

IF SEATTLE IS “INDIAN COUNTRY,” WHERE ARE ALL THE INDIANS?:
REPRESENTING THE PAST IN A SETTLER CITY

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Sarah Thornton

Thesis Committee:

Karen Kosasa, Chairperson
William Chapman
Laura Lyons

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Abstract

This paper will examine the historical representations of Native people in public venues in the Seattle area, and will especially focus on representations in the last century. How did past representations serve the settler-state? How have recent revisions changed Native-settler relations? Are these revisions powerful enough to effect any significant change to the injustices that challenge the persistence and sovereignty of Native political entities? By performing a textual and contextual analysis of public commemorative activities, museum exhibits, historic monuments and markers, this paper will investigate the way Seattle's material culture has been preserved and mobilized for heritage tourism, paying particular attention to the ways that representations of Native people have changed over time. The goal of such an analysis is to reveal some of the meanings these "sites of memory" might convey about the relationship between Native people and the settler colonial society that has displaced them.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Representation and the Settler Project

On the beach in West Seattle there is a replica of the Statue of Liberty. It was placed there in 1952, a gift to the city from Reginald Parsons, a successful Seattle-based financier and philanthropist, on behalf of the Boys Scouts of America. In addition to this statue in Seattle, the Boy Scouts placed replica statues in hundreds of cities across the United States as part of a program called “Strengthen the Arm of Liberty,” the commemorative celebration of the organization’s 40th anniversary. In the July, 1950 edition of *The Scout Executive*, the Boy Scouts’ National Director of Public Relations Leslie Stratton wrote of the project,

When we think of the Magna Charta(sic), the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights and the Atlantic Charter and what all those great instruments of freedom mean to man, we can visualize the true symbolism of the Statue of Liberty and why it is revered alike by terrorized exiles finding a safe haven here from the man-made tyrannies of totalitarian despotism and the American citizen who has known freedom for 174 years.¹

Statton further points out that many Americans don’t know that the broken shackles at Lady Liberty’s base represent America’s “release from colonial enslavement.” This lack of knowledge, he argued, demonstrated the need for such a project, “because today, more than ever, all Americans need to be reminded that freedom, like life itself, is preserved only through vigilance and care...” For Statton, then, the statue was a useful way to preserve and perpetuate a particular historical memory.

¹ Leslie A. Stratton, “The Statue of Liberty,” *The Scout Executive*, http://www.cheyennetroop101.org/liberty/ScoutExecutive_1.jpg (accessed June, 2011).



Figure 1. Lady Liberty statue at Alki Point. (Image courtesy of Jason Baker)

This one piece of public art, however, is laden with multiple meanings. It is, on one hand, a reminder of America's founding principles of freedom and liberty. In addition, as an historical object that has been a part of the community since 1952, the statue evokes even more layers of memory and meaning, from its association with the Boy Scouts to its importance as a gathering place for mourning the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001. In addition to its connotations of liberty and freedom, Seattle's replica statue also embodies another historical memory. Seattle's earliest white settlers wanted to make a new city in the image of New York City, the symbolic hub of American trade and culture. Alki, the name of the statue's West-Seattle neighborhood, is a shortened remnant of the original settlement's name, "New York Alki," *alki* being a word from Chinook jargon meaning "by and by," or "eventually." The statue's placement at Alki resonates, then, with this allusion to New York, since the first settlers envisioned their little endeavor becoming the west coast's "New York, by and by." The image of

Lady Liberty also connotes the United States' history of immigration, due to the original statue's location on Liberty Island, adjacent to Ellis Island, America's largest and most active immigration station. At the beginning of the 20th century, Lady Liberty became a highly visible symbol of the journey's end for immigrants arriving in New York by boat. Particularly because of this association with immigration, then, from the perspective of Native people the statue can be perceived as a symbol of settler colonialism.

Colonialism involves the historic and ongoing incursions into Native lands and ways of life, as well as a history of violent discriminatory practices and institutions. Contemporary society, however, no longer openly tolerates violence and discrimination. Instead, America endeavors to create a peaceful and tolerant society by embracing and celebrating its cultural and ethnic diversity. For America's Native people, this means greater acceptance and inclusion in American society. Discriminatory practices that once made it difficult for Indians to acquire higher education or even be hired on to higher paying jobs have become illegal. Social and legal restrictions can no longer determine where Indians can (or cannot) live, work or socialize. For individual Indians, opportunities for a successful American life are greater than they have ever been. On the other hand, as the boundaries that once excluded Indians from American society disappear, there is the danger of mistaking racial inclusion and a perception of racial "harmony" with the fulfillment of reconciliation between Native people and settler society.

Settler Colonialism and the City of Seattle

This paper will examine the historical representations of Native people in public venues in the Seattle area, and will especially focus on representations in the last century. How did past representations serve the settler-state? How have recent revisions changed Native-settler

relations? Are these revisions powerful enough to effect any significant change to the injustices that challenge the persistence and sovereignty of Native political entities? By performing a textual and contextual analysis of public commemorative activities, museum exhibits, historic monuments and markers, this paper will investigate the way Seattle's material culture has been preserved and mobilized for heritage tourism, paying particular attention to the ways that representations of Native people have changed over time. The goal of such an analysis is to reveal some of the meanings these "sites of memory" might convey about the relationship between Native people and the settler colonial society that has displaced them.

I chose the city of Seattle for a few reasons, not the least of which is my own familiarity with that city and its history, as well as with the region in general. I am an enrolled member of the Squaxin Island Tribe of Shelton, Washington, but more specifically I am descended from both the Sehwamish people of the south Puget Sound region and the Tsimshian of southern Alaska. Needless to say, my interest in Native affairs in the Pacific Northwest region is first and foremost a personal one. I have always perceived the region to be heavily saturated with reminders of its Indian past, whether in the form of public artwork like totem poles, or regional logos that resemble Pacific Northwest Native artwork, or in restaurants and markets that replicate Native foods, arts and crafts. However, when I once suggested the city's Native "flavor" to a friend who lived in Seattle for a time but was not originally from the region, she seemed confused, and told me that she perceived no such Indian element. In fact, she said, she had never considered the city of Seattle as having an Indian past at all, and was surprised that the city had enough Indian history about which I might write a thesis. It seemed to me that historical representation had accomplished a rather marvelous and powerful magic trick, to make such an

important part of Seattle's history both central to its history and absent from its present. To me, such contradictory perceptions reinforced the importance of examining the ways that Native people are represented in Seattle's history. How can Indians be so central to the city's history and its historic identity, and yet be invisible?

In trying to understand this contradiction, I have found it useful to keep in mind Patrick Wolfe's explanation of settler colonialism and its "logic of elimination" as I examined the ways that the stories of Seattle's past have been presented to the public. According to Wolfe, settler colonialism's primary objective is the replacement of the Native and the appropriation of the land itself. The logic of elimination has both a negative dimension and a positive dimension. "Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base – as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event."² In other words, in terms of my project, there is no one date, year, or place for invasion that can be identified with an historic marker, since "invasion" is both the foundation and the skeleton that structures American settler society. Settler colonialism, in other words, is not merely part of America's past; it continues to structure its present.

Settler society is built and sustained by a range of strategies – economic, biological, institutional, and legal –which facilitate the erasure and replacement of Native societies. As Candace Fujikane has pointed out, "Invasion continues to be constitutive of the very structure of the settler state and its persistent, institutionalized policies of elimination."³ Certain negative dimensions of elimination are easy to identify throughout U.S. history, such as the Indian

² Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387-409.

³ Candace Fujikane, "Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai'i," in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 10.

Removal Act and the resulting Trail of Tears. Various frontier massacres like Sand Creek and Wounded Knee are well known instances of Indian Removal in the literal sense. The “Indian Wars” that occupied the U.S. Army for much of the last half of the 19th century served to enforce the removal of Native people from their traditional homes and to enforce their restriction to reservations, away from mainstream American settlements and cities. This negative dimension of elimination is becoming easier to perceive as it becomes more and more visible in mainstream historical representations. The other dimension of elimination, its positive dimension, is conceptually removed from the violent injustices of the past. The ability for Americans to recognize the relationship between nation-building and the ongoing logic of elimination is obscured by ideas about patriotism and national pride, and bolstered by popular representations of history that ignore the connection between the violence against Indians in the past and the ongoing hardships and injustices Native people face in the present.

For example, representations of the ill treatment of Native people abound in textbooks, museums and historic sites. Strategies such as the forced cultural assimilation of Native people by criminalizing traditional cultural practices and requiring Indian children to leave their communities to attend boarding schools are increasingly common elements in historic narratives. This is possible now because these kinds of policies of elimination are no longer utilized or justified by settler society. The effects of these past strategies linger, however, but the legacies of forced assimilation are not always made apparent in public history settings. Important cultural knowledge was lost, including Native languages and cultural practices, in the generations that were forced to deny their cultural heritage. The effects of such a loss linger in contemporary challenges to Native identity and “authenticity.” For instance, is an Indian still an Indian if he

doesn't know how "to be" an Indian, i.e. if he doesn't speak the language, wear "Indian" clothing, know Indian histories, practice Indian crafts? Such questions, when posed by both Natives and settlers, challenge the survival of Native communities.⁴

Settler society might congratulate itself that it has ended the violence and racial discrimination that characterize 19th century U.S.-Indian relations, but racial discrimination, according to Wolfe, was not a prime motivator of conquest. It was merely a historically specific justification for it. "Whatever settlers may say...the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory."⁵ Race, he argues, is but one historically distinctive mode of differentiation, which was at one time expedient for expropriation.⁶ However, Wolfe argues, as America's frontier era came to a close and there was no space left for removal, assimilation policies were developed that perpetuated settler-colonialism's logic of elimination. Indians, it was hoped, would disappear by being absorbed *into* American society, rather than by being ejected from it. Being detached from the tribe, assimilated Natives were no longer Indians, but Americans.

Indians were not the only racial/ethnic group subject to the processes of assimilation. Today, the American "melting pot," which previously "melted" all ethnicities into a dominant, white, middle-class culture, has been adapted to incorporate diverse ethnicities into a multi-cultural society. As American society struggles to embrace its diverse minority populations, this contemporary version of assimilation still threatens to absorb the Native into the political, social, and cultural body of the nation. The danger of this is in forgetting that Indian tribes and nations,

⁴ Eva Marie Garrouette, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁵ Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 388.

⁶ Patrick Wolfe, "Race and Citizenship," *Magazine of History* 18, no. 5 (October 2004): 66-71.

unlike other minority racial and ethnic groups, have a unique political relationship with the United States. It is via this government-to-government relationship that Native communities in the United States perpetuate their sovereignty and therefore determine their communities' futures. The past violence of forced assimilation may be alleviated as Natives are embraced by settler society, but as Native people are absorbed into the ethnic heterogeneity of immigrant populations and become one of many ethnic cultures that constitute American society, America's fundamental organizing structure – settler-colonialism – disappears behind the guise of a multicultural harmony. Consequently, the binary political categories of “Native” and “settler” which provide the foundation for Native political and cultural sovereignty become more and more obscure.⁷ In this way, it is possible for settler society to recognize the importance and even the value of Native people in Seattle's past, even as the stories about Native dispossession and displacement are permitted to disappear from the record of public memory, subsumed by the narratives of settler society. After all, the challenge these stories of dispossession might pose to settler ownership of the land is rendered somewhat impotent if settlers can regard Indians as “one of us.”

History, Politics and Place

It is vitally important to analyze and uncover the relationship between historical representations and the logic of elimination because of the implications such a project has for the future of reconciliation and/or reparations – in other words, some measure of justice. “Justice” for Native people is first of all contingent upon the recognition of injustice, and not merely the injustice of *past* violence and betrayal. The past is fundamentally connected to the present state

⁷ See Fujikane, “Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai`i,” 1-42.

of affairs. This link must be made apparent, and not just as a link in a chain of historical inevitability. Finding solutions for the present-day issues and challenges with which Native people contend means understanding the historical processes that helped to create those challenges. Furthermore, the tendency for contemporary American society to distance itself temporally and ideologically from the unfortunate actions of its predecessors allows Americans to ignore the nation's fundamental character as a settler society, and to conveniently forget that the nation's contemporary existence and affluence *is a result* of the colonial activities of the past. Until settlers are able to recognize and articulate this connection, they will remain complicit in the structure of invasion.

This connection between the past and the present makes the way we tell history as important as “the facts” about history. Tony Bennett explains that, the significance of historical representations is not in their ability to tell the “facts” about the past, or to tell it “as it really was, but in “their position within and relations to the presently existing field of historical discourses and their associated social and ideological affiliations.”⁸ In other words, the past creates meaning, not merely as a series of verifiable “truths,” or as a road of causality that leads to the present. Historical meaning is always made within the context of its mobilization in the present. This is why, in order to re-shape the “meaning” of history in the present settler-state, the revision of historical representations alone is not sufficient, since meanings for such representations are created by their positioning within a context that has not changed: the reality that the United States is a settler society constituted by the structure of invasion.

⁸ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 147-148.

In the last few decades, as efforts have been made to make our nation's history more inclusive, the representation of Native peoples in America's history has changed dramatically. In many instances, these changes are made at the request of Native people themselves. However, despite the revision of erroneous and/or harmful representations of Native people, the more fundamental deterrents to Native justice persist. Until historical representations begin to reveal the foundations of the United States as a colonial settler-state, it will be difficult for Americans to find a path toward a more just relationship between Natives and settlers.

That is not to say that the many significant revisions to the historical representations of Native people in the last few decades have been futile or worthless. Indeed, similar revisions have been made with the expectation that they might support social and political change for other minority groups. For instance, academic debate surrounding the historical significance of slavery in the United States led to the revision of the representation of slavery in places like Colonial Williamsburg. This was just one historical venue in which the invisibility of the historical realities of slavery was exposed. The idea is that such a revision will reveal the reality of slavery's significance in America's past, as well as its legacy of violence and injustice. Furthermore, such a revision is expected to have an ameliorating effect on the racism that slavery helped to create by incorporating an honest version of African-American history into America's meta-narrative. Where the American public had previously chosen to forget, public history venues began asking society to remember. In other words, history – particularly the way we choose to remember it – is a potentially significant force in shaping a more just society.⁹ Indeed,

⁹ David Blight, "If You Can'T Tell it Like it Was, it Can Never be as it Ought to be," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, ed. James Oliver Horton, and Lois E. Horton, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

the concept that public history can be used to reshape the social and political landscape of justice is a central presupposition of this paper.

“History” has come to be regarded by some less as a body of factual events than as a socially constructed expression of the way a society understands itself. As the environmental historian William Cronon has explained it, “The past is an infinitude of undigested happenings; human history, on the other hand, consists of the stories we choose to record in remembering what we care most about in ourselves and in our world.”¹⁰ Cronon here is describing a conception of history that is fundamentally tied to the function of memory. Furthermore, Cronon argues, our collective identity and our civic life depend on our sense of a common culture and a common past. This connection between collective identity and collective memory is an especially important component of nation building, or of forming and maintaining what Benedict Anderson has termed imagined communities.¹¹ Furthermore, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have shown how people and groups with political and cultural power have been able to influence and “invent” patterns of collective memory and tradition as a way of forging and strengthening social cohesion among large groups of people. In other words, the manipulation of public perceptions about history can be regarded as a function of social and political power.¹²

While official history may have influence over vernacular memory, the relationship is nothing like a linear equation. Officially produced histories are not so much agents of authoritarian “rule,” than they are imprecise tools for influencing cultural and political consensus.

¹⁰ William Cronon, “Why the Past Matters,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 84:1, (Autumn 2000): 2-13.

¹¹ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006): 6-7.

¹² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Rather, cultural hegemony provides a useful framework for thinking about the power of historical representation. As such, representations of the past can be seen as promoting unity through consent rather than coercion, providing meta-narratives of a shared community by which dissident members of diverse groups might align themselves. Furthermore, cultural hegemony has a dynamic nature, changing over time as compelled by need.¹³ Likewise, historical representations emerge at particular historical moments, only to be subsumed and revised as social needs require.¹⁴

It is important to note the distinction between the discipline of history and the phenomena of collective memory. As David Blight has observed,

History is what trained historians do, a reasoned reconstruction of the past rooted in research; it tends to be critical and skeptical of human motives and action, and therefore more secular than what people commonly call memory....Memory is often owned; history is interpreted. Memory is passed down through generations; history is revised. Memory often coalesces in objects, sites, and monuments; history seeks to understand contexts in all their complexity.¹⁵

Blight argues that history and memory are two very different ways of understanding the past.

However, the two are not mutually exclusive. If memory “coalesces in objects, sites, and monuments,” then these objects, sites and monuments are often curated, preserved and interpreted by historians. Therefore, while it’s important to maintain a conceptual distinction between history and memory, it’s also important to keep in mind that they function in cooperative ways. Indeed, the interaction between history and memory in museums, monuments

¹³ Here I am summarizing Antonio Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony, as explained by Ivan Karp in “Introduction,” in *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven Lavine, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): 4.

¹⁴ Owen Dwyer describes this process as symbolic accretion, by which “memorial agents attempt to simultaneously promote some meanings and suppress others in a landscape that is literally awash in memory.” This term will be explored further in Chapter One. Owen J. Dwyer, “Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 5, no. 3 (2004): 419-435.

¹⁵ Blight, “If You Can’t Tell it Like it Was, it Can Never be as it Ought to Be,” 24.

and historic sites is the source of their powerful potential to influence social and political change, especially since these are prominent places where many people learn about and engage with the past.¹⁶

Historic narratives shape communal memories, forging and strengthening the ties of imagined communities, but they also have another important function: they also make *place* out of *space*. Pierre Nora's notion of "sites of memory" points to the spatial aspect of conceptualizing the past. The term is used to refer to actual, physical sites, but also to refer to non-material "sites" involving celebrations and spectacles of ritual. This spatial aspect of memory is particularly important to this topic because, for settler colonialism, ownership and occupation of the land itself is the end goal. In order to fulfill this goal, not only must the Native be physically removed, but Native memories must also be removed or overwritten by settler memories. Native place must somehow be transformed into settler place.

Edward Said used the term "imaginative geographies" to refer to the process of inventing and constructing a geographic space that pays little attention to the actuality of the geography and its inhabitants. These imaginative geographies are functions of conquest, mapping the annexation of already inhabited territories.¹⁷ "Sites of memory," – that is, historic narrative as it is communicated through museum exhibits, public artwork, historic districts, walking tours, public dramas and ceremonies, etc. – help to structure and maintain imaginative geographies. They also have the profound power to unite and to divide various factions of society, and to prescribe terms of belonging and exclusion. They are often enacted and maintained by a

¹⁶ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978): 54.

dominant group, but they also provide important sites of contestation for marginalized groups to lobby for and enact crucial social change. Writing about the displacement of the Palestinian peoples and the creation of the Israeli state, Edward Said argued that the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality is one of the chief battles that the Palestinians must fight. Furthermore, he says, “A similar battle has been fought by all colonized peoples whose past and present were dominated by outside powers who had first conquered the land and then rewrote history so as to appear in that history as the true owners of that land.”¹⁸

Seattle is a particularly interesting place to examine the relationship between settler society and the creation, maintenance and evolution of “sites of memory,” especially since it seems that settler society has retained many aspects of Native history, place and memory, rather than obliterating and effacing them. Place names like Alki (a word from Chinook trade jargon) or Leschi Park, named after the Nisqually Chief who led the 1856 attack against the city, can be found all around the city. Totem poles decorate many parks and squares. While the city’s founders are memorialized only in various street and building names, the Indian Chief Si’ahl is memorialized in bronze sculptures in two separate locations, as well as being perpetually remembered in the city’s very name. One important question that arises in a place like Seattle is, if the imaginative geography of colonialism is at work in Seattle, how can the centrality of Indians in the city’s history and identity be explained? How is the inclusion of Native history in public memory consistent with the logic of elimination? These kinds of inclusions of Native history and culture within the city do indeed seem to have a particularly important conformity to the logic of elimination, as this paper will demonstrate. The historic representations of Native

¹⁸ Edward W. Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 175-192.

people that I examine here seem to share this common characteristic: relegated to certain criteria of acceptability, they do not provide an overwhelming challenge to the settler-state's "quiet" possession of the land.¹⁹

Outline of Chapters

I begin with an analysis of some aspect of Seattle's historic narrative, since crafting narratives is an important method of making meaning out of the events of the past. Chapter One, "The Dream and the Deed," is an analysis of the city's historic narrative as it has appeared in a selection of official commemorative forms. Over the last century, the city has staged many re-enactments of the Denny Party's landing on Alki Point in 1852. The first of these commemorations was held in 1905, and included ceremonies to place commemorative plaques at various sites around the city and a monument for the first settlers on Alki Point. A comparative analysis of the 1905 ceremonies, the 1952 centennial celebration, and the 2005 sesquicentennial ceremonies reveals important changes in the representation of Native people through these performances. Also, the script of the official centennial celebration play, which was performed throughout the winter during the initial 1952 celebration, provides narrative material for comparison against more nuanced histories of the city and the region that have been written in recent years. The seasonal repetition of these commemorative events helps to engrave the narrative of the city's origins into the collective memory of its citizens. This is particularly useful for creating a sense of civic unity and identity. Furthermore, by repeatedly performing the "beginning" of the city's history for public display, each commemorative moment provides a way of breaking with the past that came before that commemorated moment, creating a sense of

¹⁹ See Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference," 891.

temporal distance between “now” and the original moment of the “change of worlds.” This distance has been translated in these celebrations as a sign of progress. Can “progress,” however, both advance and disguise the settler state’s “logic of elimination?”

Chapter Two, “The Indian in the Museum,” is an examination of the way that the city’s past has been presented and interpreted by local museums. The Museum of History and Industry’s (MOHAI) permanent exhibition, “Essential Seattle,” is an important place where people learn about the story of Seattle. A textual analysis of the exhibition reveals the museum’s effort to revise past versions that have ignored Indian occupation and the vital part that Indians have played in the historic narrative. MOHAI clearly attempted to shape the representation of Native people in its museum display in such a way as to convey a more inclusive narrative.

I examine two exhibitions displayed at the Burke Museum, “A Time of Gathering,” and “AYP: Native Voices Reply.” Both of these exhibitions demonstrated the Burke Museum’s commitment to improving and deepening its relationship with the region’s Native tribes. These exhibits reflect a major shift in museum practice in the last several decades, away from a more “modernist” approach in which historic narratives are presented as univocal and authoritative representations of an objectively reconstructed past. More recent approaches to museum display, however, recognize the inherent bias in any exhibit that chooses one perspective over another, or privileges certain kinds of content. Consequently, there has been a call for more complex, multi-vocal presentations of the past and present in museums as well as other historic sites. Such an approach has been a necessary revision as America has struggled to embrace diversity and a multi-cultural society. However, when implemented in museum practice, can this “post-museum,” as Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has termed this emerging museum paradigm, sufficiently represent

the unique position of Native communities and people within American society? Have these revised efforts been enough to undo the centuries of damage that the museum has previously wrought on public perceptions about the place of Native people in mainstream society? Or do they, in their own way, continue to participate in the logic of elimination?

Chapter Three, “The Past That Had No Future,” is an investigation into the way that Seattle’s material culture has been utilized to present a sense of the city’s past. The material culture of the city – its buildings, streets, neighborhoods, parks, public art – has a very important role in creating a sense of place and a sense of civic identity. It has also been a source of contention between various factions of society as individuals and groups struggled to have their say in decisions about how the city’s material culture is managed. I begin by examining two particular fights over public space. First I recount the struggle to preserve Seattle’s downtown historic neighborhood by creating the Pioneer Square Historic District. This struggle reveals the way that narrative operates within certain spaces to help create place. It also reveals the way that the cooperation of narrative and place serve to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Such boundaries have been powerful tools for marginalizing various groups of people within urban place, including Native people. The second significant social contest over space and place that I recount is the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation’s (UIATF) campaign to create the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. Although this was an important moment for urban Indians to assert their presence and belonging within the boundaries of the city, I argue that the success of the campaign was partially dependent upon perceptions that UIATF’s proposed use of the land would be compatible with the desires and endeavors of settlers. Rather than resulting in a “rightful” return of land to Indian people, UIATF’s victory served to obscure the history of

specific injustices that dispossessed and displaced the Duwamish, the original inhabitants of the territory.

Furthermore, an examination of the “Indian” elements that have been preserved as part of the Pioneer Square neighborhood reveals these objects’ usefulness for conveying the supposed inevitability of the “change of worlds” that resulted from white settlement and the consequential end of the Indian past. Chapter Three’s placement at the end of this thesis is strategic, in that it is the culmination of an argument that begins with the role of historic narratives and meta-narratives in the colonization and subjection of Native people, and ends with the inscription of that narrative upon the land itself through the preservation of the material culture that supports it.

A Note on Terminology

It is important to note that most terminology for Indians is problematic. The word “Indian” is an infamous misnomer, and the term “American Indian,” is merely an extension of that mistaken identity. The term “Native American” became popular in the last half of the 20th century as a politically correct and acceptable reference. However, “America” is a non-Native creation utilized by the colonizers to imagine the place they would colonize.

Many scholars would argue in favor of utilizing the specific tribal titles. While this would be the most accurate reference in most cases, this approach has pitfalls of its own, since quite often tribal names are distortions of tribal names by non-Native colonizers, or outright inventions. In the Pacific Northwest, even many of the tribes were artificially organized and re-grouped in the treaty process of establishing reservations, making the use of some tribal names inaccurate in certain contexts.

In the context of this thesis, it is important to maintain the distinction between settlers and Native peoples as political categories, despite the fact that generations of inter-marriage between settler and Native individuals complicate any supposed “purity” of these categories. Still, because the focus of this analysis is predicated upon the right of Native people to assert their political identities as citizens of Tribal nations and communities, the terms “Native” and “settler” are most useful and succinct here. I have also occasionally used the word “Indian,” especially when its use connotes the stereotyped ethnic identity with which settlers have imbued it. Mostly I’ve chosen to utilize the term “Native” in conjunction with a descriptive word like community, nation, people or person.

CHAPTER 1

The Dream and the Deed: Commemorating the Birth of Seattle

Commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.²⁰

On November 13, 1951, the city of Seattle opened the year-long, 100th anniversary celebration of the city's founding with a re-enactment of the landing of the first party of pioneers at Alki Point. The West Seattle High School Band played music as the crowds gathered under gray skies. The actors disembarked from their vessel at 10 a.m., supposedly the same time the Denny Party (named for the group's perceived leader, Arthur Denny) first stepped foot on Alki's sandy beach 100 years earlier. The *Yankee Clipper* played the part of the schooner *Exact*, on which the party sailed from Portland, while various townspeople played the pioneers and some junior high school boys played the Indians, their black-dyed wigs strangely bluish in tint.²¹ Other Indians were played by members of the West Seattle Sportsmen club, "painted and dressed as Native Americans as they barbecued salmon over an open fire." As the Denny Party came ashore, the "Indians" approached and greeted the party, frightening the women and children. At the closing of the drama, as a cold drizzle began to fall, the high school band played the National Anthem. The re-enactment was the opening ceremony for a day of revelry, with prayers and speeches by civic leaders, culminating in the rededication of the Alki Monument to the Denny Party, and the placement of a time capsule at its base.

²⁰ John R. Gillis, "Introduction: Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemoration: The Politics and National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

²¹ Alan J. Stein, "Seattle Begins Its Year-Long Centennial Celebration Beginning November 13, 1951," http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3632.



Figure 2. Re-enactment of the Denny Party landing at Alki, 1951 (Image from *Seattle Times*, courtesy of Seattle Public Library).



Figure 3. Re-enactment of the Denny Party landing at Alki, 1951 (Image courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle)

Commemorative celebrations like this re-enactment are important social ceremonies in the life of a community, shaping a community's identity by shaping a narrative about its past.²² Perhaps it is at this public spectacle that the younger generations are hearing this story and learning their city's history for the first time. Even for those who already know this story, the visual impact of the re-creation and dramatization might give them a stronger sense of connection to their civic antecedents. Regardless of how audiences negotiate the meanings embedded in this re-enactment, the context of the performance, placed at the center of such pomp and public revelry, lends the story special meaning and significance. In this performance, an official history is reproduced and sanctioned for public consumption. Furthermore, the re-enactment's immediate temporal and spatial context – performed on this particular date, at a specific time and place – as well as its repetition at certain historic moments, lends the performance of this history the weight of ritual, transforming the ritual's narrative into myth, more specifically a birth narrative or creation story.

The work of the historian, according to William Cronon, is to fashion the events of the past into “causal sequences” that make meaning in the present.²³ In other words, historians tell stories, or narratives, rather than merely relay chronologies. “We do so,” he writes, “because narrative is the chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelmingly crowded and disordered chronological reality.” He goes on to state:

In the act of separating story from non-story, we wield the most powerful yet dangerous tool of the narrative form. It is a commonplace of modern literary theory that the very authority with which narrative presents its vision of reality is achieved by obscuring large

²² Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Gillis, “Introduction: Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship,”; Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²³ William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1347-1376.

portions of that reality. Narrative succeeds to the extent that it hides the discontinuities, ellipses, and contradictory experiences that would undermine the intended meaning of its story. Whatever its overt purpose, it cannot avoid a covert exercise of power: it inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others.

The framework of a narrative, then, communicates a specific value, something that an historian and the society that embraces and perpetuates that narrative, elevates. The narrative's framework, in turn, depends on its beginning and ending. Beginnings and endings serve to break the continuity between the past and the present by clearly defining a narrative's trajectory: what comes before "the beginning" does not matter, and when the story is finished, it is finished.²⁴

The Denny Party's landing at Alki is often used in Seattle's story as the dramatic moment of the city's beginning. The story of the Denny Party landing could take on an entirely different set of meanings given a different narrative framework. For example, by the time of their arrival, the Denny party had already traveled several months and several thousand miles from Illinois. Their landing in Seattle was the end of their journey. The landing was also a mid-point in the work of relocating their families, establishing a new settlement, and growing it into a city. If Alki is not really the beginning of the Denny Party's story, neither is it the beginning of non-Native settlement in the area. Farmers and entrepreneurs had already settled elsewhere around the region establishing various settlements that would grow into other cities from the Willamette Valley to present day British Columbia. Support from other settled places like Portland, Olympia and Fort Nisqually was necessary to the Denny Party's survival, both at Alki and later when most of the party moved onto lands across the bay.

²⁴ Barry Schwartz, "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory," *Social Forces* 61, no. 2 (2006): 374-402.

Given the myriad options for framing the Denny Party's landing, it is clear that the repeated emphasis by historians on their landing at Alki as the city's beginning is a very specific choice. It creates a specific framework for the city's narrative. Even the story's opening scene – set on a damp, drizzly day, on an empty beach with the ladies in the party crying – helps to provide the framework to a story that ascends to an eventual triumph, emphasizing the pioneers' fortitude and bravery amidst hardship, and amplifying the magnitude of both their achievement and their vision. In a place where there was “nothing,” they had the vision to imagine and build what would become a great city. This is not a story about the American settlement of the Washington Territory, nor of the Denny Party's long journey, but a story about the beginnings of a specific urban place. The fact that subsequent generations of settlers have created a tradition around the re-enactment of this story demonstrates an ongoing desire to perpetuate the kind of civic identity that such a narrative promotes.

If narratives serve to break the continuity of historical time into meaningful pieces, then the Denny Party's landing at Alki, by marking the beginning of the story of Seattle, chronologically succeeds the denouement of history's preceding story: the story of Native people. British and American exploration and settlement in this region had been impacting and altering the lifeways of the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest for hundreds of years before the Denny Party arrived. Although the treaties that transferred the lands from indigenous possession to American ownership and removed the Indians to reservations wouldn't be signed and put into effect for a few more years, the landing of the Denny Party has often been interpreted historically as the death knell for the region's Native people. Indeed, when the pioneers themselves, and even the re-enactors as recently as 1951, told this story as the beginning of Seattle, the implication was

that the arrival of the Denny Party was the end – or the beginning of the end – of the Indian era in the region.

Although Native people never did disappear entirely from either the region or the growing urban space, later historians continued to perpetuate this idea, sometimes as a matter of fact and at other times sympathetically, with sorrow for what had been lost or destroyed by American “progress.” Still, regardless of the story’s sad undertones, this historic process of dispossession has usually been portrayed as inevitable, for it is well understood that Indians, being merely the vanishing remnants of a pre-historic era, cannot survive the march of modern progress that builds great cities.²⁵ Although the Denny Party story is the opening scene of a dramatic narrative that is meant to glorify the accomplishments of these particular settlers and the city they built, it is discursively connected to the national narrative of the American pioneer, a story which began with the Pilgrims’ arrival on the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock and ended, according to Frederick Jackson Turner, with the closing of the frontier²⁶. The ideal of the “pioneer spirit” is still often utilized to represent, mobilize and celebrate the best qualities of a supposed American character, a set of qualities that includes a vision for the future as well as fortitude and courage in spite of a multitude of trials and dangers. So the story of the Denny Party not only elevates the quality of the local, Seattle settler, it also participates in a national discourse that supports the pioneer ideal and the drive to conquer and populate the lands of North America for the United States.

Telling and re-telling this story in public serves a particular purpose for the settler state. Birth stories in particular offer legitimacy by imposing a sense of historical inevitability, a

²⁵ Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

²⁶ See Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (Penguin, 2008).

beginning point for a linear timeline that extends up to the present, and implicitly carries on into the future. Birth stories are not generally celebrated at the moment of their occurrence, nor are they revisited in the immediately following years. For example, the landing of the Denny Party at Alki was not officially celebrated as Seattle's creation story until 1905, when only three of the 24 original members of the party were still living and able to participate. Birth narratives are celebrated at a moment when one can "look back" at them and they can give a sense of "pastness" to a place. More specifically, the celebration of a nation's, or in this case a city's founding moment, provides a framework for understanding change over time, especially for denoting a sense of progress and vision for the future around which a diverse body of people can unite.²⁷

The importance of Seattle's commemorated narrative is both historical and geographic. In other words, public celebrations of the Denny Party narrative have served to create a sense of "pastness" that legitimizes the settler state both temporally and spatially. Tony Bennett summarizes Benedict Anderson's explanation of this process in this way:

The unity of a nation...is always conceived as...the unity of a people who share the same space and time, the occupants of a territory which has been historicized and the subjects of a history which has been territorialized. But of a history which is made rather than given, which is the result of an active process of organization through which other histories – other possible frameworks for organizing events into sequences and interpreting their significance – are either eliminated or annexed to and inscribed within the unfolding unity of the nation's development.²⁸

In the case of Seattle, one could argue that the Native people in the area comprise an "other" history or alternative framework for organizing the city's history that is usually eliminated or appended as a secondary story. Furthermore, the location of commemorative celebrations and the way place is utilized during these events "territorialize" history in significant ways. For at the

²⁷ Spillman, "Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia," 142.

²⁸ Bennett, "The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics," 141.

heart of the settler project is the acquisition and perpetual ownership of the land itself.²⁹ In this way, commemoration is part of the process of creating a “historicity of a territory and territorialisation of a history,”³⁰ an important tool used by the settler state to legitimize its very existence.

Seattle’s Story

A simplified version of the Denny Party narrative has been told and retold in commemorative and founding day celebrations over the years. On November 13, 1851, 24 settlers traveling on the schooner *Exact* arrived at a sandy spit in the Puget Sound after a rough, week-long journey by water from Portland. Envisioning it as the site of a great settlement, they named the site New York, but it came to be known as New York Alki.³¹ The narrative of origins that developed over time was filled with settler stories of hard work and determination. However, it does not represent the complex historic process through which the city of Seattle came into existence. First of all, the members of the Denny Party were not the first non-Native settlers in the vicinity. Another group, led by Luther M. Collins, had settled in the banks of the Duwamish River near the place where the neighborhood of Georgetown is now, not far south from Alki Point. Apparently lacking the urban vision that the Denny Party apparently had, this was a group of farmers, not entrepreneurs or city-builders, and have often been left out of the narrative, although the Denny and Collins parties are known to have interacted and cooperated on several occasions. The narrative not only obscures the first settlements that supported the fledgling city such as the Collins settlement, but also the prior presence of other non-Native activity in the

²⁹ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

³⁰ Nicos Poulantzas, as quoted by Bennett, “The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics,” 141.

³¹ See the Introduction for an explanation of this name.

region. Fort Nisqually, for example, had been an important post for French and British fur traders that had been working in the territory from the middle of the 18th century, and was a necessary source of supplies for the Denny Party. Furthermore, the fur trade had laid a foundation for communication and cooperation with Native people, and had utilized and publicized Native routes for trade and commerce that made the success of settlements like the Denny Party's possible.

These, and other, omissions indicate that those involved with creating and shaping Seattle's story – mainly the first landholders in the city and their immediate descendants – wanted to emphasize specific aspects of the past. Omitting the other non-Native settlers in the area allowed them to imagine that their city was built out of what seems to be empty space. Furthermore, these kinds of omissions demonstrate the desire of those who had a hand in shaping and revising the city's birth narrative over time to continue to “forget” those aspects of the past that did not contribute to the kind of story they wanted the story to convey or to the specific meaning(s) it would communicate. The Denny narrative is meant to be a tale of a specifically American triumph, and the previous presence of other nationalities, as well as the presence and interactions of Native people, in the city's development complicates the valorization of the American pioneer emphasized in this version of the story. This is not merely a story about the triumph of Manifest Destiny and American settlement. It is a story about the ascendancy of an American city over an empty wilderness: the Denny Party went into the wilderness with a vision and made something out of nothing with their bare hands. The city itself – the apogee of American capitalist enterprise – is the accomplishment, and her citizens are the triumphant builders.

Another complication obscured by the commonly celebrated story is the fact that Alki Point is not the true birth *place* of the city. Alki Point is a piece of land that juts out into the Puget Sound just past the mouth of the Duwamish River, west across the bay from where the current city center is located. According to William Speidel's vernacular history of Seattle, *Sons of the Profits*, by the time Arthur Denny got around to making a land claim on Alki Point, two other members of the original landing party, John Low and Lee Terry, had already laid claim to the entire area. Although they offered Denny some free lots in their new town, Speidel suggests that Denny believed he had not traveled all the way from Illinois to purchase a small piece of someone else's town.

Furthermore, Denny's vision for building a great city included trade and industry and not merely farming. Selling timber to the *Leonesa*, a brig on its way to San Francisco, had already



Figure 4. Charlie Terry. (Image from of HistoryLink.org)

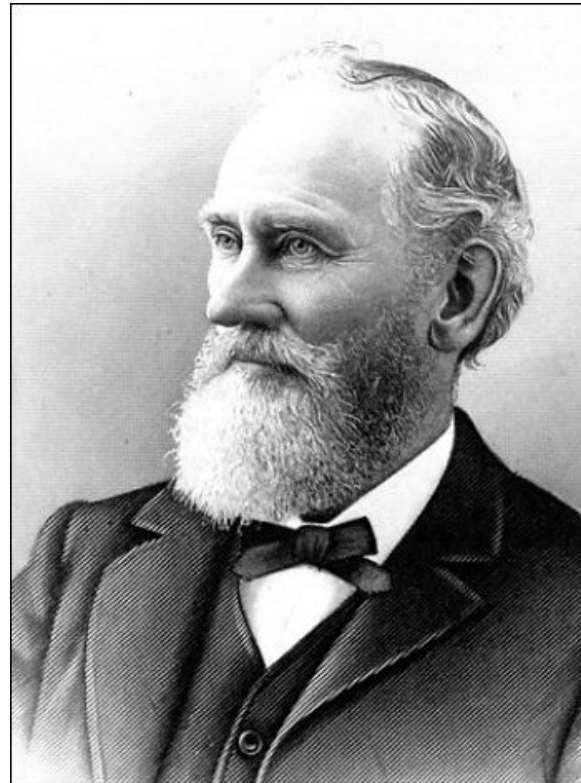


Figure 5. Arthur Denny. (Image courtesy of *Seattle-Post Intelligencer*)

met with success, but developing a timber industry required water access for large ships that Alki's shallow beach couldn't accommodate. Recognizing the site's limitations, Arthur Denny, William Bell and Carson Boren rowed the length and breadth of what is now Elliot Bay taking soundings, trying to find a more ideal location to set up a permanent town site. They managed to find deep water along the eastern shore, and a small area north of the marshy land at the mouth of the Duwamish River where the steep bluffs gave way to a tidal inlet. While the water access held promise as a port, the land itself was marshy and miserable. It was far from ideal for a settlement, but it was the only other flat piece of habitable land in the area, and so the men, as well as Arthur's brother David, staked their claims to 320 acres each in February, 1852. These claims would later become the center of downtown Seattle. According to Murray Morgan, who authored one of Seattle's more prominent history books, a clerk in Olympia had called the settlement Duwamps, after the Native people who lived there, which inspired the settlers to come up with a "less repulsive" name. At the suggestion of Doc Maynard, who had joined the group early in 1852, they settled on the name Seattle, an Anglicized version of the name of the prominent Duwamish leader, Si'ahl, who had been friendly toward the settlers and was a particular friend to Maynard.³²

Charlie Terry became sole owner of the land at Alki when his brother Lee Terry left the area. The original settlers considered Terry's Alki operation a separate settlement from Denny's marsh,

³² Seattle's name in Lushootseed is spelled *Si'ahl*, where the ' represents a glottal stop (as in "uh-oh) and the *l* is meant to be pronounced as "alsh." Some anglicizations include Sealth, Seathl, or See-ahth. An approximate phonetic spelling of the correct pronunciation, according to Native speaker and educator in Lushootseed Vi Hilbert, would be See-alsh, where the first syllable is accented. I will use the name "Si'ahl" to refer to the historic person or the title "Chief Seattle." (See my comments in Chapter Two, under the subheading "'Essential Seattle' at MOHAI.") Vi Hilbert, "When Chief Seattle (Si'ahl) Spoke," in *A Time of Gathering: Native Heritage in Washington State*, ed. Robin K. Wright, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).; Kenneth Greg Watson, "Chief Seattle (Seattle, Chief Noah [Born Si'ahl, 178?-1866])," *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=5071 (accessed June, 2012).

and as competing sites for the future city. When Denny gave Henry Yesler lots to start a lumber mill, Terry also built a lumber mill at Alki with William Renton and dominated the timber trade on the Sound. When Denny built a post office, Terry built a competing post office for Alki. In the winter, however, the northern winds blew with the tides, creating massive waves that pounded Alki's northern shore and paralyzed Terry and Renton's lumber mill. When Terry realized that he could never have a successful lumber mill at Alki because of the winter waves, and therefore could no longer compete with Denny, he sold out his businesses and moved on to other ventures. With the elimination of Terry – and Alki – as competition, Denny's city was truly born.³³

The Dream and the Deed

Although the story exists in multiple forms and scripts (even the commemorative celebrations in 1905, 1951 and 2001 tell the same story in different ways), the skeleton of the story, its framework as a creation story that begins with the Denny Party landing on Alki Point, remains largely the same over the course of 150 years. An excellent example of this narrative as produced for public consumption is Seattle's official centennial play, *The Dream and the Deed: A Stage Cavalcade of Seattle's Hundred Years*, which was produced and performed throughout 1952 by the University of Washington School of Drama. Written by the department's director, Glenn Hughes, the bulk of the play not only recreates the city's founding moment, but also its first 50 years, the period of Seattle's history up to the arrival of the railroad and the Yukon Gold Rush of 1898, the two events which helped secure Seattle's future growth and success.

³³ William C. Speidel, *Sons of the Profits Or There's No Business Like Grow Business: The Seattle Story 1851-1901* (Seattle: Nettle Creek Publishing Company, 1967): 52-55.

When Hughes wrote *The Dream and the Deed*, at the opening of the 1950s, the city was undergoing some serious challenges after the labor disputes of the 1930s, the post-World War Two economic downturn, and the suburban sprawl of the late 40s. A desire for gender equality was growing as men returning from the War were replacing Seattle's women, who had been a large part of the World War Two work force during Seattle's shipbuilding boom. The undercurrents that would lead to the racial conflicts of the late 1950s and 1960s were also already brewing in 1951, both nationally and locally. Furthermore, the city was feeling the effects of the "Red Scare." Communists were thought to have infiltrated American institutions, a national phenomenon which culminated with the McCarthy Hearings.

In 1952, the University of Washington was still reeling from the Canwell Hearings of 1948, in which a legislative fact-finding committee had been set up to investigate possible Communist activities. Led by Republican state legislator Albert Canwell, the committee, which came to be known as the Canwell Committee, investigated many individuals and organizations including the Building Service Employees' Union, the Washington Pension Union, the Seattle Repertory Theatre, and University of Washington faculty for possible communist infiltration. Canwell was convinced that the Pacific Northwest, and Washington State in particular, was a hotbed of communist



Figure 6. Albert Canwell. (Image courtesy of *The Spokesman-Review*)



Figure 7. Florence James, co-director of the Seattle Repertory Theater leaps to her feet during the Canwell Hearings, calling witness George Hewitt a liar and a perjurer. (Image courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle).



Figure 8. Florence James ejected from the hearings after her outburst. (Image courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle).

activity, and was especially concerned about supposed Communist indoctrination activities in the University of Washington in Seattle. In the end, many lost their jobs, including several university professors.³⁴

There was a growing sense that these kinds of social processes were de-stabilizing American society, at both the national and the local levels. At this historic moment, the city of Seattle was in need of a unifying narrative to help provide a sense of common identity and social cohesion. In *The Dream and the Deed*, Hughes produces just such a narrative, scrubbed of all racial, gender or class conflict and providing the story of a city built upon unity and consensus, which seemingly enabled the fledgling community to overcome all its challenges and obstacles. Furthermore, the city's sense of identity is conveyed by – just as its narrative is driven by – the motif of the pioneer spirit: courage, vision, and a sense of adventure. As the play opens, Arthur Denny speaks of the prospect of heading west. This tale of “adventure” is embedded in the challenge of carving a civilization out of the wilderness. At the close of Scene III, in which the party arrives at Alki Point and begins their work, the Second Narrator declares:

It is man against trees
Against hills
Against the sea.
Strong, silent forces, these –
Not enemies, but challenges,
Ponderous and stubborn,
Yet holding friendliness.
The hills cradle the clear, fresh streams;
The sea is alive with nourishment,
And the forest with warmth and shelter.
They wait in patient grandeur

³⁴ See Roger Sale, *Seattle Past to Present* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976).; Greg Lange, “Washington State Legislature Passes the Un-American Activities Bill on March 8, 1947,” http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=1484 (accessed January, 2011); Jim Kershner, “Canwell, Albert F. (1907-2002),” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9887 (accessed January, 2011).

For man, the transformer,
The long-expected conqueror,
The bridegroom whose bride is the wilderness.³⁵

It is implied here that man's natural purpose is to subdue the wilderness, to meet the challenge of "conquering" and "transforming" it so that it fulfills man's needs, rather than obstructs his purpose. While the wilderness is a challenge, it is not the enemy. It is the bride of man. Like man's literal bride, woman, the wilderness offers sustenance and the opportunity for reproduction. This gendered wilderness is subtly figured in the representation of women as the fruits of prior cultivation. When Arthur proposes the move west to Mary in the first scene, her reply reflects a "conquered" and "subdued" woman. "It's for you to decide, Arthur. Your will is mine." Such a declaration displays the unification and consensus, at least among the sexes, which might have been important to the play's contemporary audience.

The narrative that Hughes constructed certainly serves to obscure a more complex reality for pioneer women by portraying them as symbols of unity, beauty and civilization. During Mrs. Blaine's monologue she tells the audience that some ladies had brought seeds from their former homes and planted these flowers in this new soil, symbolic of the seeds of civilization that the pioneers had brought with them to the wilderness. In this way, Hughes shows how Seattle was being envisioned as and transformed into more than merely an urban space. It was conceived of as a home, one that was domesticated and civilized. These representations of women are especially interesting when juxtaposed with the representation of Native people in the narrative. Indeed, women and Natives are represented very similarly – wielded symbolically, their deeds and history have been simplified in order to convey a particular idea about the pioneer endeavor.

³⁵ Glenn Hughes, *The Dream and the Deed: A Stage Cavalcade of Seattle's Hundred Years* (Seattle: University of Washington School of Drama, 1952), 11.

As symbolic categories, they work together in Hughes's play to convey particular ideas about the settler project.

Hughes constructed a dichotomy in the narrative between woman and Indian that symbolizes the distance between civilization and wilderness. If the making of civilization can be conflated with the making of peaceful and happy homes, then women are certainly at the heart of this process. A scene depicting the wedding between David Denny and Louisa Boren is an iconic representation of the initiation into family-life. While the ritual and ceremony are conducted within the walls of the cabin, the Indians peer in through a window. This outside-looking-in device is laden with meaning, and the image of the curious, watchful Indian is used more than once to set the settler-home and the Indian at odds. In the same monologue quoted above in which Mrs. Blaine announces the happiness of the pioneer woman, she also describes the kinds of interactions that pioneer women might have had with Indians. "Sometimes when we were busy baking bread or sewing, we would be startled by an almost-naked Indian leaning over the lower half of the door, and peering inquisitively at us."³⁶ According to Mrs. Blaine, the success of any efforts taken to shoo these visitors from the home depended on the Indian's state of sobriety. Both Mrs. Blaine's monologue and Louisa and David's wedding represent the gap between settlers and Indians by narrating a distinction between the settler civilization – embodied in the home and family – and the pesky, watchful, curious (and sometimes drunk) Indian, which seems to resemble a generally harmless wild animal – like a curious raccoon, gazing in at the strangeness of civilization.

³⁶ Ibid., 15.

The play also highlights another story about women in early Seattle, one that reveals even as it obscures, the racial tensions between settler and Native. In scene 15, Asa Mercer is sent by the men of Seattle to the East coast to bring back women, because of their scarcity in the region. Technically, Mercer is sent to recruit women for the kind of labor and domestic support they can provide the settlement, as seamstresses and laundresses, for example. But he is also instructed that they need to be “good cooks” and “good mothers” as well. Although someone suggests that Mercer go to San Francisco, another protests, “We don’t want floozies. We want respectable women.” Another man tells Mercer, “We want the future families of Seattle to come from good stock,” to which all of the men onstage respond with cheers. The meeting’s Chairman agrees, “We don’t want just women—we want gentlewomen. And New England’s the place to find them,” making it necessary for Mercer to travel to Boston.³⁷

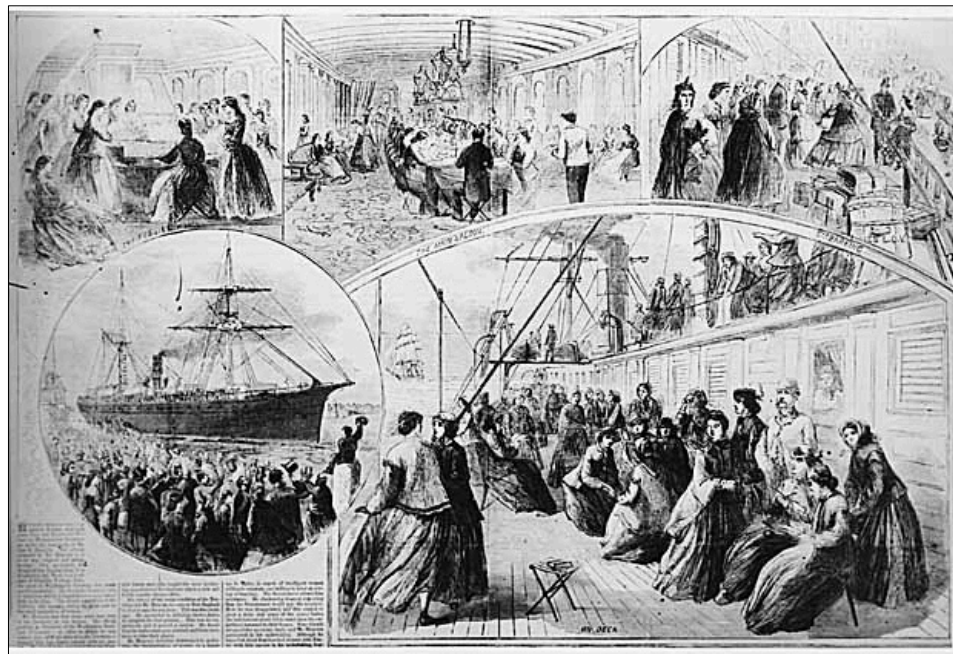


Figure 9. Illustration from a Harper’s Weekly article published in 1866 about the Mercer girls’ departure for Washington Territory. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

³⁷ Ibid., 30.

This scene demonstrates, again, how women are perceived to be the civilizing factor in settling Seattle. In Seattle's early days, when the population was overwhelmed with single men and "respectable" women were scarce, the town was a disorderly and sometimes violent place. However, this scene reveals even more than early Seattle's need for a feminine touch. Indeed, the significance of recruiting and importing respectable white women from the East coast had less to do with domestic support and companionship than with issues of miscegenation in early Seattle, something that was considered a major problem, especially as an entire generation of mixed-race progeny were coming of age around 1860. Even Henry Yesler, upstanding and celebrated Seattle pioneer and entrepreneur, fathered a mixed-race child with a 15-year old Indian girl. On the one hand, Hughes reveals the interest of Seattle's early leaders in reproducing the kind of "civilized" urbanity found in cities like Boston and New York. Embedded in the narrative, but left unsaid, is the settlers' desire that Indians and mixed-race progeny should be excluded from the urban project. The historical record is clear on this point. The territorial legislature passed the Color Act in 1855, which voided marriages between whites and Indians, and subsequent laws prohibited future interracial marriage. Mixed-race children were barred from inheriting their father's estate if a previous marriage produced a white child.³⁸ While settlers were interested in reproducing the genteel urbanity of the East



Figure 10. Julia Benson Yesler, Henry Yesler's mixed-race daughter, ca. 1875. (Image from HistoryLink.org)

³⁸ Thrush, "Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place," 58-59.

Coast, this could only be achieved, in the end, by keeping urban property in the hands of whites and out of the hands of Indians.

As told in *The Dream and the Deed*, Seattle's birth story offers very little room to question the rightful ownership of the land itself. The treaty-making process is glossed over and summarized merely as the build-up to the 1856 "Battle of Seattle." Furthermore, the battle itself is portrayed as instigated by a group of Indians without sufficient cause. The narrator explains, "Governor Stevens journeyed to every section of Washington Territory, patiently explaining to each Indian tribe the terms which he had been authorized by the federal government to make with them... They were to be paid certain amounts in cash for vacating the lands which the white settlers desired." The narrator repeats a few lines later that Stevens "had spoken clearly and in a kindly manner," but that some of the Indians were not happy with the treaty. Despite this rather concise and simple explanation, in actuality the treaties were the result of a complicated process of negotiation between Stevens and several Natives representing different tribes and autonomous groups throughout the Puget Sound area, not all of them in agreement over the terms being presented to them.³⁹ Hughes's audience, however, is offered only a simplified story of Stevens's exchange of lands for cash. Such a reductive narrative cannot possibly convey the range of positions settlers and Natives held, and provides no context for understanding why many Native people declared war rather than peacefully accept the treaties. The audience is left to believe that the Battle of Seattle was merely an unreasonable example of violence perpetrated by savage Indians bent on wiping out the fledgling settlement of Seattle.

³⁹ Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). In all, 12 treaties were negotiated by Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens in Washington Territory between 1854 and 1856, including the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, which ceded the lands on which some members of the Denny Party had already landed claimed. A further discussion about this treaty can be found in Chapter Three under the section "What About the Duwamish?"

The play's rendition of the Battle of Seattle clearly represents the difference between civilization (embodied by settlers) and savagery (embodied by Native people). In the scene, two white men are struck by Indian fire and fall on stage, but as for Native casualties the Narrator tells the audience, "How many Indians, no one knows. In the deep shade of the forest they carried away their dead." While it is true that no historic accounting has ever been made for Native casualties in the battle, it is the invisibility of the Indian in the performance itself, an invisibility that enhances his mystery, that should be noted. The audience is told that the Indians seemed to appear out of nowhere as the fighting began, and in the end they retreated and blended into the forest from where they came. With this mysterious emergence from and disappearance into the forest, Indians seem to be extensions of the natural world itself. At this point in the play, the narrator has already articulated the purpose of the pioneer, which is to bravely and steadfastly drive back nature. "Foot by stubborn foot they grubbed and slashed their way into the wilderness, / Pushing the forest back from the sea, / Sweating and aching from their toil, / But living and loving, / And cherishing the dream."⁴⁰ It is a part of the natural order – and the pioneer's heroic destiny – to defeat nature, and also, by association, the Indian.

Not all Indians needed to be driven back, however. The sense of threat at the end of the Battle of Seattle comes specifically from those Native people who slink back into their primitive forest. However, "good" Indians in the play come into the city and offer their assistance to the citizens of Seattle. A character named Tecumseh even leads his people into the city before the battle in order to seek protection from imminent violence. Another "good" Indian, Pat-Ka-Nim, does his part for the city as well, approaching Denny to warn him of the impending attack. "You

⁴⁰ Hughes, "The Dream and the Deed: A Stage Cavalcade of Seattle's Hundred Years," 16.

my friend. I tell you. Trouble come soon,” he says. Indian Tom, another “good Indian,” brings two white children into the city and hands them over to Denny. “Bad Indians kill ten people,” including the children’s parents, Old Tom tells Denny. Both his deeds and his compassion toward the children indicate his “goodness.” “You safe now,” Indian Tom then says to the children. “You no cry. You safe.”⁴¹

In creating these representations of the “good” Indians – Tecumseh, Pat-Ka-Nim and Indian Tom – Hughes draws from a larger discourse about the role of Indians in America. Ward Churchill writes about this in respect to the American film industry’s many Western genre films of the mid-20th century, which figured the “good” Indian in representations like “Tonto,” the Lone Ranger’s faithful Indian companion. Amidst a plethora of films depicting the righteous warfare of the American military against the savagely violent “bad” Indian, the trope of the “good” Indian emerged as the “bad” Indian’s foil. On screen these “good” Indians passively and peacefully accepted, and in some instances welcomed, the civilizing influence of the



Figure 11. Tom Wilechtid sheltered and transported the orphans of the Jones family, killed during the Indian attacks on White River settlements days before the attack on Seattle in 1856. (Image courtesy of White River Valley Museum)

⁴¹ Ibid., 20.

white man.⁴² Likewise, Hughes's "good" Indians are those who come into the city bearing gifts – friendship, warnings, or orphaned children. In other words, the "good" Indian is one who, like conquered woman, cooperates with and helps to build settler society.

The ultimate "good" Indian in *The Dream and the Deed* is Si'ahl, the Native leader after whom the city was named. In the play it is Si'ahl who symbolically gifts the city to the settlers by taking the stage during the "treaty-making time," reciting portions of his historic, though disputed, speech,⁴³ in which he sadly, but honorably, relinquishes all claims to the lands that the white men wanted. Si'ahl is thus portrayed as "cooperating" with the settlers in their endeavors, and bequeathing to them the land upon which the city is built. By contrast, "bad" Indians refuse to cooperate with the pioneers' endeavor, attacking the city and then slinking back into their forest. More importantly, the "bad" Indians refuse to quietly and graciously accept the terms of the treaties. They resist both assimilation and removal from their lands.

In *The Dream and the Deed*, however, this issue of assimilation is overtly applied to Seattle's immigrant population. In the final scene, the narrator explains the reasons for Seattle's greatness, firstly as "God-given" and secondly as a direct result of the "courage and vision of her founders." In addition, the city's greatness can also be attributed to the less obvious contribution of "the people who have come from afar to make this their home. From all the countries of the world they have come, bringing their skills and their cultures to enrich our city." The language Hughes uses in this passage reveals the way that assimilation is expected to function. The

⁴² Ward Churchill, "Fantasies of the Master Race: The Cinematic Colonization of American Indians," in *The Ward Churchill Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2003): 194-98.

⁴³ Si'ahl's speech first appeared in a Seattle newspaper 30 years after its oration. Its origin and subsequent uses have been the subject of many scholarly articles and books, including Albert Furtwangler's *Answering Chief Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997) and Rudolph Kaiser, "Chief Seattle's Speech[es]: American Origins and European Reception," in *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*, ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

narrator explains how the Chinese, for example, “brought us the color of their ancient civilization,” as a Chinese festival scene moves across the stage. Then the narrator remarks, “The Japanese brought us their crafts, their intricate arts, the fragrance of cherry blossoms,” as an assembly of Japanese dancers crosses the stage. The Italians “sent us her laughing sons and daughters,” and the Russians “have shared with us the treasure of their traditions.” (Only those who come from the British Isles and Canada lack some cultural gift to give, bringing only themselves and being sent by no one, “Good citizens all,” presumably because they already share in the positive traits of America’s Anglo heritage.) In other words, the city’s non-white and non-Anglo members bring token gifts from their cultures, but are welcome only if those gifts blend harmoniously with or enrich and benefit the dominant society.

These acts of celebration demonstrate how immigrant groups were often brought into mainstream American commemorations in the 20th century. According to John Bodnar, these ethnic celebrations always emphasized cultural practices from the immigrants’ previous homelands, and omitted any mention of political events.⁴⁴ Indians, not being immigrants, are naturally absent from this list of contributors to Seattle’s “greatness.” The exceptions, of course, are the “good” Indians in the play. The fact that these few are isolated and individuated by name, suggest that they are the exceptions to the rule. Like Russians, Chinese or Japanese people who are only welcome as apolitical individuals, while Indians are dangerous because of their political affiliations within dangerous tribal nations. Indian tribes in particular are potentially destabilizing entities, disrupting heroic stories about the settler-state’s origins.

⁴⁴ Bodnar, “Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century,” 70-75.

Monuments and Markers: Making Seattle's Commemorative Places

The land itself is a critical but invisible character in Hughes's play. Performed on a theater stage, the events and ideas are disengaged from the reality and specificity of geographic places. The Alki landing re-enactments, however, are staged at the very location where the Denny Party came ashore, exemplifying the importance of place in public memory making. The spatial aspect of commemoration can be even more clearly seen in the 1905 celebration of Seattle's 54th year. The celebrations began at 9:00 a.m., but not at Alki Point. Instead, nearly 200 people gathered at the Stevens Hotel on the corner of First Avenue and Marion Street, the precise location where Arthur Denny established Seattle's first post office. Denny's son, Orion, unveiled a plaque that was placed upon the building to mark the site. After the first plaque was unveiled, the crowd proceeded onward to five other sites throughout the area, unveiling more plaques. One was placed at the site of the first schoolhouse. Another was placed on a building on Cherry Street that was erected on the former site of the blockhouse in which pioneers took refuge during the 1856 Indian attack. A third plaque was placed on the Schwabacher Building, marking the site of a smaller fort that had been built on that site after the attack. A fourth was placed at the foot of Yesler Way at the site of Henry Yesler's steam-powered sawmill, and a fifth was presented at the site of Carson Boren's first cabin, by the 80 year-old Mr. Boren, himself.

These plaques and the manner of their unveiling are excellent examples of how these commemorative events celebrated the establishment and success of the settler community. The sites that were chosen for recognition identify some of the original components of Seattle's urban infrastructure. A post office, a school, a sawmill, a home, and two sites of civic defense are all important elements in the foundation of a permanent community. A post office not only keeps citizens in communication with the outside, but also establishes it as an official outpost of

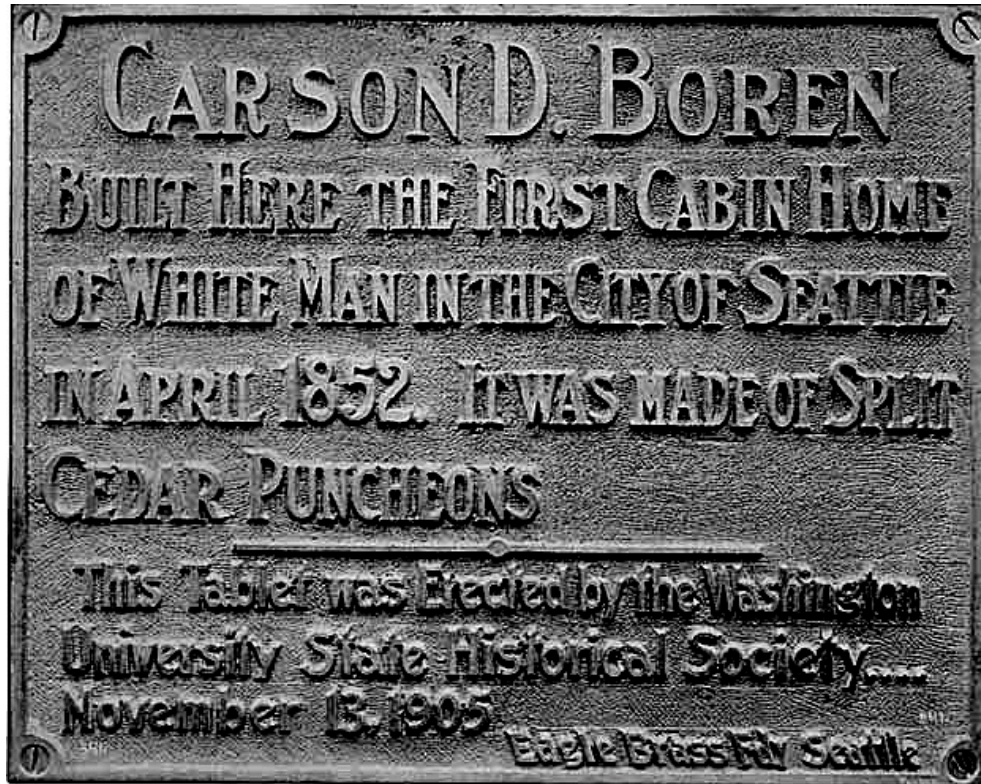


Figure 12. Plaque placed on the Hoge Building in 1905 commemorating the original site of Carson Boren's first cabin. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections).

civilization, recognized by the state and federal governments. The presence of a school is important for educating the youngest members of the population, and indicates a community's commitment to perpetuate its practices, values, and beliefs. Yesler's sawmill represents the beginnings of the city's industrial and economic development. Boren's house, the first house built by a white person in the new city according to Clarence Bagley,⁴⁵ represents a basic building block of the American settler state: permanent family homes.

As Judge Thomas Burke presented the plaque in 1905, unveiled by Mr. Boren himself, he remarked on the 50 years that had passed since Boren had built his house on that spot, as well as the self-reliance and fortitude of the early pioneers that built Seattle. The Boren house had

⁴⁵ Clarence B. Bagley, *In the Beginning* (Seattle: The Historical Society of Seattle and King County, 1980).

already been swept away and replaced with the Hoge Building by 1905, which is significant in that it exemplifies the dramatic physical changes the city had seen in its first 50 years. By 1905, the city had been transformed by fire as well as large-scale construction projects. For example, the first phase of the massive Denny Regrade had already been completed by 1905, in which the high bluffs north of Pioneer Square had been dug out and leveled to much less steep grade. The second phase of the massive project began in 1903 and took 8 years to complete, meaning the project was still underway during the 1905 commemorative ceremonies. In this context of dramatic change, at a site that had already been transformed from Boren's homestead cabin into a commercial building, the commemorative events de-emphasized the city's numerous physical, social and demographic changes and upheavals. Instead, it emphasized the settlement's supposed longevity, particularly in the persistence of its founders' initial vision, and the implied sense of its permanence.

Plaques were also placed at the sites of the former blockhouses, which were important symbols of a particular historic moment for the city, the 1856 Battle of Seattle. The first blockhouse had been built quickly in late 1855, as were many other blockhouses around the Puget Sound, as a defense against the post-treaty Indian attacks that had already begun in the region. U.S. Navy's sloop-of-war *Decatur* had anchored offshore, partly in response to the threat of local Indian attacks and partly as a deterrent against the frequent raids on Indian and American settlements by Indians from Vancouver Island, and its crew assisted in constructing the blockhouse. For this reason, the blockhouse was named Fort Decatur. In January of 1856, the town received advance warning that an attack was imminent, and settlers fled to the blockhouse

for protection. After the 1856 Battle of Seattle, the second blockhouse, later named Fort Duwamish, was built as added protection.⁴⁶

By 1905 the memory of the old blockhouses had come to mean both a local victory of settlers over Natives and a kind of national victory of the settler-state. A survivor of the 1856 attack on Seattle, Judge Cornelius H. Hanford presented the plaque. In his speech he labeled Indians a “nuisance” until they had been conquered, and said they had failed to use the land as God intended. Hanford’s justification for the United States’ claim on the lands of Native people was a popular and widely used one. More importantly, Hanford’s language clearly indicates that he regarded the vulnerability of the settler-state to be a thing of the past. Not only had Seattle survived Native attacks, but had also overcome the limitations of the terrain, recovered from a large-scale and destructive fire, and had rebounded from various economic difficulties. Victory over these obstacles and challenges was the central theme of this historic celebration. If the memory of these forts represented the fledgling settlement’s vulnerability, then the physical absence of the forts themselves served to highlight the fact that the city’s vulnerability to the Indian attack was indeed in the past, making such defensive constructs unnecessary. It is also important to note that the commemoration of these no longer extant forts focused on the U.S. military’s participation in securing the settlement, as it allows the participants and audience to connect the events of 1856 in Seattle to the national military endeavors of the late 19th century by the U.S. Army. More specifically, it connects the settlers’ victory in the 1856 skirmish to the United States’ victory in the Indian Wars, which effectively suppressed Native military resistance and paved the way for the nation’s western expansion. The plaques for these extinct

⁴⁶ Walt Crowley and David Wilma, “Native American Attack Seattle on January 26, 1856,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=5208 (accessed January, 2013).



Figure 13. Painting by Eliza Denny, Arthur Denny's daughter, depicting Seattle area settlers fleeing to the Fort Decatur blockhouse after learning of the impending Indian attacks in 1856 (Image courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle).

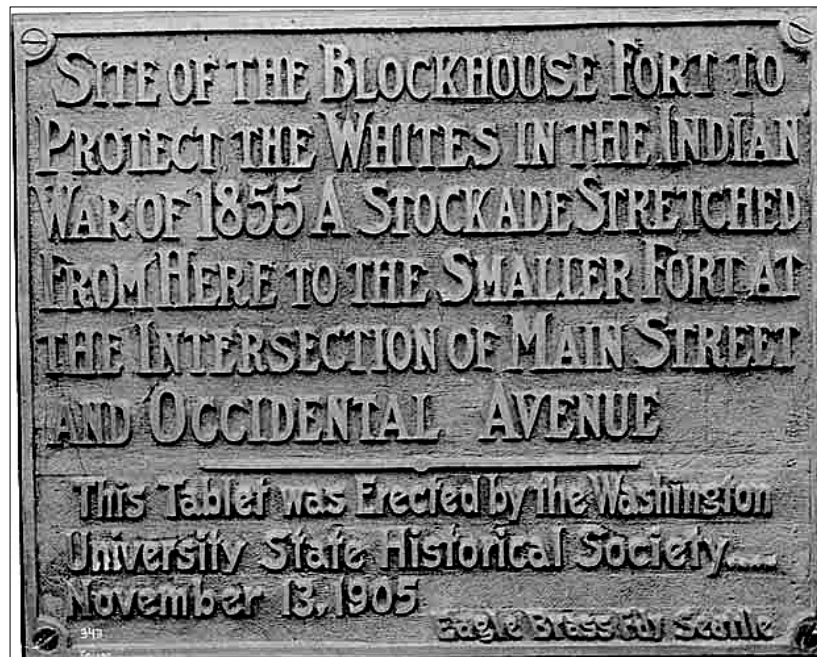


Figure 14. Plaque placed at the former site of the Fort Decatur blockhouse at First and Cherry Streets. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

forts are a celebration, then, that the lands of Seattle were not merely claimed by the settlers, but were also successfully militarily defended against violent Native resistance.

After Hanford's speech, Colonel Lamping accepted the plaque on behalf of the National Guard, and in his speech, rather than discuss the Native resistance that made the forts necessary, he celebrated the local men who had gone off to fight and die in foreign wars, a tangent that seems unrelated to Hanford's comments about the conquered Indians until one considers the historical context for this commemoration. Lamping was referring to the recent Spanish-American War, in which the United States intervened to help liberate Cuba from Spain. More specifically, Lamping was calling to mind the two companies from Seattle in the First Washington Infantry Regiment, and their participation in the Philippine-American War during much of 1899. Although many of the soldiers in Washington had enlisted in order to help liberate Cuba from Spain, that fight ended quickly, and the United States changed its position on a self-governed Cuba, choosing instead to take control there. Meanwhile, the Philippines had been fighting its own war against Spain's colonial authorities. After the U.S. defeated the Spanish Navy in Manila Bay, Emilio Aguinaldo led the Philippine people in revolt, taking control over most of the Philippines. Aguinaldo issued the Philippine Declaration of Independence and established the First Philippine Republic, but the new government was never recognized by Spain or the United States, and when Spain surrendered to the U.S., the Philippines were given to the United States along with Guam and Puerto Rico in the 1898 Treaty of Paris that officially ended the war. The Philippine Republic, refusing to relinquish the independence it had won, went to war against the United States. Soldiers from First Washington Infantry Regiment, having already been sent to the Philippines in October of 1898, were there at



Figure 15. Soldiers from the First Washington Infantry Regiment return from the Philippine-American War in November, 1899. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

the outbreak of fighting and remained for the first half of the year. Upon their return in November 1899 the governor declared a state holiday, and the city of Seattle welcomed them with cheering and public celebration.⁴⁷ The war continued until the Philippines surrendered in 1903.

When Colonel Lamping accepted the plaque, he made the connection between local soldiers fighting abroad to secure U.S. interests in a foreign land and Seattle's pioneers defending their infant city from revolting Indians, and he happily declared that, as a National Guard soldier, he

⁴⁷ Marc Blackburn, "Prospectors and Patriots," in *Pioneer Square: Seattle's Oldest Neighborhood*, ed. Mildred Tanner Andrews, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

was honored to follow in the footsteps of “trailblazers and pioneers.”⁴⁸ Although military action in the Philippines, unlike in North America, was not an attempt to establish and defend U.S. settlements there, it was motivated by America’s desire to extend its political and military influence into Asia, a desire motivated by nation-building. The move to keep the Philippines, as well as Guam and Puerto Rico, as United States Territories did not go uncontested within the United States, and a great deal of debate surrounded the issue for many years. While some famously argued against it on anti-imperialist grounds, others were concerned over the absorption of non-white races into the body of America. Clearly, just as Washington Territory and Oregon Territory had in time become states, many wondered if the annexation of territories like Cuba and the Philippines would also result in their absorption into the United States. While our retrospective understanding of imperialism has shaped our contemporary understanding of the Philippine-American conflict in American history, the link between conquering Indians in North America and conquering Filipinos across the Pacific does not generally appear in public venues, although it seems that as of 1905 this was a seemingly natural connection to make.⁴⁹

The 1905 celebration reached its climax later in the day at Alki Point, where a monument marking the site of the Denny Party landing was unveiled to a crowd that had swelled to more than 1,000. The American flag that draped the monument indicated the event organizers’ desire to connect this site’s importance to a national story. When the flag was removed and the obelisk revealed, it was inscribed with the names of the members of the Denny Party. On another face of

⁴⁸ As quoted in Alan J. Stein, “Seattle Celebrates Its 54th Birthday and Dedicates Alki Point Monument on November 13, 1905,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3917 (accessed November 2009).

⁴⁹ Richard Drinnon makes this connection in *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), in which he demonstrates the ways that the racism that characterized the expansion across the North American continent was connected to the violent and brutal military forays into the Pacific, to the Philippines and eventually to Vietnam.



Figure 16. Denny Party Monument draped with the U.S. flag before its unveiling and dedication on November 13, 1905. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)



Figure 17. Surviving pioneers of the Denny Party at the unveiling of the Alki Monument, including Lenora Denny, Carson Boren, Mary A. Denny, Rolland Denny and Mary Low Sinclair. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

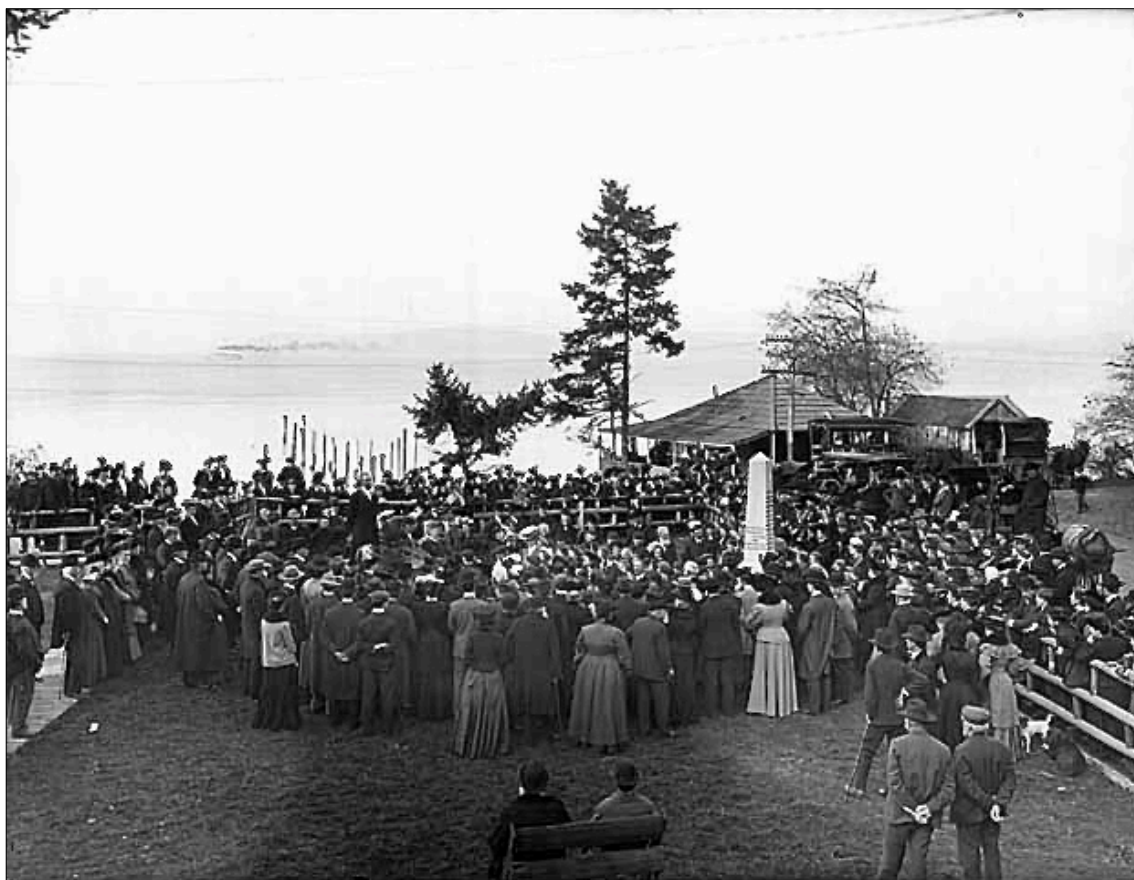


Figure 18. Monument dedication at Alki Point showing Edmond Meany giving an oration, November 13, 1905. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

the obelisk was carved, “At this place on 13 November 1851 there landed from the Schooner Exact Captain Folger the little colony which developed into the City of Seattle.” The date is carved again on one side of the foundation, with “Birthplace of Seattle,” carved on its opposite side. The erection of this monument, like the placement of plaques, added a crucial spatial element to this commemorative celebration. While a narrative creates a framework for memory and meaning from an unlimited chronology of events along a linear timeline, monuments and plaques are a means of establishing memory in place, not merely celebrating an event or person, but celebrating that *this* event happened *here*, or that a person’s great deed took place at or near “this very place.” As James Loewen observes, monuments inscribe a particular version of history

upon the physical landscape, at once marginalizing divergent narratives about the space as well as alternate uses of that space. They officiate the sense of place as sacred territory, until it is either removed or reinterpreted.⁵⁰ Therefore, these monuments and plaques are as much about remembering a particular historical narrative as they are about obscuring alternate narrative interpretations of historical space.

It is important to note, however, that monuments are not static entities. Their narratives can be re-worked, and their meanings can change over time. For instance, the Denny Party monument at Alki Point has undergone several alterations over the years, exemplifying a process that Foote has called “symbolic accretion.” This is a process by which existing memorials are altered to convey new meanings, these additions either offering further support to the original meaning, or providing a counter-history.⁵¹ The Alki Monument was originally placed on the lawn of the Stockade Hotel in 1905, with the owner’s permission. In 1926, when the City of Seattle acquired a strip of beach for its park system, many interested people expressed a desire to see the monument moved onto public property. The American Automobile Association proposed to bring a stone to Seattle from the beach fronting the famous Plymouth Rock. Roland Denny (Arthur Denny’s son) and Nettie Low (the first white child born at Alki Point) were presented with the Plymouth stone and they placed it in a niche that had been carved into a new foundation during a re-dedication ceremony. A plaque was added, which read in part: “From Plymouth Rock to Alki Point. Honoring pioneers on the American shores of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.” While the relocation of the monument onto public property helped to sanction the birth narrative

⁵⁰ James Lowen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 1999).

⁵¹ Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Dwyer, “Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration.”

as official history, the incorporation of the stone from Plymouth Rock incorporated Seattle's pioneer history into the national narrative of America's "Manifest Destiny," beginning with the Mayflower in the east and ending with the "closing of the frontier," in the west.

The Alki Monument's later additions came in 2001. During Seattle's sesquicentennial celebration the monument was fitted with two new plaques. One plaque rectifies the omission of the names of the women who came ashore with their husbands, indicated in the original inscriptions as "and wife." The other plaque honors the Native Americans who helped the original settlers to survive in those first years. It reads: "The Duwamish and other Native Peoples helped the Alki Landing Party survive the early years here. They shared their space, their food, and their knowledge. We honor Chief Seattle, leader of the Duwamish and Suquamish Tribes, and the generous cooperation of his people." While this public thanksgiving corrects previous erasures of Native people by recognizing their presence and the aid they gave to early settlers, it also does not mention the many individual Indians who may have resisted, however quietly or

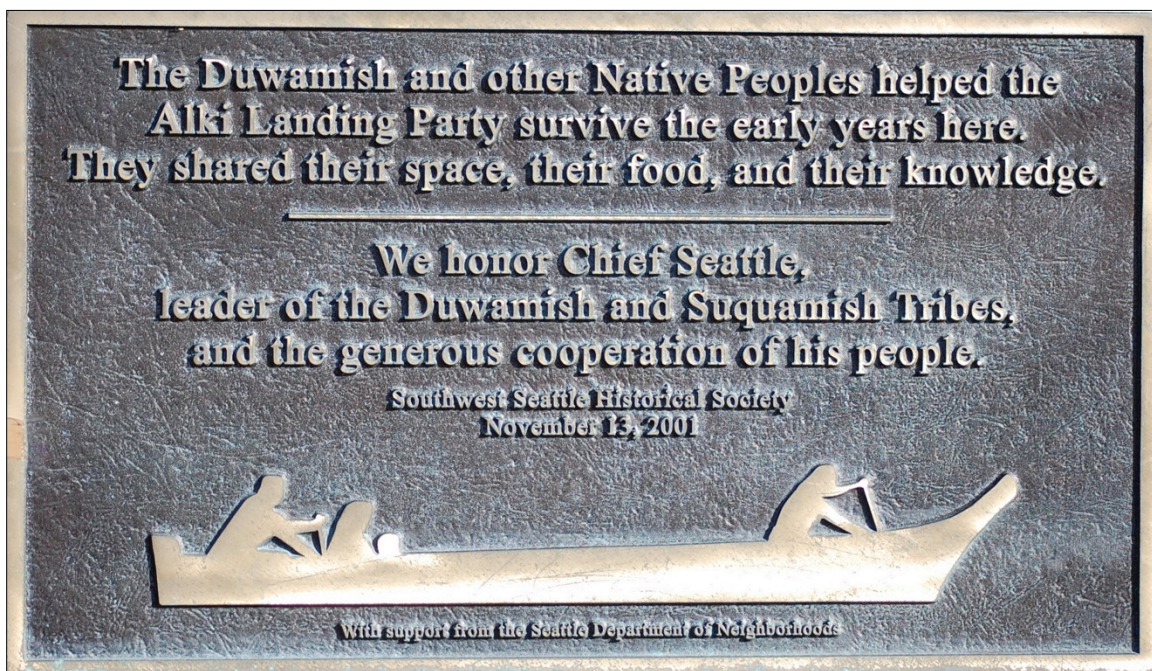


Figure 19. Plaque added to the Denny Party monument at Alki to honor Chief Seattle and the other Native people that aided the Denny Party. (Photograph by author, 2011)

futilely, the growth of a settlement that eventually displaced and marginalized them. Instead, Native people are essentialized here and represented by the person of Chief Seattle, who remains the ultimate “good Indian.” While attempting to append a forgotten history on this monument, this plaque instead provides another opportunity for forgetting, for obscuring the historical processes that built settler society at the expense of Native people. While seeming to correct the insensitivities of the monument’s original inscriptions, the new plaque instead merely confirms the dominant discourse associated with the Alki Monument’s narrative: the triumph of settler society, only this time inscribing onto the narrative the implication that this triumph was attained through the willing cooperation of Native people themselves.

Symbolic accretion explains the ways that people actively change the meanings that monuments present, but accretion also exemplifies the manner in which societies utilize memory and monuments to serve present needs. According to David Wrobel, pioneer reminiscence literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a particular significance, arising at a particular historical moment: “the much-discussed age of anxious transition from the premodern to the modern.” As the American West was transitioning from a frontier to a post-frontier society, “Old settler’s memories of ‘frontier’ adventures and hardships were designed in part to maintain or restore their social status in a new West where some of them felt increasingly irrelevant....Older generations of westerners were trying to maintain their status in a changing West by reminding younger generations of the pivotal role they had played in the past.”⁵²

It was in this historical context of transition that the Washington State Historical Society was founded in 1891. This coincides with the beginning of the gold rush in the Yukon Territory

⁵² David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002): 13.

and Seattle's first population boom in the years immediately after the 1889 fire. The influx of people severely altered the social status quo, changing Seattle from a small frontier city into the gateway to the Yukon. Furthermore, with only three of the original pioneers surviving to participate in the 1905 celebrations and many of the early leaders advancing in age, there was great interest in preserving both the memories of and a public memory about these early pioneers. According to its inscriptions, the 1905 monument was erected by the Washington University State Historical Society and presented by Lenora Denny, Arthur Denny's daughter. One of the members of the original party, she was five years old when she landed on Alki with her family. One might argue that her motivation to have the monument erected was in keeping with the desire of many pioneer families and their immediate descendants around the turn of the century to prevent the recent past from being forgotten.

While this explanation speaks to the kinds of heroic narratives that were produced, according to Wrobel the printed reminiscences of pioneer journeys and lifeways that proliferated in this time were also part of an effort to hold on to earlier versions of places that were changing rapidly or had already been transformed.⁵³ This would certainly apply to the context of the Alki Monument. Alki Point, while claiming to be the birthplace of Seattle, was not even part of the City of Seattle in 1905. It was an unincorporated community, and its ultimate annexation to the City of Seattle is part of the story of the population boom at the turn of the century. West Seattle, which includes Alki Point and is now known as the Admiral District on the western side of Elliot Bay, was originally a residential community developed by the West Seattle Land & Investment Company. The company established ferry service and connected a cable car from the area near

⁵³ Ibid.

the dock to the housing area at the top of the hill in order to encourage investment. Development of the area slowed after the Panic of 1893, and the cable car stopped in 1898.

In an effort to again encourage growth, citizens decided to incorporate into the city of West Seattle in 1902. While the ferry attracted visitors to West Seattle over the years, it was the electric streetcar railway system that began to attract residents again. As the city grew, town politics focused on annexation, primarily for access to Seattle's superior water and electrical utilities. Additionally, interest grew in annexing the nearby communities of Youngstown, Spring Hill and Alki Point. Although these communities voted against annexation to West Seattle in 1905 and 1906, by 1907, after a flurry of real estate activity and an extension of the streetcar line, citizens voted to join West Seattle, which was then annexed to the City of Seattle later that year.⁵⁴

This is the official annexation story as told on Seattle's government website. What this story obscures in this rendition are the effects this process had on Native people. Until the 1890s, white settlement was primarily confined to the eastern shore of Elliot Bay, where most white settlers focused on developing Seattle's urban infrastructure. Difficult to approach except by boat (or canoe), West Seattle had mostly been used for recreation, clam digging, fishing or camping. Significantly, it was also the location of one of the last indigenous towns to survive Seattle's urban development. Known as Herring's House, the town was deliberately burned down by a man named Watson along with several West Seattle residents in 1893, when the West Seattle

⁵⁴ Seattle Municipal Archives, "West Seattle," *Annexed Cities*, <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Exhibits/annexation/panel5.htm> (accessed February, 2011).

Land and Investment Company became interested in developing the area.⁵⁵

Not surprisingly, the burning of Herring's House and the forcible dislocation of other Native people in the region is never recounted as part of the narrative of the city's growth and development. Rather than an isolated incident, however, the destruction of Herring's House can be seen as part of a broader pattern of Indian dispossession and dislocation. Thrush recounts the testimonies of several Native witnesses in a 1920s land claims case who described similar stories from the last half of the 19th century.⁵⁶ By 1905, these processes of dispossession were largely completed, and the early settlers who could still remember Seattle as a village amidst Indian communities were eager to support a heroic pioneer narrative absent of references to Indian displacements. They inscribed the names of the pioneers and the city's birth date upon the site of the city's supposed birthplace at a moment when the memory of pioneer life was fading, and the landscape around the sacred site of the city's origin was being altered and rendered unrecognizable to both Indian and pioneer alike.

Remembering Alki in Our Time

In 2001, the city of Seattle celebrated its sesquicentennial, naturally including a November 13th re-enactment of the Denny Party landing. Ten adults and twelve children rowed ashore at Alki Point and disembarked beneath the monument erected there in 1905. They also wore pioneer-era clothing, and, of course, it rained, just as it had 50 years before. However, the 2001 commemorative celebration was remarkably different from previous celebrations. If in 1952 commemoration had been a tool used for consensus politics and the consolidation of a national

⁵⁵ Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place*, 83. Thrush further claims that, according to anthropologist Jay Miller, oral history indicates that Watson was an agent for the West Seattle Land Improvement Company, although there are no existing records that can confirm this.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 20. During the 2001 commemoration, the Denny Party's landing at Alki Point is re-enacted by Seattle citizens. (Photograph courtesy of *Seattle Times*)

(and civic) identity, the intervening years of social upheaval altered the way Seattle's founding narrative was used. For instance, in 2001, when the re-enactment party rowed to shore there were no pretend "Indians" with strangely dyed wigs to meet them. Instead, Cecile Hansen, the great, great grandniece of Si'ahl and the elected chair of the Duwamish Tribe, stood on shore along with other representatives from the Tribe.⁵⁷

For several decades, the Duwamish Tribe petitioned for federal recognition that would provide a reservation as well as fishing and other treaty rights. This battle for recognition is a long and complicated tale that appears to be nearing its conclusion in recent years. Although the tribe was granted recognition in the final days of the Clinton administration, the BIA

⁵⁷ The Duwamish Tribe has not been federally recognized, and some would argue that it is an illegitimate organization. It is represented here by Duwamish Tribal Services, a non-profit organization that offers social and cultural services to the descendants of the Duwamish people who were not absorbed by neighboring tribes on nearby reservations.

administrator appointed by the Bush administration reversed the decision within days. In 2009, U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott sponsored House Bill 2678, the Duwamish Tribal Recognition Act, but McDermott later told the media that interest in the bill was ultimately drowned out by the health-care debate. In March, 2013, U.S. District Court Judge John Coughenour vacated the 2001 denial by the Department of Interior and required them to review the decision. As of September 2014, it is still unclear whether the Department of Interior will appeal this decision or move forward with another review of the tribe's claim.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Federal Acknowledgement is currently in the process of reforming the recognition process. The changes, OFA hopes, intended to promote transparency, efficiency, and would allow for more timely decisions for petitioners. The implications for the Duwamish petition are, as yet, unclear.⁵⁹

Ultimately, Hansen, chair of the Duwamish Tribe, feels that a greater degree of public support would help their cause. "We need a conscious decision by all people of Seattle to lend their support," she said in a 2001 interview. She's won the support of many Seattle residents, including the descendants of the Denny Party, many of whom organized into the Descendants Committee of Seattle, an organization that has taken as part of its mission to aid the Duwamish in their various endeavors, including the construction of a Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center (which was completed in 2010), and the ultimate victory of gaining federal recognition. The Descendants Committee seems to understand the power that history and memory have for shaping the present and the future. The home page of their website declares that the Descendants

⁵⁸ Lynda V. Mapes, "Duwamish Get Another Shot At Recognition as a Tribe," *Seattle Times*, March 25, 2013.

⁵⁹ The period for public comment was extended to September 30, 2104. The success of these reforms will be either proven discredited after they are implemented.

Committee is "an organization that not only remembers and commemorates the past, but also makes the past relevant to the present in order to influence the future."⁶⁰

One of the Committee's recent events, "Return to Muckl-te-oh," in August 2010, was intended to commemorate the 155th anniversary of the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty. Committee Chair Amy Johnson explains in the event's press release, "While we cannot change the past, we can come together to address it, and listen to one another. It is time to hear the native people speak about the treaty and its impact on them. History is never a one-sided event, and moving forward from the past will take effort from all sides."⁶¹ Johnson's remarks to the media seem to emphasize her belief that events like these are ways of breaking with the past and beginning a new story, a new narrative for the future. "The people have come here for change and a new beginning." She also muses, "It's a good reflection of better days to come. It's an honor to my ancestors."⁶²

Johnson's comments are not entirely selfless. While it is true that the past cannot be changed, emphasizing a new beginning is precisely the approach to history that Johnson's ancestors preferred, plotting the time and place of their beginnings in ways that most benefit the settler-state. While the organization's desire to improve Native-settler relationships is admirable, and the Committee's work has helped the Duwamish Tribe to gain public support for their endeavors, events like "Return to Muckl-te-oh" are ultimately about breaking with an unpleasant past rather than understanding how the Treaty of Point Elliot – and all the treaties between the United States

⁶⁰ The Descendants Committee of Seattle, "About the Descendants," <http://www.dcseattle.org/about.html> (accessed February, 2011).

⁶¹ Descendants Committee, "The Descendants Committee of Seattle announces 'Return to Muckl-te-oh,' press release, July, 2010. http://www.dcseattle.org/docs/press_release.pdf (accessed April, 2011).

⁶² Marian Liu, "155 Years Later, Descendants of Treaty Signers Gather to Apologize, Reconcile," *The Seattle Times*, August 22, 2010.

and her sovereign, domestic wards – were a part of a larger process of dispossession with ramifications that reach into the present.

Furthermore, Native people should not be treated as another marginalized minority that can be brought back into the fold. One guest speaker at “Return to Muckl-te-oh” brought this concept of reconciliation to the event. Mas Odoi, an 89 year-old Japanese-American, was born in Mukilteo and was 10 years old when he attended a 1930 ceremony commemorating the Point Elliott Treaty. Although he was interned during World War II, he told the crowd that he “took a positive attitude and joined the Army.” His speech centered on this positive attitude. “If you have a negative attitude and just argue,” he said, “nothing gets done.” In the case of the Duwamish, however, following Mr. Odori’s advice would mean accepting historic injustices and giving up on the battle for federal recognition in order to positively demonstrate patriotism and a commitment to the project of the settler-state.

Ultimately, the Descendants Committee of Seattle, through these contemporary commemorative events and activities, is participating in the same project that the group’s ancestors were constructing with their commemorative activities: the formation of a community identity that is produced in opposition to Native people. As we have seen, Native people have been used as the “other” by which “Seattle” could be understood. They were regarded as part of the wilderness against which the pioneers struggled and conquered, and were often conflated with nature, a foe which must be driven back, then later civilized. Ultimately this heroic struggle helped define an American pioneer identity. During the Battle of Seattle, for instance, they were the foe whose moment of defeat was later regarded as the turning point success for the fledgling settlement. Later they were regarded as the settlers’ helping hand, as Alki Monument’s newest

plaque attests. The newest incarnation of the project presents Native people as the marginalized minority, whose history of pain and struggle are placed firmly in the past even as they are brought into the fold of the city, and ultimately the nation.

Conclusion

Various elements of Seattle's story can be found in many of the city's public history venues, including museums, monuments, street names, websites, podcasts, locally made documentary films, walking tours, etc. Unlike all of these other venues, which have a textual framework for exploring the complexities and contingencies of the narrative about Seattle's beginnings in some depth, commemorative activity is not as adept at providing such complexity. It has often resulted in simplified and reductive historical narratives appropriate for broad public consumption and celebration. Because it is so useful in providing a sense of shared history and community identity, commemoration has the tendency to obscure the darker moments in history. Seattle's past celebrations have shown how acts of commemoration create a temporal framework in which settlers have understood themselves to be agents of progress and civilization even while relegating Native people to an era that has passed away. While contemporary celebrations show how that belief has changed, they also show how that same temporal framework of progress remains the basis for understanding the city. Where settler society had previously exiled Native people from the city (both conceptually and physically), it is now attempting to incorporate Native people *into* the narrative, not as resisting and subjugated political units, but as cooperative agents – past and present – of that “change of worlds.”⁶³ Furthermore, these celebrations show

⁶³ This describes an expression first seen in a late version of Chief Seattle's famous speech, although the words are not Si'ahl's. It has also been used recently as the title of a museum exhibit at the Log House Museum located in Alki near the Alki Point monument, which displayed Duwamish culture and artifacts.

how commemoration also creates a geographic framework for thinking about Seattle's historic lands as an empty wilderness awaiting the work of civilization, as a space where these processes began (a receptacle for time). More significantly, through the placement of monuments and plaques, Seattle has come to be regarded as a place that has been permanently conquered and claimed. Commemoration minimizes the possibility of thinking about a place's previous uses and its previous occupants, as well as thinking about alternate uses or occupants in the future. Indeed, commemoration naturalizes the settler society as the originators of a place.

Commemoration is not merely useful as a way to disseminate particular historical narratives, or to produce and reproduce memory for a particular community. It is also important as a means of identity formation for a group, as a means of creating both distinctions from other groups as well as unity within. It provides a way for a wide array of people with a multitude of very different personal narratives to have a sense of social cohesion by creating for them a shared story, one that can even be seen in and learned through the urban landscape. The commemorative celebrations of Seattle's beginnings offer a seemingly unified narrative, one that obscures any processes of contestation and struggle that brought about the circumstances in the present. Furthermore, this unified narrative offers the public a kind of shared vision for the future. That vision no longer includes the extinction of Native people, but instead seems to anticipate a future in which the presence of Indians, co-opted into the dream, will no longer challenge the legitimacy of the city or the settler state.

CHAPTER 2

The Indian in the Museum: Narratives of Native-Settler Relations

Meanings are always constructed within social relationships, and social relationships are always enmeshed in power networks. The meanings that are most likely to be publicly upheld are likely to be approved by those who hold the most power. But this does not mean that dominant meanings are always accepted. Running alongside dominant meanings alternative meanings are always found. The struggle over meaning is ongoing.⁶⁴

The moment of Seattle's founding at Alki Point has been depicted in many ways over the years, but one depiction has become an historical object in itself. At Seattle's Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), the landing of the Denny party has been immortalized in a diorama which incorporates many of the story's more colorful details, including a roofless shack and crying women holding infants. All of the landing party's individuals are included and identifiable by name according to a diagram that the museum has included next to the label text. Even Chief Seattle is present, although historical sources don't mention his presence there that day. The settlers have their belongings all around them. There are bags of supplies, rolled blankets and other



Figure 21. A diorama depicting the landing of the Denny Party at Alki Point in 1852, on display at MOHAI as part of the permanent exhibit, "Essential Seattle." (Photograph by author, 2011)

⁶⁴ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretations of Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 50.



Figure 24. Details from the Denny Party Diorama showing Chief Seattle as he watches the settlers arrive at Alki. *The Exact* is visible in the distance. (Photograph by author, 2011)



Figure 22. Detail from the Denny Party Diorama showing Chief Seattle as he watches the settlers arrive at Alki. (Photograph by author, 2011)



Figure 23. Details from the Denny Party Diorama showing one of the ladies crying. (Photograph by author, 2011)

household goods like a stove, chairs as well as pots and kettles. To the rear of the diorama, a painted backdrop depicts the ship *Exact*, anchored off shore with rowboats bringing more supplies to the beach.

Half-naked Indians that appear to be children are depicted playing on the beach, one climbing on a driftwood log while a fully-clothed white man carries more trunks of supplies toward the settlers. Chief Seattle himself is also depicted in the scene, barely clothed with only a gray blanket wrapped around his shoulders. He stands facing the scene from the same vantage point as the museum visitor, with his back to the glass, and angled just enough for viewer's to see his face. There is a look of mournful acceptance there, which seems to anticipate the sentiments of a the historic speech he made when he signed a treaty a few years later, and sadly but nobly relinquished the land to settlers. In this representation, the old Chief is depicted as the epitome of the naked savage watching his world overtaken by the bringers of "civilization."

The Denny Party landing – Seattle's origin story – is narrated in books and plays and interpreted at historic sites and museums in various ways. Here museums have a unique pedagogical advantage, being one of the primary places where people learn about the past. Whereas people tend to distrust the "official" history they are taught in books or in grade school, museums and historic sites obscure the sense of authoritarian intervention between the object and the viewer.⁶⁵ By far the most prominent guardian of Seattle's narrative has been the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI). The museum evolved from the Seattle Historical Society, which was founded in 1913 by the surviving settlers and their descendants. The Society survived for

⁶⁵ Rosenzweig, "The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life," 32.

decades without a building to house its growing collection of early pioneer objects but eventually managed to build a museum, which opened in its current location in 1952.⁶⁶ In fact, the Denny Party diorama is the work of artist Lillian Smart, a Seattle-area doll-maker who crafted the display especially for MOHAI's opening. It became a notable fixture within MOHAI's permanent exhibit, "Essential Seattle: A City Revealed, The Future Imagined."⁶⁷

The diorama's label text explains that this depiction of the Denny Party landing "is very much a product of its time, an artifact of mid-20th century understanding." This statement acknowledges the fact that our contemporary understanding about this historic moment has changed since the diorama was created. Indeed, other displays throughout the exhibit demonstrate several important changes in the way Native people are represented in Seattle's historic narrative. But how do these revisions make the past meaningful to the present? Also, do these changes ultimately revise or even unsettle the master narrative that reinforces the visitor's ideas about settler society?

"Essential Seattle" at MOHAI

The diorama's three labels provide some historical context for understanding the display. The first label explains that American settlers have landed on the beach "at the place Native people called *Shaq w abqs – Smaquamox* as the settlers heard the *Lushootseed* word." Using the *Lushootseed* word for the place conveys the important reality that the place that became known

⁶⁶ Alan J. Stein, "Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)," http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3682.

⁶⁷ All references to the written labels from the permanent exhibits at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), Seattle, Washington, were obtained during my visit to the museum on April 7, 2011. In November, 2012 MOHAI moved to its new location in the Naval Reserve Building (Armory) in Lake Union Park in November, 2012. The museum's primary permanent exhibit, "Essential Seattle," was replaced with a new permanent exhibit after the move. It is unclear what elements of "Essential Seattle," if any, were utilized for its new exhibit, including the Denny Party Diorama.

as Alki already had a name, given by the area's Native residents. Furthermore, the text uses a *Lushootseed* word, conveying the specificity of a distinct Native culture rather than a broad and generic "Indian" word. Another label repeats this information: "At its founding as an American settlement, the first landing place was *Sbaq w abqs – Smaquamox*, Native ground; crossing to the east side of Elliot Bay in 1852, the settlers landed at *Tsehalalitch*,⁶⁸ 'Little Crossing Over Place,' King County, Oregon Territory, and finally in 1853, Seattle, King County, Washington Territory." Again, the use of the *Lushootseed* names for these places indicates a purposeful representation of the presence of a distinct Native people-group within Seattle's historic narrative. However, the impact of this inclusion is diminished by the context of this information within the evolution of the site's place-names. Underlying this explanation is the assumption of the naturalness of both the evolution of a territory's ownership and the resulting change in its name. It is also implied that this evolution has "finally" ended and the present monikers for the region's places are now fixed. The old order has passed away, and the new order is here to stay.

The physical location of the diorama within the exhibit – where it is placed relative to other displays – also constructs particular meanings. For example, before one approaches the diorama, the visitor must pass before another display, titled "*Si'ahl's* Encounter." Rather than containing an historic object or array of objects, this display is a large illustration of the area's landscape sans its current cityscape, heavily forested and with an unobstructed view of Mt. Rainier in the distance. The silhouette of a Native individual stands on a rocky beach in the foreground, looking out over the water as a European schooner enters the bay from the left. The illustration is meant to depict *Si'ahl's* account of watching Captain George Vancouver's ship, the *Discovery*,

⁶⁸ See Chapter Three for an explanation of the more commonly used version of this word, *Djidjila'letc*.

anchor off Bainbridge Island in 1792, the year Vancouver first explored Puget Sound. The label tells the visitor that Chief Seattle’s “good will was essential to the early success of the American town that bore his name,” and that he “encouraged his people to sign the Treaty of Point Elliott in which the Duwamish ceded 50,000 acres of land – the land on which Seattle and most of the towns of King County stand today.” This text highlights Chief Seattle’s importance within a particular historic context: the birth narrative of the city.

Chief Seattle⁶⁹ is often depicted (and celebrated) as operating on behalf of settler society within this narrative framework. However, historian David Buerge has argued that Si’ahl’s Si’ahl’s motivation for aiding and encouraging the settlers was probably political, driven by a desire to benefit his own community rather than a friendly desire to see the American settlers prosper. Buerge claims that Si’ahl hoped that an American trading presence would break the monopoly of the Hudson’s Bay Company in the region (which had dominated the economic and personal lives of Native people for many years) as well as discourage raids by hostile tribes from the north.⁷⁰ Such information incorporated into the display would point to Si’ahl’s life as a Native individual and leader of a society that was displaced and dispossessed by the process of building the city, highlighting the ways some Natives accommodated the newcomers and

⁶⁹ The image and memory of Si’ahl has been re-invented and reproduced many times by non-Natives, so that the historic figure of Si’ahl is more often obscured rather than authentically represented by the icon of “Chief Seattle.” As Denise Low has observed in her analysis of the various versions of Chief Seattle’s famous speech that have been published and reproduced, “Even the persona of Seattle is so changed that he becomes a two-dimensional emblem of an Indian who more easily fits into a non-Indian equation of domination and subordination.” (In “Contemporary Reinvention of Chief Seattle: Variant Texts of Chief Seattle’s 1854 Speech,” in *American Indian Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1995): 407-421.) In this paper I alternate between two spellings for Si’ahl’s name. For clarification, I will utilize “Chief Seattle” when referring to the iconic image that has been produced by settler society, since this is how most non-Native media refers to and remembers Si’ahl.

⁷⁰ Buerge is quoted in Mildred Andrews, “A Change of Worlds,” in *Pioneer Square: Seattle’s Oldest Neighborhood*, ed. Mildred Tanner Andrews, (Seattle: Pioneer Square Community Association in association with University of Washington Press, 2005): 11-12.



Figure 25. The only known portrait of Si'ahl was taken by E.M. Sammis in 1864, shortly before Si'ahl's death. (Image courtesy of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle)

negotiated the growing political and economic power that non-Natives accumulated in the region. Rather, in this exhibit display, Si'ahl is presented as a kind of "first man," not merely a witness to the beginning of a new era, but also an important leader. As the giver of land and "a good friend to the founders of this city," his cooperation is represented as the foundation of the new order and the means for a peaceful regime change. While the display may not err in fact, it situates this information within an interpretive framework that provides a particular meaning for Si'ahl, drawing him into the project of establishing and building the settler state.

"Si'ahl's Encounter" provides an important initial context for all of the exhibit's other displays, situated as it is at the beginning of a narrative that is organized chronologically. If one examines the serene and empty space that the young Si'ahl gazes upon in this first display with the Denny Party Diorama that immediately follows it (in the temporal sequence), one can clearly see underlying notions about *terra nullius*.⁷¹ In the first display the beaches are empty and seem to be nearly overgrown with trees, their branches hanging down in the foreground. In the next scene, the beach is filled with the various apparatuses of "civilization." Furthermore, "Si'ahl's Encounter" shows a lone, silhouetted individual while the Denny Party Diorama is filled with people and seems to bustle with activity. In the space of two consecutive displays the visitor begins to understand that this exhibit's narrative is about an empty wilderness being transformed into an urban civilization. Although the museum made efforts to reinterpret the Denny Party diorama, its original narrative about the disappearing Native – its "mid-20th century

⁷¹ *Terra nullius* (literally "empty land") is a justification for colonization based on misperception by non-Natives that the land is uninhabited. As Patrick Wolfe explains, "the doctrine held that property in land resulted from the mixing of one's labor with it to render it a more efficient provider of wealth than it would have been if left in its natural state... In its colonial application, where it acquired the formality of a name (*terra nullius* meaning "nobody's land"), the same set of principles furnished a warrant for denying 'nomadic' peoples ownership of the land they occupied." Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866-905.

understanding” – is reinforced when placed next to “*Si’ahl*’s Encounter.” Such an opening scene also provides the framework for the rest of the exhibit that follows, which celebrates the city’s narrative of civilization and progress.

Another nearby exhibit, however, seems to counter the implicit representation of *terra nullius* that “*Si’ahl*’s Encounter” conveys. “Duwamish Salmon Camp” shows early 20th century illustrations and photos while its text reads, “Duwamish people thrived in the place we call ‘Seattle,’ and continued to do so after American settlement. . . . the American newcomers entered a complex community, not a wilderness.” Another large text board titled “This Native Ground,” situated near the opening of the exhibit, reads, “When explorers and settlers came to Washington, they found a rich Native culture. This place we call ‘Washington’ has been home to different people and known by many names, through time. European explorers and the American settlers who followed them did not discover a wilderness, but encountered a rich and dynamic Indian way of life.” By placing the name of the city and state in quotation marks, the museum emphasizes the imposition of a new place name, while the display describes a people who were not only residing in the territory but also actively using the land and resources there. This is an important revision of the *terra nullius* narrative: the land was neither empty, unused, nor unnamed.

However, the semantics of the label text indicates a lingering ambivalence about the implications of countering *terra nullius*. For example, the text explains that explorers and settlers found a “rich Native culture,” and encountered a “way of life,” a semantic decision that seems to separate the cultural traits of a bygone people from the people themselves. Rather, explorers and settlers encountered communities of people who indeed had a “rich culture” and a “way of life,”

but who had also organized themselves according to a complex social and political framework, who lived according to socially agreed upon mores and were punished according to authoritarian structures within that framework. These people affiliated themselves by political and kinship ties from locations as far apart as the Oregon Coast, Alaska and Montana and maintained these relationships through both war and diplomacy, connected physically through a transportation infrastructure made of waterways, roads and trails. The explorers and settlers did not merely encounter a “dynamic Indian way of life.” Rather, what explorers and settlers encountered was a large network of specific, established and interconnected indigenous societies.⁷² The semantic difference is important, since it reflects the persistence of settler society’s tendency to revere the bygone “lifeways” of Indians even while it ignores the historic destruction of the specific societies which Native cultures experienced, as well as the alterations and adaptation to those “rich cultures” that were necessary in order for Native societies to survive into the present.

While more than one display about the early settlement of Seattle emphasizes the idea that Native occupation preceded the city’s beginnings, one display demonstrates the exhibit’s underlying ambivalence regarding the early political status of Native people. Situated very near these other two displays, a text board titled “Who Owns the Pacific Northwest” relates the historic contest between England and the United States to gain control of the territory, from the 1792 arrival of Vancouver when he claimed the entire Northwest for England to the resolution in 1846 that created the U.S.-Canadian border and resolved the conflict between the two nations.

⁷² Alexandra Harmon discusses the complications inherent in identifying the multitude of Native communities using a common label like “Coast Salish,” while at the same time demonstrating the need for such a designator to reveal the interconnectedness of these communities throughout a large region. Alexandra Harmon, “Coast Salish History,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver, BC, CAN: UBC Press, 2007). See also, Wayne Suttles and Barbara Lane, “Southern Coast Salish,” in *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 7*, ed. William C. Sturtevant, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990).

The text sets off certain words – “won” and “own” – with quotation marks, indicating the skepticism with which the viewer should approach these concepts. The question of rightful ownership is implicated, but not explicitly confronted. Situated around a corner and on a different wall is a text board titled simply, “Washington Territory,” which explains that, “American settlement in the Northwest was illegal until treaties were signed with sovereign tribes.” Here there is no ambivalence. This statement actively challenges the viewer to confront the illegality of pre-treaty settlement. But this display is situated at a distance from another that explains that the federal government was encouraging immigration to what was then Oregon Territory with the Oregon Donation Land Claim Law, which allotted 640 acres to married couples if the husband was a white American citizen. This took place, the label tells us, “even before treaties were negotiated with Native people,” but does not re-iterate the illegality of this pre-treaty settlement. By not explicitly connecting, or more accurately, by separating the illegality of settlement and the federal government’s legislated encouragement of settlement the museum misses a crucial opportunity to explore the concepts and perceptions of sovereignty that guided Native-settler interactions and the treaties that these interactions produced, as well as to approach and question the ethical implications of these interactions for Indian policy both past and present.⁷³

While these displays include the Native in the historic narrative, others go further, revealing the important roles Native people played in the process of city building. A display devoted to explaining early trade in the region describes the influence of The Hudson’s Bay Company. “The Indians, Kanakas from the Hawaiian Islands, English, Scots and French Canadians who worked

⁷³ For more on the implications of the treaties negotiated by Isaac Stevens in Washington Territory in the mid-19th century, see Alexandra Harmon, ed., *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

for the HBC lived together in a mixed world,” the label reads. Here, Indians are noted for their useful labor in the fur trade industry that preceded American settlement. Another label describes the vital role of Native laborers in the hop fields in the late 19th century. Such accounts offer an important counterpoint to representations that conceptually separate the Native from the city by representing Indians as the savage “other” to the civilized urban space. Instead, these displays represent Indians as a previously unheralded and marginalized minority group, necessary agents in the formation and development of the city, whose contributions had previously been overlooked or ignored.

The text also emphasizes a contemporary concern with issues of diversity and racial harmony that obscure the unique political position of Native people. For instance, the label tells the visitor that, in addition to their role as laborers, “Europeans and Indians met on common ground to trade.” The expression “common ground” implies a balance of power and an equality of exchange that was entered into for mutual benefit. The issue of power relations (as we understand them now) between Natives and non-Native traders is a complicated one, and its narrative has changed over time.⁷⁴ This display presents Indians as one of a multitude of ethnic groups that “met on common ground” and found a way to live “together in a mixed world,” instead of complicating this notion by presenting the ways that trade relations were re-balancing (and un-balancing) power relations between Indians and settlers, or by presenting Native participation in the fur trade as one of many ways that Indian people were trying to maintain influence and agency while being subject to a power balance that was increasingly tilting out of

⁷⁴ Alexandra Harmon has written in depth about the changing power relations between Native and non-Native people in the Puget Sound area, and the formation and mutability of perceptions of “Indian” identity that resulted. See Alexandra Harmon, “Lines in Sand: Shifting Boundaries Between Indians and Non-Indians in the Puget Sound Region,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (1995): 429-453.; Harmon, “Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound”.

their favor. This exhibit display exemplifies one strategy for resolving the discordance inherent in representing the often-oppositional history of Natives and settlers. The display unifies the two oppositional groups by representing them as part of a common mission: the development and success of the new order.

While these displays that depict Seattle's earliest years make sure to include Native people in this opening narrative of the city's beginnings, the lack of Native depiction in the subsequent years is noticeable. Native people were apparently thriving when European traders, explorers and settlers began arriving in the region, but Indians seem to disappear (at least from the city's important historic moments) after the treaties were signed and the Indian wars that followed were quelled. Any displays that do depict Indians seem to have been awkwardly inserted into a pre-existing narrative structure. For example, a set of displays depicting the development of Henry Yesler's saw mill explain the expansion of the lumber industry and then continues in an adjacent room full of model storefront windows meant to represent the growing town. There is a bank with a stone façade, a church, and other town buildings. Each window reveals a display about a facet of the town's economic and social development during the late 19th century. Indian people in 19th century Seattle have their own display in a separate space, that describes the "change of worlds" they were experiencing, and the discrimination, hostility and marginalization they were enduring, including the burning of Herring's House (although the display does not use the village's name), and a Duwamish village in West Seattle. One could argue the appropriateness, and perhaps the poignancy of such an arrangement that separates Indians from the depiction of settler places, since the display itself explains, "In 1856, Indian people were at the heart of Seattle; in 1893, they were on the city's margins."

While visitors are told that Native people did not disappear, their representational presence in the city's narrative seems to end here, with one exception. Native people do reappear much later in the exhibit's sequence, on a wall devoted to examples of activism in Seattle's past 50 years. A large photo shows Muckleshoot Indians marching during protests that eventually led to the 1974 Boldt Decision, which upheld the right of Native people to fish in their "usual and accustomed ground," per the treaties that originally ceded their lands to the United States. Another photo above it shows Marlon Brando participating in a 1964 Indian fishing rights demonstration. These photographs are situated within a collage of photographs and labels entitled, "The Times They are A-Changin'," with photographs depicting activism in the city regarding race relations and the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, as well as city improvements and the economic challenges of the 1970s.

While African-American protest in the 1960s and the treatment of Japanese-Americans returning to Seattle after World War II make up the panel on race-relations, the Boldt Decision is presented within the framework of environmental protest. By categorizing this important legal decision as an environmental matter, the display implies that this legal reversal of almost 100 years of exclusion from their "usual and accustomed" fishing grounds was based on neither racial/ethnic considerations nor even the proper enforcement of treaty rights (although the treaty is mentioned in the label text). Instead, the 1974 Boldt Decision is presented as the result of political activism driven by environmental concerns – namely, concern over the "Endangered Salmon."

Furthermore, the inclusion of a photograph of Marlon Brando participating in the protest suggests a widespread popular support for the movement beyond the Native communities

concerned. In reality, Native protests escalated in the early 1960s in response to the targeted arrests of Indians and the growing demonization of Indian people who were often represented by the media as selfish, anarchic, violent, and interestingly enough, anti-conservation.⁷⁵

Furthermore, the text explains that, in addition to upholding Native *rights* to fish, the Boldt Decision also upheld the *responsibility* that Native tribes had for managing fisheries. It is a choice of wording that seems to create a perception of Indian fishermen being drawn into a cooperative union with non-Indian fishermen, who share a common desire to restore the endangered salmon runs. On one hand the exhibit shows how Indians, as an organized minority group, were participating in the broader national trend of using public protest in order to effect



Figure 26. Robert Satiacum (right) and Marlon Brando shortly before they were arrested in a 1964 protest. (Image courtesy of *Seattle Times*)

⁷⁵ Gabriel Chrisman, “The Fish-in Protests At Franks Landing,” *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project* <<http://www.civilrights.washington.edu>>, [depts.washington.edu/civilr/fish-ins.htm](http://www.civilrights.washington.edu/civilr/fish-ins.htm) (accessed September, 2011).

change. In other words, they were demonstrating their “American-ness” through protest. The display reveals, yet again, the underlying perception that Indians have been fully absorbed into the multi-ethnic American whole, one thread within the larger national/urban fabric.

Indians in the “Post-Museum”

The misrepresentation of the prelude and postlude for the Boldt Decision emphasizes its meaning for settler society and divorces it from its important meaning for Native people. One could argue that such interpretive strategies are necessary in order to form a coherent, univocal, and unifying narrative from a collection of events that have been a source of social division and political upheaval in the recent past. However, in the last few decades scholars and museum practitioners have increasingly noted the museum’s untapped potential for organizing historic objects and information in more complex ways, thereby creating potentially multi-vocal narratives and allowing visitors to make connections between the past and the present that would not otherwise be as perceptible. Such exhibits would have the potential to inspire social and political change.⁷⁶

It is clear that curators of “Essential Seattle” attempted to address particular issues of Native representation, reflecting a large-scale change in museum theory and practice in the last half of the 20th century. Previously, especially in local history museums, if Indians were presented as part of the historic narrative they were often depicted as stereotypes. As Karen Coody Cooper has pointed out, “Most historical societies were formed solely to relate the story of their

⁷⁶ See Hooper-Greenhill, “Museums and the Interpretations of Visual Culture”; Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).; Robert R. Janes and Gerald T. Conaty, eds., *Looking Reality in the Eye: Museums and Social Responsibility*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005).; Ruth J. Abram, “Harnessing the Power of History,” in *Museums, Society, Inequality*, ed. Richard Sandell, (London: Routledge, 2002).

‘founding fathers.’ With that mission in mind, the founders were the ‘heroes’ and if anything, or anyone, had impeded the advance of their dreams, those characters were antiheroic. And, so, American Indians were either absent from the local story or were the villains.”⁷⁷ The most common representation would fix Indians within the past, either as part of pre-history or early history, but certainly not as a part of America’s narrative of progress that always culminates in the present. By erasing Natives from recent history, museum narratives suggest the fallacy that “real” Indians did not survive.

MOHAI is just the sort of museum that Cooper is referring to: founded as an historical society by the children of the first settlers and for many years committed to the mission of celebrating the “founding fathers” and early pioneers. However, MOHAI has deliberately brought Native people and perspectives into “Essential Seattle” in ways that would not have been considered before the mid-20th century. In the last half of the 20th century there have been significant changes in museum policies and practices, partly as a result of Native American protests. Protest, however, worked in tandem with other academic, cultural and social changes. The civil rights movement demanded political equality for African-Americans, which translated to a demand for a higher level of inclusion for African-Americans within civil society.⁷⁸ African-Americans and other minority communities began to demand that museums accurately depict their roles within the mainstream historical narrative. While historians began to uncover the stories of people that had been left out of the history books, a growing academic interest in

⁷⁷ Karen Coody Cooper, *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices* (Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press, 2008), 4.

⁷⁸ Ivan Karp, utilizing Antonio Gramsci’s definition of civil society – as a “site for the production of hegemony, that is, as an intellectual and moral commitment to the way a society is ordered and governed, and as a site for contesting assertions about who has the right to rule and to define the different identities in society.” Karp discusses the usefulness of conceiving of the museum as an influential element of civil society. As such, museums have the important role of producing and articulating social ideas. Karp, “Introduction,” 4-5.

colonialism and post-colonialism, as well as developing theories of postmodernism in the late 20th century provided a new perspective for the critique of museum representation and interpretation, especially in the display of non-Western people and cultures. Such criticism, combined with changing social values, served as a catalyst for a paradigm shift in museum anthropology and practice.⁷⁹

Much has been written on this shift, especially in respect to the museum's relationship to society. Tony Bennett has charted the development of the modernist museum in order to understand it, from its origins, as an instrument of power and governance. One important argument he makes is that by presenting itself as a universal and generally representative institution, the museum has opened itself to political demands for parity from the excluded and marginalized portions of the society it represents, a parity that has often been neglected in the past. However, according to Bennett, the physical limits of museum display make the universal representation that the museum rhetorically promotes impossible to actually achieve. Rather than limiting the focus in reforming museum practices to issues of representation, he calls for a transformation in the relations between the exhibit, exhibit organizers and the museum visitor. "In addition to what gets shown in museums," he argues, "attention needs also to be paid to the processes of showing, who takes part in those processes and their consequences for the relations they establish between the museum and the visitor."⁸⁰ This approach focuses less on questions about "representational adequacy," and more on questions about the relationship between the museum and the diverse communities that museums represent, bringing up issues such as access

⁷⁹ See Gail Anderson, ed., *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, (Lanham [etc.]: AltaMira Press, 2004): 7.

⁸⁰ Bennett, "The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics," 103.

and collaboration. Whose knowledge is being displayed, and for what purpose? Is the community provided the opportunity to participate in an exhibit's narrative's construction?

Hooper-Greenhill has also analyzed some of the differences between the modernist museum and what she has termed the "post-museum," which refers to the kind of museums and museum practices that will ultimately be the result of this paradigm shift, although the full extent of these changes haven't yet been fulfilled. In particular, Hooper-Greenhill has shown how the modernist museum, institutionally organized by a desire to discipline the public through education, has been affected by new ideas about the nature of knowledge, culture and communication. "Representation does not reflect reality," she explains, "but grants meaning and confers value; in this way it is constitutive of reality."⁸¹ In other words, history museums like MOHAI can no longer be understood as merely "telling the facts about history." Rather, museums must instead be perceived as sites that construct meaning for visitors, and therefore have the power to shape social life. Hooper-Greenhill continues:

New statements may speak old messages, but also have the potential to construct different ones. Through display, museums can make new meanings which are produced through new equivalences. Museums thus have the power to remap cultural territories, and to reshape the geographies of knowledge. These are political issues, concerned with the opening up or closing down of democratic public life.⁸²

Furthermore, by demonstrating that the meanings of objects are not monolithic and singular, but polysemic – interpreted in different ways by different interpretive communities – Hooper-Greenhill reveals how museum representation is not merely cultural but also political. "Where meaning is multiple," she writes, "but where a single meaning is insisted upon, questions must be

⁸¹ Hooper-Greenhill, "Museums and the Interpretations of Visual Culture," 138.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 21.

asked as to who is advantaged by the meaning made available, and whose history or culture is denied by being suppressed? Questions of knowledge are also questions of power.”⁸³

Ivan Karp, like Bennett and Hooper-Greenhill, finds that because representation – meaning-making – is enacted within a power structure, museums need to continually assess their relations with the changing communities that surround them, whether local, national or international. Museums and museum exhibits, he argues, are stages for enacting and contesting civil society’s hegemonic relations, and for “contesting assertions about who has the right to rule and to define the different identities in society... [Museums are] places for defining who people are and how they should act and as places for challenging those definitions.”⁸⁴ Certainly there are echoes here of both Bennett’s and Hooper-Greenhill’s modernist museum, with its pedagogical mission to educate and prescribe behavior. But Karp also conjures a vision of the post-museum, in which meaning may be made through the arrangement of objects, while it is interpreted and made use of – even contested – by a knowing subject who is positioned within one or multiple interpretive communities. In other words, since knowledge cannot be thought of as transmitted in one direction – from the museum to the visitor – care must be taken in arranging the museum as a site for dialogue between the ideas the museum presents and the many interpretive communities that will interact and be affected by the ideological messages conveyed through the museum’s displays.

It is especially important to understand that museums provide arenas for defining and contesting identity. “For communities,” Karp writes, “the struggle over identity is vital to their existence: they often feel that they live or die to the degree that they are accorded or denied

⁸³ Ibid., 77.

⁸⁴ Karp, “Introduction,” 4.

social space.”⁸⁵ This assertion has an interesting dimension when applied to Native communities. For years, museums (and other such exhibitionary spaces) have been one of the primary places where concepts of “Indianness” were defined and reproduced by and for non-Indians. Indian objects were collected and displayed, often within the context of an evolutionary narrative that defined “civilization” against the more primitive “savagism.”⁸⁶ On the one hand, representing Indians in such displays was a way of articulating an American identity by differentiation, juxtaposing it against an antithesis.⁸⁷ Such representations have also been interpreted as displays of imperial power – the power by which Indians were conquered, collected and then exhibited – and as expressions of imperial superiority.⁸⁸ Furthermore, museum displays drew from literature, film, advertising, and other popular media to produce ideologies of “Indianness” that have had a profound impact on settler knowledge of Native people, serving as a rationalization for their subjugation, but also creating a quagmire of confusion over what constitutes a “real Indian.”⁸⁹

Particularly in museums, perceived as sites of scientific “truth,” the persistent representations of historically bounded, universal “Indianness” have created a narrow space for thinking about Indian identity. However, most “real” Indians do not resemble the “white man’s Indian” that has proliferated throughout American media. Furthermore, the lack of connection

⁸⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁶ See Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁸⁷ See Robert Jr. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian From Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

⁸⁸ See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire At American International Expositions, 1876-1880* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁸⁹ Eva Marie Garrouette explores the many implications of defining Indian identity for the survival of Native people in *Real Indians: Identity and Survival of Native America*. Also, Alexandra Harmon has discussed the ways in which “Indian” as a racial category has been defined in the Pacific Northwest, arguing that the concept has not been static. Rather, “Indian” identity has been developed and redefined over time, its parameters negotiated dialogically between Indians and non-Indians, and it has been utilized to erect and define boundaries – both social and geographic – around Indians. See *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound*.

that such representations make between “Indians” and the contemporary lives of Native people supports a popular belief that Indians are either a thing of the past, or that contemporary Indians aren’t “real” Indians, placing Native people in the position of having to announce and defend their continued existence, often by proving their differences from settlers. This situation has been compounded by a history of cultural and biological assimilation practices enacted by the colonizing settler-society. Unlike other racial categories in which biological difference was fervently maintained in the defense of a white “purity,” Indian “blood” is perceived as diminishing generationally through miscegenation. In effect, the Native can be thought of as biologically “vanishing” by being absorbed into a white, dominant society, even while society’s idea of the “Indian,” temporally and culturally fixed and providing a differentiating “Other” by which white civilization might orient its own identity, receded into history.⁹⁰ The power to define “Indian” identity, and how that power is utilized, then, has straightforward implications for the survival of Native communities.

Native people have protested through the years against the colonizing effects of many museum practices, resulting in several important changes. For instance, the Indian ethnological collections in many museums were the result of years of archaeological looting during the 19th and into the 20th century. Graves were dug up and important cultural objects ended up in boxes in museum storage rooms. For Native people, the collection and display of cultural objects in museums has long been closely tied to the violence of colonial domination. Indians protested that museums were “hoarding the material culture of indigenous peoples, preventing us from

⁹⁰ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 397-401.

experiencing an intimacy with our own pasts.”⁹¹ As a result, many museums have recently become more sensitive to the collection, preservation, and display of Native objects. After years of Native protest, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed in 1990. The legislation required museums that receive federal funding to publicly identify certain Native artifacts and remains in their collections, and facilitated a process for their return to lineal descendants and/or the Indian tribes with which they are associated.

Also, the founding of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) created a new space (figuratively and literally) for the Indian within the context of the nation. Located on the mall as part of the constellation of Smithsonian museums, the official repository of America’s national heritage, NMAI represents an important repositioning of the museum in respect to the Indian in its commitment to constructs its exhibits utilizing Native voices and perspectives. A changing understanding of the politics of representation, the restoration of cultural artifacts to their tribal homes, and a commitment to inclusion and collaboration with Native people are just a few of the results important to Native communities of the paradigm shift that is producing Hooper-Greenhill’s notion of the “post-museum.”

Collaboration at the Burke Museum

MOHAI’s “Essential Seattle” exhibit shows a desire to address this paradigm shift by revising the settler narrative to include the participation of Native people, recognizing their territorial occupation prior to American settlement, and recognizing their (past) mistreatment. However, a closer look at the content, text and organization of the exhibit’s displays reveals that these revisions are not significant enough to reinterpret the museum’s underlying bias: the

⁹¹ Cooper, “Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices,” 2.

celebration of the founding and development of settler society. Efforts were made, but the museum chose not to take a self-critical approach to its relationship with the Native communities it represents. Subsequently, white history – or more specifically the history of white exploration, conquest and settlement – orients the exhibit’s narrative, while Native people and perspectives are merely supplementary. The narrative celebrates the city’s victory over various hardships and obscures the settlement of the territory and the growth of Seattle as an act and process of colonization.

Another Seattle-area museum has also responded to the museological “paradigm shift,” particularly in its orientation toward Native communities. Seattle’s Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture is Washington’s oldest museum, founded in 1885 as The Young Naturalists Society, which began as group of teenage boys, sons of early white settlers, who shared a mutual interest in natural history. Fourteen years later, in 1899, the state legislature designated the collection they had amassed as the Washington State Museum, and it was housed in various buildings at the University of Washington for many years. In 1962 the name was changed to The Burke Museum, in honor of Judge Thomas Burke, after a bequest from Burke’s wife’s estate made it possible for the collection to be housed permanently in its current building.⁹² The museum has a long history of collecting Native American artifacts, acquiring one of its first significant collections after the Alaska Yukon Pacific (AYP) Exhibition of 1909, Seattle’s first world’s fair. Many of the Indian artifacts acquired from the AYP Exhibition came from Northwest Coast Native tribes. Today the museum is particularly renowned for its collection of

⁹² Alan J. Stein, “Burke Museum (Seattle),” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8468 (accessed November, 2011).

Native American art and artifacts, and has taken initiatives to transform the museum's relationship with Native communities.

The Burke's 1989 exhibit, "A Time of Gathering: Native Heritage in Washington State," was the museum's first attempt to forge new relations with Native communities based on a practice of inclusion, consultation and collaboration. Native participation was sought in all stages of the exhibit's development, from planning to implementation, beginning with a committee of Native advisors. The exhibit was timed to coincide with Washington State's 100-year commemoration, but did not conform to the celebratory tone one would expect from a centennial observance. When members of the committee suggested that some Native people might not wish to celebrate the State's centennial year, the name of the exhibit was chosen to describe what it would mean to Native people. Upper Skagit elder Vi Hilbert's remarks at the naming ceremony reflected his approval of the exhibit's name, "A Time of Gathering," saying, "Our honored ancestors will be remembered...The treasures they made with their hands will be borrowed from all over. And then everyone will see them when they come here to this place...A Time of Gathering. This is very good. Because our honored people will gather along with their treasures."⁹³

The Native advisors were not merely brought in after the fact to support and perhaps revise an already formed exhibit, but instead were given the opportunity to offer insights and make requests that impacted the entire exhibit process, from the inclusion or exclusion of individual artifacts to the exhibit's narrative content. For instance, contemporary art was not originally a part of the original prospectus but was included at the insistence of the Native advisors,

⁹³ Quoted in Robin K. Wright, "Introduction," in *A Time of Gathering: Native Heritage in Washington State*, ed. Robin K. Wright, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991): 16.

reflecting a desire to represent Native people and communities as vibrant and artistically productive. Native advisors also insisted on including historical information about the devastating effects of colonization and the ways in which the lives of Native people were changed by the impact of white settlement in the exhibit. With “A Time of Gathering,” The Burke Museum provided Native people an opportunity to influence the formation of an exhibit that would be meaningful for Native communities by sharing information and providing advice.

The Burke Museum’s next attempt at utilizing this collaborative methodology produced the permanent exhibit “Pacific Voices,” opened in 1997 to replace a previous outdated display of Pacific Rim cultural exhibits. The development of the new exhibit was complicated by the diversity of communities that were represented and the conflicting demands from the advisors of each community. The planning process was fraught with disagreement and miscommunication, and the accommodation of so many voices and perspectives, rather than resolving certain issues of representation, merely exacerbated them. For instance, the goal of displaying culture as complex and dynamic was frustrated by the limits of display space and technologies, while the communities themselves were not always in agreement over which aspects of their culture to display or emphasize, sometimes divided over details and at other times over more foundational issues. As Miriam Kahn, the exhibit’s curator, has pointed out, merely the inclusion of multiple voices cannot entirely eliminate issues of representation and bias. Instead, she argues, the problem of representation must be approached as one of authority and control. “Regardless of how collaborative the exhibit agenda may appear, museums still invite others to fit within institutions and narratives that are not of the community members’ own making.”⁹⁴ Despite these

⁹⁴ Miriam Kahn, “Not Really Pacific Voices: Politics of Representation in Collaborative Museum Exhibits,” *Museum Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (March, 2000): 57-74.

various complications, the exhibit was largely regarded as a success by the advisors as well as the public, and Kahn herself regards it as a step in the right direction for museum practice in a culturally diverse society.

The ramifications of this exhibit – and the standards by which it can be considered a “success” or “failure” – are different for the various “Pacific Voices” than for the Native communities that contributed or were represented. Kahn explains, “Advisors decided that the exhibit should be about sources of cultural identity for people of Pacific Rim origin now living in the greater Seattle area.”⁹⁵ In this way, the exhibit was oriented to speak to and for American – more specifically, Seattle-area – ethnic communities, rather than simply to be a cultural display of Pacific Rim cultures. Native communities, then, are displayed alongside other ethnic minority cultures that arrived in the Pacific Northwest as immigrants. Also, Northwest Native artifacts and languages are interspersed among similarly themed displays around the room, rather than grouped together. The Lushootseed language display is placed near displays about Korean writing, oral traditions and other language displays, while a display about Potlatch is situated near displays about other cultural ceremonies such as a Korean wedding and the Samoan Saofa’i. On one hand, this successfully fulfills the advisory committee’s specific desire to organize the exhibit thematically rather than culturally in order to emphasize commonalities among cultures. But this desire to present “Pacific Voices” as an expression of harmonious diversity in effect obscures the special and particular relationship that Native people have with the place that immigrant communities have come to call “home.” Consequently, the exhibit diminishes the

⁹⁵ Ibid., 61.

unique political position of Native people within the nation, eroding public perceptions of Native difference and sovereignty.

The Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition: Indigenous Voices Reply

Twenty years after “Pacific Voices” forged a new collaborative relationship between The Burke Museum and area Native tribes, the museum developed an exhibit titled “Alaska-Yukon-Pacific-Exposition: Indigenous Voices Reply.” Opening in 2009, the exhibit was a part of several public events and exhibits celebrating the centennial of the world’s fair that Seattle had hosted in 1909. Like so many world’s fairs of its era, the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (AYPE) organized the display of indigenous people and cultures in a way that would contrast with displays of Western cultural and technological development, in order to demonstrate a progressive evolution from “savagism” to “civilization.” “Indigenous Voices Reply” was conceived as a platform for the critique of AYPE’s racist representations by juxtaposing the story of AYPE with contemporary artwork by Pacific Northwest Natives in order to expose and highlight the hurt that years of such representations caused Native people.

The Burke Museum hoped to offer a critique of an episode in Seattle’s history that was otherwise being commemorated during a yearlong celebration in 2009. The 1909 AYPE was itself a celebration of the recent growth of Seattle and the surrounding Puget Sound region after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897 in Alaska. After gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory, Seattle quickly set itself up to be the primary gateway into the Klondike, an easy place from which miners seeking the riches in the north might purchase supplies and embark upon their journey. The gold rush, along with other developments of the late 19th century, helped the city grow into one of the largest on the west coast. A few years later, city officials were hopeful that a

world's fair would provide Seattle with another economic boost. Having witnessed the economic benefits that Portland reaped from the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1905, prominent Seattle businessmen were convinced that a world's fair in Seattle would bring national attention to Seattle and provide more opportunities for economic growth. This is why AYPE organizers chose to represent Seattle as the gateway to the wealth in the Yukon, and, likewise, as the gateway to the wealth available in Pacific markets.

This emerging focus on economic expansion into the Pacific is most visibly articulated in AYPE's official seal. Three women, each representing Asia, Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, hold different objects in their hands. The woman from Asia holds a steamship, indicating the



Figure 27. The official seal of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

means by which the connection between the United States and Asia would be forged. The woman from Alaska holds a gold nugget, indicating the riches available in the north. The woman from the Pacific Northwest holds a railroad engine, indicating the manner in which the region would be linked to both Alaska and the rest of the United States, and also suggesting the possibility that such wealth would move beyond the region into the rest of the nation. AYPE's official opening remarks by railroad magnate James J. Hill made this connection between west and east even more explicit.

This exposition may be regarded as the laying of the last rail, the driving of the last spike, in unity of mind and purpose between the Pacific coast and the country east of the mountains...If the star of empire in history has moved westward, it followed rather than led those bold spirits by which empires are made and upheld.⁹⁶

Hill was articulating a vision of national unity and accomplishment within the context of Manifest Destiny, a force that motivated and justified the violent taking of indigenous lands and the subjection of Native people to a colonization that has not ended. His remarks show how AYPE was regarded as the final “party” celebrating both the national drive to conquer and settle the west and the pioneering men and women who accomplished the task. In this way, the idea of American empire, the colonizing activities that produced it, and its continuation into new western “frontiers” was embedded in the exposition.

⁹⁶ Rydell, “All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire At American International Expositions, 1876-1880,” 185.



Figure 28. Artist William Caughey created this bird's eye view of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, looking to the southeast toward Mt. Rainier. Several University buildings are visible, such as Denny Hall and Parrington Hall in the right foreground. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

AYPE showcased the advance of “civilization” across the North American continent and beyond. This was a significant articulation of American empire. Bound to ideas about evolution and progress, it was especially important in the representation of Native and non-European peoples. American “civilization” was made visible in the arrangement of educational displays and even of the fair grounds themselves, which were spatially organized to mark a categorical difference between the exhibition buildings and the fair’s midway, where AYPE displayed civilization’s achievements and savagery’s delights, respectively.

The landscape of the exposition grounds, designed by the Olmstead Brothers, reflected the fair-planners’ concern with beauty as a display of civilization. The Olmstead Brothers’ father was Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed New York City’s Central Park, as well as the

Midway Plaisance for Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. Both the father and the sons are associated with the "City Beautiful" movement in the U.S., which advocated social improvements through urban design. It was presumed that the civic loyalty and moral rectitude of the impoverished inhabitants of the city could be enhanced by planting trees and creating parks, as well as through grand architectural designs and the beautification of urban spaces.

The Olmstead Brothers' design transformed the landscape of the University of Washington, which was previously still heavily forested. The central feature of the new landscape was a central open slope featuring a long pool of cascading waterfalls. It visually led the visitor's eyes upward toward an unobstructed view of Mount Rainier. Many acres of the campus were transformed into formal gardens that were compared to the public gardens of Versailles. New buildings were constructed as well, most of them highly stylized. These buildings housed exhibits showcasing objects, demonstrations, natural resources and the newest technologies. The exotic objects of far-off lands were also displayed, as well as American Indian, Alaskan Native and Eskimo artifacts in the Smithsonian Exhibit. Congress's mandate for AYPE's Smithsonian display stated that the Smithsonian would provide "such articles and materials of an historical nature as will impart a knowledge of our nation's history, especially that of Alaska, Hawaii, and the Rocky Mountains." Furthermore, officials in charge of that exhibit were explicit in their wish to make the display "present an outline of our national achievements and progress."⁹⁷ With this directive as the exhibit's organizing principle, the inclusion of American Indian and Alaskan Native artifacts served to emphasize the "primitive" cultures which the nation had conquered,

⁹⁷Ibid., 201.

subdued, and assimilated, as well as to convey the nation's ownership of these artifacts and, by extension, the nation's triumph over the societies from which they were taken.

The message of progress and civilization in the educational exhibits was further reinforced by the display of Native people in the fair's pleasure district, the Paystreak, a term that referenced the gold rush and at other fairs would refer to the midway. The Paystreak was AYPE's primary amusement area, less stylistically cultivated than the landscapes for the main exhibition halls. It was also much more wild and chaotic, designed for pleasure rather than education. The Paystreak included a "Temple of Mirth" or "Foolish House," a "Temple of Palmistry," a live game exhibition, and a Ferris wheel. Dancers in the "Streets of Cairo" were shut down regularly by the morality police for being too risqué, and rides such as the Fairy Gorge Tickler were appealing for the possibility that one might bump up against one's neighbor.⁹⁸

It was in this context of bawdy and provocative amusements that indigenous and non-western cultures and people were displayed in stereotypical ways along the Paystreak, in concessions like the Chinese Village, the Eskimo Village, and the Japanese Village. For instance, a Wild West Show was regularly performed, in which cowboys dramatically defeated Indians in Plains style dress. The most famous display of exotic primitive people was at the Igorotte Village, where indigenous people from the Philippines lived as a kind of anthropological performance. Marketed as dog-eaters and scandalously naked, they were a sensational and popular attraction. In the Eskimo Village, Inuits wearing sealskin and "living" in igloos made of plaster and canvas demonstrated games and crafts. There were also some native Alaskan people "who are partly

⁹⁸ Ruddy, Christina, "Alaska Yukon Pacific Expo: Seattle's Forgotten World's Fair," *Seattle Channel*, video, <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4030901> (accessed April, 2011).

educated,” and still others “who can conduct our business affairs, operate mills and canneries and who have reached an advanced stage of civilization.”⁹⁹ In this way the AYPE demonstrated for the public that exposure to Western culture could act as a civilizing influence, and the possibility that educating primitive people might mold them to a more “productive” way of life.

Furthermore, if the Paystreak offered the visitor an understanding of evolutionary progress, it was by the placement of the indigenous – the Inuit, the Igorottes, and the American Indians – within the context of this carnival-like atmosphere while setting it apart from the stately halls in which the achievements of “civilization,” including the nation’s power to collect the primitive, were proudly displayed.

In 2009, the City of Seattle organized a celebration to mark the 100-year anniversary of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. Many events and exhibits were planned, including a re-enactment of the coast-to-coast car race that launched the Model T and Henry Ford’s car manufacturing company. The Nordic Heritage Museum offered an exhibit celebrating the cooperation of the significant population of Scandinavian immigrants in AYPE’s story and in the history of the Puget Sound region. An exhibit at MOHAI displayed photographs of the fair taken by AYPE’s official photographer, Frank Nowell. A walking tour of the University of Washington campus was offered by the Friends’ of Seattle’s Olmstead Parks in order to highlight the legacy of the City Beautiful movement for the UW campus and also for the rest of the city. A documentary film was made for the Seattle Channel, and various websites were established to organize the numerous resources being made available to Seattle residents to educate themselves about their city’s “forgotten” world’s fair.

⁹⁹ Rydell, “All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire At American International Expositions, 1876-1880,” 199.

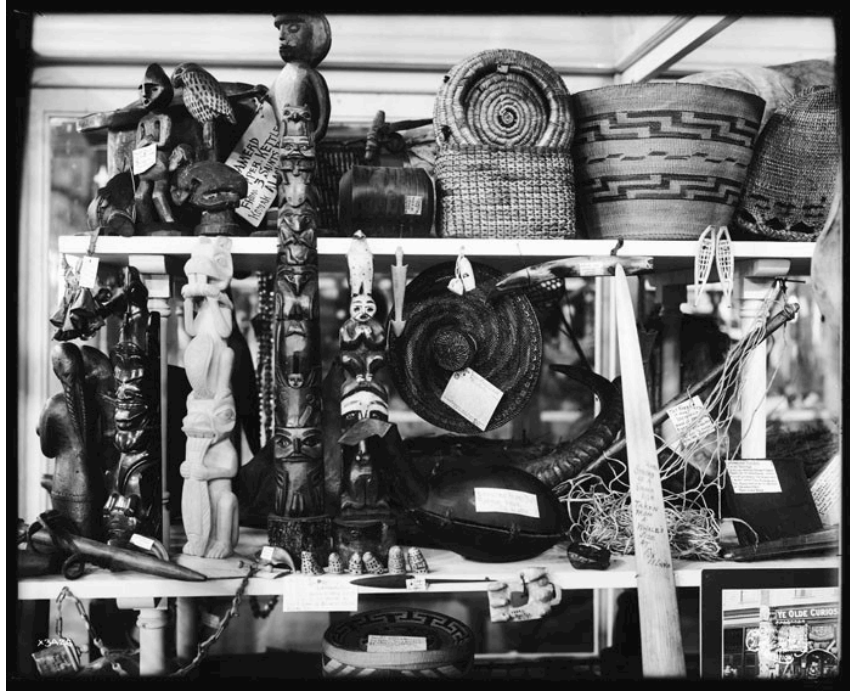


Figure 30. Display of Indian and Eskimo artifacts in the Alaska Building. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)



Figure 29. Igorrote men and women performing ceremonial dance in the Igorrote Village at AYP. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

The constellation of AYPE centennial exhibits and events were primarily celebratory. The fair's racist justifications of empire were mentioned only in passing if the subject was broached at all. Primarily these events focused instead on the legacy of the fair as Seattle's first moment of national and international distinction. For example, a publication devoted to the history of AYPE and its images, printed in concurrence with the celebration, describes the racist representations on the Paystreak as merely "a difficult side of AYPE history...found in this otherwise enjoyable section of the fair." Shaunna O'Reilly, the publication's author, explains that the Igorotte Village was intended to be educational, but that "by today's standards it was quite inhumane." Like MOHAI's re-interpretation of the Denny Party Diorama, O'Reilly chooses to suggest an evolutionary rationale to create distance between the past and the present, suggesting that America's racist past is in the past.

The Seattle Channel's documentary, *Alaska Yukon Pacific Expo: Seattle's First World's Fair*, treats the matter of indigenous representation in more depth than O'Reilly, but chooses to emphasize the noble intentions of the exhibit's organizers, who desired to offer an educational display and also to provide an "international experience" that most fair-goers would have been unlikely to experience. In the same context, the film describes the Wild West Show as "ubiquitous," and explains that this was a standard part of the entertainment culture of the nation. Then the film describes the fair's "baby give-away," in which a one-month old baby boy was offered as a kind of door prize by the Washington Children's Home, and explains that 1909 was "very strange indeed."¹⁰⁰ If such representations are "very strange" to us now, then the film, like

¹⁰⁰ Ruddy, "Alaska Yukon Pacific Expo: Seattle's Forgotten World's Fair."

O'Reilly, suggests a desire to disconnect past race relations and mores from our contemporary selves. In this way, the only “legacies” that 1909’s Exposition provide for us are those that the public can celebrate.

It was amidst this city-wide celebration that The Burke Museum produced an exhibit that provided one of the few critical remembrances of the 1909 exposition, “A-Y-P: Indigenous Voices Reply.” The exhibit was offered in conjunction with other events throughout the year, including a symposium on race and empire that featured museum and academic professionals from around Pacific Northwest. The goal was “to explore how the representation and understanding of indigenous people and cultures has changed or not changed over 100 years.”¹⁰¹ The exhibit opened with photos and panels depicting the history and content of the AYPE, and explained the racist ordering of the fair’s objects and ethnic villages. Also included in this section was the story of Pioneer Square’s first totem pole, which was stolen by a group of Seattle men from a Tlingit village in Alaska in 1899, indicating the museum’s desire to reveal the way AYPE’s representations of primitive “others” was supported by attitudes outside the fairgrounds, rather than merely particular to the exposition. In other words, AYPE not only helped to construct such attitudes toward indigenous people, but the fair’s representations of race also reflected and reproduced existing beliefs about the order of the races.

The central focus of the exhibit was the contemporary artwork by Native artists. The museum had called for Native artists to respond to AYPE and its racial legacy by producing artwork that would interact with objects in the museum’s collections. The exhibit succeeds in achieving a few important objectives for establishing a more open relationship between the

¹⁰¹ Burke Museum, “A-Y-P: Indigenous Voices Reply,” <http://www.burkemuseum.org/static/ayp/artists.php> (accessed December, 2009).



Figure 31. Preston Singletary's "Tlingit Storage Chest." (Image courtesy of The Burke Museum)



Figure 32. 19th century Haida storage chest that served as inspiration for Singletary's piece. (Image courtesy of The Burke Museum)

museum and Native people, as can be seen in a few of the exhibit's key pieces. Preston Singletary's "Tlingit Storage Chest," for example, is based on an object in the Burke Museum's collections labeled "Bentwood Chest," a 19th century Haida storage chest. Singletary's version is made of cast glass rather than carved wood, which is not a "traditional" medium for Native art, but the design of the object speaks to the older "Bentwood Chest." As Singletary remarked about the piece in a documentary video produced and distributed by the Burke, "It was just an homage to the design, the Tlingit designs. It's sort of my way of just being present, and showing that we're still here, and showing who we are and what we do in very contemporary ways."¹⁰² The exhibit, then, provided a platform for Native artists to demonstrate both the survival and persistence of their culture, but also its dynamic nature, challenging assumptions about an Indian "authenticity" that is based on historic stereotypes constructed by non-Indians.

The exhibit also challenges the stereotypes that would suggest a monolithic pan-Indian or a monolithic Northwest Coast Native identity. For instance, each artist contributing to the exhibit is identified by his or her specific tribal affiliation in the exhibit's labels. Even overlapping identities are recognized. For instance, one artist is identified as Athabascan, Inupiaq, German and Irish, while Singletary is identified as a "multi-ethnic individual with connections to the Alaskan Tlingit, Filipino, and European cultures."¹⁰³ The inclusion of the artists' specific tribal associations reflect a break with concepts of "Indian" as a racial category in exchange for concepts of Native identities that are not fixed by blood-quantum, but are instead defined by community or kinship associations. Such an approach also rejects damaging assumptions about biological "purity" that are associated with ideologies of race.

¹⁰² Anna Hoover, "Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition: Indigenous Voices Reply," (2009).

¹⁰³ Burke Museum, "A-Y-P: Indigenous Voices Reply."



Figure 33. Phillip Charette's "Poisoned Mask." (Image courtesy of The Burke Museum)

Phillip Charette's "Poisoned" mask, rather than responding to either AYPE or to an object in the Burke Museum collections, responds more generally to the treatment of Native peoples' material culture by museum professionals. Charette was inspired to make the mask after his experience interacting with Yup'ik masks in the Smithsonian's collection. The mask represents Amikuk, a Yup'ik spirit creature, but in addition to traditional spiritual elements of an Amikuk mask, Charette has also included markings on his piece that represent the kind of markings that collectors have made on such Yup'ik masks as they were catalogued for museum collections, including the object's location of origin and the name of the person who acquired it. Additionally, many of the masks that were collected had been damaged and defaced when early curators soaked them in arsenic to kill and prevent infestation by parasites. The word "poisoned" was

stamped on the masks to warn those who handled the items to use gloves. Charette has also inscribed the word “poisoned” onto his piece in order to call attention to the way Native sacred objects have been defaced by such practices. Charette has commented, “I just hope that this brings more awareness to the things that have been done that really have damaged not only the pieces but the spirit of our people.”¹⁰⁴

While Charette’s piece speaks to the damage that was wrought against Native Yup’ik masks as well as against the damage to Native cultures and communities as a result of the colonizing practices of settler-society, the piece prompts the viewer to think about these damages in terms of the past. In other words, “This is what ethnographers *used* to do to Native sacred objects.” The ramifications of damage in the present remain implicit, obscured by the need to emphasize the persistence of Yup’ik culture. Likewise, Singletary’s “Tlingit Storage Chest,” or Matika Wilbur’s photographs of Native women in various urban Seattle settings provide the material “proof” that these communities have not disappeared, remained culturally stagnant, nor fully succumbed to the forces of assimilation. Such an emphasis, however, overwhelms any connection between the past and the present that might help the viewer to see a relationship between the historic colonizing practices of the settler-state and the contemporary, on-going results of those practices. In what ways are Native people still suffering from colonization’s “poison?”

The structure of the exhibit itself obscures the association between the colonial past and the consequences of colonization in the present. To enter the exhibit space, the viewer walks through a room dedicated to the display of the 1909 AYPE, the ways the exposition used race to uphold

¹⁰⁴ Hoover, “Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition: Indigenous Voices Reply.”

and reproduce ideologies of empire, and the ways that racial prejudices structured Seattle society at the turn of the century. To view the rest of the exhibit, the viewer leaves this room to enter the next space, which is dedicated to the display of the contemporary artists' works, which, as a whole, combine to send a message about the survival of Indian communities and the vibrancy of contemporary Native cultures, as well as to utilize the significant changes in museum practice that have corrected many representational issues for Native people. Taken as a whole, the exhibit is structured to reflect the underlying assumptions about evolution and progress that were expressed even in other openly celebratory remembrances of AYPE: America's racist past is in the past. The viewer is left to conclude that Native people, having survived the past violence of colonization, are now welcome to enjoy the fruits of a settler-society that has seen the light and restored the balance. However, such a conclusion ignores the more complicated reality of the ongoing colonial invasion that still provides the foundation for contemporary settler-society.

Conclusion

The history of representing Native people in museums across America has been shaped by attitudes of colonial superiority and triumph. While local history museums like MOHAI have concerned themselves with grafting the particular elements of the local history onto the larger body of America's national narrative of Manifest Destiny and triumphant pioneers, natural history museums have developed exhibits that articulate racialized hierarchies based on the evolution of the "savage" into the "civilized." Venturing out from the museum into the larger exhibitionary complex, these kinds of representations were also at the heart of displaying an American imperial triumph in late-19th century and early-20th century world's fairs. A paradigm shift in museum practices in the last half of the 20th century has encouraged museums to rethink

the way master narratives of race and nationalism have been represented. The result has been a reinterpretation of such narratives with the understanding that such representations do not merely deliver a series of facts to visitors, but instead offer narratives by which visitors construct meanings or generate interpretations about historical events and cultural practices. Exhibits are not merely reflective of reality but help constitute reality for visitors. In this way, the museum has been revealed as an instrument of hegemonic power promoting certain narratives or perspective over others.

How this power is and has been wielded against Native people is the central question here. Museums have responded to this paradigm shift as it regards Native people by revising representations that reinforced racist stereotypes. At MOHAI, for instance, the Denny Party Diorama was reinterpreted to explain the way settlers *used to* think about Indians. However, the foundational framework of the exhibit as a celebration of settler-society requires that the inclusion of the Indian in the narrative be fashioned to fit this celebration. In other words, “Indians helped build Seattle, too.” At the Burke Museum, representations of culture and “civilization” have also been broadened to include rather than exclude Native people, even utilizing collaborative methods in order to allow Native peoples to speak for themselves against America’s past utilization of race to justify empire. Ultimately, the “Pacific Voices” exhibit regarded “Native” as a one of a multitude of American racial categories rather than recognizing its importance as a political distinction, a choice that undermines perceptions of Native sovereignty. Twenty years later, “Indigenous Voices Reply” was structured to demonstrate that past injustices were being righted in the present by bringing the voice of indigenous protest into the public sphere. This is an important development in museum practice, but the exhibit’s

structure to showcase this development and help to solve the past problem undermined the exhibit's ability to connect the past to the present.

In these museums, the contemporary version of the “post-museum” has not been able to create an exhibit that is completely successful in supporting the advancement of Native sovereignty. Revised representations and collaborative methods are not sufficient to create an exhibit that does not in some way serve to merely maintain the status quo of Native-settler relations. Amy Lonetree, in a critique of the National Museum of the American Indian, argues that this is the result of the NMAI's failure to tell the hard truths about the past. “Given the silences around the subject of colonialism and its ongoing effects, I argue that the museum fails to serve as a site of truth telling and remembering and that it remains very much an institution of the nation-state.”¹⁰⁵ Lonetree also explains how the Saginaw Chippewa's Ziibiwing Center for Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways successfully embodies a decolonizing museum by, among other strategies, speaking the hard truths of colonization. Lonetree's argument argues that an institution of the nation-state cannot embody a decolonizing museum, unlike a tribal museum. However, insofar as a decolonizing museum is defined as a site of truth telling, I would argue that non-tribal museums, recognized *as* institutions of the nation-state, *can* and *must* become decolonizing museums.

Until museums are willing to provide a hard and critical look at America's colonial past, they cannot provide a way for the public to understand America's colonial present. Tribal museums are important sites of truth telling, but will never be able to speak as loudly or as convincingly to settler-society as an “institution of the nation-state,” nor can tribal museums

¹⁰⁵ Amy Lonetree, “Museums as Sites of Decolonization: Truth Telling in National and Tribal Museums,” in *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, ed. Susan Sleeper-Smith, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 323.

speaking *for* settler-society. Museums like MOHAI, The Burke Museum and even The National Museum of the American Indian must also become decolonizing museums and explain historic narratives by utilizing the voice of the settler-state that tell the hard truths about colonization, past, present and everything between. Only then can museum visitors begin to comprehend America's ongoing history within the framework of Native-settler relations, and begin to appreciate the largest concerns for contemporary Native communities: the struggle to exist as sovereign and autonomous political and cultural entities that can one day thrive again independently of the nation that colonized them.

CHAPTER 3

The Past That Had No Future: Settler Heritage and Indian Place in Seattle

If the preservation movement is about something greater than the aesthetic rewards of fine architecture and urban design, it is the notion that enduring values of community, faith, and even freedom can be expressed in stone and wood as well as words. When we make a community, we inevitably struggle toward some sense of our own ideals, and thus our identity.¹⁰⁶

The people have made and are making the city, and it in turn exercises its influences upon their destinies. – Victor Steinbrueck¹⁰⁷

“Seattle is Indian Country,” claims Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau.¹⁰⁸ The Bureau’s website offers a myriad of ways that visitors and residents can explore and “discover” Seattle’s unique heritage. From shopping and festivals to arts and sightseeing, visitors can choose among several downloadable brochures to guide them toward several categories of ethnic experiences, including African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian-American, Nordic-American and Native American. The Native American Heritage guide promotes museums, art galleries, and parks containing public artwork. In a description of Snoqualmie Falls, the brochure seamlessly combines the phrases “one of Washington’s premier tourist destinations” with “a sacred site for the Snoqualmie People,” ignoring the discrepancies between the two concepts. The brochure reveals the ways that settler society has appropriated Native heritage in order to combine it with a cluster of ethnic heritage options to produce an image of the city as a diverse, multicultural place.

¹⁰⁶ Reid Karaim in “The Real Littleton,” *Preservation* 53 (May/June 2001): 58. Quoted in Judy Mattivi Morley, *Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 15.

¹⁰⁷ Victor Steinbrueck, *Seattle Cityscape* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1962), 27.

¹⁰⁸ Seattle’s Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, “Native American Cultural Guide,” http://www.visitseattle.org/getattachment/Visitors/Discover/Heritage/Native-American-Heritage/Seattle_Native_American_Heritage_Brochure.pdf (accessed February, 2012).

If Seattle is Indian Country, however, there is little beyond this cultural “flavoring” that has been preserved to indicate the thousands of years of history that Native communities lived there, nor of the short 150-year history in which Native people have contended with the encroachment of American settlement. Archaeological sites are few (additional sites are probably buried under the city’s streets), but these few sites unearth information about Indians that lived in the distant past. “Archaeological sites in the Puget Sound area date back over 10,000 years,” the brochure states, immediately followed by the explanation that “traditional life” centered around cedar and salmon. “Traditional life,” however, does not convey the vast difference between the lives of Indians today and the lifeways of their ancestors. In fact, the events and processes of the recent past, which have so drastically damaged and altered traditional Indian life, disappear entirely between the deep history of archaeological sites and the more recent historic material of white settlement that is being preserved in the city.

The vast majority of historic places and structures that have been preserved and materialize the past for Seattle’s public represent the story of settler society. There are no monuments that depict the exact location of Duwamish winter villages that have been paved over. There is no historic site that cordons off the place where, prior to white settlement, Indians from all around the Puget Sound, Canada and Alaska would bring their canoes ashore, back when the place was known as *Djidjila’letc*, nor are there markers that identify the places where they moored their canoes in the settlers’ fledgling town.¹⁰⁹ There is no plaque interpreting the site where Herring’s House, the last Duwamish village that persisted almost to the turn of the century, was burned to the ground and its inhabitants violently displaced by land developers hoping to profit from the

¹⁰⁹ *Djidjila’letc*, meaning “little crossing over place,” is the Lushootseed name for the Native place that encompasses the current Pioneer Square. Andrews, “A Change of Worlds.”

territory on the west side of the Duwamish River. There is no outdoor museum that reconstructs the 19th century Indian camps around the perimeters and on the margins of the city, the only places where Indians were allowed to reside when they came to town, nor in the place that used to be Ballast Island, at the foot Washington Street, where the displaced residents of Herring's House lived until they scattered to other places.

Still, in addition to many galleries and museums, there are several suggested sites listed in the Convention and Visitor Bureau's guide for discovering Seattle's Native American heritage. One is a cedar replica of a Northwest Coast Native longhouse, built by Ivar Haglund in 1970 to house his restaurant, *Ivar's Salmon House*. Likewise, Tillicum Village, a tourist destination on Blake Island, also features a replica of a longhouse, and serves salmon dinners cooked in the



Figure 34. Duwamish camp on the Seattle waterfront, ca. 1891. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

“traditional Northwest Coast Indian style,” served by Native people, who will also entertain visitors with Native dancing and storytelling. There are also several parks that feature public art by Native artists, as well as the location of a large rock in the Duwamish River that can be seen at low tide and associated with a Duwamish legend.

Also listed is the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Discovery Park, the home of United Indians of All Tribes, an organization that provides social services for Indians in the Seattle area. While the building itself isn’t quite “historic” by professional preservation standards (built in 1977 it is only 35 years old), the place is historically important history to Seattle’s Native people. Also in the brochure are Terminal 107 Park and Herring’s House Park, which have only recently been carved out of a formerly polluted industrial space. Formerly a Duwamish village site, the parks contain protected archaeological resources, but there is little more than an interpretive sign to indicate the existence of the former village, and it does not explain the village’s fate.¹¹⁰

Pioneer Square is also a suggested destination, and is the only site in the Visitor Bureau’s brochure that is a formally recognized and preserved “historic” place. Regarded as the “birthplace of Seattle,” the neighborhood is a National Register Historic District, and several of its buildings, as well as its Chief Seattle Statue and a Tlingit totem pole from Alaska, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These items, however, speak more about the appropriation of Indian images and symbols than they do about the history of Native people on the land that became Pioneer Square. Neither do these markers interpret or even symbolize the

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Herring’s House Park is not the location of the former Herring’s House, however, which is located farther north on the Duwamish River. Herring’s House Park and Terminal 107 Park contain the archaeological remains of an additional village site. David Buerge estimates that there would have been around 26 winter villages around the area at the time of white settlement.

more recent past, when large numbers of urban Indians lived in the historic district, an aspect of the past that remains obscured by the story this place tells of the pioneer forefathers who built the city, the fire that destroyed it, and the “Seattle Spirit” that rebuilt it.

When heritage is constructed (and marketed) in particular Seattle sites and places, it raises several questions, especially about the interests of Native people. How do historic and heritage sites tell the story of Indians in Seattle? How do they contribute to the creation of “place,” and how do they collect and construct collective memories? Do these places help bridge the gap between Indians who lived in the past and Indians in the present? Or do historic sites predominantly serve the needs of the settler-society, providing the “placeness” for narratives about the success of the pioneers’ urban dreams and visions for its multicultural future? More

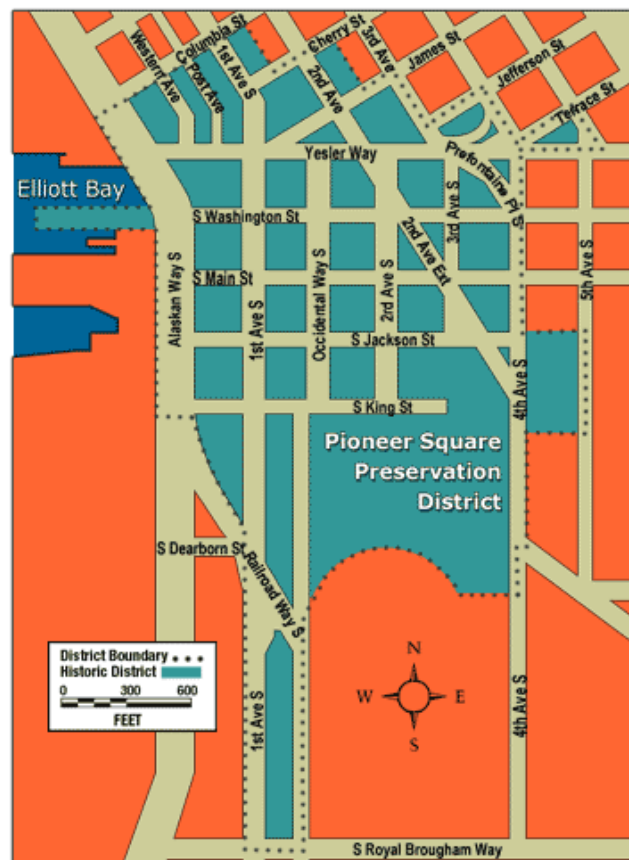


Figure 35. Map showing Pioneer Square Preservation District. (Image from City of Seattle, Department of Neighborhoods)

specifically, how do these narratives overshadow the fact that Indians have been integral to the city's place-stories, and not merely as the builders of the ancient ruins upon which Seattle was constructed?

Historic Preservation Saves Pioneer Square

One could argue that the most important structure in the history of Seattle's historic preservation movement is a building that doesn't exist anymore, except as a memory. The old Seattle Hotel was originally known as the Occidental Hotel, and opened in 1861 in what is now Pioneer Square Historic District. John Collins, the owner, replaced the original wood-frame structure with a grander building on the site in 1883, but this second wood-framed structure was destroyed only a few years later in the 1889 fire that leveled most of downtown Seattle. The city was quickly rebuilt again, this time in brick, and by the early 1890s the new hotel, renamed the Hotel Seattle, had replaced the ruins of the previous structure.¹¹¹

The hotel stood there for many years, used for a time as a hotel and later as office space. By 1961, however, the building's usefulness to the downtown area expired, like many of the other buildings in Pioneer Square. As part of the urban renewal projects of the 1960s, plans were made to demolish many of the neighborhood's aging and lifeless buildings. The Hotel Seattle, derelict and long-since vacant, went first. To the horror and dismay of many, it was replaced with the structure that has come to be known as the "Sinking Ship" parking garage. When you approach the building on Yesler Way from the west, from the direction of the waterfront, the triangular structure's sharp front angle does indeed appear like the bow of a ship, and the design of the

¹¹¹ Karin Link, "Preservation and the Era of Civic Revival," in *Pioneer Square: Seattle's Oldest Neighborhood*, ed. Mildred Tanner Andrews, (Seattle: Pioneer Square Community Association in association with University of Washington Press, 2005): 181.



Figure 36. Hotel Seattle, ca. 1911. (Image courtesy of Museum of History and Industry, Seattle)



Figure 37. "Sinking Ship" parking garage that replaced Hotel Seattle after its demolition in 1962. (Image courtesy of WSDOT)

structure is such that the garage's "bow" appears to be angled upward toward the sky, so that the rest of the structure appears to be "sinking" into the hillside. The replacement of one of Seattle's historic treasures with what has been widely regarded as the aesthetically ugly "Sinking Ship" was the catalyst for inspiring a culture of preservation activism in Seattle that continues to this day.

Like the narrative of the Denny Party's landing at Alki Point, the story of Hotel Seattle provides a dramatic and coherent, if simplified, and often-used beginning for the narrative about the historic preservation movement in Seattle. The surge of protest and activism after the loss of Hotel Seattle was an important moment when preservation efforts in the city, previously negotiated at the local level, were hitched to a growing national movement. Seattle citizens looked toward the success stories from places like Williamsburg and Charleston and utilized the brand new innovation of federal preservation law to create the Pioneer Square Historic District. Despite being one of the nation's younger cities, Seattle was among the first cities in the country to do so.

Hotel Seattle, like many other buildings in cities all across the nation, was the casualty of urban renewal, a federal program begun in the late 1950s aimed at dealing with the deterioration of downtown spaces. In Pioneer Square, business had moved northward just after World War I, and by the 1930s Yesler Way, running through the heart of the district, had become the original Skid Road. The road was formerly known as Mill Street. When Henry Yesler nearly abandoned his venture to build a sawmill in the fledgling city because all the waterfront land had already been taken, Doc Maynard gave up a strip of land between his claim and Arthur Denny's adjacent claim that connected a larger tract of land further east with the waterfront in order to encourage

Yesler to settle in Seattle and build his mill. This strip of land became Mill Street. Timbers cut from the top of the hill were skidded down Yesler's strip of land to his mill on the waterfront, and the road, known today as Yesler Way, became informally known as Skid Road.

In the 1930s, as the Depression left many Seattle laborers without work, these down-and-outers – mostly single men – congregated in and around Pioneer Square. Faith-based missions like the Salvation Army's Harbor Light Center, the Lutheran Compass Center and the Union Gospel Mission purchased buildings near Pioneer Square. These missions became centers where homeless men could go for news about temporary work, get a meal and find a place to sleep. Government-funded facilities opened there also, like the Blue Ox Lodge, which bunked up to 130 men.¹¹² When these missions and flophouses were full, some of the homeless utilized abandoned basements throughout Pioneer Square's "underground" areas. In time the name "Skid Road" became known nationwide as a moniker for any place where a community's indigent population would congregate.

After the end of World War II, American cities became increasingly decentralized as families began moving into suburban housing developments and service businesses followed the families. In Seattle, particularly, Boeing Corporation brought a surge of people and money into the city during and after World War II. Requiring large areas for test runways, the company's manufacturing plants were spread around the metropolitan area. As Boeing continued to grow, an influx of new employees came from the Midwest and settled in suburban areas that were growing around the city.¹¹³ While World War II brought an end to the Depression, and Boeing's

¹¹² Mildred Andrews, "The Era of Booms and Busts," in *Pioneer Square: Seattle's Oldest Neighborhood*, ed. Mildred Tanner Andrews, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

¹¹³ Morley, "Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle."

post-war growth and expansion brought an economic boom to the city overall, Pioneer Square itself continued to deteriorate. As suburban businesses began to challenge the primacy of Seattle's central business district, city planners and business owners made plans to revitalize the downtown utilizing urban renewal strategies and federal funding. The Seattle Center, home of the 1962 World's Fair and Seattle's famous Space Needle, was one of the first such projects, and displayed the city planners' vision – a futuristic aesthetic for a forward-thinking city.¹¹⁴ This futuristic vision never became consensus. Indeed, Pioneer Square's area business leaders had already shown an interest in preserving the historic quality of the neighborhood. In 1954 the Pioneer Businessmen's Association sponsored a design competition for the restoration of the area around Pioneer Place, which was won by Victor Steinbrueck, a professor of architecture at the University of Washington. His vision included a commemorative park, a museum at the corner of First Avenue and Cherry Street, a walking bridge and sunken landscaping.¹¹⁵

Steinbrueck's design was never funded and utilized. Years later, however, the city council commissioned the 1963 Monson Plan, which proposed to redesign the central business district, just north of Pioneer Square, as a suburban shopping mall. The deteriorated neighborhoods surrounding the district – such as Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market – would be torn down and the spaces utilized for parking, although the plan did propose to save Pioneer Place itself, the triangular park at the center of the district. The Monson Plan reflects the mid-century ethos of urban renewal: tear down blight and begin again with something new and shiny. Meanwhile, private investors were quietly buying Pioneer Square-area buildings and renovating them for new uses. Ralph Anderson, for instance, bought the Jackson building in 1962.

¹¹⁴ Morley, "Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle."

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Earthquake guidelines made an overall restoration too costly to be profitable, but Anderson was able to get around the engineering guidelines by remodeling in small pieces, creating office space on the second floor and an apartment on the third floor. On the ground level, interior designer Allen Salsbury moved in his prestigious interior-design display room, attracting more affluent customers into the area.¹¹⁶ In 1965, Anderson's friend Richard White took a long-term lease on the Liberty Building nearby, remodeled it and opened an art gallery. In the following few years White also bought the Union Trust Building and the Globe Building. As Anderson and White, along with other property owners, also worked on beautification projects like planting trees, the area became appealing to other architects, artists, and interior designers due to the aesthetic quality of the old buildings, the low rents, and the proximity to downtown.

Journalist Bill Speidel also took an interest in Pioneer Square. Renting offices in Anderson's Jackson Building, he wrote and published the weekly *Seattle Guide*. He began exploring and writing about the forgotten "underground" areas of the neighborhood. After the Great Fire of 1889, when Seattle needed to rebuild almost everything, the city decided to take the opportunity to raise the streets. Parts of the city had been built on tidal mud flats that had been reclaimed using sawdust from Yesler's sawmill, and certain areas would still have trouble with flooding at high tide. When the city burned to the ground, city officials decided it was the perfect opportunity to solve the problem of tidal flooding. Retaining walls were built up along the sides of the streets and filled in, raising the height of the roads. Many property owners chose not to wait until the street raising project was completed before they rebuilt, and by the time the roads were finished the first floors of these buildings were a full 10 feet lower than street level. The

¹¹⁶ Mildred Andrews, "Left Bank: Art and Politics," in *Pioneer Square: Seattle's Oldest Neighborhood*, ed. Mildred Tanner Andrews, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).

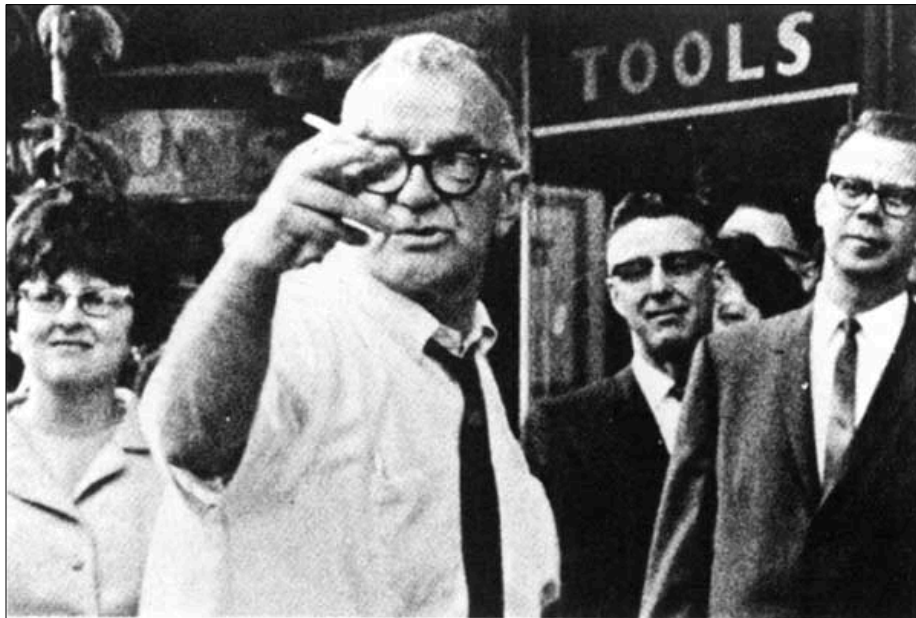


Figure 38. Bill Speidel points out historic sights on a tour of Pioneer Square's underground in 1964. (Image courtesy of Underground Seattle Tour)

original sidewalks also remained below, requiring pedestrians wishing to cross the roads to climb ladders until new sidewalks were built to cover the open spaces between the streets and the buildings. When the roads were completed building owners converted the first floors into basements, and these original entryways and sidewalks were “buried” and forgotten, utilized mainly as storage for unwanted items. Speidel’s readers took an interest in the underground and in 1965 he began Underground Seattle, a walking tour of these areas that incorporated stories of Seattle’s less respectable past – gambling, prostitutes and murders. It became a popular tourist attraction that continues to this day.¹¹⁷

The popularity of Speidel’s Underground Tour emphasizes the importance of these underground places as repositories of Seattle’s history, and not just the history of the prosperous men who constructed the buildings. Many “official” histories of the city would emphasize the contributions of men of power and influence, who built Seattle by making their own fortunes in

¹¹⁷ “A Little History,” <http://www.undergroundtour.com/about/history.html> (accessed June, 2012).



Figure 39. Seattle's "underground" as seen on Bill Speidel's Underground Tour. (Photograph by author, 2011)



Figure 40. A tour guide leads a group through the Underground Tour. (Photograph by author, 2011)

the process. Speidel's Underground Tour, on the other hand emphasizes the "forgotten" contributors, including those with less than respectable reputations. Collected in Speidel's book, *Sons of the Profits*, such stories are still utilized as the main source for the Underground Tour's narratives. For instance, the book and the tour includes stories about Lou Graham, a brothel owner and madam who, despite her less than respectable profession, contributed greatly to the city.¹¹⁸

Doc Maynard is also remembered in these tours. In Speidel's version, however, he is not remembered as the paragon of civic leadership, although Maynard's efforts and actions in the first 50 years have long been regarded as crucial to the city's early growth. Instead, Speidel's book and tour reminds the public that Maynard was an alcoholic, and his personal fortunes suffered for his lack of financial savvy. He did not die a wealthy man. For Speidel, such stories were important to keep the history of the city from becoming sanitized by society's desire to bestow upon these men and women "a degree of saintliness they neither wanted nor deserved,"¹¹⁹ and the dirty corners and basements of Seattle's "forgotten" underground was the perfect place to tell these stories.

Steinbrueck, Speidel and the Politics of Place

There are many ways to think about the process of constructing "place" from "space." Most relevant to processes of historic preservation – or more generally to the creation and perpetuation of historic places – is narrative, or story. "Because stories live at once inside people and places," Ned Kaufman explains, "they remind us of an important truth: that the meaning of a place lies neither wholly in its forms and materials nor wholly in the minds of the people who use it, but

¹¹⁸ Speidel, "Sons of the Profits".

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

arises out of the interaction of the two.” Bill Speidel’s Underground Tour demonstrates the powerful association between place and story. His newspaper stories first hinted at the urban legend that there were underground tunnels all throughout the neighborhood, and brought to light the possibility that they might actually exist. These new stories were the initial spark that lit the public interest in Seattle’s “forgotten” history. As demand for more information grew, Speidel investigated the claims, finding the old passageways under the sidewalks.

When Seattle’s Chamber of Commerce held a “Know Your Seattle Day” in 1965, they convinced Speidel to conduct tours for a dollar per person. 500 people went on tours that day, and Speidel soon began scheduling others, utilizing the tour’s huge popularity to promote Pioneer Square’s preservation. He quickly collected 100,000 signatures for a petition supporting a Pioneer Square Historic District, which he then presented to Seattle’s mayor.¹²⁰ The massive response demonstrated that the public was interested in Pioneer Square as a repository for Seattle’s historic narrative. Class conflict, economic development, historic continuity and aesthetic living conditions might have shaped the debate between preservationist and business leaders over preserving Pioneer Square, but the public support for preservation resulted from these tours. The activation of story and place shaped the public’s collective memory about Pioneer Square.

It is particularly significant that the “forgotten” aspect of the underground piqued the public’s interest. Pierre Nora, writing about what he calls “sites of memory,” argues that the proliferation of such sites in the modern world actually indicates society’s lack of memory, and that the desire to archive the material trace of history is symptomatic of this lack. “Fear of a rapid

¹²⁰ “A Little History.” Bill Speidel’s Underground Tour, <http://www.undergroundtour.com/about/history.html> (accessed June, 2012).

and final disappearance combines with anxiety about the meaning of the present and uncertainty about the future to give even the most humble testimony, the most modest vestige, the potential dignity of the memorable.”¹²¹ It is the threat of forgetting that spurs the creation of historic material. In the case of Seattle’s Pioneer Square, it was the threat of its disappearance, and the disappearance of the memory it contains, that catalyzed its preservation.

Similarly, Margaret Farrar argues that the reclamation of historic space in the United States for preservation and beautification has been a response to the proliferation of “placeless places” that form what John Brinkerhoff Jackson called the “landscape of the temporary.” She explains, “These are sites of either willful or accidental amnesia, where the powers of place are neutralized by ignoring them or removing them from history.”¹²² Historic preservation, she continues, has been the nostalgic response to the “landscape of the temporary,” but has not provided an antidote to the problem. The inequitable power relations that create historic places, the commoditization of heritage, and the idealization of a history that has been stripped down to its simplest forms frustrate and complicate the usefulness of preservation for nurturing what Dolores Hayden calls “the power of place” – “the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory.”¹²³ Farrar similarly argues that place has an under-utilized political power that is fueled by collective memory: “To the extent that our landscapes and cityscapes thwart our potential for spontaneous, unscripted remembrance – by creating resolutely unmemorable spaces or spaces which authorize only

¹²¹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire,” *Representations* 26, (Spring 1989): 13.

¹²² Margaret E. Farrar, “Amnesia, Nostalgia and the Politics of Place Memory,” *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (August 2010): 723-735.

¹²³ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (The MIT Press, 1997), 9.

specific kinds of memory – we limit the potential of this powerful political resource.”¹²⁴ In other words, if place has the power to help shape collective memory, then both urban renewal and preservation have the potential to thwart the “power of place,” the former by creating “placeless places,” and the latter by obscuring the many layers of time, habitation and history under one reductive, official history.

Steinbrueck saw this connection between memory, place and politics in Pioneer Square, and shaped his arguments for preserving Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market around both the aesthetic and social dimensions of the place. He emphasized the profound connection between people and their environment, and the value that artistically pleasing spaces have for contributing to social betterment. Furthermore, his son, Peter Steinbrueck, remarked, “While he focused on built environment and preservation, and design of the city, his motivation was more about people than about things and objects, about how we live and what we valued.”¹²⁵ This vision was particularly important to the older Steinbrueck’s efforts to preserve Pike Place Market.

Established in 1907, the market became an important economic and social space for the city.

Peter Steinbrueck explains,

When you look at saving [Pike Place] market, it wasn’t so much about saving the buildings but about preserving a way of life, especially the presence of local farmers. He valued the relationship between the consumer and producer, which in modern society has been all but lost, enormously....The culture of the market, the opportunities availed through that kind of environment, and preserving a place for people with low incomes was very important...He valued the Market’s role and wanted to see it continue to provide its historic function.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Ibid., 732.

¹²⁵ Heather MacIntosh, “Victor Steinbrueck: Life and Ideas,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=2126 (accessed February, 2012).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

In this way, his campaigns to save Seattle's historic places shared an affinity with the writings of Jane Jacobs on the destructive effects of urban renewal. In *The Death and Life of American Cities* Jacobs argued against the planning perspectives of the day ignored the underlying order of cities, the way their diverse parts and uses function alongside and with each other. Planners, she argued, were promoting and imposing an artificial aesthetic and organizational order on cities that did not meet the needs of the people living there. "The look of things and the way they work are inextricably bound together...[But] it is futile to plan a city's appearance, or speculate on how to endow it with a pleasing appearance of order, without knowing what sort of innate functioning order it has."¹²⁷ Jacobs seems to have inherited this perspective from precursors like Steinbrueck, whose campaign reflected a desire to preserve material history, not only for its



Figure 41. Victor Steinbrueck (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

¹²⁷ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 14.

aesthetic value, but also for the structure it provided for the social life of the neighborhood. Furthermore, he championed the rights of the neighborhood residents and of all Seattle residents, not merely the building owners and outside developers, to have a say in Pioneer Square's fate. By helping to shape the campaigns against the destruction of Seattle's historic places as "a populist struggle of 'the little people' against the 'business interests,'" Steinbrueck was encouraging people to think about historic preservation not merely as an aesthetic or an historical concern, but as an element of social life and of social justice.¹²⁸

Indeed, contemporary critics in the last few decades have advocated for a greater understanding of the spatial dimension of social life and how it relates to issues of justice.

Edward Soja argues:

There exists a mutually influential and formative relation between the social and the spatial dimensions of human life, each shaping the other in similar ways. In this notion of a *socio-spatial dialectic*...the spatiality of whatever subject you are looking at is viewed as shaping social relations and societal development just as much as social processes configure and give meaning to the human geographies or spatialities in which we live.¹²⁹

Furthermore, he argues that these geographies have the potential to generate injustice in various ways and forms. Historic preservation, it seems, is profoundly implicated in this socio-spatial dialectic. Preservation is a social and often-political process that generates meaning for space and place, and the meanings constructed for these spaces and places in turn has an important influence over social relations. Pioneer Square provides a way of seeing this dialectic at work, in that socio-historic processes shaped the neighborhood, but later, as conflict arose over defining the neighborhood's historic meaning, the neighborhood's identity as an historic place began to structure social belonging and exclusion, both politically and spatially.

¹²⁸ Morley, "Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle," 102.

¹²⁹ Soja, "Seeking Spatial Justice," 4.

The Pioneer Square neighborhood was designated as an historic district and placed on the National Register in 1970. The designation, which increased the potential for tourism, was good for business, but it resulted in higher rents, driving lower income residents and some businesses out of the area. However, the social services that remained in Pioneer Square continued to make the district a popular “home” for the city’s indigent population, and as time went by conflicts arose over whether steps should be taken to remove the homeless. Many argued that the “bums” were a part of Skid Road’s heritage, and they should not be driven away, while others complained that their presence was impeding business. The conflict became even more apparent as the city grew more committed to marketing Pioneer Square as a tourist destination.

Openly the conflict was about the “bums,” but it came down to the question: which heritage should be preserved? Many would argue that such a thing as a single unified heritage for any given place is problematic. David Hamer has written:

The concept of the historic district has to a large extent been based on a commitment to a representation of history as static, a series of points in time artificially frozen and then immunized to a substantial degree from the impacts of change. This is not only un- or even anti-historical. It is also profoundly anti-urban in the sense that it denies the diversity that is the very essence of urban life and the source of its greatest challenges and enjoyment. For change is the essential and only constant characteristic of the history of many American city districts.¹³⁰

This tension between the complexities of a polyvocal history and the marketability of a reductive heritage is not unique to Pioneer Square. Often, the emphasis that is placed on utilizing preservation as a tool for economic development affects the process of shaping historic place. As the scope of preservation expands to incorporate a greater variety of places, setting aside increasing amounts of property from the pressures of the market in order to interpret the past puts

¹³⁰ Hamer quoted in Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 164.

limits on the available uses of property. These limits, critics argue, are detrimental to economic development, especially as communities endeavor to preserve entire urban districts. By focusing on the potential *for* economic development, preservationists can alleviate some community resistance. This is one reason adaptive reuse is a popular form of preservation in historic districts. Adaptive reuse, however, tends to limit the ways that these preserved structures can interpret the past. Gutted of their historic material to make space for new businesses, they are reduced to facades, providing a historic flavor as a draw for customers.¹³¹ Overemphasis on preservation's marketability tends to result in a version of history that has been streamlined as a marketable commodity, a "fabricated heritage," reduced, simplified and suitable for mass consumption.¹³² In this way, communities managing historic districts must negotiate the realm of preservation options between authenticity and marketability.

In Seattle, developing Pioneer Square as the birthplace of the city, or more particularly, as the re-birth of the city – when it rose from the ashes of destruction just before the turn of the century – created a more appealing venue for tourism, materializing the legacy of the "Seattle Spirit." However, such an approach froze the interpretation of the district within a particular moment in time. Indeed, the commitment to a specific, static time was strong enough that for a few years in the 1970s the city's police donned 1910-style uniforms to fit this heritage during daily business hours. Others argued that such an approach ignored Pioneer Square's "true" past, sanitizing it of its disreputable beginnings on the edge of the city's vice district and ignoring the story of its deterioration into Skid Road. Allowing Pioneer Square's seedy beginnings and

¹³¹ Mike Wallace discusses the tension between heritage and economic concerns in Mike Wallace, "Preserving the Past: A History of Historic Preservation in the United States," in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996): 178-221.

¹³² David Lowenthal, "Fabricating Heritage," *History & Memory* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 5-24.

underclass history to influence the interpretation of the neighborhood – allowing the “bums” to stay – might be bad for business, some argued, but it would retain the place’s “authentic” past.¹³³

This last argument illuminates the relationship between the interpretation of heritage and the erection of boundaries of social and spatial inclusion and exclusion. Because the homeless were a part of Pioneer Square’s heritage, planners felt the need to consider their potential displacement and how the neighborhood could instead accommodate their continued presence, even if they were not given a voice in negotiations. In other words, the “bums” would be guaranteed a place in Pioneer Square because they had a “place” in Pioneer Square’s story. This template for inclusion was limited, however, because another group – the descendants of the territory’s original inhabitants – had as much a claim on the place’s history. Indians, however, had long been removed from the city’s story in all but the most superficial ways.

If Seattle is “Indian Country,” Where are all the Indians?

In Seattle, the contest between economic development and historic authenticity in Pioneer Square shows how preservation leaders desired to circumvent the tendency for preservation to exclude portions of society from public space (at least as regards Seattle’s homeless population) and to create a place that would be socially inclusive. Since the initial preservation of its historic districts, the city has fostered the concept of multiple heritages, and the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau offers a plethora of ethnic heritage sites for visitors to discover throughout the city. Pioneer Square, their brochure claims, is a place where they can discover Seattle’s Indian heritage. “Native heritage” is preserved and made visible in Pioneer Square with three prominent

¹³³ Judy Mattivi Morley, *Historic Preservation & the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006.): 83-84.

objects: a totem pole, a bust of Chief Seattle situated atop a fountain, and contemporary public artwork.

The statue of Chief Seattle is one of three such creations by artist James Wehn, and was installed in 1909. Another bust by Wehn was installed in Renton in 1910, and both busts preceded the installation of his best-known work, the full-size Chief Seattle statue in Tilikum Place in 1912. All three statues were commissioned and cast in response to a 1907 city ordinance calling for more sculpture and public artwork as part of improvements that were being made in anticipation of the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909. Much of Seattle's public artwork is "more generally of the abstract expressionist variety,"¹³⁴ making Wehn's statue one of the few pieces of public artwork in the city that exemplifies the tradition of realism in memorial statuary. More commonly seen in cities further east, statuary commemorating prominent leaders has often been erected, especially at the turn of the century, to foster civic pride at the national or at the local level.

There are very few of these memorial statues throughout the city, and the absence of any statues of Arthur Denny, Doc Maynard or Henry Yesler – or of any other the other prominent leaders of the early settlement – makes the multiple statues of Chief Seattle around the city particularly significant. It indicates that the image of Chief Seattle was a more powerful expression of civic pride and identity than the image of the city's own pioneer founders. Chief Seattle is particularly remembered for his famous friendship with the early settlers – especially with Doc Maynard who suggested the city be named after the Duwamish leader. His speech at the signing of the Point Elliot Treaty in which he relinquished the lands of his people has been

¹³⁴ National Register of Historic Places, "Chief Seattle Statue, Tilikum Place, Seattle, Wa." #84003502.



Figure 42. Chief Seattle statues created by James Wehn. (Top) Bust installed in Pioneer Square. (Photo courtesy of Brian Glanz)



Figure 43. Full size statue installed in Tillikum Place, near the Space Needle. (Photo courtesy of City of Seattle, Department of Arts and Culture)

famously reproduced over the years,¹³⁵ and he is especially remembered for discouraging his people from participating in the post-treaty uprising and attack on the settlement by Indians unhappy with the treaty's terms.

As a symbol, Chief Seattle is useful for signaling the primacy of the territory's Indian occupancy but also its end. Unlike other prominent Native leaders from other parts of the nation – leaders like Sitting Bull or Geronimo, who have come to symbolize a Native resistance that was conquered, that is, quelled by force – Chief Seattle, as the ultimate noble savage, has come to represent a more civilized, peaceful transfer of ownership. In this way, the image of Chief Seattle has often been mobilized to provide a sense of legitimacy to the “change of worlds” that transpired.¹³⁶ Erected just as the city was preparing for the AYPE and its entrée to the world stage, this bust in Pioneer Square is the creation of a settler community eager to symbolize at once the city's Indian past and the originating moment of its own legitimacy: the moment when Native people – essentialized in the image of an official Native spokesman¹³⁷ – transferred power to the new regime of civilization. In this sense, the Chief Seattle bust is less an object of Native heritage than a commemorative ornament celebrating Seattle's settler society.

Pioneer Place's famous totem pole is another visible reminder of Seattle's Native heritage. The present-day pole is a recreation of the original, known as the Chief-of-All-Women pole. It

¹³⁵ For a discussion of the speech's origins and uses see: Furtwangler, Albert, *Answering Chief Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Kaiser, Rudolph, “Chief Seattle's Speech[es]: American Origins and European Reception,” in *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*, ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

¹³⁶ “Change of worlds” was a phrase that came from a later addition to Si'ahl's speech, an invention that first appeared in local historian Roberta Frye's 1931 book, *Four Wagons West*, but it also appears in a reprinting of the speech by Clarence Bagley that same year. Since then, the phrase has become a ubiquitous description of Seattle's “transition” from Native to settler place, showing up in books, museum displays and articles about Seattle's early history. See Krupat, “Chief Seattle's Speech Revisited,” note 8.

¹³⁷ See Crisca Bierwert, “Remembering Chief Seattle,” *American Indian Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 280-305.



Figure 44. Tlingit Totem Pole installed in Pioneer Square, ca. 1915. It was destroyed by an arsonist in 1938 and replaced in 1940 with an exact replica carved by the descendants of the carvers who created the original pole. (Photo from *Picturesque Seattle and Puget Sound*, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1915)

was carved to commemorate the life of a Tlingit noblewoman who died sometime near the close of the eighteenth century. The pole housed her cremated remains in a niche near its top, and was erected in her family's village some time in the late 1700s. Prominent Seattle citizens on a Chamber of Commerce excursion in 1899, liking the look of it, took it from Tongass Island, Alaska and discarded the woman's remains.¹³⁸ The Tlingit people to whom it belonged filed charges against the thieves, and although a court heard their grievances, the thieves' punishment amounted to a \$500 fine and the right to keep the pole, which was donated to the city of Seattle and erected in Pioneer Place in 1899 as a memento of the Alaska Gold Rush.¹³⁹

The tall multiple-figure funerary poles like the Chief-of-All-Women pole were not traditionally used by Native people in the Puget Sound region. They were originally only used by the Haida, Tsimshian and Tlingit people in what is now Southwest Alaska and British Columbia. Poles would traditionally be raised during a potlatch, and so when the potlatch was made illegal in Canada in the mid-1800s fewer new poles were created and erected. When a burgeoning tourist industry began bringing visitors to the Northwest Coast on steamships in the late 1800s poles that were still standing in Indian villages became a popular draw and Native carvers began making small model poles for sale as souvenirs. The popularity of totem poles grew, and many poles were taken and sold to collectors and museums. Tlingit and Haida poles were acquired for display at the Centennial Exposition in 1876, for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and for the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904, and they became a symbol of all Northwest Coast

¹³⁸ Thrush, "Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place," 113.

¹³⁹ National Register of Historic Places; "Pioneer Building, Pergola and Totem Pole; Seattle; King County; Washington; National Register" #77001340.

Indians.¹⁴⁰ The image of the totem pole, then, essentializes the diverse societies of the Northwest coast – the multitude of tribes and even tribal clans – into a single, portable image. Furthermore, the theft of the pole and its removal to a context in which it didn't belong exemplifies the processes of cultural imperialism that were prevalent during the turn of the century.

The theft of the Chief-of-All-Women pole was not a lone occurrence of expropriation, but was part of a larger trend. The men who collected the pole from Tongass Island justified their taking by explaining that they thought the village was abandoned. In this light, one can connect the theft to a widespread anthropological interest in collecting and preserving the material remains of Indian societies during the late 19th century. Arizona's Casa Grande ruin became the nation's first national monument in 1889, indicating a national desire to preserve the land's Indian remains and ruins, and to incorporate this ancient history into the nation's own past. Artifact-hunters began collecting artifacts and human remains throughout the area to sell to museums. This wide-scale looting of Indian sites in the Southwest led to the creation of the 1906 Antiquities Act, which provided protection for these archaeological resources – at least, those located on federal lands.

The collection of Indian artifacts was seen as a way to preserve the material remains of a vanishing people that belonged to the nation's past. Likewise, the Chief-of-All-Women pole was removed from its perceived ruin, where it would only see decay, and given a new life and a new story. "I am the only civilized totem pole on earth," wrote a Seattle citizen-poet in 1899, "and civilization suits me well... I sunder all the ties / That bound me to the ancient creed which holds

¹⁴⁰ Robin K. Wright, "Totem Poles: Heraldic Columns of the Northwest Coast," University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections: American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/wright.html> (accessed June, 2012).

my people flat, / And I will be a Totem pole / That knows where it is at.”¹⁴¹ Other cities soon participated in the trend, and in the early 20th century totem poles were also erected as civic ornaments in Victoria, Vancouver, Sitka and Juneau, mobilized as part of a discourse on conquest and appropriation.¹⁴²

The Chief Seattle Fountain and the Pioneer Square Totem Pole, the neighborhood’s visible signs of “Native heritage,” do not, in fact, provide a direct link to the history of the Native people who occupied the land that became Seattle, nor to the Indians who have called it home in the more recent past. These preserved objects instead more aptly represent the settler society’s celebration of its ascendancy over the territory’s Indian past. Although it is not mentioned in the Visitor Bureau’s brochure, there is another Indian object in Pioneer Square, one that speaks to the more recent and contemporary presence of Native people in the city. Edgar Hachivi Heap of Birds’

installation *Day/Night* consists of two



Figure 45. Bust of Chief Seattle, with Edgar Hachivi Heap of Birds's installation. (Photograph by author, 2013)

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Thrush, “Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place,” 114.

¹⁴² For more on the intercultural meanings of totem poles, see Aldona Jonaitis, *The Totem Pole: An Intercultural History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).



Figure 47. Edgar Hachivi Heap of Birds's installation in Pioneer Square. Each panel's English phrase is also written in Lushootseed on the reverse side. (Photograph by author, 2012)



Figure 46. “Day/Night” by Edgar Hachivi Heap of Birds. (Photograph by author, 2012)

vertical panels that are situated to visually bookend the bust of Chief Seattle when looking at it from the front. From that angle, the signs display symbols – crosses, dollar signs and abstract green shapes – that surround words written in the phonetic alphabet of Lushootseed, which was Chief Seattle’s native language. When one walks around to view the other side of the panels the translation of the Lushootseed is revealed: “Far away brothers and sisters we still remember you,” reads one, and the other, “Chief Seattle now the streets are our home.” Heap of Birds has remarked in reference to the installation, “In the city of Seattle there are countless references to our indigenous people...but we do not find institutionalized evidence of the living indigenous people.”¹⁴³ The installation, then, is intended to draw attention to the city’s Indian population – urban Indians and homeless Indians – both past and present.

Seattle, indeed, is and has been home to a large number of Indians from all over the state and country, not just from the Puget Sound area. In what became the Pioneer Square Historic District, in particular – the old Skid Road area – there were a preponderance of single-resident occupancy (SRO) hotels housing Native people, as well as many Indian bars, known as “bow and arrow joints,” to serve the population of urban Indians. After the area was designated a historic district, the process of post-designation gentrification shut down a large number of the SRO hotels and bow and arrow joints began closing one by one. As gentrification began to “clean up” the neighborhood, the district’s remaining homeless population were increasingly Indian.

Heap of Birds’s installation *Day/Night* seems to reference the homeless Indians of the recent past, but by invoking the memory of Chief Seattle in the panel the installation also references the

¹⁴³ Quoted in Thrush, “Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place,” 174.

dispossession enacted by the treaties – the original dispossession that catalyzed the transformation of the land into urban place – and makes an important connection between the historic activities of dispossession and the contemporary state of urban Indians. Furthermore, the “we” that remembers seems to be the voice of a Native collectivity, distinguished from a settler collectivity that refuses to remember, or chooses to forget.

Day/Night provides Pioneer Square with a lone voice of protest against both the original dispossession of the Native, as well as the historic and ongoing processes of displacement. Dispossession and displacement, it is important to note, are two separate enactments. Nicholas Blomley, in his analysis of urban property in the settler-city, points out that, while dispossession is complete, displacement is not.

Physically, symbolically, and politically, the city is often still a native place. In this, I make a distinction between dispossession and displacement, such that the former refers to the specific processes through which settlers came to acquire title to land historically held by aboriginal people. Displacement, while related, refers to the conceptual removal of aboriginal people from the city, and the concomitant emplacement of white settlers.¹⁴⁴

In other words, while dispossession severs Native ownership of specific spaces, physically separating Native people from the land, Blomley sees displacement as a way of further unraveling and effacing Native cultural ties to and memory about places in order to create settler places. Indeed, the concomitant emplacement is a critical aspect of displacement. Similarly, Patrick Wolfe has used the terminology of “negative” and “positive” dimensions of eliminating the Native.¹⁴⁵ The “negative” dimension would correspond to acts of physical and legal dispossession, while the “positive” dimension would correspond to the conceptual replacement

¹⁴⁴ Nicholas Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 109.

¹⁴⁵ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

of Native place-memory with settler place-memory. One can see this at work in Seattle, since the entire urban structure obscures and replaces any memory of and access to historic Native places.

Blomley goes on to argue that place making, as a social and political project that enacts a particular claim to land, is always partial and incomplete, opening the project of displacement up to contestation and remaking.¹⁴⁶ *Day/Night* is one such act of contestation, “unsettling” the perception of “the city” and “the Indian” as naturally incongruous by calling attention to the presence of Indians throughout the city’s past and into its present. However, the installation stands alone amid the material evidence of a counterclaim that suggests that the “change of worlds” was an inevitable and irrevocable historic fact. Although Native people have called the place home into the 20th century, gentrification transformed Skid Road from a low-income neighborhood where urban Indians could live and work into a tourist destination where the memory of Indian dispossession is at once commemorated (via the totem pole and the Chief Seattle fountain) and obscured by the veneration of the material culture of the settler society. In this way, I would argue that the preservation of the Pioneer Square neighborhood as it has been carried out is complicit with the historic and ongoing process of Native displacement, in that the “place” that has been created by these preservation projects serves to obscure the historic processes of dispossession that allowed for its possibility. Furthermore, the neighborhood’s “Indian” elements memorialize the history of Native people as a kind of past that had no future while simultaneously celebrating settler history as the past that will persist into an endless future.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Re-Placing Indians in Seattle

Despite the overwhelming abundance of place-stories that reaffirm and even naturalize the achievements of Seattle's settler history, and despite the utter devastation of Indian places in the process of making and preserving that history, Indians have been continually establishing places for themselves in the city, especially in the last 30 years. One very important Native place has been Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, which is the home of the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF), an organization that provides social services and aid to urban Indians living throughout the city. The center represents an important moment for Native people in reclaiming a place – both physical and conceptual – in the city of Seattle.

Conceptually, it has been an important symbol for the persistence of Indian people in urban places. Indeed, despite their banishment to reservations throughout the state – away from the locus of urban development – many Native people, past and present, have moved to cities in search of economic and social resources. This trend was particularly pronounced in the 1950s, as the Federal Government began implementing policy that has come to be known as Relocation and Termination. Programs were implemented that encouraged Native people to leave the reservations and move into the cities to find work and education. As reservations were increasingly vacated, the government could conceivably terminate the trust status of these lands and liquidate all tribal assets. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service enacted policies in which only Native people on or around their reservations were under the authority of Tribal Governments and thus could receive health care and other services. In

effect, this meant that once these Indians left the reservation, they were no longer regarded as Indian, ending any treaty obligations to them.¹⁴⁷

As a result of the relocation policies and the lack of opportunities for work and education available on the reservations, Indians began moving into cities like San Francisco, Portland and Seattle in larger numbers. Between 1950 and 1970, Seattle's Indian population escalated from 500 to 4000. However, there was little help in terms of health care or other services from federal, state or county funding, despite the millions of dollars that were available for minorities through War on Poverty programs. Instead, Natives relied mostly on volunteer social services. In Seattle, the American Indian Women's Service League operated a free health care clinic in an old church downtown, and an organization that called itself *Kinatechitapi* operated a Native American employment assistance collective.

Beginning in the late 1970s, Indians in the city began organizing in order to find solutions to urban Indian problems and to lobby for greater government assistance. Out of these initial organizational meetings, Bernie Whitebear emerged as a natural leader. By birth, Whitebear was a member of the Colville Confederated Tribe, and like many others, had left the reservation for the opportunities available in the city. Since 1959, he had been meeting regularly with other Natives in Tacoma, including the leader of the Puyallup Fish-In protests Bob Satiacum, to talk about Indian problems and possible solutions. After Whitebear moved to Seattle in 1961 he began to recognize the political climate as an opportunity for Native people to take a more militant stand in voicing their grievances. "Seattle had the Students of Democratic Society, the

¹⁴⁷ Allen Lossom, "By Right of Discovery: United Indians of All Tribes Retakes Fort Lawton, 1970," *Seattle Civil Rights & Labor Project*, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_takeover.htm (accessed June, 1012).

Black Panthers, United Black Contractors, Vietnam War and United Farm Workers protestors,” he wrote.¹⁴⁸

In 1969, Whitebear participated in the famous Indian takeover of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco. Native protesters took up residence on the island, claiming it “by right of discovery,” ultimately wanting to build a cultural center and Native American university there. The takeover lasted 18 months and captured the attention of the nation, but the Native protesters did not achieve their goal to assume ownership of the land. In 1970, however, Whitebear saw the opportunity to stage a similar takeover of Seattle’s Fort Lawton Army base, which was scheduled for closure. The city of Seattle wanted to purchase the surplus land, so Washington State senators Henry Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson pushed a bill through congress that would allow non-federal entities to obtain surplus federal lands for between 0 and 50% of their fair market value, making the city of Seattle eligible to obtain the former Army post at no cost.

Hoping to benefit from the city’s land acquisition, Kinatचितapi petitioned the city for the use of a portion of the land for an Indian cultural center, but the city’s response was to suggest they take up the issue with the BIA, a useless suggestion since the BIA did not recognize or serve urban Indians. Furthermore, a few weeks later Mayor Wes Uhlman, in a press conference on the Fort Lawton property announced the city’s future acquisition of the property for its exclusive use as a park. To urban Indians, this indicated the intention of the city to ignore their requests and to exclude Indians from the planning process. Whitebear saw this as an opportune moment, and organized an invasion of Fort Lawton in March of 1970.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Ibid.



Figure 48. Bernie Whitebear. (Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)



Figure 49. After being forcibly ejected from the grounds during their "invasion" of Fort Lawton, protesters set up a camp outside the front gate where their protest was even more visible to the public. Image courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections)

Draping blankets over the razor wire, protesters climbed over the Fort's fences and quickly set up teepees and drum circles. The military police on the base, aided by armed troops from Fort Lewis and squads of Seattle police officers removed them, but protesters continued demonstrating outside the gates, where the media's cameras captured their activities. A second invasion was planned, and four days later on March 12th, Indians approached the Fort by water and scaled the large bluffs on the south side, again quickly setting up teepees and building a fire. Again, the invaders were removed, and the protest was moved outside the Fort's front gates. A third invasion was mounted on April 2nd, but enthusiasm and momentum was beginning to wane among the protesters.

The Fort Lawton occupation, unlike the occupation of Alcatraz, was a success in the sense that it garnered the support of the local residents of Seattle and provided a foothold for Indians to enter into negotiations with the city. The United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF) was formed to represent Seattle's urban Indians in the negotiations. It managed to convince BIA commissioner Louis Bruce to place a hold on the Fort Lawton lands, impeding the city from acquiring the land until UIATF was able to make an application to the Department of the Interior for use of part of the property well before the city's application could be submitted. The General Services Administration required the city to come to terms with UIATF and submit a single application before it would finalize the property's transfer, so negotiations began in June of 1971 between UIATF and the City of Seattle and lasted several months. In the end, it was agreed that UIATF would lease twenty acres of the property for a 99-year period, with options for successive 99-year leases. UIATF also negotiated for the City to provide \$600,000 to the American Indian

Women's Service League for a Social Services Center, underwriting the City's only Native American Public Development Authority – the Seattle Indian Services Commission.¹⁴⁹

Once UIATF possessed the land, they quickly put together funding to construct a building on the site, securing \$500,000 from the city of Seattle, a \$250,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration, as well as donations of lumber from the Colville, Quinault, and Makah Tribes. The building's design and name was inspired by the vision of Black Elk, a Lakota spiritual leader, in which a "a daybreak star herb," the "herb of understanding" fell to earth and took root. One stem produced four different colored blossoms (black, white, scarlet, and yellow) pointing in the four cardinal directions that represented the four races of mankind, united "spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally."¹⁵⁰ This sentiment of unity was expressed at the dedication ceremony by a Dakota Sioux medicine man, Chief Eagle Feather: "You have proved that unity exists here today. You have showed the Indian way of honoring the black, the red, the yellow, and the white races as brothers and sisters."¹⁵¹ Chief Eagle Feather's presence at its dedication, and his emphasis on unity, underscored the new building as a symbolic expression of hope for both intertribal unity and racial harmony.

Daybreak Star is the result of a physical reclamation of Indian space in the city. The organized endeavor to claim the Fort Lawton lands for Native people was driven by urban Indians' desire to protest their erasure and marginalization, to re-assert the fact of their presence in the city, and to insist on having their rightful voice in the political processes of the city – and ultimately of the nation. Senator Jackson's suggestion that the Indians put their request to the

¹⁴⁹ Bernie Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton: Meeting the Needs of Seattle's Native American Community Through Conversion," *Race, Poverty & the Environment*. Spring-Summer, (1994): 3-6.

¹⁵⁰ Lossom, "By Right of Discovery: United Indians of All Tribes Retakes Fort Lawton, 1970."

¹⁵¹ Brenda Dunn, "The Indian Arts Center That Nobody Thought Would Happen," *Seattle Weekly*, May 18, 1977.

BIA was perceived as a brush-off, according to Whitebear. “We felt he had channeled us into oblivion,” he remarked, “and that touched off the demonstrations.”¹⁵² Urban Indians were ready to protest their invisibility and assert their presence.

Coll Thrush has argued that popular and historical representations of Native people have served to perpetuate a notion that “Indians and cities are mutually exclusive.” This theme, he argues, is deeply embedded in the way we think about Indians and cities: the disappearance of Indians was the inevitable result of American progress, and cities “are the ultimate avatars of that progress, representing the pinnacle of American technology, commerce, and cultural sophistication.”¹⁵³ The protesters prepared a statement that addressed this divide between Indians and modern, urban life. Bob Satiacum read aloud this proclamation as the MPs were dragging away Indians during the first invasion.

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Fort Lawton in the name of all American Indians by the right of discovery. We feel this land of Fort Lawton is more suitable to pursue an Indian way of life, as determined by our own standards. By this we mean “this place does not resemble most Indian reservations.” It has potential for modern facilities, adequate sanitation facilities, fresh running water, educational facilities, fisheries research facilities and transportation.¹⁵⁴

By referring to the government’s history of broken treaties and the mistreatment of Indians, the proclamation was a call to settler society to make reparations, to right its past wrongs – from stolen lands and forced relocation to forced assimilation. It was also a declaration that Indians would henceforth define their own identity and determine their own future. The invasion asserted

¹⁵² Shelby Scates, “Whitebear Leads Indians to Victory in Ft. Lawton Battle,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 5 December, 1971.

¹⁵³ Thrush, “Native Seattle: Histories From the Crossing-Over Place,” xiv-xxv.

¹⁵⁴ Excerpt of statement by Bob Satiacum as quoted in Jeffrey C. Sanders, “The Battle for Fort Lawton: Competing Environmental Claims in Postwar Seattle,” *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (May 2008): 203-235.

that Indians in Seattle were not absent, and the declared desire for “modern facilities” asserted that Indians and urban modernity were not incompatible.

The protesters knew, though, that they would need to garner the public support of Seattle’s citizenry. One impediment to this was the public perception that Indians would “run down the land,” in the words of Whitebear,¹⁵⁵ or that Indians wouldn’t “use the land properly,” a sentiment that particularly outraged Bob Satiacum. In an interview published days before the demonstrators dismantled their “village” outside the fort’s main gate, Satiacum responded to this allegation by saying: “We don’t think we have to destroy the earth to prove or ‘improve’ its value. It would take a pretty insensitive human being to ignore today’s evidence that our environment is being made deadly to all of us.”¹⁵⁶ He claimed that the Indians’ first priority would be to set up an environmental preserve, and that this would “help teach whites how to stop destroying the earth.” Many Seattle citizens shared this ecological concern, and there were several organizations that had been lobbying since the early 1960s to acquire the fort as an open park space, including the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. These efforts were part of a growing national concern about the preservation of natural spaces within urban areas, and coincided with the endeavors to end urban blight that prompted the urban renewal programs of the 1960s.¹⁵⁷ Words like “beauty,” and “open space,” became part of the vocabulary wielded in opposition to the “blight,” of the deteriorating urban space that was increasingly linked to poverty and other social problems.

If Fort Lawton’s natural beauty was in danger from the encroaching cityscape, the Indians stressed their own unique abilities to care for the environment as points in their favor. Indeed,

¹⁵⁵ “Equality in Seattle is Indians Message,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 12, 1970.

¹⁵⁶ Frank Herbert, “How Indians Would Use Ft. Lawton,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 22 1970.

¹⁵⁷ Sanders, “The Battle for Fort Lawton: Competing Environmental Claims in Postwar Seattle,” 203-235.

Satiacum insisted that such ecological knowledge was a part of traditional Indian culture, and implicated the poor treatment of Indians as a specific danger to Native survival and environmental sustainability. “We must recapture that lore before it dies with the last few who hold it in trust. This excess federal land which was once ours – and is morally ours now – would make the ideal place to begin that restoration.... We want to pass that along – not to just our own descendants, but to whites, too.”¹⁵⁸ By “returning” all or even a part of Fort Lawton’s land, the settler-city would be righting two wrongs at once: the wrong done to Indian people, and the wrong done to the Earth, and in the process settler-society would be “given” the knowledge they needed to forestall their own oblivion. The implication was that whites could only ignore this opportunity at their own peril. They could not afford to destroy both the natural environment and the Indians’ secret to averting this disaster.

Whitebear credited the support of the Seattle citizens with UIATF’s victory in the Fort Lawton struggle. Their support was garnered in part through this rhetoric of rectification – both political and environmental. However, although Whitebear and others argued for the inclusion of Indian people in urban modern life, they drew on popular stereotypes of Indians as environmentalists that were beginning to proliferate in the 1960s. This perception of Indians as ecological saviors is based on the persistent dichotomy between “savagism” and “civilization.” The prevailing understanding for much of America’s history was that Indian societies, having been somehow stunted in their “progress,” are more primitive, and therefore closer to nature.¹⁵⁹ The assumption that they will have a special connection to the natural world and a proprietary

¹⁵⁸ Herbert, “How Indians Would Use Ft. Lawton.”

¹⁵⁹ Pearce, “Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind.”

knowledge about caring for it is an extension of this belief.¹⁶⁰ So even while Native people challenged their own invisibility within the city, they did so by perpetuating an image of their own innate incompatibility with urban life. However, the strategy served the cause at Ft. Lawton, since it coincided with the overwhelming public desire to preserve the space as natural parkland. By drawing on these environmental concerns, UIATF made their cause more appealing (less threatening) to the public, and their ultimate success allowed Indians to gain some measure of political influence. They were also able to construct a highly visible symbol of Indian persistence in the form of Daybreak Star Cultural Center at the heart of one of the nation's largest urban areas, thereby transforming a parcel of settler space into an Indian place. One might argue that whatever harm there was in this strategy was worth the prize.

What About the Duwamish?

The success of the Ft. Lawton takeover overshadowed another problem. While the protesters emphasized their ecological superiority, they also emphasized their moral right to the land. According to UAITF's Proclamation, "We the native Americans, *re-claim* the land known as Ft. Lawton in the name of *all American Indians...*"¹⁶¹ (italics mine). This language speaks to a growing sense of unity among Indians from all over the nation that were coming together in these urban areas. Indeed, one unexpected result of the relocation policies of the 1950s was to help Native people begin to identify themselves as part of a common racial group along with

¹⁶⁰ See Robert Jr. Berkhofer, "The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian From Columbus to the Present," 76. "If what was natural was good, then what was civilized was artificial, hence decadent and certainly bad...In fact, primitive peoples probably apprehended the laws of nature more clearly than civilized man since they were less corrupted by the practices and prejudices of civilization and more creatures of instincts considered natural."

¹⁶¹ This proclamation was printed in *Helix*, an underground newspaper published in Seattle between 1967 and 1970. From the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, "By Right of Discovery: United Indians of All Tribes Retakes Fort Lawton, 1970," http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_takeover.htm (accessed June, 2012).

members of other tribes. Harmon points out, “The programs aimed to end Indians’ peculiar status and rode a wave of rhetoric about common humanity, yet most Indians emerged from the termination era with a heightened sense that they were different from other Americans. Termination policy reflected nationwide pressure for cultural and political conformity, yet it confirmed Indians’ abnormality.”¹⁶²

As Native people from diverse tribes began to see themselves as part of a collective Indian community, they also began to adapt the strategies of civil disobedience utilized by other racial communities, especially African Americans. Their goal was to increase the visibility of Indian struggles and to achieve greater influence over social institutions. This surge of pan-Indian identity was crucial to the Native American protests and demonstrations that fueled what became known as the Red Power movement of the 1960s and 70s, including the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz by a group of Native people calling themselves, “Indians of All Tribes” (which is distinct from Whitebear’s “United Indians of All Tribes”). This sense of racial unity was useful for the purpose of uniting Indians under one banner and motivating them towards activism and protest. However, the perception of “Indian” as a unified racial minority obscured the specific issues raised by local Indian struggles. For instance, while Natives and settlers alike have celebrated the success of the Ft. Lawton invasion for contributing to the establishment of the Daybreak Star Indian Center, this one great success overshadowed the absence of an Indian place for the people who originally lived on and claimed the space as their home: the Duwamish.

¹⁶² Harmon, “Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound,” 213. By “termination era” Harmon is referring to the Federal policies of the 1950s and 60s whereby the Federal government rescinded its recognition of many tribes and dis-established their reservations. The Indian Relocation Act soon followed in an attempt to draw Native people away from still-existing reservations into urban areas where they would assimilate into mainstream settler society. Both policies are widely understood as an attempt by the Federal government to weaken and ultimately dissolve Indian tribes as political entities and thereby to sever the government’s financial and territorial responsibilities towards them.

Ft. Lawton is situated on part of the lands that were ceded to the United States in the 1856 Treaty of Point Elliot. Although the treaty promised a reservation to the Duwamish Indians, this promise was never fulfilled. In 1866, Superintendent of Indian Affairs proposed a reservation on the Black River, south of downtown Seattle in territory that is now part of the cities of Renton and Tukwila. However, King County settlers discovered that the land contained a valuable tract of coal, and united to resist the reservation. They sent a petition to Arthur Denny, who was the Territorial Delegate to Congress at the time, urging him to resist the creation of a Duwamish reservation in the county. “Such a Reservation would do great injustice to this section of country, and is uncalled for, and of little value to the Indians,” they argued, going on to call the proposal “unjust” and “unnecessary,” on the basis that the remnant of the Duwamish numbered only 16 families. Furthermore, they argued, these Indians’ “interests and wants have always been justly and kindly protected by the settlers of the Black River country,” and a reservation would be an “injury” to the “quiet and flourishing settlements upon the Black and Duwamish rivers, -- as being unnecessary to the aborigines and injurious to your constituents of King County.”¹⁶³ The petition was signed by approximately 156 settlers – nearly all of the King County residents at that time. Denny sent it on to the BIA, and shortly after the proposed reservation was withdrawn from consideration.

With no reservation to call home, and being no longer welcome in their former places, the Duwamish had only a few choices. Some moved onto the Port Madison, the Tulalip or the Muckleshoot reservations, although these reservations incorporated Indians that the Duwamish considered enemies. Some, however, chose to remain in or near their traditional places, and

¹⁶³ David Wilma, “Seattle Pioneers Petition Against a Reservation on the Black River for the Duwamish Tribe in 1866,” *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=2955 (accessed June, 2012).

many Duwamish settled for a time near the Black River. They petitioned for a reservation again in 1916, but were unsuccessful, and after the Lake Washington Ship Canal drained the Black River, eliminating the salmon runs that had been their subsistence, people living in the last Duwamish village dispersed to other places around the city.¹⁶⁴

Despite the geographic dispersal of the Duwamish peoples they remained organized, and by 1925 they adopted a constitution and a governmental structure. They also took part in land claims cases with neighboring tribes against the federal government in the 1930s and 50s. In 1977, wanting to participate in treaty fishing rights that were upheld by the 1974 Boldt Decision, the Duwamish petitioned the federal government for recognition, and in 2014 are still fighting, despite the many obstacles in the process.¹⁶⁵ Tribal chairwoman, Cecile Hansen believes that the opposition of neighboring tribes such as the Muckleshoot and the Tulalip poses a serious impediment. She believes these tribes fear that if the Duwamish are federally recognized they will finally be able to put land into a trust and build a casino in the city of Seattle, potentially draining revenues from other Indian casinos in the area.¹⁶⁶ Also at stake are the fishing rights granted in the Boldt Decision that are currently unavailable to Duwamish tribal members. Instead, members of the Muckleshoot Tribe retained the rights to fish in Duwamish territories, rights that the Duwamish would no doubt sue to gain fishing rights in these areas.

¹⁶⁴ Lia Steakley Dicker, "The Tribe That Would Not Die," *Seattle Met*, February 2009.

¹⁶⁵ For more on the course of the Duwamish Federal recognition process, see Chapter One in the subsection, "Remembering Alki in Our Time."

¹⁶⁶ Paul Shukovsky, "Duwamish Tribe Sues to Reverse 'Extinct' Status," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 7, 2008., Rob Hotakainen, "Duwamish Say Tribal Rivalry Hinders Bid for Recognition," *Seattle Times*, July 7, 2012.

Strangely enough, while neighboring tribal entities resist Duwamish efforts to gain federal recognition, Seattle's local citizens and businesses provided the necessary help and support to aid the tribe in bringing another longstanding dream to fruition: the construction of a longhouse near the banks of the Duwamish River, across the street from Terminal 107 Park and an ancient Duwamish village that is now on the National Register of Historic Places as an archaeological site. This is also the vicinity of Herring's House, the last of the old Duwamish villages that was burnt by settlers in 1893 to drive the Indians off the land. Unlike Daybreak Star Cultural Center, the endeavor required no invasion, no demonstrations, and no attention-grabbing protests to garner support. However, the project took 30 years to complete from the time of its conception. Like Daybreak Star, the Longhouse now serves as a cultural resource center where tribal



Figure 50. Construction of the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center, located in West Seattle, was completed in 2008. (Photo courtesy of Joe Mabel)

members can learn about Duwamish history, culture and crafts, and provides space for meetings, Native art display and concerts. It is an important place for preserving Duwamish culture, for fostering Duwamish identity, and for promoting Duwamish visibility.

The media represented the Longhouse as a victory for both Natives *and* settlers, both for what it symbolized and what it could provide. A contemporary news article on the Longhouse's opening reported: "Supporters, both Duwamish and others, said the center did not belong just to the tribe. 'This place is for the City of Seattle, for our children and (Duwamish) children,' said Arlene Wade, a fundraiser with Friends of the Duwamish. 'They can learn about our shared history.'"¹⁶⁷ This echoes sentiments shared regarding the opening of the Daybreak Star Cultural Center in 1977: "The Daybreak Center represented beauty and understanding for all races... It should not surprise us if one day Seattle fulfills the Indian prophecy that predicts a revival of Indian culture that will protect the earth from continued human abuse." Such remarks reveal a perception that Native culture has a fundamental "usefulness" to settler society, and that Indian cultural centers are valuable for what special knowledge they "share" with settlers.

The success of the Longhouse project, supported as it was by many area individuals, businesses and foundations, has been represented in the media as a symbol of reconciliation. "The longhouse seems to represent the closing of a circle broken generations ago when the Duwamish signed the Point Elliott Treaty in 1855, giving up 54,000 acres -- most of its land and the area that largely constitutes modern-day Seattle -- to Washington's territorial government. Other tribes received reservations through their treaties with the government, but the promised reservation land to the Duwamish was never fulfilled," writes Seattle Post-Intelligencer reporter

¹⁶⁷ John Iwasaki, "Ceremony Marks Opening of New Duwamish Longhouse," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, January 3, 2009.

John Iwasaki, indicating that the Longhouse might somehow be the equivalent of – or at least the next best thing to – federal recognition and reservation lands. Amy Johnson, speaking on behalf of the Descendants’ Committee, which was very active in helping the Duwamish Tribe raise funds and file paperwork for the project, remarked at the Longhouse’s opening, “The circle has come back together, and now it’s time for the people of Seattle to reconnect with the first people of Seattle.”¹⁶⁸

With the erection of the Duwamish Longhouse, an effort that succeeded through the support of settlers, the past injustices of dispossession and displacement were made to seem null and void, making the beginning of a new era of Native-settler “connection” possible. The opening of the Longhouse, then, was regarded as a victory for the Duwamish, won through the goodwill of the city’s citizens, and providing an opportunity for reconciliation between Indians and settlers. Like UIATF’s victory at Ft. Lawton, the support of Seattle’s citizens helped make the Longhouse a possibility. In order to gather public support, these projects were presented as symbols of reconciliation between Indians and settlers. UIATF and the Duwamish both had to negotiate the expectation that, in exchange for allowing Native people to create Indian places in Seattle, these resulting places – which would make it possible to preserve Native culture – would also serve the needs of the settler society to feel it had atoned for past wrongs ?.

Conclusion

Although Seattle was once Indian territory, the history that is preserved in its built environment primarily represents the accomplishments of its white settlers. The historical layers of Native occupation and use are obscured and literally and physically covered over by the signs

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

and material edifices of white occupation. The memory of those people who for thousands of years called this space home have been largely erased from the landscape. The land itself is often perceived as the blank slate upon which layers of white, urban settlement grew into one of the nation's major metropolitan areas. The commemoration of Native people functions as historical ornamentation in places like Pioneer Square, and in artifacts like the Chief Seattle statue and the Chief-of-All-Women pole. These items, which exist in their present context without adequate interpretation, are largely silent about the processes that drove the Indians "out of place" on their own lands. Properly interpreted, however, these articles could speak volumes.

While recent years have seen an increased interest in revitalizing Native language and traditions, revitalizing Native culture and communities will also require the revitalization of historic Native places. This should not be limited to the contemporary places that Native people use such as reservations, or to the ancient places of memory recorded by archaeologists and ethnographers. More recent places of encounter and of dispossession need to be preserved and interpreted as well. Furthermore, the perception of what constitutes Native place can and should include the traditional gathering places that co-existed with the early city for a time and that disappeared as Indians were displaced. For instance, plaques could be erected to indicate the places and dates of Native dispossession, such as the former site of Ballast Island where a multitude of homeless Indians took refuge in 1893 when Herring's House was burned out. Additionally, there is no plaque to indicate the former site of the Herring's House village. The area has been turned into a public park, and a sign there indicates that it used to be an important place for the Duwamish, but neglects to mention the violent historic events that drove them away. Until these places and their stories are identified and incorporated into the city's collection of

heritage sites, the story of Seattle's origins will be partial and incomplete. Meanwhile, these historic sites of Native use and dispossession remain glaring omissions in Seattle's place-story.

As Native people struggle to revitalize language, traditions, and even place-stories that have been violently damaged by the activities of settler oppression and repression, the old places are not forgotten, but they are often built over with shopping malls and parking garages. As settler-society goes about preserving its own heritage, it erects and reinforces the material culture of settler places, while obliterating the memory of the Native places upon which the city was built. Even those places that have been re-claimed by Native people, niches carved out of settler space, have been earned with some price to Native autonomy.

While settler society has grown increasingly open and supportive of incorporating Native people into the fabric of American urban life, there is still a large, dark void in Seattle's place-story where injustices to Native people occurred. Even when the general notion of past injustice is recognized, the specifics of the historic events and the connection to their lingering effects remain unacknowledged. Settlers must begin to incorporate the specific histories of dispossession and displacement into their urban place-stories if they truly desire to create a meaningful change in Native-settler relations. Also, it is vital for Native people to continue to find ways to create new Indian places within the urban environment, like Daybreak Star or the Duwamish Longhouse. It is equally important for Native people to find ways to promote the memory of traditional Indian places around the city, to commemorate the vast Indian landscape that is still remembered by the city's displaced Native people, and to revitalize the memory of Seattle's Indian past for the future.

CONCLUSION

History & Memory in the Colonial Present

We are...inclined to gloss over the terrible violence of colonialism. We forget the exactions, suppressions, and complicities that colonialism forced upon the peoples it subjugated, and the way in which it withdrew from them the right to make their own history, ensuring that they did so emphatically not under conditions of their own choosing. These erasures are not only delusions; they are also dangers. We forget that it is often ordinary people who do such awful, extraordinary things, and so foreclose the possibility that in similar circumstances most of us would, in all likelihood, have done much the same. To acknowledge this is not to protect our predecessors from criticism: it is to recall the part we are called to play – and continue to play – in the performance of the colonial present.¹⁶⁹

Throughout the city, particular monuments, museums, public art and material culture collectively tell the story of Seattle's birth and growth. While these communal representations of the past are capable of communicating more than a single, authoritative meaning, their primary relation to the city's settler story help to shape a sense of shared, collective memory about Seattle's beginnings. This thesis has been an attempt to unravel the meanings that these representations communicate. More specifically, this thesis has been an attempt to unravel these representations' meanings from a Native perspective.¹⁷⁰ Despite the changes and revisions to the story that have been made over the years to accommodate and incorporate Native history, they continue to undermine Native struggles for sovereignty and autonomy.

Narrative, Memory, Identity and Power

This thesis begins with an examination of the dominant narrative of Seattle's "birth" and growth, because narrative is an important link between memory and its representations. Memory,

¹⁶⁹Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan. Palestine. Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 9-10.

¹⁷⁰ This is not to assume that there is such a thing as uniformity to "Native perspective." Indeed, although I use "Native" to refer to a broad category (that is differentiated against "settlers") it is not intended to ignore the potential for a myriad of more specific and varied "Native perspectives."

particularly communal memory, touches on issues of identity and nationalism, while representations of collective memory are expressions of power and authority.¹⁷¹ Collective memory's influence over identity can help to explain why memory is such an important aspect of creating a sense of group membership. "Shared interpretations of the past help to construct narratives of inclusion and exclusion that are rendered specific and differentiated."¹⁷² In this way, memory is an important component in the construction of "imagined communities." Furthermore, narratives – particularly those that are constructed by collective memory – express what a community "imagines" itself to be, how it explains itself, its importance, its members and its "others." Representations of collective memory are also expressions of power, since they have the ability to help define group identity, which in turn influences group membership and behavior.

Narrative, then, because it connects memory to its representations, is also an important component of colonial domination. "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them."¹⁷³ As we have seen, historic narratives about settler place have served to justify and naturalize settler ownership of the place that became Seattle, obscuring thousands of years of Native occupation and history. For instance, when the Denny Party landed at Alki, the commemorated narrative told us, there was not much there but a single unfinished cabin, wilderness, and rain. It was an exemplary expression of *terra nullius*. Later, as Native people fought to change these kinds of narratives that implied that Native land was empty and

¹⁷¹ Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place," 176.

¹⁷² Brian Graham and Peter Howard, "Heritage and Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2008): 18.

¹⁷³ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994): xiii.

free for the taking, the story changed. Instead of *terra nullius*, the settler community now remembers that “Seattle is Indian country,” or at least it *used to be*, until Chief Seattle graciously ceded Indian claim to the land and bestowed upon the deserving settlers of Washington Territory the right to make a city. This revised narrative was performed during the 2001 sesquicentennial commemoration, when Cecile Hansen, Si‘ahl’s great-grandniece, stood on the beach at Alki to symbolically represent Chief Seattle’s welcome of the Denny Party and approbation for their endeavors. The meaning of Alki Point, then, was altered. Where it once was remembered as the empty place where settlers began building a great city, it became, through narrative revisions, the place where Indians welcomed the settlers and cooperated in building the city by passing the baton to settler society. Either rendition, however, performs the end of Native ownership of the place that became Seattle.

Historical Revision, Imagined Communities and Native Sovereignty

Attempts to write Native people “back into” the history of Seattle serve as a kind of olive branch to Native people, and as a way to include the previously marginalized group. While it may have appeared to be a successful moment of Native-settler reconciliation – after all, the ceremony included the participation of Native people – the revision did not provide a challenge to the “rightness” of settler society because, despite the Native presence, it did not provide a version of the story from a Native perspective. In both renditions, in fact, settler society is represented as the naturalized outcome of history. Of course, commemorative ceremonies rarely acknowledge the more complicated aspects of the past, such as competing or opposing perspectives among social groups. Rather, they generally communicate memory that is useful for

unity and social cohesion.¹⁷⁴ Commemoration, as an expression of “imagined community,” assumes not only a shared past, but a shared *perspective* on the past and participation in a particular social order. This makes representing Natives in settler commemoration difficult, complicated and potentially contentious.

While Native communities often do have to draw from the resources of the settler state that has colonized them, participating in civil society and functioning as American citizens, they are also citizens of indigenous political groups.¹⁷⁵ The sovereignty of Native tribes is the basis for their right to determine their own social, cultural and economic futures. As Natives are increasingly incorporated into settler narratives, histories of Native resistance, even instances of contemporary resistance, are overwritten by or absorbed into narratives of multicultural harmony. Furthermore, the power that Native people are allowed to exert over their own lives and territories by the settler society to which they are still spatially, economically and often politically subjugated, is often subsequently diminished or compromised.

It is clear that historical representations of Native people have changed over time. These changes have been the product of social demands within American society for greater tolerance for difference and an end to racial discrimination at the social, cultural and political levels. These changes have had some important effects for Native people, creating opportunities for Native people to participate in and alter social and political institutions in ways that are beneficial for them. One problematic result of this change is that Indians, previously “othered,” by settler societies’ historical narratives, are now often included. This inclusion, as we have seen,

¹⁷⁴ See Connerton, “How Societies Remember”. Gillis, “Introduction: Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship.”

¹⁷⁵ Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

frequently comes at a cost. As multiculturalism has replaced assimilation, Native people are increasingly seen as one of America's many ethnic minority groups.

Progress and the “Change of Worlds”

Part of the problem is that progress, the thematic framework of the city's narrative – indeed, the framework for justifying the national colonial narrative – is also the rationale for revising these historic narratives. For instance, as the city was commemorating and celebrating the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exhibition, itself a display of American progress, the Burke Museum's critical response to that celebration attempted to uncover the racist aspects of AYP and its role in producing colonial domination. In the process, the exhibit itself was embedded in a framework of progress, demonstrating the changes between *then* and *now* as a vast distance and emphasizing the marked improvements that museum practice and American society have made in the intervening years, the primary improvement being the inclusion of the Native perspective into the historical narrative.

Progress is also an important element of the dominant narrative of the city. Crafted around its special moment of beginning – that pivotal moment when the Denny Party came ashore at Alki, when there was little but wilderness, rain and a half-built cabin, the story describes the ensuing years of hardship and endurance through which the settlers brought the city into being. It is a story of progress. The often-emphasized beginning at Alki Point serves as a temporal rupture between the Native era and the settler era. The naturalness of this rupture is even associated, through repetition, with its own sound bite in the phrase “change of worlds.”¹⁷⁶ Through this

¹⁷⁶ This phrase is an often-cited reference to phrase added to the end of a popular rendition of Chief Seattle's famous speech, likely by Roberta Frye Watt. See Arnold Krupat, “Chief Seattle's Speech Revisited,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2011): 192-214.

narrative, the invasion of American settlers in the mid-19th century and the displacement of Natives with settlers has largely been represented as an inevitable outcome of history. Furthermore, the story often conveys the idea that progress has been the driving force behind Seattle's change and development, ever propelling and propelled by its people into a better future. In this way, Seattle's dominant narrative communicates that the "Indian past" is a past that has ended. More specifically, it is a past that was brought to an end by progress. Progress now demands that Natives, along with other minority groups, be re-written into that past. However, they are often re-written as co-participants in the shared work of city-building, and by extension, nation-building.

Place, Preservation and Imagined Geographies

Seattle's story has been re-enacted in commemorative celebrations again and again, giving the story the weight of communal mythology. It has been told in the city's museums in various ways, giving it the credibility of objective truth. The connection between memory and place, and its importance for creating "imagined geographies" of the settler state, can be seen in the way history is literally and figuratively written in monuments and plaques that have been placed and preserved around the city, not to mention street names, park names, building names, and the names of various neighborhoods.

The foundational connection between memory, place and politics is exemplified in the struggle to save the city's Pioneer Square district from the destruction of urban renewal in the 1960s. Bill Speidel's "Underground Tour" brought to light the historic memory that was under threat by the wrecking ball. By publicizing the stories about Seattle's past in which the public discerned a special meaning about the city, he mobilized a significant protest against the city's

plans for the neighborhood's redevelopment. The result was the creation of Pioneer Square Historic District, one of the first nationally designated historic districts under the relatively new Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Attempts to find ways of interpreting the district's history, however, resulted in debates about whose heritage would define Pioneer Square...and, by extension, whose would not. Native history was not a part of that debate. Today, Native society is represented in Pioneer Square by public artwork that, with the exception of Edgar Heap of Birds's installation, commemorates an Indian past that has ended, but obscures the role that settlers played in bringing that ending about.

Many of Seattle's historic places, plaques, and monuments can be seen as an example of Patrick Wolfe's "positive" element of elimination: they reproduce narratives of settler possession and ownership, while obscuring previous Native use and occupation as well as the historic processes of dispossession by which Native ownership was extinguished. These commemorative places legitimize the settler endeavor by communicating a "historicity of a territory and territorialisation of a history"¹⁷⁷ that extends both into the past and into the present. In other words, these historic places communicate the sense that settler society is anchored firmly in the past and will persist into an endless future. The Native past, on the other hand, is a past that is finished.

¹⁷⁷ See Nicos Poulantzas, as quoted in Bennett, "The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics," 141.

Re-Writing the Narrative / Re-Placing the Native

Many scholars are involved in the project of rewriting Seattle's Native history, a history of Native people that re-frames the past according to a Native perspective.¹⁷⁸ None have done so more powerfully than Coll Thrush. In *Native Seattle: Histories of the Crossing Over Place* he re-tells parts of Seattle's history to include the influences and actions of Native people that have heretofore been left out of the dominant narratives. It is an important beginning for thinking about the way the settler history and place can be revised to include Native influence and agency in the past, as well as Native perspectives on and interpretations about that past.

Likewise, opportunities abound for a revision of settler place in order to accommodate these uncovered narratives, and to re-write these stories onto the city's places in the form of new monuments, more public artwork in the vein of Heap of Birds's installation, and new plaques to re-interpret places that once belonged to Native people but were destroyed and/or altered by the force of settler colonialism. For example, the recent project to demolish part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and to replace part of the Elliot Bay seawall has resulted in a large-scale redesign of Seattle's waterfront area. The city wants to create a new public space with new parks and paths, access to the water, places to enjoy views, and "vibrant public and cultural spaces."¹⁷⁹ The Puget Sound's Native communities have an opportunity to influence these plans, and to potentially inscribe Native narratives into these new places.

In 2014 City officials began reaching out to local Indian tribes to involve them in the design and to incorporate their history and culture into the finished park. "We want tribes to be partners.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed By Cedar, Living By the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999). Harmon, "Coast Salish History,"; Harmon, "Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound".

¹⁷⁹ "About the Program." <http://www.waterfrontseattle.org/waterfront/default.aspx>

We want tribes to have a stake and a place in this project,” said Marshall Foster, the city’s waterfront design manager.¹⁸⁰ Since April, city leaders and lead designers have met with the Suquamish, Muckleshoot and Stillaguamish to seek their input. In September, they also hosted a session for interested urban Indians. The Duwamish, who are still seeking federal recognition, were also included. Suggestions have included a culturally appropriate outdoor gathering space that could be used to host traditional ceremonies and events, as well as a Salish cultural center. The tribes also are interested in ways they can tell their own stories and histories. Of special note, the former site of Ballast Island, at the foot of Washington Street, is also a part of the area that will be redesigned. Interpretive elements to mark and narrate the story of the burning of Herrings House would be a powerful inclusion to the design, since it was there that the displaced residents of the last Duwamish village regrouped before dispersing to other areas around the city.

Memory Work

The past is rife with meanings, with stories that can be shaped and crafted to help us understand ourselves as individuals, and also to help us recognize ourselves as part of larger “imagined communities” – shaping, for instance, what it means to be an American or what it means to be an Indian. Belonging to a specific community can structure a particular perspective on viewing and understanding the past. For my part, I am situated to have more than one perspective. As a member of a Native tribe, I have a vested interest in seeing my tribe – and my larger “imagined community” of Native people in the Puget Sound and in the United States – thrive, grow, and find a way to plot a course that will see them into an endless future. However, I also descend from American settlers, and often find myself connecting in emotional ways to

¹⁸⁰ Lynn Thompson, “Seattle’s Waterfront Park to Reflect Region’s Rich Tribal Heritage,” *The Seattle Times*, http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2024363633_nativewaterfrontxml.html.

narratives of the past that my grandparents and great-grandparents might have experienced firsthand. My hybrid identity shapes the way I understand the past: I value the preserved memory and material of settler place, but find myself troubled by the way the past is often interpreted to support the narratives of settler memory, simultaneously minimizing and sometimes erasing all together the painful history of Native people in the process.

In Seattle, settlers have embraced parts of the city's Native past in many ways, but often these inclusions serve as the ornaments of diversity. The more complex and unpleasant stories of Indians in the city's founding and development remain largely untold. Historic signs tell inquisitive passers-by that this *used to be* the home of the Duwamish, for instance, without mentioning where they went or what happened to make them change their home address. Indeed, in order to acknowledge this aspect of the past settlers would have to acknowledge the specific and sometimes violent injustice of Native dispossession. Furthermore, in order to understand the colonial past – and acknowledge its connection to the colonial present – they would have to identify themselves as settlers and colonizers, words that might require them to question their own right to the land they inhabit.

“Memory work,” writes Karen Till, involves “acknowledging what was forgotten, what was not seen, and what was lost in the process of remembering and reconstructing the past.”¹⁸¹ If America is ever going to find true reconciliation with Native nations, settler society will first have to acknowledge the violence and injustice on which the cities of the present are built. There is much memory work left to be done, then, in order to excavate below the layers of heritage that

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Derek H Alderman and Rachel M Campbell, “Symbolic Excavation and the Artifact Politics of Remembering Slavery in the American South: Observations From Walterboro, South Carolina,” *Southeastern Geographer* 48, no. 3 (2008): 338-355.

console settlers in order to expose the forgotten, ignored history of colonial dispossession and displacement of Native people that made Seattle, and other cities like it, possible.

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