9 / Urban Renewal in Indian Territory

In the city of totem poles and Native ghosts, real live Indians seemed to reappear suddenly in 1970. On the morning of 8 March, more than a hundred Native men, women, and children gathered at Fort Lawton, a decommissioned army base on high bluffs in northwest Seattle. Spreading out, they quickly entered the fort from all sides, scaling the fences while a diversionary force raised a ruckus at the main gate. As military police descended, Puyallup activist Bob Satiacum read a statement addressed to the "Great White Father and All His People" claiming Fort Lawton "in the name of all American Indians by the right of discovery." Invoking treaties supposedly promising surplus government land to tribes, the activists demanded the fort. Most of the proclamation went unheard in the ensuing chaos of scuffles and handcuffs, but news of the invasion quickly spread around the world. According to the *Seattle Times*, an Italian News Agency correspondent had asked, "You can't imagine how fascinating this story is in Europe. Indians attacking a fort in the West of the United States. Tell me, do you have an Indian problem out there?" Meanwhile, front-page photos of uniformed white men carting Native women and children off to jail ensured that Seattle's "Indian problem" joined student protests and carpet bombings as early-1970s hot political topics.[1]

This was political theater at its best. The Native invaders of Fort Lawton had no legal authority on which to claim land in Seattle. Even if their proclamation did riff on the legal frameworks established by treaties, these were urban Indians, most with no connections to the Duwamish, Lake, and Shilshole peoples whose territories had become the city of Seattle. But by 1970, what it meant to be Indian in America—and what it meant to be American on Indian land—was changing, and

as a result, the place-story Native activists were telling in Seattle was a new one. This city and this land are ours, they shouted—and for the first time, Seattle, and the world, seemed to be listening.

But this was only one of several place-stories being told by urban Indians in postwar Seattle. As Native people from many tribes and nations worked to make the city home, they told stories as diverse as their communities of origin. Some actively participated in the city's romantic narrative of the Denny Party, while others wove Seattle's urban history into a broader story of genocide and dispossession. Still other urban Indians, including the city's most destitute, struggled simply to assert their basic humanity in a civic story that cast them as little more than symbols of racial decay. In each case, the stories Native people told about their place in Seattle had everything to do with the changes in the city and in what it meant to be Indian and American. As cultural, political, and even environmental landscapes shifted in the decades after the Second World War, so would Seattle's Indian place-stories, and those stories would be as complicated and diverse as urban Indians themselves. Urban renewal would have many conflicting meanings as Native people worked to make Seattle home.

To say that Seattle's urban Indian activism began with the invasion of Fort Lawton in 1970 is a bit like saying that Seattle's urban history origins lie only at Alki Point. If the "Indian attack" of the Vietnam era took most of Seattle by surprise, it was only the latest and most visible of a series of efforts by urban Native people to claim space in Seattle. To understand the origins of Indian struggles to find home in Seattle, we must go back to an earlier war. Epidemics and railroads had been the great forces that shaped Seattle's urban history in the nineteenth century, but the pivot on which the city's twentieth-century history turned was war. The Great War had helped complete Seattle's arrival on the world stage, but it was the Second World War that would truly transform Seattle into a city of global significance. More than perhaps any other American city, Seattle would be changed by the necessities of prosecuting war in Europe, Africa, and the Pacific. The changes were most obvious in the kinds of work people

did in the city. Where in the 1930s lumber mills and canneries were the main industry in the region, by the 1950s the shipyards and hangars and foundries that supplied the Allies with machines of war had changed the city's economy in profound ways. Between 1939 and 1941, for example, Seattle's manufacturing base doubled; the number of people employed in manufacturing went from 35,000 in 1940 to 115,000 in 1943. Across the American West, cities were being transformed by wartime industry. The battleships and warplanes from Seattle—including one called *Chief Seattle*—helped turn the course of global conflict, just as they cemented Seattle's new role in the global economy. Seattle was now Boeing's town.[2]

The Second World War had begun a new chapter in Seattle's urban story, and it also marked a turning point in Indian history, as Indians moved to the city to work on behalf of the war effort. Adeline Skultka, a young Kaigani Haida from Craig, Alaska, was one of these. After graduating from high school, she came to Seattle with her sister and a cousin and immediately found work on a Boeing assembly line and as a welder in a local shipyard; soon after, she met her Filipino husband, Genaro "Gerry" Garcia. Despite the long history of Indian migration to Seattle, for people like Skultka, moving to the wartime city involved a steep learning curve—but as before, the city beckoned with opportunity, especially compared to the grim prospects back home. "A lot of them had never been off the reservation before," remembered Lillian Chapelle (Cowlitz-Yakama), "and yet there were jobs here in Seattle." Like service on the battlefield, work on the home front proved that Native people could be both Indian and American.[3]

The enthusiasm and opportunity of the war would soon fade, though. When, at war's end, cancellation of government contracts at the shipyards and factories led to layoffs and as returning soldiers clamored for jobs, women and people of color were the first to go. Meanwhile, Native veterans struggled to reintegrate into civilian society, and Indians who depended on the waning extractive industries of Old Seattle found themselves increasingly adrift. Although the economy regained its footing in the 1950s, the benefits of the boom rarely trickled down to urban Indians, who experienced discrimination in virtually every aspect

of life: Chinese restaurants that refused to hire nonwhite waitresses, vacant apartments mysteriously rented, hospitals that refused to serve Native people, murders of homeless Indians that went uninvestigated. During a period when federal Indian policy enthusiastically encouraged assimilation into mainstream society and few, if any, resources existed for the Native community, the economic and social realities of 1950s Seattle afforded urban Indians little security and even less hope.[4]

The result was that many Indian men and women who came to Seattle ended up on Skid Road, the area that included Pioneer Square and much of First Avenue, stretching all the way north to Belltown. In his much-beloved 1951 history *Skid Road*, Murray Morgan described "men sitting on curbs and sleeping in doorways . . . , condemned buildings . . . , missions and taverns and wine shops and stores where you can buy a suit for $3.75." For Morgan and many other Seattleites, downtown—particularly Belltown, First Avenue, and Pioneer Square—had become "the place of dead dreams," populated by the aging workforce of Old Seattle, which one 1950 memoir called "the discards from the maelstrom of industrial activity." The streets and run-down hotels of Skid Road were also home to hundreds of Indians. Colville architect Lawney Reyes, for example, recalled that during those years "if you wanted to see an Indian in Seattle you'd jump in the car and go down to Skid Row." In the 1960 census, 30 percent of Pioneer Square's inhabitants were either "Indian or Oriental," and the district included the largest, most concentrated population of Native people in the city. Out in the hinterland, many Indian reservation residents described skid roads as places where people disappeared, almost as if they had died—and, sometimes, the deaths were real: cirrhosis, a fall under a passing train, tuberculosis, a knife in the ribs. After the brief window of wartime opportunity, life in Seattle was almost as bleak as ever for its Indian population—if not worse.[5]

The seven women who came together in the 1950s to address this problem were unlikely activists. Most had come to Seattle during the Second World War to work in the defense industries and, unlike most Native people, now enjoyed the relative security of working- and middle-class life, focusing their energies on volunteering at churches and their

children's schools. On the surface, they were paragons of assimilation—Christian, married with mixed-race children, and productive members of postwar society. At the same time, it was these seven women who would lay the foundations for the radical action at Fort Lawton more than twenty years later. They first met in 1958 under the leadership of Pearl Warren, a Makah who had come to the city after the war. Pearl's daughter Mary Jo Butterfield had recently brought home a desperate Indian couple, left on the streets after the wife was discharged from the hospital. Like Ann Peterson's home in 1930s Ballard, this postwar Makah household was a refuge for urban Indians. Inspired in part by that experience, Warren, Butterfield, Adeline Skultka Garcia, and their friends decided that if resources for Native people in Seattle were going to exist, Native people needed to create them. They began visiting apartment buildings, downtown hotels, and the Greyhound station—anywhere they might find other Indian women. By the fall of 1958, they had more than fifty members, whose tribal communities ranged from Washington and Alaska to Canada and the Plains. With the help of Erna Gunther, a University of Washington anthropologist, the group incorporated that year as the American Indian Women's Service League.[6]

For almost two decades, the Service League would be Seattle's leading urban Indian organization. Pearl Warren, Adeline Garcia, and the other founders described the role they hoped to play in the inaugural issue of the Service League's newsletter:

> The newcomer to the city will find [the Service League] a good place to meet other Indian women and make new friends; and those who want to learn more about conditions and developments that may eventually affect their own lives—Indian legislation, medical care, employment, etc.—will hear new and vital information at each meeting. And to those who can see a way of picking up and straightening out the threads from the tangle of Indian affairs, there is the opportunity of doing a real service to the Indian community—locally, statewide, or even nationally.

And always, the leaders of the Service League connected everyday life both to tribal traditions and to Indian politics, on scales ranging from

the local to the national. "Where else but in an Indian paper," asked one writer in the newsletter, "would you find such unique receipts [*sic*] such as 'Sturgeon Spinal Cord' and 'Buckskin Bread,' legends written as told by the old people, the 'Lord's Prayer' in Chinook?" She then continued by pointing out that the newsletter would also cover "land and claim decisions, inter-tribal meetings, fishing and hunting, House and Senate Bills pending on local and national levels" and other key issues in Indian political life.[7]

But creating community in the city also meant finding a place. With that in mind, the Service League opened Seattle's first Indian Center in 1960 in a rented storefront at First and Vine at the northern end of Skid Road. Two years later, they moved into a larger space across from the Greyhound Bus depot. Where totem poles and statues of Chief Seattle greeted non-Indian visitors to Seattle, here real Indians greeted real Indians as Service League members kept an eye on the bus station, looking for new arrivals.[8] Fond memories of the Indian Center highlight the sense of community created by the women who ran it. In 1970, for example, Choctaw Seattleite Harvey Davis and his wife, Nellie, recalled the many things the center had provided over the years:

> Food if he was hungry. A friend if he was friendless. Shoes if he was barefoot. Sympathy and advice if he was troubled. Thrown out if he was drunk. Returned to his people if he was lost. A quiet place to sit and read or contemplate. Free clothing on Thursdays. An opportunity to help our less fortunate tribesmen.

Most important for the Davises, the center provided "a feeling of warmth and friendship which can be found in few, if any, other places in Seattle." In a city where most Indian people were at worst ostracized or at best neglected, the center was a kind of home, where even the poorest of Seattle's Indian community could contribute. Adeline Garcia recalled how "those bums on [First] Avenue, they'd come in and clean up the place," bringing produce and fish from the Public Market when they could afford it and offering skills such as carpentry in return for a hot meal and a place to "stretch out and rest." Mary

Jo Butterfield, meanwhile, described the struggles of one Blackfoot Indian Center volunteer:

> Sitting in a house out at High Point [public housing] with five hungry kids and you're an alcoholic and you're trying to dry out and take care of your kids and you can't feed them and you don't have any money—you don't have bus fare to get to the Indian Center to get groceries. And you don't have a phone. Those kind of people were the ones that worked the hardest and got the most out of it.

Here was self-help, here were grass roots, here were Indian people of many nations, creating a place in the city.[9]

But despite the efforts of the Service League, not everyone felt comfortable being Native in Seattle, where those "No Indians Allowed" signs still hung in windows and, according to Puyallup activist Ramona Bennett, "a lot of Indians were still trying to pass as Italian." In response, the Service League saw public relations as a critical element of its mission, equal to providing services to Native people. The 1961 North American Indian Benefit Ball at the Masonic Temple, for example, showcased crafts and dances and used television and radio spots to encourage non-Indians to attend. Similarly, well-attended picnics at Seward Park on Lake Washington involved Lummi dancers, speeches and stories in the Makah language, and door prizes of baskets and handmade sweaters. But the group's signature event was the salmon bake at Alki Point, which by 1967 was feeding more than two thousand people and had become a highlight of the annual Seafair festivities, often as part of reenactments of the Denny Party's landing at Alki. League members, then, did not work to overturn the city's place-story in the 1960s. Instead, they lobbied to become part of it—as living Indian people.[10]

Participating in celebrations of urban founding did not preclude outspoken advocacy on Native political issues. In particular, Service League members worked to increase non-Indians' awareness of the shortcomings of federal Indian policy: most notably the relocation and termination policies of the postwar years, one of which sent Native people to cities only to abandon them, and the other of which sought to negate

treaties by dissolving reservations and annulling the federal-tribal relationship altogether. Pearl Warren, for example, represented the Service League in particular and urban Indians in general before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on Indian affairs in 1968, and that same year, the Service League helped organize an international urban Indian conference in Seattle that welcomed activists and community organizers from the United States and Canada to share stories and strategies. But funding for their efforts was hard to come by, even as the city's political landscape shifted toward a multicultural civic politics and as the federal government began to fund programs in other minority communities. "So much money was coming into Seattle," recalled Lakota Service League member Letoy Eike, "and Indians were not getting anything." For two years, Service League members tried to convince city officials to earmark money for an Indian Center in a vacant site at the south end of Lake Union, but as one observer commented, the city "passed the buck" while "millions of dollars poured into the [predominantly African American] Central District." One Model Cities project even paid for Central District youth to carve a totem pole portraying the nation's black history, which must have underscored the disparities between the city's black and Indian communities.[11]

Urban Indian strategies in Seattle were about to change, however. For some younger urban Indians, including an Indian Center volunteer named Bernie Whitebear, the frustration was building. Whitebear, born Bernie Reyes and a Colville from eastern Washington, was one of many who had come to Seattle to work at Boeing. In that sense, he was like Adeline Garcia, but Whitebear's activism represented a new style of Indian leadership in Seattle. Although concerned by the dominance of African American concerns in Seattle racial politics, he was also inspired by the work of Seattle's black, Latino, and Asian American communities. Whitebear and his allies began to formulate a more multicultural—and more radical—approach to claiming space in the city. And so when the city, the army, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs dragged their feet on a proposal for a new Indian Center at the recently decommissioned Fort Lawton and Indian activists took over Alcatraz Island, the stage was set for a new chapter in Seattle's urban Indian history.[12]

The occupation of Alcatraz by American Indian Movement activists and others in 1969 had garnered international attention, and by capitalizing both on the successes of other movements' radical strategies and on a growing popular interest in (and sympathy toward) indigenous peoples, the occupation of Alcatraz was a turning point for Native activism, focusing international attention on the everyday lives of Indian people in the United States. While the takeover of Alcatraz was a failure in the sense that Indian people and institutions never achieved permanent tenure on the Rock, it was a phenomenal success in that it inspired similar tactics among "Red Power" activists throughout the nation and brought public attention to Native issues. And so on that brisk March morning in 1970, more than a hundred Indians "took" Fort Lawton.[13]

The invasion was a radical departure from the more diplomatic traditions of the Service League activists. Nothing made this more obvious than the allies the takeover attracted: Alcatraz veteran Leonard Peltier, radical black comedian Dick Gregory, and antiwar feminist Jane Fonda all came to offer their support. (So did the radical Seattle Liberation Front, which had recently held a protest naming part of the University of Washington campus "The People's Republic of Leschi" after the man who led the 1856 attack on the city.) The tactics of the takeover were a far cry from the salmon bakes and mayoral meetings of the Service League: protestors were more than willing to be arrested, and they even hired a skywriter to pen "A New Day . . . Fort, Give Up . . . Fort, Surrender" over the city. There were, however, connections between the Fort Lawton activists and the Service League. League founder Ella Aquino, for example, was among those who scaled the fences at Fort Lawton, and she and other League members, "armed with sandwiches and coffee," supported the occupation from behind the scenes and reprinted the Fort Lawton proclamation in *Indian Center News*. And in a broader sense, the Fort Lawton leadership carried the same hopes as the Service League. In their proclamation, protestors described their vision for Fort Lawton:

> We feel that this land of Ft. 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, health care facilities, fresh running water, educational facilities, and transportation facilities.

Point for point, this was the same vision that Pearl Warren had pursued for years; she had always wanted to move beyond a crisis-driven Indian Center and create lasting, proactive Indian institutions in the city. Despite their more radical and visible tactics, the "invaders" of Fort Lawton were the political descendants of those first seven women who had come together back in 1958.[14]

Many non-Indian Seattleites dismissed the invasion of Fort Lawton as mere silliness; one Native woman, for example, quit her job after her boss told her that the takeover "was pretty stupid, and that the Indians were dumb for doing it and had no reason for doing it." But despite negative reactions from some non-Indians (eggs and insults thrown, death threats made, and neighborhood petitions calling for an end to the "noise and stupid acts"), by the end of the invasion, more than forty non-Indian organizations in the city had come to support the occupation, including the Seattle Human Rights Commission, whose bias toward African American concerns had frustrated Indian leaders in the past. And within two years of the invasion, United Indians of All Tribes, as the activists came to be known, had negotiated an agreement with the city with the help of Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Sixteen acres of Fort Lawton, soon to be renamed Discovery Park, would be leased for an Indian cultural and social-services center. When the Daybreak Star Cultural Center finally opened in 1976, the *Post-Intelligencer* called it a "proud day," not just for Indians but for the city that had found ways to compromise with activists. As Service League member Arlene Red Elk put it, "They got their spot."[15]

The spot they had gotten was a distinctively Indian one. Designed by architect Lawney Reyes, Bernie Whitebear's brother, the Daybreak Star Cultural Center was inspired by Lakota spiritual leader Black Elk's vision of a star that had come down to earth and taken root to form a sheltering tree, and the building's four wings, built of timber donated by Northwest tribes, represented the four directions. Meanwhile, the

public spaces of Daybreak Star were filled with art made by Indian people of many tribes: Creek, Tlingit, Chiricahua Apache, Caddo, Cowlitz, and Aleut, among others. Just as Seattle's connections to the world had widened in the years since the Second World War, so had its Indian hinterland. No more was that hinterland just a woven coast; it was now a woven continent.[16]

But the outward successes of the urban Indian community, symbolized by the opening of Daybreak Star, masked new rifts that were starting to open within that community. One rift came from the leftist, multiracial mode of organizing that Whitebear and his supporters had pursued. According to Diane Vendiola, whose Filipino father and Swinomish mother had met in Seattle back in the 1930s, these activists had pursued what she called "the city mode." Its confrontational strategies and connections to other minority communities—especially African Americans and antiwar radicals—alienated some older activists. This same tension would also arise on reservations as Indian men and women, energized by leftist tactics honed primarily in urban places, brought those visions of revolution back to their home communities. Other rifts were widened by success itself; as urban Indian programs began to finally receive public funding, they seemed to become less Indian to many community members. As Marilyn Bentz explained it, "once money came into the picture, things changed, and it got a lot more political . . . that turned off a lot of people." Harvey and Nellie Davis felt the same way, recalling the early Indian Center as a place "without a lot of gobbledy-gook, double talk, social service workers lingo," unlike the new post–Fort Lawton institutions. For many members of the urban Indian community, the institutional success of the Indian Center made it less of a Native place and more like any other social-service agency.[17]

At the same time, the successes of Seattle's Indian community had profound impacts far beyond the city, as volunteers, activists, and service professionals earned their stripes in the urban milieu and then took their skills and experience back out into Indian country. Women who had been involved in the American Indian Women's Service League (which carried on with its work even as United Indians of All Tribes

grabbed most of the public attention) were among the best examples of this new generation of Native leadership that had been forged in Seattle. Adeline Garcia went on to become a board member of the innovative Seattle Indian Heritage High School and served as a liaison among reservations, the Seattle Public Schools, and colleges. Ramona Bennett became chair of her Puyallup Tribe, while Joyce Reyes, wife of Lawney and president of the Service League after Pearl Warren, became a Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator. These and other women would play crucial roles in the ascent of self-determination—Indian control over Indian lives—in the 1970s.[18]

But back in Seattle, where the Daybreak Star Cultural Center, with its origins in the work of the Service League, told a new place-story by claiming that the city could indeed be Indian land, there was another new urban Indian place-story taking form. This one told a very different tale from that of United Indians of All Tribes and the American Indian Women's Service League. As it would turn out, the postwar successes experienced both by the Indian community and by Seattle itself were a double-edged sword. As public dollars poured into the city to support programs like Model Cities, Daybreak Star, and the new Indian Center, other forces of urban renewal were at work. During the same years that Indians and other activists claimed spaces in a newly multicultural city and demanded public investment in communities of color, other civic leaders began to invest in the city's historical heritage. For Native Americans on Skid Road, life was about to get more difficult, as the same forces of urban affluence that helped to create new Indian spaces in the city forced the city's poorest Indians, quite literally, onto the streets.

In 1991, the Seattle Arts Commission launched an ambitious program called In Public, a citywide set of installations designed to inspire dialogue about the role of art in everyday urban life. From the enormous proletarian *Hammering Man* in front of the Seattle Art Museum to huge banners hung from light poles demanding "do you prefer being on welfare?" In Public was edgy and controversial. One of the most confrontational pieces, by Cheyenne-Arapaho artist

Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds, was installed in Pioneer Place Park alongside the Chief-of-All-Women pole and the bronze bust of Chief Seattle. Called *Day/Night*, it consisted of two ceramic panels inscribed with dollar signs, crosses, and text in Whulshootseed and English that read "Chief Seattle now the streets are your home. Far away brothers and sisters we still remember you." Dedicated to the city's homeless Indians, *Day/Night* challenged Seattle's other place-stories. "In the city of Seattle there are countless references to our indigenous people," wrote Heap of Birds, "from professional football helmets [of the Seahawks, Seattle's NFL team], to towering totem poles . . . to the name of the city itself [but] we do not find institutionalized evidence of the living indigenous people."[19]

Day/Night also drew attention to the fact that the city's new Indian institutions did not necessarily benefit all Indian people. "Daybreak Star . . . is beautiful," Heap of Birds told one reporter, "but Pioneer Square and Occidental Square are also Indian centers." In fact, by the 1970s, Skid Road had become "Indian territory," as one observer called the area around Pioneer Square. It was an urban neighborhood with its own traditions, institutions, and ways of operating. But as urban renewal, historic preservation, and heritage tourism—all supported by the same kinds of public reinvestment that had helped fund the Indian Center and Daybreak Star—became dominant themes in the 1970s and beyond, Native Skid Road would disappear, to be replaced by historic districts catering to tourists. And as downtown was transformed from historical Skid Road to historic Seattle, it would be filled with art like *Day/Night*. Here was the ironic history behind Heap of Birds' installation: at the same time that it told a radical new place-story, confronting the inequalities of postwar urban Native life, it was also made possible by those inequalities and by the destruction of an Indian neighborhood.[20]

And a neighborhood it was: for all its dysfunction, for all the poverty and discrimination and cheap booze, Indian Skid Road was a community with its own rules and its own distinctive identity. To begin with, the Native population on Skid Road tended to be fairly stable. According to one source, they accounted for half the city's "home guards"—residents whose home base was in Seattle, as opposed to the rootless

"bindle stiffs," many of them increasingly elderly white men, who migrated from place to place. And unlike the general population of Skid Road, the downtown Indian community included many women, who often held down jobs as barmaids and cooks. One former Skid Road resident said it seemed as if every tavern had a Native woman in the kitchen. Like their Service League counterparts, the women of Skid Road were problem solvers; they could be depended on, for example, to know about openings in berry picking, dock work, carpentry, and other jobs. Among the black jazz clubs, gay cabarets, Chinese restaurants, and Filipino night cafés that had also sprung up in the area, Native Skid Road had by the 1960s developed into a functioning, if troubled, community with three key institutions: the Indian bar, the single-resident occupancy (SRO) hotel, and the streets themselves.[21]

At the end of the Second World War, it remained illegal to sell liquor to Indians in Seattle, and most downtown taverns refused entry to Indian men and women, relegating them to the streets. But in the late 1950s, a general relaxing of state liquor laws allowed the formation of what the local bartender's union called "bow and arrow joints"—Indian taverns like the Lotus, the Anchor, and El Coco—scattered along First Avenue from Pioneer Square to Belltown. Each had its own niche: one attracted Native Alaskans, who left the bar virtually empty during the summer fishing and logging season; another served a younger crowd, with more expensive drinks and Indian go-go girls; while a third, frequented by both Indians and Mexicans, had the roughest reputation. The best documented of the Skid Road Indian bars, the Britannia Tavern, catered to veterans, loggers, railroad men, and migrant laborers, most with tribal origins in Canada, Washington, Alaska, and the northern-tier states. At the Britannia, Indians could catch up on gossip from the reservations, drop the guards required by urban life, and simply be Indian. As at the Service League's Indian Center, there was a sense of family at the Brittania; patrons often referred to the bar's co-owner, a Puget Sound Indian woman, as "Ma," "Mom," and "Little Cousin." Even Native people who did not live on Skid Road found the Britannia to be "home territory"; one veteran who lived in a middle-class neighborhood often came to the tavern on weekends because "his people" were there.[22]

If the "bow and arrow joints" of Skid Road were homes away from home, it was another downtown institution, the SRO hotel, which often provided actual shelter. In more than two dozen hotels, some 1,700 single-occupancy rooms provided cheap accommodations for Native people and other Skid Road residents. Even the most run-down SRO hotel could be home. Despite the "long, dingy, and bitter-smelling corridors" of the Morrison Hotel, for example, one young Indian woman said, "I loved it here," and having one's own hotel room was a sign of status among the Indian Skid Roaders. For those who were not so fortunate, the Romanesque terra-cotta portico of the Pioneer Building, the benches under the totem pole, and the alleys off the main streets were often the only option. These public spaces were also Native meeting grounds, where answers could be found to questions like "What's happening?" "Who's around?" "Is Joe at the Anchor?" "Will he lend me five dollars?" Skid Road, then, was truly Indian territory.[23]

But time was not on the side of Skid Road, Indian or otherwise. Since the 1950s, civic leaders had been entertaining proposals for the revitalization of downtown, and especially of Pioneer Square. Most proposals included historic preservation (after all, this was the city's birthplace), but the plan that became the favorite of business leaders, John Graham and Company's 1966 design, proposed razing all but four blocks around Pioneer Place Park. The Chief-of-All-Women pole and the bronze bust of Chief Seattle would stay as part of a historic plaza—those place-stories merited preservation—but skyscrapers, parking lots, and a new highway would replace the rest of Skid Road. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, historic preservation and heritage tourism, like multiculturalism, had become part of Seattle's new civic language. Citizen activists quickly decried the Graham proposal, lobbying instead for the preservation of the entire neighborhood as a National Historic District. Not unlike the pioneers several generations before, who had looked to their Indian past as metropolis was born in their midst, now many of the city's residents had begun to look to the city's historic places as a balm against rapacious urban development in the postwar era.[24]

And so the Pioneer Square Historic District, among the first in the nation, was established in 1970 to much self-congratulation on the part

of historically minded Seattleites. But a nagging question remained: what to do with the people who actually called the ground of history home? The answers ranged from the derisively violent to the sympathetically exploitative. One downtown businessman simply called Skid Road residents "scum of the earth" who should be run out of town, while one Native Skid Roader remembered a policeman saying to him, "They didn't play cowboys and Indians long enough . . . they should have killed all you bastards off." As for Graham and Company, the foiled levelers of Pioneer Square, they argued that the people of Skid Road added "little, if anything, to the economy of downtown" and suggested relocating those who could not be institutionalized in prisons or asylums. Some supporters of preservation, however, saw the "denizens" of Skid Road as having value—not as urban citizens but as part of the historic urban landscape. Mayor Wes Uhlman, for example, delighted in welcoming visitors to the city with a tour of Skid Road. "I was the only mayor in America who could do that," he mused, proud of the combination of historic buildings and seedy characters that Pioneer Square provided. Bill Speidel, who led wildly popular historical tours of Pioneer Square's underground network of streets and storefronts, agreed, pointing out that "if we didn't have the bums around, we've have to hire them from central casting." For Uhlman and Speidel, the people of Skid Road had a role to play—literally—in the district's place-story. This would be especially true for Indians, who for so long had been used to represent so much.[25]

Armed with new preservation and safety ordinances, city officials shut dozens of SRO hotels, and by the mid-1970s, three quarters of the city's downtown housing stock had been lost and nearly 60 percent of Pioneer Square's countable population had disappeared. The Morrison Hotel, for example, closed in 1976. It eventually reopened, but by 1981, more than 15,000 units of SRO housing had been lost in downtown Seattle. Meanwhile, the Britannia had shut its doors many years before—in 1970, the same year that the first historic preservation ordinance was passed—and many of Seattle's downtown "bow and arrow joints" followed suit soon after.[26]

For people who remained on Skid Road, downtown's "renaissance"

was a disaster. "A large portion of the city's heritage and architecture has been saved, business has been improved, tax revenues are up," noted one critic in 1972. "Everything is fine except for the people who used to live here. Their condition has not been improved, but has been made worse." And as the hotels closed, the people who remained downtown tended to be poorer, sicker, more often homeless and unemployed, and less likely to be white. Skid Road residents who could move on did so, while those left behind depended upon the few missions and social services that remained downtown. In just a few short years of urban renewal and historic preservation, the Skid Road Native community and many of its diverse neighbors had been almost entirely erased by a district of art galleries, bookshops, restaurants, and taverns catering to tourists and the young and middle class. Indian people, meanwhile, remained the most visible minority on what was left of Skid Road, struggling to survive alongside more new totem poles. One writer noted that "victims of the white man's scorn can still be seen in doorways and around Seattle's taverns near Pioneer Square, or lolling on the area's few park benches," as though the Britannia, the Morrison, and the other institutions of Native Skid Road had never existed. Seattle's third Indian place-story, of the homeless Native person as an urban allegory, had been literally built into the landscape.[27]

Indian people on Skid Road were more than aware of their own visibility. As early as the 1970s, a handful of voices from Skid Road expressed defiance toward the role Indians had been told to play in Seattle's urban narrative. Mexican Indian J. A. Correa, for example, wrote in 1972 about the visibility of Indian people in the district:

> Pawn shops / and / broken people / who drink and sing / and beg for wine / they provide amusement/ for the tourists / who believe in / historical sites / and little kids / from school / are taken there by / devoted bored teachers / to see the heart of their / grandparents' city.

Correa's poem is a dramatic alternative to the story of downtown's "renaissance," illustrating the human costs of urban renewal and what it meant to try to live in what was now the ground of Official Urban

History. Meanwhile, architect Laurie Olin described meeting some of the remaining Skid Road Indians while sketching Pioneer Square streetscapes in the 1970s:

> One morning under the pergola an Indian sat down next to me and said: "How are you at drawing scars?" and grinned. . . . These people whose identity has been so brutally denied wanted to see that they were still there. My drawings seemed to reaffirm their existence. "Draw me, man, draw me; draw me next, I'll hold still right here," said one.

A quarter century later, Earle Thompson, a Yakama writer who had spent years on Skid Road, highlighted the ongoing visibility of homeless Indian people downtown:

> In a mission / doorway / a in-num [Indian] / puts / a green bottle / up to his lips. / He begins / to sing: / "Gimme 5 / minutes / only five minutes more; / let me stay / ah-yah-aye . . ." / He pounds his fist / on the wall. / A couple passes / and he smiles / at them.

Like the Service League members holding their public events and the Fort Lawton activists reading their proclamation, here at last, twelve decades after the founding of Seattle, were Indian voices telling a new place-story. Or more to the point, here at last, twelve decades after the founding, someone was listening and writing it down.[28]

It was against this backdrop of historic preservation and the erasure of Skid Road's Indian history that Edgar Heap of Birds' *Day/Night* was installed to wide acclaim. Columnist and cartoonist David Horsey wrote, for example, "Amid the human wreckage congregating around the Pioneer Square pergola, it seemed that it would be redundant to point out the tragic circumstances of some of Chief Seattle's tribal descendants. But, instead, the panels stand like exclamation points among the living proof of their indictment." The irony of *Day/Night*, though, is that it too is part of the gentrification of the neighborhood, created to speak to those who visit Pioneer Place Park and Pioneer Square in search of stories about the city. When asked in 1997 what she thought of

Day/Night, Margaret, a homeless Aleut woman, referred to it simply as "fucking white man bullshit." To some extent, she was right. Without the crowds who frequent historic Pioneer Square, *Day/Night* would have little meaning and even less of an audience. And perhaps most importantly, it says what many expected all along: that Indians and cities cannot coexist. After all, Heap of Birds took his piece's title from one version of the Chief Seattle Speech: "Day and night cannot dwell together. The red man has ever fled the approach of the white man, as the changing mist on the mountainside flees before the blazing sun." In both English and the first language of this place called Seattle, here again is what we mistake for history: a place-story telling us what we already thought we knew.[29]

DAYBREAK STAR, *DAY/NIGHT*: two astronomical metaphors, speaking radically different place-stories. One tells us: *This city is Indian land*. The other: *This city is no place for Indians*. Their conflicting tales of the connections between Native people and the city capture the conflicts inherent in urban Indian history: What does it mean to be Native in the city? Can people even *be* Native in the city? And what about the fact that, throughout Seattle's history, whether during the creation of the ship canal or the ouster of Native Skid Road, civic leaders seemed determined to make the city into a place that was no place for Indians? The story of Indian activism in the city and the destruction of Indian Skid Road can be understood only in the context of the changing nature of Seattle itself. Before the Second World War, Seattle was a city of lumber mills, racial segregation, and Skid Road. Fifty years later, it was city of white-collar industry, multicultural politics, and urban renaissance, in which reinvestment in city-hood meant both the creation of institutions like the Indian Center and Daybreak Star and the destruction of an Indian neighborhood in the name of historic preservation. As in earlier periods in Seattle's past, changes in the city led to new possibilities and challenges for the Native American community, just as changes in Seattle's Native community led to new urban stories. For all their complexity, these stories together attest to a single, clear fact: that Indian history can, and does, happen in urban places.

More than thirty years after the invasion of Fort Lawton, new stories are still being written. In 1970, there were some four thousand Indians in the city; by the end of the century, there were nearly three times that number. Despite the rise in Native population, though, voluntary groups like the Service League had begun to fade soon after the successes of the 1970s. "Indian people were more able to get jobs and education and so forth," recalled Marilyn Bentz, with the result that "the volunteers weren't as necessary." Meanwhile, the radical activism that had helped reconfigure civic politics faded as well, as life in the city got better and ethnic institutions became more bureaucratic.[30]

But challenges remained, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the range of Native organizations in Seattle attests both to the ongoing pressure to reconcile what it means to be Indian with what it means to be urban, and to the amazing capacity of the Indian community to respond to its members' needs. At Daybreak Star, United Indians of All Tribes offers Head Start classes, foster-care advocacy, culturally appropriate therapy, outpatient treatment for substance abuse, GED (general equivalency diploma) courses, and housing referrals, in addition to its annual powwow and an ongoing art market. The Seattle Indian Health Board—housed in a building named after Leschi—offers medical and dental services and coordinates access to traditional healers. A group called Queer Oyate supports Native people with HIV and AIDS, while the Chief Seattle Club, founded without permission by a Jesuit priest in the 1960s to serve homeless Indians in Pioneer Square, still manages to operate among the galleries and nightclubs. There are even a couple of Indian bars in town. Meanwhile, the Service League is undergoing a renaissance of its own, with members involved in virtually every aspect of the community, and the I-Wa-Sil youth group has recently formed the nation's first urban Indian Boys and Girls Club. All speak to the enormous creativity and strength of Native people in Seattle, according to Lawney Reyes, the architect of Daybreak Star:

I'm very proud of the survival of urban people. The government, they're still scratching their head. . . . We're supposed to be extinct by the help of our own government. And somehow we have managed to survive even when

Native people have been placed in environments that are unlivable. We still find a place to create home.

All that was unlivable—the benches in Occidental Park, the dingy rooms in the Morrison Hotel, the projects at High Point—is being transformed.[31]

Perhaps the most ironic result of that transformation, and of Seattle's urban Indian story, comes from this place itself: from ideas about the connections between Indians and nature and from the simple fact that the city's Native community, made up of families and individuals from scores of tribes, has grown up on territory that once belonged to other Native people. Back in 1970, Bernie Whitebear had played the nature card: "If we're allowed to take over this land we would leave it in its natural state," he told the press at Fort Lawton. "We wouldn't destroy the natural areas there. We would preserve the land, the way the Indians have always done." Later, when Daybreak Star finally opened, the progressive *Seattle Weekly* saw the new facility as part of an "Indian Renaissance" that would lead to preservation of the earth. But twenty years later, the idea of Indians as inherent environmentalists would come back to haunt Daybreak Star when United Indians of All Tribes proposed building conference and museum facilities—a People's Lodge—in Discovery Park. Concerned over aesthetics, parking, and open-space preservation, local non-Indian residents highlighted the plans' seeming betrayal of "Indian environmental values." Having played the ecology card in their claims to Fort Lawton, the founders of Daybreak Star were now held accountable to the stereotype of the ecological Indian.[32]

In responding to the complaints just before his death in 2000, Whitebear unwittingly highlighted the deepest irony about an urban Indian community built on indigenous land. "From the window of my office," he wrote in the *Seattle Times*, "I look north from Magnolia Bluff and imagine the warriors of the Haida Nation who once paddled their great canoes into Puget Sound and beached them on the shores below in what is now called Shilshole Bay." Thinking of those ancestors, he recalled the words attributed to Seeathl that claimed that the white man would never be alone in the city. But Whitebear neglected to mention that those

ancient Haida warriors had been raiders, come to enslave and kill the Shilsholes. And so the place-story of one urban Indian activist came into conflict with another kind of place-story that had been rising during the same years. For while Seattle's urban Indian community had been making a place for themselves in the city, other Indian voices—the descendants of the indigenous people of Seattle—were also laying claim to the city.[33]