5 / City of the Changers

When Ollie Wilbur was a little girl living on the cusp of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the horse and buggy ride from the Muckleshoot Reservation to Seattle was a long one and, in her words, "awful, you know—have to go uphill, downhill, we'd all get off and walk." Even so, her family went every year to visit her grandmother's brother, who lived in a ramshackle floating house near the mouth of the Duwamish. Seetoowathl—or Old Indian George, as his neighbors called him—still lived where he had been born, in a place known in his language simply as Tideflats. He shared the house with his wife, who was either "quite insane" or "the meanest old . . ." depending on whom you talked to, and he made a living by catching dogfish and rendering their oil for local sawmills. ("That's all he does, is fish, the old man," Ollie recalled.) The monotony of fishing was broken every September when Ollie and her parents came with canned berries from the foothills. Their journey linked Seetoowathl, who refused to speak English with visiting ethnographers, and his prickly wife to a reservation some thirty miles distant. Long past the treaty and the Battle of Seattle, indigenous people whose ancestors once lived in Duwamish, Shilshole, and Lake communities like Little Crossing-Over Place and Herring's House still lived in Seattle, even as many of their kin found homes far from the city.[1]

Between 1880 and 1920, however, forces were at work that would make indigenous survival in Seattle virtually impossible. During those years, the city saw its most explosive period of urban growth, which spelled disaster for Native people trying to live in traditional ways and places. By the 1920s, in fact, indigenous Seattle—the geographies and communities that predated the founding of the city—would come to

an end, even if Indian Seattle would not. The wholesale transformation of the urban landscape dramatically altered indigenous subsistence practices and created a new place-story in which the "vanishing race" and the ghostly Indian haunting the city were self-fulfilling prophecies. The Indian people who remained in Seattle, meanwhile, became almost invisible as they adapted to life in a new metropolis.

According to oral tradition, Seeathl had seen this change coming. During treaty negotiations in 1855, he had warned his people to pay special attention to the Americans and their government. "You folks observe the changers who have come to this land," he told those gathered. "You folks observe them well." In calling the Americans "changers," Seeathl invoked the figure of Dookweebathl, the Changer, who had organized the chaotic landscape of deep time and made the world habitable for the human people. It was a particularly apt choice of terms. As powerful forces reshaped Seattle in the decades around the turn of the century, indigenous people found themselves caught up in a transformation of their world nearly as dramatic as those described in the ancient stories. By 1920, Seattle had become the city of a new kind of Changers.[2]

At first glance, Seattle's two most important fires seem unrelated. The first, in 1889, utterly destroyed the city's commercial district; the second, four years later, obliterated several Native longhouses along the West Seattle shoreline. In Seattle's urban mythology, the earlier conflagration is one of the city's great turning points, the phoenixlike moment from which the city rose up to become the Northwest's premier metropolis. The other is a mere historical footnote, forgotten by nearly all of Seattle's chroniclers even though it made headlines at the time. But the two stories they represent—Seattle's urban triumph and the dispossession of local indigenous people—are in fact one story. The path between a boiling pot of glue in 1889 and an arsonist's torch in 1893 represents not just the trajectory of those four years but a broader pattern: in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth, indigenous people in Seattle found themselves on the losing side of urban development. Although many of the specifics of this "dispossession by

degrees" are lost to the historical record, the shared context of these two fires offers insights into the seemingly inexorable, yet often invisible, marginalization of the Duwamish, Shilshole, and Lake peoples.[3]

Rudyard Kipling, imperial apologist and rhetorical bearer of the white man's burden, is an unlikely figure to appear in a history of Seattle, but he offers a graphic (if typically acerbic) description of the city just after the Great Fire of 1889. Arriving in late July as part of a transcontinental tour, he described the near-apocalyptic aftermath. "The wharves had all burned down, and we tied up where we could, crashing into the rotten foundations of a boathouse as a pig roots in high grass," he wrote. "In the heart of the business quarters there was a horrible black smudge, as though a Hand had come down and rubbed the place smooth. I know now what being wiped out means." Kipling also noted the scores of canvas tents set up among the ruins, full of men carrying on with "the lath and string arrangements out of which a western town is made."[4]

Seattle had nearly been *un*made by the terrible events of a few weeks earlier, when early in the afternoon of 6 June, a pot of glue boiled over and started a fire at Victor Clairmont's basement cabinet shop at the corner of Front and Madison. The flames rapidly spread upward and outward to surrounding wooden buildings. Thanks to brisk late-spring winds and a laughably insufficient water system, by nightfall sixty acres (thirty-three blocks), including virtually the entire business district, had burned to the ground and to the waterline. Yesler's wharf, the Lava Beds, and other Seattle institutions all disappeared into Kipling's black smudge. The fire could be seen miles away; one Snohomish Indian woman recalled seeing her older relatives cover their faces with their hands, rocking and wailing as the southern horizon glowed redly throughout the night.[5]

Seattleites moved quickly to repair the damage. As soon as the ashes cooled, business owners resumed their affairs in the canvas tents, but they expended little effort on their less seemly neighbors, many of whom had lost everything to the flames. Orange Jacobs recalled that "the fallen angels and the upper class of gamblers could take care of themselves," while other, less fortunate citizens required "careful and necessary scrutiny" to prevent the handing out of "free lunches."[6] The long-stand-

ing enmity between the people of the Lava Beds and their more straitlaced neighbors shaped responses to the disaster, but as before, the two elements of Seattle society had always existed in a symbiotic relationship. Before long, the Lava Beds had resumed activity. In fact, within months, they were more active than ever, as the Great Fire spurred a riot of urban development in the old commercial district. Wooden structures lost to the fire were replaced by ones of brick and stone, and as capital poured in to rebuild the city, so did new immigrants. For the next year, more than two thousand new immigrants arrived in Seattle every month, nearly doubling the city's population to over forty thousand people by the Great Fire's first anniversary. In terms of the built landscape, population growth, and civic self-identity, the Great Fire was a critical juncture in Seattle's urban story.

But, in fact, the Great Fire had only accelerated growth already under way. It was not the flames of a boiling glue pot but rather those inside a Northern Pacific Railroad engine that had truly sparked Seattle's great lurch toward metropolis. In 1883, the city held its Railroad Jubilee, which included a massive salmon barbecue hosted by local Indians. The Jubilee proved premature, however; the first Northern Pacific train would not arrive until June 1884, over tracks laid by some 1,400 Chinese laborers and heralded by a twenty-one-gun salute using cannon from the 1856 Battle of Seattle. Even then, service was poor, uncomfortable, and inconsistent, leading to complaints from locals and the eventual abandonment of the line by the Northern Pacific. It took yet another year for the "Orphan Road" to become a functioning railway, but when it finally did, in late 1885, it began a new wave of immigration to Seattle that had yet to peak when the city burned.[7]

Eight years later, the 7 March edition of the *Seattle Times* noted a sharp increase in the number of "red denizens" on Ballast Island on the rebuilt Seattle waterfront. Ballast Island was exactly what its name implied: a massive pile of rock, brick, and other debris dropped by ships near the foot of Washington Street. It was one of the few places in town where large groups of Indians were tolerated. On this day in 1893, ten large dugout canoes and several smaller ones, some loaded down to the waterline with furniture, tools, and trunks of clothing, had, along with their

owners, attracted a "large and curious crowd of spectators." Dispatched to Ballast Island by his editors, the reporter soon learned that the canoes' occupants had been burned out of their homes on the West Seattle shoreline. According to the Indians, eight houses had been destroyed, their owners and inhabitants "turned out indiscriminately, without reference to the disposition of the Indians, who, however, took the matter without resistance." Some of the now-homeless Native people were quite elderly and had lived in West Seattle for many years, carrying monikers like West Seattle Jack, West Seattle Jim, and West Seattle Charlie to prove it. Indeed, these were the people of Herring's House, the old indigenous town, which had survived the early phases of urban development. But the Saturday before, a man named Watson, with the help of several other West Seattle residents, had started the fire that brought centuries of Herring's House's history to an end.[8]

At first glance, the Gilded Age razing of this small Native neighborhood in West Seattle seems an anomaly. The deliberate destruction of Herring's House seems more in keeping with the spasmodic violence of Seattle's early years than with the nascent progressivism of the 1890s. But the events of March 1893 were part of a larger urban process of indigenous dispossession that had begun decades before, although that process accelerated in the late nineteenth century with Seattle's metropolitan ascent.

Not long before the fire of 1893, West Seattle had still been an isolated community, separated from Seattle by Elliott Bay and the wide, muddy Duwamish estuary. By the late 1880s, its residents were clamoring for regular connections with Seattle, while Seattleites became increasingly interested in excursions to (and suburban homes on) the West Seattle peninsula, with its beaches, fresh air, and views of the waterfront and Olympic Mountains. And so on Christmas Eve 1888, the ferry *City of Seattle*, equipped to carry wagons, buggies, and cattle, began regular eight-minute passages between the two cities, subsidized by the West Seattle Land Improvement Company, itself bankrolled by San Francisco capitalists. With the new maritime connection, the company began buying and clearing land, building roads and sidewalks, and establishing a cable car line from the ferry landing to a new business district. As

one observer recalled, "it was quite the thing for newcomers to ride back and forth just for the pleasure of the fresh salt air. Even retired deep-sea captains enjoyed the trip." Wharves and grain elevators near the ferry terminal soon followed, and by 1893 West Seattle was in the midst of a development boom, in no small part thanks to the population explosion after the Great Fire of 1889. Muckleshoot tribal member Gilbert King George described his mother's stories of what that had meant for the people of Herring's House:

> My mother told me of the days when this area was being claimed, and playmates' homes were destroyed for relocation purposes. I always remember because she was so puzzled by what happened to her friends' home. She got up the next day, there was a pile of ashes there. Whole families were removed. Relocated. So you have to wonder, you know, what are the mental impacts on a mother and a father, grandparents, who have to literally pick up their family and have to move.

The Great Fire of 1889 had spurred growth in West Seattle, which in turn encouraged the fiery ouster of indigenous people living in places slated for "improvement."[9]

The fire of March 1893 is unusual only in that it merited the attention of the press. Other fires, ignored in newspapers and other historical documents, continued to smolder in the memories of indigenous people who had witnessed them. Occasionally, these memories found their way into the written record. During a landmark 1920s land claims case, for example, older Duwamish Indians recalled what had happened to their villages as Seattle grew around them in the second half of the nineteenth century. Major Hamilton described how, "when the settlers came, they drove us away and then they destroy the house and even set fires to get us away from these villages." Similarly, Jennie Davis, a Lake Indian (and the daughter of Chesheeahud, the indigenous homesteader on Lake Union's Portage Bay), portrayed the transition from Native to settler residences: "Some of [the Indian houses] was gone and I see where the construction of some of the buildings." West Seattle itself was the scene of more than one fire; Sam Tecumseh, the son of

one of Arthur Denny's close Indian allies, recalled the large "potlatch house" that had once stood at Herring's House along with the smaller longhouses. The result of two summers' worth of labor by nearly a score of skilled builders, the big house alone was valued in 1920s currency at around $5,000. "When the white settlers came," he told the courtroom through an interpreter, "then they took possession of [the Indians'] cleared land and also destroyed the house." These indigenous place-stories link the fire of March 1893 to a longer history in which urban development and Indian dispossession went hand in hand.[10]

Seattle's growth also caused a major shift in the urban labor pool. Gone were the days when settlers needed the work of Native people to conduct everyday town life, when Henry Yesler needed Indian men for his sawmill or white women needed Indian women to do their laundry. As more and more newcomers arrived, many indigenous people were pushed aside, their services no longer necessary. For the Duwamish man Dzakwoos, who had kept a homestead on Lake Union, the loss of work forced him to abandon his homestead and relocate to the east, where he would become part of a Native community living at Monohan on Lake Sammamish, where mill jobs remained. This community would come to be part of the modern-day Snoqualmie Tribe, and present-day tribal members understand the changing demographics and economy in and around Seattle as a key reason for the development of this new community. Snoqualmie elder Ed Davis recalled, for example, that the people at Monohan, including Dzakwoos and his extended family, "all come together when they run out of jobs."[11]

And so the refugees from Herring's House, characterized as indignant but "philosophical" by the reporter, had some decisions to make as they gathered on Ballast Island in 1893. They could move to the "lighthouse colony," a windblown squatters' encampment at West Point north of town, and some apparently did. Or they could move upriver: the area around the confluence of the Black and Duwamish rivers had been the eponymous Duwamish "inside" for centuries, and in the 1890s several Indian families still lived there, in a narrow stretch of the river valley that settlers simply called Duwamish. (The descendants of many of those people would become the modern-day Duwamish Tribe.) The refugees'

third option was to go further afield and apply for an allotment of land on one of Puget Sound's reservations, such as Port Madison (later known as Suquamish), Muckleshoot, or Tulalip. For many, this last option seemed to be the safest. At a time when Indian people enjoyed few legal rights, faced discrimination and hostility from many of their non-Native neighbors, and were often forced to live at the peripheries of the new economy, land, even when held in trust, could offer security that life in and immediately around Seattle could not.[12]

Ironically, the rapid urban expansion that had fueled the fire in West Seattle, with its ferries and beach cabins, slowed soon after the community of Herring's House was razed and its members dispersed. Just a few weeks after Watson's arson, the stock market collapsed and banks began to fail across the nation. The Panic of 1893 was on. In West Seattle, the Panic led to what one observer called a "nervous breakdown": the ferries and cable car stopped running, real-estate ventures crumbled, and growth came to a standstill. The depression that followed dampened Seattle's spirits for four long years, and we might ask whether West Seattle Charlie and his neighbors might have still had homes on the shore there if only the timing had been a little different.[13]

Meanwhile, other Native people continued to live in Seattle, albeit in diminishing numbers, after the burning of Herring's House. In fact, it was those diminishing numbers that would lead to a change in the way indigenous people were portrayed in Seattle—indeed, the fact that they were portrayed at all. Whereas the workings of indigenous dispossession in the late nineteenth century rarely appear in the historical record, by the dawn of the twentieth century, Indians in Seattle—especially ones that seemed to be vanishing—were front-page news.

On the last evening of May 1896, Kikisebloo, the daughter of Seeathl, died of tuberculosis in her home on the Seattle waterfront. Her passing was big news in the city, where shops sold postcards of her image and where a chance encounter with the "Indian princess" was one of the highlights of the urban experience. Children sneaked into the city morgue to see

her body, while undertakers argued over who had the right to bury it. When the funeral finally took place on 6 June, thousands of Seattleites lined downtown streets to watch the procession make its way to a full requiem mass at Our Lady of Good Hope. Afterward, Kikisebloo was laid to rest in Lakeview Cemetery in a canoe-shaped coffin, next to her old friend and ally Henry Yesler. Her grandson Joe Foster, whose terrorized mother had committed suicide so many years before during Seattle's "village period," was the sole Indian present.[14]

Kikisebloo's life had been like Seattle's Indian history writ small. Present with her father at the Denny Party's settlement at Alki, she was closely allied with Seattle's founding families, many of whom employed her as a washerwoman. Simultaneously noblewoman and drudge, Kikisebloo elicited a wide range of reactions from her white neighbors: some revered her as a touchstone to the indigenous past (case in point her much-ballyhooed introduction to visiting U.S. president Benjamin Harrison in 1891), while others, especially young people, were more likely to throw rocks at her as she passed in the street. For her part, Kikisebloo was famous both for her loyalty to pioneer families and for throwing stones of her own (or clams or potatoes, depending on what was handy) at her tormentors. In the last years of her life, she lived in poverty on the Seattle waterfront, simultaneously watched over by solicitous society women and lampooned in the press. By the time of her death, Kikisebloo had come to represent both the "noble savage" (expressed best by the urban legend that she had brought warning of the 1856 Indian uprising to Seattle residents) and the stubborn, backward "Siwash" doomed to extinction.[15]

In the nineteenth century, Kikisebloo's life had reflected many of the contradictions inherent in Seattle's Indian story. On the eve of the twentieth century, however, her death heralded a new pattern. The presence of indigenous people in Seattle was used by white observers to craft a powerful new narrative about the inevitable disappearance of Indians from Seattle and the modern world. Native people had always been symbols in Seattle—witness the debates about vice, fire, and disease in the village period—but in earlier decades, they had also been a force to be

reckoned with. As their numbers dwindled in the early twentieth century, local Indians were recast as stock characters in melodramatic stories about urban progress, representing both the inevitability of indigenous decline and the inexorable ascent of metropolitan Seattle. Here was a new place-story.

While she was by far the most celebrated of Seattle's "last" Indians, Kikisebloo was by no means the last of the last. Other Duwamish, Lake, and Shilshole people continued to live in Seattle well into the twentieth century. Some displayed a remarkable commitment to particular places. On Salmon Bay, for example, the small cedar-plank home of Hwelchteed and his wife, Cheethluleetsa, also known as Madeline, was a distinctive landmark on the shore opposite a settlement now known as Ballard. Cheethluleetsa and her husband harvested clams, salmon, and berries to sell in Ballard, using the income to purchase items from area merchants or for ceremonies held with visiting relatives. Like another Salmon Bay Indian, nicknamed Crab John, whose shouts of "salmon, ten cents" were a fond memory of many Ballard residents, Hwelchteed and Cheethluleetsa were living links between the indigenous town of Tucked Away Inside and the modern town of Ballard. Indeed, Hwelchteed portrayed himself as the hereditary headman of the Shilsholes and, as such, garnered much attention from residents and tourists alike, particularly after the death of Kikisebloo.[16]

Meanwhile, on Portage Bay at the eastern end of Lake Union, Chesheeahud and his wife, Tleebuleetsa (confusingly, also called Madeline), regularly entertained visitors from area reservations at their homestead. When Tleebuleetsa lay dying in the spring of 1906, relatives came from area reservations and elsewhere to keep vigil, and a *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* photographer captured the image of family members as they arrived at the small house on the flats of Portage Bay. In the background of the photo, the new University of Washington campus and streetcar suburbs reach to the horizon. Two supposedly separate worlds—the urban and the indigenous—were in fact the same place. (Nowhere is this clearer than at Chesheeahud and Tleebuleetsa's graves, which lie in the old section of Seattle's Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery immediately next to that of Hiram Gill, a controversial Seattle mayor who made his

career playing off the bad blood between Lava Beds society and the "law and order crowd.")[17]

Hwelchteed, Chesheeahud, and their wives were relatively successful at surviving in Seattle, but other indigenous people had a harder time of it. Living among the marshy suburbs on Portage Bay was one thing; trying to eke out a living on the industrial downtown waterfront was another. In 1910, a Duwamish couple named Billy and Ellen Phillips made the headlines after a winter storm destroyed Billy's crabbing boat, their primary source of income. Identified as a nephew of Seeathl, Billy (whose Whulshootseed name was Sbeebayoo) and his wife quickly became a minor cause célèbre. The *Post-Intelligencer* printed graphic descriptions of the couple's living conditions in their cabin at the foot of Stacy Street: both were malnourished, Billy was nearly blind, and Ellen was suffering from chest pains. For some time, they had been surviving on neighbors' stale bread and on fish donated by a nearby cannery. The *Post-Intelligencer* coverage inspired a broader charity campaign aimed at not just keeping them alive but also paying for their relocation. As reporters milked the story for all it was worth, they also chronicled the process by which a skilled fisherman and his wife had been reduced to such dire circumstances. His camping places along the Puget Sound shoreline had become private property, and the new owners resented Indian trespassers. Both game and fish were harder to come by, as habitat loss, pollution, and commercial fishing took their toll. Even Billy's canoe had been lost. These factors, combined with age and ill health, had nearly spelled the end for Ellen and Billy.[18]

The struggle of the Phillips was not unique to Seattle. Throughout Puget Sound, indigenous people were finding fewer and fewer places to call their own. While the treaties of 1855 had allowed Indians to leave the reservation to hunt and fish and work, *living* off-reservation was another matter, especially as the non-Indian population continued to burgeon. Bureau of Indian Affairs agent S. A. Eliot described the situation in the 1910s:

> The most serious situation among the Sound Indians is occasioned by the large number of homeless vagrants. . . . The reservations on the Sound are

now all allotted and there remains a remnant variously estimated at from one to three thousand Indians who are landless and homeless. These people wander up and down the Sound, living on the beaches and constantly evicted or ordered to move on by their white neighbors. In one or two places they have established considerable villages, but they have nothing there but squatter's rights.

In the 1920s, Suquamish tribal member Charles Alexis reported seeing other Indians living in impoverished conditions on sandspits and in other marginal locations around Puget Sound in earlier years. The "lighthouse colony" at West Point, to which some of the refugees of the Herring's House arson had briefly removed, was one such place. While Alexis and Eliot had very different perspectives on these landless Native people—one as a tribal witness in a land claims case, the other as a government advocate of Indian "industrial and moral development"—they both saw Indian landlessness in urban Puget Sound as a dilemma.[19]

For many Native families still living in and around Seattle in the 1910s, allotment at Muckleshoot, Suquamish, and other reservations remained the most realistic solution to this dilemma. In their applications for allotment, Indian men and women both outlined their long connections to Tucked Away Inside and other indigenous communities, as well as to Seattle itself, and exchanged those connections for a new kind of security on the reservations. Even "Lake Union John," the man named for his place, left the city: soon after his wife's death in 1906, Chesheeahud sold his property on Portage Bay (making him one of the richest Indians in Puget Sound) and removed to the Port Madison Reservation, where he died four years later. The only reminder of his presence on the bay was the name of the plat set up on his former homestead; even today, legal descriptions of lots in the neighborhood designate them as part of "John's Addition."[20]

Billy and Ellen Phillips did not initially relocate to a reservation. Instead, with the help of cousins from Suquamish and donations from non-Indian Seattleites, the couple moved into a new cabin on Salmon Bay, next to that of Hwelchteed and Cheethluleetsa, who may have been relatives. The little enclave near old Tucked Away Inside would not exist

much longer, though. Sometime in 1914 or 1915, during construction of locks for a ship canal connecting Puget Sound to Lake Washington, Cheethluleetsa died. Three months later, Indian agents from Port Madison came to take Hwelchteed to the reservation. Soon after that, Billy Phillips burned their home in keeping with Native strictures against moving into a house where someone had died. Neighbor Andrew Jacobsen recalled that the Phillips place caught fire as well: "He let that burn too; he was clearing the land." When the locks were completed in 1916, none of the old indigenous people remained near the site of old Tucked Away Inside; the only Indian people living on Salmon Bay were the mixed-race inhabitants of Ballard and surrounding neighborhoods.[21]

Although they offer glimpses into the concrete workings of indigenous marginalization, contemporary accounts of Seattle's "last" Indians also reflect deep-seated assumptions about the racial destiny of Native people in general. Not unlike tales of Indian ghosts, these are place-stories inhabited by the "vanishing Indian" and a cast of characters drawn from the broader national imagination. Princess Angeline was "the Pocahontas of the West," the Phillips were members of the "fast falling band of Siwashes," and Lake Union John and Madeline represented a final chapter in the "romantic history of early Seattle." As elsewhere in the country, indigenous people who survived in Seattle seemed like temporal anomalies, holdouts from an earlier age. Of Native women selling wares on the city's streets, for example, one writer claimed that "nothing has ever happened to any of them in the city, but they remain what Darwin calls a persistent type, and stuck like a porous plaster." White writers described other Native Seattleites in similar ways. Mandy Seattle lived "in the past . . . when she herself was young and straight as the shoots of the alder in springtime," while her kinswoman Mary Sam Seattle, who had once helped clear land for the first settlers, had been "left by the side, jetsam thrown up by the ebb and flow of human activities, as exemplified in the upbuilding of this city." Simultaneously stuck in the past and vanishing into it, indigenous people in Seattle were characterized by local newspapers as "Our Citizens of Yesterday" and a "wretched remnant."[22]

Accounts of people like Salmon Bay Charlie, then, were often clouded

by powerful ideas about the inevitable decline and disappearance of Indians as a race. They also reflected a major shift in the place of Indian people in urban affairs. As combatants and laborers, alleged vectors of contagion and supposed purveyors of vice, Indians had played a central, and material, role in civic politics in the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, however, Indians were no longer a threat. No one was worried about Hwelchteed and his wife bringing smallpox to town or about Tleebuleetsa and her husband burning down the city. And aside from the few who ponied up cash for the Phillips' move, neither did white Seattleites seem all that concerned about their long-term welfare. Instead, the presence of people like Mandy Seattle simply served as an allegory about both the fate of the vanishing race and the city's urban success. Seen as having little material use, indigenous people could still serve a rhetorical purpose. They could still be used to tell place-stories.

Like indigenous people, indigenous places also served important symbolic roles in twentieth-century Seattle. There was a growing interest in Seattle, and around the country, in "Indian" place-names. Both University of Washington anthropologist T. T. Waterman and his history department colleague Edmond S. Meany, for example, received regular requests for "picturesque" and "quaint" Indian names for estates, beach cabins, boats, and parks. Elsewhere, such names could be used to market urban development itself. In the spring of 1909, for example, the real-estate firm of Calhoun, Denny, and Ewing held a promotional event for their new residential plat, just in time for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. Called Licton Springs, the neighborhood-to-be just beyond Seattle's northern city limit drew its name from the red pigment that Native people had collected there for use in ceremonies. In fact, it was this connection to the indigenous past that made Licton Springs desirable. "The opening of a plat with these natural features in the East would create a riot," crowed one advertisement. "They have learned to appreciate such treasures. Apparently Seattle is arriving at such a stage." Using "legends of our Indian tribes now extinct" to sell suburban homesites made perfect sense in Seattle, where actual indigenous people seemed to be on their way out, save for "here or there a relic."[23]

As "great throngs" rode new trolleys to Licton Springs, they took the waters, visited the nearby shake cabin that had once belonged to David Denny, and entered contests to win free lots. However, should one of those Indian "relics" deign to "worship the God of Health" at the springs—or, more tellingly, should one of their ghosts choose to haunt the place—one writer warned what would happen:

> And it may come to pass that if the spirit of Chief Seattle or Leschi, or whatsoever Hyas Tyee was wont to come to mix his war paint at Licton Springs in the centuries that are passed, should chance again this way on a similar mission bent, he would come plum against a blue-coated, brass-buttoned caretaker, who would take him by the lapel of his war bonnet and, leading him down the cement walk, among the electric lights to the confines of Licton Park should tell him to move on. For this is the 20th Century, and to "move on" is the edict for all of us.

Taken alongside the experiences of Sbeebayoo and other Native men and women, this Licton Springs place-story suggested that there was very little room for indigenous people—alive or undead—in modern Seattle. Their legends and place-names, on the other hand, made great copy. Even the symbolic landscape now seemed to belong to the new Changers.[24]

Seattle is a bad place to build a city. Steep hills of crumbly sand atop slippery clay, a winding river with a wide estuary and expansive tidal flats, ice age kettle lakes and bogs, and plunging ravines and creeks are all sandwiched between Puget Sound and vast, deep Lake Washington. But it was built anyway, despite all this, and today Seattle's watersheds in particular are among its most transformed landscapes: where four rivers once joined to become the Duwamish, now only one flows; Lake Washington empties to the west instead of the south and is shallower; other lakes, creeks, and beaches have been filled, dredged, culverted, and bulkheaded. In the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth—roughly the same years that the "last" Indians populated Seattle head-

lines—the city undertook a series of massive engineering projects that turned hills into islands, straightened one river and obliterated another, and reshaped entire watersheds, driven by what one urban scholar has called the "leveling impulse."[25]

Seattle civic leaders had long held ambitious visions for improving what they called the "natural advantages" of their city. The deepwater port backed by two significant bodies of freshwater had spelled opportunity since the Fourth of July, 1854, when Thomas Mercer gave the name Lake Union to a body of water he hoped would someday link Lake Washington with Puget Sound. Despite various attempts at linking the lakes with flumes and ditches, large-scale efforts were beyond the reach of the young city. Other problems—most notably the steep hills that ringed downtown and the untidy margin between land and sea—remained unsolved throughout much of Seattle's early history. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the technology and capital were available to begin serious attempts at terraforming. In 1895, former governor Eugene Semple proposed cutting a canal through Beacon Hill to connect Lake Washington with the Duwamish River, which until that point had only connected via the shallow, sluggish, and snag-filled Black River. Authorized by the state legislature, construction began in 1901, with soil and clay from Beacon Hill being used to fill the tidelands at the mouth of the Duwamish. While the South Canal project never reached completion—cave-ins and spiraling costs proved its death knell—Semple's passion for reshaping the Seattle landscape continued in the works of other men. The managers of the Seattle General Construction Company, for example, carried on with the filling of the tidelands, using sediments dredged from the Duwamish. Eight years and 24 million cubic yards of silt later, the company had replaced the river delta with the world's largest man-made island, flat, dry, and ready for industrial tenants. That same year, the flood-prone, meandering Duwamish, long a source of frustration, became the focus of engineers' efforts with the creation of the Duwamish Waterway Commission. Dredging began in the fall of 1913, and by 1920, only one original bend of the river remained within the city limits; the rest was a more-or-less straight, fifty-foot-deep channel ideal for large seagoing vessels.

The most dramatic project, however, took Semple's idea of a canal and moved it north. Under the leadership of Hiram M. Chittenden, of the Army Corps of Engineers, and Seattle City Engineer Reginald H. Thomson, the Lake Washington Ship Canal linked Puget Sound, Lake Union, and Lake Washington through state-of-the-art locks at Salmon Bay, opening the lakes to maritime traffic beginning in 1917. Denny Hill was mostly gone by then, too, its earth used to fill tidelands that now fronted a wide, straight, and deep Duwamish Waterway. The Lake Washington watershed had been reoriented entirely; instead of flowing south out of the Black River, it now moved north and west through the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks in Ballard, and the lake itself was ten to twenty feet lower. Together, all of these changes would have profound impacts on indigenous people and places.[26]

For the men who envisioned and then enacted these changes, Indians were irrelevant. Except as emblems of a vanishing past, Native people virtually never appear in the writings and plans of Thomson, Chittenden, and the other modern Changers. Instead, the creators of Seattle's new urban ecology thought they were improving nature. Thomson, for example, called the Duwamish's natural curves "ugly" and "unsightly," preferring a channelized and useful river to one that was messy and unpredictable. Meanwhile, ship canal visionary Chittenden argued that the transformation of Lake Washington and Lake Union was "distinctly a case where utilitarian ends can be accomplished without any sacrifice of sentimental interests." Each of these men downplayed the social costs of reengineering Seattle's landscape; relocating undesirable people, when mentioned at all, was simply one of the benefits of efficient urban planning.[27]

That none of them mentioned Indians should not come as a surprise. For one thing, adherents to the modern urban-planning tradition paid little attention to local knowledge or history; instead, they looked to abstract, positivist models in which attachments to place and past bore little relevance. In other words, indigeneity and modernity were mutually exclusive in the minds of urban planners. At the same time, urban Indians were disappearing into a diverse category of people and communities known as Seattle's underclass, a grouping that would serve

as the bogeyman in planning schemes for decades to come. The presence of Indian people, when noticed at all, could in fact mark areas in "need" of urban renewal. In 1892, for example, one observer described the "Shantytown" neighborhood around Kikisebloo's house on the waterfront in language similar to that used to malign the Duwamish and the places where a canal needed to be built:

> What a blemish on this fair and growing city is that particular locality, where scores of shanties, lean-tos, and sheds, holding a heterogeneous mass of humanity, are huddled together—little children with old faces, unkempt men and women, dirty dogs, stray cats, the sewage from unclean sewers pouring down contagion and filth, moral and physical ill-being—all down that hillside, where the tumble-down dwellings are piled in many cases one over the other.

In a pattern that had begun with the old Lava Beds and that would continue into the late twentieth century, Indianness became a marker of urban disorder. In the case of Thomson, Chittenden, and their fellow Changers, though, those in charge of landscape change were more likely to ignore indigenous people altogether.[28]

Not that there wasn't evidence of Native people all around Thomson and the others; beyond the front-page stories of Billy Phillips and other beleaguered "last" Indians, large-scale civic-engineering projects could themselves reveal evidence of the indigenous inhabitants of Seattle. This was particularly true in the case of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. In 1913, workers exposed a deep shell midden that had once been part of Tucked Away Inside. And when Lake Washington dropped several feet in 1916 as the last barrier between it and Lake Union was dynamited, even older relics were revealed. At a marshy cove on Union Bay, rows of wooden posts—the remains of the fishing weir at the indigenous town of Little Canoe Channel—stood exposed, and ancient stone hearths resurfaced along the new, lower shoreline. But even these discoveries could serve as arguments for the "improvements" to Lake Washington. In the *Seattle Town Crier*, M. J. Carter wrote that the hearths, created by a "dusky race of primitive men," proved that the canal was

a "natural" improvement. "Nature moves slowly and on many feet," he wrote, "but man, harnessing the pent forces of the earth to his needs, strikes with irreverent hand, and the entombed secrets of the past stand revealed." Rather than evoke the importance of such places to indigenous people, these unearthings only confirmed the naturalness of the engineering marvels that revealed and then obliterated them. These men thought they were restoring nature.[29]

But for Native people trying to maintain connections to traditional places within Seattle, the changes to the landscape in the first two decades of the twentieth century were far from irrelevant—they were devastating. Simply finding traditional foods, for example, had become close to impossible. The Duwamish estuary's eelgrass beds, which had sheltered young salmon and armies of herring, were gone, buried under the fill of Harbor Island and bisected by the new Duwamish Waterway. The great middens around Smith's Cove—proof of the spot's wealth of clams and other shellfish—were now covered by a landfill. The oxbows and bends of the Duwamish, once home to clouds of waterfowl, had become avenues for global shipping. And when Lake Washington dropped with the opening of the ship canal, its outlet, the Black River, ceased to exist. Duwamish descendant Joseph Moses recalled that it "was quite a day for the white people at least. The waters just went down, down," he told a local historian, "until our landing and canoes stood dry and there was no Black River at all. There were pools, of course, and the struggling fish trapped in them. People came from miles around, laughing and hollering and stuffing fish into gunny sacks." And on Lake Union, business and residential development wiped out the trout population. "Too much house now—all gone," Chesheeahud told one observer, not long before he finally just sold up and left for the reservation. In reordering the landscape for urban utility, Seattle's Changers had dramatically reduced the utility—and habitability—of that landscape for indigenous people.[30]

There was an element of truth, then, in the "lastness" of Indians in Seattle. In the 1910s, anthropologist Thomas Talbot Waterman noted that Seetoowathl, Ollie Wilbur's relative with the crazy wife, was one of the only indigenous people left in Seattle. In many ways, men and

women like Seetoowathl and Mandy Seattle *were* the last indigenous generation. Certainly, there were people of indigenous ancestry who continued to live in the city. Across Salmon Bay from Hwelchteed and Cheethluleetsa, for example, several families of Shilshole heritage lived in Ballard, and people with roots in communities such as Herring's House and Place of the Fish Spear could be found in other parts of the city. In them, the so-called vanishing race carried on. But in terms of indigeneity—which we might define by subsistence patterns, use of traditional places, ceremonial practices, firsthand experience with the pre-urban landscape, and, not insignificantly, the perceptions of observers—the deaths and departures of Tleebuleetsa, Chesheeahud, and the others did in fact mark a discontinuity in Seattle's Native history. The first decades of the twentieth century did not spell the end of Indian Seattle by any means, but they were the end of *indigenous* Seattle.[31]

During those same decades, indigenous knowledge of Seattle often came to be located outside the city, on reservations like Muckleshoot and Suquamish or in small enclaves like the Duwamish community at Black River. When academics and amateur ethnographers went in search of Native knowledge of the places that had become Seattle, they rarely went to the city. Their lists of collaborators, in fact, read like shorthand for the slow erosion of indigenous presence in Seattle. Waterman's informants Anne Seattle and Lucy Eells, living at Muckleshoot, both had fathers who were born at Little Crossing-Over Place, the settlement now buried under downtown's King Street railway station. Julie Jacob, born African American and abandoned as an infant on Ballast Island before being adopted by Jacob Wahalchoo and his wife, shared her cultural knowledge in her home on the reservation at Suquamish. So did Jennie John Davis, the daughter of Chesheeahud. Local knowledge was no longer local; understanding of indigenous Seattle could best be obtained by getting out of the city.[32]

Meanwhile, for people whose indigenous ancestors had left Seattle decades earlier, places in Seattle remained important: clam beds, fishing sites, campgrounds. But just as urban landscape change brought Billy Phillips and his wife to the brink of starvation, it would also erode connections between outlying Native communities and indigenous

places within the urban fabric. In a 1994 interview, for example, Muckleshoot community member (but enrolled Puyallup) Art Williams, born in 1913, described traveling to Alki Point during the summers of his childhood. There, his parents would build a small timber and buckskin shelter, and for two or three weeks, they and other families would harvest clams, mussels, geoduck, octopus, and salmon from Elliott Bay and the Duwamish estuary. "All along, you'd see bonfires," he told the interviewer, "all along the beaches, where they cooked clams and do everything." Accompanied by drumming, songs, and stories, the annual trip to Alki was a continuation of older seasonal rounds. Fishing and clamming were only part of the action; the main event took place across Elliott Bay, at the foot of James Street on the Seattle waterfront. There, Native people would trade "whatever you got," in Williams's words: woolen blankets and dried clams, camas bulbs and buckskins. For two or three weeks, they would "have a big potlatch . . . everybody come there and say goodbye to one another . . . 'til next year comes, and then have it over again."[33]

That was about to end. As Art Williams got older, the trips to Alki Point and the Seattle waterfront became more difficult. As white Seattleites began to build beach houses with names like Dewdrop Inn and Bide-a-wee facing the beach at Alki, Indian encampments were less welcome. "No, no, no camping no more," Williams recalled. "They said no, no more camps. They wouldn't let us." Incorporated into Seattle in 1907, West Seattle had changed from an outlying community to an urban neighborhood, leaving less and less room for Native encampments. Urban growth and its attendant environmental impacts, meanwhile, led to new conservation law. Indigenous people would bear the brunt of these changes as well. State records pertaining to the arrest of Native people for fishing in the Duwamish and on Elliott Bay no longer exist, but Jennie Davis testified some years later that the Duwamish and other local Indians had to stop fishing "or they will be arrested." Indian agent Charles M. Buchanan was particularly strident in his opinions about the criminalization of indigenous fisheries on Puget Sound, especially in urban places. "The Indians of this agency have donated to the white man all of the great townsites of Puget Sound," he argued in 1916. "No

Indian has given more—no Indian has received less!" He placed the blame on "the stringent and harsh application to Indians of the State game and fish laws . . . done under color of law." Enforcement of these unjust laws, moreover, led to real criminality, reducing Indians to "beggary and theft." By 1922, when Art Williams returned from the Chemawa boarding school in Oregon, he and his family had to "sneak around different places" to harvest fish and clams. They found, however, that shellfish harvests at Alki Point had dwindled, and Williams attributed this not just to urban development and scapegoating laws but to the fact that Indian people were no longer allowed to go there simply to pray for the clams' continued abundance. Indigenous stewardship of the environment, with all its religious components, had been sundered.[34]

And much more than clams had disappeared; urban growth had also destroyed the numinous forces that had given many local places their meaning. The story of Ballard's early political history, for example, is the story of residents struggling to keep each other's cattle from fouling the creek that was the town's main water supply. To the Shilsholes, that creek had once been known as Spirit Canoe after the power that resided there, but by the early twentieth century the power was said to have fled, likely offended by the feces and urine of the Bostons' beasts. By the early twentieth century, there were fewer out-of-the-way places for spirit powers and the practices that accessed them to carry on unmolested. Meanwhile, a Duwamish elder described to ethnographer John Peabody Harrington the effects of urban development on a supernatural horned serpent known to inhabit the Lake Washington shoreline and once employed by some of the most powerful and feared shamans. Harrington's notes simply say that by the 1910s it was "gone, not there now." Around that same time, a boulder inscribed with shamanic power figures on the West Seattle shoreline was buried under fill and concrete foundations. In the late twentieth century, some Indian people would return to sacred sites in Seattle, but during the years of the city's most rapid growth, at least some local indigenous people felt that urban change had destroyed, dispersed, or submerged many of the landscape's spiritual, and thus most fundamental, qualities.[35]

In fact, the primary place-story local indigenous people told about Seattle in the early twentieth century was one of alienation and erasure. Other informants recounted for Harrington what had happened elsewhere in the city, contrasting indigenous places with their current conditions. Of the firs at Little-Bit-Straight Point, where a settlement and stockade had once guarded the mouth of the Duwamish River, settlers had "cut them long ago," and in their place stood the Rainier Brewery. The nearby town of Place of the Fish Spear, meanwhile, now lay beneath the Seattle Electric Company machine shops. And new calamities always seemed possible; when construction of the Alki Playground in West Seattle uncovered the remains of several smallpox victims in 1911, some local Indians were concerned that a new epidemic would be visited upon the area. Together, these stories made up an indigenous accounting of urban transformation, in which a new kind of changer, men like R. H. Thomson and Watson the arsonist, had reworked the creations of the original Changer. For people like Hwelchteed, who resisted leaving Salmon Bay until the very end of his life, and for Art Williams, who had never called Seattle home but who came there every year, connections to Seattle's indigenous landscape had been almost severed.[36]

This is not to say that people from reservations and tribal communities stopped coming to the city. As it did for most people living in outlying areas, Indian or otherwise, the city offered services and amenities and jobs that were unavailable elsewhere. Parents brought children from Suquamish to visit doctors in Seattle; Muckleshoot men and women came to the city to shop. A Skagit shaman could get cataract surgery in the city; Tulalip allottees could go to the courthouse to demand land payments. And in a city still fueled by sawmills, canneries, and shipyards, there was always the possibility of paid work. The new urban landscape—the glitter of the department stores, the seediness of Skid Road, the bustle of the waterfront—might have destroyed the indigenous landscape of horned serpents and herring runs, but it still attracted Indian people, who engaged the city on Indian (if not always indigenous) terms.[37]

For all their differences, Seattle's indigenous and urban landscapes were often closer together than they seemed. While one had appeared

to give way to the other in a dramatically short period of time, in reality both existed simultaneously in the minds of many Native people. Muckleshoot elder Florence "Dosie" Starr Wynn, for example, told an interviewer about trips made to the city in the 1930s and about the persistence of Seattle's indigenous landscape in her grandmother's memory:

> We went to the waterfront, and we went up to the public market, and we used to go up there. And when we'd take her shopping, we'd go through that road through Duwamish, that way. And she named all the rocks. The hills—well, they're gone now, because of blasting and new homes going in, and businesses. But they had names for every one of them rocks down there. . . . Stories about those hills. All along that valley, there.

The place-stories Dosie's grandmother told her were those of North Wind and South Wind, of the dwarves that helped Spirit Canoe travelers, and of lookouts posted on hills to warn of slavers from the north. The landscape might have been changed almost beyond recognition—the sacred horned snake "gone, not there now"—but the memory of these things remained vital for the descendants of Seattle's indigenous people. In 1931 Suquamish elder Mary Thompson said it best, telling a *Seattle Times* reporter that although she seldom visited the city named after her great-grandfather, she remained connected to the place. "I always feel that I own it somehow," she said. Meanwhile, a small community of Duwamish people continued to live within the city, blending in as far as outsiders could tell but maintaining their own sense of themselves as a people. Decades later, their story would resurface, and the transition between indigenous and urban ecologies, represented by changes like the Lake Washington Ship Canal, would be central to that story.[38]

And then there is the indigenous name for the city itself. When ethnographers like Harrington and Waterman in the 1910s and Marian Wesley Smith in the 1940s interviewed elders throughout Puget Sound, they found that most did not refer to the city by the name chosen by Arthur Denny and his pioneer compatriots. Instead, they used the name of the indigenous settlement buried long ago under the sawdust from Yesler's

mill. On the eve of the Second World War, almost a century after the founding of Seattle, Little Crossing-Over Place continued to exist in the hearts and minds of Indian people.[39]

THE FLOAT HOUSE at Tideflats where Seetoowathl lived with his unpleasant wife at the turn of the century did not escape the Changers. The couple had struggled in the first years of the twentieth century, as the dogfish oil industry collapsed with the introduction of petroleum products. Some of their Indian neighbors moved on to the reservations, while others passed away. Meanwhile, the Duwamish River on which their home rose and fell with the tides had changed dramatically. After all the dredging and filling and straightening, they now lived on the last remaining natural bend of the lower river. Relatives came less frequently; Ollie Wilbur and her parents had stopped coming because they "didn't care to go there anymore." It might have been that isolation, together with infirmity and the industrial landscape that surrounded them, that spelled the end. In the 1910s, Thomas Talbot Waterman described Seetoowathl as "hale-appearing," but that would change very quickly. In the winter of 1920, Seetoowathl and his wife starved to death. "He died, you know," recalled his great-grandniece Ollie, "and they just cremated his body, you know."[40]

The crazy woman and the old man who refused to speak English had chosen to stay on the river, and that choice had cost them their lives. The fact that two old people, Indian or otherwise, could starve to death in Seattle in 1920 is an indictment of the failings of the Progressive Era. The city now had over 300,000 residents and had achieved remarkable successes. Most notably, the tallest building west of the Mississippi—the Smith Tower, completed in 1914—stood within sight of the Duwamish, a testament to wealth, competence, and confidence. From its upper floors, one might have been able to see the curve of the river at Tideflats, but the Progressive ethos of reform, charity, and order, for all its successes, could not make the cognitive leap from skyscraper to float house. Then again, the Progressive Era, which saw great leaps forward in medicine, social work, conservation, and suffrage, was also the era of Jim Crow, the Alien Land Law, the

first Red Scare, and the disaster of Indian allotment. Why should Seattle have been any different?

During construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, engineer Hiram Chittenden had once written that critics of the canal disliked such projects "simply because they destroy old associations . . . those who have been familiar all their lives with certain conditions are naturally loth [*sic*] to see them changed." For many Indian people, the "old associations" had been destroyed almost completely. In the decades between the coming of the railroad and the Great Depression, Indian agency in Seattle is hard to find. It is there, though: in the applications for allotment, in the death vigil held near the university grounds, in the "sneak fishing" on the Duwamish. These small acts would provide tenuous links between the indigenous past and future reclaimings of urban space by Indian people. Meanwhile, during the same decades that indigenous Seattle was reaching its nadir, another kind of Indian history was on the rise. In describing her kinsman's house on the river, Ollie Wilbur recalled that a number of the Indians living at Tideflats were not kin of hers or of anyone she knew. They were what those who still spoke Whulshootseed called by a name that meant something like "from the surf's mouth." They were from far, far away, and they had come to make Seattle theirs.[41]