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A Little Song for Sarah

She had two voices.

*The one voice, when she spoke,
was that of a child,
shy and high and uncertain and sweet,
somehow beseeching approval.*

*But when she opened
that glorious throat
to sing,
she was transformed,
bathed suddenly in radiance,
and strong
and sure.*

*This metamorphosis
was a miracle of a sort.
She knew then who she was,
why she had been materialized on this earth,
and what she had been destined
since forever
to do.*

*There was no voice like it,
not in our time certainly,
and probably not in any other.*

*It was three octaves at least,
possibly four,
although she would laugh and say,
"The day I have four octaves,
I'm sending for the newspapers."
She could do anything with it,*

*send it to the skies,
like some soaring, exuberant bird,
or down into dark, melancholy caverns
reverberant with echoes of other times,
other realities, other universes.*

*Someone supposedly asked Segovia
why he had played something so fast.
And, according to the story,
he replied, "Because I can."*

*She too would do things because she could.
She could change the hue of the sound
between one note and the next,
or, if it occurred to her,
even within the same note.
Do it carelessly, effortlessly,
because she could.
She could paint pictures with tone alone,
glorious overwhelming abstractions
of cascading colors.
Because she could.
Because she could.*

*She would do it playfully,
mischievously,
like the child
that lived inside her,
the child in that other voice.*

*There was never anyone like her,
not in our time anyway.
And there never will be,
ever,
ever,
ever.*

John, Gil, Dave, and the Man on the Buffalo Nickel

Part One

We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women and children.

William Tecumseh Sherman to President U.S. Grant

This war of civilization . . . admits of but one solution . . . the extermination of the red man.

Rocky Mountain News, July 24, 1865

Paul Desmond used to extend his index and middle fingers horizontally in a V shape and say to Dave Brubeck, "White man speak with forked tongue." It was a very inside joke.

Jock Mahoney, part Cherokee former medical student, ballet dancer, stunt man, and actor, taught me something a few years back. He said that anyone who was part Cherokee was almost certainly part black, due to their extensive intermarriage. The Cherokees had a written language and a court system before the white man arrived to covet their lands and displace them from their ancestral earth.

Some years ago, a friend of mine in the film industry, Lane Burton, who is tall, strikingly handsome, and black, was driving me to Los Angeles Airport to catch my plane back to New York. We passed a billboard on which there was a big image of John Wayne. "I hate that motherfucker," Lane said in an ironic tone.

"Why?" I said.

"He taught me there were no nigger cowboys," Lane said. "And there were."

He had that right. A book called *Black Indians* by William Loren Katz (Atheneum, New York, 1986) documents the blending of blacks and Indians from the very earliest days of slavery and the participation of these people in the exploration and exploitation of the west.

Whites urged the so-called Five Civilized Tribes to adopt slavery and hold blacks in bondage. The Seminoles refused to do so, allying themselves and extensively intermarrying with blacks. The Chickasaws treated their black slaves with a cruelty comparable to that of whites but the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Creek Indians never got the hang of slavery and treated their bondsmen loosely and leniently. To the whites, fearful that this example could inspire insurrection among their own slaves, there was only one solution to the problem:

The Indian Removal Act of 1830, the mass displacement of these intransigents from their rich, fertile homeland in the southeastern states, sending them on the infamous Trail of Tears westward to be deposited in the wilderness we now call Arkansas and Oklahoma, the so-called Indian Territory that whites considered uninhabitable. Sixteen hundred of the Cherokees who made the winter journey west under the guns of seven thousand soldiers commanded by General Winfield Scott were black Cherokees. Fourteen thousand Cherokees set

out on the journey; 4,000 died on the way. To put this in perspective, consider our indignation over the Death March of Bataan, in which 2,330 of 12,000 American soldiers died. Winfield Scott did it to women and children.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, black Cherokees, Creeks, and others chose to stay with the Indians, and thousands more blacks came to join them and marry among them. Indeed, many whites joined the Indians during this period. Eventually, of course, the Oklahoma Territory was no longer deemed uninhabitable by whites. In 1889, about a hundred thousand people lined up for the great Oklahoma land rush. The history books usually neglect to tell us that about a tenth of them were black. A shot was fired, and this "empty" land of the Indians was over-run. When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, segregation was imposed, black Indians were not allowed to vote and full Indians risked their heads if not their lives if they tried. Frustrated, young Indians, both black and red, turned to drink and crime.

"In the nineteenth century," Katz wrote, "a Black-Indian friendship limped on despite onslaughts from white racial policies destructive to both peoples. It survives still in the legends of Native Americans, and in the stories and faces of many dark people."

We are often reminded that Crispus Attucks, the first American to die in the American Revolution, was black. We are not usually told that he was part Natick Indian. Frederick Douglass was part Indian, although the Encyclopedia Britannica doesn't say so. The sculptress Edmonia Lewis, who maintained a famous studio in Rome in the late nineteenth century, was the daughter of a black father and Chippewa mother. "I have not a single drop of what is called white blood in my veins," she said. Katz notes that Langston Hughes said he was descended from Pocahontas. Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable, born on one of the French Caribbean islands, the son of a French sailor and an African slave woman, and a highly cultivated man, founded the city of Chicago. Du Sable High School, where Captain Walter Dyett trained so many brilliant black jazz musicians, is named for him.

Edward Rose, a major figure in the opening of the west, had European, Cherokee, and African blood lines. "He spoke a dozen Native American languages and Indian sign language," Katz writes. Blacks were often used as scouts, negotiators, and translators, because the Indians viewed them as apart from whites and trusted them more. Black cowboys were prominent in the development of the Chisholm Trail, and Deadwood Dick, who invented the sport of bulldogging, was one of the most prominent rodeo performers of his time. His assistants were Will Rogers (who was Cherokee) and Tom Mix. (The

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latter's name is interesting.)

James Beckwourth was a chieftain of both Crow and Blackfoot Indian Nations, who took a succession of Indian wives, usually the daughters of royalty. Beckwourth, the son of a black slave and her white master, was considered the greatest Indian fighter of his generation, a not inconsiderable accolade in that his competition included Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Jim Bridger, and Kit Carson. In 1850 Beckwourth, who dressed as an Indian and bore several Indian names, discovered a pass through the Sierra Nevada that became one of the important routes to the Gold Rush. He led the first wagon train through this pass, which is named for him. (It is now California Route 70.) In the biography on which he collaborated with a journalist, there is no mention that he was black, and in a movie called *Tomahawk*, Katz notes, Jack Oakie was cast as Beckwourth. Small wonder black American children do not know their own heritage.

Katz observes: "Those who assume that a people have no history worth mentioning are likely to believe they have no humanity worth defending . . . Denying a people's heritage questions their legitimacy."

The 1790 Spanish census of California revealed that 18 percent of the population of San Francisco, 24 percent of that of San Jose, 20 percent of Santa Barbara, and 18 percent of Monterey had African ancestry.

Only two of the 44 people who founded Los Angeles were European. The rest were African, Indian, or a mix of African, Indian, European, and Mexican. A grand-daughter of one of the city's black founders once owned what is now Beverly Hills. Francisco Reyes, a founder of Los Angeles who was either black or Indian or a mixture, became the mayor of Los Angeles, surely the first minority mayor of an American city. Fifteen percent of the population of California under the Spaniards listed their ancestry as African. After the Americans took over, a great many of them "passed" and became "white."

Kay Starr is three-quarters Indian -- Choctaw, Cherokee, and Iroquois -- and one quarter Irish. "The American people would like us to just disappear," Kay told me. "And we have almost done it." Joe Williams is part Seminole; so was Bobby Scott. Art Farmer and Lena Horne are part Blackfoot. Benny Golson and Ed Thigpen both have Indian background. "You could see it my father's face," Ed told me not long ago. His father was Ben Thigpen. Earle Warren was part Cherokee. Doc Cheatham's maternal grandparents were full Cherokee; his father's father was Choctaw. Russell Moore was Pima, born on a reservation. Joe Mondragon was Apache, possibly full-blooded, and often teased about it: once when he was looking for a light for a cigarette Shelly Manne offered him two drumsticks. Oscar Pettiford, Trummy Young, Mildred Bailey, and Lee Wiley were part Indian. So are Horace Silver and Sweets Edison, and there was Indian in Duke Ellington's family. Indeed Ellington's sister Ruth told Dave Brubeck, "All the credit's gone to the African for the wonderful rhythm in jazz, but I think a lot of it should go to the American Indian."

My friend Dr. Dominique Rene De Lerma, head of the black music studies department at Columbia College in Chicago, gave

a speech in April of this year at the University of Chicago in which he dealt with aspects of this matter. Dominique's ancestry is Spanish and African, but the mixing occurred in Spain, not America; his grandfather came to the New World as ambassador to Mexico. Dominique has reservations about the term *musicologist*, even more to *ethnomusicologist*, but I don't really know what else to call him. Whatever he is, his thinking on these matters is the most expansive I have encountered. Dominique tells his "black" students that if they deny the other tributaries of their blood stream, if they ignore the English or Irish or French or whatever else they may also be, they are complicit in their own ghettoization, offering a suppliant acquiescence to the white racists who want them kept in their "place."

Dominique said in his speech:

"While there are few problems determining who is Italian or who lived during the Renaissance, defining who is black poses a greater problem . . . The identification of black Americans and their culture is initially rooted in American sociology. When William Grant Still . . ." For those unfamiliar with Still's work, we should note that he was a "classical" composer who studied with Varese; he was also an arranger who wrote for bands, including that of Artie Shaw. The chart on *Frenesi* is his. ". . . was born in Mississippi, his birth certificate identified his race; when Roque Cordero was born in Panama, his birth certificate identified his nationality. Yet both of these composers share African, Indian, and Spanish blood. Cordero's nationality acknowledges all three, while Still's recognizes only one, and totally ignores his Anglo background. Let us not forget then that Willie the Lion Smith was a cantor, that John Tchicai is Danish . . . and that the history of music in France can readily include the Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

"The black American currently reacts in the same simplistic manner. In his 1949 autobiography *A Man Called White*, Walter Francis White wrote: 'I am Negro. My skin is white, my eyes are blue, my hair is blond.' The irony of such a comment would be transformed into irrationality in a Panamanian setting, but American thinking accepts it, with far more than passive black co-operation. The matter is compounded if a non-black marries a person of African ancestry, which union produces a child who is then regarded as black. And to a far greater extent than appears in print, miscegenation has quite often included Native Americans, whose identified contributions are far fewer and whose culture is often thought even further outside of the mainstream . . .

"In this post-Reagan wake, a symptom of the times is the emphasis now being given to matters outside of black music to account for as many of its characteristics as rhetoric and speculation will allow . . . Yet black nationalist stances will not consider other acculturated factors, such as the contribution to jazz history of Jewish and native American musicians (although we can maintain that jazz is first and foremost a black music)."

One of the major influences in jazz was Frank Trumbauer, who helped shape the playing of Lester Young and Benny Carter. Benny told me that himself, and Lester Young

attested to it so often that there can be no question. Woody Herman said Trumbauer influenced him, and was sure that Johnny Hodges would say the same thing. Thus eventually Trumbauer also influenced Phil Woods, whose avowed influences are "Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges, and Charlie Parker, in that order," and all those whose work comes out of his. Trumbauer, who gave up music to be a test pilot and then returned to music after World War II, died in 1956.

John Chilton wrote of Trumbauer's "pithy sense of understatement and dry, delicate tone." Put that together with this: Trumbauer's wife Mitzi made the wry observation, "Frank was an Indian, you know, and would never say one word where none would do."

I recounted this to Ladonna Harris, a Comanche activist in Washington for Indian rights. She said the image of the taciturn Indian is inaccurate. The tradition, she said, requires that you say nothing unless you have something to say. But when you do have, you say it. And the utterance may be very eloquent.

I am reminded of something I was told by Virginia Carlille, the widow of the brilliant country-and-western guitarist Thumbs Carlille. Virginia, who grew up in Wyoming and is part Comanche, described an attempt of a representative of the Department of Agriculture to persuade one group of Indians that they should take up growing potatoes. At a meeting of the elders, he extolled the potato's virtues and finally, hoping to clinch his case, asked the chief to say a few words in its behalf. The chief rose and said, "God damn a potato!"

End of project.

I was talking in February of this year with John Lewis at his home in New York, a richly and beautifully appointed apartment in one of the wealthier areas of the upper east side. The living room contains two grand pianos, a Steinway and a Bechstein, so that John can play duets with his Yugoslavian wife Marjana. There is also a harpsichord, which is hers. During his student days at the University of New Mexico, John had a double major: music and anthropology. He took the latter because of interest in his own ancestry. John Aaron Lewis was born May 3, 1920, in LaGrange, Illinois, for the practical reason that his mother happened to be there at the time, but his family story runs deep in the history of New Mexico, where he grew up. John's family roots on the North American continent go back not just centuries but millenia, possibly ten thousand years or more. John said:

"I got very interested in the Indians. Very much so. We had the greatest natural laboratory that there is in the country, there in New Mexico. There life still continues the way it's been going on for thousands of years. There were the Pueblo people who lived along the Rio Grande. You can go and see them. They live the same. They've done better than some of the other groups. They're an older and very talented people, and they don't have the same problems that most of the people on reservations do in Arizona and the other states, because of the great expanse. And it's a desert area, except for the one river that runs through. No big population to

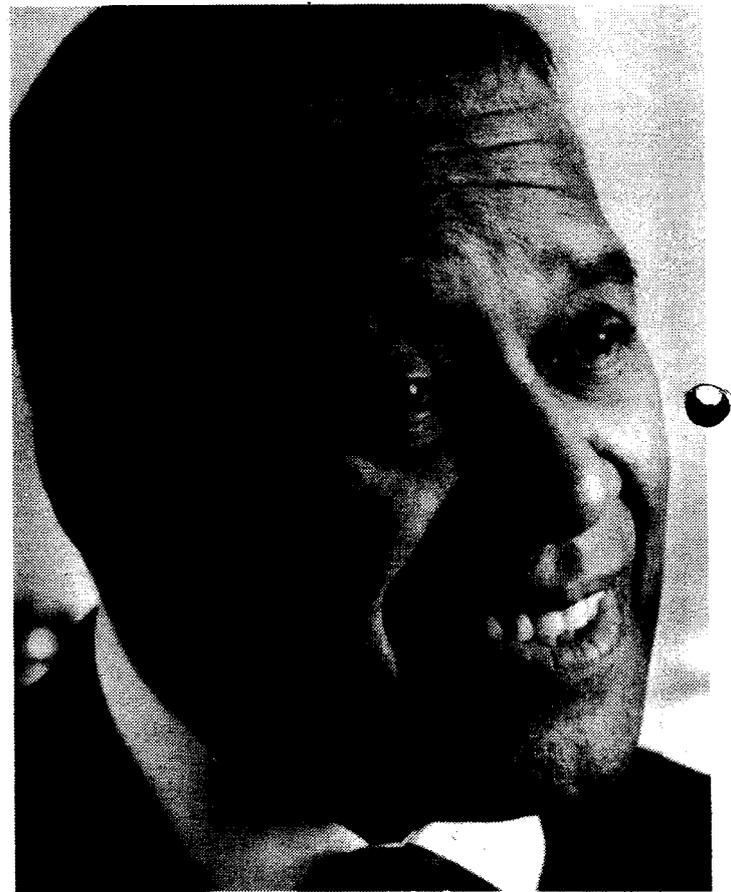
overcome. There's nothing to do there, so most people don't stop there." Meaning, politely, that the white man didn't want that land anyway.

"My great grandmother was Cherokee," John said. "My grandmother was born in 1863 in New Mexico. Her father went out to Santa Fe and had a hotel there, called the Old Exchange Hotel. He went out in a wagon train with my great-great grandmother. My mother's father was Comanche."

The Comanches were and are a remarkable people. When the whites pushed west, repeatedly violating treaties and practicing genocide, the Comanches put up such a resistance that they halted the advance of the Texas frontier for almost half a century. They were such effective horsemen and fighters that they drove the Apaches, one of the bravest and toughest of the Indian peoples, from the southern plains in the seventeenth century, and they didn't end their war with the United States until 1875. I was intrigued, then, that gentle, elegant soft-spoken John Lewis is a quarter Comanche, and more than a quarter Indian.

"Someone wrote," I said, "that the Comanches were the greatest light cavalry in history."

"Yes," John said. "So were the Sioux. They proved they



John Lewis 1991

photo by John Reeves

were!" He laughed -- not, I thought, without a touch of pride. "Jim Hall is part Cherokee," he added.

Jim verified this to me a few days later.

Now, according to the demented doctrine underlying segregation in America, anyone who has the smallest trace of African ancestry is "black" and cannot belong to the country club. I have always found this baffling, for the corollary of it is that "black" blood is so strong and "white" blood so weak that the least drop of the former completely taints the latter. If those in the lynch mobs thought it through, they would see it as an implicit confession of white inferiority. But then, those in lynch mobs are not capable of anything I would call thought. I can understand some crimes, including theft and embezzlement. There are two that simply baffle me; I cannot understand them at all: racism and rape.

Marlon Brando has correctly observed that the image of the Indians was created by the movies. There are those who believe the image of the African American was also created by the movies, and that "race relations" were much better before D.W. Griffiths made his racist movie *The Birth of a Nation*, the more dangerous for being brilliantly done.

And the movies left us with a belief that miscegenation never occurred. It was not until the James Stewart movie *Broken Arrow* in 1950 sympathetically portrayed a marriage between a white man and an Indian girl that this misleading silence was broken.

Why did the movies leave us with the impression that Abie never had an Irish rose, even long after Irving Berlin married Elin Mackay? Because the owners of the industry would not allow it. A Protestant never married a Catholic, much less a gentile, a Jew, or, heavens! a black marry a white -- or a white marry an Indian or a Japanese. If occasionally a "forbidden" love did occur, it was *always* between an occidental male and a girl of another race; never the reverse. And the solution to their irresolvable dilemma was usually that she died nobly in the end, their love -- by implication -- unconsummated. It was all blithering nonsense: intermarriage and trans-racial rape had been going on in America from the earliest days, and in the American west, where I live, the admixture of Indian is everywhere.

The prejudice, Dominique de Lerma points out, is manifest in opera. Many black divas have arisen since Leontyne Price made her debut, singers such as Martina Arroya and Grace Bumbry. But few black tenors have come up, although surely our conservatories have trained some good ones. Why? "Because," Dominique said, "it's all right to have a black woman on stage with a white man professing love for her, but you can't have some buck making love to a white woman." The essence of racism is right there: We have the right to your women, you do not have the right to ours. I used to tell Lenny Bruce: "Everybody's missing the point. The issue isn't desegregation of the classroom, it's desegregation of the bedroom."

Often when I read European commentaries on jazz, I am

impressed with how little sense of America the writers have. Their knowledge of this music comes from books and interviews with visiting jazz players of celebrity status, which may well be deceptive: everyone being interviewed is aware that he is talking for attribution, and his comments are likely to be circumspect and, consciously or unconsciously, self-serving. At least one English writer on the subject seems to be proud that he has never been to America, even as a tourist.

For this and other reasons, the European writers seem unaware of the extent to which jazz is a part of the American culture. In cities and towns all over America there are excellent players they've never heard of in Europe; indeed, that we in America have never heard of. Here in Ojai, population of seven thousand, there are three very good jazz pianists, one of whom, Theo Saunders, is of a stature that he travels with the likes of Bob Brookmeyer and Freddy Hubbard. I heard a superb pianist in Santa Maria, California, a small city north of Santa Barbara; he had moved there after working extensively in studios. Similarly, I encountered an outstanding guitarist in a restaurant in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He had gone home to live after years in Las Vegas. I was left open-mouthed with admiration for a fusion group from Fresno, California, that I heard two or three years ago. Jazz is *everywhere* in America, and it doesn't all get onto records.

A New Orleans-to-Chicago-to-John Hammond exegesis of jazz genesis won't work. Proto-jazz seems to have been developing all over the United States in the early twentieth century, including the west, where Jelly Roll Morton and others spent time.

The distinguished Chilean composer Juan Orrega-Salas long ago led me to see that the land itself has an influence on a composer's work. He, like I, much admired Sibelius. He said that his own music was characterized by angular lines probably because he grew up in sight of the Andes. That of Sibelius had the softer contours of the lake-and-forest vistas of Finland, which is strikingly like that of northern Ontario and upper Minnesota. Is it a coincidence that when Longfellow wanted to evoke the mysterious feeling of the forest in *Hiawatha* that he modeled the poem rhythmically on a major Finnish epic?

A few years ago, I took a train north from Milan at noon. It passed up into Switzerland, then ascended the Rhine valley. I got off about nine o'clock in Cologne; had I stayed aboard another two or three hours I'd have been in Denmark. If you get on a train at noon in San Diego and head north, by midnight you won't even be out of California.

It takes five days to cross Canada by train. If you drive from New York to California, you had better allow seven days for the trip, and ten would be better. I've done it three times. I thought a lot about John Lewis when I passed through Albuquerque, New Mexico. Nothing you can read or can see in a photograph will prepare you for that place. It is in a valley of a depth and breadth that you find hard to believe. The highway seems to descend and descend and descend *forever* until at last you are in the town. You can see objects from incredible distances. A man seems a small thing indeed in the valley of Albuquerque. And I wondered if the topog-

raphy of the west -- those peculiar mesas that you see in the movies -- have anything to do with the airy way John plays, the minimal statement, the placement of just two or three notes, but the *perfect* two or three notes, somewhere behind a Milt Jackson solo. There is all that *space* in John's playing. Is it because he grew up in Albuquerque and these images of the west lie sleeping always somewhere in his soul, like the Andes in Juan Orrega-Salas and the forests in Sibelius?

Carl Fischer, the Los Angeles pianist and Frankie Laine's friend and accompanist who wrote the melody of *We'll Be Together Again*, was full-blooded Indian. "That," Dave Brubeck said when I mentioned it to him, "is one of the most beautiful ballads ever written." Fischer also wrote *You've Changed* and *It Started All Over Again*, and he wrote an orchestral suite called *Reflections of an Indian Boy*, recorded on Columbia and long since out of print. It is a haunting thing, full of a sense of the west, the best thing of its kind since Macdowell orchestrated a group of Indian themes.

Recently I saw again the John Wayne film *The Searchers*. It is shot in that impressive mesa country of the west, Arizona maybe, or New Mexico. The camera tries but cannot capture that country. You have to see it yourself, you need that hundred and eighty degrees or more of vision, you have to stand there and turn around and survey the whole three hundred and sixty degrees of the horizon, to believe it. It is profoundly beautiful, and profoundly intimidating. I would hate to be lost out there. I would hate to have my car quit out there. Once, crossing one of those vast stretches of desert, I took a sight on a distant promontory, and checked my odometer. When I got there, I checked it again. I had seen it from a distance of 30 miles. Europeans -- and for that matter Americans who have never seen it -- have no idea of the beautiful, awesome, intimidating, vast emptiness in the west.

In 1884, Helen Hunt Jackson, a lady from Amherst, Massachusetts, who wrote shallow sentimental verse, published her novel *Ramona*, about the so-called Mission period of California history, when Franciscan padres herded native Indians into Mission compounds and put them to work. You can see the remnants of some of these Missions to this day, including that in Santa Barbara, perfectly preserved, and the one at Carmel. The Mission of San Juan Capistrano is partly in ruins.

Ramona left an impression, still extant, that the Indians were magnificently treated by the Franciscans, under whom they lived contented, serene, productive lives which were disrupted only when the Anglos came to California from the east. A sort of industry grew up around the novel, with books being published purporting to identify the "real" Ramona, the place where she lived, the bed she slept in, and on and on. The book was dramatized. At least three movies of the novel have been made, and there is a Ramona Pageant every year at Hemet, California. Hemet is in the midst of several Indian reservations, which are set on desert so bleak that the land isn't worth a damn to anybody but movie actors and others with enough money to keep the golf courses green at nearby Palm Springs. Helen Hunt Jackson's novel is a tissue of

romantic twaddle, a load of historical lies.

The Franciscan padres sent military expeditions into the surrounding countryside to capture Indians. They were often flogged, then herded to the Mission compounds and forcefully "converted" to Christianity. One of the gifts of the Spanish soldiers to the Indians was measles. Another was syphilis. These Indian slaves were housed in obscenely filthy conditions, kept chronically undernourished to make them too weak to run away, and worked from six a.m. until sunset. As an alternative to the blessings of Christianity, they died in fearsome numbers. (It was no doubt a great consolation to the padres to think that their charges had died in the faith and been accepted into paradise, but it didn't do the Indians much good.) They were consistently punished by flogging and confinement in the stocks.



Dave Brubeck 1924. He was four. According to a handwritten note on the back of the picture, it was taken, of all places, at Mission Carmel.

In the Zorro movies -- another misleading tradition -- the Spanish civil authorities are the villains, but in fact the civil authorities frequently complained about the Franciscans. In his 1946 book *Southern California Country*, Carey McWilliams noted that "in 1783 the able Governor Fages filed a bitter complaint against Father Junipero Serra -- the sainted figure of California legend -- for the excessive punishment he had meted out to neophytes."

McWilliams wrote:

"With the best theological intentions in the world, the Franciscan padres eliminated Indians with the effectiveness of Nazis operating concentration camps. From 1776 to 1834, they baptized 4,404 Indians in the Mission San Juan Capistrano and buried 3,227 . . . In not a single mission did the number of Indian births equal the number of Indian deaths. During the entire period of Mission rule, from 1769 to 1834, the Franciscans baptized 53,600 adult Indians and buried 37,000 . . . So far as the Indians were concerned, the chain of Missions along the coast might best be described as a series of charnel houses." When the Franciscans arrived in 1769, there were about 130,000 Indians in California. When the Mission period ended in 1832 -- sixty-three years later -- there were 83,000. When the hacienda system replaced the Missions, Indians were kidnapped and used as unpaid -- that is, slave -- labor. Their numbers further declined to 72,000. Then in 1848 the gringos began to flood into California, many of them drawn by the gold discovered not far from where Dave Brubeck and Gil Evans grew up, or coveting the rich valley lands. They proved to be about as good for the health of the Indians as the Franciscans had been before them. By 1865, the number of Indians in California had fallen to 23,000; by 1880 to 15,000. In Southern California, there were 30,000 in 1769. In 1910 there were 1,250. A government report in 1877 noted that "Never before in history has a people been swept away with such terrible swiftness." The white man's treatment of the black in the American east and south seems a model of benignity compared to what he did to the Indians of California. What the Spanish began, the gringo finished. They coveted the rich Indian lands, and as a matter of policy systematically, willfully, and ruthlessly exterminated them. It is a chapter of history unknown to most Americans. We have some idea of what was done to the Sioux, the Apaches, the Cherokees, and the Comanches, because there are a lot of them around and they are -- quite rightly -- raising vocal and legal hell about it. But we don't know about the extirpation of the California Indians because it was so effective: there aren't enough of them left to complain.

Canadians like to believe that they did not treat the Indians as the Americans did. Wrong. Systematic genocide extended well above the 49th parallel. A new book titled *Occupied Canada* (McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1991) makes this only too clear. One of its authors is Robert Calihoo, himself a mixed-blood Indian. So deep was the bias against Indians that Louis Riel, a brilliant young scholar in Montreal, was rejected by the parents of the girl he wanted to marry because he was one-eighth Chippewa! Embittered, he returned to his

home on the prairies and later led a rebellion of the Metis, as they are called: mixed blood people, some French-speaking, some English-speaking. His execution by the Canadian government remains a blot on the nation's history, but there are others. Calihoo's book -- Canadian history from the Indian viewpoint -- makes one's blood run cold. The slaughter of the Indians is omitted from Canadian history books as it is from those in the United States. We expect, of course, we even demand, that the Japanese and Germans teach their children the "truth" about World War II. And we are allowed to hear endlessly what Cortez and Pizarro and their successors did to the Aztecs and Incas. There is a reason for that. This emphasis sustains an anti-Hispanic bias that permits the unrestrained exploitation of Latin America, from the expropriation from Mexico of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, to the Marine Corps occupation of Nicaragua and the far more recent funding of murderers by Oliver North and friends and the unacknowledged support of Central American death squads.

Not that this in any way mitigates the depredations of the Spanish. Carey McWilliams wrote that "the thoroughly Missionized Indians, such as the Chumash, the Gabrielino, the Luiseno, and the Juaneno are, today, wholly extinct . . ." The Chumash lived in the area around Santa Barbara and the Channel Islands that lie off the coast. Ojai is a Chumash word meaning "nest", and their legend held that two giants guarded the Ojai Valley. Not well enough. I live on the site of a Chumash camp ground and often when I garden I dig up arrowheads and smooth stone hand tools: that seems to be all that is left of them in Ojai. McWilliams was not quite right, however: Bruce W. Miller, in a book called *Chumash: A Picture of their World* notes that "until recently the Chumash people themselves have been scattered to the winds." Today there are an estimated 1,500 surviving Chumash living in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties; I live in the latter. There is a Chumash reservation near Santa Ynez, but only two of its families are pure-blood Chumash.

Archaeologists have established that the Chumash -- it is a misnomer, like the term American Indian, but it is in general use -- were living in California by 8,000 B.C. They were a clever, friendly, civilized people whose technology by 2,000 B.C. was in advance of that of the barbarians in the forests of northern Europe. They had an elaborate fishing and trading economy, and their terrain, which extended up the coast from Malibu for about 200 miles, almost to the Monterey County border, was huge. They were also a very musical people. The Franciscan friar Juan Crespi, who accompanied the Portola expedition of 1602, wrote in his diary that "the Indians were quite kind but . . . they played weird flutes all night and kept us awake." In common with other Indians of California, they utilized something like the Finnish sauna, rooms built into the ground with a fire in the middle. The Spanish called these sweat houses *temescals*. When they had worked up a good sweat, the Chumash would dive into the sea, even as the Finns roll in snow. A friar on a later expedition wrote, "The women cover themselves with deer skins hanging from the waist, with

a cape of otter skins over the shoulders . . . and are pretty, and they have pendants in the ears." The Spaniards consistently remarked on the kindness and gentility of the Chumash. The Chumash welcomed, fed, and guided them.

The Chumash lived continuously in California for 9,000 years. The Spanish brought them to the edge of extinction in sixty, and destroyed their culture forever.

The gringos impressed some of the surviving Indians into a system of peonage somewhat like that of the Spanish period, but much harsher. An Indian had no resort to the courts, and could -- legally -- be shot for breaking the white man's code with such offenses as demanding his wages. (It should also be noted that railways of California often paid off the Chinese laborers who built them by executing them.) The Indian male, of course, was much more liable to this summary termination. Women, after all, have a certain utility to men. A scholar at the University of California estimated that 12,000 Indian women became the concubines of American settlers. The resulting mixed-breed populace were considered Indians, as anyone with a traceable amount of "black" blood was considered Negro in the South. They retreated into a sullen hatred of the white man that persists in many of them to this day. And of course this hatred of the white man is endemic in the 96 reservations still extant in California.

The first gold-mining and the first wine-making were done with Indian labor. J. Ross Brown, Inspector of Indian Affairs, wrote, "If ever an Indian was fully and honestly paid for his labor on the Pacific coast, it was not my luck to hear of it." Where they could not be used, they were eliminated: 50,000 Indians were slaughtered in two years of the Gold Rush. That's not counting the Mexican peon population, the "greasers" whose sobriquet derived from the hide-and-tallow trade in which many of them worked.

In 1850 a mob of 2,000 Americans destroyed the Mexican mining town of Sonora in a week of unimpeded rioting and lynching. The indiscriminate lynching of Mexicans went so far that in July of 1851, a Mexican woman three months pregnant was strung up. In 1853 there were more homicides in California than in all the rest of the United States put together, and the figure rose to one a day in Los Angeles in 1854. In the five years from 1849 to 1854, the population of California spent \$6,000,000 on bowie knives and pistols, and during that period there were 2,400 murders, 1,400 suicides, and 10,000 other "miserable deaths," which Carey McWilliams took to mean Mexican deaths. A peaceful, even docile, Mexican peasantry was stirred to a hatred of the Anglos that continues to this day.

With the decline of the Indians, imported Chinese took up the more gruelling and menial tasks. Later the Italians and other immigrant groups were used as peons, and in the 1930s, the Oakies and Arkies -- ironically, Anglos displaced from the very Indian Territory their ancestors had taken from the Five Civilized Nations. Today California's agriculture is premised on a modified system of peonage, which the struggles of Cesar Chavez have not alleviated. Laments about illegal immigration

from Mexico are hypocritical: without the underpaid labor of these pathetic people, the economy of the state would collapse. The abuse of them is frightening. Often they have to wash their clothes in muddy rivers, cook on open fires by the fields where they labor, sleep under trees or in sheds or in cars. Just north of Salinas, in August of this year, Monterey County officials found two hundred of these workers living in caves scraped by hand from hillsides. They are Indian, mostly, I suppose, Yaqui and Aztec and Apache. They are devoted and diligent workers, and for the most part very gentle people, very intimidated, and they light up if you treat them with respect and especially if you to their shock! speak Spanish to them.

California takes a back seat to no other state, probably even no other nation, for its record of relentless racism. When you hear hints in the news -- the almost casual beatings and summary shootings of Mexicans and blacks -- that its police and sheriffs' departments are racist, you'd better believe it. It has been a killing ground comparable perhaps to Cambodia under Pol Pot, with entire populations having been simply exterminated. Dave Brubeck told me a story: "Outside of Yreka, at the foot of Mount Shasta, they gave a feast for the Indians. The old ones said to the younger ones, 'You better not go.' A few of the older guys didn't go. And they poisoned the food, and there was just a trail of dead Indians, hundreds. There were just unbelievable things that were done."

California is infinitely varied, very beautiful, and haunted. It is small wonder that someone with an Indian ancestry might be dissuaded from laying claim to the heritage. No one lays claims to Yuki ancestry. This people, who lived in north central California, numbered 6,880 in 1850. By 1864, the number was down to 300, and by 1973 to 1. The Modoc didn't fare quite that badly. They were once a powerful and important people. There are still a few of them on a reservation at Klamath, near the California-Oregon border.

"Don't teach him that nonsense," Elizabeth Ivey Brubeck would say to her husband, Peter Brubeck, whenever he would try to tell Dave to be proud of his heritage. Her own father came from Cornwall, England, and there was either Polish or Russian background on her mother's side -- she was never sure. Peter's father came from Indiana. There was some German in the family history, which is whence the name derives. And the "nonsense" she didn't want filling her son's head was that there was Modoc Indian in the line as well.

"There's maybe a fourth Modoc," Dave told me.

"My dad was born in 1884 near Pyramid Lake, which is an Indian reservation." Pyramid Lake is in Nevada, close to the California border and 30 miles north-northwest of Reno. "That lake still belongs to the Indians. He was born maybe twenty miles from the lake at a place called Amedee, where there's no one living, in Honey Lake Valley. At the time there was an eighty-mile long lake. It's dried up. There were steamboats on it. It's gone. Some lakes disappear. He was raised there."

(To be continued)