painting, a significant sum at the time and place. As the Kiowa Five’s fame increased, so did the price of their art.121

Throughout all of this, especially early, Jacobson reached out to Lew Wentz to buy many of their works. Wealthy oilman and good friend to Jacobson, Wentz contributed substantially to keeping the Kiowas at the university.122 Jacobson did not want Wentz to simply give them money to attend the university, however. He did not think that the young men would respond well to charity. But by selling their artworks, Jacobson helped the Kiowas gain ambition and confidence, something he believed they desperately needed.123 Jacobson proposed that Wentz see this an investment, and in exchange for the money, he would receive paintings as the Kiowa

121 No source suggests that Jacobson ever took a commission from the students. When the Kiowa and other Indian artists were asked about commissions, they indicated that they received all the funds or that the funds went to cover their university expenses. Often the Kiowa artists borrowed against future sales. Dorothy Kirk interview by Silberman.
122 Brousse, “About Indians;” “The Sooner Salutes,” Sooner Magazine; Susie C. Peters to [Commissioner of Indian Affairs], DC, 5 May 1931, 89KC0.003.1; Jacobson, Kiowa Indian Art, 8.
artists developed their work. Jacobson assured Wentz that he could make the artists famous, thereby helping Wentz capitalize on his investment. According to Susie Peters, the Indian agent who introduced the Kiowas to Jacobson, Wentz paid most of their university expenses for over two years, amounting to something like three hundred dollars a month for all five artists to attend.

Before arriving at the University of Oklahoma, the Kiowa students were already celebrated dancers and musicians in their own communities and the larger powwow circuit, so their art development at OU only added to their prestige. Jacobson, like the Indian artists themselves, capitalized on their “otherness” and “exoticness,” and booked various dance performances to help them obtain funds. This gave the artists an opportunity to sell more of their artworks. One example occurred early in their studies. Sponsored by ten Oklahoma City women’s clubs in November 1928, Jacobson helped arrange for the Kiowas to perform a small demonstration in front of two hundred people at the Shrine auditorium. The performance opened with the Gourd Dance, and Mopope, the best dancer of the group, performed a solo part. Jacobson sold their artwork in the lobby and the proceeds helped raise funds for the Kiowas’ art courses at OU.

For the most part, the Indian students enjoyed performing in front of large crowds, including at the University of Oklahoma. The Kiowa Five had a big debut in front of the entire school during a powwow in the auditorium. They performed along with a few other Indian friends and family, and their presentation received rave reviews. During homecoming and other

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124 For a more national view on powwows, see Clyde Ellis, Luke E. Lassiter, and Gary H. Dunham, eds., Powwow (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
125 Ellis, To Change Them Forever.
special occasions, they erected a tipi in front of the art building, where they would sing and
dance, drawing large crowds. They always sold their artworks on such occasions.126

Jacobson constantly looked for ways to financially help his students. After several years
of working intermittently with Jacobson at the university, artist James Auchiah needed money to
continue his studies at OU or needed to find another way to earn a living, preferably though his
art. Auchiah had depleted his funds helping family members who struggled with tuberculosis and
the money he made from renting out his allotted land in Anadarko did not provide adequate
income.127 In an effort to help, Jacobson wrote to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles J.
Rhoads in May 1931. Jacobson began by pointing out the remarkable work his “Indian boys” had
produced and how Jacobson had “succeeded in making them very well known throughout
America and abroad.” He frequently called the Kiowa Five and other Indian artists studying
under his direction his “boys,” despite the fact that they were all men. This reflected a
paternalistic attitude toward the artists.128 He wrote that Auchiah had “already made a
contribution to American art” and had sold some of his work, but it was not enough to stay
afloat. “If he should go to the usual American art school and get the orthodox training it would
probably so change his art that it would become like that of all other white artists,” something
Jacobson hoped to avoid. “When that happens,” Jacobson explained to Rhoads, “he will have to
compete with some five thousand, more or less, distinguished artists, and he probably would not
be able to make any better living than he does now.” Jacobson did not want his efforts in
retaining the “Indian quality” in his students’ works to fade away. Therefore he asked the

126 John Dunn, interview by Arthur Silberman, 19 November 1981, Folder 2, Box 9, NCWHM.
127 All the Kiowa Five artists rented part or all of their allotted land to generate an income. Tribal land in Oklahoma,
previously known as Indian Territory, was allotted. Despite being home to a large fraction of the U.S. Indian
population, only one reservation is located in the state.
128 On OU’s campus, just outside the entrance of Jacobson Hall, nestled on the side, there is a statue of Jacobson and
his Kiowa students. He is disproportionately large among the Indians, towering over them paternalistically. He seem
like a father among small children.
commissioner, “If you can find him a job as teacher of Indian art in an Indian school for which he is already qualified you will do something not only for him but also for the great many Indian children whom he will come in contact,” noting that “Auchiah is a fine young fellow.” Jacobson ended the letter by saying that he knew “Indians pretty well. They can be killed financially, physically and spiritually but they can not be made over into white.”  

The commissioner passed Jacobson’s request on to W. Carson Ryan Jr., Director of Education for the Office of Indian Affairs, who then reached out to Kenneth Chapman, a man well connected with the boarding school’s art program, who also taught Indian art appreciation courses at the University of New Mexico. Ryan asked Chapman if there might be a teaching job at the Santa Fe Indian boarding school for James Auchiah, “one of the Kiowa boys whose paintings have attracted attention,” although he also wondered if “it is important to keep out cultural influences other than Pueblo.” Ryan asked Jacobson the same question. In the end, Auchiah did not take a position at the Santa Fe Indian boarding school. Jacobson had to find other ways to aid Auchiah financially.  

129 Jacobson to [Charles J. Rhoads] commissioner, Office of Indian Affairs, DC, 27 May 1931, 89KC0.003.1.  
130 Chapman and Jacobson’s responses are not in the archival file, so at present it is not known how they answered the cross-cultural question. It is unlikely Jacobson saw this as a problem, especially since the original letter requested a job for Auchiah in an Indian school, not specifically a Kiowa school. Chapman’s position is not as easy to know. However, a year later Chapman wrote to Commissioner Rhoads about securing Dorothy Dunn as teacher of fine and applied arts at the Santa Fe boarding school. Chapman pointed out that Dunn was an ideal candidate given her work with Pueblo and Navajo pupils and her graduate work in art at the University of Chicago. Chapman needed someone like Dunn to help manage the Arts and Crafts Department, especially since the school recently restructured the curriculum by cutting down on core classes, thereby allowing more time for electives, such as art. Doing this alone was too burdensome for Chapman while he also managed his laboratory work. Chapman had founded the Laboratory of Anthropology of Santa Fe and it kept him busy, plus he had just finished his work for the National Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts and Crafts. Rhoads informed Chapman that such an appointment was impossible as “all expansion of program in Indian schools has been deferred.” The only position for Dunn at the school was to work as a part-time elementary teacher, with some her time allocated for elementary art education. Therefore it is not known if Chapman did not want Auchiah working at the Santa Fe school because he was concerned about cross-cultural influences among Southern Plains Indians and Southwestern Indians, or if the position at the time simply was not available, or if he had already in mind someone else for the job, such as Dunn. W. Carson Ryan Jr. to Kenneth M. Chapman, 15 June 1931; [Rhoads] Commissioner, Department of Interior Office of Indian Affairs, DC, to Chapman, 8 August 1931, 89KC0.003.1.
The Kiowa artists did not earn a degree at OU, since they came as non-traditional and non-degree seeking students. They did not have the required credentials to enter the university officially as students. When the Kiowa Five’s tenure at OU came to an end in the early 1930s, Jacobson’s work and relationships with the artists continued. He no longer acted as their art instructor, but instead as a friend who cared about finding ways they could support themselves through their art and who helped them gain outside recognition. While his promotion of the Kiowa Five intensified throughout the decade, he also looked for other Indians interested in recording their tribal history through their art.\footnote{131}

Some controversy exists regarding who deserves credit for the exposure and fame of the Kiowa Five.\footnote{132} The artists had received instruction from other teachers before arriving at OU, but that limited training did little to further their professional aims. For the most part, they received supplies and encouragement to paint and sketch, but not necessarily proper artistic instructions from qualified teachers. Susie Peters, the Kiowa field matron who brought the artists to Jacobson, knew the Kiowa Five as children.\footnote{133} While watching them grow, she realized they had a deep-seated interest in art. Occasional lessons given by an acquaintance of Peters, Willie Baze Lane, served to encourage the young Kiowa children’s imagination. Peters wanted them to mature in their pursuit, so she provided them with supplies, but the materials proved far from conventional. When she brought samples of their work to Jacobson, they appeared on shoeboxes and brown paper bags.\footnote{134}

\footnote{131}{Brousse, “About Indians.”}
\footnote{132}{This emerged once the Kiowa artists gained reputations as artists, and it still today, as there some confusion regarding this subject.}
\footnote{133}{According to Jacobson, Susie Peter’s brought the Kiowa artists to his attention, as stated in Kiowa Indian Art, 8. Brousse, on the other hand, states that an Indian agent named J. A, Buntin deserves this recognition. Jacobson, Kiowa Indian Art, 8. Brousse, “About Indians.”}
\footnote{134}{“Peters, Susie (Susan Ryan Peters), Field Matron and Kiowa Art, 1927-39,” Folder 5, Box 7, NCWHM.}
Jacobson, through his connections and position at OU, helped the Kiowa artists gain a strong reputation among the larger artistic community, and he secured the financial means to fund their education at OU, especially with the help of oil man Lew Wentz. Peters, however, had arranged ways for the Kiowas to make money as dancers and artists, a practice they continued under Jacobson and that was essential to their long-term income. The Gallup Ceremonials in New Mexico, for instance, enabled the Kiowas to profit from their dancing and singing by selling their art immediately following their performances.\(^{135}\) Peters, however, put in a significant amount of time and resources to promote the students and so took a commission from their performances in exchange for her efforts. Eventually, in the early 1930s, several members started to resent this commission. They contacted John Collier, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), directly to request that they be able to handle their own arrangements and finances. In 1935 Peters sent a letter to John Collier, to say that her role in getting the Kiowa artists recognized is largely overlooked. She wrote, “though Oscar B. Jacobson gives me little credit, he would never have heard of the Kiowa Artists if it had not been for me taking them to the University.” She went on to say that she “even loaned them money...mended their clothes and paid the cleaners.”\(^{136}\) Such gestures probably helped the students a great deal. Despite this falling out, there is no doubt that Peters played a significant role in the sponsorship of the Kiowa Five. Her initial intentions were genuine, although she could not claim that she made the Kiowa Five world-famous artists. She did succeed in using their newfound fame to assist with booking exhibits and performances for the artists.

\(^{135}\) Ibid.
\(^{136}\) Susie Peters to John Collier, 11 August 1934, Kiowa Box 7 PI 163 E 121, RG 75, Records Relating to Indian Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Classified Files 1907-39, General Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives Branch Depository, Washington D.C.
But it was with the 1928 exhibition in Prague, that Indian art sponsorship and
acknowledgment changed dramatically. And recognition for this development is undoubtedly
due to Jacobson, whose persistence in ensuring the longevity of the Kiowa Five’s careers was
critical. The artists made noticeable progress on their artistic development under his attention. As
the decades passed, Peters objected to her omission from the story and sent letters to newspapers
and other Indian art patrons. She even wrote to Collier at the BIA about the issue. She fought
for acknowledgment as early as 1926, and this vigorous pursuit lasted until the end of her life.
Most Indian art books that mention the Kiowa Five, consequently, do recognize Peters’s role in
discovering the Indian students’ talents.

The Kiowas’ flat style went on to influence Southern Plains painting art styles for
generations. Even today, numerous art critics claim that this style is “the only true traditional
Indian way of painting.” Such assertions, point to the significant influence this style had on
future Indian painters and art schools. Dunn often receives the credit for perpetuating this style,
but her own success has its roots in Jacobson’s work. But defining what qualifies as “truly
traditional” is somewhat controversial.

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137 See for example Susie C. Peters to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC, 5 May 1931, 89KC0.003.1
(in this letter, Peters notes the role OU and Jacobson played in bringing attention to these relatively unknown
artists); Peters to Dunn, n.d., 1962, 89KC0.003.1 (in this letter, Peters downplays Jacobson’s role, and acts as if she
is should be credited for the Kiowas’ fame).
138 General Indian art history books support this information. For example see, Bernstein and Rushing, Modern by
139 Bernstein and Rushing, Modern by Tradition, 4, 5, 27, 29, 36, 40; Bob Boyer and Lee-Ann Martin, Powwow Art:
141 In 1932, Dorothy Dunn directed the art program at the Santa Fe Indian School, often called “the Studio.” She,
like Jacobson, was a non-Indian, grew up in Kansas, and was enthralled with Southwest Indian art. Also, during the
first couple of years as director, Dunn used the Kiowa Five’s paintings as prime inspiration to model her teaching.
Of course, her students’ works reflected the tone of the Southwest Indian lifestyle. Over the years, Dunn and Susie
Peters became friends. Bernstein and Rushing, Modern by Tradition, 4, 5, 27, 29, 36, 40; Boyer and Martin, The
Powwow Art, 29; Berlo and Phillips, Native North American Art, 216-17.
Yanktonai Sioux artist Oscar Howe (Nazuha Hokshina, Trader Boy), from the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota, frequently exhibited at the Philbrook Museum of Art’s annual Indian art exhibit, in Tulsa, and was inspired by Southern Plains painting, but he also wanted to find his own artistic style.\textsuperscript{142} As his artistic training progressed, Howe felt stifled by “traditional” contemporary painting. On one vocal occurrence, he became outraged when one of his works was rejected from the 1958 Philbrook’s annual competition because it did not reflect the standards of Indian painting. He responded to their rejection with a letter that stands as the first manifesto of Indian modernism and artistic autonomy:

Who ever said that my paintings are not in traditional Indian style has poor knowledge of Indian art indeed. There is much more to Indian art than pretty, stylized pictures....Are we to be held back forever with one phase of Indian painting, with no right for individualism, dictated to as the Indian has always been, put on reservations and treated like a child, and only the White Man knows best for him? Now, even in Art, ‘You little child do what we think is best for you, nothing different.’ Well I am not going to stand for it.\textsuperscript{143}

Other Indian artists increasingly shared similar views as Howe, such as Woody Crumbo, a Potawatomi artist, who also knew Jacobson and the Kiowa artists.

Many patrons wanted Indians within a particular tribe or group to draw inspiration solely from their own culture and respective community in order for their art to remain “authentic,” but this did not always occur. Although each tribe, as well as sects within the tribe, maintained cultural aspects that are distinctively Kiowa or Pueblo, for instance, tribes shared some artistic and historical characteristics. Kiowa Five artist Jack Hokeah, is a good example of these cross-cultural ramifications.

\textsuperscript{142} Oscar Howe is discussed at length in the following chapter.

By the late 1920s, Mopope, and possibly Hokeah among other Kiowa Five members, developed a strong camaraderie with Indians from New Mexico and Arizona. This is reflected in their art, such as Mopope’s *Hopi Green Dance*. Mopope had painted dances by Hopi, Apache, and other Indians of the region. Intertribal powwows and regional dance performances also helped foster a shared identity among Indians.\(^{144}\) The Kiowa Five also attended the Gallup Ceremony in New Mexico and won numerous awards and accolades in categories, such as painting, beadwork, regalia, dancing, and music.\(^{145}\) They danced many different styles. Over time, the Kiowas impressed Indians from across the Southwest region. During one visit to New Mexico, Hokeah met Maria Martinez, the well-known potter from San Ildefonso.\(^{146}\) He became the “adopted” son of the Martinez family.\(^{147}\)

Commonalities and differences helped form bonds of friendship between Hokeah and other Kiowa Five members with Pueblos, especially at San Ildefonso. The Kiowa language exhibits similarities with several of the different Pueblo languages, including the Tewa dialect spoken at San Ildefonso. This connection does not appear to be part of any major historical

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\(^{144}\) Ellis has written extensively about powwow culture, discussing how intertribal gatherings allowed Indians from various tribes to come together and express their shared identities and differences. He does not talk about the Gallup Ceremonies or tribes in New Mexico and Arizona, as his focus is on the Southern Plains. See, Ellis, *A Dancing People*.

\(^{145}\) The Kiowas attended many dance competitions, but Gallup was the largest. They loved performing and made their own regalia. They also saw this as an opportunity to sell their art. They often took the top prizes, for dancing and their art. They danced many different styles. Over time, the Kiowas impressed Indians from across the Southwest region. The Pueblos actually adopted the Kiowa War Dance, something not traditionally done by their tribe. Even when the Kiowa Five no longer participated, the Pueblos continued to perform the War Dance, also known as the Fancy Dance at the Gallup Ceremony. Hokeah brought Kiowa culture to San Ildefonso Pueblo. Riley Sunrise, interview by Author Silberman, 8-9 December 1979, Folder 17, Box 11, NCWHM; Gordon Dale Tsatoke, interview by Arthur Silberman; Gordon Dale Tsatoke is the son of Tsatoke; Scott Tonemah, interview by Arthur Silberman, 14 April 1982, Folder 6, Box 12, NCWHM.

\(^{146}\) Jacobson had likely met Maria Martinez at the San Diego fair, if not at the St. Louis fair.

\(^{147}\) The Jacobson House, [http://www.Jacobsonhouse.com](http://www.Jacobsonhouse.com); “Association of Indian Affairs,” oral transcription of letters and documents from the Association of Indian Affairs archives in Princeton, New Jersey, March 1983, transcript, Folder 5, Box 66, in addition to location SC00261, NCWHM; James Auchiah, interview by Author Silberman; Riley Sunrise, interview by Author Silberman.
conversation. Also, Hokeah, like numerous Pueblo communities, practiced Catholicism, a very important cultural tie.

Similarities were not the only reasons the Pueblo and Kiowa tended to enjoy each other’s company. Deep-rooted differences aroused curiosity, which eventually transformed into bonds. Dance and song are excellent examples of such differences. The Pueblos actually adopted the Kiowa War Dance, something not traditionally done by their tribe. Even when the Kiowa Five no longer participated, the Pueblos continued to perform the War Dance, also known as the Fancy Dance, at the Gallup Ceremony. At Taos Pueblo, the Eagle Dance was performed. It was a friendship dance given to Kiowas by the well-known dancer Tony Whitehead. This became a popular subject for Mopope’s work (fig. 5.26). Hokeah brought Kiowa culture to San Ildefonso Pueblo. Hokeah joined, and sometimes formed, dance troupes with members from different Pueblo and Hopi communities. He also reflected Pueblo, Hopi, and Navajo dance themes and regalia in his art, and Pueblo artists used Kiowa cultural themes.

Furthermore, regalia exhibited another obvious difference. Recorded oral histories and non-recorded oral accounts note cross-cultural interest in regalia and songs. Sometimes the Pueblos at San Ildefonso adopted historically Kiowa regalia and dances, such as the Kiowa War Song, whereas Hokeah, along with other Kiowa Five members, performed the Hopi Snake Dance for large public gatherings in the Southwest. Hokeah’s picture of *Drummers-Singers* (fig. 5.27 *Kiowa Voices*), shows regalia that is not historically Kiowa but instead reflects Pueblo influences.

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148 On numerous occasions, I have held conversations with Maria and Julian Martinez’s grandson, Martin Martinez. He mentioned the linguistic connection.
150 Ibid., xvii.
Figure 5.26 Stephen Mopope Eagle Dancers, *Kiowa Voices*, 84 (original at the Heye Foundation, New York, N.Y.)

Figure 5.27 Jack Hokeah, Drummers Singers, 1932, the dress shows Pueblo influence in New Mexico, *Kiowa Voices*, 28-29
San Ildefonso Richard Martinez speaks to this cross-cultural exchange in an oral interview. Hokeah sometimes stayed at Richard Martinez’s house, and Hokeah would Pueblos Kiowa songs and trained them in war dancing. San Ildefonso Pueblo still sing and perform some of these songs today. Also, since Hokeah made his own regalia, as all the Kiowa Five artists did, he showed locals how to make similar regalia. In particular, Martinez really liked Hokeah’s big hawk feathers on the back of his head. Richard Martinez even copied all of Hokeah’s paintings, like Mother and Child, but Hokeah never minded, Martinez noted. Hokeah’s influence went beyond San Ildefonso because he also performed at Gallup with a couple of Navaho Indians, too. Martinez did not think that the Kiowas came to New Mexico and Arizona and spoiled everything, because the way he saw it, they were brothers, all Indians.

Pueblos from San Ildefonso had connections at the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School, as students and commissioned artists. Hokeah painted murals alongside artists such as Julian and Richard Martinez, from San Ildefonso. He was the only non–New Mexican Indian who painted some of the first murals at the boarding school. But their painting styles, techniques, and subject matter were very similar, sometimes borrowing from each other’s motifs. Their works adorned the school’s walls for all Indian children from all over the country to observe and use as examples for their own work (figs. 5.28, 5.29, 5.30, 5.31, 5.32, 5.33).

Hokeah’s influence continued to permeate the school because he also worked there as an art instructor, possibly the first Indian art teacher. He encouraged cultural artistic expression, although he evidently taught in a non-traditional sense, meaning he was not paid like the other

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151 Richard Martinez, interview by Arthur Silberman, 16 October 1982, Folder 16, Box 11, NCWHM.
152 Author conversations with Martin Martinez. Maria used to live with Martin and his parents when he was a young child. While Martin does not remember his grandmother mentioning Jack, he does acknowledge the influence Kiowas had on their culture.
153 Richard Martinez, interview by Arthur Silberman, 16 October 1982, Folder 16, Box 11, NCWHM.
154 Influences on painting in the Santa Fe Indian School are discussed in: 93.DDK.51.
Figure 5.28 Richard Martinez, Santa Fe. Indian Boarding School, Arthur Silberman, Folder 10, Box 111, NCWHM

Figure 5.29 Julian Martinez, Mural at Santa Fe. Indian Boarding School, Arthur Silberman, Box 111, NCWHM
Figure 5.30 Muralists and Faculty at the Santa Fe. Indian Boarding School. Jack Hookah is in the center, Arthur Silberman, Box 111, NCWHM

Figure 5.31 Santa Fe. Indian Boarding School, Jack Hokeah is on the far right and Maria Martinez, is in the back row, third from the left. Arthur Silberman, Folder 10, Box 111, NCWHM
Figure 5.32 Jack Hokeah, untitled mural, n.d. Arthur Silberman, Box 111, NCWHM

Figure 5.33 Jack Hokeah, mural, n.d. Arthur Silberman, Box 111, NCWHM
According to Jacobson, Hokeah “while in New Mexico…exerted considerable influence on the style of the Pueblo’s painting, as well as on the style of their dance costumes and even their dances.” Jacobson went on to express that the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School’s administrators wanted Hokeah to leave the school premises because he was “contaminating all the Pueblos” and their narrowly defined artistic style. Some administrators wrote the John Collier, claiming that Hokeah had a drinking problem and his attendance was not wanted. Richard Martinez recalled that Hokeah drank a bit, but never did anything bad and did not see it as a problem. Despite whatever disagreement might have occurred, Hokeah was proud to teach art to American Indian students. Students, including Riley Sunrise, a Hopi, loved his presence and instruction. Hokeah’s future daughter, Sherry Hokeah, remembered that her father felt his time in New Mexico with the Pueblos was one of his best periods.

Hokeah’s presence at the school, well known at the time, has since largely been overlooked in scholarship about Indian art education. His presence and influence is important, however. By the mid-1930s the school emerged as one of the nation's most important Indian art programs until the 1960s, when it was turned over to Indian control. Scholars almost never acknowledge his role and influence at the school. It also appears that Dunn wanted credit for

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155 Sources indicate that he volunteered his time and effort. Back in Oklahoma he rented his allotted land to white farmers, and lived off the rent made and from his art sales. Also, he did not appear to grade other Indian’s artwork created in classroom setting.
156 Jacobson, “Asah, Smoky, Auchiah, and Hokeah.”
157 Some letters of exchange discussing Jack’s alleged drinking problem are dated as late as 1937: Folder 109, Box 4, NCWHM.
158 Riley Sunrise and Hokeah had a close bond, perhaps because both were orphaned. Susie Peters encountered Sunrise when he was a young boy in Arizona. He was orphaned as a child, and Peters ask his grandmother if she could take him to Anadarko and raise him. Hokeah spent a lot of time at Peters’s home and even helped her chop wood for her fireplace among performing other chores. Riley looked up to Hokeah, like a much older brother, and he admired the other Kiowa artists as well. Riley Sunrise, interview by Author Silberman.
159 Ibid.; Sherry Hokeah, interview by Anne Allbright, 6 May 2007.
160 Berlo, “From Indigenous America to North Africa.”
being the first teacher at the school that shaped the art program into a nationally recognized institution. Sources show she did not give Jacobson’s role in the development of Indian art any great importance, but instead focused on her own work with the artists. 161

Jacobson, on the other hand, acknowledged the role Dunn played in fostering Indian art and called her a “great teacher.” 162 She, like other “sympathetic white men and women, mostly artists and poets of the Southwest,” wrote Brousse and Jacobson, “are responsible for the amazing upsurge of this artistic creative activity among our Indians of nearly all tribes. They are responsible, though perhaps indirectly, for giving the Indians to America.” 163 Dunn’s program, better known and more influential than Jacobson’s, primarily centered on lessons she had learned through observing his specific manner of teaching. In that light, Jacobson’s contributions to Indian art instruction clearly reached beyond Oklahoma. 164

In the late 1930s, with the continued success of the Kiowa Five fueling him, Jacobson organized a course in Indian art history. This class appealed to both whites and members of various tribes. Brousse explained the significance of the class: “It was the first such course offered in the country that considered Indian art as a living force and from the esthetic point of view, not merely as an anthropological and ethnological study.” 165 Over the next years, more Indians attended the University of Oklahoma, and students from many tribal affiliations took courses under Jacobson’s direction. 166

Jacobson meanwhile sought promising artists from other Oklahoma tribes—“such as the Cheyennes, Comanches, and Arapahos”—in order to “encourage them to preserve their work

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161 Dunn, American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas.
163 Ibid.
164 Bernstein and Rushing, Modern by Tradition, 4, 5, 27, 29, 36, 40; Boyer and Martin, Powwow Art, 29.
165 Brousse, “About Indians.” Kenneth Chapman taught an Indian art course at the University of New Mexico, but with an anthropological and ethnological focus.
166 Ibid.
before contact with our modern civilization has led them away from their native art.”

Some of his students even gained world recognition, including Woody Crumbo (Potawatomi), Allan Bushyhead (Cheyenne-Arapaho), Dick West (Cheyenne), and Acee Blue Eagle (Pawnee-Creek).

News of the Kiowa Five’s success had inspired Acee Blue Eagle, who had intended to stop his education after finishing high school, to instead use his allotment money to pay for OU’s tuition. The prospect of working under Jacobson’s guidance had ultimately fueled this decision. Blue Eagle was perhaps Oklahoma’s best-known Indian artist. He once lectured at Oxford and met with England’s royal family. Years later, in 1959, Blue Eagle came back to Jacobson with a pressing concern. As the professor listened intently, Blue Eagle exclaimed, “What would I do? What would we all do, we Indians, without you? You can see our problems so clearly and we know that we can always trust you, good friend.”

Jacobson’s reputation among Indians continued to grow. Many Indians, propelled by a newfound interest in selling their art, wrote to Jacobson for advice, including members of the Navajo, Pueblo, Apache, Sioux, and Blackfeet tribes. When possible, Jacobson tried to counsel them on ways of deriving an income from their work. At times, he purchased their art relatively cheaply, either for his own collection or for the museum. As the first postsecondary Indian art curriculum in the United States, and because of this effort, the American Indian Art program at the University of Oklahoma gained national recognition. “The success of the Kiowas,” Jacobson recalled, “spurred other Indian painters to ask me for help and advice; eventually I found myself

167 “Untaught Indian Artists Win World Praise for Paintings.”
168 Jacobson, “Fred Beaver, Acee Blue Eagle, Allen Houser;” Brousse, “About Indians;” Sooner Magazine Vol. 17:10, 4-5. For more insight on the strength of Acee Blue Eagle and Jacobson’s friendship, see Acee Blue Eagle General Correspondence 1933-75, Boxes 8-11.
169 Brousse, “About Indians.”
170 Ibid.
mentor—sometimes adopted father—to a great many of them.” He corresponded with, taught, and advised more than one hundred Indian artists from Oklahoma and throughout the nation. In the process, he left a lasting mark not only on his individual students, but on the regional and national art scene.

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171 Jacobson, “Indian Artists from Oklahoma;” Sarah Gertrude Knott to W. M. McCrown, 4 May 1936, Folder 5, Box 109, NCWHM.
172 Brousse, “About Indians;” “Indian Artists from Oklahoma.”
CHAPTER 6
GOVERNMENT AWAKENING: THE NEW DEAL

The Great Depression hit the American public hard, but the federal government did what it could to ameliorate the worst effects and provide much-needed relief work for millions of Americans, including Native Americans and artists. American Indians, Oscar Jacobson, and other artists finally witnessed a president who supported the arts on a grand scale, something Jacobson had wanted for years. He was also pleased the government finally saw the value in Indian people, culture, and art, and that the nation began to preserve their communities and ways of life.

Through his own art, as well as his work among Indians and non-Indians, Jacobson solidified his own legacy as one of Oklahoma’s greatest art promoters. He supported Indian artists, former students, friends, and professional colleagues whenever possible. He worked closely with New Deal programs, since he served as a technical advisor for the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) in Oklahoma and for Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP). Both programs offered new opportunities to Native and non-Native artists in addition to continuing with his obligations at the University of Oklahoma.

Jacobson continued to serve as a cultural broker for his former Kiowa students throughout and after the Depression. Rene d’Harnoncourt (Chairman of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board), John Collier (Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs), and Edward Rowan
(assistant chief, Section of Fine Arts with the Federal Works Agency), and Inslee Hopper (Division of Painting and Sculpture, Treasury Department) listened to Jacobson’s advice because he had earned the respect from the Southwest Indian community, was a noted artist in his own right, and was an art director at a university with a strong art program. All these attributes validated his expertise in art development.¹

The Indian reform movement of the 1930s was also known as the Indian New Deal. It included passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), creation of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (1935), and agencies such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that employed Indians. Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, Indians, like other Americans, suffered economic hardships and desperately needed employment opportunities. Of course, unemployment and poverty had already plagued Indians across the United States for decades, so in many ways, the New Deal programs helped Indians and their communities even more because their level of destitution was more acute.

The Indian New Deal did not actually start with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration, although the name emerged during his presidency. Historian Francis Paul Prucha states, “the agitation for reform that had been building up through the previous decade now turned into substantial and, to some degree, revolutionary action.”² Before the onset of the Depression and at the behest of many artists, patrons of Indians, preservationists, and “friends of Indians,” the Institute for Government Research conducted a landmark study on Indians affairs. As historian Sherry Smith notes, “writers produced books for popular audiences that offered new ways to

¹ Brousse, “Glimpses.”
conceptualize Indian people, alternatives to the images that had transfixed Americans for centuries.” Such individuals helped whites see Indians through more sensitive lenses and understand that their “cultural perpetuation would benefit all Americans.” Little by little more people, including individuals in government, exerted pressure to improve tribal situations reservation conditions.

One outcome of this pressure, the 857-page Meriam Report (1928), officially known as “The Problem of Indian Administration,” shocked many white Americans who had little or no contact with Indians. Most people were unaware of the hardships many Indians faced, such as malnutrition, abusive boarding school practices, and lack of economic development in their communities. For those whites more aware of Indian peoples’ desperate conditions, the report only reaffirmed their beliefs. It also helped generate government acknowledgement of problems and a commitment to act, most notably in health, education, economics, and government cooperation regarding legal and social issues.

Under President Herbert Hoover, the federal government began reform efforts by directing more money and other resources into Indian schools. As for the cultural and economic deficiencies discussed in the Meriam Report, the BIA made some effort to encourage Indian arts and crafts and introduced Indigenous art instruction in BIA schools, especially in the Southwest.

Yet, significant transformation did not occur until John Collier’s appointment as Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1933. Using the Meriam Report as a springboard, Collier

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3 Sherry L. Smith discusses how writers Charles Fletcher Lummis, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Mary Austin, and Anna Ickes, all helped lay the groundwork for the Indian New Deal. Through their writings, conversations and friendships with Collier, they played instrumental part in its shaping. See Smith, Reimagining Indians, 5, 119-44, 165-212.

4 To read the report in its entirety see: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED087573.pdf.

5 Yumiko Nakano, “The Making of ‘Indian Arts’ in Schools: The Case of Educational Reforms in the American Southwest, 1920s-1930s,” Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities, Seikei University, 47 (2012), 27. The development of promoting Indian arts and crafts became much more prominent in the following years with the appointment of John Collier.

6 Lawrence C. Kelly provides a full account of Collier’s personal and political background leading up to the New
designed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, which President Roosevelt signed into law on June 18, 1934. This became the most sweeping change in Indian policy since the Dawes Act of 1887.

Assessing the Indian New Deal is complicated. As historian Patricia Limerick astutely states it can be an “exercise in bewilderment” to evaluate all its components.\(^7\) Not all aspects of the IRA positively affected Indian communities, as it remained paternalist and Eurocentric.\(^8\) Prucha believes that Collier acted with good “humane” intentions, but “despite the high-sounding rhetoric of Indian self-determination, it was a paternalistic program for the Indians, who were expected to accept it willy-nilly.”\(^9\)

\(^8\) For other criticism of the IRA and Collier, see: Lawrence C. Kelly’s works, Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Navaho Indians and Federal Indian Policy, 1900-1945* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968) and “The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and Reality” *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (August 1975): 291-312. In 1980, historian Graham Taylor’s important work, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism* argued that the Indian New Deal, as enlightened as it was compared to previous administrations and policies, was fatally weakened by its emphasis on tribal reorganization and the assumptions about contemporary Indian societies which formed the basis for the tribal idea. Also, unless Indians supported the economic programs, Collier’s administration was bound to fail. Ideas were imposed on Indians without a greater understanding of their unique and often tribal-specific cultural concerns. Taylor also points to the Indian New Deal self-government policies created an environment that allowed for current tension to emerge among tribal communities. Collier, as Taylor sees it, was an Indian sympathizer and wanted to help tribes economically and culturally, by encouraging self-determination. But because non-Indians, more often than not, held misconceptions regarding Indians’ needs and “aspirations contributed to a return to the disastrous policy of rapid assimilation in the years following Collier’s departure from the Indian service.” Taylor’s views are undoubtedly shaped by Indian economic statistics coming out of the mid to late-1970s. A report by the American Indian Policy Review Commission in 1977 claimed that despite the rich natural resources Indians’ held on their land, such as gas, oil, coal, they largely remained “poor, uneducated, and unhealthy,” and this is partly attributed to the fact that Indians tended to lack good relationships with the BIA. Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). For an even bolder take on Collier and the idea of stark change, turn to D’Arcy McNickle’s essay: D’Arcy McNickle, “The Indian New Deal as Mirror of the Future,” in *Major Problems in American Indian History* (D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 467. The author asserts the Indian New Deal was “far from a radical break with past policy, the Indian Reorganization Act sought not so much to reverse the nation’s historic attitude toward the Indians as to freeze it where it was in 1934.” This assessment is found in her 1980 article titled “The Indian New Deal as Mirror of the Future.”
\(^9\) Prucha, *The Great Father*, 318.
Most scholars agree that assaults on Indians’ way of life decreased at this time. While Indians and tribes did not have a direct role in crafting the original bill, Collier did consult anthropologists and those considered friends of the Indians, many of whom worked closely with Native people. (Jacobson was not one Collier contacted.) In addition to non-Indians, Collier also had numerous conversations with Pueblos and the Flathead Indians, among other tribes, which allowed him to take into consideration their concerns and points of view. There is no doubt that Collier listened to their pleas, but how he interpreted them, and what he decided to do about them, remained in his hands.

Historians tend to either give credit to or place blame on Collier alone for the outcomes of the Indian New Deal. However, he alone did not decide its fate. Pointing to this debate centered on Collier in relations to the outcomes of the Indian New Deal, historian Sherry Smith convincingly states, “To begin and end with Collier is to ignore the much more complicated history of the many men and women, Indians and Anglos, scholars and popularizers, whose published works and public actions contributed to significant policy change.” She points out that American political change “is more often than not evolutionary, rather than revolutionary.”

A more nuanced assessment is required.

The Indian New Deal was a watershed moment in Indian history rights. Jacobson certainly agreed. Historian Tom Holm (Creek/Cherokee) noted that a strong emphasis was placed on day schools instead of boarding schools, and tribal quasi-states were allowed to exist, under the Indian New Deal. Also, tribes gained more control over their natural resources. Not

10 Smith, Reimagining Indians, 16-17.
12 Oscar B. Jacobson, American Indian Painters.
13 Tom Holm, The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era (Austin:
all tribes accepted the IRA, despite major revisions Collier made. Each tribe had its reasons for accepting or rejecting the IRA. Prucha touches specifically on why Navajos voted against it. He also briefly explains that in Oklahoma, Indians, such as the Cherokee, had already been assimilated in large part, did not consolidate their individual allotments into community tribal land. While some tribes opted out of the IRA, 93 tribes, bands, and Indian communities adopted constitutions and bylaws and 73 became charters. Although Collier hoped for much more, this still signified a major shift in government-Indian relations. Prucha points to this accomplishment of Collier’s as paving the way to “later developments in tribal autonomy.”

Looking at Collier’s first draft of the IRA, however, reveals that his support of Indian civil rights and independence was more progressive than the final version suggests. According to historian Wilcomb E. Washburn, Collier realized that he needed white support for Indian reform; therefore, in the final bill, he framed policies in a way that whites could accept. Since whites tended to think of Indians as belonging in tribes instead of in clans or villages, Collier then pushed for tribal unity “as an organizational structure,” rather than “preexisting historical structures.” Washburn points out that whites often romanticized Indians, and Collier played into this image so that non-Indians, especially whites, could support preservation of Indian cultures and presence. Collier also believed, however, that if tribes were to survive as political units, then they needed to unify under tribal affiliations. By doing this, Washburn argues, Collier used “white perception of tribal unity” to “create unity where it did not exist, and strengthen

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14 Prucha, *The Great Father*, 325.
tribal power where it was lacking." Washburn does not suggest that tribal unity was perfect, but instead implies that Collier worked within his limits. Washburn notes that whites allowed for change to occur to their political organizations, and questions why Indians should have been held to a different standard. Washburn also criticizes those who imply that IRA tribal governments were forced on Indians, “unilaterally by fiat, coercion, and corruption.” Just as Prucha points out, even the Navajo Nation, acting against Collier’s pleas, rejected the IRA by voting. This vocal act, in Washburn’s point of view, is a testament to the fact that Indians exercised agency and that they did not have to accept the IRA and form a tribal constitution.

A few letters of exchange, in particular, demonstrates the frustration some native people felt regarding the BIA and federal regulations regarding their activities, but also reveals that under Collier, Indians thought they had a Commissioner that cared about their perspectives. James Auchiah, a member of the Kiowa Five, grew more and more frustrated with local Kiowa governmental agency’s power over his work and that of other artists. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Susie Peters, the Kiowa Field matron who had introduced the Kiowa artists to Jacobson, acted as their manager while attending the Gallup Ceremonies in New Mexico and other art and dance venues throughout the country. She received a commission for her work, and Auchiah and others had no power over the process or her appointment as their manager. Auchiah

16 Ibid, 281.
17 Ibid, 283.
18 For a strong criticism regarding the IRA as it pertains to Navajos, see Kelly, The Navaho Indians and Federal Indian Policy and Kelly, “The Indian Reorganization Act”: 291-312.
19 James Auchiah to Delos K. Lonewolf, National Archives Branch Depository, Washington D.C. General Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. RG 75, Records Relating to Indian Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Classified Files 1907-39 Kiowa Box 7 PI 163 E 121. This letter was written in 1934, prior to May, but the specific date is not indicated.
wrote to his uncle Delos K. Lonewolf, a fellow Kiowa and employee of the BIA, about his frustration over the government-sanctioned commission process. In a 1934 letter he complained that he had to pay commissions to white patrons. Auchiah wanted Lonewolf to speak to Collier, in hopes Collier would appoint Auchiah as business manager for the “Kiowa Artists.”

Indians struggled for access to markets without going through a patron. Also, Indian agencies still managed their accounts. Many contracts had to pass through them first. Auchiah believed he had the skills to become manager of the Kiowa artists and performers. He even hoped to manage his art career on his own behalf.

Auchiah again wrote to his uncle in a follow-up letter that reflected optimism and frustration. Auchiah believed change might occur if he reached out to Collier, while at the same time, his writing revealed his continued frustration with paternalistic aspects of government-Indian relations. His letter attacked Peters, but his criticisms went beyond one individual. They conveyed a deep sense of exasperation at the inherent bureaucracy and paternalism associated with the government agency. He wrote, “this is very important to me and I am looking forward to” Collier’s response. He noted that “for the last four years I have been to every parts [sic] of the country and I could have made good profit[s] selling paintings if it were not for the contracts and giving large percentage of my earning to some white managers.” He goes on to say that the

Auchiah mentioned that the Kiowa tribe thought his uncle was accomplishing good work at the BIA. Delos Knowles Lonewolf came from a large influential Kiowa family on the Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache reservation, commonly known as the KCA. He was a farmer and during the 1890s and into the 1900s, he also worked as a government interpreter. Prior to this work under FDR, he joined Kiowa warrior Lone Wolf the Younger and challenged the Dawes Act, specifically the Jerome Commission, introduced in 1892. The commission meant to further undermine tribal sovereignty and reduce Kiowa land more significantly thereby infringing on the Medicine Lodge Treaty assurances that required Indian consent to the opening of the reserve to white settlers. Together they appealed to the Supreme Court for the District of Columbia and argued that the Jerome Agreement deprived them of their lands without due process of law. They lost, and in 1901 President William McKinley opened up Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache to white settlers. Under FDR’s presidency and Collier’s appointment, Delos K. Lonewolf took part in significant change the KCA. For more information, see William C. Meadows, “Black Goose’s Map of the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in Oklahoma Territory” Great Plains Quarterly 71 (2006) and Blue Clark, Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights and Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).
artists should manage themselves and points out how some Kiowa politicians “betray their fellow tribesmen for money and try to control,” them. Auchiah’s letter revealed a self-confident man asserting his views and believing that if his letter got to Collier, then change would follow.21

Auchiah had reason to hope his complaints would reach sympathetic ears. Lonewolf passed along his letter, and indeed, Collier responded to his complaints. The commissioner pointed out that because the government did not sponsor the Gallup Ceremony, the Kiowas could select their own leader to represent them there and handle their funds as they saw fit.22 Auchiah was told to discuss the matter with the Superintendent of the Kiowa Agency in Anadarko, who would advise him accordingly. Collier’s response also indicated, that had the Gallup Ceremonial been government sponsored, then perhaps the “Kiowa Artists” would not be able to manage their own affairs.

However, despite Collier’s sympathies, Kiowas remained restricted Indians.23 The federal Indian office held their property in trust and managed it. Guardians oversaw government-issued funds and monies associated with their allotments and because the government defined Kiowas

21 James Auchiah to Delos K. Lonewolf, May 21, 1934, National Archives Branch Depository, Washington D.C. General Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. RG 75, Records Relating to Indian Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Classified Files 1907-39 Kiowa Box 7 PI 163 E 121. Also, enclosed in the archives is a letter by Susie Peters, challenging Auchiah assessment of her. She points out that her commissions barely cover the traveling expenses and that her relationship is good among other Kiowa artists. Susie Peters to John Collier, July 5, 1934, National Archives Branch Depository, Washington D.C. General Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. RG 75, Records Relating to Indian Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Classified Files 1907-39 Kiowa Box 7 PI 163 E 121. Other included letters reveal the politics behind restricted Indians management of their own funds.

22 Collier to Auchiah, 10 July 1934, Federal Archives Record Group 75 Kiowa Agency E4-904, National Archives.

23 For a comprehensive discussion on the laws regarding restricted Indians see Tanis C. Thorne’s book, The World’s Richest Indian: The Scandal Over Jackson Barnett's Oil Fortune, (Oxford University Press, 2003), 11, 13, 37-54. Thorne looks at the life of Jackson Barnett, an Osage from Oklahoma, who became rich when oil was discovered on his allotted land. But since he was considered “restricted”, meaning incompetent, he had a guardian look after his oil royalties, and there begins a long saga of non-Indians taking advantage of an Indian’s land and money, and all in the name to “protect the Indian.”

258
as “incompetent,” lacking the right education and business training to make smart choices concerning their own financial affairs. Also, the government placed other limitations on restricted Indians, such as prohibiting alcohol consumption.24

Collier, however, did not fully share this view of Native incompetence. Instead, he listened to Indians, and while he acted paternalistically, as all previous commissioners had, he more vigorously consulted with Indians regarding their affairs.25 In time other Kiowa Five and other native artists also wrote directly to Collier. The Commissioner often responded expressing his concern and willingness to help in some form.26

Along with his investment in taking Indian perspectives into account, Collier revolutionized the Bureau of Indian Affairs in other ways, including its impact on art.27 His appointment of Rene d’Harnoncourt as Chair of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board helped shaped governmental policies regarding Indian art and dealt with questions surrounding authenticity, quality, and “traditional” vs. “modern,” all of which d’Harnoncourt did while only receiving part-time pay. Historian Jennifer McLerran, points out that Mexico provided a model, a type of

24 John Buntin, Superintendent of the Kiowa Indian Agency, to Jacobson, 13 January 1934, Federal Archives Kiowa Agency Art-Crafts 361-705, Ft. Worth. John Buntin’s letter commented that Jack Hokeah had a drinking problem while working at the Santa Fe. Indian Boarding School, and wanted to see him removed. Buntin was also motivated by expelling Jack since he did not like his influence on the school children as a whole. It appears that Buntin wanted Dunn to have greater influence on the artistic developments of Indian children, not Jack, an “outsider.” More on Hokeah’s time in New Mexico is discussed later in the chapter.
25 Much of the scholarship on the Indian New Deal under Collier does not include Indian voices. Even those scholars criticizing previous authors for looking too favorably on Collier did not tend to incorporate Indians’ voices, other than those of the Navajos who have been the central focus of a great deal of scholarship. Authors often speak for Indians. Collier, although far from perfect, still represented a significant change from previous commissioners. Kelly’s book *The Navaho Indians and Federal Indian Policy, 1900-1945* took Collier and the Indian New Deal to task and held them accountable for their misconceptions and lack of understanding of Navaho culture. But it was not until Kelly published the article “The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and Reality,” that he addressed larger flaws with the IRA and Collier, as the two are synonymous. This article became a classic and remains commonly cited in this genre of historical scholarship. For a more favorable view of Collier and the Indian New Deal, see Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism*.
26 Federal Archives Record Group 75 Kiowa Agency E4-904, National Archives.
framework, for the U.S. to follow regarding the promotion of Indigenous art. Having worked with Mexico developing and supporting Mexican folk art, d’Harnoncourt brought a great deal of knowledge with him to Washington D.C. He, like other “romantic primitivists,” hoped to nurture what was “uniquely” American. Indian arts and crafts provided the U.S. and the Americas, generally speaking, with something that represented an ancient past, one that helped cultivate nationalism. Both, Collier and d’Harnoncourt intended to use indigenous art in the U.S. to help foster a pan-Indian identity as well. The Indian New Deal allowed Collier and d’Harnoncourt the opportunity to develop diverse art projects among Natives in pursuit of these goals throughout the country. This included Indian arts and crafts cooperatives and Native art programs at Indian schools and colleges.

Ideally, Indian New Dealers, wanted to help Native people achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency. In reality, however, things did not always play out as Collier had intended. The New Deal put limits on Indians to meet art market demands and forced them to continue the production of art that lived and represented the past instead of allowing and encouraging Indians to modernize their works. Also, as art historian Jennifer McLerran points out, some misguided policy changes negatively affected Indian self-sufficiency. One example that keenly illustrates this is how livestock reduction among the Navaho affected textile production. The declining livestock numbers meant Navajos used imported materials and had to alter the textile aesthetics, and the quality of their materials also declined, which had a negative impact on their
marketability.\textsuperscript{28} Such policies furthered commoditization and colonization of Indian arts and crafts.\textsuperscript{29}

Nevertheless, the Indian New Deal benefited Indians and their communities in various ways. McLerran illustrates that “the coming together of Collier and d’Harnoncourt marked a significant moment in the development of a sustainable market for Native American arts and crafts.”\textsuperscript{30} Romantic primitivists such as Collier and Jacobson despised cheap tourist art and sought to educate the public. They especially focused on those with money, educating them about the value of Indian art and crafts, as a way to encourage a continuation of “traditional” productions and materials, while at the same time providing much-needed income to Indian communities.

Jacobson had some influence over New Deal policies regarding how administrators allocated funds and which artists received appointments to projects. He had powerful friends and acquaintances in the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., including Collier and Rene d’Harnoncourt. After Jacobson published \textit{Kiowa Indian Art} in 1929, Collier, according to Jacobson’s wife, “read the text—twice,” and he wished to discuss policies that affected Indians with Jacobson because he respected Jacobson and agreed with his views.\textsuperscript{31} Brousse recalled that

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\textsuperscript{28} McLerran, \textit{A New Deal for Native Art}, 16. Peter Iverson discussed artistic aspects of Navajo life, such as silversmith, weaving and the arts industry, in addition to the introduction of technical schools and a community college and the subsequent economic and cultural impact on their communities. When Iverson describes John Collier’s determination to force reductions of herding, because of environmental concerns, Iverson, does an excellent job providing a voice for Navajo concerns over such intrusive policies. He makes clear that white, non-Navajo, policies regarding Navajo affairs, did not include the advice of Indians, and policies such as these had a colonial ring to them. Peter Iverson, \textit{Dine: A History of the Navajos} (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

\textsuperscript{29} McLerran, \textit{A New Deal for Native Art}, 1.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{31} Brousse, “About Indians;” Similar information found by Jacobson, “Indian Artists from Oklahoma.”
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Jacobson and Collier corresponded throughout the years, and when Jacobson was in Washington, D.C., the two would meet.32

Although Jacobson saw the importance in Collier’s reforms and thought them long overdue, he worried Collier maintained a nostalgic view of Indians’ artistic ability. Brousse noted that Jacobson “had become a sort of unofficial adviser to the Bureau. He was trying to temper a little Mr. Collier’s extreme enthusiasm. Mr. Collier thought he could see an Indian artist being behind every clump of sagebrush.” Jacobson thought Collier lacked artistic judgment on the art market.33 Jacobson wanted Collier to know that Indian artists needed not only to make art but sell it as well. Yet Jacobson “warned that attempts made to develop commercially the Indians’ talents might prove too expensive for the results.”34 The Indian market “was, after all, quite limited,” Brousse recalled. “Besides, buyers who were for the most part undiscriminating, purchased imitations of the real Indian works, made in Japan and elsewhere. The genuine articles could not be produced as cheaply.”35 As a result, many government undertakings, especially those under the Indian Arts and Crafts Board under Rene d’Harnoncourt, proved unprofitable and the federal government had to abandon them.36

32 Brousse, “About Indians.” She also remembered that later in Collier’s career he had been “severely criticized and he was probably too idealistic in his dreams. But he was a true friend of the Indians; he tried to protect them and to salvage the best in their culture. He liberalized the whole Indian Bureau. [Jacobson’s] work with the Kiowa artists had quite a little influence in changing the program of education, in art and other subjects, for all Indians.” Almost all of Jacobson’s correspondence has been lost or never kept, the former being more likely. I have not consulted Collier’s personal records to see the nature of possible exchanges. It is known that Collier frequently mentioned Jacobson in a friendly and favorable manner when he spoke of his Indian patronage and work in Oklahoma. Many of these letters can be found in Folder 5, Box 109 NCWHM.
33 Brousse, “About Indians.”
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid. For a more in-depth look into the IACB, see Robert Fay Schrader’s book, The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983). The bulk of Schrader’s writing focused on the political discussions surrounding the Board’s creation and its struggle to exist as Congress cut its funding more and more during the late 1930s into the early 1940s. Schrader attributed Congress’s reluctance to properly finance the IACB to its overseer, Rene d’Harnoncourt, an Austrian, and also to reservations from House members to promote Indian culture through arts and crafts. Because Schrader tended to focus mostly on administrative history, one begins to see the complexity of policymaking and political spins, especially as the subject relates to Indians. Schrader provided ample evidence to demonstrate Congress’s undermining of the IACB’s
Meanwhile, non-Indian unemployed artists appealed to President Franklin Roosevelt in 1934 asking for relief in the work of paying work. They attracted the President’s attention. George Biddle was an artist and lawyer who had attended Groton and Harvard with President Roosevelt. Like d’Harnoncourt, Biddle also looked to Mexico as inspiration and recommended the United States follow Mexico’s suit and employ artists “at plumber’s wagers” to paint murals on government buildings. Mexico\textsuperscript{37} During the 1920s, Mexico sought to strengthen its national identity, and turned to artists to convey a message of nationhood. The Mexican government, acting under the leadership of President Alvaro Obregon, commissioned artists to paint murals on public building around Mexico City. There, artists helped memorialize the Mexican Revolution, the defining moment in Mexico’s history of independence. As Mark White notes, “this initiative gave rise to the renowned school of Mexican muralists. The most famous of those artists include Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco, and David Siqueiros.”\textsuperscript{38}

Biddle understood the effectiveness of the Mexican murals, and believed that American artists could help “memorialize” the social ideals FDR hoped to achieve. At Roosevelt’s request, Biddle contacted Lawrence Robert, an official at the Treasury Department. They brought Edward


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 91.
Bruce, another Treasury official, into the conversation and the three of them hashed out the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), with a budget of $1,034,745, allocated from the Civil Works Administration budget. The PWAP project intended to fund artists living and working in urban areas.

The U.S. Treasury Department consequently invited Jacobson to serve as technical advisor of Oklahoma’s PWAP, part of Region XII, which included both Oklahoma and Texas. John Ankeny, Director of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, was the regional manager of Region XII. Jacobson accepted the position and announced that artists throughout the state would decorate federal buildings with murals, easel paintings, and wood sculpture. Over the next seven months, the duration of the short program, the PWAP employed more than 3,700 artists, all at an hourly wage, ranging from $38 to $46.50 a week. In Oklahoma and Texas, 93 artists produced around 350 prints, 81 murals, 36 oil paintings, 17 carvings, 4 sculptures, 2 sketches, and 2 watercolors, but Oklahoma employed only 17 out of the 93.

One aspect that made the Oklahoman PWAP’s contribution unique was the high percentage of Indian artists that participated, which art historian Mark White attributed to Jacobson’s influence, and also the fact that most of the non-Native commissioned artists had worked with Jacobson at OU. Jacobson’s teachings and influence provided significant opportunities for artists. In Oklahoma, Indian artists painted scenes that celebrated their Indianness. For example, the mural *Buffalo Hunt*, painted by Stephen Mopope and James

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40 Ibid., 9. Erica Beckh Rubenstein states that pay for artists ranged from $25.50 per week to $42.50 (Erica Beckh Rubenstein, “Tax Payer’s Murals” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1944), 30.)
Auchiah—at the Cherokee Female Seminary at the Northeastern State University Campus in Tahlequah, Oklahoma—demonstrated Mopope’s fondness for early-nineteenth-century bison hunts. Their mural *Kiowa War Dance* (fig. 6.1), at the same campus shows the Kiowas’ interest in blending tradition with modern life, painting the dancers in contemporary (1930s) ceremonial powwow regalia while the Kiowa audience wore nineteenth-century attire. Mark White suggests that the way Mopope placed the hunters “riding dangerously close to the bison” indicates the artist was aware of the popular Charles M. Russell’s scenes of Plains Indian bison hunting. Although Russell’s work may have influenced Mopope, the Kiowa artist used his “own stylistic cast,” which White and Greiner explain as “the use of broad areas of flat color and with sharp contours, which he has uncharacteristically painted white.”

Figure 6.1 Mopope and Auchiah, *Kiowa War Dance*, PWAP Mural, Cherokee Female Seminary at the Northeastern State University Campus in Tahlequah, Oklahoma

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 18.
Acee Blue Eagle also painted for the PWAP in Chickasha at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. Life-size murals, *Buffalo Dancers* and *Moving Camp*, among other smaller designs, adorn the walls of one classroom, whereas murals *Indian Spear Dancer* and *Dancer in Headdress* are in another classroom. His mural Drummer, has been ruined due to water damage. These particular murals are so important, “because they exemplify New Deal art that is strongly associated with Oklahoma’s Indian heritage,” writes White.\(^45\) New Mexico and Arizona’s PWAP projects produced even more Indian art than those in OK, but comparing the different regions is a bit difficult as PWAP varied region by region. One thing is certain, the Southwest, including Oklahoma, emphasized Indian employment in the arts.\(^46\)

Not all PWAP Oklahoma works came from Indians. For example, Derald Swineford, one of OU’s white art students, earned a commission to carve oak panels for the doors of OU’s art building. With the help of other university art students Anita Furry, Margaret Giles, and Paul McBride, they carved sixty panels. The PWAP commissioned a series of twenty narrative panels, whereas the other 40 constituted as part of his work for his masters, which he completed between 1937 and 1945. White suggests that these may have been the only PWAP sponsored woodcarvings in Oklahoma, and that Swineford, “may have been influenced by Jacobson’s writings and lectures, which promote, an interpretation of art history based largely on the evolution of aesthetics.”\(^47\) Specifically, in a Japanese court scene, “Swineford found inspiration for the scene in both the work of the Japanese artist Utamaro (1753-1806), and in Jacobson’s prints.”\(^48\) Jacobson’s interests in non-Western cultures affected his student’s art and mindset.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 25.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 94.
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 50.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 51.
After the dissolution of the PWAP in June 1934, Jacobson’s supervisory role continued as a technical advisor to the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP). Not only did Jacobson insist Indians be hired, but that they earn pay equal to that of white artists, especially those who had national and international reputations. Other than Kiowa Five members, Jacobson’s current and former students also painted Public Works murals. Acee Blue Eagle painted a cycle of six murals for the gymnasium of the Oklahoma College for Women (now the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) in Chickasha in 1934. In later years, other Native artists, like Dick West and Solomon McCombs received a TRAP commissions in Oklahoma. Public muralists greatly stimulated art production in the state, and Oklahoma made a significant contribution to public art. Many of the murals still exist today and efforts to preserve them continue.

After the PWAP project ended, other options appeared. In April 1935, for example, Congress passed the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act that provided close to five billion dollars for works projects. In the following month, FDR created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and asked Harry Hopkins to run it, as he had the PWAP. By late summer, Hopkins launched the WPA Federal Project Number One, which designated money for federal art, music, writing, and theater projects. The WPA lasted much longer than the previous PWAP program, ending in 1943, and instead of hourly work, it commissioned artists depending on the scale of the job. The WPA’s Federal Art Project (FAP) employed painters, sculptors, graphic

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 The Theatre Project ended in 1939 at the request of Congress.
artists, and art instructors. Through the WPA and its programs, 5 thousand artists created over 100 thousand easel paintings, two thousand murals, ten thousand print designs, and nearly twenty thousand sculptures. Jacobson supervised several projects in OK.

The FAP established more than one hundred art centers around the country. The WPA Experimental Gallery in Oklahoma City was among these. Later it became the WPA Oklahoma Art Center, and at Jacobson’s suggestion, artist Nan Sheets, an important figure in Oklahoma art development, received appointment to state director. Thomas C. Parker, the assistant to Holger Cahill in Washington, the National Director of the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration, contacted Jacobson to assist “in finding the best man to direct the WPA art program in Central Oklahoma.” Jacobson said he “unqualifiedly recommended” that Nan Sheets would “make a success of the venture if she could be persuaded to consider it.” Up to this point, Sheets was a painter and private art teacher. She accepted the position.

Nan Sheets made the most of what the WPA provided the Oklahoma Art Center. Jacobson recalled that Sheets “has done more than anyone for the people of Oklahoma in matters of art,” especially given the limited budget and facility. Initially the WPA funded the new center with a new and large space. Also, the Federal Art Project’s Central Allocation Unit gave generously to the center, as it gave Oklahoma City, twenty-eight works by twenty-six artists. This WPA collection provided the basis for the museum’s new permanent collection. After the United States entered World War II, Roosevelt ended the WPA in 1942. Sheets, however, “salvaged” the Art Center after it no longer received government funding. Whereas “most

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53 It’s important to note, however, that not all art projects fell under the large umbrella of the WAP. Bustard, A New Deal for the Arts, 10-11; Jacobson, “The Government in Art;” http://www.okcmoa.com/visit/events/complete-wpa-collection-75th-anniversary/.
54 Jacobson, “Nan Sheets,” TMs, Folder 18, Box J-13, WHC.
55 Ibid.
centers” established as relief New Deal measures closed, the Art Center stayed open and did much to the advancement of arts in Oklahoma. Jacobson attributes its success, entirely to the “magnetic personality, ability and energy,” to Sheets.\(^{57}\) To further make his point, Jacobson hypothesized that if Sheets and “Eleanor Roosevelt were to alight from the same train, in a strange town, the reception band would follow Mrs. Sheets,” assuming Jacobson meant an Oklahoman town.\(^{58}\)

Another artistic outlet existed with the Treasury Department, initially called the Section of Painting and Sculpture and later the Section of Fine Arts. It was not part of the WPA. It hired muralists to decorate new federal buildings. Edward Bruce, the treasury official, believed that Section of Fine Arts competitions and works would make art accessible to more citizens because the works were right in their towns. Furthermore, it opened a dialogue between towns’ citizens and artists.\(^{59}\) Unlike the PWAP, the Section of Fine Arts never served as a relief program and was highly competitive, including notable and young artists alike. Typically artists earned $700-800 per project, but the actual commission depended on the scope and scale of the work. Artists offered their ideas and sketches for murals, but to keep the competition fair, they could not put their names on their submissions. They also had to know about the area, as the mural needed to reflect local history and a community’s identity. However, this proved a financial difficulty for many artists who could not afford to make the necessary visits to a town.

Here, too, Jacobson played a substantial role. He oversaw numerous artworks, served as a judge selecting artists assigned for particular buildings or at least made strong recommendations,

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\(^{57}\) For more on Nan Sheets influence in Oklahoma art promotions see Jacobson, “Nan Sheets.”

\(^{58}\) Ibid.

and acted as project manager on sites. This consumed much of Jacobson’s time and energy, but he was happy to see the artists get much-needed work, especially his Indian friends. Sometimes Oklahoma did not have enough qualified and willing artists to participate, but artists did not receive commissions solely for their states. Since some murals were executed on large canvases, it meant that artists did not have to travel, only their work.\(^\text{60}\) Competition was tough and selective. Residents did not always like that an “outsider” might depict their town’s history or important themes of their Oklahoma identity. Eugene J. McFarland, acting Presidents of the Association of Oklahoma Artists and the Enid Artists’ League, wrote Edward Rowan, Assistant Chief of the Fine Arts Section in D.C. Speaking on behalf of both organizations, McFarland wrote that Oklahoma had enough qualified and willing artists to execute the Enid post office mural and asked for a state or regional competition instead of national. McFarland argued, “Artists living in Oklahoma are much more capable of interpreting the life and feeling and spirit of Oklahoma.” He went on to say, “we realize that the quality of work is not more important but we are sure the quality is here if just encouraged by opportunity.”\(^\text{61}\) Two week later, Rowan responded that the Enid mural would be open to only Oklahoman artists.\(^\text{62}\)

Interestingly, prior to the Enid, a conflict arose when the Okemah community refused to let a New Yorker paint the mural for the town’s post office. Jacobson asked the Secretary of Treasury to hire an American Indian for the job because the town was the former capital of the Creeks. After pondering the suggestion, officials gave Jacobson permission to solicit Indian artists. Despite offering new and much-needed opportunities to Indian artists, sometimes cultural


\(^{61}\) Eugene J. McFarland’s letter to Edward Rowan, 7 November 1941, Folder “Enid PO and Courthouse,” RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Washington, D.C.

\(^{62}\) Edward Rowan’s letter to Eugene J. McFarland, , 21 November 1941, Folder “Enid PO and Courthouse,” RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Washington, D.C.
challenges arose. One unnamed Okemah citizen told Edward Rowan, that “the Indian has a peculiar mental attitude, and they have a reluctance to enter their work against white competition, even though their own work may be superior.”63 Rowan passed this along to Jacobson, who shared the same worry. Jacobson reassured Rowan and the Okemah citizen that an Indian artist would paint the mural, the subject matter would focus on Creek culture, and that he would personally oversee the project, which he did.

With Jacobson faced another challenge regarding his competition—how to define “Indian.” When some artists wanted to submit plans or drafts for possible murals, Jacobson did not know if Collier or the government would consider them “Indian,” since some Indians on tribal rolls had little blood quantum.64 A person's blood quantum was defined by one’s physical ancestry and documentation on the Dawes Rolls. (Euro-Americans developed this construct.) Of course, this measurement did not often reflect traditional views among tribal members as to who qualified as Indian or not. Some individuals had more Indian “blood” or ancestry than some enrolled people, spoke the tribal language, practiced Indian customs, yet did not appear on official rolls. Jacobson asked Rowan to meet with Collier and report back to him on this issue, as Jacobson understood that the blood quantum qualification did not reflect one's ‘Indianness.’65

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63 Okemah National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1939-41. Jacobson’s letter to Edward Rowan, Assistant Chief, Section of Fine Arts Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 21 March 1941, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1939-41
64 “Blood” is a social and cultural construct, and meanings shift over time. During this period, blood was a symbol of racial identity, whereas today, especially among Indians, blood signifies race and culture. Whether someone is Indian or not depends on who is asking and in what context. In the context of allocating New Deal funds, the government dictated the definition. Race was understood by blood quantum beginning in the nineteenth-century scientific thought. An excellent work that discusses this at length, using the Cherokee as a case study, see Circe Sturm’s book, Blood Politics.
65 Jacobson’s letter to Edward Rowan, Assistant Chief, Section of Fine Arts Federal Works Agency, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 21 March 1941, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1939-41. Circe Sturm shows how the perceptions of Indianness centered on blood has changed. She notes that, “The biological standard of “one-quarter Indian blood” was challenged by the 1985 Zarr v. Barlow, et al. case in California. The case set an important legal precedent, namely, that the federal government cannot legally discriminate against Native Americans on the basis of blood quantum. Unfortunately, the implications of this case have not had much effect on the political relations between federal and tribal governments” (Sturm, Blood Politics,
Simultaneously, Leonard Good, a fellow OU art teacher and Jacobson’s former student, posed the same question about the definition of “Indian” to Rowan. One of Good’s unidentified students, who was one-quarter Indian, wondered if he qualified as Native American for federal work. This individual was not on the Cherokee tribal roll because his full-blooded Cherokee grandmother withdrew from the tribe when she married his non-Indian white grandfather. The reasons for her decision are not known, but since many whites considered Indians second-class citizens, his grandmother likely thought it best for her family’s future to “leave” the tribe. Good believed, “he is just as much Indian as several well known painters in the state who sign Indians names to their decorations,” suggesting that using an Indian name helped authenticate certain sellers and market oneself. Unfortunately, for this particular student, Rowan replied only those listed on tribal rolls or who had at least one “full-blooded” parent would be eligible.

In the end, in 1941, his former student Richard “Dick” West (Wah-Pah-Nah-Yah, Lightfoot Runner), a southern Cheyenne, won the competition, “from more than a dozen or more Indian artists [whom] competed,” Jacobson commented. West painted Grand Council of 1842 (fig. 6.2). Jacobson stated that “naturally, with his training, there is evidence of white man’s influence in his art, especially in this mural painting.” West did not see a conflict in blending influences and cultures in his work. Later in 1955, West emphasized this point, especially as his art further developed, when he stated:

T]he Indian artist must be allowed freedom to absorb influences outside of his own art forms and see the promise of a new lane of expression that should keep the Indian's art

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67 Edward Rowan to Jacobson, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 27 March 1941, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1939-41.
68 Jacobson, “Solomon McCombs, Dick West,” TMs, Folder 49, Box J-13, WHC.
69 Ibid.
the art form termed 'native Indian painting,' and I give my student every opportunity to execute it... I have always felt that the term abstraction has been a part of the Indian's artistic thinking longer than most European contemporary influences and perhaps in a [truer] form.  

Figure 6.2 Richard “Dick” West, *Grand Council of 1842*, 1941

Jacobson thought of West fondly. Jacobson commented that the six-foot-three West “looks and walks like a huge panther, and most considerate young man it has ever been my pleasure to know. At school he was everybody’s favorite, including the ladies.”

Richard West attended OU’s art school from 1938–1940 and graduated as the first “full-blood Indian” with a Bachelors of Fine Arts, according to Jacobson. He went on to earn his Masters of Fine Arts in 1950. West won the Okemah mural competition, but sketches sent in from other Indians so impressed the judges that they decided to let the runners-up, second place Woody Crumbo and

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70 Lydia L. Wyckoff, ed. *Visions and Voices*, 287.
71 Ibid., “Solomon McCombs, Dick West.”
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
third place Acee Blue Eagle, decorate other Oklahoma post offices.\textsuperscript{74} All three artists had been Jacobson’s students.

What Jacobson found so wonderful about FDR’s encouragement of art was that Indians had at last received the opportunity to display their abilities and heritages on a large public scale, funded by the government. This indicated a drastic shift from the government’s former stance of “killing the Indian but save the man.” This consequently brought attention to tribes, cultures, and artistry. Subject matter, however, proved limited. With the exception of the Trail of Tears, most art focused on nostalgic and positive aspects of Indian life. The government did not want to draw attention to contemporary tensions between Indians and non-Indians. Administrators intended these murals to celebrate positive views of American history and society. While this presented a highly censored picture of Indian histories, at least the government finally included Native people in the American narrative and demonstrated their survival.

For the duration of the PWAP and WPA projects, all of the Kiowa Five completed murals. Tsatoke, Asah, Mopope, and Auchiah painted large murals on public buildings throughout Oklahoma, whereas Hokeah worked on murals in New Mexico prior to the PWAP. During all of this, Jacobson advocated on the side of the artists, but did not always find working with government officials enjoyable. For instance, during the production of the Anadarko federal building, Jacobson had to keep asking for the Treasury Department to send the commissions to Mopope, so he could pay the other artists. Also during the execution of the Anadarko federal building mural, “hardtimes,” Jacobson stated, delayed the project. Tsatoke died of tuberculosis in

\textsuperscript{74} Letters from Edward Rowan to Woody Crumbo and Acee Blue Eagle, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 29 May 1941, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1939-41; Jacobson, “The Government in Art.” Woody Crumbo was the art director at Beacon College and Indian College.
January 1937 while working on the mural. Aside from being a great emotional loss to his community, and Jacobson, who loved him dearly, it also delayed work. To make matters worse, June of that year, Mopope got into a car accident, and got blood poisoning, and was hospital ridden for a couple of weeks. Jacobson asked for a two-three weeks extension for Mopope, so he “doesn't feel that he has to rush the work,” but Jacobson’s request, for whatever reason, was not granted.\textsuperscript{75} While Hopper (Assistant Superintendent of the Section of Painting and Sculpture) was sorry about Mopope’s trouble, but he could not extend the contract and hoped that Mopope “will be able to keep the same quality in his work while somewhat under pressure.”\textsuperscript{76} In the end, Mopope received the praise from the Section of Painting and Sculpture at the Treasury Department.\textsuperscript{77} Jacobson also received additional praise from Edward Roman, the Superintendent for the Section of Painting and Sculpture, for “his splendid cooperation on this project” and expressing much appreciation.\textsuperscript{78}

This relief effort encouraged artists in a monumental way, and they took their craft seriously.\textsuperscript{79} According to Jacobson, “relief for distressed artists was important, but what mattered was that the United States government considered the artist a valuable citizen and for, a short space of time, became the patron of living art.”\textsuperscript{80} Don Weida, Secretary Manager for the

\textsuperscript{75} Letters from Oscar B. Jacobson to Inslee A. Hopper (Assistant Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture), Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 9 October 1937, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Anadarko.
\textsuperscript{76} Letter from Inslee A. Hopper (Assistant Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture) to Oscar B. Jacobson, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 13 October 1937, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Anadarko.
\textsuperscript{78} Letter from Edward B. Rowan (Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture) to Oscar B. Jacobson, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 30 November 1937, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Anadarko.
\textsuperscript{79} “Mopope, Steven, Biographical, 1934-87; Letters to Silberman, 1972,” Folder 4, Box 70, NCWHM.
\textsuperscript{80} Jacobson, “The Government in Art.”
Anadarko Chamber of Commerce, also expressed the commerce’s sentiments to Rowan that Jacobson believed that these “are the best murals in the state today,” and that the Chamber of Commerce “feel justly proud of them.”

Not all the projects focused on the state level. Some work also took place in the nation’s capital. Inslee A. Hopper (Assistant Superintendent of the Section of Painting and Sculpture) at State Department asked Jacobson to recommend Indian artists who would decorate a room in the new Department of Interior building. They did not know which artists from which parts of the countries should be commissioned, and wanted Jacobson’s thought on the matter. Hopper also asked who Jacobson would suggest to oversee the murals in Washington DC, someone “who would be sympathetic,” to the subject and artists, and that “would know how to organize the work as successfully as you have done in Anadarko,” with the post office murals. The purpose would be to celebrate Indians in the larger American historical narrative. State Department officials knew something about Stephen Mopope’s impressive work, but also thought of artists Andy (Andrew) Tsiih-Nah-Jinni, a Navajo of Salt River Bend, Emiliano Abeyeta of San Juan Pueblo, Hokeah, and Auchiah as all possible contenders, but wanted even more artists to consider. Jacobson conveyed his hope that Oklahoman artists would receive some of the work. Successfully, Jacobson helped secure this job for Mopope and a handful of others including James Auchiah. This was “the largest mural commission ever awarded to a Southern Plains

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81 Letter from Ron Weida (Secretary-Manager, Anadarko Chamber of Commerce) to Edward B. Rowan (Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture), Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 26 November 1937, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Anadarko.
82 Letters from Inslee A. Hopper (Assistant Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture) to Oscar B. Jacobson, Public Buildings Administration, Washington, D.C., 5 March 1937, RG 75 National Archives, Maryland Folder Anadarko.
Indian,“ recalled Brousse. Mopope and Auchiah completed Mopope’s mural *Ceremonial Dance* (fig. 6.3) in 1938–39. As Brousse indicated, it was impressive in its grandeur, covering a space measuring eight feet by fifty feet. It depicts a traditional ceremonial dance celebrating a hunt. Huge in its undertaking, with at least nineteen figures, including drummers, dancers, women preparing a traditional meal, weavers, and attentive children, all in the foreground, whereas in the distance, in the center of the mural, five tipis stand. In 1930, Auchiah completed a mural *Harvest Dance* (fig. 6.4) centered on the Harvest Dance, performed by Kiowas. Stephen Mopope aided James Auchiah in his mural as well, although the design was Auchiah’s. This mural is six feet by fifty feet, and is full of movement. Both murals remain on display today in the basement cafeteria of the Department of Interior. Mopope and Auchiah continued to earn commissions thereafter.

Woody Crumbo’s government-sponsored murals did not only take place in Oklahoma, as he also won a commission for a series of paintings for the employees’ lounge in the penthouse of the eighth floor of the Department of Interior. Murals include *Buffalo Hunt* (fig. 6.5), *Deer*, *Courting* (showing a traditional Potawatomi courtship) (fig. 6.6), *Flute Player* (fig. 6.7), *Wild Horses*, and *Peyote Bird*. McLerran notes that these murals “vary from abstract to representational.” Crumbo’s signature image becomes “a highly stylized and highly charged, yet lyrical, representation of a horse,” which both *Buffalo Hunt* and *Wild Horses* exhibit. *Buffalo Hunt*, is an action-filled scene. This is conveniently conveyed by McLerran, as she writes:

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84 Brousse, “About Indians.”
Figure 6.3 Steven Mopope, *Ceremonial Dance*, 1939, Department of Interior building, Washington, D.C.

Figure 6.4 James Auchiah, *Harvest Dance*, 1939, Department of Interior building, Washington, D.C.
Figure 6.5 Woody (Woodrow Wilson) Crumbo, *Buffalo Hunt*, 1930, penthouse, eighth floor, Department of Interior building, Washington, D.C.

Figure 6.6 Woody (Woodrow Wilson) Crumbo, *Deer* (left) and *Courting*, 1930, penthouse, eighth floor, Department of Interior building, Washington, D.C.
Spatial depth is achieved through overlapping of forms, and a staccato rhythm is established by the regular repetition of tufts of grass across the painting’s frontal lane. The shape and surface characteristics of Crumbo’s buffalo allude to the painted buffalo hide robe, a form of painting that is viewed by many as forming a bridge between ancient and modern Indian painting. With their regular shapes and lightly colored surfaces covered with regular marks that have a distinct graphic quality, the fur of Crumbo’s buffalo possesses the character of processed hides used to inscribe tribal histories. Man such hide paintings traditionally recorded individual and group exploits during buffalo hunts. Crumbo thus adds a subtle and ironic twist to his representation.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
As a result of such patronage by Jacobson and others involved in the promotion of Native art, the interwar period led to an “Indian Renaissance,” according to art historian Barbara Kerr Scott.\textsuperscript{87} These murals reflect this as something really special emerged during the Indian New Deal.

During the New Deal mural work, Jacobson stretched himself financially and physically, but he appeared thrilled at the opportunity despite the constant paperwork. Only after a time did he request funds to recover some of his out-of-pocket expenses, such as paying for meals and the gas to drive to faraway places including Anadarko, Okemah, Claremore, and Osage County.\textsuperscript{88} Jacobson’s expertise on Native art, not just about Indians from Oklahoma, was recognized by the Federal Government. In addition, his knowledge of qualified non-Native artists, also helped advance artists of various backgrounds on a national level, through the numerous New Deal art programs. Jacobson’s advice carried weight, which allowed him to be an effective cultural broker and advocate for artists.

Equally important, White asserts that Jacobson also seems to have been instrumental in securing allocations of artwork from the PWAP and TRAP for the University of Oklahoma on four separate occasions in 1935, 1938, 1942, and 1943, including Native American paintings from the Santa Fe Indian School Studio, prints from the PWA workshops, and Federal Art Project oils from notable artists such as Stuart Davis, Joseph Hirsch, and Jacobson’s personal friends, Lloyd Moylan and Josef Bakos. Bakos belonged to the Los Cinco Pintores.

A total of 143 works of art, most of which were produced by Coloradan and New Mexican artists, became part of an OU collection that would expand dramatically in 1936.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 95: This comes from Barbara Kerr Scott, “The Indian Renaissance,” http://www.cameron.edu/~barbaras/IndianRen.htm.
\textsuperscript{88} Okemah National Archives, Maryland Folder Okemah 1941-42; Brousse, “About Indians.”
\textsuperscript{89} Allbright and White, “Oscar Brousse Jacobson: Cultural Broker,” 24-25.
CHAPTER 7
SOLIDIFYING A LEGACY

Throughout Jacobson’s last years at OU (he retired in 1945 as Director of Art and 1952 as Director of the Museum of Art) and post retirement, Jacobson was as motivated as ever to advance art in the state and to take his professional pursuits to the next level. Despite growing older and facing increasing resistance from newly hired school administrators who saw him as obsolete, a relic, he still dedicated all his energy to his work as painter and promoter. He expanded the art collection at OU and published more scholarly works with the help of his wife. Jacobson stayed relevant and he solidified his legacy.

Jacobson continued to grow the University of Oklahoma’s art school and collections. Some of the most important collection occurred during the Great Depression and during and after World War II. Regarding New Deal art, White asserts that “Jacobson also seems to have been instrumental in securing allocations of artwork from the PWAP and TRAP for the University of Oklahoma on four separate occasions in 1935, 1938, 1942, and 1943, including Native American paintings from the Santa Fe Indian School Studio, prints from the PWA workshops, and Federal Art Project oils from notable artists such as Stuart Davis, Joseph Hirsch, and Jacobson’s personal friends, Lloyd Moylan and Josef Bakos,” a member of the Los Cinco Pintores group. A total of
143 works of art, most of which were produced by Coloradan and New Mexican artists, became part of an OU collection that would expand dramatically in 1936.¹

Another substantial art collection came in 1936 when Gordon Matzene and Lew Wentz presented Jacobson with a large assortment of Asian and East Indian art in his honor. Wentz was the oilmen who had helped fund the Kiowa Five’s tuition, room, and board at OU through his patronage of their art. Matzene and Jacobson, longtime friends, shared a variety of interests, such as photography and art collecting. A distinguished world traveler, Matzene, a native Dane, had lived in many countries, including England, Italy, Egypt, India, and China, where he purchased numerous ancient artifacts. His collection consisted primarily of unique and original pieces from China, larger Asia, and the South Pacific. In 1934, Matzene praised Jacobson for his determination and devotion to display the artwork of other cultures. Matzene, intent on doing more than paying lip service to the Swedish art professor’s accomplishments, resolved to demonstrate his gratitude with a more tangible gift. With the financial backing of their mutual friend, Lew Wentz, Matzene donated his collection of some 750 art pieces to the University of Oklahoma. The Great Depression, however, hindered Matzene’s financial ability to simply donate everything. Therefore, his dear friend Wentz, at Jacobson’s urging, offered Matzene some compensation for the collection. This endowment remains permanent property of the university.² At the time of the donation, the Asian collection’s total value exceeded 300,000 dollars, according to Jacobson’s research and assessment, although later estimates suggest that value was exaggerated.

The contribution included rare Chinese artifacts, including items from Kingdom of Nepal, while other objects came from India and Persia. The only comparable Asian collection

came from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1931, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art acquired “Southeast Asian sculptures and more than 300 Persian and Indian textiles,” and continued to grow as the museum collected and acquired more Islamic art and south and southeastern Asian art, in the 1940s, and again in the 1970s.3

After receiving the Wentz-Matzene collection, Jacobson and Brousse spent weeks identifying and labeling artifacts. Jacobson put together a wonderful exhibition, and the school again received attention. Years later, a Chinese art appraiser commented on the uniqueness of this collection and noted that its richness and diversity existed nowhere else in the United States, which was an overstatement considering Nelson-Atkins. Dr. Hu Shi, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, viewed the ancient works of art in May 1941 and expressed surprise when learning the extent of the collection. During Jacobson’s life, a complete exhibition of the entire Matzene and Wentz gift never occurred.

In 1936, as a result of the Wentz-Matzene donation and Jacobson’s previous 2,500-piece collection, the University of Oklahoma Museum of Art originated with this gift. Not unexpectedly, Jacobson acted as its first official director. The Wentz-Matzene posed problems regarding storage and exhibition space. While the board of regents voted to officially separate the art school and museum into two entities, this did not immediately solve Jacobson’s space problem. For the time being, the school and museum continued to coexist on the same cramped floor of the art department in the old library.4 Jacobson set up exhibitions wherever he could. While some art hung in hallways, he also scattered additional pieces in various classrooms and offices.5

5 Jacobson, “Museum of Art.”
Jacobson conjured up a creative plan. He asked his students to take out bulky art items from their lockers and place them in the hall and art room, emphasizing the diminutive proportions of the department. Jacobson then invited the state governor, school president, all the member on the board of regents, as well as influential socialites, to a special “tea party.” Jacobson took great pains to ensure the meeting took place at the end of the hall, forcing all in attendance to navigate their way through the obstructed passage, in single file. Not surprisingly, attendees in the crowded hall complained vehemently. Jacobson’s plan succeeded brilliantly. His department soon moved into the old library.\(^6\) In 1937, the art department relocated, and the museum remained in the old library building. Eventually, the museum took the name Jacobson Hall in 1953.\(^7\)

Jacobson had begun his tenure at the University of Oklahoma in 1915, while Europe was engaged in World War I, and he would end his appointment at the close of World War II. For some years, the Jacobsons had grown nervous about the rising animosities in Europe, reflected in the emergence of Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Soviet aggression under Joseph Stalin. The Jacobsons “shuddered at the thought” of another world war. When war did break out, they thought that democratic world leaders would quickly stop it. As time went on, the Jacobsons were astonished at the absence of concern about the European war in America: “the world went on almost as if nothing had happened. Before long the war itself was merely a bulletin one read at breakfast.” Each day the Jacobsons waited anxiously for more news. Brousse recalled waking every morning, “wondering how it was possible for the world going on eating, drinking,

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\(^6\) Leonard Good, interview by Arthur Silberman, 30 September 1979, Folder 23, Box 9, NCWHM.
\(^7\) Jacobson, “Museum of Art;” This is also supported by various article found in Scrapbooks, Vols. 5–8, Boxes 2–3 OHS.
sleeping, laughing, while over there,” in Europe, human beings experienced such misery. Despite losing contact with family in previous years, Brousse still felt a connection to her home country of France. As the war spread, so did Americans’ interests in events overseas. Jacobson and Brousse’s son Oscar felt “restless, seeming unable to settle down to his studies,” so he registered for the 45th Infantry Division of the National Guard. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Oscar volunteered for aviation, became a pilot, and served until the end of the war in 1945.8

Jacobson, too, found ways to aid the war effort. Following Pearl Harbor, he asked the US Department of War in Washington what more he could do help.9 The Department of Defense sent him to Dallas for a secret meeting where he learned that the military required camouflage production on an enormous scale. The Defense Department wanted to prevent the Germans from sneaking submarines into the Mississippi River or from flying airplanes over southwestern oil fields. As a result, he volunteered to take part in this massive national effort to overhaul the current camouflage. Once Jacobson learned which types of structures would need camouflaging, he set about the task of creating workshops to teach and produce camouflage.10 He recruited people of various backgrounds, from amateur artists to landscape gardeners and house painters, who arrived from all over the country. Jacobson trained these first arrivals so that they could return to their places of origin and teach classes themselves.

Brousse recalled that at one point the commanding officer of the Will Rogers Air Base contacted Jacobson to help train his men in producing camouflage though the officer had not yet gotten approval from the higher ups. Realizing the sensitive situation, both men decided to move forward anyway. “A busload of soldiers came regularly to the Art School and aroused curiosity,”

8 Oscar returned safely from World War II, but died in a car accident in Colorado shortly after completing his term of service. Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Box 4 Folder 3.
9 Archival sources do not reveal specifically who Jacobson contacted.
10 “World War Two,” Folder 5, Box J-1, WHC; Brousse, “Biographical Notes.” Folder 3, Box 4.
Brousse remembered, but Jacobson successfully “secured the cooperation of the University Daily, Norman Transcript, and The Daily Oklahoman” to keep the purpose of the visits secret.\footnote{Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 3, Box 4.}

The men quickly learned the technique of camouflage for a variety of landscapes. This training kept the campus active despite low enrollment, primarily of men, due to military enlistment.\footnote{Before the war, graduating classes reached over 1,000 students, whereas in 1945, the graduating class only had 274 students. Sooner Magazine, 1965, Vol. 38: 67.}

Jacobson also recommended artists to work in aviation plants, such as the Douglas plant in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and others in Fort Worth, Texas, and Wichita, Kansas. Artists’ skills helped aviation plants with blueprints. They simplified technical drawings so that workers at the plant could execute the plans faster. To meet the needs of the military, Jacobson “inaugurated intensive training in a series of new courses tailored to the emergency.” The classes consisted mostly of women since the young men had gone into service. As recounted by Brousse, the specialized courses counted as credits toward an eventual art degree.\footnote{Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 3, Box 4.}

Jacobson signed up for Civil Defense, presented patriotic lectures, and repeating his World War I experience, aided the propaganda poster effort. Toward the war’s close, after all the demand for manufacturing jobs at the aviation plants had dwindled down, Jacobson looked to help elsewhere. He believed that art production was therapeutic and a “powerful medicine,” so creating art could help even wounded World War II veterans focus on something other than their pain, physical and mental. As remembered by Brousse, after consulting with doctors at Oklahoma’s navy base and army hospital, and with the dean at OU’s medical school, Jacobson orchestrated courses at the school for nurses to help with the rehabilitation of the wounded. For
those who could not attend classes on the campus, Jacobson dispersed his best students and teachers to hospitals to train nurses on-site in an arts and crafts program.\textsuperscript{14}

Although he hoped the Allied forces would win the war, Jacobson did not believe it should happen at any and all costs. Never a strong believer in militarism, he had mixed feelings about U.S. involvement in the war. In a war against fascism, he could understand his son’s need to enlist, and Jacobson clearly had his own desire to engage in the war effort. Still, he expressed great reservation about the measures the United States took to secure Allied victory. Leonard Good, a former student, coworker, and friend, recalled that on most political issues Jacobson remained quiet, but when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan, he seemed resigned to the ultimate destruction of mankind. He reportedly asked, “What difference does it make? Nuclear fission is bound to get all of us anyway.”\textsuperscript{15}

Over the course of the 1940–1950s, Jacobson earned important recognition. Nan Sheets, fellow artist and director of the WPA Oklahoma Art Center (now the Oklahoma City Museum of Art), helped organize Jacobson’s first retrospective in 1941. The exhibition traced the development of his career from 1912. A silkscreened program cover was a reproduction of his 1923 \textit{Ocatilla and Barrel Cacti} the, a tribute to Jacobson's love for the desert. The exhibition included seventy-four paintings, mostly of the American West and Africa, a testament to his summer travels. In 1941 his alma mater, Bethany College, honored him with a Doctor of Fine Arts degree, and he received the International Business Machine Corporation Medal for Notable Contributions to the Art World the following year.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
Throughout the 1940s, Jacobson’s university underwent dramatic administrative changes, and Jacobson felt marginalized by the changes regarding the art department. After serving as the university’s executive for fifteen years, President William Bennett Bizzell submitted his resignation in 1940. During his tenure, he took the art department school from a small student body and to a substantial one. He accepted the invitation from the Board of Regents to stay on as President Emeritus and head the Sociology Department, but one year later, he reached the newly required mandatory retirement age for faculty and so retired.

The new campus president, Joseph A. Brandt, served from 1941 until 1943. Brandt was the first alumnus to become president, and prior to the appointment, he had worked at the university’s press. Salaries, which had decreased during the Great Depression, had not been restored to pre-Depression levels. Brandt sought monumental university changes. He believed that “by the late 1930s the University was being governed by an administrative oligarchy and that it desperately need democratization,” according to the University’s biographer, David Levy. Deans had lifetime appointments, up to this point in time. Many of the department heads had been around for a very long time, made hiring and firing decisions all on their own, if they so desired, and they set agendas for the departments. Some department heads collaborated more than others.

Brandt thought the university could only grow in stature and increase the student body if the administration became more democratic. He, along with the Board or Regents, thought the university needed fresh people with new ideas. Brandt did not think of every dean or head “as a tyrant,” states Levy, but overall, they wielded too much power. Brant liked Jacobson a great deal, and did not suggest Jacobson was one of the tyrants. In fact, Brant and Jacobson had a good

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17 Levy, The University of Oklahoma, Volume 2, 290-293.
Jacobson knew Brandt was a big admirer of his work, so in 1943 the artist gave one of his paintings to the president and his wife at his going away party. Regardless of their friendship, however, Brandt knew department heads like Jacobson held enormous influence. Up to this point, Jacobson had benefitted from the support of the university administration. Jacobson believed that ended with the incoming president, Dr. George L. Cross, who served from 1943–1968, and disliked him as a result, but actually, Brandt is the one who set change in motion.\(^{18}\)

Numerous professors retired over the following years as the school and the Board of Regents sought significant change. Initially Brandt, then eventually Cross, saw the end of World War II as an opportunity to revitalize OU’s focus and to attract new professors and students. Brandt wanted to build a great research university and initiated big shifts during his short time as president. One of these changes occurred after he “abruptly removed” the department head of history, the university’s most well-known historian, Edward Everett Dale, along with other department heads, accounts Levy. After such treatment, Dale thought to accept a job offer from Oklahoma A&M, but Brandt did not want to lose the esteemed professor altogether. Instead, after Dale handed in his letter of resignation to work elsewhere, Brandt created the title of Research Professor. This included a lighter teaching load and a salary of $5,000, equal to a dean’s salary. Brandt wanted to extend this title to other respected and longtime faculty members. Because of the war and bureaucracy, it took a couple of years to finalize the title of Research Professor, which occurred after Brandt left OU. In 1944, while still serving as director of the art school, Jacobson received an appointment, along with Dale and two others, as “research professor.”\(^{19}\) These men were the first in the university to earn this recognition, and while an honor, Jacobson perceived this as moving him one step closer to relieving him of his duties as art


\(^{19}\) Ibid., 292-94; *Sooner Magazine*, 1944, Vol. 16: 5.
director. According to the school’s *Sooner Magazine*, newly appointed President Dr. Cross hoped the new “system of research professorships” would keep OU from losing its “top men year after year,” but Jacobson did not see it this way.20

After thirty years as Director of Art at OU, in June 1945, Jacobson reached the mandatory retirement age for faculty and retired as head of the art department.21 Cross wanted to bring OU’s teaching methods “out of the dark ages” and restructure the campus’s organization. He looked to “attract aggressive leaders with revolutionary ideas” and wanted faculty to play a role in shaping policy. Expecting enrollment to surge to over 10,000 following the war, especially given that the G.I. Bill offered more students the possibility of getting a higher education, Cross had a lot of work to do. He hired William Harold Smith to replace Jacobson as head of the art department.22

For some time the art school’s faculty remained divided over Jacobson’s resignation, though other pressing matters temporarily diverted their attention. Under the advisement of Dr. Harrison Kerr, Dean of Fine Arts, the department modernized in several aspects. Smith based a new curriculum around the philosophy of modern contemporary art.23 This upset Jacobson a great deal; he had helped build the college from nothing and felt that the incoming administration did not acknowledge what he had done for the art department or university. He had unquestionably become more conservative in his growing years, but not to the point of eschewing new ideas and art forms.24 Ironically, only a decade before, Jacobson had emphasized

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20 Levy, *The University of Oklahoma*, Volume 2, 291-293; Cross had taught at the university as a botanist since 1934 and knew Jacobson because they worked together on the war effort.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 John O’Neil, interview by Arthur Silberman, 5 November 1981, Folder 11, Box 11, NCWHM. John O’Neal, who would assume the role of art department director in 1950, comments on Jacobson’s foresight for the State Department Collection that Jacobson played a critical role in acquiring, which is discussed later in this chapter. O’Neal stated that “Many of those” pieces that Jacobson wisely purchased were abstract, and Jacobson “saw them as
the importance of modernism, but this was when the art form represented something more recognizable, unlike the art following World War II. For much of Jacobson’s tenure at OU, he was “a rebel in art,” commented Nan Sheets reflecting back on this period; “whenever he desired could ‘fling the tradition of the schools to the four winds.’” Sheets was surprised that some referred to Jacobson as a conservative as he got older. In the meantime, however, Jacobson kept his position of director of the art museum.

Smith, an art teacher at OU since 1936, stayed on for roughly five years. Originally from Seattle, Smith believed himself a good addition to the faculty because the art department had tended to hire their own graduates during the preceding fifteen or so years. Smith thought of Jacobson as “an artist and not a scholar,” a conservative, not embracing the latest “isms” of the day, such as Abstract Expressionism. He judged Jacobson’s own art as predictable, always the same size and same subject matter.

Smith, then, attempted to introduce changes in the department, particularly placing greater emphasis on contemporary art. However, he met significant resistance from faculty and students. For instance, when Smith introduced courses in advertising design, he believed that he revolutionized the art program. Old timers, such as Jacobson, disagreed. Smith recalled that Jacobson was “bitter” and thought the school was being “taken over by those of the abstract

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26 Nan Sheets, “Art,” The Daily Oklahoma Sunday Magazine, 10 October 1954, p.; Olkinetzky, an artist and future director of the OU Museum of Art, commented that “Jacobson for his time in Oklahoma was really one of the advanced thinkers and apologists for modernism and contemporary art. And his own work reflected a degree of modern vision the sort that one might find in Cezanne….So in a sense he was truly a pioneer of contemporary art in Oklahoma but I think that as happens with many of us up to a certain point,” that Jacobson was not “willing to accommodate new developments beyond Cezanne, and this happens to so many people in art history and esthetic appreciation.” Sam Olkinetsky [sic. Olkinetzky] interview by Arthur Silberman, 6 July 1980, NCWHM.
27 William Harold Smith, interview by Arthur Silberman.
28 Ibid.
persuasion,” and that the art school would be “ruined.” Smith, part of a younger cohort, had the support of the newly arrived Dr. Kerr, Dean of Fine Arts, and President Cross. But pushback from the older generation generated much unfavorable press, as many of the faculty and students still on campus favored the older professors.29

Another moment of great tension between Jacobson and the new director emerged over the relocation of the Wentz-Matzene collection. Many artifacts had remained in boxes until the university could build a proper place to display them.30 Smith believed the items to be outdated and valueless. He had workers box the remaining artifacts and store them in the attic. Jacobson was outraged over this because extreme temperature in the attic could damage the pieces. He relocated them to a more suitable place—or so he thought—in the basement. Unfortunately, a flood damaged many of the works. Gordon Matzene, “unimpressed with the new director’s leadership and apparent lack of respect for such a valuable collection,” according to Brousse’s memories of events, “made a fateful decision: the Ponca City Library gained responsibility for the remainder of the Asian treasures.”31

Throughout Jacobson's remaining years at the museum, he continued his promotion of other cultures. Just a partial list of exhibits from 1946 indicates his continuing interest in diverse cultures: Lithography by Artists from 18 Latin American Countries, Graphic Arts from Poland, Exhibition of Painting by Indians of North American, and Masks of the World.32 As director, Jacobson assisted in a major acquisition in 1948 from the controversial U.S. State Department exhibition, Advancing American Art.”33

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Brousse, “Glimpses.”
33 Ibid.
After World War II, and throughout the Cold War, especially in the 1950s, governments used the arts to show their countries’ intellectual and artistic achievements. The United States, the Soviet Union, and other European nations “used ballet performances, symphony concerts, and art exhibitions as tools of cultural diplomacy,” notes art historian Jennifer McComas. McComas went on to say:

In addition to disseminating political agendas, these cultural events were intended to spread positive messages about a nation’s intellectual and artistic accomplishments. In the case of American cultural diplomacy, such events stemmed in part from perceptions that Europeans considered the United States an artistic backwater. Yet such endeavors were also fraught with controversy over the government’s role in art patronage. A latecomer to the field of cultural diplomacy, the United States began employing it only on the eve of World War II, when the State Department, the federal agency responsible for international relations, began circulating externally curated exhibitions to Latin America. In 1945, the creation of the Office of Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) within the State Department signaled an increasing interest in, and engagement with, cultural diplomacy. Yet, despite the important role that cultural diplomacy would assume within American foreign policy in the coming years, the marriage of art and politics was a controversial undertaking, and never more so than in the case of *Advancing American Art*. Up to this time, the State Department’s largest exhibition was *Advancing American Art*.

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35 Ibid.
The State Department purchased “79 modernist paintings by 47 artists,” with a $50,000 budget. At the time, all selected artists had successful careers. The Advancing American Art exhibition was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York prior to its international debut. After the MET, organizers divided the paintings into two groups to broaden their viewing. Then they sent both groups “to world regions considered vulnerable to communism; forty-nine works were selected for display in Eastern Europe, and the remaining thirty were sent to Latin America,” McComas writes. The intent of the exhibit was not only to demonstrate American artistic achievements, but the exhibit “was intended to showcase the creative and intellectual freedom that American artists enjoyed in a democratic society.” Ironically, McComas continues, “this message of American freedom would be silenced by an unprecedented act of censorship by the United States government.”

Speaking to why the selected artworks were so controversial McComas writes:

Traditionalist artists led the initial campaign against Advancing American Art, and were soon joined by conservative politicians who argued against the exhibition on the grounds that it was funded by tax money and by its inclusion of artists known for leftist political affiliations. They also contended that modernist art—especially the works reproduced in Look—did not represent true American culture. In this context, it is worth noting that the most vocal critics of the exhibition (Republican congressional representatives John Taber of New York State, Karl Stefan of Nebraska, and Fred Busbey of Illinois) hailed from rural or otherwise provincial backgrounds, raising the question of whether their quarrel was really with modern art’s association with urban culture, as well as the immigrant backgrounds of many of the artists.

The exhibition was ultimately recalled that same year by Secretary of State George C. Marshall.
The War Assets Administration auctioned off the recalled artworks in 1948, and of the 117 works, 81 were acquired by three universities “located in small southern towns far from art world centers,” one of which was the University of Oklahoma (Oklahoma is sometimes considered southern). Curator Dennis Harper comments that it is surprising that most of the artwork “ended up at locations not normally associated with progressive, avant-garde inclination.”\textsuperscript{40} McCombs expounds on this, saying, “it is indeed an ironic twist of fate that the censorship of \textit{Advancing American Art} on the grounds that it was too ‘communist’ in fact brought audiences in a socially and politically conservative part of the country face to face with modernism.”\textsuperscript{41} The University of Oklahoma acquired more than the other institutions, with thirty-six paintings, including works by, William Baziotes, Romare Bearden, Adolph Gottlieb, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Ben Shahn.\textsuperscript{42} These became a part of the museum collection. White suggests that “Jacobson was less enthusiastic than expected about all the acquisitions.” Jacobson complained that modern art “is shrouded in a prevailing gloom and is not ‘happy’ as art should be.”\textsuperscript{43} A former advocate for open mindedness regarding modern art, Jacobson felt alienated by postwar art production; “He had become the rearguard.”\textsuperscript{44}

Not serving as Director of Art released Jacobson from many administrative duties so he quickly came to realize he could use his newfound time to focus on more productive concerns. He researched, wrote, and painted more, something he had longed to do. Brousse recalled that he “was painting with a fierce enthusiasm and a sense of freedom” and claimed that “for some time he had been anxious to shed off the burden” of administration. He and his wife worked together.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Allbright and White, “Oscar Brousse Jacobson: Cultural Broker,” 26; Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) was awarded an extra painting at a later date making their total thirty-six as well.
\textsuperscript{43} Riley Wilson, “Modern Art Is Too Gloomy, O.U. Professor Maintains,” \textit{Norman Transcript}, Sept. 21, 1948, 8.
closely on researching projects and writing text, and because Jacobson was a less-than-adequate speller, Brousse did most of the typing. For decades, Jacobson had desired to publish historical material about Indian and Oklahoman artists, in addition to other aspects of Indian life, but his professional duties often interrupted this work. Now little stood in the way of his determination to bring Indian and Oklahoman artists into the public’s consciousness. So, with only the museum to watch over, Jacobson pursued a variety of avenues to help bring this goal to fruition.  

For a number of years, Jacobson had painstakingly crafted a manuscript on Indian painters. Actually getting the volume published, however, proved difficult. Not until after World War II did Jacobson successfully finish writing and secure a suitable sponsor. Despite having a good relationship with OU Press, the university’s press did not have the needed printing sophistication that Jacobson’s book required. According to Brousse, C. Szwedzicki, who had published Kiowa Indian Art, contacted Jacobson and asked if he had anything to publish. The timing could not have been better. Szwedzicki desperately needed the business because the war had negatively affected the press. It is believed that Szwedzicki, a Jew, had been rounded up in Nice and sent to Poland. The Nazis confiscated his press and destroyed much inside. After the war, and upon returning to Nice, Szwedzicki salvaged what he could and restarted his business. Szwedzicki had the ability to handle the color work that Jacobson required for his book, so Jacobson opted for the French publisher over American presses unable to deliver the quality he wanted. Before they could send the manuscript off, Brousse translated the document from English to French, so the book could be produced in both languages. While she labored over the work, Jacobson made the needed arrangements and sent the original art pieces. The final two-

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45 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
46 Szwedzicki, first name is currently unknown. His surname is Polish, and he lived in Nice. Janet Berlo has thoughtfully written about Szwedzicki in her book, Szwedzicki Portfolios.
47 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
volume project took the name *American Indian Painters*, and *Les Peintres Indiens d’Amerique* for a French-speaking audience.\(^{48}\)

Together Jacobson and Brousse wrote the introduction on American Indian paintings, and throughout the volumes, the text includes personal anecdotes, revealing just how connected Jacobson was with Indian artists. As art historian Janet Berlo notes, “after working with many of these artists over two decades, perhaps Jacobson felt a great need to record a short look into their lives.”\(^{49}\) Volume I contains thirty-six plates, volume II includes forty-one, and the paintings span nearly three decades from 1920–1948. Many of the original paintings came from the University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, and some from Jacobson’s own collection, which are now at OU’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art or at the National Museum of the American Indian.\(^{50}\)

In 1949, while Jacobson was preparing the Indian painters book, the Oklahoma Hall of Fame inducted him. The day of the induction ceremony, which should have provided a reprieve from the worries of the typical workweek, turned out much to the contrary. Brousse, suffering from a severe cold, barely made it to the ceremony. The actual event went well, but when the pair got home, they realized that Jacobson had locked the house keys inside their home. Sick and freezing, Brousse complained about her husband’s “mania for locking windows,” but she was pleased to know that one window had a broken latch. Jacobson proceeded headfirst into the opening. Once safely inside, Brousse remembered, “we drank a boiling hot lemonade and we laughed now that we could indulge in laughter.”\(^{51}\) A month later Jacobson mailed out the text for *American Indian Painters*, which appeared in 1950.\(^{52}\)

\(^{48}\) Oscar B. Jacobson, *American Indian Painters*.
\(^{49}\) Berlo, “From Indigenous America to North Africa,” 118.
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 118-20.
\(^{51}\) Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
\(^{52}\) Ibid.
While working on *American Indian Painters*, the couple planned another book, *North American Indian Costumes, 1564–1950*. Preparation for this project took considerable time and patience. The Jacobsons aimed to be as accurate as possible. The manuscript illustrated certain regalia worn by different tribes and explained how ceremonial wear differed from everyday wear. As “accuracy was the first requirement,” the couple relied on a number of sources—“letters, diaries, reports”—to glean information. They found that non-Indians’ depictions of regalia were usually unreliable. At times, Jacobson went to great lengths to compare and contrast a variety of sources to verify the tiniest detail. Ultimately, he wanted to produce a creditable source.

The couple traveled all over the country to document Indian regalia, inquiring extensively on what they saw. The Jacobsons sent many letters to elders of different tribes, though on occasion some Indians abstained from using the mail to transport needed information. Either tribal members came to them in person, or the Jacobsons journeyed the distance needed to take Indians’ statements. For each tribe discussed, Jacobson wrote about the evolution of regalia, from prior to European invasion, to the intermixing with whites, with other tribes, and with African slaves, to modern times, after allotment. He also discussed tribal populations and briefly mentioned certain catastrophes, such as massacres and removal policies, that negatively affected Indian demographics. In addition, he listed which tribes started to recover and grow stronger, such as the Navajo.

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53 The word “costumes,” commonly used during Jacobson’s era when discussing Indian attire, has been replaced in recent years by the term “regalia.” Oscar B. Jacobson, *North American Indian Costumes*.
54 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
55 Ibid.
56 Jacobson, *North American Indian Costumes*. 
Perhaps the most important motivation for Jacobson’s new book concerned a shift in cultural attitudes. Much had changed since the pair first began their fascination with Native American cultures. Indians, Jacobson understood, had not always adhered to strictly traditional thinking regarding their clothing and dance, but he did notice that in more recent years, an increasing number of Indians incorporated aspects not customarily theirs. Some illustrations also included Native dress in contemporary times, such as wearing cowboy boots and jeans. Jacobson did not paint these changes in a negative light.\textsuperscript{57} For numerous plates, he drew from published sources, such as the paintings of Catlin and Bodmer. Many of the original tracings are from the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art collection and probably executed by Jacobson, according the museum’s current director, Mark White.

Jacobson oversaw every aspect of the book’s production, and having just the right Native artist to provide the illustrations was important. He hired a Sioux Indian from South Dakota, Oscar Howe. Born in 1916, Howe had grown up on the Sioux reservation and attended the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School, where he took art classes under Dorothy Dunn. During the Great Depression, he had worked for the WPA as a muralist in South Dakota. After returning from his World War II service, he had entered a nationwide contest for Indian artists at the annual Philbrook Art Museum’s competition, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He won the grand prize.

Howe proved a wonderful choice for Jacobson as they worked together from 1947–1948. Howe painted sixty examples of Indian dress, but only fifty made it into the book. He had to create simple paintings that clearly showed the details of the dress, yet, as art historian Janet Berlo points out, the results did not reflect his own forthcoming style of painting as “his own paintings were far more complex...Howe was on his way to becoming one of the best-known

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
contemporary Native American painters.”  

Howe’s art took an abstract turn during his master’s thesis. For Jacobson’s project, wanted Howe to paint using a two-dimensional flat style, a traditional form among Plains and southwestern Indians.  

For the regalia book, Jacobson again published with Szwedziki’s company. Native American themed books sold well in Europe, and the market in the United States was growing as well. The final North American Indian Costumes consisted of two books with a total of fifty colored plates. Released in 1952, the work sold quickly, and the publication can still be found today on many a collector’s shelf. Jacobson succeeded in creating a historical overview of American Indian clothing, and did so by employing a Native artist for its complete visual account.  

That same year, 1952, Jacobson lost his position as Director of the Museum of Art. He received the termination notice by mail. Despite being told he could direct as long as he wanted because he had started the collection that became the foundation for the museum, a new policy made the retirement age of sixty-five for all administrative positions at the university. The termination led him to comment, “I guess I should have worked as hard for my family as I did for the university,” suggesting that he had been overly devoted to his professional life. Reflecting on the matter, Brousse noted, “He was stoical and decided to fade away, but his heart was broken.” Jacobson ceased working for the University of Oklahoma in any capacity. Flabbergasted, Brousse tried to make sense of the news:  

[T]here had been considerable indignation in the state over the previous treatment of Dad. Besides, the attendance at the art school had dropped markedly. Students who had been subjected to the “modern” curriculum were realizing that they lacked a solid foundation being only indoctrinated with the current “ism.”… The demand for solid basic study was

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59 Howe eventually earned his MFA at OU in 1954.  
61 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
growing. So, with a few broader minded teachers, “new” courses were offered. True, these “new” courses were exactly what had been dropped some years earlier as we well knew.\textsuperscript{62}

Ture or not, it is how the Jacobson’s felt. The university administrators, however, did recognize his enormous contributions to the school by renaming the art museum building in his honor the following year. Jacobson took pride in this prestigious tribute. He believed this signaled a change, showing him and his contributions to the University of Oklahoma in a more favorable light. Jacobson Hall continued to house the museum until the completion of the Fred Jones Jr. Memorial Art Center in 1971. The hall now serves as the Visitor Center for the campus and still retains Jacobson’s name.

Indeed, much change occurred with the appointment of John O’Neil in 1951 as Director of Art, just five years after Smith’s appointment. O’Neil had attended the university as an art student from 1932 until 1939, at the tail end of the Kiowas’ presence. He, like most art students, admired Jacobson on many fronts. “The attitude toward [Jacobson] was absolute reverence for a long time,” O’Neil explained, “he was considered Olympian ... I don’t think that would happen to anyone today.” O’Neil acknowledged the difficult tasks Jacobson encountered on arrival at the school and the incredible progress he made over his years of service at OU. Jacobson took an unknown, practically “primitive” region and transformed it and the university into a first-class art center. In addition, O’Neil noted the influence Jacobson had on him personally. “I do think he set standards. I often think back to that time and realize that many of my own attitudes were formed then so I look upon it with some awe. I think that was shared by most of the people who worked with him.”\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} John O’Neil, interview by Arthur Silberman.
Despite his early friendship with his professor, time away from OU gave O’Neil additional perspective on Jacobson. When O’Neil returned after a decade of working elsewhere, he saw that the art school needed refocusing beyond President Smith’s ambitions. O’Neil believed the art department could reach its fullest potential only if the curriculum had a clearer focus and greater professionalization, offering painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and design, while placing courses such as fashion design and home economics in other departments. Dean Kerr listened and acted on his suggestions. Professors that moved to other departments, like Edith Mahier, “felt like they were being rejected,” O’Neil recalled, but he went on to say that was not his intention; he meant only to create a more concentrated curriculum. Also, the art history component of the school needed trained art historians, not artists such as Jacobson teaching art history. O’Neil acknowledged that Jacobson did indeed know about the history of art, but much had changed in national curricula since Jacobson's education at Yale. O’Neil did credit Jacobson with creating a “magnet school.” According to O’Neil, not much was going on in the Midwest, with the exception of the Art Institute of Chicago, when Jacobson first arrived at OU. O’Neil’s comment, however, overlooks Bethany College in Lindsborg, among some other important art programs in the region. Given the growth of art schools in recent years, however, O’Neil saw that OU needed to revitalize its program.  

At seventy, Jacobson’s career as both a painter and culture broker had slowed, but his legacy was very much apparent. He earned another mark of distinction when the *American Art Directory*, an important database for information about artists and the market place in the United States, listed him. But Jacobson and Brousse achieved no great satisfaction in resting on their laurels. Instead, they opted to expand the breadth of their work by publishing articles regarding

64 Ibid.
state artists in the *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. In a 1953 essay entitled “Early Oklahoma Artists,” Jacobson outlined the importance of such work by arguing that the first white artists in the state collected significant historical data in their work. They offered “the only visual information concerning the country and the people before the invention of the camera.” In particular, Jacobson paid homage to George Catlin (1834), John Mix Stanley (1843), and Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen (1853) for their contributions to Oklahoma art and history.65

Jacobson prepared biographical references for other artists as well, all of which he believed had made lasting contributions to the state’s art. In “Art in Oklahoma” (1954), Jacobson continued his commentary on the origins of local art. Sometimes he relied simply upon personal memory, including an account of a 1906 encounter with Frederick Remington. In addition, the section discussing Father Gregory Gerrer, a noted artist, patron, art collector, and close friend, allowed Jacobson to portray the previously overlooked personal side of the multi-talented priest.66 Originally Jacobson intended to write a full-length book on the subject, but perhaps as he aged, he found this increasingly difficult, or did not want to continue such a grand undertaking. His typed notes on various artists are extensive, however.

In 1957, the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, asked Jacobson to assemble a number of his canvases for a retrospective exhibit. The museum wanted to celebrate his artistic achievements during the state's semi-centennial, alongside artists Doel Reed, Adah Robinson, and Pauline Townsend. Jacobson was unable to attend the opening because of poor health, having suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in March 1955. These solo exhibitions were part of a much larger program called *Artists of Early Oklahoma*.67 The program focused on paintings

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created in the territory and state between 1896 and 1934. In this context, Jacobson’s exhibition directly acknowledged his role in fostering the arts in Oklahoma.

As his wife recalled, this particular event “gave him a purpose” and shook the artist awake from a creative sleep. During the same period, Jacobson received recognition as one of Scandinavia’s greatest artists in a Swedish magazine article entitled “One Thousand Years of Swedish Art.” Life as he knew it did not appear over. After reflecting on childhood memories and growing nostalgic with age, Jacobson decided that instead of painting his usual dry desert scenes, he would paint a different motif. Brousse recalled that, “He was in an exploring mood.” Brousse wrote that, “so yearning to paint coolness instead of the burnt desert, he worked on a small Swedish lake, cool indeed with many hues of greens. While coming down for breakfast one morning, he remarked that he was ‘going to have fun.’” He also began painting portraits again, something he had not done for many years. Although he had lost the use of his non-painting hand to arthritis, Jacobson still performed remarkably well with more detail-orientated work.

Until the very end of his life, Jacobson found his experiences among the Indians to be the most gratifying outside those with his own family. He clung to and reminisced about his days spent as a teacher and mentor to various tribal members. Jacobson’s relationship with the Kiowa Five, in particular, remains what most people remember him for today. Even after Jacobson no longer served the University of Oklahoma, the local Indian community never forgot him. At a powwow held near Norman, he “received an ovation . . . and was asked to attend a chief’s

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70 Brousse, “Biographical Notes,” Folder 4, Box 4.
71 Ibid.
meeting to discuss several issues of concern to Indians in view of changing attitudes at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.”  

On more than one occasion, Indians invited the Jacobsons to participate in Indian burial ceremonies. At the persistent urging of Auchiah, Jacobson and his wife attended the reburial of Santanta, Auchiah’s grandfather, at Fort Sill. Dancers honored the dead, and although this should have been a time of quiet reflection, Jacobson and his wife “were sad to see how garish the dancers’ costumes had become.”  

Jacobson did not like seeing this extent of integration of white influence, something he viewed as poisonous to a beautiful culture.

Every year, for several decades, the Philbrook Museum offered local Indian artists their own art exhibition. Jacobson served as a judge and knew the procedures well. Toward the end of his life, he sometimes stayed at home if his health did not permit him to attend the exhibition. One particular year, friends offered to transport the Jacobsons and encouraged them to attend the event. After watching the opening dances and listening to the awards ceremony, Jacobson realized the importance of his presence that year. The Bureau of Arts and Crafts surprised him with a certificate of achievement award “for sparking the Indian art renaissance.” Rene d’Harnoncourt, the prominent Austrian-born museum director and authority on American Indian and Mexican arts and crafts, issued the document.

By the late 1950s, Jacobson’s relationship with OU had improved, but newly appointed museum director Sam Olkinetzky acknowledged that Jacobson still avoided the art department. Jacobson invited Olkinetzky into his home and introduced him to his friends and those in his art

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72 Brousse, “About Indians.” What was exactly discussed is not recorded, nor was the year, but it is likely that it was late during Jacobson’s life, and after John Collier left the BIA, since a new policy of assimilation occurred post–World War II.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
circle, all of which Olkinetzky appreciated. Upon arrival at the university in 1959, Olkinetzky took the Wentz-Matzene collection out of the basement, a gesture Jacobson certainly favored. Olkinetzky had museum credentials and therefore could professionalize the museum and help it grow in size and stature. Moreover in 1961, the OU Museum of Art mounted the most ambitious exhibition of Jacobson’s career since 1941, with *Oscar Brousse Jacobson Retrospective Exhibition*. It included forty-six paintings and drawings that traced Jacobson’s career from his days at Yale to his recent work.

The retrospective was the last major event of Jacobson’s career. He died in 1966 at the age of eighty-four. Family members scattered his ashes outside of Allenspark, Colorado, a place of great significance for him and them as they had spent decades in their summer cabin in Colorado. The following year, in 1967, his most intimate companion and friend—his wife, Sophie Brousse—also passed away. Her ashes joined his.

Jacobson left an indelible mark on the state. For fifty years, Oscar Jacobson had been a key figure in the cultural development of Oklahoma. He increased the faculty and student enrollment at the OU School of Art dramatically, established an art museum on campus, and generally encouraged the visibility of the arts in the state and nation through his participation in organizations such as the Association of Oklahoma Artists and the American Federation of Arts. Jacobson, a prolific artist, was largely sympathetic to modernist experimentation even though his own work was somewhat conservative in its adherence to post-Impressionist techniques. His role in promoting a cosmopolitan awareness of global cultures, especially Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American, is arguably the most significant aspect of his career. Through lectures and

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76 Sam Olkinetsky, interview by Arthur Silberman.
77 Cover of *Oscar Brousse Jacobson Retrospective Exhibition*, 1961, Museum of Art, Jacobson Hall, University of Oklahoma.
exhibitions, he introduced white Oklahoma audiences to the complexity of different cultures and encouraged his audiences to appreciate and find value in the unfamiliar. As a cultural broker, Oscar Jacobson contributed greatly to the enrichment of both Oklahoma and the Southwest, and his artistic legacy lives on through his paintings, his advancement of Native American art and art history, public art murals across Oklahoma and Texas, and the University of Oklahoma’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, previously known as the Museum of Art. Through art, Jacobson believed, a society left its mark, its values, and its culture, and Jacobson certainly left his mark on society.

79 A 1928 quote by Harvey Wilder Bentley, an artist and critic from Stillwater, Oklahoma, illustrates Jacobson’s effect on Oklahoma art development, especially compared to Santa Fe art. Bentley commented that Jacobson, “Should be commended on his admirable ambition to give us a school of landscape painting which does not dodge the main issue faced by all the art schools in the Southwest. That is to give us an interpretive, indigenous art not slavishly modeled on the older schools at Santa Fe.” Bentley, quoted in “State Artists Evince Modern Trend,” The Daily Oklahoman, 18 November 1928, p.
EPILOGUE

THE JACOBSON HOUSE REMEMBERS

Following Jacobson’s death, the University of Oklahoma’s art museum experienced a rapid period of growth. Eventually, in 1971, it transferred to a larger modern building on the campus and acquired the name Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. Artists and scholars acclaim the museum as one of the best university museums in the nation with a unique collection of interesting art and artifacts to help promote art in the Sooner State. The museum formally recognizes Jacobson for establishing Oklahoma’s first public museum and developing the first solid art curriculum for the University of Oklahoma.\(^1\) To celebrate the centennial year Jacobson joined OU’s art faculty, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art Director Mark White orchestrated a retrospective exhibition of Jacobson’s work and oversaw and contributed significantly to the catalogue, *A World Unconquered: The Art and Life of Oscar Jacobson*.\(^2\) If Jacobson could see the architecture of Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art today, it is likely it would remind him of the Hall of Fine Arts at the Baltic exhibition of 1915, which would have made him proud of how far the museum had come since his departure.

Currently, Jacobson’s former home serves as a Native Art center to honor all that took place within the confines of this particularly modest looking building, it is formally called The Jacobson House Native Art Center. In 1915, when Jacobson first arrived in Oklahoma, houses

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\(^1\) Carol Whitney, “The Jacobson House,” Folder 17, Box J-1, WHC.
\(^2\) Allbright, Berlo, and White, *A World Unconquered*. 
were scarce. Jacobson and his wife aspired to recreate the architecture of their home countries, Sweden and France. Due to a lack of building materials at the onset of World War I, their house took several years to finish. During Jacobson’s life, his home provided a meeting place for his many Indian friends. Here, they could relax and worship, perhaps beating on the drum and singing. His home became a haven for many students and admirers, for Indians as well as non-Indians.

Today, the Jacobson House’s primary purpose is to provide American Indians a place to exhibit their culture through various art forms, for themselves and for the public. The venue has frequent American Indian art exhibits. Each fall, different Indian tribes provide Southern Plains Indian flute lessons, open for anyone willing to learn, and participants learn to carve their own instruments. In the spring, drumming classes are also given, encouraging people of all ethnic groups to participate in future powwows. Other activities include poetry readings and social gatherings to discuss American Indian matters of national and community importance.3

Every November, an annual Scandinavian exhibit takes place, honoring Jacobson’s Swedish heritage. In 2004, for example, the Jacobson House produced an exhibition on the work of Ella Hansa, a Norwegian Sami Artist. The Sami are Scandinavia’s indigenous people. Hansa also made several appearances in classrooms on the University of Oklahoma’s campus. He led discussions in music and art, along with topics such as indigenous struggles to exist.4 As Jacobson was interested in many non-Western cultures, it is fitting to host artisans such as Ella Hansa.

Although the Jacobson House is a Native art center, it also has qualities traditionally associated with museums. Other than being a historical landmark, the house has a room

3 Ibid.
4 Author as source.
designated to honor Jacobson’s legacy. The house’s curators prominently display photos of Jacobson and the Kiowa Five artists. Kiowa Five pieces cover an entire wall, and Jacobson’s own artwork hangs as well, adding to the site’s colorful history. Additional artifacts include *Kiowa Indian Art*, a book that Jacobson assembled to exhibit his Kiowa students’ best works and other treasured memorabilia. Along one wall, numerous brochures reveal current Indian issues and upcoming events, allowing visitors the opportunity to take part in Indian affairs.

Because of Jacobson’s insistence in promoting the art of all cultures in Oklahoma and abroad, two unique museums exist. Although the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Jacobson House Native Art Center are very different in terms of their substance, both declare American Indian art as fine art, something that artists and scholars had rarely done before Jacobson’s vigorous efforts, especially within Oklahoma. As Jacobson helped spark Oklahoma’s interest in art, he also cultivated an international appreciation for Indian art, an accomplishment few can claim. His cosmopolitan way of thinking allowed him to see past mainstream bigotry and encouraged others to do the same. The impact he left on Oklahoma is immeasurable.

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5 Ibid.
CHRONOLOGY

BORN: Västra Eknö, Sweden, 1882
DIED: Norman, Oklahoma, 1966
MARRIED: 1914
STUDIED: Bethany college, Lindsborg, Kansas. B.P. 1903, The Louvre, Paris, also Sweden and Denmark, 1914, Yale University (Yale 1905-06) B.F.A. 1916, Bethany College, D.F.A. 1941 (Honorary Degree)

POSITIONS
Attaché, Royale Swedish Commission, St. Louis World’s Fair 1904
Minnesota College 1909-11
State College of Washington 1911-1915
Director, School of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman 1915-45
Director, Broadmoor Art Academy, Colorado Springs 1924
Technical Advisor, U.S. Treasury Art Projects 1936-37
Visiting Lecturer, University of Colorado, Summer 1936
Director, Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, 1944-1950
Research Professor of Art Emeritus, 1950

EXHIBITIONS
Kansas City Art Institute
Wichita Art Museum
Dallas Museum of Fine Art
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center
Houston Museum of Fine Arts
Oklahoma Art Center—Oklahoma City
Philbrook Art Center
St. Louis City Art Museum
University of Kansas Museum of Art
University of Wisconsin Art Gallery
Syracuse University Art Center
Cornell University Art Gallery
Grinnell College Art Gallery
University of Missouri Art Gallery
Kansas State college Art Gallery
American Federation of Arts Traveling Exhibitions
W.P.A. Traveling Exhibition 1939-40
I.B.M. Traveling Exhibitions in South America 1940
Traveling Exhibitions in Sweden
Traveling Exhibition in China, Japan, Australia and Siam, 1925
New York World’s Fair 1939
Golden Gate Exposition 1939
Coronado Exposition 1940
Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C. 1940
Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma

**AWARDS**
Gold Medal, Mid-Western Exhibition 1931
Kansas City Art Institute Invitational
Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1940
Invitation, West of the Mississippi Exhibition, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1940
International Business Machines Corp. Medal for Notable Contribution to the Arot of the World, 1942

Honor in Oil Painting, Springfield Art Museum, 1942

Laureate Delta Phi Delta, National Art Fraternity

Honorary Chief, Kiowa Tribe, 1928

Oklahoma Hall of Fame, 1949

Honorary Member, Oklahoma Historical Society, 1949

Honorary Research Associate in American Indian Art, Anthropology division, Stovall Museum, University of Oklahoma 1958

Citation, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Arts and Crafts, 1960

PUBLIC LECTURES

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Chicago Art Institute

Denver Art Museum

Kansas City Art Institute

Milwaukee Art Institute

Dallas Museum of Fine Arts

Wichita Art Museum

Joslyn Museum of Art, Omaha

Brooks Memorial Gallery, Memphis

Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans

Houston Museum of fine Arts

Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, and over 50 universities and colleges.

AUTHOR

Numerous articles in local periodicals, and national magazines such as


*Kiowa Indian Art* (with wife Jeanne d’Ucel), Nice, 1929.


**MEMBER**

College Art Association of America

American Federation of Arts

American Association of Museum

American Association of University Professors

Societe Des Artistes Algeriens et Francais

Association of Oklahoma Artists (Founder)
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Dorothy Dunn Kramer Collection. Laboratory of Anthropology, Research and Archives Center. Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Kenneth Milton Chapman Collection. Laboratory of Anthropology, Research and Archives Center. Santa Fe, New Mexico.


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Horse, Cecil and Jennie. Interview conducted by Arthur Silberman, 1973-73. Transcripts. Arthur and Shifra Silberman Native American Art Collection, Research Center, National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Hokeah, Sherry. Interview conducted by Anne Allbright, 6 May 2007.

Howard, Anita (Kramer). Interview conducted by Arthur Silberman, 1980. Transcripts. Arthur and Shifra Silberman Native American Art Collection, Research Center, National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.


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*Ohio State Journal*, 1919.  
*Oklahoma Leader*, 1920-30s.  
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Tulsa World, 1920s-1980s.
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NYA IDUN, 1910.
Oklahoma Magazine.
Sooner Magazine, 1929-80.