7 / The Changers, Changed

In 1866, Seeathl, Seattle's namesake, died at Place of Clear Water, the community from which Jacob Wahalchoo had once gone out in search of power below the waters of Puget Sound. He was buried on the Port Madison Reservation across Puget Sound from Seattle, not far from the enormous main longhouse at Place of Clear Water that settlers called Oleman House or Old Man House, meaning "worn-out house" or "venerable house" in Chinook Jargon. The death of Chief Seattle garnered little official attention in the city that bore his name; no Puget Sound newspapers announced his passing, and while settlers who knew him surely noted his death—perhaps some even mourned—Seeathl seemed to fade quickly from prominence in Seattle's civic consciousness. A few years later, government agents burned Oleman House, seeing it as a hindrance to their civilizing mission. Meanwhile, the descendants of Seeathl and their fellow Suquamish tribal members tended his grave; occasionally a white visitor from off the reservation would place American flags there in memory of the indigenous leader's contributions to the birth of Seattle. But more often, the madrone-ringed cliff-top cemetery, facing Seattle across Puget Sound, remained a quiet place.[1]

In 1911, the scene at Seeathl's grave could not have been more different. Hundreds of visitors from Seattle were on hand, enjoying the late August weather and the U.S.S. *Pennsylvania*'s brass band following a welcome from the local Indian agent. Seattle mayor George W. Dilling, jurist Thomas Burke, and University of Washington history professor Edmond S. Meany each gave an address describing Seeathl's hospitality toward the first settlers, and patriotic songs were sung in English and Chinook Jargon. As souvenirs, each guest was given a pho-

tograph of the grave courtesy of printer (and future mayor) Ole Hanson. This was Chief Seattle Day. "The sentiment of a Chief Seattle Day, in commemoration of the Indian chief who befriended the white man in the early days of the Puget Sound country," wrote one participant, "has appealed strongly to many of Seattle's prominent citizens." Those citizens made good on their sentiment; by the 1930s, Chief Seattle Day included special Black Ball Line excursions, picnicking, and saltwater swimming, while plans were under way to construct a baseball diamond and tennis courts next to the cemetery. Place of Clear Water, once a fusty impediment to civilization, had become a pilgrimage site for those wishing to commune with their urban indigenous past.[2]

Arthur Denny might have been Seattle's founding father, but Seeathl—generous toward the settlers at Alki, powerfully articulate during treaty negotiations, and unswervingly loyal during the "Indian War"—was its patron saint. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the bad poetry inspired by visits to his grave. One particularly florid example, penned by Professor Meany himself and using the old Whulshootseed name for Puget Sound, was read at the 1911 pilgrimage to Suquamish and later to the University of Washington's graduating class of 1912:

> Peace be with thee in thy honored grave,
> O, Chieftain, as pilgrims we lovingly come,
> Drawn to a shrine by Whulge's cool wave;—
> Suquamish, sad fragment, in fir-girdled home.
> . . . . . .
> Slowly the smoke from the log cabin curled,
> From hearth of white stranger near wilderness shore,
> Hearth and a home at the edge of the world,
> With bold Saxon faith in a hut's open door.
> . . . . . .
> Raging with anger, demons of hate,
> The howling foes fought through the battle's long day.
> Chieftain, O, Chieftain, blest was our fate!
> Thou stoodst like a rock in our tempest strewn way.
> Sweet be the flower, O, child, that you bring,

And pure be the prayer that you Heavenward send,
Soft be the song as wild robins sing,—
A shrine in the grass by the grave of our friend.

Seemingly the noblest of savages, Seeathl was the Indian benefactor to a Saxon city; the place-story of the man and the city that bore his name relied on two premises: a notion of a vanishing race and a belief in inevitable Anglo-American racial supremacy.[3]

Other would-be poets made the connection between Seeathl and Seattle even more explicit, often apostrophizing the person and the place in the same stanza as California resident Florence Reynolds did in the 1920s:

Oh! City so marvelously fair of face,
You were born of a noble Indian race,
And to honor their chieftain you were given his name.
Oh! Seattle, great warrior of deathless fame—
You have a monument that ever will stand,
A tribute of Love to your character grand;
A city of beauty that is fast growing great—
A "Wonder Spot" in a wonderful State.

For Reynolds, a grave paled in comparison to a city itself as a marker of Seeathl's life. Similarly, white Suquamish resident T. M. Crepar, a contemporary of Reynolds, suggested an even closer connection between man and metropolis:

There's a people that's proud of the story,
There's a city that's proud of its name,
Like the Chief he was in his glory,
For Sealth and Seattle's the same.
. . . . . .
'Neath a whitened cross and mound of sod,
The bones of Chief Seattle lies [*sic*];
While across the bay, where once he trod,
Seattle towers to the skies.

Included in a brochure sold to gravesite visitors by Princess Angeline Souvenirs, the poem's claim that "Sealth and Seattle's the same" reflected popular linkages between the man and the city. Talking about Seeathl and Seattle in the same breath—using an Indian to explain the city—seemed only natural. And, in fact, nature was at the core of this particular place-story, which expressed longing for the lost world of the "first Americans."[4]

Stories about Chief Seattle had little to do with the real man named Seeathl. In a pattern that would come to dominate urban discourse over the twentieth century, the city's namesake was often little more than a character from central casting, and the circumstances in which his image appeared rarely had much to do with actual Indians, typically revealing far more about the portrayers than about Seeathl. And, in fact, the symbolic resuscitation of Seeathl in the early twentieth century was but one example of the ways in which white Seattle residents used Indians and Indian imagery to tell urban place-stories. More than appropriations of Indian symbols—a time-honored American tradition—these stories were also ways to work out concerns about a changing city, and as such, they reflected the conflicting ambitions and anxieties of Seattleites. They were stories about place: about what had happened here, about who belonged here. As white Seattle turned to Indians to tell urban place-stories, it was clear that the "Changers" had also been changed by the experience of urban conquest and the transformation of this place called Seattle.

On 17 July 1912, a new kind of Indian arrived in Seattle. Like so many who had come before on their way to the hop yards or the tideflats, he came from the north. But there was something different about this Indian. Perhaps it was that he arrived aboard the *Portland*, the same auspicious ship that first brought Alaskan gold to Seattle. Perhaps it was his dress: rather than the plain pants and shirts that most Native men wore, he sported a Chilkat blanket and the tall headpiece of a Tlingit noble, abalone and copper and yellow cedar announcing an ancient lineage. Perhaps it was the presence of the *Fox* and the *Davis*, twin U.S. Navy destroyers that

flanked the *Portland* as it entered Elliott Bay, or the thousands of Seattleites gathered on wharves and rooftops, blowing whistles to greet him and cheering as calliope music filled the air. What made this "Indian" most different from his predecessors, though, was that he was not an Indian at all and no newcomer. Underneath the mountain-goat wool and cedar headdress were the business suit and balding pate of George Allen, Pacific Northwest manager of the National Surety Company of New York. On this day, however, Allen was no run-of-the-mill insurance executive: he was Hyas Tyee Kopa Konoway—"Great Chief of Everything" in Chinook Jargon—and he had come to Seattle to potlatch.[5]

Between 1911 and 1914 and again in the 1930s, Seattle's premier urban festival was the Potlatch. Like the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYPE), the Potlatch drew on symbols of the city's northern hinterland and trumpeted the unique virtues that assured a great future for Seattle, its residents, and its investors. More than just another example of public relations, though, Seattle's Potlatch festival was also a way for a certain class of Seattleites—specifically, the city's new commercial elite—to tell stories about the city and its history. Called a "triumph of symbolism" by one observer, the Potlatch appropriated Native imagery to create a regional vision of civic development. In telling stories about the places that had been linked to Seattle through its imperial networks, Seattle's Potlatchers crafted a new narrative about what it meant to be not just in this place but in this place that dominated other places: in the premier city of the Northwest Coast.[6]

Seattle's Potlatches, like the AYPE before them, were indicative of the heated competition among Western cities in the early twentieth century. While Seattle's regional dominance was largely a fait accompli by the first Potlatch in 1911, the urban West remained a volatile place, where the fortunes of cities could still be won or lost. Potlatch organizers sought to cement Seattle's position by creating a signature event, "all that the Mardi Gras is to New Orleans; all that La Fiesta is to Los Angeles; all that the Rose Festival is to Portland." But why call it Potlatch? To highlight the city's modernity, why did festival promoters choose a Native tradition as their leitmotif? The answer centers on the question of wealth and on the idea of a civic generosity that offered the promise of pros-

perity to all those who lived in Seattle and its hinterland. That an Indian ritual could best articulate this vision made perfect sense to Potlatch promoters:

> To the Indian of the Northwestern water reaches [Potlatch] means a feast to which all of the tribe are bidden and whence they return to their tepees laden with gifts.
>
> Seattle has adopted the Indian name and applies literally the Indian definition. It spends $200,000 or more upon its annual festival, and offers it, as free as its Northwestern air, to whomsoever may fare this way.
>
> No feature of the whole delightful celebration is offered at a price, for The Potlatch is not established for profit. Rather it is an annual thank-offering for a prosperity that seems perennial; for such beauties of climate and nature as have nowhere on earth their parallel.

Potlatch promoters, then, cast themselves as humble "chiefs" generously bestowing the fruit of civic and ecological wealth upon the people of Seattle and their guests.[7]

Their choice not only served the message of the festivals but also expressed a long-standing fascination with the potlatch among non-Indians. Identified by outsiders as a trademark cultural element of the Northwest Coast, "potlatch" was in fact a constellation of diverse practices used by indigenous people all along the northwestern edge of the continent as a way to manage social, economic, and spiritual relationships. In Puget Sound, for example, the practice of *sgweegwee,* from the Whulshootseed word for "invite," linked elite families, their resources, and their spirit powers over great distances through the public performance of a spiritually sanctioned sharing ethic, often on occasions such as funerals. As one elder said in the 1910s, *sgweegwee* both made a wealthy person's name "high" and made it "go all over the place." This notoriety brought responsibility; Tulalip elder Gram Ruth Sehome Shelton (Seeastenoo) pointed out that the primary purpose of the practice was to "keep up the poor," to maintain social cohesion through sharing.[8]

Puget Sound potlatches, however, were overshadowed in the public eye by those held further north. Marked by more lavish ritual per-

formances, the public destruction of wealth, and the pageantry of dancing societies, the potlatches of the Kwakwaka'wakw and other northern Northwest Coast peoples fascinated academics and the public alike and inspired a vast scholarly and popular literature. Fascination, however, was tempered by colonial revulsion at the seeming profligacy of Indian society, expressed in the de jure repression north of the U.S.-Canada border and in de facto repression south of it. In Seattle, though, potlatch became the inspiration for appropriation. To borrow Gram Shelton's words, Seattle's urban Potlatchers would use Native symbolism to make the city's name high and to make it go all over the place. Here, then, was an event that represented yet another weft of the woven coast, showing how completely Seattle's urban identity had been transformed by encounters with its indigenous hinterland.[9]

It did not start out this way. The first Potlatch, in 1911, used Klondike imagery: the presiding figure was King D'Oro, the avatar of golden wealth, who arrived on the *Portland*—always the *Portland*—with a retinue of hoary prospectors and rambunctious dancing girls. The following year, though, D'Oro was succeeded by Hyas Tyee Kopa Konoway. The brochure for the 1912 festivities described this new incarnation:

> Seattle's Potlatch is unique, for it is based upon and is true to the rich tradition and history of Puget Sound and the Alaskan coast. Every pageant, every spectacle, is colored with the original pigments. Its principal pageant is a line of a thousand totem poles; its emblem is an Alaskan grotesque; its "patron saints" the Whale, the Crow, the Seal, the Bear and other quaint and startling crests of the native of the Northland.

This was, in effect, the AYPE's appropriation of "Indian" images metastasized citywide. The "Alaskan grotesque," inspired by the totem poles of both Seattle and Alaska, was the Potlatch's mascot, known as the Big Bug. Simultaneously an emblem of the festival and an object of racist derision, the Big Bug was a regional cousin to Sambo, drawn not from the imagined plantations of the South but from the Northwest Coast of popular imagination. The Big Bug's nearer kin were everywhere in Seattle during Potlatch: the Chanty Tyees quartet ("the singing chiefs

of the Seattle Press Club") sang "Chinook choruses" for Hyas Tyee Kopa Konoway Allen during his official tour of the city, which including making "good medicine" over the new liner *Potlatch* at the Seattle Construction and Dry Dock. Across town, three dozen young men performing the "Totem Pole Dance" as part of the play *The Alaskan*, written by Joe Blethen, son of the owner of the *Seattle Times*, proved a far greater success than the sourdoughs and sad old King D'Oro. Upon Hyas Tyee Allen's ritual departure, the *Times* observed that "ever after Seattle will look to the Potlatch for an Indian chief and not for a king or queen as high ruler."[10]

The *Times*'s rejection of royalty suggests that the Potlatches were democratic, or even populist, in their conception. Indeed, they were—designed as participatory spectacles, the events brought Brahmin and lowbrow together in a unified civic identity. But for all the nods to generosity and philanthropy, it was Potlatch organizers who gained the most from civic potlatching, and they did so through an organization that stood at the core of urban power: the Tilikums of Elttaes. Making their official debut at the unveiling of a newly painted Chief-of-All-Women pole in the fall of 1911, the Tilikums ("friends" in Chinook Jargon; Elttaes is Seattle spelled backward) included the most powerful men in Seattle. During the 1912 Potlatch parade, for example, one of the highlights was "Chief Skowl's War Canoe," crewed by some thirty Tilikums. Among them were Hyas Tyee Allen's insurance industry colleagues, as well as bankers, attorneys, a Presbyterian pastor, the Seattle postmaster, and staff from both the *Times* and the *Post-Intelligencer*. The canoe also carried J. C. Marmaduke, general manager of the New Washington Hotel and the Alaska Building; Colonel William T. Perkins, an executive with the Northern Exploration and Development Company, the Alaska Midland Railroad, and the Northern Securities Company; Clyde Morris, president of Nome-based General Contractors and the Arctic Club; and Joshua Green, president of the International Steamship Company. Called "the livest of the live wires" in Seattle, these Tilikums had made fortunes from the city's hinterland, whose images their friends at the papers now used to sell the city. So perhaps civic potlatching was not about generosity after all.[11]

Soon after their appearance, the Tilikums became one of the largest civic organizations in Seattle. A competition among their three component "tribes" in 1913, for example, brought in 1,547 new members, bringing the total to 2,588 Tilikums, a significant portion of the city's white, middle- and upper-class men. Their induction ceremony involved the climbing of a totem pole, and tongue-in-cheek gossip of human sacrifice circulated through town, a reminder of the fascination with rumored cannibalistic rites among Northwest Coast peoples. "Playing Indian" was a well-established American pastime and had always expressed a wide range of political and cultural notions, but if the Tilikums tried to look like Indians, they behaved more like their white counterparts in fraternal organizations throughout the country. Concerned—at least on the surface—with more than simply making money, the Tilikums also sought to create a new moral climate in the city. During their inaugural year, for example, they erected a totem pole downtown that literally spelled out the values of the Tilikums. A far cry from the Chief-of-All-Women pole at the other end of the downtown, this one stood atop seven steps, each engraved with a virtue: Energy, Loyalty, Tradition, Truth, Ability, Equality, and Success—all spelling Elttaes. For all its gaiety, the work of the Tilikums was also a moral project, its apparent confidence belying deep-rooted concerns about modern urban life and the reforming impulses of the Progressive Era.[12]

The work of the Tilikums was also a historical project. The 1912 Potlatch parade, for instance, was a wheeled chronology of Seattle's imperial past, its place-story cast in crepe and cardboard. First came a float belonging to a "shaman," who used rattles to clear "evil spirits" from the parade route, followed by the Hyas Tyee's own float of walruses, ravens, and golden cornucopias representing the North's abundance. Then came the Tilikums themselves, some wearing papier-mâché bear, eagle, and whale masks and others dressed as totem poles, with horns braying and drums pounding in "the way in which the Indians of the North called together the chieftains." Next came a Native potlatch scene complete with slaves and giant feast dishes, followed by Russian Alaska: a miniature replica of the Orthodox church at Sitka and

"Russian priests, Cossacks and Indian slaves." Last, but certainly not least, came the American period, represented by a huge eagle perched on a map of Seward's purchase, a re-creation of Chilkoot Pass with a regiment of sourdoughs, and lastly the Home Government float, "a patriotic conception of what the future holds for Alaska." Looking north to articulate Seattle's urban future, Potlatch organizers expended little energy on the local past: Chief Seattle, the pioneers at Alki, and other figures and events from Seattle's pre-imperial history rarely appeared at Potlatch. This was a story about place, and the place in question was the salmon-scented silences, gold-strewn Arctic creek beds, and totem-poled villages of Seattle's hinterland—not the lands and waters upon which Seattle had been built.[13]

The kind of place-story the Tilikums told had everything to do with the kind of men they were, and with the kinds of experiences they had had with both cities and Indians. Most members of the Tilikums of Elttaes were *cheechakos,* people who had arrived during Seattle's period of rapid population growth that began in the 1890s. Few of them had experienced Seattle Illahee. For them, the city had always been a place of banks and steamships and railroads and tall stone buildings, all connected to Alaska and the North Pacific. To be fair, Potlatch—which, after all, began as Alaska Day—was never really about Seattle's history in the first place. A glorified street party and public-relations campaign, Potlatch was an escape from the past, created by men with little interest in reliving a history few of them had known firsthand. At the same time, convincing residents, visitors, and investors of Seattle's current and future greatness required the creation of a historical trajectory—a story for the city. And, in a sense, the Tilikums' version of Seattle's history *was* a local story; in the crowded world of twentieth-century urban competition, Potlatches and totem poles and tribes could provide the city with a unique urban identity among its rivals. But their definition of place was a new one: as the Northwest Coast's greatest metropolis, the hinterland had for the Tilikums become part of Seattle's local terrain.

The Tilikums might have escaped the local past, but they could not escape the global present. The 1913 and 1914 Potlatches resembled that of 1912 in all the important ways—totem poles lining the streets,

Tilikums in their war canoes, and the Big Bug leering at the throngs—but Seattle's biggest festival became increasingly entangled in events in the broader world. The 1913 Potlatch was marred by running battles between enlisted men and the Industrial Workers of the World, and as the world embarked upon the Great War in 1914, Potlatch was scaled back to only four days and received only subdued press coverage. In fact, the 1914 Potlatch would be the last for two decades. The festival was revived again in 1934 to bolster the spirits of a suffering city, thanks to a new generation of Tilikums with their own Hyas Tyee Kopa Konoway, tribal chieftains, and shamans. By the Aviation Potlatch of 1941—the last Seattle Potlatch, as celebration gave way once again to war—images borrowed from Seattle's experience with empire, and versions of history that emphasized the regional over the local, had come to seem like natural expressions of Seattle's past. Although the Tilikums had been responsible for creating this new sense of the local, based in their own lived experiences in a regional metropolis, they did occasionally venerate local history. Even in the years when Potlatch was not held, the Tilikums participated in other urban ceremonies, throwing their weight behind both Chief Seattle Day and commemorations of the landing of the Denny Party at Alki Point. And when the men who dressed as totem poles, who shook Tlingit rattles and spread cannibal rumors about themselves, came together to remember these turning points in the local past, they came into contact with another group of Seattleites who told a very different place-story but who also used Indians to do it.[14]

THE TILIKUMS OF ELTTAES told one kind of urban story in the early twentieth century; pioneers told another. As the "live wires" that powered the dynamo of urban growth, the Tilikums used Indian imagery to sell the city, but pioneers and their descendants used Indian imagery to express ambivalence about the losses attendant to that growth. Potlatches were optimistic festivals of promotion, while pioneer stories were sentimental markings of the passage of time. The two had different purposes: one to drum up attention in the noisy marketplace of civic public relations, the other to pre-

serve local heritage and revisit fading memories. The Tilikums looked to the future, while the pioneers gazed longingly into the past. What they had in common, though, was that both told stories about Indians to give shape to the history of the city. To craft their place-story, pioneers used accounts of local indigenous people to commemorate their own lives in the city's lost landscapes and, in doing so, cast themselves as a "vanishing race" in their own right. The Tilikums were not the only white people playing Indian in Seattle.

In 1938, the same year that the Tilikums dragged the Big Bug through the city for a "Potlatch of Progress," Seattle pioneers and their families gathered at the Stockade Hotel at Alki Point. While Potlatches were about extravagance, hyperbole, and celebration, the gathering at Alki was something quite different. "The blazing logs crackling in the fireplace," noted a *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* observer, "imparted an air of authenticity and quiet corroboration to the ceremonies which were simple but heartfelt." The guest of honor that day was Rolland Denny—an infant when his parents and their cohort landed on 13 November 1851, the last living member of the Denny Party, and, as such, the only surviving link to those hallowed events. Denny's presence also made Seattle unique; in his address to the group, Mayor Arthur Langlie pointed out that Seattle was one of the few cities where one of the original founders still lived—a backward-looking kind of boosterism. (Seattle's uniqueness in this regard was to last only a few more months: Rolland Denny was dead by the following year's gathering.)[15]

This was not the first such gathering. For nearly half a century, early Seattle settlers, like their counterparts in other Western places, had been coming together to commemorate and commiserate. The Society of Washington Territory Pioneers—"pioneer" defined as someone who had arrived prior to the indigenous uprising of 1856—was incorporated in Seattle in 1872, with Arthur Denny, Henry Yesler, William Bell, and Henry Van Asselt among the founding members. It merged with the larger Washington Pioneer Association in 1886. From the outside, the group's annual meetings, usually held in Seattle, seemed almost funereal. Except for quaint anecdotes of settler life—a litany of hapless Indians, runaway horses, and jokes about mud—the reunions seemed like

a deathwatch. A Seattle newspaper described one such proceeding in the 1890s:

> Charles Prosch . . . read his annual report as secretary, which was interesting and of pathetic interest, especially when we have the names of those recently dead. The pathos of this was heighted [*sic*] when, in response to the reading of the roll call, the answer several times given from those present was, "He is dead," these being the names of those who had gone, but of whose death Mr. Prosch was not aware.

The paper then enumerated the dead by name: thirty-seven for that year, including Henry Yesler. Press accounts of pioneer reunions, which typically included page after verbatim page of members' reminiscences, highlighted the fact that the generation that had settled Seattle, along with the way of life they represented, was fast disappearing before the onslaught of modern urban life. Pioneer stories were a way to talk about urban change and offered a counterpoint to the enthusiastic promotion of boosters like the Tilikums of Elttaes.[16]

Arthur Armstrong Denny set the precedent; if he is the "father of Seattle," then he should also be known as the father of Seattle pioneer malaise. In the first published history of the city—*Pioneer Days on Puget Sound,* printed in 1888—Denny was the first to express anxiety about the urban transformations taking place around him:

> It is now thirty-six years since I came to Puget Sound, and I am more and more impressed with the fact as each succeeding year rolls by that the early settlers of the country will very shortly all have crossed over the river and be soon forgotten, for we may all concede the fact that we shall be missed but little when we are gone, and that little but a short time; but when we have met the last trial and our last camp fire has died out some may desire a knowledge of such facts as we alone can give.

Here was another kind of crossing in the crossing-over place of Seattle: between two kinds of Bostons, to use the old Chinook Jargon term for the Americans. In one particularly petulant passage, Denny penned that

it is a common occurrence for parties who have reached here by the easy method of steamer or railway in a palace car, to be most blindly unreasonable in their fault finding, and they are often not content with abusing the country and climate, but they heap curses and abuse on those who came before them by the good old method of ninety or a hundred days crossing the plains.

Denny made a clear distinction between his generation and the burgeoning tide of *cheechakos,* many of whom would go on to become members of the Tilikums of Elttaes. He became increasingly dejected in his public musings about the passing of his generation and the ascendancy of Seattle's new civic society; in an 1890 interview with historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, for example, Denny lamented his own obsolescence and seemed to look forward to what he called "crossing over." Even the physical evidence of his role as founder of the city had disappeared; in 1892, the remains of that first log cabin at Alki were razed, despite Denny's efforts to save it. Denny might have been the father of Seattle, but he seemed surprisingly lost in the city's modern incarnation.[17]

Denny may have been the first—and the most pessimistic—Seattle pioneer to articulate this anxiety over modern urban life, but he was by no means the last. Major J. Thomas Turner, who had first come to Seattle in the 1850s, noted in his 1914 reminiscences that "times have changed," not unlike the North American landscape. "There are no more Rocky Mountains," he wrote, "no more Indians, no more buffalo, and the Great Plains have disappeared. Come to think of it, were there ever any, or were [*sic*] their existence only an iridescent dream?" Meanwhile, Charles Kinnear, after describing scenes of 1870s Seattle in his own memoirs, ended with the acknowledgment that "this was in those long haired Siwash Indian days on what is now the city's main waterfront, and the like of it cannot be seen here any more." Similarly, Edith Sanderson Redfield mourned the passing of Seattle's "wilderness," its "virgin shore," and the race of "Redmen" who lived there in a 1930 poem:

All, all are gone, the men, tepees
E'en gone the trickling streams, the trees.

Seattle now in pride surveys
Its ports—its buildings—railroads—ways,
Where money comes and money goes;
Whose right supreme? Who cares? Who knows?

Turner, Kinnear, and Redfield each linked their history to specific places lost to urban development, and filled those places with remembered Indians.[18]

As pioneers told stories about Indians and nature to measure what had been lost, they produced a place-story that challenged the one told by the Tilikums, and they knew it. Pioneer poet Francis Henry, for instance, had written in 1874 about the "pleasant condition" of the early settler who was no longer the "slave of ambition" and who found a new life in the Northwest surrounded by "acres of clams." Some years later, Henry felt compelled to pen a bitter sequel:

Some say this country's improving,
And boast of its commerce and trade,
But measured by social enjoyment
I find it has sadly decayed.
In the pioneer days on the Sound,
When the people had little to wear,
And subsisted on clams the year round,
We'd hearty good fellowship here.
. . . . . .
Not only our friendly relations
Are dropped for the worship of gold,
But the solid backbone of the country
Is recklessly bartered and sold.

The poem continues with complaints about logging, the commercial harvest of those sacred clams, and other emblems of industrial Puget Sound. That Henry used gold as a metaphor for the lack of "friendly relations" in the new, metropolitan Seattle was no accident. He and his pioneer compatriots were crafting an urban story that directly challenged

the one promoted by the Tilikums in the Potlatch festivals. Instead of a story in which the city's northern hinterland—and the wealth that had sprung from it—was the driving force, pioneers crafted a story in which Seattle's origins lay in a close-knit community set in a nigh-Edenic landscape.[19]

The local press also became involved in this clash of urban histories. In 1913, just before the start of the third Potlatch festival, a writer for the *Patriarch* complained that "publicity has developed into a system in the present day. That which is not unworthy of publicity is considered, by the public, to be not worth notice." The writer then listed all the civic holidays in Seattle—including Tilikums' Day and Boosters' Day—before pointing out that the "Hegira" of the pioneers had nothing to do with gold and that "theirs was no feather-bed Pullman car luxury, such as is now enjoyed by those insolent 'chee charcos' who presume to treat them with patronizing condescension." The tension between Potlatch parades and pioneer reunions, then, reflected a much deeper conflict between the *cheechako* and the pioneer generations and the social orders they each represented. Some pioneers had benefited from Seattle's metropolitan status; in fact, many of the founding families had become important members of the civic and commercial elite. But in the new cities of the West, as historian David Wrobel has shown, pioneers' political and economic power was usually slight—even if their cultural and moral status was not—and their accounts of the past contrasted sharply with the efforts of boosters to imagine places like modern Seattle into existence.[20]

As more and more of Seattle's first settlers died, it fell to their children and grandchildren to keep the pioneers' place-story alive. Not surprisingly, the Denny clan was at the heart of things. In a series of enormously popular books, Emily Inez Denny (the daughter of David and Louisa Boren Denny) and her second cousins Sophie Frye Bass and Roberta Frye Watt (the granddaughters of Arthur Armstrong Denny himself) equated Indians, nature, and the pioneer way of life more explicitly than their predecessors ever had. Denny's 1909 family memoir *Blazing the Way; or, True Stories, Songs, and Sketches of Puget Sound and Other Pioneers* is filled with passages in which the first white woman

born in Seattle grieves for a time when "our play-grounds were the brown beaches [and] the hillsides covered with plumy young fir trees." The playground was made all the more wonderful by the "friendly advances" of Native children, who "in their primitive state . . . seemed perfectly healthy and happy little creatures." All this would be swept away by the inexorable tide of progress:

> To the few of our pioneers who are left and who were once the barefooted boys and girls who played the roads that are now First and Second Avenues the past seems like a beautiful dream, wherein people of another world dwelt; the red man with his picturesque garb of blankets and beads; the pioneer in his buckskin hunting blouse and coon skin cap; the sailors from white winged ships, and the jolly Jack tars from the old man-o-war.

Denny's "beautiful dream" contrasted starkly with the urban landscape she now saw around her.[21]

Denny's kinswomen Sophie Frye Bass and Roberta Frye Watt were brought up with tales of Seattle's village period and, like Denny, told stories about Indians to talk about Seattle's metropolitan transformation. Bass in particular used changes in the urban landscape to distinguish between the Indian past and the urban present: "Third Street with its neighborly homes, beds of pansies and mignonette, shade trees, picket fences, along with the lum-me-i (old woman) and her micka tickey clams (Do you want to buy some clams) is of yesterday, while Third Avenue with its hurrying throng, its roar of traffic and brilliant lights—is of today!" She described the deaths of indigenous people like Kikisebloo and the city's massive engineering projects in the same sentence; she mourned the time before conservation laws, when local settlers could come home with bags full of game. To talk about urban change, it seemed, required talking about Indians. Watt followed a similar path; in writing of her uncle Rolland, for example, she cast the Indian and urban as antonyms:

> His life has spanned the years from the Indian cayuse to the automobile, from the Indian canoe to the airplane. He has seen Seattle grow and change

from one roofless cabin in the wilderness to a city of towering buildings; he has seen the winding Indian trails give way to straight and paved streets; his ears have heard the cry of the cougar, the chanting of the medicine man—and the voice of the radio.

In fact, in lamenting the loss of the pioneer way of life, with its romantic scenery and encounters with Indians, the Denny women and other pioneers created a framework in which Indians and cities seemed as though they were mutually exclusive. Just as "pioneerness" seemed impossible in twentieth-century Seattle, so too did "Indianness." Some even went so far as to equate themselves with the Indians who peopled their stories. In describing the passing of the settler generation, Bass described the factors that had led to the dispossession of many *real* local Indians—in particular, large-scale urban engineering—as if she and her ancestors were a vanishing race as well. And when her family home burned in the 1870s, she recalled feeling as though "I could say with the Indians when they were driven from their homes, 'chad-quid-del-el' ('Where is my home?')," using a Whulshootseed phrase to express the terror of homelessness. In Bass's urban story, pioneers practically *were* Indians.[22]

The Denny family writers mourned the effects of urbanization—in particular, the perceived loss of community, freedom, and closeness to nature—and used stories about Indians to do it, but they rarely spoke of the processes by which indigenous land had become Seattle. For example, none of the women mentioned the 1866 petition that had prevented the creation of a Duwamish reservation near Seattle—a petition their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers had all signed. Instead, they emphasized the "incalculable injury, outrages, indignities, and villainies practiced upon the native inhabitants by evil white men." Like their ancestors, Watt, Bass, and Denny saw Indian-white hostilities as the fault of the "wrong" kind of settlers, whitewashing both their own past and Seattle's urban history. Avoiding the connections between urban founding, Native dispossession, and metropolitan dominance, the creators of pioneer place-stories absolved themselves of responsibility for both the indigenous past and the urban

present. *It wasn't us*, they seem to protest. *It was somebody else, the squaw men or those damned* cheechakos.[23]

Despite the contrasting place-stories they told, and the real differences those stories represented, the Tilikums and the pioneers had many things in common. One of those things was Edmond S. Meany. A University of Washington historian, Meany played a critical role in documenting the local past, often in collaboration with pioneer societies, but also participated actively in the civic boosterism and cultural borrowing of the Tilikums. Meany consulted with Broadway High School students on a historical pageant that stretched from Vancouver's voyage to the creation of the Ship Canal and the Smith Tower, and he was one of the lead organizers of the AYPE, ensuring that the University of Washington would benefit from the development of the fairgrounds. He advised Tilikums on the "proper" meaning and use of the term "potlatch" and regularly answered letters inquiring about "Indian names" for young-businessmen's clubs, high school yearbooks, real-estate developments, and vacation homes. Meany's life and work blurred the distinctions between Potlatcher and pioneer, academic and booster, archivist and appropriator.[24]

Beyond the tireless Professor Meany, the Tilikums and the pioneers had something else in common. Together, they crafted Seattle's most powerful place-story, in which something called the Seattle Spirit, born in the founding at Alki Point, triumphed over both nature and Native people. This story was transmitted most explicitly on the anniversary of the Alki landing, known as Founders Day. While Founders Days in the nineteenth century had been reserved observances, by the twentieth century they had become urban spectacles, second only to the Potlatches, joining memories of Indian "depredations" to calls for a renewed civic consciousness and grafting local stories onto national narratives. In reenactments and other rituals, Seattle's "Pilgrims" were not just founders of one northwestern city but players in a triumphant drama of civilization-versus-savagery that had begun at Plymouth Rock. Every November, Seattleites made their city's place-story and their nation's place-story one and the same.

One of the first large public observances of Founders Day came in 1905. Hundreds gathered at the corner of First and Cherry, the site of the blockhouse where settlers had cowered during the indigenous attack on the town in 1856, to witness the installation of a plaque commemorating survivors of the "Battle of Seattle." Pioneer attorney Cornelius Hanford gave the keynote address, describing in vivid detail the "sanguinary struggle." While noting that only a few settlers had been killed in the uprising, Hanford pointed out that "it was an earnest war, and waged for the purpose of expelling or exterminating all of the white people." But the pioneers had persevered, eventually allowing landscapes locked in Native possession to achieve their full potential:

> Necessity, which is natural law, justifies the exercise of power of dominant races to occupy and use the land for the purposes for which it is adapted. . . . The Caucasian race acquired North America, partly by purchase and partly by conquest of the native inhabitants, who, as occupiers of the land failed to use it as God intended that it should be used, so as to yield its fruits in abundance for the comfort of millions of inhabitants.

For Hanford, and likely for many in the audience that day, the connection between indigenous resistance and urban development was clear: the former had almost ended but ultimately justified the latter, and it was the land, *this place*, that joined those two stories. In later years, Hanford would hone this logic. In his 1924 subscription history *Seattle and Environs*—along with books by the Denny clan, part of Seattle's historical canon—he wrote that the attack stemmed from Indian resentment of a "stronger and more enlightened people." In the end, Native envy had faltered before the Seattle Spirit, which had existed "from the time when the founders landed . . . intangible as the souls of men and yet a real force, giving community identity distinct as the individualities of persons." The birthplace of Seattle, then, was located both at Alki Point and in race war.[25]

Some observances of Seattle's birthday were held in public places like the corner of First and Cherry; others were held in private homes where old friends gathered to share their memories. One such gather-

ing took place in 1914 "in a proud old house on the top of First Hill, where the ceilings are high, and the roof is mossy, and the stairs are square, and the light comes through the windows in rainbow patches." This was the home of Vivian Carkeek, one of the éminences grises of Seattle society. He was a pioneer; in fact, he had been born in a waterfront house built on the place where, back in 1862, David Kellogg had watched Bunty Charley's initiation into a Duwamish secret society. As founders of the Seattle Historical Society and with links to Seattle's village period, Carkeek and his peers crafted a genteel vision of the past. But there was also a darker side to that history: among the teacakes and crinoline at his party could be found "an Indian costume or two for grim reminder." For all their gentility—or, rather, because of it—pioneers saw themselves as noble survivors of the violent tensions that had dominated Seattle's first years. One of Carkeek's friends wrote, for example, that "as ever the case from Massachusetts Bay to Puget Sound the white and red man go to war." Linking Seattle's creation to that of the nation, pioneers saw their city's foundations laid in the inevitability of racial conflict and in the moral fiber that had ensured American victory. From Pawtuxent to the Little Crossing-Over Place, the story seemed the same.[26]

This vision of civic and national origins was not limited to the pioneers. Pioneers and Potlatchers alike told stories about interracial violence as a way to remind modern Seattleites of the travails of their forebears. Abbie Denny-Lindsley, one of Arthur and Mary Denny's daughters, cautioned in 1906 that if modern urban residents could "awaken from their uneasy slumbers some night and find Seattle as she was forty-five years ago, they would think it a pipe dream and feel for their scalp locks." That same year, attorney and civic busybody W. T. Dovell—a candidate for future Tilikum membership if ever there was one—echoed Denny-Lindsley's sentiment, contrasting the softness of twentieth-century city life with the grim realities of the frontier. "Where in those days the stranger, who struggled to these shores, found no warmer welcome than that accorded by the lurking savage who coveted his scalp," Dovell said in an address later printed in the *Washington His-*

torical Quarterly, "he is now received into the abiding place of luxury and wealth." And at a 1938 pioneer reunion, Mayor John Dore warned the younger people present that "the race is getting soft [but the] pioneers lived hard. It would be well if you children could understand the hardships these people went through." Certainly, there were other Seattle Spirit stories: the lost railroad-terminus battle with Tacoma in the 1870s, the imposition of law and order during anti-Chinese violence in the 1880s, and the struggle for Alaska gateway status in the 1890s. But it was the Indian challenges of those first years that had the most power and that would continue to reverberate for much of the twentieth century.[27]

That power sprang from the resonance between local place-stories and the national narrative. American thinking about the frontier, best articulated by historian Frederick Jackson Turner at the 1893 world's fair in Chicago, linked the belief in a national character shaped by the frontier experience to concerns about the fate of a nation whose frontier had just "closed." Just as Mayor Dore worried about the loss of the Seattle Spirit, Americans in general wondered who they were without the twin threats of Indians and wilderness. Meanwhile, the Indians in Seattle's stories also looked familiar: Seeathl was the noble savage par excellence, assuaging the guilt of conquest through hospitality and prophecy; the Big Bug and other icons of Potlatch reflected fascination with the exotic and, ultimately, the laughable and primitive; and the Seattle Spirit drew on the long history of American fear in which the ignoble savage, with his tomahawk and shrill war cry, skulked in the dim forests of the imagination. The creation of stories like these had become a national pastime. Like countless new local historical societies, Grand Army of the Republic reunions, and reenactments at Plymouth Rock, Seattle's Potlatches, pioneer gatherings, and Founders Days were part of what historian Michael Kammen has called a new civil religion of historical observance. Stories about Indians created meaning in modern America. They established pioneers' social status in a wealthy new metropolis, they voiced dissent regarding environmental and cultural change, and ultimately, they justified urban conquest. And in the years

leading up to the Second World War, Seattle's place-stories went largely unchallenged, even by Native people themselves.[28]

DURING THE YEARS THAT the "Changers" transformed Seattle's indigenous and urban landscapes and crafted civic place-stories using Indian images, few Native people resisted either development in explicit ways: the 1893 protest by refugees from Herring's House on Ballast Island was a rare exception. Certainly, indigenous people had their own place-stories of the city's growth—Chesheeahud's comment about "too many houses now," for example—but those stories were almost never told in public. Instead, Native men and women often participated in the events through which white place-stories were transmitted. They were there at the 1911 Potlatch, paddling a canoe against the University of Washington's crew team. (The Indians lost, proving yet again, according to the *Post-Intelligencer*, that "the red man and his handiwork could be no match for the white man and his skill.") They sometimes came to pioneer gatherings; Suquamish elder Jennie Harper, for example, was brought across Puget Sound to sit at the head table during Rolland Denny's final reunion at the Stockade Hotel. And in 1936 Snohomish elder Harriet Shelton Williams unveiled the new official city seal—a suspiciously Roman-looking profile of Chief Seattle—on Founders Day, while her father, Tulalip chief William Shelton, told stories about Seeathl in Whulshootseed, Chinook Jargon, and English. At events like these, indigenous people's participation seemed only to confirm the civic story. Meanwhile, Native people from Seattle's hinterland, lacking the authority that being local bestowed, had even less of a voice.[29]

Even at Chief Seattle Day celebrations, held on a reservation, Native people were active participants in observances that told stories serving white urban interests. Beginning with the first Chief Seattle Day in 1911 and continuing through the 1940s, the Suquamish were gracious hosts to hundreds of visitors from the city, decorating Seeathl's grave, coordinating massive clambakes, playing the bone game, and entertaining with "quaint old Indians [*sic*] songs." In formal speeches, hereditary chiefs and other tribal leaders spoke of Seeathl's generosity, called

for peace between whites and Indians, and conducted graveside ceremonies. In doing so, they asserted their own ceremonial and political presence, but if there was resistance to the Seattle place-story embedded in Native participation in Chief Seattle Days, no one outside the indigenous community seemed to notice. Native people surely had their own Seattle place-stories; as historians of other places have shown, private stories shared among communities with limited access to public discourse can be the basis for a vibrant alternative historical consciousness. Around kitchen tables, at winter dances, and in tribal council meetings, tribal people surely told their own stories about what Seattle—the man and the city—meant from their own perspectives, keeping alive their own memories of urban conquest. It would be years, however, before those place-stories reached white audiences.[30]

Stories have a past; they come from somewhere. Stories also perform work; when they are told, they enact power. Seattle's place-stories both reflected and reinforced the city's patterns of power, as illustrated by two final Potlatch stories. Leon Metcalf, who spent many years recording the stories of Puget Sound Indian people, saw firsthand the power of Seattle's urban narrative. Late in his life, he recalled attending the Golden Potlatch of 1912, where the Big Bug and the Tilikums commanded the thoroughfares, where totem poles decorated downtown, and where indigenous people were among the throngs. "My father and I were walking across a street after the parade had gone past," he told an interviewer,

> but there was still lot of racket, it was very loud. There were two Indian women, probably Duwamish Indians, that were there selling clams and baskets, probably. One turned to the other and I listened to hear what she was going to say. What she said was [we are making noise] . . . it was kind of a pun, a play on words, on her part.

From our perspective almost a century later, it is hard not to see the Duwamish woman's Whulshootseed wordplay as a sardonic reference to the extravagant chaos that the Tilikums had orchestrated, or perhaps even as a protest against the public silence of local indigenous people in civic discourse. In a city that used Indian images and stories to make

sense of itself, real Native people, and especially those not affiliated with totem poles, were pushed to the margins of urban society. They now had little impact on the shape of Seattle's urban narrative—except maybe as metaphors.[31]

More than two decades later, in 1939, Snohomish elder Harriet Williams fondly recalled the Potlatches and expressed hope that more would be held in the future:

> I have a jumbled, but happy memory of Seattle's Potlatch—walking along avenues full of many shops—many people and the hum of many voices—the thrill of watching various drill teams and bands march with perfect precision—so many beautiful floats, the result of thought and work . . . yes, I had a most enjoyable time.

Like Skagit shamans visiting the optometrist, Plains warriors on the AYPE Ferris wheel, or Haida assembly-line workers, Williams's memories of Potlatch reminded readers that Native people, so often relegated to Seattle's urban past, were also part of Seattle's urban present. But as she continued, Williams also drew attention to all that had been lost:

> But I somehow still long for those past days—I can see the approach of countless canoes, the sounds of drums and the rhythms of different chants—my own language, which I hear so seldom now. But such is progress—and so the Indian of today brings his dollars and cents to Potlatch and receives various pleasures in return—and hopes Seattle will keep on having Potlatch.

By the 1930s, this kind of image—the sweeping away of the city's complicated past (and most of its Indians) before a crushing wave of metaphors, marketing, and metropolis—had become received wisdom and common knowledge. But just as tides come in, they rush out again, and Williams's words were spoken on the eve of a new era in Seattle's complicated Native histories in which the place-stories told in Seattle, and the people doing the telling, would change yet again.[32]