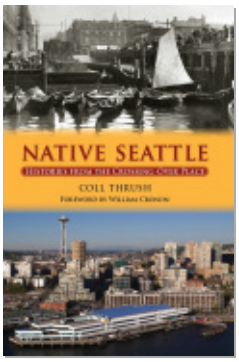
PROJECT MUSE®

Native Seattle

Thrush, Coll, Cronon, William



Published by University of Washington Press

Thrush, Coll and William Cronon.
Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place.
University of Washington Press, 2009.
Project MUSE.muse.jhu.edu/book/10411.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/10411

Access provided at 4 Dec 2019 00:46 GMT from University of Washington @ Seattle

6 / The Woven Coast

A visitor to Seattle in the summer of 1900 would have been impressed. Where a town of fewer than four thousand people had existed only twenty years earlier, a city of eighty thousand now crowded the shores of Elliott Bay. A newly commissioned army fort guarded the bluffs above West Point, a massive railroad and shipping terminal was under construction at Smith's Cove, and electric lights illuminated much of downtown, powered by distant dams. More than forty labor unions represented workers in the city, including the longshoremen who shepherded millions of dollars in international commerce into and out of Elliott Bay. The Duwamish River still curved chaotically toward the Sound, but its meandering days were numbered; plans were already under way to transform it into an organized channel of commerce. Even Ballast Island, where the refugees from Herring's House had come to protest seven years before, seemed to reflect Seattle's urban fortunes, growing each year as bricks, rocks, and other detritus were added by ships from Manila, Honolulu, Valparaiso, San Francisco, and Sydney. Metropolis had arrived.[1]

But in 1900, it was not the people of Herring's House who now camped on Ballast Island. Instead, it was people from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. These were S'Klallam people, thirteen dozen men, women, and children who had come to the city from their homeland on the northern shore of the Olympic Peninsula. Their canoes, and those of other Native people from even more distant Native places, had inspired some observers to dub Seattle's waterfront the "Venice of the Pacific." S'Klallam people camped safely in the territory of the Duwamish: clearly, the city's Indian terrain had shifted.[2]

Meanwhile, several blocks away, on the site of Henry Yesler's old mill,

a second kind of new Indian terrain existed. On a triangle of greensward known as Pioneer Place Park, wedged in among the banks and hotels, a massive Tlingit carving rose over flowerbeds and a neatly clipped lawn. At its base, mythic ancestor Raven-at-the-Head-of-Nass anchored a series of striking figures: a whale with a seal in its mouth, a smaller raven, a mink, a woman holding her frog-child, and yet another raven carrying a crescent moon in its beak. This was the Chief-of-All-Women pole, carved to memorialize a woman who had lived and died a thousand miles from Seattle. It was an unlikely candidate for the city's first piece of public art, but there it stood. According to one observer, it even made Seattle unique, "the only city in the world which possesses a monument of this character to a fast departing race."[3]

The story of how canoes from the Strait of Juan de Fuca and a totem pole from Alaska got to Seattle is the story of the city's arrival as a regional metropolis, of the linking of distant places to each other and to that metropolis, and of the creation of a new urban story. Just as Ballast Island was a physical manifestation of Seattle's connections to distant ports, Indian people and images in Seattle reflected the city's new economic and cultural boundaries, which by the twentieth century reached as far north as Alaska. Indian canoes arriving on Seattle's waterfront from far-flung places heralded the creation of an urban Indian hinterland of which Seattle was one nexus. Meanwhile, Seattle's experience of regional empire, spurred in part by the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1897, led to a new urban vocabulary that used Native imagery such as totem poles to highlight the city's new position as gateway to the North. Seattle's Indian hinterland stretched along a coast woven together by new urban and indigenous connections, and through that new weaving, both Native people and the city would be changed.

In August 1878, the *Seattle Daily Intelligencer* reported that scores of Native men and women were camped at the foot of Washington Street on their way to the hop fields of rural Puget Sound country. Perhaps they were the people immortalized in Mr. Glover's bird's-eye panorama of the city. If not, they were people like them. Above the tide line, temporary shelters and dozens of canoes filled with personal

belongings turned the waterfront into a sudden and unmistakable Indian neighborhood. The paper predicted that after three or four weeks earning "considerable money" from labor in the fields, the Indians "will then return, on their way stopping at Seattle to spend the larger part of their earnings." The movement of working Indian people—and, not insignificantly, their money—in and out of Seattle was becoming part of the city's urban calendar and a central facet of life in Native communities far beyond Puget Sound. Canoes from Washington's Pacific coast, the islands and inlets of British Columbia, and as far north as Alaska were more than just modes of conveyance toward economic opportunity: they were vehicles in which Indian people traveled toward a new identity crafted through their encounters with the urban.[4]

Long before hops and cities reoriented Native lives on the Northwest Coast, indigenous people had come from great distances to visit Puget Sound. In the 1990s, archaeologists working on the site of a new sewage treatment plant at West Point in Seattle found two remarkable pieces of carved stone, one worked from dark green nephrite and the other hollowed out of light gray stone. These were labrets, ornaments that had once pierced the lower lips of elite Native people; the green one even bore scratches where it had rubbed against the teeth of its wearer. They were at least three thousand years old, and their origins lay far to the north; no societies south of the central British Columbian coast had ever worn them. While the labrets are a mystery (were they worn by men or women, slaves or invaders, spouses or traders?), they attest to ancient voyages along the vast edge of a continent.[5]

Stories of such journeys come from shallower time as well. During the same decades that Vancouver and Wilkes explored the Northwest Coast for their empires, indigenous people with their own ambitions were making thousand-mile journeys in forty-foot canoes to the places that would become Seattle. Shilshole elders, for example, told one local historian of raids by Stikine Tlingit from southeast Alaska; those unable to escape into the backcountry around Tucked Away Inside were either taken as slaves or killed, their heads thrown into Salmon Bay. The Lekwiltok Kwakwaka'wakw of the northern Strait of Georgia had earned a similar a reputation in Puget Sound by the 1820s, their raids

appearing in the oral traditions of both peoples. Even after non-Indian settlement in Puget Sound, these northern Indians (described by settlers as "northern British Indians" or even "British-Russia red-skins" to distinguish them from local indigenous people) continued to make forays into the inland waterways near Seattle, sometimes turning their attentions to white schooners and farms.[6]

But in the late nineteenth century, the nature and frequency of Native visits to Puget Sound and Seattle changed. Drawn by seasonal work in the region's burgeoning economy, Indian men, women, and children began traveling huge distances, often every year, to Seattle and its outlying areas. As Puget Sound's first large-scale agricultural commodity, hops played the largest role in these migrations, but over time other kinds of crops—berries, vegetables, herbs, flowers—demanded Native labor. For tribal communities all along the coast, occasional forays into Puget Sound became regular peregrinations. By the early twentieth century, the city was a well-established stopover for Indian laborers whose home communities ranged up and down the Northwest Coast.[7]

Canoes going to and from Seattle changed both their home communities and the city. The most obvious effects were monetary: Indians fresh from the hop fields and other jobs injected large sums of money into Seattle's economy. One Seattle newspaper noted in 1879, for example, that Native visitors brought "great trade" to the city's merchants, and that "between their calls going and returning they will leave several thousand dollars in Seattle." Native shoppers in Seattle quickly established a reputation for shrewdness, with one paper referring to them as "sharp, close traders [who] look upon the Bostons with a suspicious eye." According to some observers, Indians' spending made them preferable to other minorities in the city. One paper reported that they were better than Chinese immigrants "as they spend the money they receive . . . and keep it in the country, instead of hoarding it and shipping it to a foreign land, from whence no dollar returns." While not on a par with tourist dollars or large-scale capital investments—particularly in later decades, as the urban economy reached metropolitan proportions—Indian cash nonetheless helped to fill urban coffers.[8]

Things bought in Seattle could be used to maintain Native traditions

in the hinterland, as the purchase of material goods in Seattle and other urban centers meshed with indigenous notions of prestige. One observer, for example, noted that "it was a common thing to see several sewing machines in one Indian house or half a dozen phonographs, and beds and tables by the dozen but never used. . . . If by chance the owner of the house should die, to ease his condition in the next world all these household goods were piled upon his grave, often including the very doors and window sashes of his house." Goods procured in urban places—phonographs and bedsteads as well as more mundane resources like flour and coffee—helped maintain and even augment indigenous institutions like the potlatch. Sometimes the potlatches, important ceremonies in which Natives displayed their wealth, reaffirmed their status, and cemented kinship and community ties, were even held *in* Seattle. Orange Jacobs recalled one such event in the 1880s, when a Canadian Indian named Jim gave away hundreds of dollars' worth of blankets, calico, suits of clothing, and "Indian trinkets" to dozens of participants on the tidelands south of town. Even the journey itself could be a display of status; Pacheenaht chief Charles Jones once boasted that he had paddled from Vancouver Island to Seattle in a single day. The urban experience did not necessarily erode indigenous traditions; it could in fact strengthen them. This was perhaps especially true for Native people whose homes were in British Columbia, where the potlatch was outlawed beginning in 1885.[9]

Casting one's lot with the vagaries of the American agricultural economy, however, brought risks for travelers and those they left behind. One Canadian Indian agent noted in 1891, for example, that Seattle-bound Tsimshians had "failed to obtain much labour, and realized but little profit." Likewise, Kweeha Kwakwaka'wakw Charles Nowell recalled one season when he, his brother, and some in-laws stayed in Seattle for only two or three days after learning that hops were "all burnt," and returned home virtually broke. Labor gluts and disasters like the hop louse infestations of the 1890s could wreak havoc with Native fortunes. In 1906, some unlucky Sheshahts from Vancouver Island were forced to spend the winter digging clams and selling them in Seattle for meager returns because of losses earlier in the season. Meanwhile, migrants'

absences could leave their kin vulnerable on remote reserves: an agent on eastern Vancouver Island reported in the late 1880s that Cowichan elders faced hardship as younger relatives spurned local subsistence activities to pursue wealth elsewhere.[10]

But perhaps the greatest challenge posed by annual migrations came from disease. Economic vectors between Seattle and its Native hinterland were mirrored by biological vectors, pathways where contagion traveled with the phonographs and cash. Those vectors had helped fuel Seattle city leaders' racist paranoia in the 1870s, but if the paranoia had mostly ended by the last years of the nineteenth century, the continuing effects of such diseases had not. In fact, the prevalence of measles, tuberculosis, and other illnesses among Native travelers allows us to locate them in the urban landscape. Death records for King County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show clusters of Indian mortality among the tidelands and shanties near the old Lava Beds. Canoes lay at the foot of Weller Street, for example, while their owners and passengers died just blocks away. The diseases went home with the survivors. Indian agents on Vancouver Island were especially aware of the illnesses that struck communities whose members had gone to town. In 1888, Agent Harry Guillod reported that many Kyuquot and Chickleset children had died of measles on the way back to Vancouver Island from the Sound while the Hesquiaht, who had stayed home, had been spared. Two months later, the province's Indian superintendent reported that the same outbreak was now raging everywhere on the British Columbia coast. Hundreds of miles from urban centers, Native cemeteries bore the marks of diseases that blossomed in crowded cities.[11]

Migration to and from Seattle had its more subtle costs as well, eroding connections to indigenous places in the hinterland. Among the Tlingit, for example, the central element of social life, the *kwáan*, or clan, was a map of sorts, a linkage between a group of people and a place expressed through subsistence activities and oral tradition. Through relationships with urban places, however, these intimate connections between people and place were shifting. Charlie Jim Sr., or Tóok', a Hutsnuwu Tlingit Raven who often came to the city, told a biographer that

in the early twentieth century he sometimes felt "like a man without a country" because of his regular movements between southeast Alaska and Seattle. For someone who defined himself in large part by his *kwáan,* and thus his place, this was a telling statement. His story, likely not unique, suggests that, while the coast was being woven together in some ways, it was being sundered in others.[12]

For all its risks, though, migration to Seattle and Puget Sound gave Native people a chance at independence and presented challenges to federal Indian policies in both the American and the Canadian parts of the Northwest Coast. Treaties with Washington State and the rules of the reserve system in British Columbia allowed for the movement of Native people off of reservations and reserves, but it often seemed to agents that such travel undermined efforts to "civilize" Native people. From the Makah Reservation, for instance, whole families headed to the hop fields, leaving agency schools empty, Bibles unread, and lessons unlearned. Makah Daniel Quedessa wrote to a white friend in the 1880s that he would soon leave with his parents to go to pick hops, adding that "I guess every one of the School childrens will go up to pick hops." Meanwhile, Canadian missionaries across the Strait of Juan de Fuca found it "very up-hill work" persuading families to stay on the reserve during the school year when work and wages beckoned from the south. Native travel to Seattle thwarted the larger goals of national policies, much as it had in earlier periods of Seattle's history. As before, efforts to define who belonged where rarely worked out as planned.[13]

For all the agents' complaints, though, canoe trips to Seattle actually helped Native people integrate themselves into settler society. Few extant sources indicate how Native people perceived places like Seattle, but it appears that, for some, encounters with urban life inspired new, cosmopolitan ambitions. It is likely that many found the material abundance, social opportunities, and general spectacle of Seattle an exciting change of pace. Many Native men and women may have agreed with Tsimshian Arthur Wellington Clah, who simply called Seattle a "great city" in his 1899 diary. Others seem to have aspired to an urbanity of their own; on Vancouver Island's west coast, one sign of prestige at the turn of the century was a home sporting bay windows and Vic-

torian fretwork, emulating houses seen in Seattle and elsewhere. The urban experience left subtle marks on communities hundreds of miles from the city itself, both augmenting traditions like the potlatch and inspiring a new, cosmopolitan Indianness.[14]

Over time, the attractions of the city even inspired some Native people to become longer-term residents, spending more than the summer months in Seattle. In 1886, for example, a group of Kyuquot families chose to winter over and dig clams to sell in the city. Meanwhile, an Indian couple from an unidentified Northwest Coast community worked as "fiery Baptist missionaries" in Seattle in the first years of the twentieth century, attracted by the souls that needed saving on what was left of the old Lava Beds. Among the Makah, living in Seattle for varying lengths of time became a normal part of life in the 1910s. Neah Bay was "almost deserted" in the summers as people went to the city and the hop fields, and some did not come back at all. In fact, Seattle had become so central to Makah economic life that Daniel Quedessa lamented in 1915 that "I can not even go to Seattle for a trip. I can't go some place for week so I stay here [in Neah Bay on the Makah Reservation] all the time. That's why I dont make money. I always wishing if I could go away and make little money." For many of the Makah, Seattle had become an indispensable part of getting by, and for some, it was becoming a home in its own right.[15]

Coming to Seattle meant that Native people from the city's hinterland sometimes came into contact with local indigenous people. Suquamish elder Amelia Sneatlum, for example, recalled the time in the early twentieth century when her family was camping on the beach at Seattle and a Yakama man stabbed and nearly killed her father. At the other end of the spectrum, Muckleshoot elder Art Williams described friendly encounters with Native migrants on Elliott Bay, which were facilitated by the use of Chinook Jargon and, in later years, English. At the same time, the erosion of indigenous communities in and immediately around Seattle also provided openings for migrants from the hinterland. The Sheshahts who stayed in town to dig clams, for example, could do so because many indigenous Duwamish families with traditional rights to those beds had moved to area reservations or given up clam-

ming. The growth of one kind of Native presence in Seattle, then, existed in a sort of inverse relationship with another kind of Native presence—at least until the clam beds were destroyed altogether by urban change.[16]

Meanwhile, a new kind of urban Indian history was on the rise. As Native people arrived in Seattle in canoes (and, more commonly in the twentieth century, on steamers), they entered a city with a new vocabulary. Throughout the city, totem poles and other Native symbols, drawn from the very same hinterland places whence the travelers had come, marked shop fronts and street corners. If the movement of Indian people to and from the city had changed both the Native hinterland and its urban center, the movement of Indian things had also changed both places as well, providing a new iconography of urban empire.

Sometime near the close of the eighteenth century, a Tlingit noblewoman of the Ganaxádi Raven clan, Chief-of-All-Women, drowned in the Nass River while on her way to comfort an ill relative. After lengthy and heartfelt mourning rituals, clan members in her community of On the Cottonwood on Tongass Island in southeast Alaska hired a carver to commemorate her life and her heritage. Drawing on ancient stories of Raven-at-the-Head-of-Nass and other figures associated with her lineage, the carver produced a fifty-foot cedar pole that was erected next to the clan's longhouse. For more than nine decades, the Chief-of-All-Women pole, with the dead woman's cremated remains inside it, reminded the Tongass Tlingit of Ganaxádi origins and social standing.[17]

Then, in 1899, a group of men from Seattle—among them clergymen, land developers, and bankers—arrived at On the Cottonwood on a ship chartered by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Coming ashore to see the "totem poles" and longhouses of the Tlingit community up close, they were particularly taken by the Chief-of-All-Women pole. Thinking it would make a fine souvenir of their journey to Alaska—and later claiming that the village was deserted—the men sawed through the pole at its base, discarded Chief-of-All-Women's remains, and floated the pole out to their ship, breaking off the beak of Raven-at-the-Head-of-Nass in the process.[18]

Several weeks later, on 18 October 1899, the Chief-of All-Women pole was erected in Pioneer Place Park, a spot of sod at the heart of Seattle's first plats. "All day long people paused and gazed; went away, returned and gazed again," crowed the triumphant *Post-Intelligencer*, "and said it was a great and wonderful thing and a grand acquisition to the city." In a fit of Victorian flourish, another observer gave voice to the pole itself:

I am the only Civilized totem pole on earth,
And civilization suits me well
. . . . . .
While all the others of my kind
Are slowly settling on their stems
Among the salmon scented Silences,
Sequestered from the sight of man,
Here in Seattle's surging scenes
I stand, incomparable
. . . . . .
So here's farewell to all my past
And welcome to the things that are;
With you henceforth my die is cast,
I've hitched my wagon to a star.
And by the Sacred Frog that hops, And by the Bird that flies,
And by the Whale and the Bear, I sunder all the ties
That bound me to the ancient creed which holds my people flat,
And I will be a Totem pole
That knows where it is at.

Abandoning its backward creators, the Chief-of-All-Women pole now served a higher purpose: advertising Seattle. Where it was "at," among the city's "surging scenes" and far from the "salmon scented Silences," seemed not only preferable but natural. Seattle knew where it was "at" as well; at the dawn of the twentieth century, it was the gateway to a new empire that stretched from its railroad stations and wharves, along the rainy northwestern edge of North America, and into the high Arc-

tic. Just as Native people moved up and down the coast, Native objects and images began to move as well, and both Seattle and its hinterland were changed. Here was a city that highlighted its urban modernity by telling stories about places far from the bustle, about silent places in the distant wilderness over which it held sway.[19]

As early as 1870 the *Alaska Times* was being published in Seattle, but it was the arrival of the steamer *Portland* in 1897 that truly hitched Seattle's wagon to the North's star. Soon after the *Portland* hove to on the waterfront with half a ton of Yukon gold on board, Seattle established itself as a fulcrum in the economy and ecology of gold, a crucible that turned raw yellow metal into cash, food, clothing, real estate, patronage, and more. While other developments helped spur the eightfold expansion of the Seattle economy between 1895 and 1900 (steamship trade with Asia and South America, as well as increases in commercial rail shipping to markets back East), the gold rush became the dominant explanation for Seattle's new international prominence.[20]

As the launching point for voyages to Alaska, Seattle became an entrepôt not just for yellow metal but for encounters with the Native peoples of the North. Anthropologists had been working the coast for years, but the massive migration of non-Indian people, diseases, technologies, and goods into Seattle's northern hinterland quickened the "scramble" for Northwest Coast materials and gave rise to a salvage mentality among scholars. Anthropologists came to document cultures that seemed on the verge of extinction; tourists came in search of exotic Others who called the northern wilderness home. Most of them came from Seattle, particularly after its status as the commercial center of the gold rush was clinched, and were encouraged along their way by guidebooks printed by railroads, steamship companies, and Seattle's own Chamber of Commerce. Native people and things, along with the spectacular scenery of the Inside Passage, were the chief attractions of trips from Seattle to Alaska. As early as 1890, naturalist John Muir described mobs of totem-seeking tourists on the waterfront at Wrangell, Alaska. "There was a grand rush on shore to buy curiosities and see totem poles," he wrote. "The shops were jammed and mobbed, high prices being paid for shabby stuff manufactured expressly for the tourist trade." And once

Seattle had established itself as the gateway city, tourists need not go as far as Wrangell to purchase a piece of the North. Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, opened in 1899 by J. E. "Daddy" Standless among the steamer wharves of the waterfront and still in business today, became a nexus of the trade in Native material culture and the greatest of dozens of such emporia in Seattle. In addition to outfitting "Indian corners" in private homes, the Curiosity Shop and its competitors helped fill the American Museum of Natural History and the Field Museum; curio shops were places where popular imagination, ethnographic impulses, and urban ambitions joined. But the movement of Native things—such as the miniature argillite totem poles, ivory shaman's tools, and cedar canoe models at the Curiosity Shop—from Seattle's hinterland was made possible by Native people. Just as Indian men and women met the throngs at Wrangell's wharves, they also worked at the heart of the trade in Seattle. One such man was Sam Williams, a Ditidaht carver from Vancouver Island. First coming to Seattle around the turn of the century, Williams settled on the tideflats like so many other migrants, and in 1901, his skills came to the attention of Daddy Standless. Over the next four decades, Williams carved hundreds of miniature and full-size totem poles for the Curiosity Shop. Several of Williams's children and grandchildren also carved for Standless, and a handful of his poles can still be found at the Curiosity Shop.[21]

The Chief-of-All-Women pole, erected in Pioneer Place Park at the height of the gold rush, was the most famous example of this migration of Native objects and imagery. It instantly became an icon of Seattle's promise and one of the "must-see" attractions of excursions to the Northwest. In the April 1905 *Journal of American Folklore*, anthropologist John Swanton wrote, "Every visitor to Seattle, Washington, has been attracted and more or less interested by the great totem pole that adorns its main square." As its image circulated around the globe on *cartes des visites,* "Seattle's Totem Pole" provided a frontierish frisson that set the city apart from its competitors. Indeed, the Chief-of-All-Women pole was all the more exceptional because of its urban backdrop. "This totem pole is such a curious object!" wrote one observer to her Massachusetts kin in 1901, "especially when seen right in the business part of the city

as ours is." In 1907, temperance writer Agnes Lockhart Hughes cast the pole as a zero-datum marker for the city's growth:

> For less than a decade of years this heraldic monument has gazed upon the many changes in its vicinity, and shortly, on all sides it will be overshadowed by the immense business structures now in [the] course of construction. Relentlessly the hands of a nearby clock mark the speed of fleeting time . . . seemingly unmindful of the grotesque Totem Pole. . . . Its lips tell nothing of its past, its ears are deaf to the roar of traffic around it, but its eyes gaze down on the rapid progress of Seattle, the wonderful Queen City of the West.

For observers like Hughes, the pole in Pioneer Place linked the banks, law firms, and other businesses of the city's commercial district—many of which fronted the park where the pole stood—with the goldfields and other resources of the new Alaskan frontier. The fact that the pole faced northwest was deliberate: a trophy of the gold rush boom, the Chief-of-All-Women pole became a symbol of Seattle's metropolitan reach, and thus its modernity. Other imperial cities had created visual languages to reflect their ambitions and the nature of their holdings; Seattle had looked North and found a totem pole.[22]

Like Indian migration to and from Seattle, represented by canoes on the waterfront, the hinterland represented by the Chief-of-All-Women pole was manifested in comings and goings. A canoe capsized in the Nass River, inspiring the carving of a pole. A chartered ship dropped anchor at Tongass Island, its passengers hungry for a trophy, while steamboats spilled tourists onto wharves in search of Alaskan souvenirs. Railcars emptied at Seattle stations, to be filled again with masks and rattles on their way to eastern museums. Lines on tourist brochures linked Seattle with Alaskan places like Wrangell and Sitka. Urbanites took the trolley downtown to see a pole erected, and postcards traveled the world, naming Seattle Gateway to the North and City of Totems. Through routes of travel and commerce that linked places like On the Cottonwood to places like Pioneer Place Park, Indian images came unmoored and could serve new masters.

This was a powerful new place-story, literally: the creation of Seattle's new urban vocabulary carried with it new power relations. Within months after the Chief-of-All-Women pole was taken in 1899, for example, the Tlingit people of On the Cottonwood accused eight of the *Post-Intelligencer* expedition members of theft. Seeing little cause for concern, the "Committee of Eight" filed a mock suit against themselves, bringing Lake Indian Chesheeahud from his home on Lake Union to play the role of plaintiff. That ploy was dropped when a federal grand jury indicted the committee, but the presiding judge soon dismissed the indictment after a dinner held in his honor by committee members. Drafting a retroactive bill of sale, the committee paid $500 to the people of Tongass Island and then sat back to bask in their newfound notoriety. The Ganaxádi Ravens and the Seattleites had been connected to each other in new and unexpected ways, in an urban warp and indigenous weft that bound up a continent's vast edge.[23]

THE KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH symbolized Seattle's imperial education; the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was its coming-out party. Held in 1909 on the shores of Lake Washington, the AYPE trumpeted Seattle's status as "Queen City of the Pacific," and its massive Beaux Arts–style buildings, made mostly of plaster, stood as symbols of "the awakening of the Pacific, and transforming of the backyard of the world into the front." The neoclassical White City confections impressed visitors, but so did the presence of "Jap-Alaskan" architecture and other Indian-inspired spectacles, especially on the amusement strip known as the Pay Streak. "The red man of the Pacific Coast is present everywhere," announced the *Seattle Times:* "His crude art, always symbolical and sometimes hideous, glares and grins at the visitor from the red and dun-colored totem poles marking the way to the Pay Streak; the carved tribal history of Alaskan tribes upholds the beautiful 'Tori' arch of the South Gate, and figures in many of the postcards sold by dealers in such wares." Beyond the Pay Streak, Indian things filled the displays of the fair: Seattle photographer Edward S. Curtis's photogravures, S'Klallam ceremonial objects, even human scalps recalling the "red man of J. Fenimore Cooper" in the Govern-

ment Building's Dead Letter Department. Virtually every exhibit included some sort of ethnographic display, and the message was clear: these Indians were our people—not in the sense of being *us*, of course, but in the sense of being *ours*. Like other world's fairs, the AYPE was intensely didactic, brazenly ambitious, and thoroughly racist.[24]

For all the power of Curtis's photos and the titillation of scalps and "grotesques," it was the display of actual Native *people* that most captivated the attention of Seattle fairgoers. The most popular attraction of the entire exposition was the Eskimo Village on the Pay Streak, where "expert reindeer men, skin-boat builders, ivory carvers and the best looking women," most of them from Siberia, served as living examples of primitivism as they undertook everyday activities in their plaster "frozen north." Meanwhile, Indian schoolchildren from Tulalip were put on display to show "what the bureau of Indian affairs has accomplished for the Indian people during the last few years." And just outside the fairgrounds at the White City Amusement Park, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota men attacked stagecoaches day after day as part of a Wild West Show, only to be rebuffed every time by white gunslingers. Whether as harmless primitives, emblems of assimilation, or violent barbarians, Native people, like Native things, were used by fair organizers to articulate a clear message: witness our realm, see our burdens.[25]

It is all too easy to see Native people at the AYPE as mere captives to Seattle's imperial fantasies. To some extent, they were. But at the same time, Native people had their own reasons to go to the fair. Two days after arriving in Seattle to tend reindeer at the Eskimo Village, for example, Iñupiat Oliver Angolook decided to return to his community near Nome. When the agent who had procured his services confronted him at the wharf, Angolook was reported to respond, "Got money. Pay my own fare." Indeed, Angolook's salary was reportedly enough to "keep an entire family in affluence through several seasons"—and ironically, it provided the means for him to leave Seattle altogether. Similarly, many Indian Wild West Show participants saw such performances as a way to visit faraway places while earning money for displays of traditional skills like horsemanship. Still another performer, the "Eskimo belle" known as Columbia, reaped a more unique reward; after winning the

AYPE beauty contest (trouncing several white competitors), the young Labrador Inuit woman received a lot in one of Seattle's new suburbs. Like hop fields or curio shops, the AYPE was an opportunity. Meanwhile, Skhandoo, a Chilkoot Tlingit shaman, wowed audiences with dances and ceremonies at the Eskimo Village alongside other Tlingits of the Chilkat, Hoonah, and Taku bands. He had once earned great wealth thanks to the Otter spirit that gave him power to heal, harm, and see far-off events, but after two prison terms for deaths caused by his ministrations, he found himself destitute until landing the job at the world's fair. For Skhandoo, the AYPE served two purposes: it allowed him to continue performing the work for which he had received prestige from both Tlingit and white observers, and it provided him with a living. For a man in Skhandoo's tenuous position, participation in the AYPE may have been the best of few options. For all these Native people, coming to the fair, like coming to the city more generally, often simply made good economic sense.[26]

Seattle's fair was also a place to play out long-standing rivalries between indigenous communities. In early 1909, for instance, fair organizers received a telegram from Harry Hobucket, a Quileute from Washington's outer coast, noting that the rival Makah were having trouble acquiring a gray whale to bring to the fair and offering to bring one on behalf of the Quileute. While exposition organizers appear to have declined the offer, the proposal suggests that some Native people saw the fair as an opportunity to shame old enemies in a new setting with a huge audience. Several weeks later, a challenge came from Chief Taholah of the Quinault and his sub-chief Pe-ka-nim of the Hoh to Indians everywhere, "and especially to their old enemies," to join in a canoe race at the fair. But such competitions, like the canoe races on 6 September, "Seattle Day," could also facilitate new alliances among tribal communities. As teams from Washington's Skokomish and Tulalip reservations and British Columbia's Lyacksun and Penelekuts reserves attracted thousands of spectators to the shores of Lake Union, they both drew white approval and helped craft a shared Native identity.[27]

At least one Native group came to Seattle explicitly to resist white authority. These were the Tsimshian of Metlakatla, a Christian settle-

ment founded in 1862 by the missionary William Duncan, who sought to isolate the Tsimshian from outside influences. Many Tsimshian people saw this isolation as a barrier to opportunity and began to rebel against Duncan's authority, and by 1909, various American governmental bodies had gotten involved as Tsimshians and others complained to the Department of Interior and the Alaskan educational authorities. While the Metlakatlan contributions to the fair—a brass band and a ladies' auxiliary known for its needlepoint—were portrayed as the products of civilizing efforts, several Tsimshian fairgoers were in fact trying to oust the man seeking to civilize them. The auxiliary president, for example, was Mrs. Bertrand Mitchell, whose husband was in the midst of a campaign against Duncan, writing to Alaska school commissioners, "We are slaves here. We are getting poorer all the time and Mr. Duncan is getting richer. What is the matter with the government?" Meanwhile, William Pollard, assistant leader of the brass band, had also vocally opposed Duncan's rule. Needlepoint and rousing marches, then, were a way for Tsimshian people to join the outside world. Coming to the AYPE was an act of resistance.[28]

Finally, Native people also came to the fair as full-fledged spectators, taking in the urban spectacle like everyone else. The *Post-Intelligencer* reported that Indian observers at the canoe races, for example, "put the organized yells of some rah, rah boys completely to shame." Meanwhile, several Lakota Wild West Show performers and their families, "decked out in all the picturesque attire of the cow country—sombreros, chaps and all the rest of it," went to the Pay Streak one afternoon for fun and encountered a group of Flathead Indians. "To the uninitiated it looked as if a real war whoop was the next thing to be expected," winked the *Times*, but "then the chief of the Rosebuds gave a guttural command and his braves lined up in single file and slowly approached a similar file which formed on the instant among the Flatheads. For fifteen minutes the warriors of the two tribes shook hands silently. Not a word was passed between them and there was never a smile until the ceremony was over and then they fraternized as if they had come from the same reservation." The two groups then went to visit the Eskimo Village, where they showed the Siberians, the Tlingit shaman Skhandoo, the "Eskimo

belle" Columbia, and the gawking crowds "what a war dance is like when danced among friends." Then the Lakotas and Flatheads finished the day with a ride on the Ferris wheel.[29]

We cannot know what the Indians on the Ferris wheel thought of the Eskimo Village, the Baby Incubators, the Upside Down House, or the Temple of Palmistry. Native people probably found the AYPE awe inspiring, offensive, hilarious, and perhaps even boring. But they may also have seen deeper meanings for themselves—a Wild West Show as a mark of prestige, an invitation to the Pay Streak as a gesture of friendship, a "war dance among friends" as a step toward a shared Native identity. As the center of a vast regional empire, Seattle had become an important venue in which to pursue old and new Native ambitions. Not only did canoes represent Indian migration to and from the city, but when paddled in AYPE races, they also signified the development of a shared Native identity. Totem poles represented not only Seattle's imperial claims on the North but also the people who traveled to the city in pursuit of economic independence, social status, or a good show. While on its surface a spectacle of urban dominance and white racial superiority, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition also reflected the ambitions of its Native participants, who came from the far ends of Seattle's hinterland on their own terms.

One of the most striking photos in any of Seattle's archives dates from the first years of the twentieth century. Taken by an unnamed photographer in front of the Frederick and Nelson Department Store at the corner of Second and Madison, it captures a Native woman, likely Makah or Nuuchah-nulth, sitting against the building's stone façade and selling baskets, blankets, and other handicrafts. She looks ahead and slightly down, avoiding the gaze of a well-dressed white woman who leans over her with an I-assume-you-can't-speak-English-so-I'll-talk-louder expression. A third woman of indeterminate race, possibly Indian, watches the exchange as busy urbanites rush by, among them a particularly dowdy older woman who seems to observe the scene with disdain. It is a moment

of encounter, where women of different races and classes came together for a moment on the streets of the city to haggle over a basket.

Weaving was not just a metaphor for what happened on this coast. Like canoes and totem poles, baskets were both product and symbol of Seattle's Indian hinterland. Throughout the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, sidewalk encounters between Indian vendors and white customers were a part of everyday life in Seattle. One 1905 newspaper article might have been describing this very photo: "Uptown, on First and Second avenues, many an important corner was given a touch of nature by the presence of a wrinkled old squaw, leaning her toil-bent back against the supporting columns, while around are arrayed canoes and baskets and mats, in reckless profusion, all ready to be traded for the money of whites." Travel correspondent Nina Alberta Arndt described the ubiquity of similar "touches of nature" in the *Overland Monthly* three years later, noting that Indian women and their wares could be found "upon the steps of the principal banks, on the sidewalks of the business thoroughfares, or again . . . in the aisles of some department store." Local newspapers identified Indians "squatting in characteristic attitudes with 'hiyu iktas' [many things] spread around them" as "one of the most common sights along the pavements of Seattle . . . intrud[ing] itself on the vision of every pedestrian." Meanwhile, "more eager seekers" of curios could visit Native encampments on filled land south of the city. No need to go to Neah Bay, Prince Rupert, or Sitka; the hinterland came to Seattle, bringing touches of distant nature to the heart of urban America. And, in fact, most of the basket vendors on Seattle streets at the turn of the century were not from Puget Sound. According to the *Post-Intelligencer*, many were Makah or Nuu-chah-nulth from Vancouver Island (and her baskets' designs suggest that the woman in the Frederick and Nelson's photo was as well). An agent among the Sheshahts at Port Alberni on Vancouver Island confirmed that many Seattle vendors were his charges: "during the winter months the women often engage in the manufacture of baskets . . . which, being . . . a distinct novelty, are readily disposed of in the larger towns in the state of Washington." Like canoes and totem poles, baskets connected Seat-

tle street corners to Native communities hundreds of miles from the city.[30]

Eastern tourists to Seattle often saw a basket or other Indian "curio" as the requisite souvenir of a trip to the city, meaning that a Sheshaht basket could easily end up in Boston or London or St. Louis. Indeed, for some Native vendors, eastern customers were preferable. According to one Seattle paper, "an Indian curio-shop manager at the corner of a Seattle block can tell an Easterner from a Western product. He knows the 'cheechaco.' A sale with an Eastern tourist is easily landed, and probably a hundred percent on the real value is assessed at that." The sale of baskets, then, drew attention to the boundaries not just between white and Indian but between westerner and easterner, captured best in the Chinook Jargon word *cheechako,* literally meaning "newly arrived" but also glossed as both "easterner" and "greenhorn." Baskets linked places to each other but also differentiated places as well, distinguishing Seattle and its people from their eastern counterparts. Here was a city where Native nature could be acquired without venturing into actual wilderness, and where urban America had an Indian edge.[31]

Gullible easterners were not the only collectors of baskets, however. Throughout Seattle, in places socially, if not physically, distant from the tideflat encampments and street corners, white women added baskets and other items to "curio corners." A *Post-Intelligencer* article describing the best collections in town reads like a clipping from the society page: the wives of mill owners and other civic elites all had extensive collections. Carrie Burke, married to a judge, even had a new wing added to her house specifically for her Indian collection. In fine homes on the hills of Seattle such as the Frye mansion at Ninth and Columbia, upperclass white women used the collection of Indian things to mark their own social status. Just as totem poles spoke of Seattle's metropolitan status, cedar bark and maidenhair fern from Vancouver Island could help a banker's wife in Seattle tell stories about privilege and power and showed how tightly the urban center and indigenous periphery were woven together along the coast that Seattle dominated.[32]

This was a new kind of imbrication, different from the landscape Mr. Glover had hinted at with his 1878 bird's-eye sketch of Seattle. The

treaties had been signed for fifty years, the indigenous towns had long been burned, Kikisebloo had died a decade earlier—and yet Indian people remained a highly visible part of Seattle's urban landscape. But instead of the Whulshootseed word *yiq*, these people might have used other words to describe the process of imbricating themselves into Seattle's landscape, taken from their own languages: words for "weaving" like the Quileute *tsikbay*, the S'Klallam *ekwel*, and the Kwakwala *yepá*, or words for "worrying into tight places" like the Tlingit *dik'eek'* or the Nuu-chah-nulth *pithlqa*. And as the indigenous languages spoken in Seattle had changed, so had the city's civic vocabulary. Croaking amid the urban din of Pioneer Square, Raven-at-the-Head-of-Nass told a place-story of transformation, but he was not alone. Like Mrs. Burke displaying her baskets, Seattle's civic leaders had found new ways to talk about the city and its past. Inspired by the memory of urban conquest and the creation of a regional hinterland, the city's leaders set about crafting a new set of place-stories that cut to the very heart of what it meant to be white, American, and of this place.[33]