

Chapter Four

Racial Aggression & Boys' Toys

Rock'em Sock'em Robots is a classic children's toy from the 1960s and 1970s. First introduced by Marx Toys in 1964, it featured a red robot known as the "Red Rocker" and a blue robot known as the "Blue Bomber." With the help of two players to press buttons operating the boxers' arms, the two robots would battle it out in a boxing ring until, as the television commercial described it, one robot's "block is knocked off."¹ The toy is both in theme and action a boys' toy, a toy designed to appeal to competitive and aggressive instincts associated with masculinity. Marx's advertising for the toy emphasized boys' attraction to Rock'em Sock'em Robots. A typical ad featured either two boys or a boy and his father enthusiastically playing with the toy. These television commercials highlighted the potential for male bonding over a toy in which boys could engage in physical competition, beating each other up by proxy. Because operating the toy did not require any actual physical strength, just the ability to press buttons, it was an ideal medium for masculine expression without an adult boxer's muscles. As sociologist R.W. Connell has pointed out, "sporting prowess is a test of masculinity even for boys who detest the locker room."² With Rock'em Sock'em Robots even the scrawniest of boys could assert his manliness by winning a round in the ring.

Though the goal of the toy is to pummel an opponent, as far as "violent" or "aggressive" boy toys go, Rock'em Sock'em Robots is not particularly alarming. There have been far more violent boy toys in the history of American toys. One reason Rock'em Sock'em Robots may not be remembered as one of America's more aggressive

toys is that the subjects of the blows are robots, not humans. As fantasy machines, robots are not bestowed with feelings and thus fists to the face (and a knocked off block) do not hurt them. Secondly, the toy evokes a sport that though some might describe as violent, has a loyal following and a long history of popularity in the United States. As boxing is intensely associated with manliness it is not surprising that it would be an appealing subject for a boys' toy.³ In fact, though Marx used the tagline "the world's only boxing robots" to describe the Rock'em Sock'em Robots toy, it was far from the world's *only* boxing toy.

What makes the Rock'em Sock'em Robots toy interesting to this project is its pedigree as the descendant of numerous boxing toys that have presented children with lessons about hegemonic masculinity. This lesson on competition and dominance by physical aggression has been communicated to boys in the form of boxing toys for over a century. Often, these toys were racially charged with black boxers either competing against each other or competing against a white boxer. Even Rock'em Sock'em Robots subtly evokes African American heavyweight champion Joe Louis in the name of the Blue Bomber robot - Louis' nickname was the very similar Brown Bomber. However, though Louis' specter may linger in the naming of the robots, as robots the Blue Bomber and Red Rocket have no race and any aspect of racial tension is removed from them. In their machine bodies, the robots avoid the messiness of racial categories, but they do provide a way to unleash aggression and make a claim of manliness, a goal in many boys' toys, and a goal that has often been achieved by way of concentrating that aggression on racial outsiders.

In the last thirty years much of the academic scholarship on children's toys and play has focused on toys and violence. Scholars of early childhood education and psychology have conducted studies on the impact of so called "violent toys," which typically fall under two broad categories of toy weapons and fighting action figures, on children's behavior. Results of these studies have failed to reach a consensus on the impact of violent toys, but concerns about exposure to violent toys and desensitization to violence, increased violent behavior, or dependence on violence for conflict resolution persist. Education specialists Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levine have extensively promoted this view.⁴ Others, most notably play theory expert Brian Sutton-Smith, have concluded that aggressive play themes are not only normal in children, but also that they have existed since long before the commercial toy industry and its violent toys. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of differentiating between aggressive play and aggressive behavior. According to these scholars, children very easily understand the difference between the two, even if to the adult eye they often look the same.⁵

The academic debate about violent toys was most active in the 1980s and 1990s, the result of feminist debates about children's media culture and the Federal Communications Commission's move to deregulate children's television in 1984.⁶ However, the concerns date back to at least the 1930s, when according to historian Gary S. Cross, some adults began to believe that toy guns together with gangster activity were encouraging children into violent behavior.⁷ In one case, Rose Durso De Simone, a Chicago area Parent Teacher Association president, helped organize anti-toy gun weeks in which toy guns were collected from school children in 1934 and 1935. The *Chicago*

Daily Tribune reported on the first such event at which “a mammoth ‘burning of the guns’” took place followed by an impromptu snowball fight. The *Tribune* noted that De Simone “became a special target” of the snowballs and that the children did not seem too fazed by the anti-toy weapon theme of the day for “[i]n snowballs they had found even more attractive weapons than guns.”⁸ That children would willingly hand over their toy weapons in support of anti-violent play and then engage in playfighting with snowballs moments later speaks to the enduring appeal of aggressive play.

Scholars have attempted to understand why children, and particularly boys, are so attracted to aggressive play scenarios and toys that support such play. There is no one agreed upon theory, but they fall into three basic arguments.⁹ The first is that boys are culturally shaped or socialized into aggressive play from the time they are born. The second is that biologically boys are hardwired to be drawn to aggressive play irrespective of cultural forces. Finally, the third takes a psychoanalytical approach and sees boys’ aggressive play as a manifestation of the repression of their Oedipal desire for their mothers.¹⁰ Of course some girls also enjoy aggressive play. Often these girls are described as anomalies or as simply going with the flow of an established boy game.¹¹ Sutton-Smith, however, argues that aggressive play scenarios are endemic to both boys and girls. He writes, “Basically the play of all children, boys and girls, is obsessed by age-old play habits of chase and escape, attack and defense, and acceptance and rejection between good and bad characters which have dominated the play of people (and animals) throughout history.”¹² And it is not necessarily bad that children enjoy aggressive play. Some scholars have speculated that through aggressive play children can learn to be more

empathetic towards others, to work through competitiveness, and to bond with each other.¹³

Regardless of why so many children are drawn to aggressive play and the possible dangers and benefits of aggressive play, scholarship on toys and violence has largely ignored the issue of who is the target of aggression in violent toys. In fact, historically, aggressive toys in which an intended target of aggression was provided have used people of color as their subjects. As has been repeated throughout this project, toys communicate cultural values to children and as such play a role in maintaining dominant culture. Thus if the culture holds people of color to be inferior, and boys' toys have been used to pass along ideals of a hegemonic masculinity that assumes the dominant position of white males in society, then the choice of nonwhite subjects as targets of aggression may seem almost natural. The potential implications of such play are at least as disturbing as those for playing with toy guns or GI Joe action figures. While children's imaginative play can take numerous unpredictable (a largely unrecorded) paths making it difficult to know how children engaged with, for example the black and white boxer toys, or how their thinking about race may have been affected by playing with such toys, what can be determined from a survey of aggressive ethnic toys is that for a long time, toymakers deemed people of color - particularly African Americans, African natives, and Native Americans - appropriate targets of white aggression and that it was acceptable to share that value with children.

“Emperors of Masculinity”

Ives, Blakeslee & Williams Company (best known as Ives) of Bridgeport, Connecticut, made what may be the first American mechanical boxing toy. Dating from

approximately 1885 to 1892, the Mechanical Boxers, as they were named, featured two African American men standing atop a wooden platform beneath which a wooden box housed a windup clockwork mechanism.¹⁴ When activated, the two men thrust their fists at each other mimicking the movement of boxers. Ives specialized in high-end toys with some of their wood and cloth clockwork toys retailing for as much as four dollars, a hefty price for a toy in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ Like all nineteenth century manufactured toys in the United States, this toy would have had a presumed white audience. But because this toy was also very expensive, it would have been a toy intended specifically for wealthy white buyers and most certainly not for the subjects of the toy.

Why would anyone be interested in such a toy? As previously mentioned, boxing is a sport that has long been enjoyed in the United States. Toy historians Marshall and Inez McClintock report that in the first half of the nineteenth century boxing matches were popular events at amusement parks and county fairs despite that fact that they were “illegal in many states and frowned upon in all.”¹⁶ But by the late nineteenth century, boxing expanded its appeal beyond sporting men - men who enjoyed horse racing, boxing, gambling and drinking – to become a national craze. So both sporting men and more refined boxing fans may have thought the Mechanical Boxers a clever gift for a child. Yet, even with the widespread popularity of boxing in the late nineteenth century, Ives’ choice of two black boxers seems to indicate something beyond a love of boxing, something about the illicit nature of boxing and the act of watching two black bodies hit each other. It is not even clear that the toy depicted real boxers. At the time, boxers fought shirtless, but the two men in the toy are dressed in long-sleeved shirts, pants, and hats made of cotton. The result is that the men look more like farmers than boxers, more

like rural men caught in the middle of a quarrel. Their heads and arms are made of carved wood that has been painted black and they are made fearsome with large white eyes and open red mouths bearing white teeth. Ives made other clockwork toys with gruesomely depicted African Americans, including their Women's Rights Advocate and Negro Preacher, two toys that were more obvious in their mockery of African Americans (and the women's rights movement).¹⁷ Given Ives' history of representations of African Americans, the Ives Mechanical Boxers toy seems to communicate two messages, that it is funny to see two African Americans fight each other, and that they do not even know how to box properly. These are no professional boxers, and their very masculinity is mocked.

The legendary Jack Johnson, who from 1908 to 1915 was the first African American to hold the world heavyweight boxing championship, may have altered the public perception of the abilities of black boxers.¹⁸ His defeat of James J. Jeffries, a popular former heavy weight champion, in a 1910 match advertised as "The Fight of the Century" also stirred up virulent racism that fed a demand for a "Great White Hope" who could defeat Johnson.¹⁹ As Gerald Early has described it, the world heavyweight title is, "something like being the 'Emperor of Masculinity.'"²⁰ Thus, Johnson's defeat of Jeffries was perceived as a direct threat to both white masculinity and white supremacy. Even after his loss of the heavyweight title, Johnson maintained notoriety in the public eye by way of a high profile court case, a period in exile, a stint in prison, and commercial product endorsements all while continuing to box professionally through the early 1930s.²¹

Children, particularly those who read sports news, would have been familiar with the public commotion that surrounded Johnson's career. Thus it is not surprising that the drama of a black boxer entering the ring against a white boxer, challenging a hegemonic masculinity that oppresses black men, made an appearance in boys' toys in the twentieth century. A tin toy manufactured in the 1920s by Einfalt, a German tin toy exporter, capitalized on the spectacle of a battle between the races. In this wheeled mechanical toy, a white boxer clad in red shorts faced a black boxer in either white shorts or blue shorts with white stars. Like other tin toys, the tin was lithographed before it was pressed and cut and sometimes slight changes were made to the lithography. The blue starred shorts however, clearly evoked the US flag and marked the black boxer as American. So while the toy was not specifically identified as a representation of Johnson, it seems to have at least been influenced by his worldwide celebrity. The toy was a variation on a pull toy. In this case, when the toy was pulled or rolled across a flat surface the wheels triggered a mechanism housed under the boxers' feet that activated the boxers' bent arms so that they swung at the shoulders giving the effect of an assault of upper cuts. Not only was the boxers' mode of attack identical, so were their bodies. The same press mold was used for both boxers so that the lithography was all that differentiated the two. Both had bulging biceps and thick calf muscles, and both wore the same gloves and shoes. That the same mold was used for both boxers was likely a cost saving measure. However, when facing each other in the toy ring, they were both mirror opposites and "racial opposites," giving the toy a strong visual impact.

The image of racial opposites in a boxing ring attracted attention long before Johnson and Jeffries, and even predated the beginning of the American toy industry. For

example, in 1811, a boxing match between African American and former slave Tom Molineaux and Englishman Tom Cribb, a fight Cribb famously won, captivated England and was recorded in an illustrated print.²² Just seven years later, the French Romantic painter Théodore Géricault created a lithograph of a boxing match between a black man and a white man. The black and white lithograph highlights the contrast between the two men's skin, and like the Einfalt toy, their poses neatly mirror each other. Both have their right foot forward, both have their left fist in front of the right, and both stand with knees bent and torsos leaning back and to the left. This visual juxtaposition of dark and light in these illustrations, as well as in the toy is not only an allegory of the two races, but also an assertion that these two opposites will always be at odds.

The rise of African American Joe Louis, the world heavyweight boxing champion from 1937 to 1949, may have inspired additional black and white boxer toys. However, by this time white children may have been more willing to and their parents more encouraging of cheering on the black boxer. Due to Louis' defeat of Max Schmeling, a German boxer with Nazi affiliations, in 1938, a clean reputation, and his patriotic enlistment in the army in 1942, Louis earned the status of national hero. Yet, even with Louis' hero standing, black and white boxer toys continued to present the boxers as polar opposites. This makes particular sense in the case of a toy by Rühl, a German tin toy maker that produced a black and white boxer toy for the export market in the 1940s. German toymakers in the US Occupation Zone were allowed to return to toy making soon after the end of World War II and toy boxers already had a proven market.²³ Lithographed in full color, the Rühl boxers stand atop a two-dimensional boxing ring as a crowd of spectators look on. A windup key activates the boxers who bounce back and

forth towards each other and swing their arms from their shoulders. Like the Einfalt toy, these boxers are nearly identical apart from their coloring. Both stand in profile, both have large bicep and pectoral muscles, both have knobby knees, and both wear shorts with stripes down the sides. It is their skin color, one light and one dark, that mark them as opposites. More subtly, Rühl's designers made the black boxer's lips red in contrast to the white boxer's only slightly pink lips. Whereas both Einfalt boxers had red lips, the difference in lip color in the Rühl toy slyly references blackface minstrel-type representations of blackness. This was perhaps a slight jab at Joe Louis and blacks in general. The toy likely failed to raise any eyebrows in the United States. Though Louis was a national hero, his achievement marked neither an end to racism in the United States nor an end to the use of stereotypes in children's toys.

The Wakouwa Champs boxing toy further simplified the physical differences between the black and white boxers and in doing so reinforced the visual black-white binary.²⁴ This wooden toy, sometimes called a push puppet, from 1947 featured boxers made of hollow jointed wood pieces standing atop a wood boxing ring. When a button under the ring was pushed, strings that ran up through the boxers' bodies loosened causing the boxers to twist around in unexpected directions. The boxers were very simply painted in an opposing color scheme; one with a white body and black gloves, shorts, and shoes, the other with a black body and white gloves, shorts, and shoes. The abstract, slightly folksy nature of the figures, made from a variety of cylindrical and round pieces of stacked wood similar to an artist's mannequin, makes them almost like chess pieces, merely presented in opposing colors to tell the two sides apart. But given the history of black and white boxer toys and the public attention paid to black boxers like Joe Louis,

this does not seem like an adequate understanding of the meaning of the two boxing figures. Rather, a visual representation of a battle between irreconcilable racial opposites persists, leaving Joe Louis, the African American hero, an anomaly.

Hitting Black Bodies

African Americans and African natives were targets of aggression in numerous target toys and games dating from the late nineteenth century until the early 1930s. As sociologist Steven Dubin has noted in his study of the “symbolic slavery” of black imagery in popular culture, for many white Americans the post-slavery era was a period of perceived diminishing white control over blacks, and incorporating racist humor into household objects was a way of “reasserting white control.”²⁵ In target toys or games the objective is to hit a target. These can be quite simple, for example tossing a bean bag or small ball at a target; or they can incorporate weapons, such as a toy gun or bow and arrow to shoot the target. In their more innocent forms, a target toy or game might be seen as a way to develop a child’s hand-eye coordination. But when imagery of racial or ethnic Others is used as the target, the toys become a means of symbolically harming people of color and of asserting white supremacy. Furthermore, as toys and games marketed primarily to boys, they were training tools for an assertion of white masculine power.

Selchow & Righter, maker of the Sliced Nations puzzle discussed in Chapter Two, was an early source of black target toys. A survey of late nineteenth century Selchow & Righter wholesale catalogs reveals four styles of black target toys sold by the firm. “The Negro Target,” also listed as “The Transformation Negro Target,” appeared in the 1882 and 1884 catalogs.²⁶ This target toy consisted of a thirteen-by-fifteen-inch

decorated wood frame that could stand on a level surface. A lithographed image of the back of a black man's head printed on heavy paperboard was fitted inside the frame. Even from the rear, the man's racial identity was made clear by his dark skin, closely cropped hair, and small gold hoop earrings in each ear. A wooden ball attached to an elastic cord, described in the catalogs as a "missile," was attached to the center of the back of the man's head. When the ball was pulled to strike the man's head, scoring in the paperboard caused the image to give way to reveal a second image of the man's face with his eyes squinting and mouth wide open revealing his teeth as if crying out in pain and surprise.²⁷ Initially advertised at nine dollars per dozen, and then lowered to seven dollars per dozen, this toy would have likely retailed for no more than one dollar.

A less expensive version of the toy, called "The New Negro Target," was listed from 1884 to 1886. This target featured a simpler wooden frame with the same illustration of the black man's face used in the more expensive target. Unlike the earlier target, it did not transform. Instead, when the ball attached to the elastic cord was pulled, if the ball struck the man's face in the mouth or either eye, that area of the target would pop out and drop to the floor. Scoring around the eyes and mouth made the action possible. The catalogs explained, "It requires considerable skill and [is] very amusing, still any child can operate it successfully."²⁸ At two dollars per dozen, these would have retailed for about twenty-five cents, making them an inexpensive toy for the middle class child.

What is surprising about these toys is not the abusive treatment of the man on the target – sadly, it was not unusual for toys of the period to present such treatment of racial and ethnic Others.²⁹ Rather, it is the use of the word "Negro" in the names of the toys that

seems out of place with the theme of the toy. At a time when offensive racial epithets were a part of mainstream culture - recall the children's books *Ten Little Niggers* from Chapter Two - Negro was a term many African Americans desired to be called. That these targets used the era's more respectful term for African Americans while also promoting the physical assault of a black man seems contradictory, but it may also be sarcastic, a way of mocking the very term "Negro."

Two targets from the 1899 catalog abandoned Negro in favor of more derogatory names: Sambo and Darkey. The "Sambo Target" and the "Darkey and Clown Target" were small cheap toys, only about nine inches tall, and would have retailed for five or ten cents at the most. In the former toy, "Sambo," was a lithograph of a black person of indeterminate gender (the catalog description calls him "he," but Sambo wears a dress) with stereotypically large eyes, nose, and mouth, mounted on a wood panel. The panel was attached to thin wires on either side so that when struck with the provided wooden ball, the target would spin on its horizontal axis so that "he turns a Somersault." The "Darkey and Clown Target" was listed just below the "Sambo Target." This target featured the face of a black man centered on a wood panel to serve as the target's bull's eye. In addition to the face as a target, a small lithographed figure of a clown could be stood on top of the wood panel. A small metal catapult and wooden ball were provided for hitting the target. If the ball struck the "bull's eye," the black man would take a hit, and the clown would fall off the target.

These two targets not only used names that were offensive to African Americans, but they also used a cartoonish illustration style that emphasized the comical nature of hitting the targets. The introduction of the clown in the last target toy alludes to the idea

that blacks, like clowns, were more amusing playtime characters than they were actual human beings. Denis Mercier has argued that the comical, broadly smiling appearance of black subjects in target toys conveyed the notion that, “Blacks, unlike other people, felt no pain, so players could indulge in and enjoy aggressive assaults because no real pain was inflicted.”³⁰ This may have been especially true for the middle-class white child, whose life experience may or may not have included interactions with African Americans, so that the African American, much like a clown, may have registered with the child as a fantasy character incapable of feeling pain.

Ten Pins games provide an example of how often African Americans, as well as other outsider groups, were interchangeable with make-believe characters. Ten Pins toys are indoor bowling sets. In the late nineteenth century, color lithographed illustrations of popular storybook characters were often glued to the wood “pins.” In its 1914 catalog McLoughlin Brothers offered ten pins in the likeness of Palmer Cox’s multiethnic Brownies, characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, Punch and Judy, and “Funny Creatures” which included Puss in Boots, an owl in a tuxedo, and an African American man dressed in an elaborate three-piece suit and top hat carrying an umbrella. Selchow & Righter offered “The Mikado or Japanese Ten Pins” featuring illustrations of Japanese women in various poses in its 1887 catalog, while wholesaler Butler Brothers offered “Darkey Ten Pins” with boys holding large watermelons in front of their chests with their mouths wide open in 1914.³¹ It would seem the racial outsiders in these toys were one choice of “characters” among others.

Ball tossing games, home versions of popular carnival games such as Skee-Ball, were another form of target toys that incorporated imagery of African Americans married

with that of clowns. The “Alabama Coon” toy advertised in the Sears Roebuck and Company catalog of 1912 featured a die-cut target in the shape of a black man dressed in a clown-like costume of stripes and polka dots and with a beanie on his head. His head is disproportionately large compared to his body, another nod to carnival aesthetics, and his mouth is wide open. A box is mounted to the back of the figure so that his cut-out mouth will accommodate small rubber balls that are to be thrown at him. Balls that successfully landed in his mouth were sent out through three numbered circular cut-outs at his feet. Thus, depending on how the balls were aimed into his mouth, anywhere from one to three points could be earned. The cover of the game’s box shows three small white children dressed in striped suits and straw hats aiming balls at the larger than life target (in reality the target was only fourteen inches tall). The composition evoked children at a carnival, playfully throwing balls at the giant black man.³² The image shows the game as a fun time, and nothing of the implications of hitting a man is acknowledged. There are no consequences – no pain, no guilt.

McLoughlin Brothers offered a similar toy called the “Jolly Darkie Target Game,” in three sizes from 1914 until 1919. Like the “Alabama Coon,” these targets featured a clownish image of a black man dressed in an Uncle Sam inspired suit, with an oversized head and gigantic open mouth. McLoughlin Brothers’ artist added references to minstrelsy by placing a banjo and tambourine in the man’s hands and coloring his lips bright red. A later version of this toy, likely by Milton Bradley, used the same illustration, but placed it next to a clown to create a “Twin Target.”³³ Sitting next to each other, the black man and clown were presented as equals, both with wide open painted red lips, both available for a battery of balls to be thrown at their faces.

Even more aggressive were the target toys that incorporated guns. Toy shooting galleries, also inspired by carnival games, offered a variety of targets to shoot including African Americans and clowns. The “Little Darky Shooting Gallery” offered by Butler Brothers in 1914 was packaged with a pistol that shot rubber tipped arrows and three targets in the shape of African Americans, including one woman which was quite unusual for a boys’ target game.³⁴ Schoenhut’s “Rubber Ball Shooting Gallery,” dating from about 1910 to the 1920s, came with an even larger gun, a rubber ball firing rifle, and a wood framed shooting gallery quite similar in design to carnival shooting galleries.³⁵ Targets included clowns, rabbits, a traditional bull’s eye, and one dandyish black man dressed in a blue suit and top hat. While the action of shooting a black person may not have been a conscious act of racial hostility on the part of the children who played with these toys, the toy makers did undeniably present racial hostility in them.

Hostility towards blacks was not limited to African Americans. African natives were also used as targets. The All-Fair Toy Company of Churchville, NY made a series of games from 1928 to 1931 that used African Americans and African natives as targets. In fact, according to Bruce Whitehill the founder of the American Game Collectors Association (now known as the Association of Game and Puzzle Collectors), All-Fair, “made more games depicting black characters (usually in a comical, stereotypes fashion) than perhaps any other company of that time.”³⁶ All-Fair’s “Tip the Bell Boy” (1929), “Bean-Em” (1931), and “Watch on the Rind” (1931) were games with African American targets. The “Pop and Plop Shooting Game” (1928) and “Jav-Lin” (1931) featured African natives. In all of these games, the black subjects were illustrated in accordance with dominant prejudicial stereotypes of the period.

The objective of “Tip the Bell Boy,” which was carried by Sears Roebuck and Company, was to earn points by catapulting wooden balls into shallow cups.³⁷ Two of the cups were held by a figure illustrated as a black bellboy. Neatly dressed in his uniform, the man stood at the far end of the game’s box base. Balls that fell short of the man could land in one of fourteen numbered cut-out rings, while balls that made it further had the chance to land in one of the bell boy’s cups, in a cup behind the bell boy’s feet, or strike the bell boy causing him to sway and any balls in the cups to fall out. When played in pairs, a child might strategically hit the bellboy so his opponent would lose points. Imagery of blacks as bellboys or porters, examples of low paying, service sector jobs that were available to African Americans, were common in the first half of the twentieth century. Here, tipping the bellboy referred to both the symbolic tipping of the bellboy by landing a ball in one of his cups (in lieu of money), and the literal tipping of the bellboy when a ball struck him. In this way the game made fun of the man’s labor.

“Bean-Em” and “Watch on the Rind” used older stereotypes derived from blackface minstrelsy. The former was a beanbag target illustrated with the heads of three black men – each a cartoonish depiction of men with giant red lips and inky black skin. The men appeared inside large red circles marked with a point value and each man’s name: Mose for twenty points, Sambo for ten, and Rastus for five. “Watch on the Rind” featured three black children with dark black skin and large red lips posed behind a giant watermelon slice. The boys were given the same names used in “Bean-Em,” and included a catapult like the one used in “Tip the Bell Boy” for hitting the child targets.³⁸

The visual constants in these games – the exaggerated facial features and skin color – were carried over in All-Fair’s depictions of African natives. In “Pop and Plop

Shooting Game” the object of the game was to use the included cork gun to shoot cardboard animals, but the box cover was also designed to serve as a backdrop for the shooting range. The cover was illustrated with a jungle scene including a white safari hunter shooting a lion in the belly. To the left of the hunter in the background, is a native with a shield in one hand and a spear raised over his head in the other. His skin is so black that his only visible features are the whites of his eyes and his oversized red lips. As part of the composition, he can also be shot at, along with the elephant, monkey, lion, and giraffe. The “Jav-Lin” box cover illustrated two African natives dressed in skirts made of leaves and grass. They are also adorned with gold arm and leg bands, gold hoop earrings, and topknots held in place by gold rings. While their costumes were distinctive from that of All-Fair’s other black subjects, their gigantic red lips were in keeping with the other games. “Jav-Lin” was package with four feather-accented javelins – wooden rods with a wooden ball at one end and feathers for fletching at the other. To play, the child would throw a javelin at the target which had six cut-outs next to which stood one native who pointed to the cut-outs. As racially charged as the illustrations are, “Jav-Lin” also offered the opportunity for a child to symbolically play an (arguably completely invented) African native game along side an (undeniably invented) African native. Most likely, sometimes the native posed next to the cut-outs was hit by a javelin in the course of playing, and thus the native does not escape the role of target. However, unlike the other All-Fair games discussed, this black man is not the intended target in this game.

It is important to remember that children exercise a great deal of agency in their play. Though Denis Mercier argues that the use of blacks as targets, “revealed an intense white hostility towards Blacks.”³⁹ these toys may not have actually evoked or inspired

hostility towards blacks in the children who played with them. Instead, children may have paid little attention to the subjects of the targets, or they may have, as previously suggested, thought of them as make-believe characters and not as real people. The latter possibility is not an ideal scenario because it denies the humanity of African Americans and African natives, but it seems preferable to adopting the point of view of the toymakers, that the act of shooting, hitting, or knocking down of a person of color was amusing. The “Jav-Lin” game particularly complicates the location of the child in relation to the black target. Could the white child positively emulate the black subject?

The Zulu Toy Manufacturing Company of Battle Creek, MI made dart blowing toys that allowed children to pretend to be “Zulu” hunters. Two versions of the “Zulu Blowing Game” box cover reveal how the toy makers hoped to inspire children to play “Zulu.” The earliest version of the toy, from about 1925, featured a box cover illustration of ten African natives in a lush jungle hunting a giant male lion. The natives wear lion cloths, headbands with a single long curved feather at the back, armbands, and necklaces. Several are shown blowing through a long thin tube aimed at the lion, and others are shown holding identical tubes. Two blow guns similar to the ones in the illustration were included in the box along with eight wooden darts and four small paper bull’s eye style targets. Though it is highly unlikely that any American child would have had the opportunity to hunt a lion, the box’s illustration provided a make-believe play scenario for children – one in which they could emulate rather than target African native hunters. A redesigned box cover dating from about 1927 built on this idea with two possible play scenarios. The right side of the box cover featured an illustration of an African native blowing into his blow gun while surrounded by a thick stand of trees. Text next to this

image encouraged children to, “Form a Zulu Blow Gun Tribe.” Again, this image illustrates how a child might play “Zulu.” Meanwhile, the left side of the box cover showed a domestic living room scene in which four white male children wearing Indian playsuits use the blow guns to shoot at the paper targets they have hung on the room’s curtains. An American flag is hung on the wall to the left of the curtains reinforcing the American location and identity of the children. Here the child was encouraged to adopt a different kind of native identity. A 1928 Zulu advertisement in *Boys Life* magazine stressed the connection between blow guns and diverse native cultures stating, “Centuries ago the African tribes, the American Iroquois and Cherokees used Blow Guns.”⁴⁰ With this language Zulu’s ad writers appealed to a child’s desire to play native. Indeed, playing native, as well as targeting natives, increasingly entered children’s play in the 1930s as representations of Native Americans in boys’ toys increased both due to a Western craze, and because imagery of blacks as targets was no longer perceived to be as socially acceptable.

The Trouble With Indians

Like people of African descent, Native Americans have been frequent targets of aggression in boy toys. And like blacks, they have been presented as easily interchangeable with animals or fantasy beings. For example, The Animal World ABC Blocks, a set of children’s alphabet blocks listed in Bliss Manufacturing Company’s 1911 catalog, featured blocks with letters on one side and color lithographed illustrations of an animal on the other.⁴¹ Alphabet blocks are perhaps the most common educational toy of early childhood in America; however, the lesson of these blocks extended beyond literacy into the realm of systematics. Rather than an animal or group of animals below the title

words “The Animal World,” the cover of the toy’s box was illustrated with a man riding on a horse over a snow-covered clearing surrounded by tall pine trees. Far from a peaceful winter scene, the man and his horse are shown being attacked by two wolves, one of which bites at the man’s torso as he attempts to defend himself with a knife in his raised right hand. The horse is clearly scared, his eyes are wide, his tail erect, and his front hooves leap off the ground attempting escape. If the man on the horse were white, the image might be interpreted as an allegory of nature versus civilization. Instead, he is dressed in a buckskin tunic with a decorative chest piece, full feather headdress, and a quiver full of arrows on his back – he is an Indian.⁴² Here it is implied that the Indian is part of the animal world and not a representative of civilization, that the wolves, horse, and Indian are all part of a shared animal existence where they fight for their survival. While in some ways this is true, all are technically animals and share an ecosystem, it is telling that the only human being to appear in the Animal World ABC Blocks set is an Indian. The popular image of the Native American, one that closely associates Native Americans with the natural world, envisions them as hearty warriors, and locates them in the past, is at work in this image, and while it is on the one hand degrading, implying that Native Americans are less than human, it is on the other hand oddly admiring of his gallantry; after all, this man bravely took on two vicious wolves.

The cover illustration of The Animal World ABC Blocks demonstrates the strange position of the Native American in toys, for unlike African Americans and African natives, Native Americans have also been popular subjects of imitation by children. In the nineteenth century, minstrel show performers in blackface makeup turned pretending to be Other into a lucrative art form. As a form of imitation, blackface

minstrelsy was meant to demean and ridicule, to promote an understanding of blackness as buffoonery and ineptitude and ultimately an inferior state of being. For children, masks and burnt cork make-up kits designed for playing black were advertised in department store and novelty catalogs from the early twentieth century through the 1960s.⁴³ These masks, like so many children's playthings, offered a toned down version of the racism common in adult popular culture, and thus some were quite restrained in their caricature, while others were more overtly exaggerated in their representation, but none embraced blackness the way that Indian costumes, masks, and child-sized accessories seemed to claim Indianness as a child appropriate identity. Furthermore, Indian playsuits, toy tomahawks, feather headdresses, drums, and bow and arrow sets have been a far more frequent and enduring offering in toy stores and the children's pages of major retail catalogs than black equivalents. This was likely because toy makers and sellers were quicker to recognize racist black imagery in toys as potentially offensive (with prodding from African Americans and others), resulting in a tapering off of overtly racist toys with black subjects in the 1930s. While the designers of Indian costume toys also relied on stereotypes for their designs, particularly an invented amalgamation of Western Plains clothing styles widely circulated by late nineteenth century wild west shows,⁴⁴ they were far less likely to grotesquely degrade or mock Native Americans (as was done with African American subjects) and far more likely to promote the idea that Indians represented a natural or pre-civilized state of being whose raucous behavior (again a notion promoted by popular depictions of Native Americans) was natural to childhood and especially boyhood. These "dress-up" toys offered one image of the Native American, that of a white child's alter ego (a relationship that did not exist with blacks -

under slavery Africans and African Americans were often referred to as child-like, but this was a unidirectional analogy and white children were not compared to blacks), while countless miniature toy Indians offered a competing image, that of white civilization's enemy.

Playing Indian

A 1925 article in *Playthings* posed the question, "What boy or girl does not delight in 'playing Indian?'"⁴⁵ Indeed, as much as children seemed to delight in pitting toy cowboys against toy Indians, they also enjoyed pretending to be the Indian. Play often takes the form of energetic rejection of "good" behavior, and the persona of the "wild Indian" lent itself to this kind of play. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the toy industry happily aided Indian play with child-sized tepees, play suits designed to mimic traditional Native American attire (though largely consisting of loose fitting fringed tunics and pants), and a variety of accessories including tomahawks, hatchets, tom-tom drums, hunting knives, and a multitude of feather headdresses. Contemporary scholars sensitive to Native American culture have decried these toys for equating objects of honor with "party hats and playtime objects," as well as lacking any authenticity in terms of design or tribal representation.⁴⁶ These are entirely fair criticisms. However, the fantasy Indian of children's play was uninterested in cultural sensitivity or historical accuracy. For the child, the point of playing Indian was to reject, if only temporarily, non-playtime adult expectations of good behavior.

The props for Indian play demonstrated how adults perceived children, and particularly white children who were the presumed market for nearly all manufactured playthings since the industry's inception, as the inheritors of the frontier fantasy. In this

scenario, children dressed up as Indians relived the excitement of the frontier without leaving the safety of civilization, and they did it from the perspective of the conquered Other. This performance was in line with a theory held by some early twentieth century childhood development scholars, including G. Stanley Hall, who believed that the stages of human development mirrored the evolutionary stages of the human species as described by Charles Darwin. In this “recapitulation theory,” children were analogous to pre-civilized “savage” man, a necessary phase of development to evolve into the next.⁴⁷ Even pediatrician and childrearing authority Benjamin Spock adopted strains of Hall’s theory in his explanation of “preteen rebelliousness and ‘bad manners.’”⁴⁸ Thus, from the perspective of child experts, playing the “wild Indian” was both natural and even vital for a child’s development. Philip Deloria describes this recapitulation theory as intersecting with a parental desire to “prepare children for modernity” at boys’ summer camps, where they were trained to perfect antimodern activities like fishing and mountain climbing before their return to their modern lives.⁴⁹ Mass produced toys for playing Indian might be described as bearing some relationship to this idea of training for modernity, though with less expense and oversight, but certainly they were also designed to carry children through their “savage” phases. Many of the “dress-up” Indian toys were designed for outdoor play where children could let loose in a way that most parents would not knowingly allow inside the home. The physical separation of Indian play from quieter, less boisterous indoor play further reified a distinction between civilized and uncivilized behavior.

A 1947 advertisement for a Wigwam Play Tent by Baker-Lockwood Manufacturing Company (best known as an awning company) offered an illustration of

what playing Indian might look like.⁵⁰ A group of seven boys, ranging from about five to eight years old, were shown playing in and around the wigwam with three of the children racing around its perimeter while two wrestled on the ground, one swung from a tree branch, and another watched from the doorway of the wigwam. The children were dressed to represent three groups - Indians, bandits, and cowboys. Of the three children dressed as Indians, only one wore a typical Indian play suit, in this case, the boy sitting inside the wigwam wore a fringed shirt with matching pants and a headband decorated with a geometric pattern and a single feather at the back of his head. The other two “Indians” were shirtless, wearing only the feathered headbands and dark pants. These were likely their regular pants as the Indian play suits were designed to mimic buckskin and thus were made of tan fabric. Half naked and patting one hand over the mouth while parading around the wigwam the boys were depicted as performing a popular perception of an Indian war dance. The performance and feathered headbands made their play identities clear even in the absence of a full costume. In fact, their bare chests served to highlight their natural, uncivilized state of being. The two “bandits” were also shirtless, wearing only shorts, a half-mask over their eyes, and a single gun and holster at their hips. They seem to represent an intermediate stage between the play Indians and cowboys, the latter of whom were shown as fully clothed in typical boy clothing – shorts or pants and t-shirts – accessorized with bandannas around their necks. The bandannas were both additional products offered by Baker-Lockwood, and symbols of their cowboy identities. As the most civilized of the bunch, the cowboys in this illustration are the least costumed and their role seems the least articulated. However, both the bandits and cowboys wear shoes, the article of clothing perhaps most associated with civility. Even in

their state of Indian play, the children are in fact not far removed from civilization. The wigwam, decorated with an “Indian Legend in hieroglyphic style,”⁵¹ is shown in a suburban backyard evidenced by a house with lush landscaping to the right of the wigwam. The image presumes that children who receive the Wigwam Play Tent will have a backyard in which to set it up. These suburban children live in a civilized land of manicured lawns, but wilderness can be summoned with the right props.

The absence of girls is notable in the Lockwood-Baker wigwam advertisement. The image seems to communicate the idea that Indian play is for boys. The presence of two dogs in the illustration adds to the sense of a male play space. A boy and his dog is a common advertising trope, the visual opposite of a girl and her kitten. Certainly, the idea of playing Indian contained strong notions of masculinity. Hunting and fighting, two activities associated with Indian play are arenas for displaying strength, prowess, and courage – all markers of manliness. However, toy manufacturers and sellers recognized that girls were also attracted to playing Indian.⁵² Blake’s “Big Chief” wigwam play tent, advertised in 1927, proclaimed, “Every boy and girl will want the ‘Big Chief,’”⁵³ and Indian play suits were regularly designed for girls and boys. Typical costumes for Indian play were sold in sizes for four to twelve year olds, and were offered in “Chief” or “Squaw” versions, or more ambiguous unisex designs. For example, the American Wholesale Corporation listed two kinds of Indian play suits in a catalog dating from approximately 1910-1920.⁵⁴ One is described as an Indian Chief and features, a “heavy khaki shirt and trousers, colored felt trimmings, red twill laced yoke front, [and] various colored feather head dress.” The play suit is shown on a little boy, and a nearly identical one is shown next to him, but a girl models it. The primary difference between this play

suit and the former, is that it has “Indian designed art cloth” trim along the tunic and head dress edges and it is more expensive. This play suit also has a “chief head dress,” a designation which might imply that it was for a male, but the model’s Mary Jane shoes indicate that a girl can just as likely wear the costume. The illustration seems to educate the retail buyer about how and to whom to sell the play suits - they are not merely for boys. Even when separate outfits for boys and girls were offered, some aspects of the Indian play suit and expected Indian play behavior remained constant. For example, the 1962 F.A.O. Schwarz Christmas catalog offered separate chief and squaw play suits, with pants for the boy chief and a skirt for the girl squaw, but the long “chief-style” feather headdresses and the decorative motifs on the outfits were identical. Furthermore an accompanying illustration of a white boy and girl modeling the play suits showed them in animated poses, dancing around a campfire holding decorative rattles.⁵⁵ This image implied that in playing Indian, girls playing the “squaw” rejected a domestic play scenario in favor of an active one equal to that of the boy “chief.”

The accessories in fact, avoided any strict gender designation, could last a child through growth spurts, and as demonstrated in the Lockwood-Baker advertisement were the most crucial details of playing Indian. Toy and department stores sold dozens of varieties and combinations of Indian play accessories from the early twentieth century through the Western craze of the 1960s, perhaps the most common being individual feather headdresses. Sets of Indian play accessories ranged from the simple, for example a 1933 “Indian Set” with headdress, tomahawk, chaps, and belt with a knife for only fifty cents (advertised in *Playthings* with the clever headline, “They Paid Him 50¢ to Turn Then Into Indians”), to the more complicated, as with a 1959 “Chief Cochise Play Indian

Set” with a clear plastic mask with attached headband and colored feathers across the forehead designed to give the illusion of war paint and black hair and eyebrows, along with a green plastic tomahawk, blue plastic hunting knife, bow and quiver with suction cup arrows, tom-tom and drum stick.⁵⁶ For added Indian flavor the tom-tom and quiver were decorated with thunderbirds. Historically, there was a Chief Cochise, a nineteenth century Apache from present day Arizona who resisted western expansion into his homeland.⁵⁷ This toy has no connection to the actual Cochise, rather the designers at Transogram seem to have simply selected a Native American name for the toy. As with all of the dress-up Indian toys, authenticity was neither a goal, nor an expectation. Rather, the toys were meant to allow children to explore their “pre-civilized nature” with relatively safe play tools and within range of adult supervision, as well as to partake in a long-standing American tradition of playing Indian.⁵⁸

The bow and arrow included in the Chief Cochise toy set was part of another Indian toy trend, the toy archery set. These toys, often sold with suction cup-tipped arrows for safety, were a domesticated version of the non-toy bows and arrows boys might use at Boy Scout camp. Though Indian archery toys were undoubtedly less accurate and effective than those used by Boy Scouts, they could facilitate a play scenario in which a child practiced an antimodern hunting skill while in the role of Indian. The Chief Cochise example represented one popular version of the Indian archery toy, a bow and arrows with an additional dress-up element to temporarily physically transform the child into an Indian. The Ben Pearson Company, an archery firm that specialized in real bows and arrows for competitive archery and hunting, manufactured another example of this category of archery toy under the name Big Chief Archery Set in 1946.⁵⁹ With a

hardwood bow, this set would have likely shot better than its plastic competitors, but it too had suction cup tipped arrows for safety, and came with a feather headdress. An additional layer of identification was provided on the headdress's headband, an illustration of an Indian wearing a full feather headdress flanked by the words "Big Chief." The child wearing this headdress would not only play Indian by way of wearing the headdress and shooting the bow, he would also be unmistakably identified by the words "Big Chief" and by the illustration of the man he was pretending to be.

Not all Indian archery toys were so didactic in their you-as-Indian design. Some were merely unadorned bow and arrow sets with an Indian name, like the Sioux Chief Bow and Arrow offered in the 1912 Sears Roebuck and Company catalog. This was a metal bow sold with a rubber-tipped arrow. Though the Sears catalog described it as, "Just what the boy needs to play Indian," no reference to Indians was made by the toy's design, and indeed an all-metal bow was decidedly not evocative of an Indian bow.⁶⁰ The name alone made a tentative connection to playing Indian, available should the child choose it. Other Indian archery toys hinted at the potential for playing Indian through their box cover illustrations. Selchow & Righter's Tru-Flight Archery set (1930) was sold in a box with a full color triptych of a mountaintop scene printed on the cover. In the center panel, a man dressed in buckskin pants and a large, elaborate feather headdress that extends just past his hips stands in profile with his left foot in front of the right and his legs hip-width apart, his left arm is raised and fully extended. In his left hand he grips the center of his bow, while his right hand pulls the bow's string back, making the muscles in his right forearm visible. These are not the only visible muscles on the man's body. His shirtless torso also has defined chest and stomach muscles framed by the two

long braids of hair that extend to mid-torso. He is a lean, strong man. He points the arrow in his bow, seemingly aiming at a bald eagle that flies overhead, his left wing extending into the right panel of the triptych.⁶¹ The right panel shows another man, this one is similar in appearance except that he wears only one feather at the back of his head and carries a quiver of arrows on his back, standing farther down the side of the mountain with his bow relaxed at his side while he peers up at the eagle. While the man in the center panel appears in a kind of power stance – his feet firmly planted hip-width apart, his bow erect, his muscles taut, and positioned higher atop the mountain – the man in the side panel takes a more passive pose.

Even without understanding the significance of the full feather headdress, the man in the center panel is clearly the man in charge, the man with whom a child would want to identify. The man is reminiscent of so many depictions of archers in ancient art of the Old World, but here he appears as a man of the New World, dressed to fit the popular archetype of Indian chief. To complete the triptych, a woman appears in the left panel. She stands wrapped in a woven blanket next to a tepee that has been placed next to a mountain crag. She stands so close to the crag and side of the tepee that she nearly disappears into the setting. Her arms that are obscured by her blanket do not carry a bow and arrow or any other visible tools. Though she is located at the same elevation as the “Chief,” she is clearly relegated to the domestic corner of the scene. The small campfire that burns in front of the tepee is her domain, not hunting. While Indian themed archery sets like this one were not only for boys’ play, the imagery they used did communicate an idea about who would or perhaps even should use them. In this case, the illustration calls for a strong, capable boy, not a passive one and not a girl.

In addition to implying who was to play with the archery toy, the illustration also portrayed the commonly held idea that the Indian's glory days were in the past. Below the mountain on which the illustration's subjects stand is a lake or river and beyond that more mountains extend into the horizon which is bathed in a wash of colors that change from purple to orange to blue. It is both literally and metaphorically sunset for the Indians. This complicates the notion that a child would want to emulate the subject of the center panel. Yes, he is powerful and strong, the very image of masculinity, but his time has passed. This tension between strength and defeat is perhaps why the actual archery set sold inside this box did not allude to playing Indian. Instead along with a bow and rubber tipped arrows, the set included targets in the shape of tiger heads.⁶² With no tigers in the United States (outside of zoos), the targets were evocative of an African safari, not for example a buffalo hunt, creating a confusion of location and play identity. Ultimately, with this toy it is unclear if being the Indian is the desired play scenario or not.

The 1946 Horn Bow Game by National Games Incorporated further complicated the appeal of playing Indian. This toy archery set came housed in a box with an illustration of a boy in profile. He is possibly ten to twelve years old and kneels on his right knee in a kind of lunge position. He is outdoors, as indicated by the silhouette of two mountains behind him, and tufts of grass on the ground. He wears a long feather headdress that just skims the ground behind his left foot, buckskin pants with a geometric design running down the legs, moccasins, and no shirt. Like the man on the center panel of the Tru-Flight Archery set, he holds a bow and arrow aloft, but in this case it is aimed at a target of concentric rings mounted between two tree stumps. A black crow flies upward from the target as though it had been perched atop the target and then was

suddenly startled and flew away. Indeed, text on the box cover reads, “Hit the target and see the crow fly,” an allusion to the fact that the game came with two toy crows that would fly (or more likely fall) off the included target when it was struck. Due to the cover boy’s age and pale skin color, he appears to represent a white child playing Indian rather than an Indian engaged in Indian stuff. This is target practice, not real hunting or warfare. Perhaps the boy on the box is meant to demonstrate how a child might play Indian with this archery set, but an examination of the game’s target reveals something more aggressive than scaring crows.

The Horn Bow Game’s target was in the shape of a shield, with three similarly shaped concentric rings printed with point values ranging from ten to seventy-five. The head of an Indian man wearing a full feather headdress appears above the outermost ring, his chin nearly touching the top edge of the target. The box cover makes no reference to the presence of an Indian target inside, instead based on the cover illustration one might expect a large crow in the Indian’s place. Perhaps, this was a play on another kind of crow, a Crow Indian, but the illustration of the archetypal western plains Indian actually seems to add a fourth “ring” to the target, albeit one with no stated point value. The intended meaning of the Horn Bow Game is difficult to decipher. The illustration on the box seems to promote playing Indian, but the Indian on the target seems to promote shooting Indians. These conflicting images both encapsulate the simultaneous admiration of Native Americans and abuse of Native Americans that is a frequent theme in American history, and support the idea that playing Indian and actual Indians are matter of children’s play. Ultimately, this game is highly reminiscent of the earlier black targets, a genre that occasionally included Indians.

Shooting Indians

Though target toys and games with African American or African native subjects were far more common, Native Americans were also fodder for shooting and hitting. The Ideal Novelty and Toy Company, best known for inventing the Teddy Bear in 1903 and introducing the Shirley Temple doll in the 1930s, offered several varieties of Indian targets in the early twentieth century.⁶³ One of these, the Ideal Shooter and Targets dating from approximately 1911, bore a similar design to the 1946 Horn Bow Game. The primary target consisted of four concentric rings with point values starting at twenty-five for the outermost ring and increasing to one hundred for the innermost ring. The target was printed on a large rectangular board, which could be propped up in its box base indoors or out. Instead of a bow, that antimodern weapon associated with playing Indian, a pistol that could be fitted with a rubber suction cup-tipped arrow was used to shoot target. For additional play value, a second target could be placed in front of the bull's eye target. This second target consisted of a stand in which a long, thin metal spring was placed, and atop this spring was a die-cut figure of an Indian on horseback. Shown in profile, the Indian was illustrated with a headband with two rear feathers placed over his shoulder length hair, buckskin pants, and no shirt. The horse was shown as if in mid-gallop with his front legs tucked beneath his body. Placed in front of the main target, the height of the Indian target positioned his body above the outermost ring of the bull's eye target. Like in the Horn Bow Game, the Indian was a bonus target with no explicit point value, just available for shooting. As a "swinging target" the Indian and his horse could be set into motion for a more challenging game, or simply stand still for an additional target ring.⁶⁴ The child playing with this would not likely have done so under the premise

of adopting an Indian identity; rather the child may have pretended to be a Cavalry soldier or a cowboy, subjects commonly portrayed in dime novels and popular culture as natural enemies of the Indian. In this scenario, especially when the swinging target was set in motion so that the Indian would have appeared to be running, the child could easily create a pretend chase or battle. However, the child may have simply shot at the Indian without taking on any play identity. Furthermore, there is no way to know if a child shooting at this target would have developed any animosity towards Indian subjects. For many children, the Indian may have just been a means of target practice, without any prejudice involved.

The Ideal Shooter and Targets, whose main target was printed with the pronouncement “Intensely Amusing,” was listed among the premiums children could earn by selling subscriptions to *The Youth’s Companion*, a popular children’s magazine founded in 1827.⁶⁵ The conflicting ideas about Native Americans demonstrated in the 1931 Tru-Flight Archery set and 1946 Horn Bow Game are also present in the October 19, 1911 issue of *The Youth’s Companion*. Just one page before the Ideal Shooter and Targets, the magazine offered an Indian play suit in exchange for one new subscription plus thirty cents.⁶⁶ The child perusing the premium options, which ranged from books of popular fiction to sporting goods, could make a choice to either play Indian with an Indian play suit or shoot Indians with an Indian target game. It would be up to the child to decide which was more intensely amusing.

Other Ideal Indian targets presented the Indian as part of the animal world and as aggressor. The Ideal Shooting Gallery, listed in the 1912 Sears Roebuck and Company catalog, bore several similarities to the Ideal Shooter and Targets. In this case, a wooden

base with three long thin springs inserted into it could be topped with a choice of eight objects to make swinging targets. The targets included an Indian riding on horseback nearly identical to the one included in the Ideal Shooter and Target, plus several birds and a deer. Also, like the Ideal Shooter and Target, the Shooting Gallery came with a gun, which shot rubber suction cup tipped arrows. The Shooting Gallery had no bull's eye target, rather this was a home-version of a popular carnival game in which the goal is to shoot moving objects. The objects chosen by Ideal for the toy locate the Indian in the natural world of animals, reminiscent of Bliss's Animal World ABC Blocks. However, by making the birds, deer, and Indian subjects for shooting, all three fall into the category of prey – subjects to be hunted and killed. Ideal Indian targets that showed Indians as aggressors might have justified such a view.

Ideal manufactured a series of inexpensive target toys printed on a single sheet of heavy cardboard and sold with a gun and rubber suction cup tipped arrows. These had a variety of illustrations printed on them, ranging from a simple bull's eye to a deer or a human figure with a bull's eye below their head. In the case of the human figure, the subject was either a white male dressed in a hunting outfit or an Indian. Both were shown aiming their a rifle right at the viewer, so that children playing with one of these target toys looked right into the barrel of their "opponent's" gun. The American Wholesale Catalog included a listing for these Ideal targets with the white hunter target illustrated next to the Indian target. Side by side, the similarities in composition of the two is apparent. Each man faces forward with one eye closed as he looks down the barrel of his rifle, each has a traditional bull's eye target (or in the case of the example shown in the figure, multiple bull's eye targets) below his face, and each appears ready to fire. Like the

Horn Bow Game and Ideal Shooter and Target, the men's faces have no given point value, but it is clear that the child playing with the target could choose to aim for the target or for the face above it. Indeed, with these particular Ideal target toys, aiming for the face may have been interpreted as an act of self-preservation. However, in the case of the white hunter, though he may have simply been an anonymous adversary or target of hostility, he may have also served as a pretend mirror image of the child posed as serious hunter. But in the case of the Indian, with his darkened skin and exotic bead and feather hair adornments, his clearly racially marked appearance makes a pretend mirror image seem less likely. A more likely play scenario presents the Indian as an aggressor for the white child to shoot before being shot.

An Indian did not need to pose as an aggressor to be a target of aggression. Snap-It, a dime toy sold by Bee-Jay Products Company in 1925, featured a handheld paddle printed with the face of an Indian man complete with patterned headband and hair beads. A rubber bead on an elastic cord attached to either side of the paddle could be snapped or shot through holes in the man's eyes, nose, or mouth for thirty, ten, or twenty points respectively. That the most points were given for shooting the man in the eye demonstrates that children were rewarded for the level of violence unleashed on the man. In addition to drawing from stereotypical ideas about the physical appearance of Native Americans, including the face's large, flat nose, it incorporated beliefs about the humor of physical injury of members of certain groups. The Snap-It toy was also available with clown and "Chinaman" faces. As previously discussed, clowns served as less than human subjects constantly at the ready for abuse and humiliation. The Chinaman, representative of another minority group, was deemed equally appropriate for assault. Though not

explicitly a target toy, Snap-It provided a means for children to hit an Indian (or clown or Chinaman) and earn points for it. Snap-it and the toy Indian targets represented one adult intervention in the process of understanding the racial Otherness and social position of Native Americans. But when it came to the Indian, perhaps the most common play scenario presented to children was the juxtaposition of the wild Indian with the harbinger of civilization, the cowboy.

The Never Ending Battle of Cowboys & Indians

Cowboy and Indian pairings are so common in the child's world of play that they may seem like the peas and carrots of the toy box; but peas are not known to seek the annihilation of carrots, nor are peas thought to be more advanced than carrots. In children's toys, the cowboy and Indian are perhaps more similar to Warner Brother's *Looney Tunes* cartoon characters the Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote, forever engaged in a game of cat and mouse, and having no fun without the presence of the other.

Encouraged by the popularity of Western themed dime novels and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show among children, toy merchandisers recognized the appeal of the cowboy and Indian genre by the late nineteenth century. For adult toymakers, the appeal of cowboys and Indians was largely nostalgic. The "frontier myth," espoused by historian Fredric Jackson Turner at a meeting of the American Historical Association in 1893, promoted the idea that the days of an untamed frontier complete with clashes with untamed Indians were something to be missed, something that made America special, and something that shaped American values. From this perspective, the West was both "a training ground for national character," and "a touchstone of national identity."⁶⁷ With such weighty meaning packed into western tales, cowboys and Indians were ideal subjects for toys designed to

inculcate children with American values and patriotism. Plus, cowboys and Indians offered an easy to understand symbolic dichotomy of good and bad, a concept children readily comprehend at a young age.

The intertwined nature of fantasy cowboys and Indians meant that playing Indian often also included playing cowboy, indeed many of the earlier mentioned Indian play suits were advertised next to cowboy play suits. Even without the presence of commercial toys, children could take part in the classic role playing game Cowboys and Indians. Similar to Cops and Robbers, in Cowboys and Indians two or more children pretend to be either a “good guy” or a “bad guy.” Traditionally, the cowboy or cop is the good guy, while the Indian or robber is the bad guy. Props can be used, toy guns are particularly popular and in the case of cowboys and Indians a play suit would be ideal, but they are not necessary. Chasing, shooting, and dramatic deaths are standard action in such a game, and boys are most often associated with it, though girls did (and do) play Cowboys and Indians.⁶⁸ In the process of playing Cowboys and Indians, the play scenarios of playing Indian and shooting Indians collide. Children participating as Indians can explore their pre-civilized “wild” nature, and those playing cowboy can satisfy the desire to aggressively stamp out “bad guys” while maintaining the status of “good guy.” This game was converted into a saleable toy in the form of miniature cowboy and Indian figures.

First made from paper, and later composition and plastic, toy cowboys and Indians draw from a centuries old tradition of toy soldiers. Plotting out battles and immersing oneself in fantasy warfare is a pastime that first began with kings and army generals, but eventually made its way to children.⁶⁹ Early examples include McLoughlin

Brothers' Buffalo Bill or the Wild West paper doll set which listed in company catalogs from 1886 to 1900, and included Indians, horses and buffalo in the set. McLoughlin Brothers also offered a Soldiers and Indians paper doll set from 1894 to at least 1918. The Indians consisted of seven scouts armed with a rifle and one chief with a rifle and tomahawk. These paper dolls could be cut out and arranged to reenact a Wild West show or a battle. FAO Schwarz advertised an Indian Camp playset made of composition in a 1910 Christmas holiday advertisement.⁷⁰ The basic set included four Indians, a wigwam, and campfire, but the deluxe set included six Indians, two "whites," one horse, a wigwam, and campfire. The cowboys and Indians were ready for battle, cast in action poses including aiming a rifle while kneeling, running with either a spear or tomahawk in one raised hand, and aiming a bow and arrow while on horseback. The potential for a bloody battle is palpable in these figures, and given the often aggressive dynamics of children's and particularly boys' play one can see how the figures made for attractive toys. However, the appeal of toy cowboys and Indians was still in its infancy, and it took a western craze fueled by television to make cowboys and Indians the ubiquitous toys that they are today.

If nostalgia attracted adults to Westerns, adventure attracted children to it. Young people read Western themed dime novels as early as the Civil War, and continued to engage with the genre as new forms of media entered their lives. Silent films, talkies, comic books and radio all tackled Western adventure stories, creating heroes and celebrities along the way. The Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers, and Cisco Kid were radio and big screen characters that attracted large child audiences in the 1930s and 1940s. In the late 1940s these characters and the Western genre began to transition to

television, establishing a Western craze among the generation that would come to be known as Baby Boomers. A boom of western themed toys soon followed, including play suits, toy pistols and holsters, and especially Western playsets – three-dimensional miniatures that included human or animal figures and scenery or buildings for acting out play scenarios. FAO Schwarz’s Indian Camp playset from 1910 was an early example, but plastic, particularly injection molded plastic, vastly expanded the world of playsets in the second half of the twentieth century. Plastic had an advantage over earlier paper, composition, and metal play figures in that it combined some of the best qualities of those materials. Like paper and composition, plastic was inexpensive and lightweight to keep manufacturing and shipping costs low; like metal, plastic was durable to withstand rough play and amenable to a high level of detail. Western themed playsets primarily focused on the acrimonious relationship between cowboys and Indians, with the figures armed with guns, knives, or bows, and cast in fighting poses, though they also frequently incorporated popular Western television show characters, frontiersmen, cavalry soldiers, and even historical figures.

Louis Marx and Company, often referred to as Marx Toys, was by far the twentieth century’s most prolific manufacturer of Western playsets. Marx introduced its first western playset, the Fort Apache Stockade, in 1951, and by the time the company closed in 1978, it had produced “over 250 standard variations of Marx Western playsets,” including many television and movie tie-in sets.⁷¹ The Western playsets nearly always included figures representative of “good guys” and “bad guys.” Typically this broke down into cowboys and Indians, though occasionally the bad guys were white outlaws or, in the case of Alamo themed playsets, Mexican soldiers. The Western playsets were not

the first time Marx confronted ideas about ethnic and racial Others in their toys, in fact one of the first two toys Marx manufactured was the Alabama Coon Jigger, a mechanical tin toy featuring a dancing African American minstrel.⁷² Louis Marx, the co-founder (with his brother David), president, and face of Marx toys did not invent the Alabama Coon Jigger. In 1921, he purchased the die for the toy from his former employer Ferdinand Strauss.⁷³ The Ferdinand Strauss Corporation, the first American company to mass produce pressed tin mechanical toys,⁷⁴ along with German exporter Lehmann, made Alabama Coon Jigger toys throughout the first twenty years of the twentieth century. However, these Alabama Coon Jiggers were merely variations of the dancing minstrel toy, which have existed since at least the 1880s when Ives produced a version made of wood and cloth. That Marx started his own toy company with an Alabama Coon Jigger toy is telling of the centrality and appeal of ethnic and racial imagery in American toys, as well as Marx's openness to such imagery in his toys.

Though Louis Marx would come to be known as the "Toy King," and "the Henry Ford of the toy world" due to the success of his cheap, mass produced toys, he came from humble beginnings.⁷⁵ Marx was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1896 to Jacob and Clara Lou Marx, immigrants from Germany.⁷⁶ His father was a tailor and his parents also tried their hands at running a dry goods store, but they were unable to keep their businesses afloat.⁷⁷ Louis grew up so poor that, "his parents could not afford to buy a single toy for their son."⁷⁸ At sixteen years old, Louis got a job with Ferdinand Strauss, and proved to be a natural for the toy business, quickly working his way up to factory manager by the time he was twenty.⁷⁹ The Marx brothers set their sights on bigger things and established their own toy company in 1919. They started out as "middlemen," connecting

manufacturers to retailers, and grew to become “the world’s largest manufacturer” of toys by 1950.⁸⁰ When the Toy Industry Association, Inc. (the American toy trade association formerly known as the Toy Industry of America) established a Toy Industry Hall of Fame in 1985, Louis Marx was the first inductee.⁸¹

In terms of a rags-to-riches story, there are many parallels between Louis Marx and Beatrice Alexander, however, they had a very different engagement with politics and the social meaning of their products. Though the Marxes were apparently Jewish,⁸² Louis was neither a practicing Jew – he declared himself agnostic in an interview with *Time Magazine* - nor active in the Jewish charities supported by other members of the toy industry.⁸³ The American toy industry had a strong Jewish presence in the first half of the twentieth century, with Jewish Americans leading several of the nation’s top toy companies, including the Ideal Novelty and Toy Company, The Lionel Corporation, American Character Doll Company, and the Alexander Doll Company. The United Jewish Appeal of Greater New York even had a Toy and Doll Division whose annual banquets were regularly reported on by the toy industry journals *Playthings* and *Toys and Novelties* in articles that read like a who’s who of the toy industry. These events appear to have been golden opportunities for networking and business deals. In addition to representatives from major toy companies, representatives from department stores such as Gimbel Brothers, Hecht Brothers, R. H. Macy & Company, and Bloomingdale Brothers participated on a buyers’ committee. Even as a non-practicing Jew, these events and the causes they supported – primarily promoting positive relationships between Christians and Jews and raising money for Israel – would have been good for business, but it seems that Marx had little interest in them. Louis Marx was known to wine and

dine buyers, but he apparently preferred the 21 Club to public banquets. Marx was also charitable, regularly donating Christmas toys to poor and orphaned children.⁸⁴ But while Alexander wanted her high-end dolls to expand a child's world, foster an appreciation of literature, and serve as a child's friend, Marx emphasized inexpensive sturdy toys with a familiar, easy to follow play script that could entertain a child for hours.⁸⁵ Both Alexander and Marx were concerned with profitability, but Alexander might be understood as having more socially conscious expectations for her dolls, while Marx simply wanted his toys to appeal to the masses.

Marx's early toys were tin mechanical toys in the style of earlier Ferdinand Strauss toys. These toys were whimsical and inexpensive, and they were often recycled with minor cosmetic changes made every few years to maintain their novelty appeal. Marx toys were primarily sold through national chain stores and mail order companies such as Woolworth's, Walgreen's, Sears, J.C. Penney, and Montgomery Ward.⁸⁶ Because most of Marx's orders were placed by these high volume chain stores (ninety percent in 1955), the company had few overhead costs related to recruiting retail buyers, which helped keep toy prices low.⁸⁷ In 1946, seventy-five percent of Marx's sales consisted of toys ranging in price from ten-cents to one dollar.⁸⁸ By the 1950s Marx toys were slightly more expensive, but most fell within the range of slightly less than one dollar to about six dollars for a deluxe playset. The most expensive Marx toys rarely surpassed the ten-dollar mark.⁸⁹

The 1950s were the Golden Age of Louis Marx and Company, aided by the popularity of playsets. Improvements in plastic composition and molding technology, the Western craze, and the growing number of children after World War II all contributed to

Marx's success in selling inexpensive plastic playsets designed to primarily appeal to boys. Marx's Western playsets emphasized play scenarios in which white cowboys, soldiers, or frontiersmen defended themselves against attacking Indians. The Fort Apache Stockade, the original Marx Western playset and model for future Western playsets, consisted of a log cabin made of lithographed tin, panels of log fencing to be erected around the cabin, two block houses to fit onto ninety-degree angles in the fencing, two tipis, thirty Frontiersmen, thirty Cavalry soldiers, thirty Indians, four horses, plus accessories such as ladders, trees, wagon wheels, a water well, axe and chopping block, butter churn, powder kegs, two totem poles, and a flag post with a US flag. Everything except the cabin was made of injection molded plastic, so that a 100-piece playset retailed for less than six dollars in 1957.⁹⁰ In addition to being quite affordable, Louis Marx's nephew Charles Marx has speculated that parents liked Western playsets for their educational value, and claims that, "children could not help but learn about history through their exposure to the classic themes used in [them]."⁹¹ However, the version of history they might have learned was likely fairly inaccurate.

Fort Apache is a real place. It was a late nineteenth century US Army Cavalry post located within a still active Indian reservation of the same name in eastern Arizona.⁹² It was also the site of a battle between the Cavalry and White Mountain Apaches in 1881. In 1948, film star John Wayne starred in a movie titled *Fort Apache* about tensions at a US Cavalry post. Despite its name, the film was not about the 1881 battle at Fort Apache, but rather a "last stand" battle between the Cavalry and the local Indian population that was loosely based on the Battle of Little Big Horn.⁹³ Historical inaccuracies aside, the idea of a "last stand," an epic battle between two conflicting sides that can be reenacted

over and over again with tiny figures with tiny weapons is one that has immense play value. As Charles Marx has also noted, despite whatever parents hoped children might learn from these playsets, children ultimately had their own reasons for playing with them. A close look at the details of Marx's Western playsets reveals part of their appeal.

A fully erected Fort Apache playset would have taken up a good amount of floor or table space. In addition to the fort surrounded by a long log fence, the set came with an "Indian camp" consisting of tepees, a camp fire, and strangely enough, totem poles. Though the Indians in Western themed toys invariably wore clothing associated with the western plains, totem poles, tall carved sculptures made from trees, are most associated with the Pacific Northwest. This confusion of cultural practices is not surprising given that the designers of such toys did not seek authenticity; rather they sought familiarity. Children of the 1950s had likely seen totem poles in photographs, magazines, or comic strips. While children may not have known their exact origins, it is likely that children would have at least known totem poles were Indian related. So though totem poles really had no place in a Western Indian Camp, in these playsets they added to a fantasy understanding of Indian life. The Indian camp also served as a visual contrast to the fort. The fort's inhabitants had a large log cabin, while the Indians had small tepees. The fort had a large fence around it, while the tepees had no fortification. The fort was equipped with domestic items like a water well and butter churn (because even in the Wild West men need butter), and the Indians had a campfire with a kettle. Both parties had at least one woman in their ranks. A woman reloading a rifle accompanied the Cavalry, and a woman kneeling on the ground and another standing with a large bowl accompanied the Indians. Though these playsets were marketed for boys' play, their designers included

small aspects of domestic life in Fort Apache. However, they also included a great deal of gruesome detail.

Nearly all of the playset's toy figures carried weapons and were posed as though engaged in battle. The frontiersmen and Cavalry soldiers usually bore rifles or pistols, though occasionally Cavalry soldiers wielded swords. One Marx Indian held a tomahawk in his right hand and a scalp in his left. A mold for casting the toy figures might have anywhere from one to over one hundred cavities – slots into which the plastic was injected. Molds were typically designed to match up with a particular set or related sets. For example, a mold with eighteen cavities for various Cavalry soldiers was used for the Fort Apache Stockade (1955-1977), the Custer's Last Stand playset (1955-1972), a Rin-Tin-Tin Cavalry set (1956), an Indian and Cavalry set (1969), and several stand alone Cavalry sets (1956-1968).⁹⁴ It was incredibly costly to develop a new mold, and the thematic similarity of so many of Marx's playsets made new molds for every Western playset unnecessary.⁹⁵ Thus, the Indian with the scalp was likely included in numerous playsets, along with Indians with knives, Indians with rifles, Indians with bows and arrows, and Indians with clubs. One shared characteristic of nearly all the Indians was their relative lack of clothing compared to the Cavalry soldiers and frontiersmen.

Though a play script of Cavalry soldiers and frontiersmen defending the fort against invading Indians was encouraged by the Fort Apache playset's box illustrations which showed angry Indians trying to scale the walls of the stockade, and catalogs like the Sears Christmas Wishbook which suggested, "He can help the 30 heroic Frontiersmen in their desperate fight to hold the fort against 30 attacking Indians," children would have ultimately followed whatever play scenario suited them. However, certain ideas about

Indians, frontiersmen, and Cavalry soldiers were designed into the figures themselves. The Indians occasionally held rifles, but mostly used more “primitive” weapons. Nearly all of the Indians are shown shirtless, with either a loincloth or buckskin pants. Some have hair braids and others Mohawk style haircuts. Most have one to three feathers on their heads. In contrast, the Cavalry soldiers wear uniforms with belts and buttoned shirts. They have “modern” weapons. Most wear a hat. The frontiersmen bear similarities to both the Indians and the Cavalry soldiers. They wear buckskin pants like some of the Indians, but also buckskin shirts to provide full chest coverage. They also wear fur “coonskin” hats and they carry rifles. Markers of modernity are much stronger with the Cavalry soldiers and frontiersmen, even though the frontiersmen have adopted some wilderness elements to their attire.

Frontiersman Davy Crockett and his coonskin hat were catapulted to icon status by a series of live action television specials by the Walt Disney Company beginning in late 1954. By the following spring, stores had sold over one hundred million dollars of Davy Crockett merchandise, some of which was earned by Marx.⁹⁶ Taking advantage of the Crockett craze, in 1955 Marx released a Fort Apache Stockade with “Famous Americans” added to the figures. Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, General George Custer, Sitting Bull, Daniel Boone, and of course Davy Crockett were miniaturized and thrown into the Fort Apache set with no explanation as to why they might be there. Marx also made a Davy Crockett Frontier playset and a licensed Walt Disney Davy Crockett at the Alamo playset that same year. The former included a plastic ranch house with a white fence a Davy Crockett figure wearing buckskin and a coonskin hat, ten cavalry soldiers, and twelve Indians.⁹⁷ The latter included a lithographed tin Alamo and lithographed tin wall

sections designed to look like adobe. In keeping with the story of the Alamo, the toy figures consisted of one Davy Crockett figure, thirty “attacking” Mexican soldiers dressed in army uniforms with distinctive round infantry hats, and thirty “stalwart” frontiersmen.⁹⁸ The set also included five cannons, eight horse, trees, ladders, and a tiny replica of the flag that was flown at the Battle of the Alamo.

In this playset, as dictated by Disney’s “Davy Crockett at the Alamo” television special, the Mexican soldiers replaced Indians as the bad guys, with the frontiersmen still in the role of good guys. Historians Randy Roberts and James S. Olson have described Disney’s representation of the Mexican Army as that of a “horde;” the Mexicans were “nameless and faceless, indistinguishable from another.”⁹⁹ This is true of many bad guys and apparently caused some confusion at Marx, as some Davy Crockett sets inexplicably replaced the Mexican soldiers with Indians. But the confusion did not stop with the bad guys; good guys were interchangeable too. The specification sheet for a Davy Crockett Alamo set in 1956, listed one set of “PL-443 Indians (12-pieces)” along with one set of “PL-442 Cavalry Figures (10-pieces).”¹⁰⁰ One outcome of this interchangeability of the different groups of good guys and different groups of bad guys is that a racial division becomes apparent. The good guys are white and the bad guys are not. This is a pattern that existed in Marx’s basic cowboy and Indian sets from at least 1956 - those sold with a small cabin in place of a stockade, tepees, covered wagons, canoes, horses, cowboys with cowboy hats, lassoes, and pistols, and Indians with tomahawks and bows – until 1975 when a black Cavalry scout named Jed Gibson was added to Marx’s Johnny West Adventure action figure series.¹⁰¹ Jed was only available for one year. By the following

year the Western craze was over, and the Johnny West series rode off into the sunset barely acknowledging the near blanket whiteness of toy Western heroes.

Conclusion

Toy makers have used outsider groups as targets of aggression in toys since the late nineteenth century, very near the beginning of American manufactured toys. These toys have been most often marketed as boys' toys, and thereby have participated in the construction of an ideal masculinity for boys that is supported by the oppression of racial Others. By promoting play in which outsider group members are appropriate targets of masculine aggression the toys may have desensitized children to violence and dehumanized people of color in white children's eyes, turning them into make-believe characters rather than real people.

Gary S. Cross argues that these kinds of toys, "were designed to prompt negative emotions [and] feelings of power at abusing an outcast character, who was pictured as uncivilized, insignificant, and foolish," and that they, "surely passed on racist stereotypes to children."¹⁰² While it is not known if children were powerless against absorbing racist ideology from racially aggressive toys, it is certainly one possibility. In the case of target toys with black subjects, the toys largely appealed to notions about blackness that were established by blackface minstrelsy and that were slow to erode from popular culture. In the case of Indian toys, Indians served as an outlet for children going through their "primitive stage," but as they outgrew this stage and became "civilized," there was an expectation that their play would eventually take up the position of the cowboy, the ultimate conqueror of the West turning little plastic Indians into targets of white

colonialism and violence. In both cases, the humanity of the subjects was rarely acknowledged.

Like cartoon characters who repeatedly have anvils dropped on their heads, children could find humor and amusement in hitting a black or Indian man through racially aggressive toys because they did not register to the children who played with them as real people. The pervasiveness of such dehumanizing imagery was alarming to many people of color, who sought more accurate and uplifting images of Otherness for children's play. By the late 1960s this was an increasing concern in communities of color, and it prompted a movement for more sensitive and "ethnically correct" representations of minorities in toys. The expansion of segment marketing into the toy industry and a wave of minority owned toy companies is the subject of the next chapter.

¹ A television commercial dating to approximately 1964, the year the toy was introduced, used this phrasing, but the toy's box typically read, "Knock his block off!" The commercial can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joDjwjtIQS8>.

² R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Second ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 37.

³ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 137-39.

⁴ For example, see Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levin, *The War Play Dilemma : Balancing Needs and Values in the Early Childhood Classroom*, Early Childhood Education Series. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987); — — —, *Who's Calling the Shots? How to Respond Effectively to Children's Fascination with War Play and War Toys* (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1990); Nancy and Diane E. Levin Carlsson-Paige, "Marketing Violence: The Special Toll on Young Children of Color," *The Journal of Negro Education* 72, no. 4 (Fall 2003).

⁵ See Brian Sutton-Smith, "War Toys and Childhood Aggression," *Play & Culture* 1(1988): 57-69; Gisela Wegener-Spohring, "War Toys and Aggressive Games," *Play & Culture* 2, no. 1 (1989): 35-47; Jeffrey Goldstein, "Immortal Kombat: War Toys and Violent Video Games," in *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*, ed. Jeffrey Goldstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 53-68.

⁶ Marsha Kinder, "Kids' Media Culture: An Introduction," in *Kids' Media Culture*, ed. Marsha Kinder (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 7; Nancy and Diane E. Levin Carlsson-Paige, "Young Children and War Play," *Educational Leadership* (December 1987/January 1988): 81.

⁷ Gary S. Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 112.

⁸ "Pupils Forget Burning Guns; Pelt Teachers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 12, 1934, 1.

⁹ For a full summary of these theories see Goldstein, "Immortal Kombat: War Toys and Violent Video Games."

¹⁰ See Wendy Holloway, "Take the Violent Toys from the Boys? Desire for Containment and the Containment of Desire," *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 4, no. 2 (1999).

¹¹ Bernard Mergen and others have argued that, "girls willingly play boys' games, but boys vigorously resist girls' games." See, Bernard Mergen, "Games and Toys," in *Handbook of Popular Culture, Volume II* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 301.

¹² Sutton-Smith, "War Toys and Childhood Aggression," 66-67.

¹³ Mark Powell, "Children's Play and Television," *Montessori Life* (Winter 2001): 37; Sutton-Smith, "War Toys and Childhood Aggression," 65.

¹⁴ The boxers are listed in an 1892 Ives wholesale catalog, though at a May 2010 auction they were dated at 1885. See http://www.antiquetrader.com/article/stevens_antique_bank_collection_could_make_history/.

¹⁵ For example, the 1892 Marshall Field & Company wholesale catalog lists two similar Ives clockwork toys at thirty-six and thirty-three dollars per dozen. See Joseph J. Schroeder, Jr., *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930* (Northfield, IL: DBI Books, Inc., 1971), 53-54.

¹⁶ Inez Bertail and Marshall McClintock, *Toys in America* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 95.

¹⁷ The Women's Rights Advocate also seems to be a visual slur, ostensibly calling white women suffragists no better (or more intelligent or worthy of equal rights) than blacks. Racializing white women suffragists in this way reinforced the notion of the supremacy of white masculinity over all O/others. These two toys were originally made by the Automatic Toy Works Company, which was taken over by Ives who continued to make the toys. See *Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁸ William H. Wiggins, "Boxing's Sambo Twins: Racial Stereotypes on Jack Johnson and Joe Louis Newspaper Cartoons, 1908 to 1938," *Journal of Sport History* 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 244.

¹⁹ This was the first of three so called "Fights of the Century." The other two were Joe Louis versus Max Schmeling in 1938 and Joe Frazier versus Mohammed Ali in 1971. Geoffrey C. Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 225-59.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹ For a full biography, see *Ibid.*

²² Cribb's biographer Jon Hurley describes the fights between Cribb and Molyneaux, beginning in 1810, as orchestrated by Cribb's manager to fully exploit the commercial appeal of a public test of white superiority. The fights were "brutal," with Molyneaux repeatedly losing and suffering severe injuries. See Jon Hurley, *Tom Cribb: The Life of the Black Diamond* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009), viii, 65-66, 74-87, 99-111.

²³ Germany had long been a major exporter of toys and toy making offered a way to restart the postwar German economy without risk of remilitarization. As part of this effort Louis Marx, head of Marx Toys and a good friend of General Dwight Eisenhower (the first Military Governor of the US Occupation Zone in Germany) toured German toy factories after Germany's surrender to determine which factories could reopen and confirm that no factories had the equipment to manufacture arms. See "Louis Marx: Toy King," *Fortune* 33, no. 1 (January 1946): 125.

²⁴ Wakouwa also made the toy with two black boxers that, like the Ives Mechanical Boxers, seems to have relied on the appeal of seeing two black bodies being beaten.

²⁵ Steven C. Dubin, "Symbolic Slavery: Black Representations in Popular Culture," *Social Problems* 34, no. 2 (April 1987): 131.

²⁶ Selchow & Righter may not have manufactured the targets as they were both manufacturers and wholesalers. Selchow & Righter, *Selchow & Righter Wholesale Catalog, 1882-3* (New York: Selchow & Righter, 1882), 57; — — —, *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1884-5* (New York: Selchow & Righter, 1884), 49.

²⁷ Selchow & Righter, *Selchow & Righter Wholesale Catalog, 1882-3*, 57; — — —, *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1884-5*, 49.

- ²⁸ Selchow & Righter, *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1886-1887* (New York: Selchow & Righter, 1886), 23.
- ²⁹ Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*, 98.
- ³⁰ Denis Mercier, "From Hostility to Reverance: 100 Years of African-American Imagery in Games," in *Ethnic Images in Toys & Games: An Exhibition at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, April 17 - October 13, 1990*, ed. Pamela B. Nelson (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1990), 31.
- ³¹ McLoughlin Brothers, *McLoughlin Brothers' Eighty-Sixth Annual Catalogue* (New York: McLoughlin Brothers, 1914), 66; Selchow & Righter, *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1887-1888* (New York: Selchow & Righter, 1887), 26; Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 188.
- ³² Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 135.
- ³³ Milton Bradley acquired McLoughlin Brothers in 1920 and continued to use many of McLoughlin Brothers' illustrations, though Milton Bradley's printing never had the crisp colors or quality of McLoughlin Brothers.
- ³⁴ Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 188.
- ³⁵ The 1921 Sears Roebuck and Company catalog lists the Schoenhut Rubber Ball Shooting Gallery, but it was likely first available earlier. See, James Spero, *Collectible Toys and Games of the Twenties and Thirties from Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 19.
- ³⁶ Bruce Whitehall, *Games: American Boxed Games and Their Makers, 1882-1992* (Radnor, PA: Wallace-Homestead, 1992), 61.
- ³⁷ Spero, *Collectible Toys and Games of the Twenties and Thirties from Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogs*, 66.
- ³⁸ Whitehall, *Games: American Boxed Games and Their Makers, 1882-1992*, 62-64.
- ³⁹ Mercier, "From Hostility to Reverance: 100 Years of African-American Imagery in Games," 31.
- ⁴⁰ Zulu Toy Manufacturing Company, "Zulu Target Game [Advertisement]," *Boys' Life* (November 1928): 49.
- ⁴¹ Based in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Bliss was best known for lithographed paper based toys and was a competitor of McLoughlin Brothers and Selchow & Righter. See, Blair Whitton, ed. *Bliss Toys and Dollhouses* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. in association with the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum 1981), 3.
- ⁴² I have adopted Arlene Hirschfelder's formula for using the terms Indian and Native American. I use the term Indian to refer to the imagined image of Native Americans promoted in popular culture and, in this case, children's toys. I use Native American to refer to actual people and not their stereotyped portrayal. See Arlene Hirschfelder, "Headdresses, Drums, and Bows and Arrows: Indian Imagery in Children's Toys," in *Ethnic Images in Toys & Games: An Exhibition at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, April 17-October 13, 1990*, ed. Pamela B. Nelson (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1990), 40-47.
- ⁴³ For example, the 1912 Sears Roebuck & Co. catalog offered four different sets of masks, each of which included at least one black mask, as well as a "Negro Makeup Outfit" which included a "black cotton hood and realistic large eyes, thick red lips and large teeth." As late as 1960, the Newark Mask Company, a novelty wholesaler, sold

“Negro” masks in child, youth and adult sizes, as well as four varieties of “character make-up” for playing Minstrel, Zulu, Chinaman, Indian, Mexican, clown, pirate, witch, devil or skull. See Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 150.

⁴⁴ Hirschfelder, "Headdresses, Drums, and Bows and Arrows: Indian Imagery in Children's Toys," 40. For more on this reduction of Native American diversity see — — —, "Headdresses, Drums, and Bows and Arrows: Indian Imagery in Children's Toys."; Arlene B. Hirschfelder, Paulette Fairbanks Molin, and Yvonne Wakim, *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999).

⁴⁵ William Bliss Stoddard, "Selling Indian Dolls and Playthings," *Playthings* (January 1925): 401.

⁴⁶ Hirschfelder, "Headdresses, Drums, and Bows and Arrows: Indian Imagery in Children's Toys," 42.

⁴⁷ Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 104; Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 190.

⁴⁸ Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 163.

⁴⁹ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 106.

⁵⁰ "Wigwam Play Tent," *Playthings* (May 1947): 16.

⁵¹ A 1946 Lockwood-Baker advertisement for the Wigwam Play Tent described the “hieroglyphic[s]” as telling the story of “The Coming of the Corn,” which could be translated with the code book that was included with every wigwam. See "Play Tents for Children," *Toys and Novelties* (August 1946): 91.

⁵² Girls were drawn to Western adventures in more ways than just dressing up as Indian. Toy books and dime novels about Indians were popular with boys *and* girls in the late nineteenth century, and Indian dolls were regularly sold in toy departments in the first half of the twentieth century. For example, the 1895 Butler Brothers wholesale catalog included a listing for “Assorted ‘Wild West’ Dolls,” which included “Indian, squaw, and Mexican cowboy” 13¾-inch bisque dolls with jointed bodies. See Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 94. Similarly the Alexander Doll Company has included specifically named Hiawatha and Pocahontas dolls in their line since the 1930s. The appeal continues unabated as demonstrated by Mattel’s Barbie which has released seven Native American Barbies since 1993 (not including the three Eskimo Barbies which were first introduced in 1982).

⁵³ "Blakes 'Big Chief' Indian Wigwam Play Tent," *Playthings* (April 1927): 37.

⁵⁴ The cover is missing from this catalog and no date is printed on the remaining pages. The date of 1910-1920 is based upon several of the toys listed in the catalog, which date to that period. American Wholesale Corporation, *[Catalog]* (American Wholesale Corporation, c.1910-1920), 514. Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Toys, Box 1, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

⁵⁵ F.A.O. Schwarz, *Schwarz' Toy Bazaar* (New York: F.A.O. Schwarz, 1962), 87. Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Toys, Box 3, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

⁵⁶ "They Paid Him 50¢ to Turn Them into Indians," *Playthings* (October 1933): 75; Transogram, *1959 Transogram Catalog* (1959), 15. The Transogram catalog can be found in the Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Toys, Box 4, Folder 2, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

⁵⁷ See David Roberts, *Once They Moved Like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache Wars*. (New York: Touchstone, 1994).

⁵⁸ For more on this tradition see Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

⁵⁹ Ben Pearson was a competitive archer, and former Boy Scout, who made his own bows. The archery company he founded in 1931 is still in business. See Cliff Huntington, "Mr. Ben," *Stickbow*

<http://www.stickbow.com/stickbow/history/benpearson.html>(accessed July 7, 2010).

⁶⁰ Schroeder, *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*, 141.

⁶¹ It seems unlikely that a Native American would have actually shot down a bald eagle due to their spiritual significance. However, given that the bald eagle is also a symbol for the United States, perhaps this is a kind of subversive (though likely unintended) commentary about US treatment of Native Americans.

⁶² Product information is from the following advertisement: Selchow & Righter, "Boys - Here Are the Games with a Real Kick!," *Boys' Life* December 1930, 68.

⁶³ McClintock, *Toys in America*, 432-33.

⁶⁴ "Ideal Shooter and Targets," *The Youth's Companion* (October 19, 1911): 563.

⁶⁵ Ibid; Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History*, 76.

⁶⁶ "Ideal Shooter and Targets," 562.

⁶⁷ Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, "Introduction: The West, Westerns, and American Character," in *Hollywood's West: The American Frontier in Film, Television, and History*, ed. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 2, 5-6.

⁶⁸ In a 1989 study of children's play, girls were found to more frequently play the role of Indian when playing Cowboys and Indians with boys. The same study found that these girls were more likely to "sneak up on the cowboys and surprise them" rather than shoot at them during the game. Girls' less aggressive approach to the game and willingness to take the "bad guy" role is indicative of not only differences in girls' and boys' play patterns, but also the perceived value of playing the "good guy." See Sally Sugarman, "Playng the Game: Rituals in Children's Games," in *Rituals and Patterns in Children's Lives*, ed. Kathy Merlock Jackson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 134.

⁶⁹ Claudette Joannis, "Canons Et Soldats De Plomb: Jouets De Princes, Objets De Musee," *La Revue du Louvre et des Musees de France* 51, no. 5 (2001): 68-71.

⁷⁰ F.A.O. Schwarz, *Schwarz Christmas Review* (New York: F.A.O. Schwarz, 1910). Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Toys, OS Box 199, Folder 3, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

⁷¹ "Marx Western Toys," The Official Marx Toy Museum of Glen Dale, West Virginia, <http://www.marxtoymuseum.com/western.htm>; Jay Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide* (Sykesville, MD: Greenberg Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), 49.

⁷² The other was a climbing monkey wearing a fez, which though not explicitly an ethnic toy, did have tones of foreignness and perhaps even blackness embedded in the design. The fez wearing monkey is most closely associated with trained monkeys that danced or

clapped with organ grinders or other street performers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is not entirely clear why monkeys were dressed in fezzes, but as discussed in chapter one, in popular imagery the fez generally connotes North Africa and monkeys have long been used as derogatory symbols of blackness. So while Marx's toy monkey was likely a reference to performing monkeys, other connections can be drawn.

⁷³ "The Little King," *Time* 66, no. 24 (December 12, 1955): 92.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ "Louis Marx: Toy King," 122.

⁷⁶ "The Little King," 92.

⁷⁷ Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 15; Cheryl Harshman, "Marx Toy Company: Making Memories in Glen Dale," *Goldenseal* (Winter 2007): 9.

⁷⁸ Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 15.

⁷⁹ Harshman, "Marx Toy Company: Making Memories in Glen Dale," 10.

⁸⁰ Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 15.

⁸¹ Inc. Toy Industry Association, "Hall of Fame Inductees 1985-2004," *Toy Industry Association, Inc.* (accessed June 28, 2010).

⁸² Harshman, "Marx Toy Company: Making Memories in Glen Dale," 9.

⁸³ Louis Marx's children were apparently sent to Episcopal services, though this may have been the result of his second wife's religious beliefs. "The Little King," 92.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "Louis Marx Gives Six Characteristics of a Good Toy," *Toys and Novelties* (December 1959): 90.

⁸⁶ Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*, 4; Morton A. Hirschberg, "Meet Mr. Marx the Merry Maker," *Antiques & Collecting* 113, no. 5 (July 2008): 39; Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 32-33.

⁸⁷ "The Little King," 92.

⁸⁸ "Louis Marx: Toy King," 125.

⁸⁹ To see Marx toy prices in the 1950s and 1960s, see Thomas W. Holland, ed. *Boys' Toys of the Fifties and Sixties: Memorable Catalog Pages from the Legendary Sears Christmas Wishbooks, 1950-1969* (Calabasas, CA: The Windmill Group 1997).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁹¹ Charles Marx, "Introduction," in *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, ed. Jay Horowitz (Sykesville, MD: Greenberg Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), 13.

⁹² The Fort Apache Indian Reservation is still active, with a population of 12,429 as of 2000, and a thriving ski resort, camping and hiking grounds, and casino. U.S. Census Bureau, "Census 2000 Summary File 1.,"; White Mountain Apache Tribe, "White Mountain Apache Tribe " *White Mountain Apache Tribe* <http://www.wmat.nsn.us>(accessed July 1, 2010).

⁹³ For more on *Fort Apache* see Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 313-46.

⁹⁴ Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 54-57, 88, 104.

⁹⁵ Jay Horowitz estimates that a set of molds for a complete Western playset would have cost \$132,000 to develop in the 1950s, and at least one million dollars today. See, *Ibid.*, 53.

⁹⁶ James S. and Randy Roberts Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 254.

⁹⁷ Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 99.

⁹⁸ Language is from the 1955 Sears Christmas Wishbook Catalog, see Holland, ed. *Boys' Toys of the Fifties and Sixties: Memorable Catalog Pages from the Legendary Sears Christmas Wishbooks, 1950-1969*, 56.

⁹⁹ Olson, *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory*, 242-43.

¹⁰⁰ This seems to be the only year that the mix-up occurred. Horowitz, *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, 101.

¹⁰¹ Tom Heaton, *The Encyclopedia of Marx Action Figures: A Price Guide and Identification* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 1999), 84-85.

¹⁰² Cross, *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*, 99.

- American Wholesale Corporation. *[Catalog]*: American Wholesale Corporation, c.1910-1920.
- "Blakes 'Big Chief' Indian Wigwam Play Tent." *Playthings* (April 1927): 37.
- Bureau, U.S. Census. "Census 2000 Summary File 1."
- Carlsson-Paige, Nancy and Diane E. Levin. "Marketing Violence: The Special Toll on Young Children of Color." *The Journal of Negro Education* 72, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 427-37.
- — —. "Young Children and War Play." *Educational Leadership* (December 1987/January 1988): 80-84.
- Carlsson-Paige, Nancy, and Diane E. Levin. *The War Play Dilemma : Balancing Needs and Values in the Early Childhood Classroom*, Early Childhood Education Series. New York: Teachers College Press, 1987.
- — —. *Who's Calling the Shots? How to Respond Effectively to Children's Fascination with War Play and War Toys*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1990.
- Chudacoff, Howard P. *Children at Play: An American History*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.
- Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. Second ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Cross, Gary S. *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- — —. *Kids' Stuff: Toys and the Changing World of American Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Dubin, Steven C. "Symbolic Slavery: Black Representations in Popular Culture." *Social Problems* 34, no. 2 (April 1987): 122-40.
- F.A.O. Schwarz. *Schwarz Christmas Review*. New York: F.A.O. Schwarz, 1910.
- — —. *Schwarz' Toy Bazaar*. New York: F.A.O. Schwarz, 1962.
- Goldstein, Jeffrey. "Immortal Kombat: War Toys and Violent Video Games." In *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*, edited by Jeffrey Goldstein, 53-68. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Harshman, Cheryl. "Marx Toy Company: Making Memories in Glen Dale." *Goldenseal* (Winter 2007): 8-13.
- Heaton, Tom. *The Encyclopedia of Marx Action Figures: A Price Guide and Identification*. Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 1999.
- Hirschberg, Morton A. "Meet Mr. Marx the Merry Maker." *Antiques & Collecting* 113, no. 5 (July 2008): 38-43.
- Hirschfelder, Arlene. "Headdresses, Drums, and Bows and Arrows: Indian Imagery in Children's Toys." In *Ethnic Images in Toys & Games: An Exhibition at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, April 17-October 13, 1990*, edited by Pamela B. Nelson, 40-47. Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1990.
- Hirschfelder, Arlene B., Paulette Fairbanks Molin, and Yvonne Wakim. *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography*. 2nd ed. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999.
- Holland, Thomas W., ed. *Boys' Toys of the Fifties and Sixties: Memorable Catalog Pages from the Legendary Sears Christmas Wishbooks, 1950-1969*. Calabasas, CA: The Windmill Group 1997.

- Holloway, Wendy. "Take the Violent Toys from the Boys? Desire for Containment and the Containment of Desire." *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 4, no. 2 (1999): 275-80.
- Horowitz, Jay. *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*. Sykesville, MD: Greenberg Publishing Company, Inc., 1992.
- Huntington, Cliff. "Mr. Ben." *Stickbow* <http://www.stickbow.com/stickbow/history/benpearson.html> (accessed July 7, 2010).
- Hurley, Jon. *Tom Cribb: The Life of the Black Diamond*. Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009.
- "Ideal Shooter and Targets." *The Youth's Companion* (October 19, 1911): 563.
- Joannis, Claudette. "Canons Et Soldats De Plomb: Jouets De Princes, Objets De Musee." *La Revue du Louvre et des Musees de France* 51, no. 5 (2001): 68-71.
- Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.
- Kinder, Marsha. "Kids' Media Culture: An Introduction." In *Kids' Media Culture*, edited by Marsha Kinder, 1-28. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.
- "The Little King." *Time* 66, no. 24 (December 12, 1955): 92+.
- "Louis Marx Gives Six Characteristics of a Good Toy." *Toys and Novelties* (December 1959): 90.
- "Louis Marx: Toy King." *Fortune* 33, no. 1 (January 1946): 122-27, 63-64.
- Marx, Charles. "Introduction." In *Marx Western Playsets: The Authorized Guide*, edited by Jay Horowitz, 13. Sykesville, MD: Greenberg Publishing Company, Inc., 1992.
- McClintock, Inez Bertail and Marshall. *Toys in America*. Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961.
- McLoughlin Brothers. *McLoughlin Brothers' Eighty-Sixth Annual Catalogue* New York: McLoughlin Brothers, 1914.
- Mercier, Denis. "From Hostility to Reverance: 100 Years of African-American Imagery in Games." In *Ethnic Images in Toys & Games: An Exhibition at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, April 17 - October 13, 1990*, edited by Pamela B. Nelson, 30-39. Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1990.
- Mergen, Bernard. "Games and Toys." In *Handbook of Popular Culture, Volume II*, 301-06. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Mintz, Steven. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.
- O'Connor, Peter C. Rollins and John E. "Introduction: The West, Westerns, and American Character." In *Hollywood's West: The American Frontier in Film, Television, and History*, edited by Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2005.
- Olson, James S. and Randy Roberts *A Line in the Sand: The Alamo in Blood and Memory*. New York: The Free Press, 2001.
- "Play Tents for Children." *Toys and Novelties* (August 1946): 91.
- Powell, Mark. "Children's Play and Television." *Montessori Life* (Winter 2001): 36-39.
- "Pupils Forget Burning Guns; Pelt Teachers." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 12, 1934, 1.

- Roberts, David. *Once They Moved Like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache Wars*. New York: Touchstone, 1994.
- Schroeder, Joseph J., Jr. *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*. Northfield, IL: DBI Books, Inc., 1971.
- Selchow & Righter. "Boys - Here Are the Games with a Real Kick!" *Boys' Life*, December 1930, 68.
- — —. *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1884-5*. New York: Selchow & Righter, 1884.
- — —. *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1886-1887*. New York: Selchow & Righter, 1886.
- — —. *Selchow & Righter Games and Home Amusements Wholesale Catalog, 1887-1888*. New York: Selchow & Righter, 1887.
- — —. *Selchow & Righter Wholesale Catalog, 1882-3*. New York: Selchow & Righter, 1882.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.
- Spero, James. *Collectible Toys and Games of the Twenties and Thirties from Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogs*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988.
- Stoddard, William Bliss. "Selling Indian Dolls and Playthings." *Playthings* (January 1925): 401-02.
- Sugarman, Sally. "Playng the Game: Rituals in Children's Games." In *Rituals and Patterns in Children's Lives*, edited by Kathy Merlock Jackson, 124-38. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.
- Sutton-Smith, Brian. "War Toys and Childhood Aggression." *Play & Culture* 1 (1988): 57-69.
- "They Paid Him 50¢ to Turn Them into Indians." *Playthings* (October 1933): 75.
- Toy Industry Association, Inc. "Hall of Fame Inductees 1985-2004." *Toy Industry Association, Inc.* (accessed June 28, 2010).
- Transogram. *1959 Transogram Catalog* 1959.
- Ward, Geoffrey C. *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.
- Wegener-Spohring, Gisela. "War Toys and Aggressive Games." *Play & Culture* 2, no. 1 (1989): 35-47.
- White Mountain Apache Tribe. "White Mountain Apache Tribe " *White Mountain Apache Tribe* <http://www.wmat.nsn.us> (accessed July 1, 2010).
- Whitehall, Bruce. *Games: American Boxed Games and Their Makers, 1882-1992*. Radnor, PA: Wallace-Homestead, 1992.
- Whitton, Blair, ed. *Bliss Toys and Dollhouses*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. in association with the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum 1981.
- Wiggins, William H. "Boxing's Sambo Twins: Racial Stereotypes on Jack Johnson and Joe Louis Newspaper Cartoons, 1908 to 1938." *Journal of Sport History* 15, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 242-54.
- "Wigwam Play Tent." *Playthings* (May 1947): 16.
- Zulu Toy Manufacturing Company. "Zulu Target Game [Advertisement]." *Boys' Life* (November 1928): 49.

Chapter Five

The Rise and Fall of Minority Owned Toy Companies

In the fall of 1986, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on an emerging “hot market” - minority children. Interviews with two newcomers to the toy industry, African Americans Yla Eason and Yvonne Rubie, revealed that the nation’s population of black children was “growing three times faster” than that of the white population, and that despite recent efforts by toy industry leaders Hasbro, Mattel, and Coleco, black dolls on the market failed to provide black children with “the sort of heroines or leaders” white dolls provided for white children.¹ Eason and Rubie’s motivations for entering the toy market were portrayed as largely related to social concerns. They wanted to make toys that would provide black, Latino, and Asian children with positive images of themselves. Meanwhile the reporter described the mainstream toy industry’s aggressive maneuvering for the minority market segment as led not out of any social concerns, but a recognition of profits to be made. To these companies, a black doll with a slightly fuller nose and mouth, and perhaps an Afro, was a means to make money – one that should only be undertaken if, as Mattel president Thomas Kahnske explained, “the market size warrants the investment.”² At play here were not just differences of *why* toy makers should make ethnic dolls, but also differences in *how* toy makers imagined these dolls should represent their subjects.

This tension over dolls representing racial and ethnic Others had been present for decades, particularly within the African American community. The need for “good looking colored dolls” that could “teach Negro children to respect their own color” was

expressed as early as 1908 in the black literary magazine *The Colored American*. In an editorial aptly titled “Negro Dolls for Negro Babies,” African American lawyer E. A. Johnson bemoaned the potentially harmful effects of giving a black child a white doll claiming, “To give a Negro child a white doll means to create in it a prejudice against its own color, which will cling to it through life.”³ A limited range of alternatives to white dolls complicated Johnson’s call for black dolls.

Black dolls, as well as dolls representing Native Americans, Mexicans, Eskimos, and Chinese, were not impossible to find at the turn of the century. However, non-ethnically specific white dolls far outnumbered them, making ethnic dolls something of a novelty. For example, the 1895 wholesale catalog for Butler Brothers carried over seventy china or bisque dolls.⁴ Of these, four were black dolls, and six were sold in assorted sets consisting of a costumed “Indian, squaw, and Mexican cowboy,” or “1 Indian, 2 squaws and 3 Chinese women.” The latter assorted collections of dolls would have appealed to children enamored of Wild West shows and international dolls (see Chapter Two for more on this), while the former dolls paint a more complicated picture. The Butler Brothers catalog listed the black dolls as either “Glazed Nigger Baby” or “Glazed Nigger Dolls,” depending on the dolls’ size.⁵ With retail prices ranging from one to five cents, these undressed dolls were far more affordable than their Indian, Mexican, or Chinese counterparts who would have retailed for between twenty-five cents and three dollars. That the black dolls were sold undressed was not unusual as nearly half of the dolls listed in the Butler Brothers catalog were sold without clothing. This kept prices low, and in an era when children routinely made their own doll clothes it was not an impediment to sales. While financial access to the black dolls offered by Butler Brothers

would have been easier than for the other ethnic dolls, they had the added burden of a prejudicial label that would have likely been off-putting to African American buyers.

Sociologist Doris Wilkinson has written about racial socialization through toys and toys as “tools of propaganda.”⁶ Despite the prevalence of terms such as “nigger” and “darky” in popular language of the turn of the century, Wilkinson argues that labels like “glazed nigger dolls” were undoubtedly meant to be offensive. She claims these names, “functioned to provide information and to transfer adult definitions of blacks to children’s items of entertainment.”⁷ Thus it is highly unlikely that a black parent would have purchased a doll with such a label and as a result, for a less affluent black child, an inexpensive white doll may have been the best option.

Many white parents apparently had no such qualms about buying a “nigger doll.” The prevalence of black dolls with prejudicial names or stereotypical appearances throughout the turn of the century and into the first half of the twentieth century is a result of the ubiquity of prejudice in everyday life as well as the popularity of black dolls in the white market. Indeed, in a series of oral histories recording women’s doll play in the first half of the twentieth century, multiple white respondents recalled owning and playing with a black doll, in some cases it was even a favorite doll.⁸ Another study of doll play, this one conducted by education experts G. Stanley Hall and A. Caswell Ellis in 1897, found that white children had mixed feelings about their black dolls. Children’s responses ranged from one four year old girl who, “wants to feed everything that tastes good to her black rag doll,” to a girl who “feared a black doll and burnt it in the fire.”⁹ Whether these feelings were racially motivated is unclear though. Miriam Formanek-Brunell’s study of turn of the century doll culture found recurring rituals of extreme

affection and extreme abuse in girls' doll play.¹⁰ What is clear is that black dolls, especially "Mammy," "Topsy-Turvy," and "pickaninny" dolls were clearly popular with many doll buyers as they were mainstays of toy catalogs.

The Mammy doll, an adaptation of the mythical black nurse maid who selflessly cared for white children, was catapulted to new heights with the introduction of the Aunt Jemima rag doll in 1905. As the official spokes-character toy for Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour, Aunt Jemima rag dolls married advertising with children's play. For just a few cents and coupons cut from pancake flour boxes, a child could receive an official Aunt Jemima rag doll.¹¹ By 1910, Aunt Jemima was joined by her husband Uncle Mose and her "pickaninny" children Diana and Wade Davis. The entire family of dolls could be had for sixteen cents and four package coupons.¹² The popularity of Aunt Jemima expanded an already established genre of homemade and manufactured Mammy dolls. It was exactly these kinds of stereotypical representations that African Americans opposed, so that even middle class and "aspiring class" black parents who wished to give their children black dolls found it difficult to do so.

Positive, or at least non-racist, representations of blacks in turn of the century dolls did exist, but they were more often than not expensive imports. German doll makers Armand Marseill, Huebach Koppelsdorf, and Simon & Halbig, as well as French doll makers Jumaeu, Bru, Mascotte, and Société de Fabrication de Bébés et Jouets were among the European companies that exported black dolls to the United States.¹³ These dolls typically ranged from five- to twenty-inches tall and represented babies through small children. While some of them followed the model used in Butler Brothers' "nigger dolls," simply applying dark black paint or glaze to a white doll, others came in a variety

of skin tones ranging from light to medium brown with what black doll collector Myla Perkins calls “Negroid features.”¹⁴ Though Perkins is vague on exactly what Negroid features entail, she calls attention to one such doll’s “detailed modeling of cheek bones, mouth, and nostrils.”¹⁵ It is clear however that a number of African Americans wished to give their children black dolls with both realistic skin tones and facial features, dolls that would defy the racial stereotypes of the day. The challenge was that in addition to being expensive, these imported dolls could be difficult to locate.

Richard Henry Boyd, a Baptist minister and former slave based in Nashville, Tennessee sought to solve the problem of access to respectable black dolls. In 1908, the same year of E. A. Johnson’s call for “good looking colored dolls,” Boyd established the National Negro Doll Company in Nashville.¹⁶ Initially Boyd commissioned dolls made in Germany, “according to specifications of his own,” and later the dolls were manufactured in Nashville.¹⁷ The dolls had a “mulatto” skin tone designed to appeal to middle and aspiring class African Americans.¹⁸ The choice of skin color reflected values promoted by this community. As one advertisement for the dolls in the Nashville *Globe*, an African American newspaper also founded by Boyd, explained, “These dolls are not made of that disgraceful and humiliating type that we have grown accustomed to seeing Negro dolls made of. They represent the intelligent and refined Negro of the day, rather than the type of toy that is usually given to children and, as a rule, used as a scarecrow.”¹⁹ The dolls were meant to counter the stereotypes found in so many commercial black dolls and offer an alternative vision. The National Negro Doll Company sold its dolls through advertisements placed in African American newspapers, including *The Afro-American* and *The Crisis*, and at church sponsored events such as the Baptist Sunday School

Congress, the National Baptist Convention annual meeting, and “doll bazaars.”²⁰ Despite the endorsement of the National Baptist Convention, the company failed to become profitable and closed around 1915.²¹ One problem was price. The company’s motto was “Negro Dolls for Negro Children,” but perhaps the motto should have been “Negro Dolls for Wealthy Negro Children.”²² Despite Boyd and the National Negro Doll Company’s efforts to make racially uplifting dolls more accessible, the dolls continued to be quite expensive. Even though the dolls were sold undressed, presumably to keep costs low, in 1911, the smallest of the nine offered dolls, a twelve-inch doll, sold for one dollar, and the largest, at thirty-six inches, sold for eight dollars and fifty cents.²³ The latter was an astronomical price for a doll in 1911, and the former would have still been difficult for many.²⁴

The quest for realistic black dolls continued, particularly in New York City where (at least) four black-owned doll companies appeared between 1917 and 1922. As historian Michele Mitchell has pointed out, growing African American urban populations with discretionary funds aided the growth of consumer items specifically aimed at the black community.²⁵ So even with the closing of the nation’s first mass-producer of black-designed black dolls, it was unsurprising that others would attempt to fill the void. African American Otis H. Gadsden advertised his, “Beautiful, Brown Skinned Dolls,” in the *Chicago Defender* and *The Crisis* from at least January 1917 until December 1919.²⁶ It is not clear where he got his dolls, but it is clear that he associated his dolls with a larger project of instilling race pride and patriotism. In one of his early advertisements he proclaimed, “There can be no better gift than a colored doll to a colored child.”²⁷ By the following year, in addition to selling dolls, he also advertised, “Patriotic pictures of the

great war showing Negro officers and soldiers, including *colored heroes*. [...] These are the only pictures on the market today, so far as we know, that show the great part the colored women are doing in this great war.”²⁸ To accompany these empowering, patriotic prints he added a girl doll dressed as a Red Cross Nurse and a boy doll dressed as a soldier to his line. He called these dolls “Colored Dolls of Distinction.”²⁹ The political message in these dolls could not be clearer. By dressing them in uniforms at a time of war the dolls made a claim to citizenship and all the rights and responsibilities that come with it. Though Gadsden’s dolls sold from one dollar to four dollars, keeping his price spectrum lower than that of the National Negro Doll Company, his company advertisements disappeared after 1919. Mitchell notes that a number of companies offering black dolls, “appeared on the scene during and immediately after World War I, when imported dolls became difficult, if not impossible, to procure.”³⁰ As it does not seem that Gadsden had his own factory, it is possible that he purchased his dolls from Europe, and by 1919 his supply ran dry.

A doll factory specializing in black dolls opened in Harlem in 1918, avoiding the problem of imports. Herbert S. Boulin was president of Berry & Ross, which was founded by Evelyn Berry and Victoria Ross.³¹ Boulin was a colorful character. Born in Jamaica, he immigrated to the United States in 1909 and settled in Harlem.³² While working at the Berry & Ross factory he promoted shares of the company in African American newspapers including the *Chicago Defender* as well as on tours through the South, all while working his way into Marcus Garvey’s inner circle in his role as a Bureau of Investigation informant. Apparently the information Boulin plied from Garvey was unimpressive and he was dismissed from his informant gig. However, he must

have been inspired by his experience, as he became a part-time private detective around 1920.³³ It seems that his side jobs did not hamper the success of Berry & Ross, and, as reported in the *Chicago Defender*, the company's stocks did quite well, paying quarterly dividends to shareholders and supporting the expansion of the company into clothing manufacturing.³⁴ By offering shares of the company to the black community Berry & Ross depended on black customers not only to support the company and keep it afloat by buying its black dolls, but also to add to the wealth of the community. This "investing in ourselves" approach was another way a black-owned doll company could contribute to racial uplift. In November of 1921, a fire broke out in the basement of Berry & Ross's factory building. Boulin was in his office at the time, and he and his secretary had to be rescued by ladder. According to a news article, the factory and office were "badly damaged by heavy smoke."³⁵ It is not clear how seriously Boulin may have been injured, or if the factory was forced to temporarily close, but approximately one year later Marcus Garvey (remarkably still friendly with Boulin) and his Universal Negro Improvement Association purchased the Berry & Ross factory and began making black dolls to support their Black Nationalism projects.³⁶ Even after the change of hands, the dolls did not lose their social or economic value to the black community.

Whereas Garveyites celebrated dark skin and racial purity, most black doll makers advertised dolls with medium brown skin. Walter B. Abbot, founder of Nutshell Variety Sales Company, or simply N. V. Sales Company, called his black dolls "Sun Tan" dolls highlighting their medium tone. He apparently hit on a winning formula, because whereas previous black-owned doll companies rarely lasted more than a few years, N. V. Sales stayed in business for thirty-two years. Beginning in 1921, Abbott advertised his dolls

with “charming complexion[s]” along with hair straightening combs and Gloria Preparations hair pomade.³⁷ That he partnered medium to light hued black dolls with hair straightening products speaks to the beauty standards (and aspirations) accepted by the readers of the African American newspapers in which he advertised. It also speaks to the relationship between dolls and instilling beauty standards in children, particularly girls. This perhaps makes it all the more understandable why Garvey hoped dark skinned dolls would encourage black children to embrace their dark skin, but it also reveals how, with a little help from a straightening iron, a dark skinned child could tame their natural hair for a more “sun tanned” look. This is not to say that Abbott was not committed to racial uplift. The same advertisement mentioned above proclaimed, “Give your child a Negro character doll, and not the Bandanna Style!” In this case, the straight, combable hair and skin “in several shades of Black, brown and beige” operated in defiance of stereotypical Mammy and pickaninny dolls with their nappy hair and coal black skin.³⁸ In fact, Abbott’s political roots ran deep. He was related to the founder of the *Chicago Defender*, Robert S. Abbott, and he ran the New York office of that newspaper for many years. He started his doll business – including developing paint colors and buying half of a doll factory - while still working for the *Defender* as a way to support the struggle for black equality “on another front.”³⁹

Despite N. V. Sales Company’s long-term success in the doll business, it too eventually floundered. According to his son, materials restriction during World War II prevented the firm from expanding, resulting in Abbott’s retirement from the business in 1953.⁴⁰ However, obituaries in the *New York Amsterdam News* and *Chicago Defender* praising Walter Abbott’s contributions to little girls in the form of uplifting black dolls,

identified a different reason for the company's demise. Both newspapers claimed he was "forced out due to competition from the national toy manufacturing companies."⁴¹

Competition is a normal part of any business, and it is certainly present in the toy industry. Demand for racially sensitive black dolls was established by the 1920s making them an attractive genre for any doll maker. The African American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* celebrated the increasing popularity of black dolls in the black community of 1927, and encouraged its readers to continue buying black dolls for their children.⁴² This message was echoed throughout the advertising pages of African American publications which saw an influx of new doll makers in the 1920s and 1930s including: Bell Manufacturing Company, O-K Colored Doll Company, Bethel Manufacturing Company, Art Novelty Company, Santone Manufacturing Sales Company, and the Victoria Doll Company.⁴³ It is not clear if all or any of these companies were black owned. The increased popularity of realistic black dolls meant that they were even being advertised in the toy industry trade journal *Playthings*, where toy buyers from across the country turned to find new products for their shelves. The Standard Product Company, a business with a Harlem address, advertised Negro dolls in *Playthings* in 1923 and 1924.⁴⁴ N. V. Sales also advertised in *Playthings* in 1924 and 1925.⁴⁵ But it is clear that by the 1930s, white owned companies were making inroads in the realistic black doll business. The timing of this may have been the consequence of increasing demand, though it is likely that the economic crisis of the Great Depression also impacted the survival rates of black-owned doll companies.

An example of a white owned company that made non-stereotypical black dolls was the Lujon Sun Tan Colored Doll Company of New York, which was active from

1935 to 1949. John C. Arthe, the son of German immigrants and a longtime figure in the doll industry, was a wholesaler and manufacturer of dolls “made in various natural shades from light sun tan to rich chocolate.” None of the dolls produced by the National Negro Doll Company, Otis H. Gadsden, Berry & Ross, the N. V. Sales Company or Lujon are known to have survived to the present day, thus it is difficult to know how they might have compared to each other. However, based on recorded descriptions of Lujon’s dolls it seems safe to say that through their physical appearance they also aimed to provide uplifting representations of black children. The Lujon dolls were well dressed in organdy, dotted swiss, and plaid percale, and as one company advertisement proclaimed, “We make only high class colored dolls.”⁴⁶ Arthe presented his collection of “exclusively” black dolls at the 1937 and 1939 Toy Fairs, annual industry events at which toy buyers show off their lines and store buyers plan which toys to stock for the year.⁴⁷ The dolls appear to have been well received as Arthe moved the company’s showroom to a larger space to accommodate “a steadily growing demand for their extensive line of colored dolls” in 1940.⁴⁸ One aspect of the Lujon business that was repeated in news briefs about the company in *Playthings* was Arthe’s established reputation in the toy industry. His business networks undoubtedly aided the success of his company, giving him access to insider events like the Toy Fair and possibly advantages in securing credit and sales orders.

By the end of World War II, more established white-owned toy and doll companies dominated the manufacture of realistic black dolls with a series of four high profile black dolls. The Patty-Jo, Amosandra, Jackie Robinson, and Saralee dolls were

introduced between 1947 and 1950. Though they entered the marketplace at approximately the same time, they represented vastly different concepts in design and function.

The Terri Lee Company was founded in 1946 with one doll mold used to make toddlers dolls of little girl Terri Lee and her adopted brother Jerri. Within a year Terri Lee founder Violet Gradwohl added additional dolls to the line including Mexican and Eskimo girls and an African American girl and boy named Bonnie and Benjie. All of the dolls used the original Terri Lee mold. Paint schemes, costumes, and wigs were the primary means of differentiating the dolls from each other.⁴⁹ Despite the company's claim that Bonnie and Benjie were, "The first negro dolls that negroes will be proud to buy for their children," sales of the Bonnie and Benjie dolls apparently lagged behind the other dolls.⁵⁰ Fortunately, the editor of the toy industry journal *Toys and Novelties* knew a woman who was looking for a doll maker to make a black doll she could promote.

Jackie Ormes, an African American cartoonist with a comic strip titled *Patty-Jo 'n' Ginger* that ran in the African American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier*, contacted Franklin Butler at *Toys and Novelties* after she had difficulty finding a doll maker that would make a doll in the likeness of her cartoon character Patty-Jo that fit her high expectations. Gradwohl agreed allow Ormes to makeover Bonnie's face to convert it into a Patty-Jo doll. As Ormes's biographer explained, "Gradwohl brought Ormes on board in hopes of capitalizing on Patty-Jo's and Ormes's name recognition within the black middle class and thereby boosting sales of the black dolls."⁵¹ This collaborative model is allowed Ormes to get the doll she wanted, and Gradwohl an entre to the middle class black market.

The Patty-Jo doll raises a complicated issue around authenticity. The original Terri Lee mold continued to be used for the new Patty-Jo doll. Ormes's redesign of Bonnie's face was entirely cosmetic, that is she used paint to reshape the lips, and give the doll Patty-Jo's signature long eyelashes and raised eyebrows. Furthermore, due to the complexities of dying the Cel-tone plastic that the doll was made of, no satisfactory skin color could be achieved without painting the entire doll a light shade of brown.⁵² One recurring complaint in the African American press was that often black dolls were simply painted white dolls. For example, a 1952 article in *Ebony* bitterly criticized the practice of "painting white dolls a dark brown and 'passing' them off as 'Negroid.'" ⁵³ Yet, despite the fact that Patty-Jo was essentially one of these "passing" dolls, the African American press lauded the doll's representation of blackness. *Ebony*, the *Negro Digest*, and unsurprisingly her home paper the Pittsburgh *Courier* applauded and promoted the doll, as did *Toys and Novelties* who called it, "truly representative of a long misrepresented American people."⁵⁴ Part of the willingness to overlook Patty-Jo's white origins was Ormes's position as a prominent black illustrator and model of black middle class success. Her personal touch on the doll's features was judged as sufficient to transform Terri Lee into an authentically black child. Another reason Patty-Jo may have been accepted by the black press was her high price tag. Though the editor of the *Negro Digest* admitted, "nobody in my set can afford a Patty Jo," he still praised it – this was a doll to aspire to own.⁵⁵ With a retail price of \$11.95 in 1947, the doll was more expensive than an American Girl doll of today. Clearly the market for Patty-Jo (and the other Terri Lee dolls) was the upper echelon of the middle class. Gradwohl secured distribution of Patty-Jo at the same high-end department stores where Terri Lee dolls were sold, but those

stores had primarily white customer bases. Ormes handled marketing to the black elite herself.⁵⁶ Despite the fanfare surrounding Patty-Jo, she was phased out of the Terri Lee line in the early 1950s, perhaps eclipsed by other emerging prominent black dolls.

On February 20, 1949 a bouncing baby girl was born on the popular radio show *Amos 'n' Andy*.⁵⁷ Her proud parents Amos and Rubie named her Amosandra, a name that combined the title characters' names. Within a week of her birth she was unveiled at the New York City Macy's department store in the form of a ten-inch rubber baby doll. Like the Patty-Jo doll, the Amosandra doll was based on a fictional character. However, whereas Patty-Jo was inspired by a comic drawn by a successful and respectable African American, Amosandra was inspired by a radio show that incorporated blackface, racist humor, and demeaning representations of African Americans. Amosandra's pedigree did not make her a good candidate for a racially uplifting doll. The Sun Rubber Company manufactured Amosandra, a project in which they reportedly invested \$100,000 in research. According to an article that ran in the *New York Amsterdam News* and *Los Angeles Sentinel*, Sun Rubber executives presented drawings of the proposed doll to unnamed "Negro leaders," but the drawings were deemed "too Negroid." Photos from "Harlem photo studios" proved no better help in developing an acceptable doll. Ultimately, children's book illustrator Ruth Newton was recruited to submit sketches, and her illustrations of "a little curly headed sepia doll that could pass for white if it did not have dark skin," were collectively approved.⁵⁸

While *Amos 'n' Andy* was almost universally despised in the black community, one can imagine why the editors at the *New York Amsterdam News* and *Los Angeles Sentinel* thought their readers would be curious about the new doll. Columbia

Broadcasting System (CBS), *Amos 'n' Andy*'s radio network launched a major national advertising promotion around the birth of Amosandra and retailers took advantage of the free advertising by creating large window and counter displays, along with local newspaper advertisements. The customer response was such that Sun Rubber Company reported producing 12,000 dolls per day to keep up with the demand.⁵⁹ African American parents had to have wondered what was so great about the doll, particularly when advertisements for the doll were even run in the *New York Amsterdam News*.⁶⁰

“She cries! She drinks! She wets!” read one advertisement for Amosandra.⁶¹ In addition to these fairly standard baby doll abilities, the Amosandra doll was made of a soft, huggable rubber that could be immersed in a bathtub without damaging the doll. To aid in bath time play scenarios she came with a small bar of soap and soap dish, plus a bottle for feeding time, a rattle for play time, and a hot water bottle and teething ring for when she was feeling fussy. A copy of her birth certificate verified her identity, and though she was only dressed in a flannel diaper, a separate layette set was also available. In addition to her celebrity status, one of Amosandra's selling points was her affordability. She retailed for less than three dollars. Her other major selling point was her cuteness. Ruth Newton's design for Amosandra was cuteness personified. Large smiling eyes, chubby rosy cheeks, and chubby dimpled arms and legs - as a Sun Rubber Company advertisement described her, “Amosandra is a sweetheart if we ever saw one!” In contrast to the blackface worn by the actors who played the title characters of Amos and Andy, Amosandra had a medium brown skin tone and in no way resembled her “parents.”

In spite of all of Amosandra's physical merits, she carried the baggage of her heritage. In sharp contrast to the language the Sun Rubber Company used to describe Amosandra, a Macy's advertisement slipped in language that subtly incorporated the kinds of stereotypes used in the *Amos 'n' Andy* show, stating, "You never saw such a cunning little bundle."⁶² The rest of the advertisement stuck to describing her actual physical features and accessories. But this little jab, ascribing a personality trait stereotypically associated with African Americans and which a baby could not possibly have, refused to let Amosandra detach herself from the nasty legacy of blackface minstrelsy that her radio show character parents perpetuated.

Amosandra's problematic heritage was likely a huge barrier to sales in the black community. In fact, a Macy's representative reported that approximately seventy-five percent of their Amosandra sales were to white customers.⁶³ Yet, in many ways she could have been an ideal black doll. She was affordably priced, multi-functioning, and designed with a non-stereotypical appearance – in fact she even had a slightly wide so-called "Negroid" nose representative of the kind of authenticity many black parents desired. But if her pedigree were not enough of an obstacle, she also lacked authenticity. Her designer was not a member of the black community and neither was the Sun Rubber Company. Though Amosandra sold very well – one report stated 200,000 dolls were sold in the first year alone – and the Sun Rubber Company advertised her until 1954, the company recognized that they missed the black market with this doll.⁶⁴ In 1956, they introduced a baby doll designed to specifically appeal to the African American market. The Sun-Dee doll was larger than Amosandra at eighteen-inches tall, but it had many of the same features including drinking, wetting, and cooing. Made of a more durable vinyl (rubber

dolls tend to dry out and crack over time), much attention was paid to the doll's hair, which was molded to look like "dark, wavy hair which hangs in seemingly natural ringlets."⁶⁵ Though Sun-Dee had none of the baggage that Amosandra carried, she did cost more retailing at nearly eight dollars. Sun Rubber was apparently caught in the pattern of less expensive black dolls with image problems and more expensive black dolls with desirable images, that has been present since the late nineteenth century.

Another celebrity black doll was introduced to the market in 1950. This time the celebrity was based on a real person – baseball player Jackie Robinson. The Allied-Grand Manufacturing Company, a company with a history of making Mammy and Topsy dolls, released an officially licensed Jackie Robinson toddler doll in 1950.⁶⁶ Jackie Robinson was by this time major celebrity, having "broken the color line" that maintained segregation in professional baseball when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. The doll's debut coincided with the release of *The Jackie Robinson Story*, a movie about his life.⁶⁷

Allied-Grand disassociated itself from its past black dolls in the design of the Jackie Robinson dolls. The doll depicted a fresh faced little boy, about two or three years old, with a medium brown skin tone and sweet smile dressed in a Dodgers uniform and topped with a baseball cap. The doll alone retailed for just under two dollar and when packaged with a warm-up jacket and baseball bat the price increased by one dollar.⁶⁸ The doll was remarkably well priced and as Robinson was a hero to many the doll would have seemingly held appeal for both black and white children. The strange thing about the doll though was Allied-Grand's decision to make the Robinson doll a toddler doll. True, children like cute toddler dolls, but there was a major disconnect between the Jackie

Robinson children may have seen on television or at the movies and the Jackie Robinson portrayed by the doll. Furthermore, though young boys do often enjoy doll play, it is an activity more associated with girls. Surely some little boys received this doll and played with it, just as surely some little girls did. But, the form of the doll may have prevented some Robinson fans from buying it. So despite Robinson's popularity, the doll was only advertised for a couple of years and then disappeared from the market. In 1950, action figures had not yet been introduced to the toy market (a feat attributed to GI Joe in 1964), but perhaps Robinson would have had a more lasting appeal as an action figure.

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt hoped that a black doll that was introduced in 1951 would appeal to black children while also providing white children with "a healthy respect for Negroes."⁶⁹ The Saralee Negro Doll captured the attention of popular media with features in *Life Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*, as well as *Ebony*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, *Playthings*, and *Toys and Novelties*. The doll was not only marketed with the provocative claim of being the world's "first anthropologically correct Negro doll," but it also carried the seal of approval of such cultural heavyweights as Ralph Bunche, Zora Neale Hurston, and the aforementioned Eleanor Roosevelt.⁷⁰ A white woman from Belle Glade, Florida named Sara Lee Creech, who *Playthings* described as a "leader in inter-racial activities," became concerned that black children did not have "quality" black dolls with which to play and decided to create just such a doll.⁷¹ With the assistance of well-connected friends, Creech commissioned a doll head by sculptor Sheila Burlingame who "studied more than a thousand photographs of negro children from which to fashion models" along with "their corresponding head measurements."⁷² This concern with creating a head

that reflected real heads of black children was equally extended to the doll's skin color. To determine which color would best fulfill the doll's goal as a tool of racial uplift, a "color jury" was convened. Comprised of African American leaders and educators, and headed by Roosevelt, the group selected "soft medium brown" for the doll's skin.⁷³

Though several black educators cautioned Creech that a single doll in a single shade of brown would not be able to adequately represent the black race, and suggested that several dolls in different shades be released simultaneously, only the Saralee baby doll made it to production.⁷⁴ Original plans for additional dolls were featured in an article in *Life Magazine*, showing an older brother and sister, but the manufacturer of the Saralee doll already had doubts about the marketability of the doll. In fact it seems that had the doll not had such powerful supporters behind it, it may never have been produced.⁷⁵ The Ideal Toy Company, best known as the inventor of the teddy bear and maker of the Shirley Temple doll, agreed to make the Saralee doll both out of company president David Rosenstein's background in sociology and interest in children's welfare, and the potential public relations coup in producing a doll endorsed by so many prominent Americans.⁷⁶

When the doll was introduced the market in late 1951, much was made of the doll's uniqueness. One black newspaper expressed excitement about doll explaining that it was not like earlier black dolls which "were either white dolls painted brown or sable, or they were the 'mammy' or 'pickaninny' type."⁷⁷ *Playthings* reported on "uniformly enthusiastic" reactions to the doll.⁷⁸ But securing retail shelves for the doll proved to be a challenge. A few major department stores including Gimbel's and Marshall Field carried the doll, but others including Macy's and Saks Fifth Avenue would not.⁷⁹ Scholar Sabrina

Thomas has argued that the political nature of the Saralee doll scared away potential retailers who had a history of carrying other black dolls. In particular, she compares the experience of the high selling Amosandra doll to that of more sales-challenged Saralee. She claims that while Saralee “was a symbolic lobbyist against the racial status quo,” Amosandra “did nothing to attempt to correct the racial lens through which White society viewed her ‘parents’ or her race.”⁸⁰ In addition to providing an accurately depicted black baby doll for black children in order “to give them a new respect for their heritage,” Saralee’s makers also wanted her to “give white children a new respect for the Negro.”⁸¹ While Amosandra, for reasons discussed earlier, was not capable of fulfilling black children’s needs for a black doll, she could have arguably presented a positive image of blackness to white children who were more familiar with the kind of image of blackness portrayed by her on-air parents. As previously mentioned, Amosandra bore no resemblance to her radio show parents. While her name and origins would have been familiar to any listener of the show, her appearance in doll form stood in stark contrast to the appearance of her fellow *Amos ‘n’ Andy* characters. Thus, she may have prompted a child to ask why her Amosandra doll did not look like her Amos and Andy paper dolls. Given Amosandra’s success on the market - over two million sold after two years - she may have positively influenced quite a few white children’s perspectives on race.

Saralee may have also been quite effective at teaching white children about realistic, non-stereotypical representations of African Americans. However, the touting of her “anthropologically correctness” may have also posed problems. Much of the process of creating a composite from photographs and measuring children’s heads smacks of pseudo-science and reinforces notions of race as a biological absolute. Plus, it is highly

doubtful that Burlingame's design was in fact a composite of the photographs Creech collected. The *Life Magazine* profile of the Saralee doll reprinted seven of the photos Creech provided to Burlingame.⁸² Even without the use of a ruler it is obvious that the children all have differently shaped faces, plus they range in age from infant to eight years old making them difficult to fairly compare. One has an oval face, another a long oval face, a young girl has a heart shaped face, and the two babies have very round faces – hardly surprising for babies. Furthermore, the photo of the Saralee doll, pictured on the same page as the photos of the black children, bears very little resemblance to any of the children, seemingly contradicting the writer's explanation of how the doll was developed. While the doll makers and the African Americans who were consulted on the doll's design, understandably wanted the doll to realistically reflect the appearance of a black child, the language employed in the marketing of the doll may have inadvertently sent the message that black children are irrefutably, biologically different than white children. This is a message that would have been equally problematic for white and black recipients of the doll. For black children who owned the doll, that Saralee was named after the wealthy white women who wanted to give black children a doll of their own, could have also sent a message that the African American community needed outside help to properly provide for their own. This may be a stretch, but it serves to show the shortcomings of this poor overburdened doll.

A final possible reason for Saralee's short life on the market, was that, outside of all of her famous advocates and earnest intentions, she was not a particularly remarkable doll. Dressed in a yellow, lace-trimmed organdy dress and bonnet, the doll had "a soft vinylite plastic body, unbreakable vinyl head, sleeping eyes and crying voice."⁸³ Her

highly researched face was rather plain, displaying none of the personality of Patty-Jo or Amosandra. Plus, she retailed for \$7.50, which made her more expensive than the two other highly promoted black dolls on the market at the time, Amosandra and Jackie Robinson. Certainly Saralee would have been a novelty in all her “anthropologically correct,” “ambassador of goodwill” glory, but it is not evident that she would have been any more cherished by a child than some other doll.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a great many popular white dolls were also sold in black versions. Black Kewpie dolls by Cameo, black Chatty Cathy dolls by Mattel, and black Patsy dolls by Effanbee are just some of the better known examples of such dolls. But it was the racial makeover of Barbie’s cousin Francie that perhaps most marked a shift in how large national toy companies approached the design and marketing of black dolls. The riots that rocked the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1965 made an impression on California-based Mattel’s co-founder Elliot Handler and he began thinking about how Mattel could help Watts and African American children across the country. By the following year Handler began the process of developing a black friend for Barbie. Because toy makers largely rely on the annual Toy Fair, typically held in February or March, to unveil new products for the year and secure orders, Handler wanted to have the doll ready for the next Toy Fair in 1967. He was clear that his goal was a doll with an all new face sculpt designed to more accurately reflect African American features – a process that would take time - but he also did not want to delay bringing a black doll to the market. His solution was to introduce a new version of Francie, Barbie’s cousin who was new to the line in 1966, with “a warm brown skin tone, large light brown eyes, and long black hair.”⁸⁴

There were some missteps in bringing the new Francie to the market. Initially she was named Colored Francie, which Mattel “soon recognized as antiquated,” and she simply became Francie. Also, in the rush to bring her to market, they used black hair that was left over from a Color Magic Barbie – a Barbie with hair that could change colors – and, initially unknown to Mattel, this hair easily oxidized so that Francie’s black hair would eventually fade into bright red.⁸⁵ But perhaps the biggest problem was the confusing relationship between the two Francie dolls. While the first Francie was introduced as Barbie’s “mod” cousin, the second Francie was stripped of her kinship status and presented as a friend. According to Barbie biographer Billy Boy, “The Black version of Francie represented a new precedent in doll manufacturing: an already established personality doll created in two different races. It was a brilliant idea. [...] However, due to the strongly established personality of the first Francie, black Francie did not sell well and was discontinued.”⁸⁶ It is unclear why Mattel did not simply give a new name to the black Francie, but perhaps they wanted to be honest about the reuse of the Francie mold.

Mattel completed the design of their “ethnic” face sculpt and replaced black Francie with Christie in the following year of 1968. Compared to Barbies of 1968 who were made with the “twist and turn” face mold,⁸⁷ the eponymous Christie face featured slightly more almond shaped eyes, a wider nose, and squarer jaw line.

Mattel timed their entry into black dolls well. They had made black Chatty Cathy dolls since approximately 1961, but by the late 1960s they offered multiple black baby dolls, as well as the newly introduced Christie, and a Barbie-sized fashion doll representing the television show character Julia, a role played by African American

actress and singer Diahann Carroll. As reported in the *Chicago Defender* during the Christmas shopping season of 1967, sales of black dolls had been rising, a trend the article attributed to “an increase in Negro self-pride.” The president of Vogue Dolls (maker of the Ginny doll discussed in Chapter Three) stated that he believed the uptick in sales was directly related to the political climate, explaining, “Because of the civil rights movement, Negroes have developed a pride in their race and prefer to have their children identify with their own race.”⁸⁸ By the following Christmas season, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that “‘Soul toys’ sell briskly to Negroes trying to avoid another all-white Christmas.” The story added that “Barbie’s Negro friends and a black G.I. Joe astronaut are selling out at many stores.”⁸⁹ Mattel did not only have competition from Vogue and Hasbro (manufacturer of G.I. Joe). The toy company Remco launched a major campaign for the black market in 1968 with a line of “ethnically correct” black dolls.

Though Remco was a white-owned company, they sought to secure a claim of authenticity for their new doll line and recruited an African American artist to design ethnically correct black faces for four dolls that would correspond to four white dolls the company already carried. This desire for realistic black doll faces was not driven by a political motive. Saul Robbins, Remco’s board chair, was frank in his explanation of why Remco was investing in ethnically specific black dolls. He told a reporter for *Playthings*:

What we want the trade and public to realize [...] is that we didn’t come out with these dolls as some kind of gesture. There’s no tokensim in our decision... We’re not looking for thanks, but business. We’re trying to fill what we believe is an unfilled market demand. If we’re right in our assumptions, these four Negro doll will turn a profit, which is why we’re in business.⁹⁰

Though Remco’s language of “ethnically correct” echoed more socially driven dolls such as Saralee, the company initially stressed that the line was simply a market-driven idea. Remco was not trying to challenge the status quo and repeat Saralee’s disappointing sales

record. This business minded approach to black doll making extended to their initial advertising campaign. They advertised their black dolls on black radio stations and in black publications *Ebony* and *Jet*. But, when it came to television advertising – a medium that was of utmost importance to reach children’s eyes and ears – Remco only advertised their white dolls with the hope that “Negro customers will become familiar with the brand name, through exposure to the TV promotion, and then choose the Negro numbers when they confront them in the store.”⁹¹ The explanation given for this approach was that television advertising was simply too expensive to cater to a smaller market segment.

By the following year, Remco’s black dolls had experienced strong sales, and a change in their promotions model was merited. An 1969 advertisement in *Playthings* with the headline “We’re spending 5½ million dollars on color TV this year,” described Remco’s new marketing approach:

We’ve learned that Negroes don’t take kindly to imitations. We don’t blame them. A white doll painted black is just that. That’s why Remco is so successful. Annuel Burrows, who designed our line of authentic replicas of Negro babies, was deluged with fan mail. And we’re mighty proud of our dolls, too. Our dolls were publicized last fall on Johnny Carson. The Merv Griffin Show. Huntley-Brinkley. Everywhere. And our ad in *Ebony* scored highest read of all the ads in the October issue according to the Starch Readership Report. *Ebony* gave us added publicity in a 5-page editorial devoted to our “step forward” with Negro dolls. It was a great season. It will be bigger this year. With 5½ million to help us tell our story to even more people. There’ll be a Remco black doll on every Remco Doll commercial we run. *Every* commercial. No other doll manufacturer is doing this. So don’t settle for less in black dolls. Look to Remco. Like millions of Negroes. And put your doll business in the black. In more ways than one.⁹²

While the company realized the benefits of advertising black dolls and television – and may have been the first company to do so – they did so because of the recognition of additional profits to be made, and not because of some newfound social concerns.⁹³

Social concerns did inspire the creation of one black doll company in the late 1960s.

As previously mentioned, Mattel's co-founder Elliott Handler was disturbed the 1965 Watts riots, and wondered how he could make a contribution to the ailing community. He wanted to train locals in the ins and outs of toy making so that they could create their own small black doll company. The brother of a Mattel's marketing vice president had become acquainted with one of the founders of Operation Bootstrap, an economic development organization in Watts, and connected them with Mattel.⁹⁴ Louis Smith and Robert Hall created Operation Bootstrap in the fall of 1965, just a few months following the Watts riots. Their goal was to provide job training and ultimately jobs that would support the people of Watts.⁹⁵ Mattel's Handler and marketing VP Cliff Jacobs believed that Operation Bootstrap's commitment to community-based economic empowerment coupled with training from Mattel could produce a self-sustaining toy company that would not only provide jobs for the people of Watts, but also increase the number of racially sensitive black dolls on the market.⁹⁶ As a result of this shared vision, Operation Bootstrap opened Shindana Toys in 1968. Mattel's generosity was noteworthy. Though at this same time Mattel was expanding their own line of black dolls, they were one of the largest companies in the toy industry, and thus this small business posed no real threat to Mattel's bottom line. In addition to providing start up money, equipment, body molds, and training in production and marketing, Mattel also shared their display space at the Toy Fair with Shindana for several years.⁹⁷ Within a year of opening, the *New York Times* reported that Remco's "ethnically correct" black dolls were "being paced by a new, all-Negro company, Shindana Toys of Los Angeles," with sales of their Baby Nancy (featuring a small Afro) and Baby Deebie dolls expected to exceed one million dollars for the year.⁹⁸

Though Shindana would not achieve one million dollars in sales until 1970, the company was remarkably successful for a small startup and press coverage for Shindana's dolls was overwhelmingly positive.⁹⁹ Mattel quietly played a big hand in Shindana's initial success. Securing retail space is a major obstacle to any new toy company, and Mattel's advocacy for the company, particularly at Toy Fair when store buyers plan their orders, was undoubtedly a major help in Shindana's initial years. But after about two years, signs of problems at Shindana emerged. A 1971 profile in the *New York Times*, focusing on the company's successes, including a line of fourteen dolls and over half a million dollars in sales in 1970, quoted co-founder Lou Smith observing that, "There is no real black network of distribution into black communities." As a result, distribution into areas such as the South was challenging.¹⁰⁰ A second article later that year reported the same problem of distribution to black communities.¹⁰¹ Cliff Jacobs revealed in an interview that in fact Shindana faced the double problem of securing distribution and growing quickly enough to keep up with the market demand. Larger companies, recognizing the lucrative market for racially sensitive black dolls, forced Shindana into a competition for shelf space. This was a fight that Shindana often lost due to their limited relationships with buyers.¹⁰²

Mattel stepped in with additional assistance, helping them secure financing from Chase Manhattan Bank and a relationship with Sears Roebuck & Company.¹⁰³ Unlike Mattel which had been relatively low key about their relationship with Shindana in the press, beginning in September of 1971, Chase Manhattan ran a series of full page advertisements touting their financial investment in the company. While the ads were surely good public relations for Chase Manhattan, they may have also convinced retailers

to take a chance on Shindana. The ad explained that Sears, Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penney, Woolworth's, and others now carried Shindana dolls. The feel-good message that, "With our help these dolls are making a profit for these guys in Watts," was accompanied by a large photograph of two young black men, factory workers likely no older than twenty-five, posing with two of Shindana's dolls Baby Nancy and her white playmate Baby Kim.¹⁰⁴

Whether it was due to support from Chase Manhattan or not, Shindana expanded in the 1970s, adding fashion dolls, cloth dolls, and celebrity dolls to their line. White buyers proved to be their biggest market due to the continued problem of distribution into minority communities. Articles in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Pittsburgh Courier* continued to laud Shindana's products and the economic development aspects of the company, and expressed surprise that "more than 50 per cent of Shindana dolls end up in white homes."¹⁰⁵ One article explained this phenomenon by suggesting that it was "indicative of the fact that the black dolls are playing a big part in the fight for equality," but another attributed the statistic to limited black buying power.¹⁰⁶

In 1976, Shindana was "the largest black owned and operated toy company in the nation."¹⁰⁷ Their line included thirty-two dolls, including an array of baby and toddler dolls, an O. J. Simpson action figure, Jimmie Walker and Flip Wilson cloth dolls, and Career Girl Wanda – a Barbie-type doll with either a doctor's coat or flight attendant's uniform and a "career club" designed to teach girls about their career options and "to help girls strive upward."¹⁰⁸ Prospects seemed good for Shindana. The company made the dolls it wanted for the black community – dolls with natural hair and career aspirations – and even if many of their customers were not black, the company was able to find a

customer base that supported their products and perhaps these sales were indicative of the dolls' antiracist work. Recognizing the expanded market for ethnic dolls, the company expanded into other groups in 1977 with the Little Friends dolls that included Asian and Hispanic dolls.¹⁰⁹ But Shindana continued to experience problems in financing, production, and distribution problems that were complicated by ever increasing competition from major national toy companies. In 1980, Shindana's old friend Mattel, introduced its first Black Barbie as well as a Hispanic Barbie. These dolls presented the idea that even iconic Miss Barbie could be ethnic. Shindana, a Swahili word that means competitor, could no longer stand up to the competition and closed in 1983.¹¹⁰

Shindana Toys' demise left a void in the world black owned toy companies. The *Wall Street Journal* article referenced at the beginning of this chapter, which described the lucrative and still largely untapped minority toy market, represented the slow return of black-owned toy companies to the marketplace. But it also represented the media's and toy industry's short-term memory surrounding the history of ethnic toys. The cycle of minority owned toy companies making ethnically sensitive dolls only to succumb to competition from suddenly interested major national companies was ignored or unrecognized by this and other articles about a "new" emergence of black owned toy companies, the need for positive ethnic toys, and a hot minority toy market in the late 1980s.

One new (albeit short-lived) development in the minority toy industry was the organization of the International Black Toy Manufacturers Association in February 1986.¹¹¹ Founded by Yla Eason and Yvonne Rubie, the association hoped to act as a advocate for black toy makers that could collectively bargain for shelf space in stores, an

ongoing problem for smaller toy companies. Eason was the founder of Olmec Toys,¹¹² a company that first produced a black superhero action figure called Sun-Man in 1985 because her son told her he could not be He-Man because he was not white.¹¹³ Rubie was similarly inspired to make her Huggy Bear doll by a need to fill a void in the market for a black character doll (publicity for the dolls went as far as calling Huggy Bear the first black character doll).¹¹⁴ Golden Ribbon, the company Rubie founded to manufacture Huggy Bear dolls, and Olmec were at the center of the minority toy media coverage through the early 1990s.

Golden Ribbon's line of Huggy Bear Kulture Kids were similar in appearance to the concurrently popular Cabbage Patch Kids, but they wore clothing that incorporated "Kente cloth-like prints" and were marketed as living in a Chocolate Forest where they traveled by way of a "magic Kente cloth" to "fabled cities and old kingdoms, uniting children throughout the world and caring for them."¹¹⁵ Olmec's product line was more expansive, including action figures, fashion dolls, baby and toddler dolls, and including black, Latino and Asian characters. Yla Eason proved quite adept at public relations and Olmec was frequently covered in major newspapers. She also partnered with Toys 'R' Us in 1992, securing shelf space at the then largest national toy store chain, and appearing in advertisements touting the company's commitment to minority consumers.¹¹⁶

Additionally, Eason struck a deal with Hasbro and acquired both financing and molds from their G.I. Joe line to make her multi-ethnic line of action figures. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the cost to develop new plastic injection molds is quite high, thus this deal was a major win for Olmec.¹¹⁷ By 1997, Olmec was "the largest minority-owned toy company in America."¹¹⁸

This success could not last, and Huggy Bean dolls faded from the market around 1993, while Olmec abruptly shut down in 1998 buried in debt. The timing of Huggy Bean's demise matches that of the end of the original run of Cabbage Patch Kids when Hasbro could no longer keep the fad going. Thus Huggy Bean's sales may have also ceased to be profitable. Olmec's problems seem to reflect the same kind of problem that faced Shindana and N.V. Sales before it – competition. Olmec quickly expanded its line in the 1990s, moving well beyond Sun-Man action figures into over fifty products.¹¹⁹ Developing, manufacturing, distributing, and marketing all of those toys would have been extremely expensive. These were the kinds of expenses that are more easily managed by large national companies – companies like Hasbro and Mattel who were also aware of the money to be made in ethnic dolls and toys.

In the years since the demise of Olmec and Golden Ribbon, there have been few minority owned toy companies engaged in the manufacture of “racially uplifting” dolls. The cycle of such companies that began in the early twentieth century has largely been supplanted by an appropriation of the genre by large national toy companies. In this sense, companies like N.V. Sales, Shindana, and Olmec signed their own death warrants with their success. Through selling dolls they showed the industry that had previously ignored their needs that they were a worthy market. Today, the more limited shape of the toy industry increasingly challenges the emergence of a new cycle of minority doll companies. Though the toy industry has always been competitive, the 1990s proved to be particularly hard on the industry, with massive buy outs resulting in two dominant companies leading the field: Hasbro and Mattel (see table 1 & 2). For smaller companies

just starting out, finding a market that Hasbro or Mattel does not already dominate is no easy task.

That the minority owned doll companies struggled to survive and often failed after less than a decade was due to both the competitive nature of the industry and the complications of marketing “ethnically correct” dolls. Fickle ideas about skin color, facial features, and hair texture placed a heavy burden on little dolls. Still, attitudes about ethnic dolls have arguably changed in the last decade. Hasbro and Mattel are no longer likely to even consider introducing a new toy line without ethnic representatives, and when developing such dolls it is now customary to bring in expert consultants. On the one hand this would seem to be a victory, but as anthropologist Elizabeth Chin has argued, ethnically correct dolls are neither necessary for a minority child’s positive self-image, nor are they cures for the social inequities that face many minority children. Furthermore, their emphasis on “notions of difference and phenotype, paradoxically mak[e] use of oppressive distinctions to create progressive change.”¹²⁰ So while Hasbro and Mattel have absorbed the teachings of past minority doll companies on how to make dolls with ethnic features, there challenges in the doll world do still remain for children of color. Perhaps the next cycle of minority owned doll companies will be led by toy makers with a vision for moving beyond physical features to address social and cultural issues affecting minority children.

<p>McLoughlin Brothers Founded 1828 New York, NY 1920 -- acquired by Milton Bradley</p>	<p>Milton Bradley Founded 1860 Springfield, MA 1984 -- acquired by Hasbro</p>	<p>Hasbro Founded 1923 Pawtucket, RI</p> <p>1952 -- Mr. Potato Head 1964 -- G.I. Joe</p>
<p>Playskool Founded 1928</p> <p>Late 1960s -- acquired by Milton Bradley</p>		
<p>Selchow and Righter Founded 1867 New York, NY</p> <p>1986 -- Scrabble acquired by Coleco</p>	<p>Coleco Founded 1932</p> <p>1989 -- acquired by Hasbro</p>	
<p>Parker Brothers Founded 1883 Salem, MA 1963 -- acquired by General Mills 1985 -- GM merged PB with Kenner 1987 -- acquired by Tonka</p>	<p>Tonka Founded 1946 Mound, MN 1991 - acquired by Hasbro</p>	
<p>Kenner Founded 1947 Cincinnati, OH 1967 -- acquired by General Mills 1987 - acquired by Tonka</p>		
	<p>Galoob Founded 1954 South San Francisco, CA 1998 -- acquired by Hasbro</p>	

Table 1 A history of Hasbro subsidiaries & brands.

<p>Fisher-Price Founded 1930 East Aurora, NY 1969 -- acquired by Quaker Oats 1991 -- became independent company 1993 -- acquired by Mattel</p>	<p>Mattel Founded 1945 CA</p>
<p>Tyco Founded 1926 Woodbury Heights, NJ 1970 -- acquired by Consolidated Foods, later Sara Lee 1997 -- acquired by Mattel</p>	
<p>Pleasant Company (American Girl) Founded 1986 WI 1998 -- acquired by Mattel</p>	

Table 2 A history Mattel subsidiaries & brands

¹ Linda M. Watkins, "Tapping Hot Markets: Toys Aimed at Minority Children," *The Wall Street Journal* Sept 12, 1986, 35.

² Ibid.

³ E. A. Johnson, "Negro Dolls for Negro Babies," *The Colored American Magazine* 14, no. 10 (November 1908): 583.

⁴ Bisque is unglazed china.

⁵ Joseph J. Schroeder, Jr., *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930* (Northfield, IL: DBI Books, Inc., 1971), 92.

⁶ See, Doris Wilkinson, "Racial Socialization through Children's Toys: A Sociohistorical Examination," *Journal of Black Studies* 5, no. 1 (1974); — — —, "Play Objects as Tools of Propaganda," *Journal of Black Psychology* no. 7 (1980); — — —, "The Toy Menagerie: Early Images of Blacks in Toys, Games, and Dolls," in *Images of Blacks in American Culture : A Reference Guide to Information Sources*, ed. Jessie Carney Smith (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

⁷ Wilkinson, "Racial Socialization through Children's Toys: A Sociohistorical Examination," 101-02.

⁸ Sabrina Thomas, "The Ritual of Doll Play: Implications of Understanding Children's Conceptualization of Race," in *Rituals and Patterns in Children's Lives*, ed. Kathy Merlock Jackson (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 114-16.

⁹ G. Stanley and A. Caswell Ellis Hall, *A Study of Dolls* (New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co., 1897), 21, 30.

¹⁰ Miriam Formanek-Brunell, *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Myla Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identificatin and Value Guide, 1820-1991* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1995), 57.

¹² "Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour [Advertisement]," *Ladies Home Journal* (October 1, 1910): 53.

¹³ Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identificatin and Value Guide, 1820-1991*, 24-25.

¹⁴ Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁶ Johnson, "Negro Dolls for Negro Babies," 583; Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 182.

¹⁷ Robert E. Park, "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to the Negro," *American Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 5 (March 1914): 618; Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, 182-83.

¹⁸ Park, "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to the Negro," 618.

¹⁹ Jr. Joe Early, "Richard Henry Boyd: Shaper of Black Baptist Identity," *Baptist History and Heritage* (Winter 2007): 99-100.

- ²⁰ Joe Early, "Richard Henry Boyd: Shaper of Black Baptist Identity," *Baptist History and Heritage* (Winter 2007): 99; Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, 182.
- ²¹ Nina Mjagkij, ed. *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2003), 66.
- ²² "Dr. Boyd's Success in Business," *Afro-American* (November 29, 1913): 2.
- ²³ For a copy of a company brochure that describes the dolls as undressed see, Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, 1820-1991*, 22-23; "Give the Child a Doll for Christmas [Advertisement]," *Afro-American* (December 9, 1911): 5.
- ²⁴ Adjusted for inflation \$1 in 1911 is equivalent to \$22.74 in 2009, and \$8.50 is equivalent to \$193.28.
- ²⁵ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, 175.
- ²⁶ Though he makes no mention of his race in his advertisements, the 1920 US Census listed Gadsden as "mulatto," and his 1940 draft card listed him as "Negro." "Dolls! Dolls! [Advertisement]," *Chicago Defender* (September 14, 1918): 5; Myla Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, Book II* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1995), 36-38.
- ²⁷ Otis H. Gadsden, "[Advertisement]," *The Crisis* 16, no. 2 (December 1917): 102.
- ²⁸ — — —, "Dolls-Dolls [Advertisement]," *The Crisis* 17, no. 1 (November 1918): 46.
- ²⁹ — — —, "Dolls Dolls [Advertisement]," *The Crisis* 17, no. 2 (December 1918): 102.
- ³⁰ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, 184.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² The 1920 US Census records for New York list Boulin's date of immigration as 1909.
- ³³ Shane White, Stephen Garton, Stephen Robertson, and Graham White *Playing the Numbers: Gambling in Harlem between the Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 94.
- ³⁴ "Berry & Ross Factory," *Chicago Defender* (April 24, 1920): 5.
- ³⁵ "Firemen Rescue Man and Woman in Big Harlem Fire," *Chicago Defender* (November 19, 1921): 9.
- ³⁶ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, 191.
- ³⁷ Nutshell Variety Sales Co., "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]," *Chicago Defender* (November 25, 1921): 8.
- ³⁸ Mel Tapley, "Sun Tan Dolls: Pioneering Effort in Positive Images," *New York Amsterdam News* (December 24, 1988): 36.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*: 23, 36.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 36.
- ⁴¹ "Walter B. Abbot Dies in New York," *Chicago Defender* (May 27, 1967): 2; "Newsman, Businessman Abbott Dies," *New York Amsterdam News* (May 27, 1967): 23; Chester West, "What's Happening in Westchester," *New York Amsterdam News* (May 27, 1967): 32.
- ⁴² "Black Dolls," *Pittsburgh Courier* (January 15, 1927): A8.
- ⁴³ Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, Book II*, 111-13.

- ⁴⁴ Standard Products Company, "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (January 1924): 438; — — —, "Colored Dolls [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (September 1923): 157.
- ⁴⁵ N. V. Sales Company, "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (April 1925): 163; — — —, "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (October 1924): 150.
- ⁴⁶ The 1920 US Census listed Arthe's parent's birthplace as Germany. "Colored and Sun Tan Dolls," *Playthings* (April 1939): 258; "Sun Tan Colored Dolls," *Playthings* (October 1936): 83; "Colored Dolls [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (March 1945): 449.
- ⁴⁷ "Colored and Sun Tan Dolls," 258; "Colored and Sun Tan Dolls," *Playthings* (April 1937): 270.
- ⁴⁸ "New Showroom for Lujon," *Playthings* (July 1940): 48.
- ⁴⁹ Maxine Thompson, "Woman Cartoonist Turns to Doll Design," *Toys and Novelties* (November 1947): 118; Terri Lee Dolls, "Benjie and Bonnie [Advertisement]," *Toys and Novelties* (August 1947): 123; — — —, "Terri Lee Dolls [Advertisement]," *Toys and Novelties* (July 1947): 70.
- ⁵⁰ Terri Lee Dolls, "Benjie and Bonnie [Advertisement]," 123; Nancy Goldstein, *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Women Cartoonist* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 166.
- ⁵¹ Goldstein, *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Women Cartoonist*, 166.
- ⁵² Thompson, "Woman Cartoonist Turns to Doll Design," 118.
- ⁵³ "Negro Dolls Popular with Public Since Birth in 1919," *Ebony* (January 1952): 51.
- ⁵⁴ — — —, "Woman Cartoonist Turns to Doll Design," 118; Goldstein, *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Women Cartoonist*, 168.
- ⁵⁵ Goldstein, *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Women Cartoonist*, 168.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 167-68.
- ⁵⁷ "Godfather to Amos' Baby," *Amos 'n' Andy* Columbia Broadcasting Company (February 20, 1949).
- ⁵⁸ "'Amosandra' Doll Cost \$100,000 in Research," *New York Amsterdam News* (March 12, 1949): 5; "Doll 'Amosandra' on Market after Long Research," *Los Angeles Sentinel* (March 10, 1949): B1.
- ⁵⁹ "'Amosandra' Doll Sales Surprise Even the Manufacturer," *Playthings* (April 1949): 100; Macy's, "It's a Girl for Ruby and Amos [Advertisement]," *New York Times* (March 6, 1949): 47.
- ⁶⁰ "'The Most Beautiful Baby Doll in All the World' [Advertisement]," *New York Amsterdam News* (February 26, 1949): 16.
- ⁶¹ Toy Manufactureres USA, "[Advertisement]," *Playthings* (September 1949): 210.
- ⁶² Macy's, "It's a Girl for Ruby and Amos [Advertisement]," 47.
- ⁶³ "Modern Designs for Negro Dolls," *Ebony* (January 1952): PAGE.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ "New Brown-Skinned Vinyl Doll from Sun Rubber Co.," *Playthings* (December 1956): 86.
- ⁶⁶ Sabrina Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," *Transforming Anthropology* 15, no. 1 (2007): 43.
- ⁶⁷ "Allied-Grand's Proven Hits [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (April 1950): 61.

- ⁶⁸ "Allied-Grand Doll Manufacturing Co., Inc. Features Jackie Robinson Doll," *Playthings* (February 1950): 285.
- ⁶⁹ Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 42.
- ⁷⁰ "Mind over Matter," *Time* 58, no. 19 (November 5, 1951): 57; "Realistic Negro Dolls to Combat Racial Prejudice among Youngsters," *Playthings* (October 1951): 129.
- ⁷¹ "Realistic Negro Dolls to Combat Racial Prejudice among Youngsters," 129; "The Settlement House Movement in America," *Toys and Novelties* (June 1953): 134.
- ⁷² "Eleanor Roosevelt Introduces Ideal's "Saralee" Doll," *Playthings* (December 1951): 113; Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 40.
- ⁷³ Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 42, 45.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 41.
- ⁷⁵ "Dolls for Negro Children: New Toy Which Is Anthropologically Correct Fills an Old Need," *Life Magazine* (December 17, 1951): 62; — — —, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 41.
- ⁷⁶ "The Settlement House Movement in America," 134; Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 41.
- ⁷⁷ "Opinions of Other Newspapers," *Los Angeles Sentinel* (November 22, 1951): A8.
- ⁷⁸ "Eleanor Roosevelt Introduces Ideal's "Saralee" Doll," 113.
- ⁷⁹ Thomas, "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll," 44-45.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 48.
- ⁸¹ "Realistic Negro Dolls to Combat Racial Prejudice among Youngsters," 129.
- ⁸² "Dolls for Negro Children: New Toy Which Is Anthropologically Correct Fills an Old Need," 208.
- ⁸³ "Eleanor Roosevelt Introduces Ideal's "Saralee" Doll," 113.
- ⁸⁴ Kitturah B. Westenhouser, *The Story of Barbie* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1994), 136.
- ⁸⁵ Billy Boy, *Barbie! Her Life & Times, and the New Theater of Fashion*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown, 1987), 82; Westenhouser, *The Story of Barbie*, 136.
- ⁸⁶ Boy, *Barbie! Her Life & Times, and the New Theater of Fashion*, 82.
- ⁸⁷ Marcie Melillo, *The Ultimate Barbie Doll Book* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 1996), 17. See photos of the Christie face sculpt in Melillo 92-93.
- ⁸⁸ "Sales of Negro Dolls Skyrocket," *Chicago Defender* (December 23, 1967): 4.
- ⁸⁹ "Business Bulletin," *The Wall Street Journal* (December 5, 1968): 1.
- ⁹⁰ Ted Erickson, "Remco: Negro Girls Want 'Realistic' Dolls," *Playthings* (July 1968): 50.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹² Remco Industries, "We're Spending 5 1/2 Million Dollars on Color TV This Year [Advertisement]," *Playthings* (June 5, 1969): 7.
- ⁹³ Joan Cook, "Integration Is Gaining on Doll Counters, Too," *New York Times* (December 18, 1969): 56.
- ⁹⁴ Westenhouser, *The Story of Barbie*, 134.
- ⁹⁵ For a complete history of Operation Bootstrap, Inc. see, William Russel Ellis, *People Making Places: Episodes in Participation, 1964-1984* (Berkeley: Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, 1987).
- ⁹⁶ Westenhouser, *The Story of Barbie*, 134-35.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

-
- ⁹⁸ Robert McG Thomas "For Toy Buyers, Christmas Is in the Fair," *New York Times* (March 4, 1969): 55.
- ⁹⁹ "Baby Nancy Dolls Make Success Story 1st Year," *New York Amsterdam News* (January 3, 1970): 4.
- ¹⁰⁰ Charlayne Hunter, "Black Doll Is 'Natural' Success," *New York Times* (February 20, 1971): 29.
- ¹⁰¹ J. Zambga Brown, "Shindana Black Doll Company," *New York Amsterdam News* (December 25, 1971).
- ¹⁰² Westenhouer, *The Story of Barbie*, 136.
- ¹⁰³ Ellis, *People Making Places: Episodes in Participation, 1964-1984*, 114.
- ¹⁰⁴ "With Our Help These Dolls Are Making a Profit for These Guys in Watts [Advertisement]," *New York Times* (September 1, 1971): 29. Baby Nancy was available in a box set with Kim. The pair's package was labeled "We have a Dream," and apparently the set was accepted by black buyers, but rejected by white buyers. See Hunter, "Black Doll Is 'Natural' Success," 29.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Whites Surpass Blacks in Purchasing 'Black Doll,'" *Los Angeles Sentinel* (May 31, 1973): 5; "Kids Digging Black Dolls," *Chicago Defender* (July 20, 1974): A14; J. I. Adkins "Black Toy Company Creates Black Pride," *Daily Defender* (November 14, 1974): 18; Art Carter, "Dolls Fulfill a Dream," *Pittsburgh Courier* (December 28, 1974): A8.
- ¹⁰⁶ Carter, "Dolls Fulfill a Dream," A8; Adkins "Black Toy Company Creates Black Pride," 18.
- ¹⁰⁷ "Toy Co. Gets Capital Boost," *Los Angeles Sentinel* (August 19, 1976): A8.
- ¹⁰⁸ "Maker of Black Dolls Finding Profits in Attitude Changes," *New York Times* (December 24, 1976): 57.
- ¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identificatin and Value Guide, 1820-1991*, 253.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.
- ¹¹¹ "Black Toymakers," *Ebony* (December 1987): 144.
- ¹¹² As explained on the back of Olmec toy packaging, the company's name was a reference to stone heads carvings made by the ancient Olmec people of Mexico. Eason subscribed to the belief that the heads represented Africans who traveled to the New World centuries ago. This idea was popularized in the 1980s, but has been widely dismissed by archeologists.
- ¹¹³ "Superhero Toy Gives Kids Positive Image," *New York Amsterdam News* (November 2, 1985): 31.
- ¹¹⁴ "First Black Character Doll Is Intrduced," *New York Amsterdam News* (June 29, 1985): 19.
- ¹¹⁵ Perkins, *Black Dolls: An Identificatin and Value Guide, 1820-1991*, 187; "First Black Character Doll Is Intrduced," 19.
- ¹¹⁶ "Toys 'R' Me [Advertisement]," *Atlanta Daily World* (November 1, 1992): 3.
- ¹¹⁷ Barbara Presley Noble, "A Christmas for Sun-Man," *New York Times* (December 15, 1991): F12.
- ¹¹⁸ "Toys for Pride and Fun," *Ebony* (November 1997): 44.
- ¹¹⁹ Robin Bell, "Olmec Dollmaker Introduces King Doll in Time for Birthday Fete," *Atlanta Daily World* (January 17, 1993): 25.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Chin, "Ethnically Correct Dolls: Toying with the Race Industry," *American Anthropologist* 101, no. 2 (June 1999): 308, 17.

- Adkins, J. I. "Black Toy Company Creates Black Pride." *Daily Defender* (November 14, 1974): 18.
- "Allied-Grand Doll Manufacturing Co., Inc. Features Jackie Robinson Doll." *Playthings* (February 1950): 285.
- "Allied-Grand's Proven Hits [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (April 1950): 61.
- "'Amosandra' Doll Cost \$100,000 in Research." *New York Amsterdam News* (March 12, 1949): 5.
- "'Amosandra' Doll Sales Surprise Even the Manufacturer." *Playthings* (April 1949): 100.
- "Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour [Advertisement]." *Ladies Home Journal* (October 1, 1910): 53.
- "Baby Nancy Dolls Make Success Story 1st Year." *New York Amsterdam News* (January 3, 1970): 4.
- Bell, Robin. "Olmec Dollmaker Introduces King Doll in Time for Birthday Fete." *Atlanta Daily World* (January 17, 1993): 25.
- "Berry & Ross Factory." *Chicago Defender* (April 24, 1920): 5.
- "Black Dolls." *Pittsburgh Courier* (January 15, 1927): A8.
- "Black Toymakers." *Ebony* (December 1987): 144, 46.
- Boy, Billy. *Barbie! Her Life & Times, and the New Theater of Fashion*. 1st ed. New York: Crown, 1987.
- Brown, J. Zambga. "Shindana Black Doll Company." *New York Amsterdam News* (December 25, 1971): C4.
- "Business Bulletin." *The Wall Street Journal* (December 5, 1968): 1.
- Carter, Art. "Dolls Fulfill a Dream." *Pittsburgh Courier* (December 28, 1974): A8, 15.
- Chin, Elizabeth. "Ethnically Correct Dolls: Toying with the Race Industry." *American Anthropologist* 101, no. 2 (June 1999): 305-21.
- "Colored and Sun Tan Dolls." *Playthings* (April 1937): 270.
- "Colored and Sun Tan Dolls." *Playthings* (April 1939): 258.
- "Colored Dolls [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (March 1945): 449.
- Cook, Joan. "Integration Is Gaining on Doll Counters, Too." *New York Times* (December 18, 1969): 56.
- "Doll 'Amosandra' on Market after Long Research." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (March 10, 1949): B1.
- "Dolls for Negro Children: New Toy Which Is Anthropologically Correct Fills an Old Need." *Life Magazine* (December 17, 1951): 61-62.
- "Dolls! Dolls! [Advertisement]." *Chicago Defender* (September 14, 1918): 5.
- "Dr. Boyd's Success in Business." *Afro-American* (November 29, 1913): 2.
- Early, Joe. "Richard Henry Boyd: Shaper of Black Baptist Identity." *Baptist History and Heritage* (Winter 2007): 91-104.
- "Eleanor Roosevelt Introduces Ideal's 'Saralee' Doll." *Playthings* (December 1951): 113.
- Ellis, William Russel. *People Making Places: Episodes in Participation, 1964-1984*. Berkeley: Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, 1987.

- Erickson, Ted. "Remco: Negro Girls Want 'Realistic' Dolls." *Playthings* (July 1968): 50-51.
- "Firemen Rescue Man and Woman in Big Harlem Fire." *Chicago Defender* (November 19, 1921): 9.
- "First Black Character Doll Is Introduced." *New York Amsterdam News* (June 29, 1985): 19.
- Formanek-Brunell, Miriam. *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830-1930*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- "Give the Child a Doll for Christmas [Advertisement]." *Afro-American* (December 9, 1911): 5.
- "Godfather to Amos' Baby." *Amos 'n' Andy* Columbia Broadcasting Company (February 20, 1949).
- Goldstein, Nancy. *Jackie Ormes: The First African American Women Cartoonist*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Hall, G. Stanley and A. Caswell Ellis. *A Study of Dolls*. New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co., 1897.
- Hunter, Charlayne. "Black Doll Is 'Natural' Success." *New York Times* (February 20, 1971): 29.
- Joe Early, Jr. "Richard Henry Boyd: Shaper of Black Baptist Identity." *Baptist History and Heritage* (Winter 2007): 91-104.
- Johnson, E. A. "Negro Dolls for Negro Babies." *The Colored American Magazine* 14, no. 10 (November 1908): 583-84.
- "Kids Digging Black Dolls." *Chicago Defender* (July 20, 1974): A14.
- Macy's. "It's a Girl for Ruby and Amos [Advertisement]." *New York Times* (March 6, 1949): 47.
- "Maker of Black Dolls Finding Profits in Attitude Changes." *New York Times* (December 24, 1976): 57.
- Melillo, Marcie. *The Ultimate Barbie Doll Book*. Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 1996.
- "Mind over Matter." *Time* 58, no. 19 (November 5, 1951): 47.
- Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Mjagkij, Nina, ed. *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2003.
- "Modern Designs for Negro Dolls." *Ebony* (January 1952): 46-48.
- "The Most Beautiful Baby Doll in All the World" [Advertisement]. *New York Amsterdam News* (February 26, 1949): 16.
- N. V. Sales Company. "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (October 1924): 150.
- — —. "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (April 1925): 163.
- "Negro Dolls Popular with Public Since Birth in 1919." *Ebony* (January 1952): 51.
- "New Brown-Skinned Vinyl Doll from Sun Rubber Co." *Playthings* (December 1956): 86.
- "New Showroom for Lujon." *Playthings* (July 1940): 48.
- "Newsman, Businessman Abbott Dies." *New York Amsterdam News* (May 27, 1967): 23.
- Noble, Barbara Presley. "A Christmas for Sun-Man." *New York Times* (December 15, 1991): F12.

- Nutshell Variety Sales Co. "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]." *Chicago Defender* (November 25, 1921): 8.
- "Opinions of Other Newspapers." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (November 22, 1951): A8.
- Otis H. Gadsden. "[Advertisement]." *The Crisis* 16, no. 2 (December 1917): 102.
- — —. "Dolls Dolls [Advertisement]." *The Crisis* 17, no. 2 (December 1918): 102.
- — —. "Dolls-Dolls [Advertisement]." *The Crisis* 17, no. 1 (November 1918): 46.
- Park, Robert E. "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups with Particular Reference to the Negro." *American Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 5 (March 1914): 606-23.
- Perkins, Myla. *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, Book II*. Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1995.
- — —. *Black Dolls: An Identification and Value Guide, 1820-1991*. Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1995.
- "Realistic Negro Dolls to Combat Racial Prejudice among Youngsters." *Playthings* (October 1951): 129.
- Remco Industries. "We're Spending 5 1/2 Million Dollars on Color TV This Year [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (June 5, 1969): 7.
- "Sales of Negro Dolls Skyrocket." *Chicago Defender* (December 23, 1967): 4.
- Schroeder, Joseph J., Jr. *Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls 1860-1930*. Northfield, IL: DBI Books, Inc., 1971.
- "The Settlement House Movement in America." *Toys and Novelties* (June 1953): 134.
- Standard Products Company. "Colored Dolls [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (September 1923): 157.
- — —. "Negro Dolls [Advertisement]." *Playthings* (January 1924): 438.
- "Sun Tan Colored Dolls." *Playthings* (October 1936): 83.
- "Superhero Toy Gives Kids Positive Image." *New York Amsterdam News* (November 2, 1985): 31.
- Tapley, Mel. "Sun Tan Dolls: Pioneering Effort in Positive Images." *New York Amsterdam News* (December 24, 1988): 23, 36.
- Terri Lee Dolls. "Benjie and Bonnie [Advertisement]." *Toys and Novelties* (August 1947): 123.
- — —. "Terri Lee Dolls [Advertisement]." *Toys and Novelties* (July 1947): 70.
- Thomas, Robert McG. "For Toy Buyers, Christmas Is in the Fair." *New York Times* (March 4, 1969): 55.
- Thomas, Sabrina. "The Ritual of Doll Play: Implications of Understanding Children's Conceptualization of Race." In *Rituals and Patterns in Children's Lives*, edited by Kathy Merlock Jackson, 111-23. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.
- — —. "Sara Lee: The Rise and Fall of the Ultimate Negro Doll." *Transforming Anthropology* 15, no. 1 (2007): 38-49.
- Thompson, Maxine. "Woman Cartoonist Turns to Doll Design." *Toys and Novelties* (November 1947): 116, 18.
- "Toy Co. Gets Capital Boost." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (August 19, 1976): A8.
- Toy Manufactureres USA. "[Advertisement]." *Playthings* (September 1949): 210.
- "Toys 'R' Me [Advertisement]." *Atlanta Daily World* (November 1, 1992): 3.
- "Toys for Pride and Fun." *Ebony* (November 1997): 42-48.
- "Walter B. Abbot Dies in New York." *Chicago Defender* (May 27, 1967): 2.

- Watkins, Linda M. "Tapping Hot Markets: Toys Aimed at Minority Children." *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept 12, 1986.
- West, Chester. "What's Happening in Westchester." *New York Amsterdam News* (May 27, 1967): 32.
- Westenhouser, Kitturah B. *The Story of Barbie*. Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1994.
- White, Shane, Stephen Garton, Stephen Robertson, and Graham White *Playing the Numbers: Gambling in Harlem between the Wars*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- "Whites Surpass Blacks in Purchasing 'Black Doll'." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (May 31, 1973): 5.
- Wilkinson, Doris. "Play Objects as Tools of Propaganda." *Journal of Black Psychology* no. 7 (1980): 1-16.
- — —. "Racial Socialization through Children's Toys: A Sociohistorical Examination." *Journal of Black Studies* 5, no. 1 (1974): 96-109.
- — —. "The Toy Menagerie: Early Images of Blacks in Toys, Games, and Dolls." In *Images of Blacks in American Culture : A Reference Guide to Information Sources*, edited by Jessie Carney Smith, xvii, 390 p. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.
- "With Our Help These Dolls Are Making a Profit for These Guys in Watts [Advertisement]." *New York Times* (September 1, 1971): 29.

Conclusion

From Topsy Turvy baby dolls to Carmen Miranda dolls, Paddy and the Pig toys to plastic cowboys and Indians, American toys have a long history of representing racial and ethnic difference. These toys raise questions about how Americans have both pictured and played with the Other. Ethnic toys provide adults a means through which to communicate historically specific ideas about race and identity to children. The history of ethnic and racial representations in toys presented in the preceding chapters offers support to the idea that race is a foundational concept in American society, so much so that it is even incorporated into the culture of childhood.

As playthings, toys may not appear to be a particularly serious subject matter, but as tools of socialization they train children, and introduce them to ideas, values, and expectations that exist in the world of adults. Toy makers in fact play a significant role in a child's life. Toys *do* shape children's play, even when children veer from the scripts that may accompany a particular toy. A child's play in turn shapes his or her experience of childhood and creates lasting memories both positive and negative. We might simply call this learning, but what does it mean when a child's play is colored by ethnic imagery from the earliest stages of play?

A key finding in this study is the ubiquitous nature of ethnic toys. Ethnic toys have been available since the very emergence of a commercial toy industry in America. Their presence was anticipated by the American children's book industry, which predates the toy industry by nearly a century. Early American children's books established importance of literacy, and extended that literacy to include the ability to "read" race. The

manners and customs books described in Chapter Two created foundational grammars of differentiation for the pre-reading children of the nineteenth century. Much of young children's play involves taxonomy: hard or soft, real or stuffed, edible or inedible. The early beginnings and omnipresence of ethnic toys reveals that Americans have long wanted their children to also comprehend us and Other – to the point that it has been foundational to establishing the children's world.

Many players have contributed to the shaping of the representations found in ethnic toys. Popular culture, politics, market and demographic trends, childrearing experts, parents, and even children have variously influenced toy makers' designs for ethnic toys. James H. Bowen's mechanical bank designs reflected the politics of the post-Reconstruction era. Madame Alexander's own life experience and the influence of the intercultural movement shaped her vision of children from different nations. Middle class African American parents shopped for realistic black dolls for decades before major national toy companies recognized a growing black buying power and replaced Mammy dolls with non-stereotypical black dolls.

The ever-shifting modes of representing race in toys are the result of the unstable nature of race. At times ethnic toys have been a medium to express ethnic and racial stereotypes and prejudices, as well as a medium to mediate those anxieties and tensions about difference –for example the target games discussed in Chapter Four. In other instances, toys have offered a safe space to explore the possibility of inviting the Other in, and – primarily in the case of minority toys makers – to claim space. This has been most successful in the form of dolls, a type of toy that promotes nurturing by its very design. Even so, who controls the doll's design often influences public reception of the

doll. In the case of the Alexander international dolls, the dolls' high price limited their audience to primarily upper income white families who were likely unopposed to a bit of exotic ethnic diversity. Meanwhile, African American parents struggled to find affordable black dolls they deemed realistic and inoffensive. The case of the top selling Amosandra doll is representative of this problem. Though the doll was well designed and relatively affordable, her relationship to the *Amos n Andy* radio show virtually banned her African American homes. Amosandra did find shelter in many white homes, and in the process she may have offered white children a sympathetic and even affectionate view of African Americans.

The perception of racial and ethnic categories has evolved over the history of ethnic toys and this has been reflected in toys themselves. However, this has been a very slow and uneven process as demonstrated by the Paddy and the Pig games discussed in Chapter Two and, more recently, the Bratz dolls discussed in Chapter One. Ethnic toys have also been a place for toy makers to present ideas about national identity. Historically the toy makers derived these images from the larger realm of popular culture. In fact, there is a great deal of circularity of the ethnic imagery used in toys across popular media – as demonstrated by the people of different nations advertisements in the late nineteenth century and Western movies of the mid twentieth century – and even across national boundaries – as demonstrated by the circulation of the “Ten Little Niggers” song and toy book. More recently, the toy industry has moved away from simply replicating ethnic imagery and has begun innovating ethnic imagery. This has largely grown from the practice of hiring outside expert consultants – especially social scientists – to help

design toys or even entire toy lines. Even today, ethnic toys are not easy to “get right,” but they are still seen as an integral part of the toy box.

The history of ethnic toys is not one in which the bad old days were full of racist stereotypes and the present is unmarred by such hateful objects. Instead, ethnic toys through the last one hundred and fifty years shows varying degrees of antipathy, ambivalence, and affection. Ethnic toys have offered us, adults and children, ways in which to make sense of our diverse American population. Public bristling over ethnic representations in toys also continues to this day – a sign of the recognized power of toys. Today, Homies toys, the Ghetto Kids, Dora the Explorer, Barbie, Bratz, and others are variously accused of being racist, inauthentic, not ethnic enough, or too ethnic. The ongoing commentary over how toys reproduce race reveals how unsettled, and yet obsessed, our nation remains on the topic of race. We have not entered a post-racial stage. My evidence is the toy aisle.