This American silver certificate from 1899 looks strikingly similar to modern American currency: it has the iconic greenish color of all banknotes, numbers indicating its value on each corner, and a portrait in the center. However, it is not hard to notice a key difference. Whereas modern 5 dollar bills have a portrait of president Lincoln, this silver certificate sports an image of Running Antelope, a Native American chief and a member of the Lakota people. Running Antelope was the chief of a prominent Lakota tribe, the Hunkpapa, and worked alongside Chief Sitting Bull.

With so many Americans being familiar with the former presidents that appear on our currency, how did a Native American end up on a silver certificate? There is no definitive reason why that we know of, but we can turn to the history of Native American relations to try and paint a picture. In the reconstruction era, views on Native culture—or what Native American scholar Phillip Deloria calls the idea of "Indian Otherness", shifted from very negative to highly positive[1]. Through the eyes of white Americans, the popular image of Native Americans had to present a positive exterior. Deloria discusses this in the context of the shift towards modernity of the Native image in the wake of "urban disorder"—as Native Americans began to assimilate in white culture, their so-called savagery was becoming a part of that culture[2]. Fearing association with the savagery, Americans carefully manipulated images of Native people to appear more noble and sophisticated. Perhaps the choice to display a Native American bust on currency was a way of introducing this new image into popular culture, as this currency had widespread use.

Coming back to the silver certificate, the engraving of Running Antelope is based on an 1872 photograph. In the original photograph, Running Antelope is wearing a simple three feather

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[1] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998)), 73.

[2] Deloria, 73.

headdress, but this was replaced with a war bonnet on the final certificate. This was done by an engraver who did very little research into the history of war bonnets, as they imposed a bonnet used by an opposing Native American nation[3]. Although Americans wanted to carefully control the image of Native Americans, they seemingly did it with no care for cultural accuracy. The control of the image was, unsurprisingly, self-centered. Without doing proper research, or even taking Running Antelope's request to not be portrayed in a war bonnet into consideration, the engraver portrayed Running Antelope as a noble chief with a headdress easily recognizable as a Native one. The purposeful inclusion of a war bonnet displays victory, a quality that Americans would no doubt want to emulate after the Civil War.

This remains the sole portrayal of a Native American on American paper currency. As Thomas King says in his book *The Inconvenient Indian*, "perhaps one Indian was more than enough"[4]. After the printing of this certificate, the deed was done: the image of a Native American was printed on an object that would see use throughout the country. With no words, this silver certificate connected the new, manipulated image to America and its economy. After this silver certificate was taken out of circulation in 1926, the Native image continued to persist on coinage, including the famous "buffalo nickel" from the early 20th century[5]. Outside of currency, this colonial image continues to be seen well into modern day.

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[3] Heinz Tschachler, "The Redskin and the Buck: Representations of American Indians on Paper Money," essay, in *Native Americans and First Nations: A Transnational Challenge* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009), 81–97.

[4] Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2013), 42.

[5] King, 40.

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