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AMERICAN INDIAN URBANIZATION AND UPLIFT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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By

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AMERICAN INDIAN URBANIZATION AND UPLIFT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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Dedicated to all the American Indian people who defied limitations on how and where they could belong.

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This study truly began at the University of Minnesota in Jeani O'Brien's classroom. Her course in American Indian history was so powerful that it pried me away from a burgeoning music career that I had dreamed about since childhood. She nurtured my intellectual curiosity as I wandered around Minneapolis's Franklin Street trying to bump into AIM leaders for a senior paper project. I firmly believe that she is responsible for opening my door to graduate study and setting me on a course that I would not have otherwise believed possible. Indeed, when I arrived at the University of Illinois at Chicago as a master's student I was rough around the edges.

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believed in my ideas. If I have in some small way lived up to these three primary mentors' belief in my capacity, then I am satisfied.

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Abstract

This dissertation takes a macro view of American Indian urbanization and off-reservation employment across the twentieth century, and does so through a wide-angle lens that is not tribe or destination specific. While the Bureau of Indian Affairs' mid-twentieth-century urban relocation program rests at the narrative's center, I have divorced it from the era's larger termination policy in order to evaluate it as a distinct historical phenomenon. Rather than emphasize Indian diasporic movement away from reservations merely as a product of BIA machinations, I instead discuss how Native people dictated the terms of relocation while impacting the program's outcome in profound and unexpected ways.

While urbanization undeniably resulted in catastrophe for many Indians, scholars have mostly failed to explore an equally important outcome in which a substantial number of Indians benefitted from urban experiences while gaining important skills to improve their respective tribes' ability to successfully exercise self-determination and political sovereignty in the modern era. In their collective refusal to be starved and stereotyped into reservation corners, Native people adapted to changing historical currents while nurturing an Indian uplift impulse that stretched back to the reservation period, when the United States federal government seemingly finished a long project of cordoning Indians off from society at large. Drawing on extensive archival research and numerous oral history interviews, this dissertation ultimately strives to position American Indians as cosmopolitan peoples who throughout the twentieth century defied reservation limits and resisted restrictions on how and where they could belong in the wider world.

Introduction—Painting a New Landscape: Native American Mainstreaming in the Twentieth Century

"If I am given half the chance I will make it pay off," he promised. "I feel it in my blood… I want a chance to learn what the schools of art have to offer and a chance to learn more." These words comprised full-blood Northern Cheyenne oil painter Dennis Field's personal statement for an Adult Vocational Training program application that he submitted to the Billings Area Indian office in 1963. At home in Lame Deer, Montana, Field was barely getting by selling oil paintings of Western landscapes. In fact, just two years prior he had checked himself into the Montana State Hospital for alcoholism treatment. Having stabilized, friends and family impressed by his talents began encouraging him to aspire to something greater. Finally agreeing, Field submitted his application for training in fine art at a studio based in Chicago, over one thousand miles from home. "The one and only reason that I signed up for AVT is to further my knowledge of my trade, 'The pallet [sic] and the paint brush,' and to develop my talents as an artist…" he imparted. "No man can know to [sic] much or enough." Perhaps indicative of the premium he placed on his potential for uplifting himself from restrictions on where and how he could belong in the wider world, Field concluded his statement, "I deeply respect teachers because they are men who started from the bottom and worked up… I have learned that once started on a trail, never turn back."[1]

Blending colors, pushing and pulling paint across a canvas, fashioning a vision, refining an aesthetic, practicing a skill, chasing inspiration—taken together these

[1] Relocation Services Information Record, 14 November 1963, RG075, Billings Area Office, Mixed Vocational and Subject Files, 1939-1960, Box 1, Folder B1-59-18-R-De, NARA Rocky Mountain Branch, Denver, Colorado.

particulars of the painting process form a fitting analogy for a substantial portion of the Native American population's motivation for wading into America's social, cultural, economic, and political mainstream during the twentieth century. Indeed, Dennis Field was just one among roughly 100,000 Native people who from the late 1940s through the early 1970s accepted Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programmatic support for relocation from rural Indian Country to urban Indian Country.[2] Through a series of complementary programs, the BIA promised to provide Native people with steady jobs and desirable housing in various Western and Midwestern metropolises. Program architects predicted that movement into the mainstream of American life would offer Indians an escape from socio-economic despair, while providing the federal United States government an opportunity to "get out of the Indian business," which critics argued had become indefensibly distended during the New Deal and World War II. Rarely, however, did the process unfold according to plan.

Unanticipated outcomes resulted from the fact that Native people brought their own ideas and convictions to relocation. Across several decades leading up to the Bureau of Indian Affairs' formal introduction of a Voluntary Relocation Program on January 1st, 1952, Native people deliberately nurtured their own off-reservation employment networks and burgeoning cosmopolitan communities within mainstream America. Initially, an arguably elite vanguard of Native people, many of whom benefitted from advanced educations and unique social opportunities, guided this

[2] Here I am specifically embracing historian Nicolas G. Rosenthal's study of how Native people carved out socio-economic space in Los Angeles during the twentieth century and in the process expanded the scope of "Indian Country." See Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

historical phenomenon. Over time, however, working class Indians increasingly picked up the banner of racial uplift and resisted both physical and intellectual confinement. In the process, they consistently thought and talked about the world beyond their reservation limits, and how reservations limited their potential as active players both nationally and internationally. By making the difficult decision to migrate from reservation to city in search of improved educational, economic, and social opportunities, program applicants challenged both the general public and federal policymakers' assumptions about what being "Indian" meant and could mean in postwar American society.

While the Bureau of Indian Affairs' mid-twentieth-century urban relocation program rests at the center of my narrative, I have divorced it from the era's larger termination policy in order to evaluate it as a distinct historical phenomenon. Rather than emphasize Indian diasporic movement away from reservations merely as a product of BIA machinations, I instead discuss how Native people dictated the terms of relocation while impacting the program's outcome in profound and unexpected ways. What becomes clear in the process is that Indian initiative consistently outpaced Indian bureau indecision over how to improve socio-economic prospects for Native people. While urbanization undeniably resulted in catastrophe for many Indians, scholars have mostly failed to acknowledge an equally important outcome in which a substantial number of Indians benefitted from urban experiences, gaining important skills to improve their respective tribes' ability to successfully exercise self-determination and political sovereignty. I argue that Native people, in their collective refusal to be starved

and stereotyped into reservation corners, adapted to changing historical currents while nurturing an Indian uplift impulse that stretched back to the reservation period. Indeed, to some degree, relocation was inevitable from the day the U.S. federal government began cordoning off individual tribes within reservation space.[3] This is perhaps true for two reasons: First, Native people did not like the idea of their "homeland" doubling as a "prison," even if they were often complicit in invoking it in alternating fashion, depending on their agenda.[4] While they fought and negotiated for their homeland, they could do without the imprisonment feature. Second, Congress's initial agenda behind reservations' creation was to employ them as laboratories within which Indians could develop Euro-American socio-cultural practices. At some point, they would have to be freed from confinement. Otherwise they would never truly be "civilized" by any culture's standards, not the least that of the United States, whose identity as an exceptional nation partly derives from breaking free from imperial rule. Therefore, in a departure from standard scholarship on this topic, I do not locate the roots of modern Indian urbanization in the Indian bureau's relocation program, or even in Native people's migration to urban war production industries during World War II. Instead, I argue that American Indian urban relocation initially began as an outgrowth of the ambitions of a generation of young Native people who received instruction in boarding school and work outing programs that pulled them away from reservations, at times through force, and exposed them to mainstream American capitalism and Western

[3] Historian Philip J. Deloria discusses the nature of reservation confinement in *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004) 26.
[4] On the prison-homeland discursive conflict see Frederick Hoxie, "From Prison to Homeland: The Cheyenne River Reservation before World War I," in *The Plains Indians of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter Iverson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 55-75.

education epistemologies. In the boarding school system thousands of Native children were inculcated with the notion that their survival as human beings, if not as "Indians," depended on their mastery of American vocational skills and the English language. Rather than return to reservations—going "back to the blanket," as federal policymakers called it—upon completion of their studies, numerous Indian boarding school graduates elected to carve out space in urban industrial centers where they could advance their education and deploy their vocational skills for gainful employment. Convinced of their capacity for competing in modern society, and rejecting any and every notion that Native people were inherently inferior beings, this generation of young Native people began establishing burgeoning Indian communities in places such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Tulsa. Some socially savvy Indian individuals even formed national Indian rights organizations, such as the Society of American Indians, which sought to "uplift the Indian race" from the supposedly deleterious effects of reservation life. Known as the "Red Progressives," they decried Indian bureau paternalism, and advocated socio-economic mobility as the most viable path toward survival.

Throughout the 1930s, what began as a racial uplift movement by an arguably elite cohort of college-educated Indian intellectuals gave way to a broader social movement of Native people who incrementally fanned away from rural Indian Country as they participated in New Deal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division. Subsequently, during World War II, upwards of sixty-five thousand Native men and women either enlisted for overseas military service or found employment in war production industries that dotted the American West. After the war, discharged soldiers and a contracting war industry forced many Indian workers back

home. Those who had enjoyed steady wages and participated in metropolitan life for the first time were understandably distraught when they returned to their reservations and witnessed deteriorating socio-economic conditions and shrinking acreage. Given these circumstances, thousands of American Indians enthusiastically applied for urban relocation and vocational training programs when the Bureau of Indian Affairs began introducing them in the early 1950s.

Joining the overarching trend toward postwar socio-cultural consensus, the Bureau of Indian Affairs designed its Voluntary Relocation Program as a solution to America's enduring "Indian problem." Federal policymakers hoped that steady urban employment for adult Indian males; lessons in domesticity for adult Indian women; and modern public schooling for Indian children would finally "emancipate" them from reservation life and Indian culture. Notwithstanding policy architects' aggressive campaigns, however, Native people whenever possible attempted to dictate the terms and goals of relocation. They brought their own visions for an Indian future to the program and attempted to exploit it for their own purposes. To be sure, thousands of Native people landed on "skid row" and suffered the consequences of their decisions. Some literally became lost in labyrinthine urban metropolises, and I devote an entire chapter to such tragic outcomes.

One enduring criticism of the Indian Bureau's 1950s relocation program is that it drained reservations of an entire generation of promising young Indians. Concluding in such fashion, however, neglects an equally important historical outcome that held positive implications for tribal sovereignty. Many Indian urban migrants' engagement with metropolitan life facilitated the mastery of important intellectual and professional

skills, especially as a result of college educations and diverse work experiences. Therefore, rather than arrive at "Red Power" militant urban Indian activism as the primary outcome of Indian urbanization, the following study instead concludes with a chapter on "reverse relocation," in which a new generation of urban Indians migrated back to Indian Country and played vital roles in tribal business and political leadership.

My study also departs from standard scholarship on this topic by delivering a macro view of Indian urbanization that is not destination or tribe specific. Standard scholarship to this point primarily only discusses Indian relocation and urbanization as either a federal policy program or as movement to and community making within one specific destination. The former approach, however, does little to reconstruct Indians' actual sensory experience of negotiating access to urban America and "going on relocation," while the latter approach does not succeed in teasing out larger themes and historical implications of what amounted to a widespread experience that Indians shared and influenced across tribal and experiential lines.

Therefore, rather than focus exclusively on Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, or Albuquerque, as other scholars have, I instead incorporate urban America at large into my narrative in an effort to draw wider conclusions about what was at stake for Indians who engaged the migratory process. At the same time, I consistently keep a finger on the pulse of reservation life. Rather than suggest that rural Indian Country remained static while Indian sojourners plunged into the depths of protean urban metropolises, I privilege the notion that Indians' visions for a future on reservations were just as complicated and important as their visions for life in mainstream, urban America.

Scholarship on Indian urbanization and off-reservation employment has achieved an impressive degree of maturation in recent years, and, to be sure, it is still growing. But before explicating my study's relationship to more contemporary scholarship, I must first momentarily dwell on a few classic works that played an instrumental role in shaping my thinking. In 1952, the inaugural year of the Voluntary Relocation Program for Indians, the Pulitzer Prize committee honored Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted* (1951), a now seminal study of immigration to America, with its annual award for an outstanding work of history. Handlin fashioned his analysis around rural European peasant communities within which members lived a harmonious existence and derived their primary sense of being. According to historian Rudolph Vecoli, however, such communities never actually existed. In an article published in *The Journal of American History* in 1964, Vecoli argued that Handlin's study took for granted "idealized" peasant communities that upon closer examination demonstrated far more stratification than Handlin recognized or acknowledged. Simply put, Vecoli argued that Handlin failed to appreciate the diversity among his immigrant subjects. Diversity, Vecoli insisted, mattered. A truly satisfying interpretation of human migration, he seemed to suggest, needs to appreciate the individual as much, if not more, than the process. Moreover, a more nuanced understanding of the subjective backgrounds immigrants brought to the migratory process is a necessary element for the scholarly adjudication of that process's relative merit. More simply put, treating

immigrants as homogenous, monolithic masses only gets us so far in grasping the vibrancy and dynamism of their individual experiences.[5]

As I waded deeper into archival sources while researching this study, I increasingly arrived at the conclusion that a comparable historiographical oversight applies to prevailing scholarship on America Indian off-reservation migration and urbanization. Much of the available material on Indian urban migration positions Native people who ventured beyond their reservation limits within a binary analytical framework that considers rural space as inherently anti-modern and urban space as inherently modern. It follows that within this framework, regardless of how, when, where, and why Indians moved to cities they were always moving deeper into a state of assimilation. In effect, assimilation, or the lack thereof, became the overarching analytical problem for scholarship on urban Indians. According to Handlin, "The history of immigration is a history of alienation and its consequences."[6] Much of the scholarship on Native American urban relocation ostensibly supports this assertion. After further analysis, however, this sweeping conclusion breaks down when we more carefully examine the actual Indian individuals who went on relocation.

In another formative scholarly contribution that proved influential on my own study, anthropologist Robert K. Thomas's "Colonialism: Classic and Internal" distinguished between "consumption" and "experience" by arguing that experience involves substantive character change, whereas the former does not. Simply put, if an

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[5] Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951); Rudolph J. Vecoli, "*Contadini* in Chicago: A Critique of *The Uprooted*," in *The Journal of American History*, v51, n3 (December 1964), 404-417.
[6] Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 4.

individual meaningfully changes through participating in an event or process, then he or she has had or gained an experience. If not, he or she has more likely merely practiced consumption. The Native people discussed in the following study, I argue, both gained and demonstrated Thomas's concept of experience.

Additionally, Thomas made a distinction between "classic" and "internal" colonialism. Classic colonialism, Thomas suggested, produces "a very high degree of social isolation. It seals off the community from relationships with other people in other communities. It even seals off the relationship with the physical environment." Native people from the turn of the century up through the modern period, I argue, consistently and overtly challenged this brand of colonialism. In the process, however, they at times unwittingly reinforced a second brand of colonialism that Thomas identified as "internal," in which external structures and systems from the classic brand of colonization become embedded within what was once an internal, independent society and culture. Simply stated, while Native people challenged classic colonialism, they often in the process developed an affinity for exploiting and benefiting from the very system they initially sought to challenge, but simultaneously confirmed and fed that system's authority. More simply stated, Native people who made socio-economic inroads into mainstream America added new tools to their metaphorical survival kit, but through acquiring those tools they confirmed their value—in this case, "weapons of the weak" were on loan from the oppressor. This resulted in an especially complex notion of what it meant to be Indian, and how that meaning changed, across the twentieth

century. The history of urban relocation might just be the most productive venue for illuminating that complex historical phenomenon.[7]

Moving toward the present, historian Donald L. Fixico deserves special acknowledgement for his foundational contributions to the historiography on urban Indians. His *Termination and Relocation* (1986) successfully contextualized Indian urban relocation within the federal government's larger effort to reawaken its grand program for Indian assimilation that arguably lay dormant during the Indian New Deal, when Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier instead promoted cultural pluralism. In this influential study, Fixico rightly identified Indians' World War II contributions as a primary motivator for federal government ideas to reward them by facilitating their merging into mainstream American society—a hypothetical win-win in that the government could then close the book on its enduring "Indian problem." Both building on and departing from *Termination and Relocation*, my study focuses less on relocation as a coercive accomplice to the era's termination policy and more on relocation as a distinctly Indian process, impacted by Indians' goals and participation in the program.[8]

Fixico succeeded in advancing scholarship on this topic a second time with *The Urban Indian Experience* (2000). Impressively, he posited a pan-Indian study of Indian

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[7] Robert K. Thomas, "Colonialism: Classic and Internal" in *New University Thought*, v4, n4 (1966/1967), 37-44. Credit goes to historian Daniel M. Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008) for introducing me to Thomas's essay. Cobb discusses Thomas's intellectual contributions to tribal people's thinking regarding both their position within the larger world and the development of decolonization theories. See Chapter One, especially page 26. On "weapons of the weak," see James C. Scott's classic work *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[8] Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).

urbanization that did not privilege a specific city or tribe. Rather, he succeeded in delivering a macro view that captured major themes of Indian urbanization. In his emphasis on the institutions and social networks that urban Indians founded in order to safeguard "Indianness," however, he accepted as axiomatic that urbanization assaulted Indian culture. In his rendering of urban America, Indians mostly fight to survive, and through that process of survival arrive at an identity crisis. I again attempt to both build on and depart from Fixico here by focusing less on urban Indian institutions and more on individuals, while challenging any assumption that relocation was inherently and essentially a grand product of nefarious BIA schemes.[9]

For the most part, modern scholarship on Indian urbanization succeeds in explaining how Native people confronted metropolitan life while fashioning a unique brand of urban socio-cultural space, but it mostly fails to explain why they accepted the urban challenge in the first place or to suggest how the relocation program fit within larger trends of Indian social and spatial mobility during the twentieth century. It also tends to promote a narrative in which Indians only accepted relocation assistance out of sheer economic desperation, and fell victim to a poorly administered program in the process. Indeed, across classic works of literature to autobiographies to scholarly histories, accounts of primitive rubes who marvel at "shiny things" and "modern gadgets," cannot operate alarm clocks or telephones, and who cowered at the sight of an elevator abound.[10] While such conclusions do in fact reflect the experiences of some

[9] Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).
[10] See for example N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (New York, 1966), 124; Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque, 2000), 14,

Native migrants, however briefly, victim-centered narratives fail to recognize a substantial number of urban Indians who worked to lead dynamic lives while reaching for success in the city.[11]

A number of recent works on Native Americans in the twentieth century have helped lay the theoretical groundwork for a reappraisal of Indian urbanization. Specifically on the topic of Indian urbanization, Nancy Shoemaker convincingly argues that Indian urbanization should not be treated as a mere "byproduct of misguided government policies."[12] Additionally, Coll Thrush's *Native Seattle* (2007) successfully overturns previous interpretations of Indian urbanization by arguing that non-Indian urbanites and scholars alike have allowed discourses of urban Indian poverty and

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25; and Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, *Mankiller: Chief of Her People* (New York, 1993), 72.

[11] See for example Larry W. Burt, *Tribalism in Crisis: Federal Indian Policy, 1953-1961* (Albuquerque, 1982); Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, 1986) and *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque, 2000). James B. LaGrand's *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75* (Urbana and Chicago, 2002) offers a more nuanced and ultimately more satisfying interpretation of the relocation experience while focusing more on the complex nature of intertribal relations within the city. Myla Vicenti Carpio's *Indigenous Albuquerque* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011) emphasizes the fluid relationship between Albuquerque and nearby Pueblo communities. Ned Blackhawk's "I Can Carry on from Here: The Relocation of American Indians to Los Angeles," *Wicazo Sa Review* 11 (1995): 16-30, and Kenneth R. Philp's, "Stride toward Freedom: The Relocation of Indians to Cities, 1952-1960," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 16 (1985): 175-190, both provide useful article-length studies of relocation, the former focusing more on Indian agency, the latter on program mechanics and policy. Many classic works on relocation draw heavily on studies by sociologists and anthropologists from the 1960s-70s whose analyses focused on the degree to which urban Indians were losing their "Indianness." Examples of this include Joan Ablon, "Relocated American Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Human Organization* 24 (1964): 296-304, and Ann Metcalf, "Navajo Women in the City: Lessons from a Quarter-Century of Relocation," *American Indian Quarterly* 6 (1982): 71-89.

[12] Nancy Shoemaker, "Urban Indians and Ethnic Choices: American Indian Organizations in Minneapolis, 1920-1950," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 19 (1988), 431.

dislocation to "mask more complicated experiences: the surprising opportunities offered by urban life, the creative struggles to carve out Indian spaces in the cities, and, most importantly, the ways in which Native women and men have contributed to urban life."[13] Finally, and most recently, historian Nicolas G. Rosenthal delivered his pathbreaking *Reimagining Indian Country* (2012), which demonstrates how Native people played an integral role in the history and development of Los Angeles, while in the process expanding the scope of "Indian Country" into that legendary city's borders. Rosenthal argues that Indian relocation to Los Angeles was often an Indian motivated process, shaped by Indian agency, and supported by socio-political networks that Indians fashioned in and around L.A. from the turn of the century forward. My own study fashions an argument similar to Rosenthal's, albeit on a national scale. In the process, I strive to build on Rosenthal's work by demonstrating the exportability of his important thesis.[14]

My analysis is also shaped by Alexandra Harmon's recent study of both Indian and non-Indian communities' historical practice of discursively denying Native peoples the freedom to earn and enjoy wealth. Advancing seminal Dakota intellectual Vine Deloria Jr.'s fight to overturn the false notion that being Indian means being poor, Harmon explicates the process by which that destructive conclusion gained traction and persisted throughout (Native) American history.[15] Additionally, Colleen O'Neill has delivered an essential framework for thinking about Native people's complex

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[13] Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 7-9.
[14] Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*.
[15] Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

relationship with mainstream American culture and off-reservation work in the twentieth century. According to O'Neill, "American Indians in the twentieth century blended their modern and traditional worlds as a matter of course and in the process redefined those categories in ways that made sense to them." Her work succeeds in rejecting the modern/traditional dichotomy that too often governs scholarship on Native peoples. "Tradition and modernity are expressions of 'difference' rather than historical benchmarks that distinguish a particular community's place in time," she concludes. The Indian urban relocatees discussed in the following study fit within O'Neill's call for an understanding of mainstream American culture as more than just a "terrain of resistance" for Native people. In an attempt to build on her work, I too strive for a "more complicated and compelling story."[16]

Historian Paul Rosier interprets the twentieth century as a period when Native people became especially adept at conducting maintenance on a hybrid identity—"Americans" and "Indians"—that emerged as a result of the federal extension of citizenship over Indian Country and patriotism that Indians demonstrated during international conflicts.[17] In an effort to add new complexity to Rosier's study, my work extends his analysis deep into the recesses of metropolitan space. Indeed, many urban Indian migrants *wanted* to exercise citizenship and be taken seriously as members of America's postwar body politic, work force, and consumer class. They imagined the city as an appropriate venue within which they could realize these goals. With that in

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[16] Colleen O'Neill, "Rethinking Modernity and the Discourse of Development in American Indian History," in *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, ed., Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill (Boulder, CO, 2004), 3-5, 12.

[17] Paul C. Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

mind, I approach Indian urbanization not as a product of federal policies, but as a bottom-up effort on the part of Native people. From this perspective, relocation appears less a profound rupture in Native American history and more as an extension of trends that had long been set in motion, typically with Native people guiding the reins.

A final scholarly work that is especially influential on my own does not explicitly address urbanization, but does wrestle with mobility and technology, two topics essential to a comprehensive understanding of urban Indians. In *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), historian Philip J. Deloria discusses how a substantial cohort of Indians from the beginning of the twentieth century actively engaged modernity through everything from athletics to automobiles. Moreover, he argues that notions of "primitivism, technological incompetence, physical distance, and cultural difference" hardly describe all Native people's relationship to twentieth century mainstream America. Finally, Deloria suggests that mobility empowered Native people during the turn of the century, and in Indian service officials' estimation, made them "just a little more threatening." Deloria's analysis is responsible for my looking askance at the myriad secondary sources that emphasize relocated Indians' inability to cope with the modern world. To be sure, there were numerous Native people who struggled to adjust to the pace and intensity of urban living, and many examples persist in the pages of this study. But somewhere along the way the understandable pain some Indian individuals experienced became the overarching story and legacy of relocation. Yet, such an evaluation does not speak for a substantial number of Indian people who willingly embraced relocation as an opportunity to improve the quality of their lives. Moreover, dwelling on those who failed reinforces the notion that Indians do not and cannot

belong in the wider cosmopolitan world, a notion that thousands of Native people firmly rejected, as do I.[18]

Deloria's work influenced my study in a second important respect. He courageously confronts the historiographic and analytical challenge of drawing broad, wide-angle conclusions that apply to 566 currently federally recognized Indian tribes in the United States (not to mention tribal groups still seeking federal acknowledgement). The problem of cultural expectations, he concluded, unites Native people across space and time during the twentieth century. Deriving inspiration from Deloria, I attempt a similar, inherently pan-Indian approach to the study of Native people that suggests that mobility, as a mode of survival, also unites otherwise independent tribal nations during the twentieth century. And I would argue that the strategies Native Americans deployed to achieve greater socio-spatial mobility in the twentieth century, while not doing violence to tribal culture and sovereignty, deserve further scholarly attention.[19]

If not those embedded within the relatively recent historiography, then at the very least the general American public's ideas about Native people in the twentieth century are often submerged in statistics and reports concerning alcoholism, infant mortality, rampant poverty, and widespread malaise. Even tribal gaming success incurs a significant share of fierce critics who brand that economic strategy a failure by asserting that casinos are inherently detrimental to societal health.[20] Of course such

[18] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 4, 146.
[19] Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 11-12.
[20] For an excellent study of tribal gaming's often positive, although complicated, impact on one particular tribe and surrounding community, see Jessica R. Cattelino, *High*

accounts of pain and suffering matter, at times even in direct relation to Indian urban relocation. After all, the substantial number of homeless American Indians currently occupying U.S. cities such as Minneapolis, Seattle, and Phoenix, for example, certainly speak to the legacy of urban relocation.[21]

But I do not want to tell another version of that same story of defeat. My motivation is to instead appreciate urban relocation as an example of Indian resolve during the twentieth century. One might conclude that I am therefore suggesting that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Voluntary Relocation Program was a relatively structurally and theoretically sound program that only needed minor tweaking on the margins. Or one might even conclude that I am suggesting that relocation was a fine program, and that if and when Indians failed it was because they were not trying hard enough. Before we progress, I must clearly state that such an argument is not remotely my agenda. Rather, my motivation is to animate a substantial portion of the Native population who understood the city as opportunity and wanted the freedom to take responsibility for their own potential successes and failures, even as they recognized that the program was flawed.

Part of that impulse grew out of an early-twentieth-century movement to uplift Indians that took shape within boarding school classrooms and progressive Indian organizations such as the Society of American Indians, but transformed in profound and

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Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008).

[21] Washington D.C.'s National Coalition for the Homeless claims that eight percent of the national homeless population is American Indian, despite only comprising one percent of the nation's total population. That figure does, however, include Indians who reside in rural areas. http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/minorities.html, accessed 17 March 2014.

unexpected ways across subsequent decades as socio-economic uplift increasingly became a central theme of Indian social history, and not just the province of an Indian socio-political vanguard. That impulse also extended from war veterans' demands for first-class citizenship and freedom to enjoy the fruits of a society they fought to protect, and from younger generations of Native people who recognized cities as places where they could escape the hardships their parents endured. Still others imagined urban life as a functional nexus through which they could pass in myriad directions while gaining valuable skills—including the necessary business and legal savvy for an attempt at reservation economic rehabilitation.[22]

Despite urbanization's potential for harsh historical outcomes, the study before you ultimately rejects a declension narrative in which urban Indians only toil as hapless victims of federal policymakers' mismanaged programs. Indeed, thousands of Native people *did* succeed. I seek to not only recover their experiences, but also to suggest that there were moments when history could and did go in different, positive directions. At the same time, those who "failed" at relocation also deserve to be rehabilitated out of a victim status defined by discrimination, alcoholism, unemployment, and other urban ailments. We might instead emphasize their contributions, regardless of individual outcomes, to Indians' enduring and evolving fight to expand not only the parameters of "Indian Country," but also the boundaries within which they could exercise self-determination and what political scientist Kevin Bruyneel terms "third-space sovereignty," which manifests somewhere in the blurry regions between traditional

[22] On cities as a beneficial nexus through which Indians could pass on their way toward improving tribal nationhood, see Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

spatial and temporal boundaries that govern the concept. Some migrating Indians during the period covered in this study unabashedly embraced mainstream American acculturation and severance of traditional tribal cultural ties as a subjective solution for their own individual Indian problem. At the same time, many migrating Indians practiced a portable brand of tribal sovereignty and identity that as a result of their own fortitude gained deeper meaning and wider application. Simply put, urban Indians, even those who "failed," stood at the forefront of an Indian socio-political movement that sought to strengthen Native people's burgeoning efforts at self-determination—a key component of acting sovereign—by gaining experience within and knowledge about the world at large. First through independent self-relocation and subsequently through Indian bureau support, a significant cross-section of Native people embraced an opportunity to advance this process. Even when the decision to relocate was highly subjective, as it often was, the end result still made a contribution to Indian nations' larger efforts to expand their influence beyond reservation limits.[23]

[23] Kevin Bruyneel. *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Chapter One—"The Bear and How He Went Over the Mountain": Native American Mobility and Modernity, 1880s-1930s

"I do not wish to be shut up in a corral. It is bad for young men to be fed by an agent. It makes them lazy and drunken."

– Sitting Bull (Lakota, 1881)[1]

"I have seen enough already. Tell me what you think a fellow can do here—steal horses like Louis? Drink and run around? No. The world's big. I'll find something to do."

– Archilde Leon in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* (1936)[2]

During a series of interviews in the 1970s, Quechan/Mojave elder Lee Emerson recalled his experiences as a child in California's Fort Yuma Indian School. "If you were a repeated runaway, they'd catch them and put shackles on them, ball and chains," he disclosed. "I always think that, perhaps, they got the idea from the territorial prison right next to us." Beginning in the late nineteenth century the United States federal government believed that education and exposure to mainstream American society would emancipate Indians from, essentially, themselves—their own supposedly "uncivilized" traditions and tendencies. From a boarding school student's perspective at the time, the introduction of an iron ball and chain as punishment for recalcitrant behavior must have seemed a severe perversion of the emancipation principle. Moreover, not only did federal authorities physically shackle young Indians to off-reservation boarding schools in distant locales, they also incarcerated them within an outside culture's relentless expectations for where and how they should belong within a nation intent on imposing its will on Indians' own. It is not surprising then that so many

[1] Peter Nabokov, ed., *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 192.

[2] D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1998, original publication 1936).

of the Indian children exposed to boarding schools put such a premium on freedom of movement and choice when they reached adulthood.[3]

Yet, Native people's appreciation for freedom of movement as a means to escape or improve less than desirable circumstances was not a strategy with which they were entirely unfamiliar. Indeed, at no point had Native people expressed an inherent hostility toward outside cultures and societies—not prior to the arrival of European people, and not even after European people exerted devastating force over their lives and lands. Prior to various European nations' and then the United States' attempts to militarily overwhelm Native people and erase them from the land, tribal nations for centuries consistently thought of themselves as peoples of the world, and they acted accordingly.

Simply put, "cosmopolitan" and "Indian" were not mutually exclusive concepts before late-nineteenth-century federal policymakers suggested otherwise. Therefore, even as part of a coercive system that rendered them economically, culturally, and politically desperate with their total population at its nadir, many Native people living within the turn-of-the-century United States saw something not only threatening, but also beneficial, at stake when told that rather than being removed, they would now be integrated into society—into "civilization." This throws into stark relief Lee Emerson's mental snapshots of his boarding school experience: the threat of the ball and chain, and the adjacent territorial prison as an ominous solution for those whose defiant behaviors

[3] Interview with Lee Emerson (Quechan/Mojave - Quechan tribal historian), 1974/1977, in Clifford E. Trafzer, ed., *Quechan Indian Voices* (Riverside, CA.: California Center for Native Nations, 2012). On the discursive power of social, cultural, political, and economic expectations for Native people during the turn of the century, see Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

iron shackles failed to correct. Indeed, a profound sense of bewilderment must have pervaded boarding school halls.

Confident in renowned ethnologist Lewis Henry Morgan's cultural evolution theory, most late-nineteenth-century federal policymakers and "friends of the Indian" social reformers alike advocated freedom of movement for Native people, insofar as that movement accorded with their vision for Native people's future within the United States.[4] As historian Fred Hoxie argues, however, that hypothetical future for Native people rapidly devolved into one of second-class citizenship.[5] Defiantly, Native people kept the window to "civilization" and "citizenship" ajar just enough to allow future generations of ambitious Indians to fashion their own meanings and expressions of those terms. In their hearts and minds they carried their own convictions for their own lives when they transcended reservations limits, either as a product of their own agency or as part of someone else's coercive agenda. Either way, Native people faced a new crisis that stemmed from a shift in thinking on the part of federal policymakers who instead of cordoning Indians off behind reservation lines now wanted to assimilate Indians into mainstream America and eradicate reservation lands altogether.

To be sure, federal policymakers never completely appreciated reservations as a permanent solution to their enduring "Indian problem." Rather, they primarily imagined them as temporary laboratories within which Native people could be divested of political and military power, in preparation for training in citizenship. Yet, what often becomes overlooked in such academic discussions is that a great many Native people

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[4] Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1877).
[5] See historian Frederick E. Hoxie's seminal study of this time period, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

also did not value reservation confinement as a permanent solution to their own distinctive interpretation of the "Indian problem." They firmly recognized the value of land, even when the land to which they were granted tenuous title did not fall into the category of "traditional homeland," as was the case for numerous tribes. But they never asked for a future existence bound within reservation limits. They too wanted free exercise of social and spatial mobility. Ultimately, what Native people found at stake in mobility at times overlapped with that of federal policymakers. At other times competing visions collided in catastrophic fashion. What remained consistent, however, was a negotiated mobility in which Native people played a decisive role and often guided the reins.

Historian Philip Deloria expertly demonstrates how an arguably exceptional cohort of Indians made inroads into "unexpected places" and as a result challenged conventional ideas on the part of non-Indians (and at times Indians too) about how and where Indians could fit in the ever-expanding American society. His study's central protagonists subverted, or at least tried to, the idea that Native Americans needed to *play* Indian in order to *be* Indian. Indeed, over the first few decades of the twentieth century a shift occurred in which expected Indians breaching unexpected places evolved into unexpected Indians carving out space in what gradually became expected, or *accepted*, places. Over time, Native people increasingly normalized their presence within mainstream America while challenging prevailing assumptions that Indians had "missed out on modernity—indeed, almost dropped out of history itself," as Deloria put it. Throughout that process, while some were careful to consider that phenomenon's

implications for the health of tribalism, others made it a point not to look back. Notions of "expected" and "unexpected" aside, Native people from this period forward repeatedly subverted assertions from both within and beyond Indian Country about where they collectively resided on a "traditional"/"progressive" continuum.[6]

With the exception of Hollywood and numerous football and baseball fields, most of Deloria's story takes place on reservations. I seek to expand on Deloria's study by emphasizing and expanding the "places" plank of his analytical framework. There were burgeoning Indian communities in a multitude of U.S. cities during the first half of the twentieth century that confronted American modernity head on. It seems that scholars tend to take for granted that these communities were acculturated and not representative of Indian Country, and therefore overlook them.[7] They deserve deeper treatment, however. Not because we have failed to satisfyingly evaluate their progressive ideologies or interrogate their assimilative predilections, but because they

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[6] See Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 6. On the concept of "playing Indian," see Deloria's *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998). In a podcast interview from 2009, Deloria questions whether or not Indians need to act "Indian" in order to be taken seriously in their efforts to exercise tribal sovereignty and self-determination. See "Philip J. Deloria on Family, Scholarship, and Politics," on *Indigenous Politics*, hosted by J. Kehaulani Kauanui for Wesleyan University radio, WESU 88.1 FM, 24 March 2009. Jessica Cattelino's "double bind" theory, which considers how tribal sovereignty typically becomes trapped in the fraught relationship between competing ideas of progress and Indian, also applies here. See Jessica Cattelino, "The Double Bind of American Indian Need-Based Sovereignty," *Cultural Anthropology*, 25:2 (2010), 235-262.

[7] There are a few recent exceptions. See for example Rosalyn R. LaPier and David R. M. Beck, "Crossroads for a Culture: American Indians in Progressive Era Chicago," *Chicago History* 38:1 (Spring 2012), 22-43 and "'One-Man Relocation Team': Scott Henry Peters and American Indian Urban Migration in the 1930s," *The Western Historical Quarterly,* v45, n1 (Spring 2014), 17-36; and Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

set a precedent that a much greater portion of Native America would aspire to in post-World War II America. Early urban Indian communities frequently thought and talked about rural-urban dichotomies, and the resultant discourses in many respects reflect those of subsequent generations of Indians who migrated to urban space in greater numbers. However unrepresentative progressive Indians were in the early decades of the twentieth century, they did predict a future important phenomenon in Indian America.

In addition to Deloria's work, this chapter builds on scholarship by historian Daniel Usner, who argues that reservations' relationship to the late-nineteenth-century proliferation of asylums, workhouses, and prisons needs attention. More specifically, he calls for a deep analysis of reservations as venues within which the federal government worked to "control and discipline a disorderly population." Simply put, he raises an important question about how both federal policymakers and "Friends of the Indian" alike attempted to exploit reservations as places where Indians could be cleansed of cultural practices that supposedly deviated from mainstream American values and threatened Indians' ability to survive within the United States.[8]

Usner also critiques anthropologist Oscar Lewis's "Culture of Poverty" theory and how it ultimately places blame for poverty on families' and individuals' own self-defeating behaviors. During the second half of the twentieth century academics often interpreted Indians' desire to remain on reservations as a self-defeating manifestation of the culture of poverty. How, Usner asks, can we move beyond such a binding assessment? When Indians succeed at overturning such assumptions, scholars,

[8] Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indian Work: Language and Livelihood in Native American History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 83.

policymakers, and the general public alike have typically accused them of losing their cultural authenticity and claims to sovereign nationhood. In 1971, influential Rosebud Sioux tribal leader Robert Burnette likened this limited choice between domination and termination to a socio-political "double bind," a concept that anthropologist Jessica Cattelino further articulated in 2010 by connecting the problem to critiques of tribal gaming.[9]

Yet, this "double bind" at times stemmed less from Indians' actions than from non-Indian Americans' inability to reconcile Indian socio-economic ingenuity with their image of the "noble savage," tethered to his land and comfortable being poor. They could only understand tradition and modernity as mutually exclusive concepts. Yet, what unfolded across the first half of the twentieth century was an enduring practice among Indians to preserve the best of their own social, cultural, economic, and political ideologies, however much they varied from tribe to tribe, while embracing effective strategies from other cultures.[10]

Writing on the politics of Indian music from the reservation allotment period up to the Indian New Deal, historian John Troutman discusses how a "culture war raged over the practice of music on reservations, in boarding schools, and in other arenas accessible to Native musicians in the early twentieth century, with notions of race and citizenship being continuously manifested and challenged." Pointing to anthropologist James C. Scott's theory on hidden resistance, Troutman argues that his own study's

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[9] Robert Burnette, *The Tortured Americans*, 153; Jessica Cattelino, "The Double Bind of American Indian Need-Based Sovereignty," *Cultural Anthropology*, 25:2 (2010), 235-262.

[10] Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indian Work: Language and Livelihood in Native American History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 92.

Indian protagonists' musical performances at times represented "an assault on the assimilation policy" in covert fashion. Moreover, he argues, when various coteries of Native performers carried their songs and dances into reservation border towns and more distant urban metropolises, they proved just as capable of subverting mainstream American society as they did succumbing to it.[11]

Indeed, a similar practice unfolded among this study's urban sojourners. Rather than conclude that Indians who ventured into metropolitan communities were necessarily choosing between "traditional" or "modern" life," it is perhaps more accurate to suggest that they were instead consistently adding layers to what it meant and could mean to be "Indian" as the twentieth century unfolded. Moreover, this process of adding characteristic layers most explicitly stemmed from Indians' expanding practice of social, economic, and geographic mobility. In other words, Native people's gradual, often calculated, movement within and mastery of one social venue did not necessarily come at the expense of another.

Yet, pointing to a theme that endures across this study's subsequent chapters, federal Indian policymakers typically made the mistake of reading Native people's relative comfort in mainstream American society as a reflection of their diminishing enthusiasm for being Indian. Ironically, the general non-Indian American public to some degree demonstrated more anxiety over *their own* exposure to modernity than the Native people who increasingly migrated toward their mainstream midsts. Indeed, as both Troutman and Philip Deloria assert, non-Indian Americans often exploited Indians as anti-modern primitivist keepsakes from the past, to which they could cling while the

[11] John W. Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879-1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 10-14.

unpredictable storm of modern technology raged around them. This perhaps partly explains mid-twentieth-century academics' relative fixation on trying to adjudicate if urban Indians were still "Indian."[12]

Finally, material in this chapter fits alongside scholarship by historians William Bauer, Andrew Fisher, Alexandra Harmon, Brian Hosmer, and Paige Raibmon, among others, who convincingly explicate the process by which Native people in the final decades of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century fearlessly mounted expeditions across America's capitalist frontier for purposes that alternatingly converged and diverged with federal policymakers' and social theorists' ideas about how best to manage the Indian problem. Taken together, their studies argue that regardless of motive, Native people depended on physical movement and a keen sense of changing socio-economic currents as a survival strategy. Simply put, the Native people in these historians' analyses exploited socio-geographic mobility and experience with capitalism as a means toward *strengthening* tribalism, as opposed to undermining it. The Indian communities these historians discuss understood that Indian social, cultural, and economic patterns could not remain static if Indian people were to survive in a modernizing world. At the same time, they understood that socio-spatial mobility would not necessarily undermine access to and maintenance of "Indianness." The Columbia River Indians discussed in Fisher's work, for example, fashioned a tribal identity inextricably linked to movement. Their collective refusal to be corralled into one externally controlled space became a defining characteristic of their tribal identity.[13]

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[12] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).
[13] William J. Bauer, *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill, 2009);

In practice, this chapter forms an episodic narrative around a series of vignettes that illustrate how independent cohorts of Native people achieved socio-economic mobility through spatial mobility. Moreover, it discusses how they framed their collective exercise of spatial mobility within a particular brand of socio-economic "uplift." This reflected similar processes and trends that unfolded among other seemingly marginalized groups—most notably, African Americans—that embraced the progressive era as a welcome opportunity to loosen the chains of racial, ethnic, and gender assumptions while pursuing a more equitable position within society.[14]

To be sure, however, the brand of socio-economic uplift that Native people articulated and practiced did not necessarily reflect a desire to eradicate "Indianness" from the socio-cultural landscape (although, for some it most certainly did). As this larger process unfolded, something was certainly lost, or at the very least attenuated, in Indian Country—the Office of Indian Affairs' profound assault on tribal languages and cultural practices resonates as the most obvious example.

Yet, Native people also gained something during this period. The increasing familiarity with American politics, economies, and societies that their expeditions

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Andrew H. Fisher, *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010); Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Brian C. Hosmer, *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation among the Menominees and Metlakatlans, 1870-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[14] For excellent studies of black uplift during the progressive era, see Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) and Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

beyond reservation limits granted them helped lay the intellectual and experiential infrastructure for exercises in self-determination that earned vociferous support across tribal lines during the 1960s. Simply put, successful exercise of self-determination in subsequent decades depended on substantive experience in the wider world. This is not to argue that some Native people did not at times explicitly elect to walk away from tribalism, for reasons beyond the scope of this chapter. It is however a critical mistake to argue that Native people who fashioned inroads into mainstream American society during this period were only advancing assimilationist agendas—either their own or the federal government's. In her study of First Nations women's community building efforts in Toronto during the mid-twentieth century, anthropologist Heather A. Howard argues that Indigenous people who ventured into Ontario's largest metropolis were not so much pursuing assimilation as they were *escaping* assimilation. She makes clear that First Nations people in Canada exploited the anonymity of mainstream urban space as a safe haven from government control and surveillance on tribal reserves. Essentially, assimilation in this case proved more of a push factor than a pull factor. Subsequently, through a process of acculturation, First Nations people in Toronto mastered the "tools of the oppressors" and deployed them as a strategy toward strengthening tribalism and protecting Indigenous culture. Howard's analysis can also apply to countless American Indians who, several exceptions notwithstanding, mostly sought through a similar process of acculturation to add layers to their being, rather than reduce them.[15]

[15] Heather A. Howard, "Women's Class Strategies as Activism in Native Community Building in Toronto, 1950-1975," in Susan Applegate Krouse and Heather A. Howard, eds., *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

Historians who address the Indian boarding school experience discuss how vocational training caused a problem in that it created a desire to deploy new skills. Raising expectations and then failing to meet them understandably caused consternation among a generation of young Native people. Regardless of whether or not they asked for vocational instruction, they now wanted and needed to use the new skills that for better or worse often came at the expense of their former position not just within the larger American society, but also within their own tribes.[16]

To illustrate this process, perhaps it is best to draw upon the first Indian boarding school: Virginia's Hampton Institute. In April 1878, Civil War veteran Richard Henry Pratt supervised the transfer of 17 prisoners from Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida to the Hampton Institute in Virginia, which had first opened ten years prior as an industrial training school for black freedmen. The prisoners that Pratt escorted to Hampton were not former slaves, however. In fact, most were Kiowa and Cheyenne men who had militarily resisted reservation confinement in Indian Territory on the southern plains. If anyone at Hampton felt particularly anxious about the prospect of two supposedly inferior races working together, Pratt proved quick to soothe their fears. "There will be no collision between the races here," he promised. "These Indians have come to work."[17]

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[16] See for example Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998) and David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[17] *Ten Year's Work for Indians at Hampton Institute*, edited and partly written by Hampton Institute instructor Helen Ludlow (Hampton Institute, 1888), 13. This book is held within the Ayer Modern Manuscripts Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

While still in Florida, Pratt had developed an educational program for his Indian charges that embraced their industrial and intellectual capacities as humans, while rejecting their cultural value as Indians. As a result of Pratt's considerable success in this endeavor, funding poured in from northeastern humanitarian and missionary societies, and Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz asked the school to accept 40 Sioux boys and nine Sioux girls from the Dakota Territory. Furthermore, the federal government offered to contribute $157 per student to help offset travel and enrollment expenses.[18]

Pratt departed Hampton the following year to found his own Indian training program in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which became an especially significant Indian boarding school, providing an education for such Native luminaries as physician and Indian rights activist Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai) and world-class athlete Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), among others. Meanwhile, Pratt's program at Hampton only grew in his absence. During Hampton's first ten years of hosting Indian students 320 Native boys and 147 Native girls from 27 different tribes passed through its doors.[19]

The training school pursued three primary goals for its Indian students: "To build up character: stimulate the mind, form habits of industry, promptitude, accuracy and self help"; "To give the students a means of earning a living"; and "To help him support himself through school." If successfully met, administrators agreed, these goals would provide a path away from tribalism and toward "civilized," American life. School officials only fretted over their third programmatic promise. Because the federal government subsidized the Indian students' education, officials lamented the "loss to

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

him of a valuable means of true education and progress." Young Native people, school officials were convinced, could only truly appreciate the opportunity if it stemmed from their own hard efforts and individual desires. They had to want it.[20]

Rather than return home to the vast, distant West for summer vacation, especially ambitious students—either through coercion or their own agency—could participate in the school's summer outing program. This typically occurred from mid-June to October 1st in Berkshire County, Massachusetts—a veritable crossroads of America's traditional puritanical past and modern industrial present, where social elites conjured condescending visions for "savage" Indians' new position within Gilded Age America. Roughly 25-30 students advanced through the outing programs each summer. Some of them even received "gifts" in the form of clothing, money, and other items. Supporters of the outing program believed that the experience would help boost Indian students' morale and intelligence.[21]

Hampton program architects also hoped that Indian graduates would continue to pursue opportunities away from their tribal homes. As one instructor wrote, "They are, and are encouraged to feel, free to choose their own homes where they will." Susan La Flesche, sister of famous Indian rights advocate Susette La Flesche (also known as "Bright Eyes"), demonstrated such a course when she advanced from Hampton to the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In a letter updating her former teachers on her progress, she discussed how graduates such as herself could serve as beacons of "civilization" for "non-progressive" Indians, and how their example

[20] Ibid, 24.
[21] Ibid, 36.

could provide a "stimulus" for other Native people to "go and do likewise."[22] At times, Native elders embraced the same message. For example, a Brule Lakota man expressed his support for the Hampton Institute to Reverend J.J. Gravatt of Philadelphia's Indian Rights Association. "I am sick and cannot live long," he confided. "I want my children to go to school, that they may be able to take care of themselves after I am gone."[23]

Still, school officials understood that most students would inevitably return home. They therefore tried to prepare the students as socio-cultural "missionaries" capable of converting their fellow tribespeople. Hampton matron Cora Folsom explained that, "The idea of Hampton is that its students should be fitted for leaders of their people at just this crisis in their history, when earnest, intelligent men are so much needed." Indeed, the first Shawnee person, for example, to take an individual land allotment was in fact a Hampton graduate, who in Folsom's estimation understood the "wisdom" of owning and developing private property. After graduating from Hampton, a third La Flesche daughter, Marguerite, returned to her Omaha tribe and wrote back to her Hampton teachers with an update on her fellow graduates. As far as she could discern, all of the Hampton graduates she knew were doing well, except for Milton Levering, whom she disparaged because he was "off with a show"—meaning a "Wild West" show, his only source of sufficient income. Most graduates had taken up farming, or were advancing their education in area mission schools. Also, many attended reservation night school, where Marguerite had in fact landed a teaching position. "My Hampton schooling has been of the greatest value to me," she confided. "God bless both

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[22] Ibid, 37, 55.
[23] Rev J.J. Gravatt, *The Record of Hampton's Returned Indian Pupils* (Philadelphia: The Indian Rights Association, 1885). This book is held within the Ayer Modern Manuscripts Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

those schools [Hampton and Carlisle]," La Flesche closed, "for only through them and by them can the 'Indian problem' be solved."[24]

The school did not result in socio-economic uplift for all pupils, however. From 1878 to 1888, 31 Indian students died at Hampton, in most cases well over a thousand miles from home. A majority of the deceased succumbed to consumption. Also within that time, the school prematurely dismissed 111 Indian students, many of whom school physicians deemed too unhealthy to stay.

Back in Indian Country, many students struggled to put their newly developed skills to use, regardless of relative degrees of mastery. In February 1888, as part of a study to determine Hampton graduates' ability to positively impact their reservation communities, influential Harvard ethnologist Alice C. Fletcher ventured to the Omaha and Winnebago reservations. She expressed frustration over her observation that Indian students gained exposure to an "enlightened community" out East, but suffered from the "vast inertia of reservation life" upon their return, and often needed to venture into more populated areas in order to find work that matched their skill sets. According to Fletcher, those who succeeded in such endeavors often only managed to leave their fellow tribespeople in awe of their talents. In some cases, those who lacked modern education became convinced that the Hampton graduates had been taught to "look into the future." Such mastery of non-Indian talents could at times drive a wedge of estrangement between returning boarding school graduates and those who remained behind. As can be typical of any group seeking socio-economic uplift, Hampton graduates who donned "citizen's dress" and seemed to want to be "white people" at

[24] *Ten Year's Work for Indians at Hampton Institute*, edited and partly written by Hampton Institute instructor Helen Ludlow (Hampton Institute, 1888), 44-45, 51.

times bore the brunt of resentment from anxious fellow tribespeople. Indeed, in order to safeguard their own financial stability, those who lacked progressive education at times banded together to bar Hampton graduates from local employment opportunities.[25]

Looking ahead, the 1956 adult vocational training program was not unlike the youth vocational training programs at Hampton, the Haskell Institute, the Phoenix Indian School, Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, the Sherman Institute, the Intermountain Indian School, and other federally supervised Indian schools.[26] Citizenship, assimilation, and racial uplift, facilitated through a process of social and spatial mobility, became key tenets of relocation rhetoric during the 1950s. Yet, those same central goals and the most expedient path toward achieving them first gained currency among a significant portion of the Indian population—especially the young generation—beginning in the late-nineteenth century.[27]

Whatever the degree to which non-Indian America was paying attention, Native people gradually advanced this strategy across the turn of the century, normalizing the practice of urban working and living in the process. Acknowledging this is essential when attempting to understand why so many Native people, even those seemingly unprepared, willingly took a chance on the city in the second half of the twentieth century. Reservation push factors certainly played a role in their decision to leave, but

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[25] Ibid, 18, 61.
[26] On Sherman Institute's work "outing programs" and their relationship to Indian "uplift," see Kevin Whalen, "Labored Learning: The Outing System at Sherman Institute, 1902-1930," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, v36, n1 (2012).
[27] According to historian David Wallace Adams, at the turn of the century roughly two-thirds of all Indian children (21,568) were enrolled in boarding schools. *Education for Extinction*, 58.

an increasing desire to practice economic and social freedom, to the degree they were promised, drove Native people to succeed with more than just pure survival at stake.

Albert Cobe's life provides a fine example of this central assertion. Born and raised on the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa reservation in northern Wisconsin, Cobe wrote about his first attempt at running away from boarding school, years before he would emerge as a professional golfer on the PGA tour and a leader of Chicago's Native American community. He pleaded with his lumberjack father not to make him return, primarily because he resented the idea of learning English and reading books. "The school is very hard on our people," his father granted. "But you have to learn to read and write. Times are changing, and you must be ready." Young Albert's obstinacy persisted, but so too did his father's commitment to modern education for his son. "Some day, you'll be glad they made you look at books," Albert's father promised. "I wish someone had made *me* look at books!" Albert's father warned that failure to "come to terms with that world" would render his son a "bum." Albert steadfastly rejected his father's warning, while arguing that his father was not a "bum" for not having entered the white man's world. "When are you going to grow up?" his father admonished. "Of *course* I did. How do you think I learned to run the sawmill? How do you think I raised enough money to buy a car? By selling lumber! Believe me, my Indian heritage didn't teach me anything about *that*. And what do you think I do when they call me to meetings in Washington?"[28]

Albert's father's persistent directives ultimately prevailed. Young Albert stayed in school and eventually arrived at the Haskell Indian school in Lawrence, Kansas,

[28] Albert Cobe, *Great Spirit* (Chicago: Children's Press, 1970), 8, 16, 24.

where he looked forward to traveling as a member of the school's basketball and baseball teams. Upon graduating, he spent two years in nearby Kansas City, where he played semi-pro basketball while nurturing an interest in golf. In 1930 he relocated back to his reservation in Wisconsin. "I had been outside the sphere of Indian life," Cobe explained. "I once would have accepted any identification other than Indian." After initially focusing his attention on his sick mother, Cobe began developing an interest in tribal politics and national Indian affairs. Distraught over his perception of social, economic, and political apathy on the part of his tribal elders, Cobe began touring other reservations in an old Chevy coupe, hoping to rouse fellow Native people from a state of inertia. "I could see that things hadn't improved on the reservation; the poorer people were poorer, worse than they had ever been," he recalled. "I realized that I still had the interest of my people inside me." After a few years he found his tribe wrestling with the decision on whether or not to accept the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). Albert's father, recognizing the need for talented young minds to help make the right decision, quickly recruited his educated son into the tribe's political fold. "We need young people like you around here," he reasoned. "People who aren't afraid to speak up." The tribe ultimately voted to accept the IRA, although Albert vociferously rejected it on grounds that it encouraged the continuation of tribal dependence on the federal government—something his own life experiences beyond the reservation convinced him to reject.[29]

After playing a small role in his tribe's political negotiations, Albert Cobe again progressed away from his reservation. He spent the rest of his adult years as a PGA tour pro, and as a golf instructor at a YMCA in downtown Chicago, where he mentored

[29] Albert Cobe, *Great Spirit* (Chicago: Children's Press, 1970), 45; "I Must Step Up," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 May 1971.

young Indian children whose families began relocating to Chicago in the 1950s. Still, however far away he ventured, he persistently reserved space for his reservation home in the recesses of his heart and mind. In 1970, reflecting on the sum of his experiences, he shared his dream of one day retiring in the North Woods of Wisconsin where he grew up. Indeed, his brief autobiography concludes with a picture of him standing at a forest's edge, arms folded, gazing pensively across an open expanse of prairie tallgrass.[30]

Similarly, during an interview in 1982, Leroy Wesaw (Potawatomie) recounted how after graduating Michigan's Harbor Springs Boarding School in 1939 he "just kind of worked at whatever was available at the time." Elaborating on his wider experiences, Wesaw explained that from childhood onward he embraced freedom of movement and opportunity, a value he found embedded in a story his father used to tell:

> And seeing my share of the country at this time, and dad always, he used to like to tell me this story about the bear and how he went over the mountain—finally came back home and figured that's where he's going to stay and I kind of remembered that and dad had no real disagreement with my traveling at the time, so I traveled all over the United States when I was quite young, furthered my education this way. I always been a real heavy reader.

[30] Albert Cobe, *Great Spirit* (Chicago: Children's Press, 1970), 45.

In 1952, after working for years as an interstate truck driver, Leroy and his wife Patricia (Mohawk) eventually made their way to Chicago after Patricia stressed that she could no longer live life as a "yo-yo." In 1978 Leroy graduated from Chicago's Native American Educational Services College. Commenting on his college degree, he explained, "It's just like a key that opens up a door and everything becomes wide."[31]

Progressive Era national Indian leaders, many of them members of the Society of American Indians, also emphasized a rhetoric of socio-economic uplift for Native people while helping pave the way for the more widely acknowledged and understood Indian urbanization and relocation of the 1950s-60s. Most scholars, however, fail to emphasize progressive Indians' overt championing of urban life and contempt for rural life, instead preferring to compartmentalize the "Red Progressives" while treating them as an exceptional cohort of Native people. Yet, for a comprehensive understanding of Indian urbanization in the twentieth century from an Indian perspective it is important to recognize how the earlier generation of boarding school and college-trained Native people helped clear paths to the city. Over time unexceptional Indians would pursue those very inroads to urban space, while echoing the sentiments of Progressive Era national Indian leaders, whether they realized it or not.

There was perhaps no greater paragon of turn-of-the-century Indian self-help and racial uplift than Dr. Carlos Montezuma, who unabashedly exploited metropolitan space—Chicago, to be precise—for social, educational, and economic benefit. When

[31] Interview with Leroy Wesaw, Chicago American Indian Oral History Project, 16 December 1982, box 2, folder 5, The Newberry Library and NAES (Native American Education Services) College Library, Chicago, Illinois.

missionaries asked Dr. Montezuma why he did not go back and practice medicine among his Apache people, he coolly responded, "Thank you, but I believe I can do more good for my people by being their voice in civilization and their missionary in Chicago." Several decades later, numerous urban Indians would express an obligation to return to their respective reservations in order to share their knowledge of the wider world on behalf of their tribe. Montezuma was diametrically opposed to any such agenda. He believed he could best help his people by remaining in the city and proving that Indians could make it in mainstream society. Pointing to himself as an example par excellence, he championed the capacity of the Indian individual while decrying the larger structural system that bound Indians in chains. A staunch assimilationist, Montezuma believed that Indian children "should have their privileges beyond the tribe, the privilege of seeing and knowing what the United States is. Reservation for Indians means the reservation from experiences and from opportunities for education and betterment in industry."[32]

Writing in 1913, Carlos Montezuma argued that the very term "reservation" contradicted the purpose for which it was designed. Reservations were supposed to be training venues for "civilization." As far as Montezuma was concerned, however, they only succeeded in keeping civilization out.[33] Writing in 1914, he could not have been more explicit in his disdain for reservation space. "Reservations are prisons where our people are kept to live and die, where equal possibilities, equal education and equal

[32] Carlos Montezuma, "The Reservation is Fatal to the Development of Good Citizenship," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians,* volume 2, no. 1, January-March, 1914 (Washington, D.C.: Society of American Indians), 69-71.
[33] Carlos Montezuma, "The Indian Reservation System," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v1, n4 (October-December, 1913).

responsibilities are unknown," he proclaimed. "For our people to know what freedom is they must go outside of the reservation and in order for them to harmonize with it and get used to it, they must live outside of the reservations."[34] It was therefore especially vital that his readers firmly understood that he was not a reservation Indian. "The world was my sphere of action and not the limitations, nearly as binding as a prison, of a strictly Bureau-ruled reservation," he insisted. While he admitted the cruelty in being torn away from "paternal love, care and protection" at a young age, he ultimately concluded that his being cast into the white world had "proven the greatest blessing." Indeed, he emphasized the experience as the most important lesson of his life. His attitudes toward reservations and Indian Service paternalism were legitimate where his own life was concerned. Experiences in the wider world raised Montezuma's expectations for his own capacity as a modern man. Kidnapped as a child, he did not request removal from tribalism, but when that process in fact occurred, what was he to do?[35]

Montezuma's close mentor and confidant Colonel Richard Henry Pratt, the boarding school founder, shared his former student's sentiments. "I want to emphasize the position you know I have always occupied, that the place for Indians is as a real part of our people," Pratt wrote to Montezuma. "They must quit being Indians and become

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[34] Carlos Montezuma, "What Indians Must Do," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v2, n4 (September-December, 1914), 294.
[35] Carlos Montezuma, "Light on the Indian Situation," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v1, n1 (January-April, 1913), 52. For an excellent biography on Carlos Montezuma, see Peter Iverson, *Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). On the Society of American Indians, see Hazel W. Hertzberg's classic study, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971).

citizens… The tribe offers them actually nothing worth thinking about." As Montezuma and Pratt exemplify, Indian "uplift" in the early decades of the twentieth century essentially meant an absolute severance from tribal life—assimilation, explicitly. In subsequent decades, however, the meaning of Indian uplift created room for the achievement of skills necessary to preserve and exercise Native people's choice to realize whatever goals they set for themselves, whether that meant walking the "Red Road" or embracing non-Indian ways. Simply put, uplift at first ostensibly meant leaving the Indian world and joining mainstream America. That however changed in subsequent decades, as a negotiated process of acculturation more often became the primary goal.[36]

To be sure, Montezuma's convictions did not necessarily reflect the most financially, intellectually, or socially expedient course for all Native people during the progressive era. Nor did his perspective encapsulate the socio-cultural values of numerous Native people who believed that the survival of Native culture depended on protecting it from non-Indian corruption. Still, Montezuma certainly was not alone in his likening of reservations to prisons. For example, as Yale graduate and future prominent Indian education reformer Henry Roe Cloud expressed, "The reservation, confining the people as it did, tended to narrow and circumscribe the thought-life of the race." He argued that isolation from outside cultures and societies produced a "conservative spirit" among Native people, which rendered them "too much contented

[36] Richard H. Pratt to Carlos Montezuma, 23 April 1920, box 3, folder 154, Carlos Montezuma Papers, the Newberry Library, Chicago. Sociologist Stephen Cornell discusses how "pan-Indianism," closely linked to assimilationists, yielded to a "supratribal" Indian political front that seemed more intent on achieving acculturation. See *Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

with things as they were." Simply put, Roe Cloud, like Montezuma, felt confident that reservation confinement sapped Indians of their human ambition, and barred them from meaningful participation in both the American and world community. Not only were Native people not free to participate in society at large, Roe Cloud stressed, they also were not free to manage their own lives within reservation boundaries. "Our dependency was made complete and emphasized by a vast, cumbrous machinery of government," he concluded. "Its tentacles reached from Washington to all the reservations."[37]

Society of American Indians president Sherman Coolidge (Arapaho), who like Montezuma was an adopted son of white parents, also argued for uplift of the Indian race. He advocated Native people's settling in towns and communities where they would be less of a "burden" and could instead "become productive, useful men and women" capable of shouldering what he considered their fair share of responsibility for national and world affairs.[38] In the clearest of terms, Coolidge firmly argued against any notion that Native people suffered from an inherently limited intellectual capacity. He instead maintained that Indians' contemporary second-class citizenship was mostly the result of having been kept in the dark about "enlightenment."[39]

Likewise, former student of both the Carlisle Indian School and the Hampton Institute Charles H. Kealear (Yankton Sioux) implored readers of an article he penned for SAI's *Quarterly Journal* to look forward, and not backward. "You may go all over

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[37] Henry Roe Cloud, "Some Social and Economic Aspects of the Reservation," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v1, n2 (April-June, 1913), 151.
[38] Sherman Coolidge, "The American Indian of Today," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v2, n1 (January-March, 1914), 35.
[39] Sherman Coolidge, "The Function of the Society of American Indians," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v2, n3 (March-June, 1914), 187.

the country, on different reservations, and who are the boys and girls that are making steady progress?" he prodded. "You will not find among them one who is always looking in the past." He challenged his readers to "put themselves side by side with the white man—our pale-face brethren—and [say], 'We can do as much; we can do as well.'"[40]

Such convictions were not limited to Indian adults who had ample experience to draw upon when selling their message to fellow Native people. Numerous Indian boarding school students also continued to emphasize the vitality of achieving a higher education and gaining experience in the modern off-reservation world. For example, in her first-prize-winning essay, "The Value and Necessity of Higher Academic Training for the Indian Student," Hampton Institute student Lucy E. Hunter (Winnebago) argued that her ability to even conceptualize such an essay title is evidence that Indians are capable of a "great awakening, which is no other sign than that of progress." Within her essay, she predicted that, "The time is soon coming when we shall be thrown upon our own resources; and without government aid we shall have to look after our rights and interests and transact our own business concerning personal and real estate property, and now is the time to prepare ourselves." To a certain degree, Hunter's essay anticipated the eventual arrival of a federal termination policy, in which the government-to-government relationship between Indian tribes and the United States would be dissolved, thus leaving Indians in the political and economic lurch. Whether or not Hunter personally advocated such a policy shift is unclear. But what is clear is that she firmly believed that Native people should waste no time in preparing

[40] "What the Indian Can Do for Himself," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v2, n1 (January-March, 1914), 41.

themselves to manage their own affairs. In this respect, she not only anticipated termination, she also anticipated advocacy of Indian self-determination decades in advance of the 1960s, when that movement firmly gained traction throughout Indian Country and slowly convinced a handful of Washington bureaucrats of its merit.[41]

Similar to Lucy Hunter, a growing chorus of young Indian voices increasingly spoke to education's capacity for awakening within Native students a cross-cultural intellectual spirit that years of conflict and confinement had seemed to erode. "The time has come when the Indian must have an education, that he may help in uplifting his race to a higher standard of civilization," Choctaw student Bennett Lavers declared. "The future hope of the Indian depends on the boys and girls who are striving in this age to take advantage of all that is given them." Papago student Joe Ignacio agreed: "The current of civilization is slowly but surely bearing down upon [the Indian], and will shortly engulf him if he has not learned to swim out of it." Finally, Chippewa student Mary LeJeune elaborated on a burgeoning competitive spirit among Native students who firmly rejected second-class citizenship. "The Indian people will not always remain in back of the people who have taken the Red Man's country for theirs," LeJeune signaled, "but they are coming to the front and will one day show the white man that an educated Indian can do as much good as any man belonging to the white race, but to do this they must first receive as good an education as their competitors."[42]

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[41] "The Value and Necessity of Higher Academic Training for the Indian Student," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v3, n1 (January-March, 1915), 11-14.

[42] "What Indian Students Say About Education," *The Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, v1, n3 (July-September, 1913), 295.

To be sure, tribal epistemologies endured during the late-nineteenth-century period of military defeat and reservation confinement, often in clandestine fashion. Yet, those who advocated for Westernized education could find common ground with keepers of tribal culture on the idea that a limited, isolated worldview had no currency in traditional tribal teachings. Prior to the removal and reservation eras, Native people had demonstrated a long history of borrowing the best and leaving the rest when mingling with other cultures—tribal and Euro-American alike. In the final decades of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth, Indian students increasingly advocated a return to such cosmopolitan practices. At times some among them proved especially insensitive toward the value of traditional tribal education. They perhaps might be forgiven, however, for appreciating Western education as a tool of uplift—a modern technology that could help their families and tribes. After all, similar to Carlos Montezuma, they did not necessarily ask to be thrust into the tutelage of government boarding schools. But when such events transpired, they fell into the unenviable position of having to choose between two approaches to life that authority figures from both sides of the spectrum argued were correct and mutually exclusive. Those who hoped to blend their experiences as the most expedient means toward socio-economic uplift for Indian people faced a difficult challenge. As did their children, who in subsequent decades increasingly gravitated toward urban centers in order to gain wider experience in the off-reservation world.

Not unlike the progressive Society of American Indians that Carlos Montezuma and Sherman Coolidge represented, federally sponsored Indian vocational schools

continued playing an unparalleled role in inculcating young Native people with a message of uplift while helping to facilitate their dynamic and unpredictable engagement with the off-reservation world and mainstream American culture. The Haskell Indian School Symphonic Band, for example, toured various western states in the summer of 1927 to bring their music to the masses. Tour stops included Provo, Utah; Boise, Idaho; Olympia, Washington; Hood River, Oregon; Bozeman, Montana; Casper, Wyoming; and Corpus Christi, Texas where the boys enjoyed swimming in the Gulf of Mexico.

Their music apparently did not go over well at some tour stops, which were likely filled with audiences that expected something a little more lively—more "Indian"—and less conventional. One critic complained that the Haskell musicians only played "four solemn dreary dull numbers, not a smile, no pep, no life, no bright happy encores, nothing but four drab sorrowful numbers… If Mr. Nelson would turn those boys loose, I am sure you would have what you advertise, a 'whoop'em up novelty' number." Band conductor Mr. Nelson bristled at the criticism and dismissed it as the design of one Miss Dalton, whom he described as a "vamping flapper type." He regretted exposing his "mannered" Haskell boys to her "daring and suggestive" conversations.[43] Still, some of the criticism must have stuck. Later that summer at an Arizona date the band appeared for its first set in buckskin and feathers, and performed

[43] "June Schedule, 1927," Haskell Indian Nations University, Decimal Correspondence Files, 1925-1959, box 134, folder: Band, 1927, National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

"Indian" numbers that included war dances. For their second set, however, they took the stage in "regular American evening dress."[44]

Destinations on the Haskell band's tour schedule were as diverse as their performances. Tour stops extended from Houston, Texas to Santa Barbara, California to Boise, Idaho, and dozens of places in between.[45] In 1927, at a tour date in far away Wenatchee, Washington, the Haskell Indian band exploited its performance as an opportunity to demonstrate its clever affinity for negotiating the blurry lines between the traditional and modern worlds. At the conclusion of their first set, one Haskell musician suddenly vacated his chair and instrument and began performing a traditional Indian war dance while his fellow musicians broke into an Indian war song. But prior to the end of the number the young Indian showman surprised, and likely confounded, the audience a second time when he abruptly broke into The Charleston, the most popular dance of the era, made fashionable by socialites in New York City and Paris. After intermission, the Haskell band once again subverted expectations when it took the stage clad in tuxedos and formal wear and proceeded to perform a series of "heavier grade" numbers.[46]

Boarding school students intent on gaining experience in mainstream America and its booming urban splendor did not necessarily need to join the school touring band,

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[44] "Indian Band at Chautauqua is Applauded Here," clipping from unidentifiable newspaper from Miami, Arizona (1927), Haskell Indian Nations University, Decimal Correspondence Files, 1925-1959, box 134, folder: Band, 1927, National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[45] Ellison-White Circuit, April-July Tour Schedule, RG75, Haskell Institute, Decimal Correspondence File, 1917-1959, box 134, folder: Band, 1927, NARA Great Plains, Kansas City, Missouri.

[46] "Indians Pull 'Fast One;' Do War Dance, Charleston," *The Wenatchee Daily World*, 14 June 1927, found in RG75, Haskell Institute, Decimal Correspondence File, 1917-1959, box 134, folder: Band, 1927, NARA Great Plains, Kansas City, Missouri.

or football, baseball, and boxing teams that traveled to compete with numerous Indian and non-Indian schools alike. In the early 1930s, largely in response to the 1928 Meriam Report's advocacy of better work opportunities for Native people, the Office of Indian Affairs gradually introduced off-reservation employment programs at several reservation agencies. Indians who benefitted from the program were mostly young boarding school graduates. They successfully established burgeoning Indian communities in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and the Pacific Northwest. In time, however, the Great Depression, Federal Work Relief projects around reservations that helped establish steady work at home, and a significant change in Indian policy that sought to revive Indian self-government and encourage reservation economic development all hindered the program's expansion and efficacy. By 1940, the Indian office had officially abandoned the program, but not before it succeeded in raising expectations for urban employment among a significant number of young Indians.[47]

A collection of interviews conducted in 1940 with former Flandreau Indian School students illustrates how federal boarding schools continued encouraging a process of Indian uplift predicated on steady vocational employment, typically beyond the parameters of rural Indian Country. For example, Emmett Jones, who graduated in 1936 with an auto mechanic license, was busy driving a diesel grader for $110 per month as part of a Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID) construction team based out of Fort Yates, North Dakota. Prior to that, however, he had worked in

[47] "The Bureau of Indian Affairs Voluntary Relocation Services Program", box 34, folder 330: Relocation, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago; Meriam, Lewis. *The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and Submitted to Him, February 21, 1928/Survey Staff: Lewis Meriam...[et al.]* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).

Pierre and then Sioux Falls, South Dakota as mechanic for Chevrolet dealerships. Because he qualified as a "specialist," he was one of the highest paid among his current Fort Yates construction team, and worked a steady 1-9pm full-time shift. He was a proud owner of his own tool set, and claimed to lead a "clean, moral life." Despite his busy work schedule he still found time for dancing.[48]

Not all Flandreau students enjoyed the same good fortune as that of Jones. Still, even among those who struggled to immediately find firm footing in the off-reservation economy, or achieve boarding school administrators' idea of success, mobility remained a consistent theme in their lives. The life of Hobart Gates is a prime example not only of this central assertion, but also virtually every major theme of this chapter in that he consistently moved incrementally between rural and urban America in perpetual pursuit of labor and social opportunities. He confronted modernity head on not only within America, but also beyond in patriotic service to his country.

The great grandson of two Yanktonai Sioux chiefs, Gates left the Flandreau Indian School in 1936 and "wandered about" from Santa Fe to the Haskell Indian Institute in Kansas to Pine Ridge and back to Flandreau. While in New Mexico, he first found work in oil fields before moving on to a CCC-ID rural electrification project. From there he migrated from Santa Fe to the Haskell Institute to join the school's boxing program. In 1940, Gates enlisted in the United States Army and eventually received assignment to the 98th Coastal Artillery Division in Hawaii, where he survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1943, he transferred to the 35th Infantry field artillery battalion in Europe and saw action in the Battle of the Bulge on Christmas Day,

[48] Flandreau Interviews (1940), box 3, folder 8, Stanley D. Lyman Papers, University of Utah Marriott Library, Special Collections.

1944. He emerged from that catastrophic battle as one of 17 survivors from among his division of 120 men. Upon his honorable discharge he bounced back and forth between New Mexico and the Dakotas as a federal officer on various Indian reservations. Finally, his career arc arrived at the major Great Lakes metropolis of Cleveland, where he worked as a job counselor.[49]

Boarding school graduates often pursued urban employment, but many urban employment directors seemed apprehensive about hiring Indian workers. In 1936, a letter from an Indian education agent to Potawatomie Agency superintendent H.E. Bruce illustrated the challenge some Indian agents faced in obtaining urban employment positions for young Indian graduates. In the letter, the Indian agent explains their failure in convincing either the General Secretary of the Topeka YWCA or the Topeka employment secretary to help locate domestic work for two Potawatomie girls from Mayetta, Kansas. Both employment agents rejected the girls for two primary reasons: First, they were already busy helping a small group of Mexican girls, whom they claimed were at a similar level of preparedness. Second, the capital city's large, transient population of political "hangers-on" offered too many hazardous social opportunities for the uninitiated.[50]

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[49] Flandreau Interviews (1940), box 3, folder 8, Stanley D. Lyman Papers, University of Utah Marriott Library, Special Collections; Hobart J. Gates obituary, *The Bismarck Tribune*, 6 November 1997. In anticipation of potential confusion, it is important to note that this is *not* Hobart H. Gates who served as Custer County's States' Attorney during the American Indian Movement's takeover of the Custer County court house in 1973. I could not confirm whether Gates's job counseling position in Cleveland was part of the Indian relocation program to that city, but that would not be surprising, in that I can find no other connection between gates and Cleveland.

[50] Letter to H.E. Bruce, 22 January 1936, RG75, Potawatomie Agency, Mayetta, Kansas, Decimal Correspondence (1883-1969), box 122, folder: K.C. Employment, Students (Girls) in Government Service, NARA Great Plains, Kansas City, Missouri.

Parents of Indian girls who sought employment in Kansas City as part of Haskell's work outing program expressed similar concerns about keeping their daughters away from harmful elements. For example, the mother of a Kickapoo girl from Powhattan, Kansas wrote an education official to express her reservations about Haskell's plan to send her daughter to Kansas City for work. She insisted that her daughter attend church each Sunday, limit visits to the movie theater to once per week, and make a weekly deposit of one dollar into a savings account in order to purchase new clothing for the next school year. Despite agreeing to the arrangement, the student's mother did not express much confidence in the program. "[The children] have too much liberty regardless of what we say or want them to do," she wrote. "This idea of sending our children to town has caused our children to drift away from us, disobey us and go where they please," she protested.[51]

While thousands of Indian children continued attending federal boarding schools during the 1930s, the Great Depression ushered in new opportunities for Indian adults to gain vocational training and a greater familiarity with mainstream capitalist society. As part of its public work relief initiative, the Roosevelt administration introduced the Indian Emergency Conservation Work (IECW) program both on and near numerous reservations. Months after the program's successful launch, Southern Navajo camp director Philip Stevenson penned an article that pondered the future for Indian relief workers who were learning the value of mainstream American consumer comforts. "In

[51] Flora Goslire (last name is slightly illegible) to J. Preston Myers, 23 May 1935, RG75, Potawatomi Agency Records, Decimal Correspondence (1883-1969), box 122, folder: K.C. Employment, NARA Great Plains, Kansas City.

these camps we are getting our Indians used to the enjoyment of many facilities such as fly-screens, abundant water, soap, antiseptics, a varied diet, etc., accessible only at an economic level far above theirs. But after camp—what?" he begged. "Send them back to their dry farms, to which water for both man and beast must be hauled miles, to all the lacks and inconveniences which during the years have bred unhealthy habits?" Frustrated, he realized that, "To keep the camps running permanently would be to dislocate seriously their family and communal life." Uncertain of a solution, he could only ask, "What is the answer?" Looking ahead to the aftermath of World War II, countless federal officials worried about readjustment for Indians who gained an appreciation for and mastery of American cultural values while serving beyond reservation limits. Yet, Stevenson's essay suggests that as early as the 1930s this was already a pressing concern for federal Indian policymakers. Likewise, his emphasis on soap and antiseptics reveals how thousands of Native adults had been exposed to the Indian Bureau's program for washing the unwashed masses—assimilation, plainly—decades before the relocation program's unveiling.[52]

In similar fashion, IECW national director Dr. Jay Nash worried about returning students from Indian schools and universities who found little opportunity to practice their new skills. "We want to fit in. We want to be of some service," returning students informed Dr. Nash. Promoting an expanded IECW work program as a solution, Nash suggested that skilled boarding school graduates could work as carpenters, plumbers, truck drivers, machine operators, blacksmiths, cooks, telephone linemen, and group

[52] "The Other Quieter Thing—Their Own" by Philip Stevenson (Southern Navajo IECW Camp Manager), *Indians at Work*, September 15, 1933 (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior), 14.

foremen. Nash also recognized an opportunity, however gendered and menial, for female students. The Navajo, Apache, and Papago, for example, had established a network of family camps, in which the whole family followed adult male work teams from camp to camp. Women, he suggested, could weave baskets and cook. Taken together, Stevenson and Nash both wrestled with problems that continued harassing Indian Bureau officials in subsequent decades as they became even more ambitious about introducing Indians to mainstream society. Above all else, they were confounded by the problem of how to achieve assimilation in painless a manner as possible, without breaking up the Indian family.[53]

Across the first few decades of the twentieth century, boarding school graduates continued searching for opportunities to deploy the vocational skills and modern education that administrators, teachers, and, increasingly, their own parents assured them would guarantee steady income and fruitful social opportunities in the ever-evolving national economy. Not all succeeded, but those who did typically cooperated to develop burgeoning urban Indian communities in numerous cities years prior to the Indian bureau's official sponsorship of a similar agenda. They needed no directive from above on how to manage any crisis from below—their coalescence unfolded organically. They simply acted as self-determined cosmopolitan peoples who could fashion a life within mainstream American society on their own terms.[54]

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[53] "Returned Students and Emergency Conservation" by Dr. Jay Nash (national director of IECW), *Indians at Work*, September 15, 1933 (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior), p. 15.

[54] For a chapter-length discussion of urban fraternal Indian societies that sprouted in the 1920s, see Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern*

In December 1926, Native people in New York City established the American Indian Association that doubled as a mutual and travelers aid society and entertainment outlet. The club was especially unique in that it was created by and for Indians; it did not depend on guidance or support from non-Indian social reformers or Indian Service personnel. The club met at a house that members rented and furnished at 72 Grove Street in Manhattan. Much of the club's launching was attributable to Mary Newell, a full-blood Cheyenne woman who for fifteen years had been teaching courses in "the great out-of-doors" at area schools and museums. Better known by her stage name, "Princess Chinquilla," Newell was born and raised in Oklahoma sometime in the 1850s and in her teens became one of the first Cheyenne students to attend Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian Boarding School in Pennsylvania. As a young adult she toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show all the way to Canada before forming her own vaudeville team that toured the United States and Europe. Eventually putting down roots among New York City's Indian population, she recognized that roughly 300 Native people living in Manhattan during that period would benefit from an organized meeting place where they could bond with other Indians who navigated the busy streets of the "Big Apple." In addition to local Indian residents, the club vowed to assist the numerous Native people who passed through the metropolitan community each year with everything from sightseeing to locating friends and relatives.

"These young braves were not unprepared for work in a great metropolitan center," one journalist stressed. In government schools, many had learned trades that

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Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971), chapter nine. Hertzberg argues that for all their modern, progressive characteristics, these early urban Indian organization's actually reinforced Indian identity, allowing urban Indians to share their experiences and provided mutual support.

were useful in cities, but not on reservations. Many found work in the New York City film industry. Others fashioned careers as plumbers, ministers, opera singers, and even college professors. Many had first migrated to New York City for industry jobs in support of the United States' effort in the First World War. Likewise, the Hog Island Shipyards in nearby Philadelphia employed over 50 Indians during the First World War. In both Philadelphia and New York City Native people labored in various munitions factories and motor plants. Journalist Frank C. Sherman perhaps summed up the attitudes of many non-Indian Americans who appreciated Native people's contribution to the war effort. "The great war has made us co-discoverers with Columbus; it has helped us to rediscover the Indian—his individuality, his bravery, his worth as a citizen," he ventured. "Let us put forth the right hand of fellowship and welcome him as he deserves, as a citizen of the twentieth century—a real American."[55]

Included among the roughly 200 members who immediately enrolled in the American Indian Association were numerous single and married World War I veterans who had learned to manage their own money and affairs, embraced the "whirl of city life," and resented the lack of socio-economic opportunities back home on reservations. In New York City, they merged with popular cultural trends of the day, most notably dancing with women, something that many Native men did not practice prior to their mingling in New York City's social life. Indeed, hetero-social entertainment, which first gained traction in progressive Greenwich Village circles in the 1910s, was a relatively new phenomenon for Americans who were intent on challenging what they perceived to be outmoded social norms. Most club members had also made successful inroads into

[55] "Indians in the World War," *The Six Nations* newspaper of the Iroquois Confederacy, v2, n21 (January 1928), 12.

the metropolitan employment sphere. Among the club members were plumbers, electricians, mechanics, ministers, college professors, and opera singers. Some members had even landed regular positions as Indian extras in New York-based film productions. Finally, while club members certainly qualified as "progressive," they did demonstrate concern for properly teaching and preserving Indian culture and history. Similar to clubs that would soon appear in Chicago and Los Angeles, on the second Friday of each month members of the American Indian Association hosted public lectures that incorporated modern "magic lantern" technology in an effort to cure non-Indian audiences of their ailing understandings of Indian history and culture.[56]

In 1924, a cohort of Indian progressive reformers formed the Society of Oklahoma Indians in Tulsa. Founding members included prominent Creek Nation leader, Bacone College graduate, and oil and gas businessman Joseph Bruner and Osage lawyer and Oklahoma State Senator Sylvester J. Soldani, who served as the group's first

[56] "New York Indian Colony Now Has Its Own Club," *New York Times*, 6 February 1927; "Mrs. Mary Newell, Leader of Indians, Dies in Queens," *New York Times*, 29 October 1938; "New York City Indian Colony Reorganizes with a Membership of 200," *The American Indian*, Newsletter of the Society of Oklahoma Indians - Tulsa, OK, (February, 1927), found in Vogel Papers, box 18, folder 33, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. Fascinatingly, in 1926 former Society of American Indians leader and Dakota intellectual Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin) began investigating the authenticity of Mary Newell's claim of Indian identity. See Cari M. Carpenter, "Detecting Indianness: Gertrude Bonnin's Investigation of Native American Identity," in *Wicazo Sa Review*, v20, n1 (Spring 2005), pp. 139-159. A group of urban Indians in Chicago created a comparable organization titled the Grand Council Fire (late renamed the Indian Council Fire) in 1923. The group's mission statement promised, "To promote the advancement and protection of Indian rights and welfare; to assist the Indian in times of distress; to encourage the Indian in all educational and artistic pursuits; to strengthen and maintain the Indian character, and to cultivate friendlier relations between the Indian and White Race." See "The Indian Council Fire, 7 May 1944," Vogel Papers, box 18, folder 33, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois. For an insightful book chapter on the history of Chicago's Indian community that includes discussion of the GCF, see David R. M. Beck, "The Chicago American Indian Community," in Terry Straus and Grant P. Arndt, eds., *Native Chicago* (Chicago: Native Chicago Independent Press, 1998).

president. In 1926 the organization began pressing its own newspaper under the banner "A Publication That Reflects the True Character of the American Indian." The paper also referred to the organization's Tulsa home as not only the oil capital of the world, but also the "Indian Capital."[57]

For the November 1930 issue editor Lee Harkins (Choctaw) reserved the lead-story spot for a reprint of an article titled "Emancipating the Indian," whose title predicted the rhetoric terminationist U.S. Senator Arthur Watkins would deploy two decades later.[58] Partly dismissing Carlos Montezuma as a hypocrite who begged for the Indian Bureau to "Let My People Go!" despite never truly being confined by a reservation, the article urged readers to realize that no Indians are confined—that they only fail to recognize their potential for mobility. "Our readers are assured that the men and women of [Montezuma's] band of Apache are urged by their present superintendent to go wherever their interest or fancy may dictate and remain as long as they wish." The article concluded by likening the Indian to the Prodigal Son of biblical verse in that he will never succeed in the larger world as long as he knows the safe arms of his father await him back home.[59]

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[57] *The American Indian* (Newsletter of the Society of Oklahoma Indians), v5, n1 (November 1930), 4; Thomas W. Cowger, "Pan-Indian Movements," *Oklahoma Historical Society's Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/p/pa010.html, accessed 15 January 2014.

[58] On Arthur Watkins's advocacy of Indian "emancipation" and influence on federal Indian policy in the mid-twentieth century see R. Warren Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

[59] *The American Indian* (Newsletter of the Society of Oklahoma Indians), v5, n1 (November 1930), 4.

As Native people incrementally migrated away from reservations and toward urban space in the first half of the twentieth century, they did not necessarily do so at the expense of maintaining an explicit socio-economic connection to their respective tribes. The Mohawk "High Steel" workers who made weekly migrations to Brooklyn, for example, regularly sent a portion of their earnings back home to their Kahnawake reservation, just south of Montreal, across the St. Lawrence River. Relatives at home then directed the earnings toward reservation projects, including housing developments and a new church. Several scholars have discussed how relocated Indians actively constructed Native space and institutions within new urban locales.[60] The Brooklyn Mohawks certainly engaged in such a process. But they also unambiguously mined the city to strengthen tribal institutions back home. Moreover, not only did work teams send their earnings to their families, they also kept up regular appearances in Kahnawake, undeterred by the twelve-hour drive along Route 9 before expansion of I-87 in the 1960s cut their commute by half. As Presbyterian pastor David Cory, who ministered to the Brooklyn Mohawk community, put it, "Perhaps Caughnawaga and Brooklyn have indicated in both economic and ecclesiastical terms a technique for conserving the values of the reservation and adjusting to the modern economy."[61]

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[60] See for example Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque, 2000), chapter seven.

[61] David M. Cory, *Within Two Worlds* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), pp. 64-65. Caughnawaga is an alternative spelling of Kahnawake. For an excellent film documentary about the Brooklyn Mohawks, see Reaghan Tarbell (director), *To Brooklyn and Back: A Mohawk Journey* (Visionmaker Video, 2009). Finally, for a general study of high steel work during the twentieth century that includes ample discussion of the Mohawk workers see Jim Rasenberger, *High Steel: The Daring Men Who Built the World's Greatest Skyline, 1881 to the Present* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), especially chapter six.

Writing for *The New Yorker* in 1949, Joseph Mitchell observed, "The most footloose Indians in North American are a band of mixed-blood Mohawks whose home, the Kahnawake Reservation, is on the St. Lawrence River in Quebec." From the 1920s onward, the Brooklyn Mohawk community frequently bounced back and forth not just between reservation and city, but also between three nations—Kahnawake, Canada, and the United States—in pursuit of steady work. Alongside Brooklyn, they also established communities in Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Detroit, albeit ones smaller in size and influence. The tribe had first entered the steel construction business in 1886 when Canada's Dominion Bridge Company (DBC) hired Mohawk men to build a cantilever railroad bridge out of Montreal, across the St. Lawrence River. Because the rail line would run directly through the Kahnawake reservation, the company promised to employ Mohawk men. "It became apparent to all concerned that these Indians were very odd in that they did not have any fear of heights," one DBC official claimed. "If not watched, they would climb up into the spans and walk around up there as cool and collected as the toughest of our riveters…" The official's might have exaggerated the workers' skills while playing into stereotypes about Indians' supposed inherent physical agility, but only slightly, as the workers' impressive record would eventually speak for itself.[62]

During the turn of the century the Mohawks increasingly gained notoriety in Canada for their steelworking skills. Still, work opportunities slowly diminished, and by the 1920s active steel gangs had taken on as many Mohawk men as they could, thus

[62] Joseph Mitchell, "The Mohawks in High Steel" (reprinted in Edmund Wilson's *Apologies to the Iroquois* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960), originally in published in *The New Yorker*, 1949), 14-15.

forcing the Kahnawake-based steelworkers to look to the United States for opportunities to demonstrate their talents. They found those opportunities in bustling New York City. Still, easy access to the American labor market was not initially guaranteed for prospective Mohawk workers who attached their hopes to the Route 9 corridor between Montreal and Manhattan. Before winning job contracts, the Kahnawake Mohawks first had to win an important and often overlooked court case that adjudicated the manner in which work visa rules applied to them.

Paul Diabo first began working in iron and steel in New York City in 1912. His career flourished without consequence until 1927 when the United States Department of Immigration arrested him in Philadelphia for not having a legal work permit and for being an illegal alien in violation of the 1924 Immigration Act. The U.S. federal court, however, ruled in his favor. Diabo successfully argued that the 1794 Jay Treaty allowed Canadian Mohawk people to freely cross the international border for work opportunities. The U.S. Immigration Office argued that the War of 1812 effectively nullified the Jay Treaty. Diabo then countered that the War of 1812 was between the U.S. and England, and that he was a citizen of neither. The judge deciding his case agreed. Not only did Mohawk people demonstrate a certain degree of business acumen and physical bravery in pursuit of steady employment, they also practiced an impressive brand of legal and intellectual savvy.[63]

Three Mohawk high steel gangs landed their first major contract in "The Big Apple" working on the Fred F. French building in 1926. In 1928, three more gangs

[63] David Blanchard, *Seven Generations: A History of the Kanienkehaka* (Kahnawake: Kahnawake Survival School, 1980); Reid, Gerald F., "Illegal Alien? The Immigration Case of Mohawk Ironworker Paul K. Diabo" (2007). Sociology Faculty Publications, Paper 4: http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/sociol_fac/4, accessed 24 January 2014.

labored on the George Washington Bridge, and during the 1930s a total of seven Mohawk steel gangs constructed the legendary Rockefeller Center, including Radio City Music Hall—"The Showplace of the Nation." Also during the 1930s, several Mohawk rivet gangs helped construct that most famous of New York City landmarks: the Empire State Building. Most of the workers also successfully gained membership in the American Federation of Labor-sponsored International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers, the Brooklyn Local, and the Manhattan Local. Mohawk women who wanted or needed to enter the labor market also met with some success. Several secured positions within Brooklyn at the Fred Goat metal-stamping factory and the Gem Safety Razor Corporation.[64]

Brooklyn Mohawk men and women alike occasionally looked beyond the New York City metro area for job opportunities. According to Joseph Mitchell, "[The men] roam from coast to coast, usually by automobile, seeking rush jobs that offer unlimited overtime work at double pay… a gang may work in half a dozen widely separated cities in a single year." Likewise, the Brooklyn Mohawk women often ventured to state and county fairs in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York to sell dolls, beaded handbags, and belts that they crafted in their spare time.[65]

By the end of World War II roughly 300 Mohawks had taken up residence near a busy shopping district in Brooklyn's North Gowanus neighborhood. Throughout the workweek, the bilingual, transnational Mohawk men of steel constructed American

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[64] Joseph Mitchell, "The Mohawks in High Steel" (reprinted in Edmund Wilson's *Apologies to the Iroquois* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960), originally in published in *The New Yorker*, 1949), 24.
[65] Joseph Mitchell, "The Mohawks in High Steel" (reprinted in Edmund Wilson's *Apologies to the Iroquois* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960), originally in published in *The New Yorker*, 1949), 21.

modernity in the form of iconic landmarks while simultaneously constructing their own modernity, which depended on a resolute tenacity for engaging capitalism head on in the most treacherous of professions. They were dynamic people earning money by virtue of dynamic labor skills in the most dynamic city in the United States.[66]

Not only did the transplants from Kahnawake fashion inroads into America's largest city's labor market and associated unions, they also successfully blended in with fellow North Gowanus community residents. Single Mohawk men occasionally found marriage partners among Filipino, German, and Italian immigrants with whom they shared the neighborhood. Mohawk children no doubt struggled to adjust to their new surroundings, as any child would. But they made friends in the neighborhood public and parochial schools, where alongside other students they read comics, shot marbles, listened to radio, played stickball, and caught double film features in their leisure time. On a typical evening Mohawk women and men could be seen gossiping or talking sports in front of the brownstone and redbrick apartment buildings they shared with Italian and Irish immigrants. When a journalist took a walk through the Brooklyn Mohawk neighborhood with Reverend David Cory, the community religious leader pointed to a young Mohawk boy named Clifford Diabo who was playing baseball in the street with a Polish boy and an Italian boy. "Quite a little melting pot out there," Cory remarked.[67]

Perhaps the Mohawks' strongest presence in the community radiated from the neighborhood Cuyler Presbyterian Church where Reverend David Cory embraced them with open arms. On Sundays, numerous Mohawk families who did not elect to drive

[66] "Indians Live in Brooklyn!" *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1945.
[67] "Indians Live in Brooklyn!" *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1945.

back to Kahnawake for the weekend flocked to the church to hear Reverend Cory deliver songs and sermons in the Mohawk-Oneida language he gradually and enthusiastically mastered. To assist him in that endeavor, two Mohawk women translated several hymns into the Mohawk language. Cory in fact had a deep familiarity with Native people, having previously worked as a missionary to numerous Indian reservations. In this case, however, Indians were coming to him.[68]

None of this should suggest that the Mohawk migrants were necessarily intent on jettisoning their tribal cultural practices. But it certainly does suggest that they were actively and consciously adding layers to what it meant to be a Mohawk person in the twentieth century. "It is a hoary myth that Indians are confined to reservations or are restricted from moving about freely," Reverend Cory challenged. "The reverse is in fact the case."[69] Still, some Mohawk people might have felt uncertain about how powerfully they wanted to amplify their Native identity while gaining socio-economic footing within the New York City urban community. For example, when a journalist visited Brooklyn Mohawk community leader Josephine Schmidt he noticed that her apartment gave no visible indication that she was a Native person—save for a beaded doll resting inconspicuously on the mantel. It turned out, however, that Ms. Schmidt in fact kept several Mohawk cultural items in her apartment, including headdresses and moccasins. Tucked away in a storage closet, they were simply out of view of regular visitors. But

[68] David M. Cory, *Within Two Worlds* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955); Joseph Mitchell, "The Mohawks in High Steel" (reprinted in Edmund Wilson's *Apologies to the Iroquois* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960), originally in published in *The New Yorker*, 1949), 27.
[69] David M. Cory, *Within Two Worlds* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), 43.

Ms. Schmidt proved quick to retrieve them from storage and reveal their significance to the visiting journalist. "You see, we are all very proud to be Indians," she stressed.[70]

One theme that should resonate across this series of illustrative vignettes is that Indians for myriad reasons have long ventured into urban space. The fact that they lacked greater visibility and presence in urban spaces during the early part of the twentieth century is more a reflection of insufficient, time, energy, finances, and transportation than it is a comprehensive indicator of some Indian cultural fear of modernity and white people. Those who did clear paths to cities during this earlier period can admittedly be termed "exceptional," mostly as a result of their advanced education and professional experience. Their general striving for Indian "uplift," however, is not especially unique in the grand scheme of twentieth-century Indian history. For the Gilded Age and Progressive Era urban Indian elite, "uplift" primarily meant achieving an advantageous degree of acculturation while breaking down barriers to Indians' involvement in national and world cultures and affairs. In subsequent chapters, a comparable brand of uplift will endure as a driving motivation for the Indian protagonists discussed. The important historical shift, then, is encapsulated not within the meaning or application of uplift, but within the changing conduits of uplift, as an Indian working class intent on becoming middle class picked up the banner once carried by an early-twentieth-century Indian vanguard.[71]

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[70] "Indians Live in Brooklyn!" *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1945

[71] In *Native Seattle*, for example, historian Coll Thrush argues that the histories of the City of Seattle and Native people from around Puget Sound are mutually constitutive.

In the early 1940s, most Indians living within the state of Michigan still occupied rural space. At the same time, however, an unfolding socio-demographic shift produced a great deal of "drifting about" and migration toward urban centers among young Indians, many of whom took up jobs and residence in booming Detroit, Lansing, Flint, Saginaw, and Muskegon. Similar to other cities across the United States during this period, Lansing provided home to a burgeoning urban Indian community that founded the Indian-governed North American Indian Club. Organized in October 1941 for social purposes, the club held meetings at a local YWCA. Club activities included visiting Indians in the area tuberculosis sanitarium during Christmas and hosting Indian celebrities who traveled through the area, such as Chippewa Princess Watassa, who traveled the nation to spread awareness of Native people's struggle with tuberculosis. An Indian club also formed at a YWCA on Witherell Street in nearby "Motor City" Detroit. The Detroit club worked to raise support for Michigan Indians' attempts to improve problems relating to housing, land titles, tuberculosis, and dental health.

Despite these organizations' efforts, alongside Native people's strong determination to succeed, many tragically fell through the nation's expanding social safety net, which often failed to recognize Native people's unique problems and needs. Indeed, there was no success story, no "Indian uplift" for the numerous Native women who landed at the Lapeer State Home and Training School, an asylum for the "feeble minded" located just outside of Flint. Heartbreakingly, the asylum subjected Indian women and girls who failed mental testing and psychological examinations to a sterilization program. Those who managed to runaway would typically "change their

names, stay in hiding and are haunted by the fear that they will be found and returned to the institutions."

These Native women's experiences poignantly illustrate the reality that escape from "reservation confinement" did not necessarily guarantee a life of socio-economic ease. For some, second-class citizenship on reservations might have been desirable compared to the worst possible outcomes in a modern America that in places clung to its own "savagery." Indeed, there is a stark contrast between the grandiose promises of boarding school administrators, government officials, and Native people who made it in the big city, and Native women in Michigan who found themselves subjected to a different brand of confinement. Some Native people felt that tribal life deprived them of opportunities in the wider world, but many among them might have learned only too unceremoniously that they were leaving the protection of the tribe. The wider world introduced wider risk. To be sure, such a cold, stark potential outcome would remain a factor for those who attached their hopes to the shifting currents of mainstream American society in subsequent decades. Acknowledging this allows us to even more deeply appreciate their courage.[72]

[72] "Michigan Indians and the Indian Service—Annual Report, Indian Field Service, Michigan Area," 30 April 1942, William Zimmerman Office Files, box 2, folder "Misc II," RG 75, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Chapter Two—The MacArthur Shift: Native American War Industry Work and the Roots of Relocation

"My experiences in the army came along just at the right time for me. I got to do a lot of things and be a part of the excitement. At least I made it back… with a lot of knowledge, good and bad."

- Hollis Stabler (Omaha)[1]

In December 1942, quaint Seneca, Illinois, positioned along the Illinois-Michigan Canal 90 miles southwest of Chicago, began experiencing a dramatic wartime transformation. Within just eight months, workers converted Seneca's pastureland into a bustling industrial machine as the "clang of steel on steel" rang out through the Midwestern air and welding torches lit the summer evening sky. In return for their construction of the U.S. Navy's massive new tank-landing ships, skilled Seneca shipyard workers, all of whom belonged to the American Federation of Labor, earned $1.20 per hour, working nine-hour shifts six days per week. By June of 1943 the shipyard was turning out a boat per week while foremen predicted a rate increase over subsequent months.[2]

Among the teams of workers that totaled 10,900 at peak production were 200 Cherokee men whom shipyard Chairman of Labor and Management Tom Greenwood recruited from Oklahoma. Greenwood, a Cherokee man who migrated to the "Windy City" in 1923, had already worked for two decades as a job recruiter on behalf of Chicago's burgeoning Indian community. In Seneca, however, Greenwood and his

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[1] Hollis D. Stabler with Victoria Smith, *No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memoirs of an Omaha Indian Soldier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 139.

[2] "A Pasture Turns into a Shipyard in Just 8 Months!" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 January 1943; "Boat-a-Week Keeps Seneca Yard Hustling," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 June 1943.

Indian labor cohort did not simply join an established urban industrial network. Rather, they participated in the literal construction of urban space as Seneca's population grew almost tenfold from a village of 1,200 to a small city of 10,000. In this respect, Seneca provides another example of how Native people in the decades prior to the 1950s made deliberate strides toward urban space and metropolitan living, without benefit of Indian Bureau support.[3]

A 1957 Bureau of Indian Affairs internal memo describing the fully operational Voluntary Relocation Services Program revealed how the bureau's new pet program was in fact rooted in the federal government's previous, unsatisfactory efforts to provide off-reservation jobs for Native people. "From the very earliest days of the history of this country, numbers of Indians have been moving out to areas of broader opportunity," it began. Moving into specifics, the memo explained how the Indian bureau's first meaningful attempt at creating an employment program for Indians materialized in the 1930s, in response to the 1928 Meriam Report, which outlined a profusion of problems in the federal government's management of Native tribes. The memo's anonymous author claimed that this first attempt at establishing off-reservation employment networks for Indians failed as a result of three key factors: the Great Depression; the popularity and success of reservation-based federal work relief projects; and a change in policy under Indian affairs commissioner John Collier, who encouraged

[3] "A Pasture Turns into a Shipyard in Just 8 Months!" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 January 1943; "Seneca Builds 157 LST's for Yank Invasions," *Chicago Tribune,* 29 May 1945; Thomas Greenwood letter to Brian G. Bardy, 22 February 1983, box 1, folder 19: Correspondence, Tom Greenwood Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

limited Indian self-government and the development of reservation economies.[4] Convinced that Indian bureau efforts of this sort only benefitted young graduates from bureau-sponsored schools, federal officials shut down the employment program in 1940, just before America's entanglement in World War II essentially began facilitating the failed program's intended results.[5]

According to historian Paul Rosier, "World War II created a centrifugal effect on Native American space, drawing tens of thousands of Native Americans away from reservations to serve in industry and the armed forces." As a result of experiences in the war and fighting for "two linked geographical spaces," Native Americans "developed a sharpened sense of themselves as Native and as American." As Rosier elaborates, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, Indians generally saw no reason to choose between American patriotism and tribal nationalism. Rather, they mostly projected a sort of hybrid identity and dual patriotism to both the American state and their respective tribal nation. In exchange for their service, Indians hoped that the United States would honor treaty rights and finally decolonize Indian Country in a fashion

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[4] For scholarship on the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Indian New Deal and John Collier's simultaneous encouragement of Indian progress and tradition, see Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992); Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988); Donald Parman, *The Navajos and the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Kenneth R. Philp, ed., *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995) and *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

[5] "The Bureau of Indian Affairs Voluntary Relocation Services Program," RG75, box 27, folder: Relocation Policies & Procedures, 1957, Billings Area Office Papers, NARA-Rocky Mountain, Denver, Colorado.

similar to what many political activists advocated internationally.[6] Rosier further concludes that most Indians, especially those who offered their lives or forged their livelihood in service of the nation's war effort, thought of themselves as Americans and wanted to be part of mainstream American society. At the same time, they broadcasted their own ideas for the nation's postwar demographic composition. In Rosier's words, Indians tried to "reform America as a pluralist society even as non-Indians coercively pushed for a homogeneous society."[7]

In her study of Indians in World War II historian Alison Bernstein concluded that the great wartime migration of Native people to urban industries amounted to a significant rupture in tribal societies. "During the 1930s, Indians had remained largely isolated from the social and economic forces which shaped white society," she writes. Moreover, Bernstein locates the roots of the 1950s voluntary relocation program in Native people's wartime migrations, which Indian affairs personnel drew upon as a model for the subsequent program.[8]

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[6] On the decolonization movement in Cold War Indian Country, see Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War* America. On decolonization in a global Cold War context, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[7] Paul C. Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 2, 9, 73. For further background on America's competing visions of homogeneous and pluralistic society in the aftermath of World War II see Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[8] Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 64-88, 168-169. For a similar treatment that locates the headwaters of the termination policy and relocation program within Native people's overwhelming support for America's World War II effort see Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

This chapter seeks to build on both Rosier's and Bernstein's analyses by further illuminating what Native people gained and hoped to gain by serving their country on the home front. In the process, it situates Indians' wartime migration patterns within larger processes of socio-spatial mobility that stretched back to the late-nineteenth century. Doing so perhaps provides an answer to a lingering question: If Native people were, or at the very least felt, so far outside the mainstream of American society, then why did roughly 65,000 Indians enthusiastically enlist for military service to their country or migrate to war production industries? Reservation poverty and a male warrior cultural tradition alone cannot explain the extent of this historical phenomenon. Additionally, this chapter marks an attempt to advance Bernstein's argument not only by detailing federal policymakers' internal discussions about Indian off-reservation employment during the war, but also by further explicating the manner in which numerous Native people actively advocated for continued social advancement upon the war's conclusion.

Experiences in World War II helped familiarize many Indians with urban industrial work and the off-reservation world at large. Wartime Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier called the Native men and women who either joined the armed forces or worked in wartime industries the "greatest exodus of Indians" from reservations to date. Just over half of all able-bodied Indian men between the ages of eighteen and fifty either donned a military uniform or clocked in at war industry plants, a figure that does not account for the thousands of Indian women who participated in

the war effort at home and abroad.[9] Writing in 1970, Dakota intellectual Vine Deloria Jr. recalled, "The war dispersed the reservation people as nothing ever had. Every day, it seemed, we would be bidding farewell to families as they headed west to work in the defense plants on the coast."[10]

Indeed, from coast to coast Native people funneled into centers of war industry that ranged from small towns within reservation proximity to major metropolises hundreds or thousands of miles beyond reservation limits. In the Great Lakes region, 129 men from the Bad River Chippewa reservation left home for jobs in tank, gun, and shipbuilding factories. Many headed to the Walter Butler shipyard in nearby Superior, Wisconsin where they worked alongside white men as welders and shipwrights. "They are making a record for industry and loyalty in the Butler yards," one foreman noted. Some trained for their position at a War Power Commission program across the southern tip of Lake Superior, in Duluth, Minnesota. At the nearby Lac du Flambeau reservation ten Chippewa women made a contribution to the war effort from home and received Red Cross pins for the 150 hours of sewing and knitting they conducted on behalf of the armed forces. These women provide an example of how Native people

[9] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior* (1944), 237. Statistics on the number of Indians who labored in war industries and off-reservation agricultural projects during the war are somewhat unreliable. Collier claimed that roughly 25,000 Native people enlisted for overseas military service, and that roughly 40,000 more made labor contributions on the homefront. Contradictorily, sociologist Alan Sorkin claimed that 46,000 Indians left the reservation for war industries in 1943 alone, and that 44,000 more left in 1944. See Alan L. Sorkin, *American Indians and Federal Aid* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 1971), 104-105.

[10] Vine Deloria Jr., "This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It," *New York Times*, 8 March 1970.

used labor as a means toward joining the larger American societal fabric. Indeed, some Native women personally helped sew that fabric.[11]

Minneapolis and St. Paul received a significant influx of job-seeking Indians during the war, ultimately pushing the cities' Native population to just over six thousand. In the Twin-Cities, Indian men found work as machine operators, welders, assembly linemen, truck drivers, and auto mechanics. Women worked as sales clerks, waitresses, typists, nurses, and telephone operators. After the war, many moved home only to quickly return after confronting the poor economic conditions of their respective reservations. Others never left the Twin Cities. Ultimately, they established stable lives in urban America years before the Indian Bureau officially sponsored relocation. And they did so while blending tribal tradition and mainstream American social practices. In 1950, for example, members of the Twin-Cities Indian community formed American Indians, Inc., a group that held weekly gatherings where Native people danced, made baskets, played on ball teams, and planned Christmas parties.[12] Ignatia Broker (Ojibwe) recalled her wartime experiences in Minneapolis in her popular book *Night Flying Woman*. In 1941, she moved to the Twin Cities, found work in a defense plant, and took night classes. She shared a nine-by-twelve-foot room with six other Ojibwe women. Together they established a food, clothing, and housing support network. "This is how we got a toehold in urban areas—by helping each other," she recalled.[13]

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[11] "Report from the Great Lakes," *Indians at* Work, v11, n3 (September-October 1943), 16.

[12] Kent Fitzgerald, "Indians in the Twin Cities," 1954, Elizabeth Clark Rosenthal Collection, box 90, folder 17, WHC. Fitzgerald was director of placement for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

[13] Ignatia Broker, *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* (St. Paul, MN, 1983), 5.

Although Indian men were the first to enlist for overseas duty and the first to take war industry jobs in distant cities, Indian women played just as significant a role in the national war effort. On the Eastern Band of Cherokee reservation in North Carolina, 79 Cherokee girls pitched in by driving tractors, repairing automotive and plant equipment, and working in the fields in order to replace more than 100 Cherokee men who had joined the armed forces. Over one hundred other Cherokee women sewed vast quantities of material for the Red Cross. The Eastern Cherokee tribe itself contributed thousands of feet of timber to the war effort and the tribal council allocated $150,000 from the tribal fund for the purchase of war bonds.[14]

Women's contributions were not only confined to reservations; many found work in industries away from the reservation. For example, Juanita Pacheco (San Juan Pueblo) made milk runs between Indian schools in Santa Fe and Albuquerque in a truck that she both drove and repaired. Marjorie McCovey worked the overnight "MacArthur shift" at Douglas Aircraft in El Segundo, California. "I like my job very much and am quite contented here," she wrote her reservation superintendent. Ada Old Bear and Marie Jefferson (Musquakie) inspected ammunition in a Des Moines, Iowa plant; a group of female Indian graduates from the Sherman Institute found work at Solar Aircraft in San Diego; and numerous Navajo women worked as silversmiths, truck drivers, and chemists.[15]

At times, Native people who had already carved out a presence in an urban metropolis stayed right where they were and exploited the local war industry as an

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[14] "Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina Contribute to War Effort," *Indians at Work,* (July-August-September, 1942), 12-13.
[15] "Indian Women Harness Old Talents to New War Jobs" in *Indians at Work*, volume 10, Nos. 2-6 (U.S. Department of Interior), 25-26.

opportunity to earn better pay or extend their employment network. For example, during the Second World War the Brooklyn Mohawk steelworkers added battleship construction to their collective resume as many members of their community filled shipwright positions with the Brooklyn Navy Yard in Wallabout Bay. The Mohawk men almost certainly pointed to their reputation as efficient high steel workers when making inroads to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This provides just one example of how Indians fashioned wider opportunities from a foundation constructed around their own hard efforts.[16]

A sample of Indian Service reports from 1942 on Indian job placement figures for roughly fifty reservations provides a strong sense of just how energetically Native workers pursued steady labor opportunities during the war and how far they would journey to fill them. Statistics for Native people who secured employment away from their reservations ranged from as few as 50 from the Standing Rock Sioux reservation to 2500 from the Papago reservation and 3500 Navajo people from the Window Rock agency.[17] At the Papago reservation specifically, 60% of the adult males were working off-reservation in cotton fields, mines, and on railroad gangs. 200 Papagos held positions in the copper mines in Ajo, Arizona. The mining company wanted to hire 30 more Papago men, but none were available.[18] The Papago reservation was not unique in this respect. A *New York Times* article claimed that on an unspecified number of

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[16] "Indians Live in Brooklyn!" *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1945.
[17] Reservation Superintendent Employment Survey Responses, box 1, folder: "Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942," RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.
[18] Beulah Head (Papago Reservation Superintendent) to Fred Daiker (Director of Indian Welfare), 3 October 1942, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

reservations as many as half of the total Indian male population had volunteered for military service.[19]

The Blackfeet Agency in Montana reported that approximately 300-500 Blackfeet people had obtained work away from the reservation. In fact, the Blackfeet Tribal Council Defense Committee played the most productive role in securing positions for its tribal base. The tribal council helped provide loans for transportation, food, lodging, and union dues for its members who sought opportunity beyond the reservation limits.[20]

The Colville Agency in Washington reported that roughly 700 Indian workers had secured employment away from the reservation, and mostly of their own accord. They typically approached local unions and the state employment bureau for job leads, and some landed positions after attending defense industry training programs in Seattle. Similarly, the superintendent of the Hopi Agency in Arizona reported that the roughly 100 Hopi people who found work away from the reservation did so by pursuing their own leads through the Phoenix employment agency.[21]

The superintendent of the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota could not say exactly how many of his subjects were currently working off reservation. He did explain that the figure typically registered at roughly 900 among the approximately

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[19] "American Indians Fight Axis," *New York Times*, 30 August 1942.
[20] Employment Questionnaires submitted to Kathryn Mahn, 1942, box 1, folder: Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, NARA, Washington.
[21] Employment Questionnaires submitted to Kathryn Mahn, 1942, box 1, folder: Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, NARA, Washington.

9000 enrolled members, but that because of current war industry opportunities that estimate was almost certainly too low. Still, compared to other agency reports, far fewer Pine Ridge Indians had pursued positions in the war industry. According to the superintendent that was because upwards of 1500-2000 enrolled members had for many years undertaken seasonal employment positions as potato pickers in various fields around Nebraska and did not want to lose leverage within that network.[22]

The Turtle Mountain Agency in North Dakota reported that approximately 700 of its enrolled members had obtained employment away from the reservation. They typically secured their own positions as farm hands within a 200-mile radius from their reservation and traveled to work sites as large groups in their own automobile caravans. The superintendent's report also explained that his subjects for the most part had not made inroads into defense industry positions. That was not, however, a reflection of lack of ambition, but rather attributable to the reservation's especially remote location and lack of information about possible war industry openings.[23]

The superintendent of the Cherokee Agency in North Carolina claimed that "Our Indians are anxious for employment, get same pay as whites." He explained that while most of his Indians landed jobs through their own efforts, the Tennessee Valley Authority had recruited many of them to help construct the Fontana Dam. While almost certainly a reflection of the nation's demand for wartime labor, he closed his report by

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[22] Employment Questionnaires submitted to Kathryn Mahn, 1942, box 1, folder: Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, NARA, Washington.

[23] Employment Questionnaires submitted to Kathryn Mahn, 1942, box 1, folder: Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, NARA, Washington.

insisting that his Indians had no more difficulty than anyone else when it came to getting jobs.[24]

As evidenced by a series of reports conducted in 1944, the employment trends that Native people fashioned endured throughout the war's duration. For example, in June of that year the Fort Belknap Agency in Montana reported that 14 of its Indian people were employed with Geo Brooke Beet Fields in nearby Savoy, 12 were working hay fields in nearby Harlem, and 12 labored in the Anaconda Copper mines located outside of Butte. Farther away, 30 had landed positions in Portland, Oregon's Kaiser Shipyards, and 10 found work in the Navy Yard at Puget Sound in Washington State.[25]

That same month the Winnebago Agency superintendent shared a similar set of data in his survey response when he claimed that "our people are pretty well scattered all over the nation, however the majority of them have gone to nearby towns and secured jobs for themselves and no attempt has been made to try and keep any track of them because they are coming and going all the time." Likewise, the Forth Berthold Agency superintendent mentioned in his report that, "Quite often these people go direct to a certain point because they have friends there. They then get work, how they secure it, we do not know."[26]

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[24] Reservation Superintendent Employment Survey Responses, box 1, folder: "Correspondence and Reports of Kathryn Mahn re: Indian Employment Opportunities in 1942," RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

[25] Survey responses, box 1, folder: Response to June 1944 Circular re: Indian Employment Collected by F.H. Daiker, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

[26] Survey responses, box 1, folder: Response to June 1944 Circular re: Indian Employment Collected by F.H. Daiker, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

In July 1944, Red Lake Agency superintendent Tom White wrote Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier to update him on the employment situation for the Ojibwe people in his care. Several Red Lake men had elected to take positions close to home at the airport in nearby Bemidji. Red Lake girls, who according to White "are always running off to the Twin Cities," had also been working as waitresses and domestic workers in Bemidji. Farther away, more ambitious Red Lake workers had taken positions in an Ordnance Department plant in Hastings, Nebraska. Farther still, a handful of Red Lake men filled positions at the Kaiser Shipyards in Portland, Oregon. Finally, and most strikingly, numerous Red Lake men reportedly had spent the last three years working at an unspecified job site somewhere in the distant Alaska Territory.[27]

In virtually every survey response the superintendent of record mentioned that Indians found off-reservation work as a result of their own efforts, typically through partnering with employment agencies. Most reports also mentioned that relocated Indians found their work experiences satisfactory and that they were being paid the same wages as white employees for the same work. Also persisting across most of these reports was a general sense of uncertainty among reservation agents about exactly how many of their Indian charges were finding employment away from the reservation, and where exactly they were going. While this certainly suggests a degree of unsatisfactory record keeping on the part of Indian bureau personnel, it perhaps more importantly illustrates the process by which Native people sought their own opportunities wherever and whenever they could locate them, and that they did not sit idly by in hopes that the

[27] Tom White to John Collier, 29 July 1944, RG75, box 1, folder: Response to June 1944 Circular re: Indian Employment Collected by F.H. Daiker, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, NARA, Washington.

Indian service would lift them from economic despair. The war certainly produced unprecedented opportunities, but Indian initiative, above all else, was responsible for exploiting those opportunities in productive fashion.

As World War II unfolded the old Indian boarding schools dating back to the late-nineteenth-century federal assimilation policy period played an important role in preparing young Indian students to make a contribution in service of their country. In sum, six Indian vocational schools introduced war industry training programs that by 1942 had already placed 2500 graduates in national aircraft, tank, and shipbuilding factories.[28] As discussed in chapter one, by the war's outbreak, these schools had all demonstrated a long history of encouraging among Indian students a certain brand of cultural assimilation steeped in racial uplift rhetoric. It is therefore not surprising that boarding schools became stepping-stones for patriotic young Indians to make their way toward war jobs and the armed services.[29]

In 1941, Oklahoma's Chilocco Indian School began offering an aircraft-production training program that successfully placed 83 inaugural graduates in war industry jobs.[30] The program's second year produced another 170 graduates.[31] Their

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[28] "Indian Schools Adjust Schedules to Aid War Work," *Indians at Work*, April 1942, 29.

[29] For useful histories of Indian boarding schools see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995) and Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

[30] "National Defense Training Program," 30 June 1942, Records of Chilocco Indian School (RCIS), Records of the Superintendent, National Defense Program Files, 1941-1943, General Administration Files, box 1, folder "Memorandums," Record Group (RG) 75, National Archives and Records Administration—Southwest Branch, Fort Worth, TX (NARA-SB).

destinations included San Francisco, Tulsa, Providence, San Diego, Chicago, Phoenix, New Orleans, Seattle, Kansas City, and Burbank. In November 1942, a Chilocco graduate wrote the school journal to share his experiences working at the Richmond Shipbuilding Corporation in California. "The wages are very good and the work not too hard especially when you think of what the other boys are doing for us," he shared. With a patriotic stroke of the pen, his letter concluded, "I could write more but Uncle Sam says, 'Keep your mouth shut.'"[32]

Los Angeles based social worker Katherine Mahn visited the Chilocco Indian School in February 1942 to deliver an address to students on tips for landing a job in the big city. "When you go for an interview you should be appropriately dressed, mindful of your manners, and confident," she advised. A visit to the school by two agents from Ponca City's employment bureau just one week later illustrates the clear degree to which some employment coordinators exploited Indian schools as labor pools. The two agents spent the day interviewing senior boys who possessed advanced skills while making records of their home address, height, weight, and social security numbers. They also verified birth certificates and took notes on prior work experience. The two men planned to return in one week for a second round of interviews.[33]

Further illustrating Chilocco's explicit connections to thriving job markets and war production industries, in March that same year the school announced the arrival of

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[31] "From the Defense Course," *Indian School Journal*, 19 March 1943. Chilocco Indian School Microfilm Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Center (OHSRC), Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
[32] A. Durant, "Ship Building," *Indian School Journal*, 27 November 1942. Chilocco Indian School Microfilm Collection, OHSRC.
[33] "Hints On Getting a Job," *The Indian School Journal*, v42, n20 (February 20, 1942) and "Getting a Job," *The Indian School Journal*, v42, n21 (February 27, 1942), Chilocco Indian School Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

a new aircraft sheet metal instructor to teach overflow night courses. Jack Meixner, the new instructor, had trained at Boeing School of Aeronautics in Oakland, and had previously worked at Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank and Beechcraft of Wichita before arriving at Chilocco.[34] The program appeared to be a great success. According to a report from Washington, defense plant directors across the nation were "clamoring for the Indian workers" that trained at Haskell and Chilocco. "We want more of them if possible," one personnel director shared. In further nod to the Indian workers' hard efforts, a writer for the *Wichita Beacon* mentioned, "It's too bad one of the Wichita-made planes isn't called the 'Tomahawk' or 'Tepee,' or something equally as Indian."[35]

Later in life, Chilocco graduate Carl Kickingbird (Kiowa) recalled his hope for landing a government job after finishing school, and how the war suddenly altered that plan. "These war industries were hollering for people," he recalled. "Of course my ambition was to get into some kind of government service but it never happened. I went to a war plant, an aircraft plant and started working there." Kickingbird first worked for the Boeing Corporation in Seattle before taking a job in Wichita, Kansas to be closer to his family and home. Rather than move back home after the war's conclusion, however, he took a job with an oil company in Illinois.[36]

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[34] "Another Instructor for Defense Course," *The Indian School Journal*, v42, n28 (March 6, 1942), Chilocco Indian School Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.
[35] "Indians Prove Expert Workers in Air Factories," *The Wichita Beacon*, 29 March 1942, found in RG75, box 2, folder: Aircraft, Records of Chilocco Indian School, NARA Forth Worth.
[36] Interview with Carl Kickingbird, 6 August 1968, T-302, page 3. The Doris Duke Oral History Project. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

By early 1943 Chilocco's Vocational Training for War Workers program had apparently been so successful that the school was running out of Indians to enroll in the program. In February that year school superintendent L.E. Correll sent an internal memo to his staff begging them to find Indian men or women between the ages of eighteen and fifty with at least one-quarter degree Indian blood to enroll in the program. "It costs nothing," he desperately urged, before reminding them that they were allowed to recruit "slightly physically handicapped" Native people as long as they made sure to coordinate such enrollments with the State Director of Vocational Rehabilitation.[37]

It is not surprising that by 1943 the school faced a shortage of desirable enrollees. From the program's outset in 1941 hundreds of Native people jumped at the opportunity to gain admission for themselves, their spouses, their children, or any combination thereof. For example, in August 1941 Stella Norman from Ada, Oklahoma sent a handwritten note in broken English to L.E. Correll to see if she could "put my boys in that Sheet Metal foundry training." She assured superintendent Correll that, "One like mechanic work + one like Electricity [sic]," before concluding, "Write and let me know at once if you can take them I will bring them over hoping to hear soon [sic]."[38]

Likewise, that same year Chilocco Class of 1924 graduate and current Indian Service nurse Mrs. Benge wrote superintendent Correll from the faraway Cheyenne River Agency in South Dakota to request enrollment in "the course for young men of Indian blood" for her Cherokee husband, Tim. "My husband is very anxious to get work

[37] L.E. Correll to Chilocco Staff, 16 February 1943, RG75, box 3, folder: Department of Interior Correspondence, Records of Chilocco Indian School, NARA Forth Worth.
[38] Stella Norman to L.E. Correll, 19 August 1941, RG75, box 3, folder: General Correspondence, Records of Chilocco Indian School, NARA Forth Worth.

in some government plant but due to the lack of the proper training he is unable to do so," she shared. Taken together, Stella Norman's and Mrs. Benge's letters suggest that enthusiasm among Native people for industrial training and employment defied both generational and educational boundaries. Parents, children, educated, and uneducated alike ardently pursued the new economic opportunities that the war facilitated.[39]

Alongside Chilocco, the Haskell Indian Institute in Lawrence, Kansas also prepared students for participation in the war industry. A brochure advertising the school's aircraft-production training program announced a "WAR EFFORT AROUND THE CLOCK AT HASKELL." "15 ½ HOURS—WAR TRAINING, 8 ½ HOURS—SCHOOL TIME, 100 PER CENT TIME FOR THE ALLIES," it boasted.[40] Six Haskell graduates found work at Standard Steel Works and four more took jobs at Columbian Steel Works. Both factories were based in Kansas City, which counted a population of more than 120,000 in 1940.[41] An eleventh graduate, Harry Clement (Creek) was busy building bombers in Wichita. According to Haskell superintendent G. Warren Spaulding, finding work for graduates was key: "Training the students is only half the job. Unless we can find positions for them in government or private industry, we consider our job only half done."[42]

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[39] Mrs. Benge to L.E. Correll, 1941 (month and day indiscernible), RG75, box 3, folder: General Correspondence, Records of Chilocco Indian School, NARA Forth Worth.
[40] "War Effort" brochure, RCIS, Records of the Superintendent, National Defense Program Files, 1941-1943, General Administration Files, Box 2, Folder "Aircraft," RG 75, NARA-SB.
[41] "Haskell Institute - Information About War Production Courses," 26 October 1942, RCIS, Records of the Superintendent, National Defense Program Files, 1941-1943, General Administration Files, box 2, folder "Aircraft," RG 75, NARA-SB.
[42] "From Needles to Battleships," *Indians at Work*, October 1941, 9.

Dozens of young Indian men from the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California had already been working at various shops in Los Angeles for several years before the war broke out. Ben House (Navajo) arrived in L.A. with nothing but a pair of overalls, but within three years he owned a car and regularly put money away in a savings account. In 1941, he left his factory job to join the armed forces.[43] Also representative of a new generation of young Indians hoping to gain off-reservation economic independence during the war was Joe Saluskin (Yakima). Having once donned beaded regalia while straddling "wild-eyed ponies," Saluskin now dreamed of working for Seattle's Boeing Corporation. For the time being, he was one of two-dozen Indians among a total of 450 young men working in shops as part of the Seattle Resident Project. Students who graduated from this program successfully landed jobs in aircraft factories around Puget Sound. Saluskin balanced a night shift from 4:30 pm to 1:00 am with a five-day class schedule while learning to build warplanes for $30 per month. Knowing he could make $30-$40 per week at Boeing helped him concentrate on his studies.[44]

World War II had a profound impact on Native people's social, economic, cultural, and political relationship to and position within the United States. At the center of that impact was a raised set of expectations among Native people for how and where they could belong in a changing America. Toward the end of the war, those paying

[43] "From the Mailbag," *Indians at Work*, July-August-September 1942, 31.
[44] Lloyd D. Weir, "A Yakima Indian Boy in a War Job," *Indians at Work*, April 1942, 19-20.

close attention to this phenomenon began writing and thinking critically about the potential crisis that would most certainly manifest if the federal government and Office of Indian Affairs failed to meet those expectations.

Writing in 1944, Dakota scholar Ella Deloria explained, "The war has indeed wrought an overnight change in the outlook, horizon, and even habits of the Indian people—a change that might not have come about for many years yet." Referring more explicitly to the process by which the war produced an Indian uplift impulse not dissimilar from that discussed in chapter one, Deloria predicted, "They will want to participate in the larger thought and life of the land and not be given special work scaled down to their abilities, as if those abilities were static, or to their needs, as if those needs must always be limited to tribal life."[45]

Similarly, Navajo tribal leader Henry Chee Dodge was confident that in the midst of the Second World War his people were "looking forward to a new and better life in which all their unique inherited gifts, supplemented by the best of the white man's way of life, will equip them to meet the complications of the future world." As far as Dodge was concerned, Indians had *not* arrived at "the End of the Trail." Specifically among the Navajo, 2500 men had enlisted for service, and 9500 men and women had labored in war production industries. Upon their return to the reservation, Dodge believed, they would bring "increased needs as well as increased knowledge." He also concluded that postwar adjustment would be especially difficult for the Navajo because more so than most tribes they were largely uneducated and unassimilated in modern, mainstream America. Moreover, many resided in extremely remote areas of a

[45] Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, original publishing 1944), 144, 148.

vast reservation. Despite the BIA's vision for a reservation-based work program for the Navajos, including plans for tourism development, Window Rock agency field representative Floyd W. La Rouche insisted that many Navajo people would need to begin looking for employment opportunities away from the reservation. The general American public, he concluded, would have to overcome race discrimination and realize that Indians made significant contributions to America's victory overseas.[46]

In 1951, Harvard anthropologist Evon Z. Vogt published a study he conducted among Navajo World War II veterans who returned to one community in the Rimrock area of New Mexico. He surveyed 15 Navajo veterans' attitudes toward "white" culture as represented by housing, clothing, food, personal hygiene, and interest in radio programs, among other cultural markers. Vogt's reading of the impact of radio among the Navajo community proved inconclusive because, unlike nearby Pueblo communities in the Rimrock area, the Navajos had not yet benefitted from an expansion of electricity to their remote locales. Battery-powered radios were too expensive, and few radio stations could be picked up in the Rimrock area anyway. On the subject of food, Vogt found that virtually all of the Navajo veterans and their respective families still preferred the traditional Navajo diet of wheat-flour tortillas and roasted mutton. Some did however introduce eggs to their families' diet, and taught their wives how to prepare them. On the topic of clothing, Vogt's research team found that most of the men had fully adopted modern dress. Yet women had not, perhaps because as the men insisted, "uneducated women should keep their own Navaho clothes."[47]

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[46] "The Navajos Consider Their Future," *Indians at Work*, v12, n1 (May-June 1944), 23.
[47] Evon Z. Vogt, *Navaho Veterans: A Study of Changing Values,* Reports of the Rimrock Project Value Series, No. 1 (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, 1951), 109-112.

Concern with personal hygiene and general cleanliness proved to be the cultural adaptation about which Navajo veterans felt most strongly, even if a dusty climate and scarcity of water often rendered extreme standards of cleanliness difficult to maintain. One veteran remembered how his sergeant would shout, "You clean shave, clean socks, wash your feet!" Many also became particularly anxious about the cleanliness of their homes. "Everything was so dirty inside the hogan," one veteran remarked. Others took umbrage to the lack of fly screens on their old homesteads.[48]

Finally, where housing was concerned, Vogt learned that 11 of the 15 returning veterans indeed preferred to occupy new "white-style" homes, even though such homes proved impractical during cold winter nights and heavy summer rains. It is important to note, however, that in all cases of Navajo veterans either dwelling in or constructing white-style homes they also maintained a traditional Navajo Hogan for ceremonial purposes. This suggests that, similar to the Navajo veterans' attitudes toward clothing for women and food, the returnees blended their cultural preferences according to seemingly arbitrary personal tastes. Moreover, it suggests that an affinity for aspects of "white" culture did not necessarily come at the expense of Navajo culture, and vice versa.[49]

Anthropologist Ruth Underhill also conducted fieldwork among the Navajo in the 1940s-50s and subsequently wrote on the significant impact World War II had on the Diné people. According to Underhill, as a result of wartime employment and overseas service, "The People were beginning, at last, to see what the whites worked for

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[48] Evon Z. Vogt, *Navaho Veterans: A Study of Changing Values,* Reports of the Rimrock Project Value Series, No. 1 (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, 1951), 109-112.
[49] Evon Z. Vogt, *Navaho Veterans: A Study of Changing Values,* Reports of the Rimrock Project Value Series, No. 1 (Cambridge: Peabody Museum, 1951), 109-112.

and what could be had." Many adopted popular American names and began working eight-hour days. With their new earnings many installed showers, modern beds, and wood floors in their homes. Some exchanged moccasins for athletic shoes and numerous Navajo men began dressing in "cowboy costumes." Underhill quotes one Navajo soldier who wrote home from the war: "Send my little brother to school. I've just found out what I could do if I was educated."[50]

According to Underhill, when wartime prosperity ended, many became disillusioned with the limited socio-economic potential of their former reservation lives. They had experienced the wider world while enjoying an improved degree of social equality. After a succession of terrible blizzards during 1947 and 1948 destroyed the Navajo tribe's agricultural prospects and plunged thousands into starvation and despair, many Navajos embraced an opportunity to seek refuge in Denver, Salt Lake City, and Los Angeles as part of the Indian Bureau's special Navajo relocation program. Ultimately, though quite hyperbolically, Underhill concluded that World War II "shook the Navaho out of the Middle Ages."[51]

Some observers were less optimistic about the potential World War II produced for Indian social advancement. Writing years later on the "profound reentry shock" returning Indian veterans faced after "heady years of freedom and equality," former Rosebud Sioux tribal chairman and famous firebrand activist Robert Burnette explained, "When they went to banks off the reservations to borrow money on

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[50] Ruth M. Underhill, *Red Man's America: A History of Indian in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 239, and *The Navajos* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 243-253.
[51] Ruth M. Underhill, *Red Man's America: A History of Indian in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 239, and *The Navajos* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 243-253.

guaranteed GI loans, the bankers told them to go back to the reservation, that the white bankers couldn't deal with Indians." Concluding his thoughts on how it must have felt for Indian veterans who offered their lives in service of America's war effort, Burnette poignantly declared, "Hatred replaced the pride that many veterans had felt in serving their country." Simply put, Burnette suggested that military service would only produce so much goodwill among non-Indian Americans who either remained ignorant about who Indians were and what they needed, or harbored racist resentment toward Native people. When engaging such fellow Americans, Indian war veterans must have felt disappointed, even deeply scorned.[52]

For their part, it did not take long for federal Indian policymakers and social theorists to realize that Indian enthusiasm for off-reservation industrial work would add a new layer to Washington's ever-evolving Indian problem. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier first and foremost advocated rehabilitation of reservation economies and the development of reservation resources. He wanted Native people to be able to support themselves at home. But he also understood that federal loans from a revolving credit fund and efforts at restoration of the tribal land base simply were not enough to lift some tribes from economic ruin. Moreover, he recognized that some Native people wanted to move freely and find their own work opportunities as the Second World War made them increasingly available.[53]

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[52] Robert Burnette and John Koster, *The Road to Wounded Knee* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), 157.

[53] "Employment of Indians Off Reservation, Circular No. 3426," John Collier to Superintendents, 22 September 1941, box 1, folder 1 ("Early 1940s"), RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Correspondence and Reports Relating to Employment of Indians, 1940-44, NARA Washington.

Therefore, in September 1941, months in advance of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Collier sent a directive to each reservation superintendent outlining a program of support for those Native people who sought urban industrial labor positions away from their reservation base. He explained to his superintendents that it was important that Indians who left for the city take with them copies of their social security cards and birth certificates. He also encouraged his subordinates to help their Indian charges acquire the right clothing for their prospective jobs. Further, he stressed that Indians leaving the reservation should have a sufficient amount of cash to survive until their first paycheck, and should also receive transportation and lodging assistance to help them make it to their respective destinations. Next, he suggested that reservation superintendents phone ahead to urban YMCA offices and church groups to let them know when Indian workers were headed their way so that they would be prepared to help Native people adjust to their new communities. Finally, Collier implored reservation superintendents to explain to departing Indians the importance of both paying their bills on time and putting some earnings into a savings account each month. He stressed the importance of saving money not only to be prepared for future needs, but also "to assist his people or family at home."[54]

This final point implies that Collier appreciated off-reservation employment not as an opportunity for Native people to completely sever their connections to tribalism, but rather as a means toward improving tribal conditions. Similar to the Mohawk people who migrated to Brooklyn during the 1920s and sent a substantial portion of their wages

[54] "Employment of Indians Off Reservation, Circular No. 3426," John Collier to Superintendents, 22 September 1941, box 1, folder 1 ("Early 1940s"), RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Correspondence and Reports Relating to Employment of Indians, 1940-44, NARA Washington.

back to their Kahnawake reservation, Collier did not believe that urban relocation had to come at the expense of tribalism and reservation development. Indeed, as an advocate of cultural pluralism, Collier appreciated urban work and social opportunities only insofar as they ultimately served the health and legitimacy of Indian culture, his paramount concern. After likening a Pueblo community in New Mexico to a "Red Atlantis" that held the antidote for modern America's ills, Collier likely championed the spread of Indian culture into new American frontiers. In sum, not only did he essentially outline the relocation program ten years in advance of its official unveiling, he also assumed an Indian perspective on relocation's value and promise, a perspective that was not inherently at odds with tribalism.[55]

There were others in Collier's New Deal Indian administration who shared the commissioner's views. In 1942, Sacramento Indian Agency field representative John Rockwell wrote Collier for his opinion on the extent to which the federal government should develop industrial labor initiatives on behalf of Indians. Rockwell mentioned that Indians in the Sacramento area were hearing about the good wages industrial workers were earning and wanted to know how they could gain access to similar opportunities. "I believe also that the range of individual differences, in abilities as well as interest, is as great with Indians as with whites," Rockwell imparted. "Believing this, I cannot close my eyes to the fact that many young Indians are eager to enter industry." But he also stressed that those seeking industrial work were not necessarily interested in surrendering their tribal culture as part of a potential deal. "Instead, I would say, they

[55] On Collier's vision of a "Red Atlantis," see Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 1-25. For wider background on Collier's ideas about Indians, see his memoir, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir; and some Essays on Life and Thought* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963).

will cling tenaciously to those values which they know are good, and which are a very real part of them. (In this we should give them every encouragement.)." Rockwell suggested. "The capacity of the Indian to believe in himself is great."[56]

In the aftermath of Native people's strong support for the United States' war effort, several non-Indian social theorists joined federal policymakers in entertaining debates over how best to solve the nation's enduring Indian problem, and the role that reservations should or should not play in that solution. Writing for the Association on American Indian Affairs in 1944, Columbia University historian and anthropologist Gene Weltfish suggested that Indians should attend strong agricultural colleges such as Iowa and Cornell, and then return to their tribes with "something of white American culture at its best, to be spread among their tribesmen. This process of bringing the surrounding culture to the surrounded people is one of encouraging the merging of two cultures; but it calls for careful direction," he continued. "More often than not, under the present haphazard way, only the worst of white American culture gets back to the tribe."[57] In a second, more cynical example, Association on American Indian Affairs president Haven Emerson authored an essay response to a recent *Reader's Digest* article concerning the emancipation of Indians from reservation confinement. In his rejoinder, Emerson cautioned against drawing such hasty conclusions about the meager value of reservations and Native people's willingness to so easily leave them behind. Such myopic "*Set the Indians Free!*" philosophies, Emerson argued, resulted in profound

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[56] John Rockwell (Field Representative in Charge, Sacramento Indian Agency) to John Collier, 4 January 1942, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.
[57] "When the Indian Comes to the City," *The American Indian* (news digest of the Association on American Indian Affairs), v1, n2 (Winter 1944), 9.

tribal land divestiture from 1880 to 1934. "Set the Indian free?" Emerson interrogated. "Free to what? Free to sink to the bottom and die away, hopeless and discouraged, in an economy and a society which he is not, as yet, equipped to handle?" Emerson then suggested that those who wanted to destroy reservations mostly embraced that belief as a result of their own selfish plan to sweep in and claim title to vacated land. "A *reservation* is not in any sense a restriction upon Indians who hold rights on it…" he insisted, before admonishing those who invoke tribal land as some sort of "outdoor prison."[58]

Emerson also made certain to point out that reservations could continue to be of value even to those who elected to migrate away for greater employment, educational, or social opportunities. "For those who leave, it is always there to return to in hard times," he reasoned. "It is a priceless asset, a rock of security in a complex world, a base from which those who are beginning to learn how to compete in our society may go forth with the confidence that, if they fail, they have something to which to return." In this respect, he echoed the sentiments of Indian affairs commissioner John Collier, who suggested that off-reservation employment could actually help improve reservation conditions.[59]

In a separate essay for the Association on American Indian Affairs' quarterly newsletter, Indian affairs education director Willard Beatty predicted that Native people would be less sentimental about their reservation homes. He suggested that training in Indian vocational schools and CCC camps had made a difference in Indians' ability to

[58] "Freedom or Exploitation!" *The American Indian* (newsletter of the Association on American Indian Affairs), v2, n4 (Fall 1945), 4.
[59] "Freedom or Exploitation!" *The American Indian* (newsletter of the Association on American Indian Affairs), v2, n4 (Fall 1945), 4.

advance in technical positions within the armed forces during World War II. Because many reservations lacked resources and a great portion of the tribal land base had been leased out to non-Indians, he worried that those who practiced technical skills during the war would become frustrated by a lack of similar opportunities at home upon their return from service. "By the thousands, these men and women have gone into crowded urban areas to work at shipbuilding, aircraft production and factory work of all kinds." In particular, Beatty pointed to Indians from Arizona and New Mexico, whose states denied them the right to vote, as being particularly fed up with discrimination and deprivation of socio-economic opportunities. "Many an Indian boy reports that, sharing a foxhole on Guadalcanal or Bourgainville with a white buddy, he has been asked searching questions as to the handicaps and advantages of being an Indian," Beatty wrote. He also pointed out that numerous Indian servicemen and women resented laws that prevented them from imbibing alcohol. Finally, he mentioned that many Indians who migrated to war production centers disliked the substandard housing in undesirable areas to which they were typically subjected.[60]

Ultimately, Beatty predicted that the number of Indians who would attempt to return to urban industrial work would depend on the national economy's ability to succeed in reconversion. If the jobs were there, he believed, then Indians would gravitate toward them. "The postwar trend of Indian employment, therefore, is largely

[60] "The Indian in the Postwar Period," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v3, n1 (Winter 1946), 2-7.

beyond the control of the Indian Service and will not be influenced greatly by what the Service believes to be desirable or undesirable," he concluded.[61]

In an article with a similar thesis to Beatty's, Della Ryan agreed that a great portion of Indian land was incapable of supporting the brand of economic advancement and class mobility that thousands of Native people practiced during the war. "Sooner or later, Indian migrations would have been inevitable," she reasoned. "The war and the increased need for manpower lent impetus to the break from the old life." The same article discusses how Pine Ridge and Rosebud Sioux had been fanning outward across Great Plains and Mountain West states in pursuit of steady wages during World War II's conclusion and immediate aftermath. In Scottsbluff, Nebraska, for example, Oglala Lakota migrants contended with potato fields by day, and during the evening harassment by the local chief of police who was frustrated and confused about legal jurisdiction over the Indian workers resided in the "squalid outskirts" of his domain.[62]

Similarly, a group of Brule Lakota from Rosebud that migrated to potato fields in Julesberg, Colorado during October 1945 ran into problems not with local law enforcement, but with the owner of the farm where they labored. Having voyaged 325

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[61] "The Indian in the Postwar Period," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v3, n1 (Winter 1946), 2-7. In a study of Navajo and Pueblo World War II veterans, graduate student ethnologist John Adair also argued that alcohol prohibition back home on the reservation was especially offensive to discharged servicemen who appreciated drinking with white compatriots during military furlough as a sign of equality and acceptance. Coupled with state laws against their exercise of the franchise and trouble securing loans they were promised as part of the GI Bill, Navajo and Pueblo veterans felt a profound sense of discrimination, and that their non-Indian fellow Americans were dismissing their brave efforts abroad. See "The Navajo and Pueblo Veteran: A Force for Culture Change," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v4, n1 (1947), 5-11.

[62] "Displaced Indians," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v3, n2 (Spring 1946), 9-11.

miles from their home on open trucks, in which they slept on bundles of tents, baggage, and housewares, the migrant men, women, and children worked hard, but for an underwhelming return. Speaking on behalf of the Lakota workers, George Roubideaux claimed that the group "got skinned at that man's place, not enough wages, no sanitary toilets, no good water." Defying many ignorant Americans' stereotypes about Indians during that time, these Lakota workers were certainly not happy laboring or living in squalid conditions. Still, demonstrating their tenacity for gainful employment and willingness to find it wherever they could, the group planned to return next year. Next time, however, they expected their own tribal council to help them secure better transportation for the journey.[63]

During the war, the Office of Indian Affairs kept its collective eye on President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which mandated relocation of Japanese-Americans to various labor and detainment camps throughout the West—some of them within Indian reservation boundaries.[64] Inspired by that program's results, some Indian service leaders began promoting the relocation of Japanese-Americans as a postwar model for relocating Native people to urban centers. Interestingly, however, they were apprehensive about broadcasting that connection. For example, in September 1943, Indian Service Director of Welfare Fred Daiker wrote Assistant Commissioner of

[63] "Displaced Indians," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v3, n2 (Spring 1946), 9-11.
[64] For example, the Colorado River Indian Reservation received 20,000 Japanese evacuees from the West Coast. The evacuees were tasked with improving 90,000 acres of reservation land for irrigated farming. See for example "First Japanese Evacuee Colony is On Colorado River Indian Lands," *Indians at Work,* v9, n6 (February 1942), 12.

Indian Affairs William Zimmerman to express his approval of just such an agenda. In doing so, however, he advised Zimmerman that if he could reword the report outlining such a program and "omit any reference to the Japanese or evacuees" it might be "very helpful." Otherwise, Daiker was on board, and shared his conviction that Indian laborers who had in previous years worked away from reservations could "lay the groundwork for other Indians" to do the same.[65]

In August 1944, during a meeting at the United Pueblos Agency to discuss work opportunities for returning Indian veterans, BIA representative Walter Woehlke promised to deliver points so important that he wanted a transcript of his speech made and immediately delivered by airmail to Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Zimmerman in Chicago. Indeed, Woehlke's speech is so insightful that it deserves some quoting at length. "In the discussion about re-employment of veterans we touch on a problem that has been confronting the Indian Service since the Year One," he opened. The problem, he elaborated, concerned the lack of sufficient economic resources on tribal bases, and the rapidly increasing Indian population that rendered resource deficiency especially critical. Woehlke then provided some background on the Indian Service's decades-long support for boarding school vocational training programs designed to help young Native people find opportunities in industries outside of rural Indian Country. Those efforts, Woehlke claimed, had repeatedly been thwarted by two primary factors: unavailability of jobs and racial discrimination against Native people. On the first problem, he defended the Indian

[65] Fred Daiker to William Zimmerman, 7 September 1943, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, compiled 1940-1944, NARA Washington.

Service against accusations that it had consistently confined Indians within reservations, kept them "in the blanket status," and denied them opportunities to maneuver freely within capitalist America. This, he assured his audience, was a "perfectly silly accusation."[66]

The second problem he likened to one faced by Japanese-Americans, including doctors and engineers, who were "rejected by white society and forced back into the Japanese ghetto, equivalent of the Indian reservation but in these they did not have proper basis for self-support." What the Indian Service needed to do, Woehlke suggested, was help willing Native workers overturn their typical economic status of "last to be hired, first to be fired." Moreover, it needed to help employers overcome their apprehension toward hiring and retaining Indian workers. Woehlke reminded his listeners that this objective was especially crucial because thousands of Native people, he predicted, would return to reservations at war's end and quickly become disenchanted with rural life and lack of socio-economic opportunities.[67]

Woehlke closed by advocating the recent relocation of 130,000 Japanese Americans to work camps as a model for a successful Indian relocation program. The War Relocation Authority, he explained, had succeeded in mobilizing "churches, the Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis and other organizations so as to minimize community resistance to the acceptance of Japanese." Woehlke seemed to suggest that, through sponsoring the migration of Native people to bustling labor markets and recruiting urban allies capable

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[66] Minutes of Staff Meeting, United Pueblos Agency, 12 August 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

[67] Minutes of Staff Meeting, United Pueblos Agency, 12 August 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

of helping facilitate their socio-cultural adjustment, the Indian Service could rehabilitate the public standing of a second marginalized group whom many Americans remembered for playing the part of mortal enemies in the nation's past.[68]

One month later, in a letter to BIA Director of Welfare Fred Daiker, Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Zimmerman also expressed support for a BIA-sanctioned off-reservation work program for Indians: "I believe that we may be forced to consider both temporary outside employment and permanent relocation." At the same time he warned that the BIA should not be too hasty in its decision-making and outward support for such a program. "I am somewhat fearful of the effects of a circular—following the various recommendations to abolish the service," he confided. "Would many people conclude that we saw the handwriting on the wall?"[69]

In the same correspondence Zimmerman also shared with Daiker the notes on Japanese relocation that Walter Woehlke had airmailed to Zimmerman's Chicago office. They must have made an impression on Daiker. Two weeks later he wrote fellow BIA Welfare Division agent and future Billings Area Relocation Director Paul Fickinger to request reports on Japanese relocation and ideas for a similar Indian relocation program. Daiker also mentioned that he had been reading a copy of *The Use*

[68] Minutes of Staff Meeting, United Pueblos Agency, 12 August 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.
[69] William Zimmerman (Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs) to Fred Daiker (Director of Welfare), 5 September 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

of Japanese Evacuees as Farm Labor, which in his opinion reflected "some of the same problems that involve employment of Indians."[70]

Finally, Daiker expressed his firm conviction that the Indian service needed to reestablish some sort of off-reservation job placement service for prospective Indian workers. To head such an initiative, he felt the Indian service would need to rely on social workers, the type that helped American employers "overcome prejudice and place Japs in communities for employment." In his estimation, Indians faced a similar brand of discrimination. "What we learn during the next year…," he concluded, "should prove most helpful in showing whether this type of service is necessary and should be reestablished," he closed.[71]

Writing in 1971, anthropologist and former Associate Commissioner of Indian Affairs James E. Officer argued that the relocation program was a "progeny of the Meriam Report and a brainchild of Commissioner John Collier's staff." He arrived at this conclusion based on the fact that during the Collier administration Indian Bureau officials conducted extensive studies that revealed how reservation resources could not support the growing Native population. Therefore, some sort of off-reservation living and employment solution was needed. After World War II, this sentiment gained even greater traction in the minds of federal policymakers. Moreover, Officer pointed to the importance of an Indian youth training program enacted in the fall of 1946, which offered a five-year basic and vocational training education at the Sherman Institute, as

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[70] Fred Daiker to Paul Fickinger, 18 September 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

[71] Fred Daiker to Paul Fickinger, 18 September 1944, box 1, folder: Early 1940s, RG75, Correspondence and Reports Relating to the Employment of Indians, NARA Washington.

yet another model for Indian relocation. Officer ultimately argued that relocation became confused with termination in the minds of both Indians and policymakers. "From a careful examination of the record," Officer wrote, "the conclusion drawn is that except for a temporal relationship, these two major tenets of federal Indian policy during 1946-1958 were not, in fact, the offspring of the same parent."[72]

Zooming out, what can be observed here is the foundation of the 1952 relocation program being laid almost ten years in advance of its official launching. Numerous scholars have long critiqued relocation as an accomplice to the era's more ominous and cataclysmic termination policy. But this evidence warrants a different interpretation. It suggests that relocation must be divorced from the termination policy and appreciated as its own distinctive historical phenomenon that produced its own particular set of consequences for Native people. It also suggests that historians who laid the foundation for relocation scholarship provided the Truman administration and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dillon S. Myer far too much credit for being the architects of the relocation program.[73]

Perhaps the major distinction between Indian New Dealers' ideas for relocation and those of Dillon Myer stems from the former group's embrace of relocation as a process that would be inextricably linked to the health of reservation economies and

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[72] James E. Officer, "The American Indian and Federal Policy," in Jack O. Waddell and O. Michael Watson, eds., *The American Indian in Urban Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 46-49.

[73] Consider for example Richard T. Drinnon. *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); and Kenneth R. Philp, *Termination Revisited: American Indians on the Trail to Self-Determination, 1933-1953* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

societies. Upon taking office in 1950, Myer's administration, by contrast, moved full speed ahead with its policy to terminate tribal sovereignty and break apart tribalism once and for all. In fact, Myer *did* embrace relocation as a complement to the termination policy, at least before relocation took on a life of its own as a result of Native people's influence on the process.[74]

Interestingly, Dillon S. Myer came from the very War Relocation Authority that Indian New Dealers appreciated as a model for Indian relocation. Yet, when he took office, he almost immediately dismissed personnel from Collier's administration, including Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Zimmerman, who advocated relocation, but resisted Myer's pursuit of a termination policy. Relocation as a federal policy initiative ultimately unfolded in fits and starts, with no discernible rhyme or reason, a topic that will be explored further in the next chapter.

The great wartime expansion of socio-economic opportunities for Native people did not solve their collective problems overnight. Writing in 1944, Dakota intellectual Ella Deloria cautioned "there are countless families in the remote pockets of reservations still in great poverty. Anyone who drives through their country can see it." She made certain to acknowledge that many Native people had indeed "made a success that is outstanding and are now out working and receiving incomes commensurate with

[74] For insightful scholarship on the termination policy, see R. Warren Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). Metcalf argues that the roots of the termination policy were at best disparately incoherent, and mostly extended from Republican senator from Utah Arthur V. Watkins's Mormon faith-influenced advocacy of an "emancipation program" for Native people. Putting Metcalf's argument in dialogue with this chapter's material on the roots of the Indian relocation program suggests that it is safe to conclude that the termination and relocation policies were not cut from the same cloth.

those earned by young people of other races for similar work." But for the most part, she concluded, the results of Native people's hard efforts beyond reservation limits had not yet led to any substantive reduction of reservation poverty. And on that note, she admonished social critics who concluded that enduring reservation poverty stemmed from dismal Indian initiative. Going forward, stronger effort was needed not from Indian people, she argued, but from non-Indian Americans who to that point had largely failed to understand the structural nature of tribal poverty, and that being poor was not some sort of noble Indian social tradition. "As soon as our country became involved in war, the Indians of all tribes got into action. They did it in 1917 and they did it again and in fuller measure in 1941 and the years following," she explained. "Who can say they are apathetic and listless now?"[75]

Indeed, thousands of Native people embraced America's war engagements as opportunities to simultaneously advance within mainstream American society and produce better conditions for their people who elected to remain in Indian Country. Those who migrated to urban war production industries or served their country overseas essentially practiced a brand of spatial mobility that facilitated socio-economic mobility. In their first war as citizens of the United States of America, Native servicemen and women fought against not only economic poverty, but also against an impoverished set of expectations concerning their position within the nation for which they offered their lives. Simply put, they fought for an equal place among their non-Indian fellow countrymen. This evolving and enduring uplift impulse to some degree would underscore the next decade's urban relocation program. In 1959, for example,

[75] Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, original publishing 1944), 136-138.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst claimed that at least fifty percent of all relocated heads-of-household were veterans of either World War II or the Korean War.[76]

Still, Indians' efforts at socio-economic uplift could not succeed in isolation. Instead they demanded from the non-Indian American citizenry a new perspective on Indians' capacity for belonging within American society. Unfortunately, some American citizens' opinions of Native people were still wedded to nineteenth-century ideas of Indians as a lesser race—a people who could only achieve equal and fair treatment if they agreed to become white. And sometimes enlisting for service in the United States military and dying in battle was not quite white enough.

On the afternoon of August 28th 1951, a traditional military burial ceremony to honor the body and memory of Sergeant First Class John Raymond Rice was underway at Garden of Memories cemetery in Sioux City, Iowa. With an Army color guard and American Legion Honor Guard following alongside, the funeral procession passed the cemetery gates and advanced toward Rice's final resting spot. Suspended six feet above the grave, the flag-draped coffin was ready to be lowered into the earth when, noticing a significant number of American Indians in attendance, cemetery manager Ben Willey stopped the service on grounds of a Caucasian-only policy. Willey then explained to Sergeant Rice's widow that the cemetery would accept her husband's body if an army official would sign a form swearing that John Rice was Caucasian, an offer Sergeant

[76] Richard Freeman (Dallas Morning News writer): "Rebuttal to Form Letter Written by Ass't Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst to Various Members of the Congress and Senate Concerning My Letter of Recent Date and News Clippings Concerning Relocation," (March 1959), Robert Kerr Departmental Papers, box 12, folder 29: Interior: Indian Affairs: General (Mar. 1959), Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, Norman, Oklahoma.

Rice's widow summarily rejected. Willey then cut Sergeant Rice's widow a refund check for her $100 deposit, which she also summarily rejected.

Sergeant John Rice's body had been relocated several times prior to its rejection at the Garden of Memories Cemetery. It had been moved from the cold earth to a field hospital in Tabu-Dong Korea, where Rice died from wounds sustained during the Battle of Pusan Perimeter. It was then transferred from the Graves Registration department, to a military warehouse, to a cargo ship out of Japan, and finally a stateside train that delivered Rice's body to his Winnebago Reservation home. Prior to the Korean War Rice himself had supervised the movement of bodies during World War II when he served with a regiment in charge of escorting fallen soldiers from Japan back home to the United States.

Eventually, President Harry Truman caught wind of the cemetery's refusal to accept Sergeant Rice's body, and made arrangements to have the slain soldier buried in Arlington National Cemetery. A funeral procession then escorted Rice's body from Winnebago to a Sioux City railway depot where it was loaded onto a train bound for the nation's capital. Finally, a year after Sergeant Rice's body first fell in Korea, it was lowered into the ground in Arlington while a band played "Just As I Am Without One Plea," "Our Fallen Heroes," and "Nearer My God to Thee." As the official representative of the Truman administration, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dillon S. Myer looked on in mourning.[77]

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[77] "The Indian Who Never Got Home," published by UAW-CIO Fair practices and Anti-Discrimination Department in Detroit, box 11a, folder 5, Theodore Hetzel Papers, Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado; William L Hewitt, "The Indian Who Never Got Home: The Burial of Sergeant John R Rice," *Nebraska History* 77 (1996): 12-20.

Chapter Three—"These People Come and Go Whenever They Please": Negotiating Relocation in Postwar (Native) America

"They need to feel that they 'belong.'" - Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dillon S. Myer[1]

"So I grew up. You know, almost with the red, white, and blue draped around my shoulders… I think the only thing I wanted to do was to get off the reservation as soon as possible."

– Lester Chapoose (Ute)[2]

In March of 1952, Montana area relocation placement officer George T. Barrett and his team of assistants arrived at the Crow Indian Agency armed with two canisters of film. They were on special orders to drum up interest among Crow people in the Indian bureau's recently unveiled Voluntary Relocation Program. The two films did not, as one might expect, include propagandist depictions of Native people working, living, and playing in sprawling metropolises—but they were not exactly popcorn films either. The first picture summarized the national Social Security system "as it applied to the average citizen." More interestingly, the second film—certainly the main attraction—was a Ford Motor Company production titled *6,000 Partners*, which discussed how "various factories were manufacturing parts that went into the

[1] Address by Dillon S. Myer Before the Combined Assemblies of the Division of Christian Life and Work of the National Council of the Churches of Christ at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, 12 December 1951, box 2, folder: 1950-1953, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Notes and Talks Papers of Dillon S. Myer, Government Agencies File, 1950-1953—Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Memoranda and Reports, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

[2] Interview with Lester Chapoose, 25 October 1986, box 1, folder 3, Ute Indian Interviews, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

automobile and how important it was for the various agencies to cooperate with each other in achieving the ultimate goal—the construction of an automobile."[3]

The two films must have seemed an odd choice to those who attended their screening, but Barrett was quick to explain. The films encapsulated an important message, he claimed, about cooperative labor and living arrangements in contemporary America. Reporting back to Montana Area Relocation Director Paul Fickinger, Barrett expressed confidence that the films successfully "brought out many very fine points that our Indians need to consider, that living in a very complex world, how dependent we have become on each other." As far as Barrett and his superiors were concerned, the time had arrived for Native people to play a productive role not just in the nation's manufacturing of market goods, but also in the maintenance of America's healthy position in a "complex world."[4] Four years later, Barrett perhaps explained what he felt had been at stake during his visit with the Crow people. In a memo to Billings office relocation director James Crawford, he confided, "As long as we continue to subsidize people who are willing to accept relief instead of going on relocation we will perpetuate an impossible situation. Our reservations have become sanctuaries for people who wish to continue a pattern of seasonal work and relief as a program for living."[5]

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[3] George T. Barrett to Paul L. Fickinger, Placement Officer's Report, 18 March 1952, box 17, folder "Reports and Correspondence, FY 1952", 8NS-075-97-270 BIA Billings Area Office Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960, National Archives and Records Administration Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.
[4] Ibid.
[5] George Barrett to James Crawford, 6 March 1956, box 16, folder: Reports (Ft. Belknap) F.Y. 1956, RG75, Billings Area Office: Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.

Previous chapters have suggested that Indians' off-reservation migrations resulted from more than just a federal policy initiative thrust upon them at mid-century. Still, in the final years of the Truman administration, Indian urbanization *did* become policy, sanctioned by the Voluntary Relocation Program, which went into effect on New Year's Day, 1952. Despite the Bureau of Indian Affairs' energetic promotion both leading up to and after its introduction, however, the relocation program did not take shape in coherent fashion. Rather, it evolved out of numerous competing perspectives on how to improve Indians' socio-economic positions within the United States, as well as rival assertions about what the city represented in the hearts and minds of both the Native people who attached their hopes to urban living and federal policymakers intent on solving their Indian problem.

In this respect, relocation, as a policy program, can be considered alongside other major U.S. Indian policy initiatives that were born out of confusion and indecisiveness, and whose eventual outcomes indicated the profound influence of Native people's own conflicted participation and criticism. For example, historian Joseph Genetin-Pilawa argues that Congress's destructive late-nineteenth-century land allotment policy was not inevitable before mainstream assimilationists who drew upon powerful political connections ultimately overwhelmed competing visions for improving Native people's conditions. Similarly, historian R. Warren Metcalf argues that the catastrophic mid-twentieth-century termination policy—of which relocation often appears an accomplice—proved less a remedy for a new generation of Indian bureaucrats' disappointment in the Indian New Deal, or a gift to Native people who valiantly fought for America during World War II, and more the result of myopic

experimentation on the part of federal policymakers who knew very little, if anything at all, about Indian people, and borrowed heavily from their own subjective convictions when devising a solution for the Indian problem. In both analogies, once Native people began maneuvering within and around these policies they played a substantial role in impacting their efficacy. At times, what Native people sought in their participation in these new (or refashioned) policy initiatives—either through courage, coercion, or both—overlapped with the goals of federal policymakers. At other times they wildly diverged. Relocation, as a policy initiative, was therefore not anomalous in this respect. As this chapter plainly asserts, relocation was not simply something that the federal government did to Native people. It was a negotiated process that arrived at ends as unpredictable as its beginnings.[6]

In 1867, the newly created Sisseton people's Lake Traverse reservation in present day South Dakota comprised 918,779 acres of land that provided home to 1,350 people. By 1956, the Sisseton land base had diminished to 113,802 acres of land shared by 1,890 Indian residents. Among the Sisseton people who resided on the reservation, 24.5 percent survived on what the BIA considered "irregular wages." Only 17.1 percent earned "regular wages." Finally, 13.1 depended on "aid to dependent children," with an additional 11.1 percent dependent on full public assistance. Statistics such as this proliferated across numerous Indian reservations during the 1950s after World War II interrupted the New Deal Indian administration's plans for comprehensive reservation

[6] Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight Over Federal Indian Policy After the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); R. Warren Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

economic development and a new postwar Indian bureau administration began introducing its own innovations for federal Indian policy. Raised socio-economic expectations precipitated by wartime work opportunities and military service encouraged thousands of Indians to continue seeking off-reservation employment even as the war industry contracted. During 1956, for example, 1,478 of the aforementioned Sisseton people were living off-reservation. Still, we must be careful not to conclude that that they had necessarily surrendered their ties to their land, or that they had no desire to eventually return.[7]

During the early stages of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' relocation program the Chicago Field Relocation Office disseminated a brochure titled "The Indians Are Coming!" designed to enlighten the non-Indian community about migrating Indians' needs. The brochure explained that relocation was primarily a solution for most reservations' inability to support more than fifty percent of their respective Indian populations. "Fairness and Justice require that we help the American Indian improve their standard of living through their own individual efforts," the brochure suggested. Further elaborating, it explained that Indian veterans from two wars had experienced the city, learned about urban work opportunities, and desired better housing and a brighter future. Moreover, the brochure made clear that many Indians, through their own efforts, had already staked out a future in various metropolises, although those were typically the "more venturesome or better educated Indians." "American Indians want to get into the stream of American life and swim," it concluded. "They don't want to sink in the

[7] Land-Bar Chart, 1867-1956 and Primary Sources of Income on Sisseton reservation, 1957, box 2, folder 2: Sisseton Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, Ayer Modern Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

idleness of submarginal reservation lands."[8] Taken together, these are prime examples of the both quantitative and qualitative analyses that played a key role in shaping the Bureau of Indian Affairs' and Congress's confidence in relocation's mitigatory power.

In 1948, new Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior William Warne authored an article titled "The Public Share in Indian Assimilation" that pointedly expressed how non-Indian American citizens had a responsibility to help Indians wade into the American mainstream. After first explaining that the "avowed objective" of the Indian Service was to "work itself out of a job," Warne elaborated on the federal government's energetic return to an unambiguous assimilation policy, which depended on advancing off-reservation job opportunities for Native people. Pointing to the increasing number of Indians that had been "drifting" from reservations in recent years, Warne suggested that non-Indians should play a key role in helping their Indian brethren adapt to modern society: "I am sure that this movement could be greatly accelerated if the public played its part in welcoming these graduates into economic and social equality." Doing so, he argued, would effectively solve "the age-old problem that our ancestors and we have created by occupancy of this great and beautiful land." With his emphasis on the vital role non-Indian urban communities could play when receiving an influx of job-seeking Indians, Warne illustrated the changing nature of proposed solutions to the federal government's Indian problem during this period. To be sure, the non-Indian general public always played a role in facilitating Indian assimilation—federal tax expenditures for Indian programs alone account for this. But in past decades, federal initiatives to uplift the Indian race mostly unfolded in relative isolation on

[8] Relocation Brochure, box 34, folder 330: Relocation, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

remote reservations. Warne's solution, by contrast, was to navigate the Indian problem right into the urban headwaters of America's cultural mainstream, thereby making it everyone's problem in most explicit fashion.[9]

During World War II's aftermath, the Navajo reservation, even in its vast size, vividly dramatized the problem of reservation overpopulation while encouraging vociferous public outcries to help poor Indians. Navajo people had experienced a succession of especially catastrophic winters that exhausted tribal resources and left many struggling to find food and warmth. Making matters worse, the tribe counted roughly 55,000 members, but reservation resources could only support roughly 35,000.[10] President Truman and other politicians who advocated a costly Navajo rehabilitation program that included an emphasis on off-reservation employment succeeded in arousing strong public support for their initiative.[11] "To take full advantage of off-reservation employment opportunities, there must be a systematic training and placement program in order to overcome the handicaps of language, lack of special skills, and irregular work habits, which prevail among many Indians," President Truman suggested in an official statement that Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug prepared on his behalf. "Off-reservation employment must provide permanent security on a family basis, if the placement program is to be successful."[12]

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[9] "The Public Share in Indian Assimilation," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v4, n3 (1948) 4.
[10] *Report on Urban and Rural Non-Reservation Indians*, Task Force Eight: Urban and Rural Non-Reservation Indians, Final Report to the American Indian Policy Review Commission (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), 28.
[11] "Truman Urges Aid for Needy Navajos," *New York Times*, 3 December 1947.
[12] Statement by Harry S Truman on the Navajo Crisis, 2 December 1947, Papers of Harry S. Truman: White House Central Files—Official File, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

In late winter 1948, the BIA established a job services program for Navajo and Hopi people seeking unemployment relief. Despite their better efforts, Navajo-Hopi job placement officials immediately struggled to get their program up and running. They experienced trouble recruiting on a reservation that lacked efficient infrastructure and modern communication networks. It could take several hours to transport workers to a pickup point, and bad weather could completely ruin efforts. "A seemingly mild breeze is sufficient to disrupt the use of telephone," one BIA representative complained.[13]

Program representatives eventually found success by contracting with Arizona and New Mexico State Employment Services and the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board while opening placement offices in Denver, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake City. In April 1950, Congress authorized a 10-year Navajo-Hopi rehabilitation program, which in addition to World War II Japanese-American relocation provided another model for a national Indian relocation program. Satisfied with the program's initial results, Congress approved a budget increase to 3.5 million dollars, and in July 1951 the BIA formed area relocation offices in Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and California.[14] During 1952, the program resulted in a total of 22,000 jobs both on

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[13] The Bureau of Indian Affairs Voluntary Relocation Services Program", box 34, folder 330: Relocation, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago; Navajo Placements for Calendar Year 1949 and Jan 1950 to September 30, 1950, box 1, folder: Stats: General Placement and Relocation (General Correspondence), 1950, RG75, Placement and Statistical Reports, compiled 1949-1954, NARA Washington.

[14] "The Bureau of Indian Affairs Voluntary Relocation Services Program", box 34, folder 330: Relocation, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago. Historian Donald L. Fixico, whose work provided the historiographic foundation for scholarship on relocation, points to the Navajo rehabilitation program as the primary model for the subsequent national Voluntary Relocation Program. See Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 134-135. In his subsequent study of Indian

and off-reservation, which brought Navajo and Hopi workers 14 million dollars in combined earnings.[15] The Navajo tribal council officially supported this effort by forming the Tribal Enterprises Corporation to provide raw materials for work projects and training programs. Under the tribal council's directive, the corporation's official policy was to intentionally hire Navajo people who lacked English language skills and industrial training. Upon completion of the training and language program they were expected to find off-reservation employment "so that another may be trained."[16]

In his new capacity as commissioner of Indian affairs, Truman appointee Dillon S. Myer drew upon both the Navajo-Hopi program and his leadership of the War Relocation Authority as wider Indian policy models when he entered the BIA in 1950. He also brought in numerous colleagues from the War Relocation Authority to fill out his BIA staff. When future Denver and Chicago relocation placement supervisor Stanley Lyman first accepted a position with the Indian bureau in 1952 he immediately realized that the former WRA people were "running everything."[17] For example, in 1951 Myer appointed former WRA agent Charles Miller as the first Chief of the Branch of Relocation Services. Miller's experiences in relocation were not limited to his service

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urbanization, however, Fixico emphasizes the War Relocation Authority as BIA commissioner Dillon S. Myer's central model for a national Indian relocation program. See Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 10.

[15] "Planning in Action on the Navajo-Hopi Reservations, Report Number 11 (Department of Interior), box 1, folder 9, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, Albuquerque.

[16] "The Indian Enters Business," box 1, folder 13, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, Albuquerque.

[17] Stanley Lyman Interview with Floyd O'Neil, Doris Duke Number 1029, box 17, folder 40 and Stanley Lyman Interview with Floyd O'Neil, Doris Duke Number 1030, box 17, folder 41, American Indian History Project, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

in the WRA; he had also led a program to bring poor Jamaican workers to the United States. In nineteen years of federal government service Miller—the "Great Mover of People"—was responsible for the movement of 400,000 Indians, Japanese-American, and Jamaicans.[18]

Lyman also sensed that the WRA cohort was motivated more by its own desire to facilitate Indian integration into mainstream American society than by a deep understanding of Native peoples needs and desires. "They approached this from strictly an intellectual viewpoint" he claimed. Still, Lyman was not entirely cynical about the program. "When you got down, then, to what we did from day to day, it was just a matter of talking to Indians… finding out whether or not they were interested in leaving the reservation, and frankly, urging them to do so," he explained. "In other words, to make it possible for the Indian people to move away and get a job where they could put beans on the table. They didn't have beans on the table at home, believe me."[19]

Reflecting on his experiences as commissioner of Indian affairs during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Philleo Nash, who held a PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago, pulled no punches when criticizing Dillon Myer, whom he had initially recommended for the Indian affairs commissioner post. Nash claimed that World War II resulted in the shrinking of the federal Indian bureaucracy at the same time that Indians were seeking opportunities away from reservations. "This then gave a push to those forces in American life which think that the solution to the Indian

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[18] "'Great Mover of People' Title Given to Miller" (unidentified newspaper story), box 15, folder 20, Stanley Lyman papers, Marriot Library, Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

[19] Stanley Lyman Interview with Floyd O'Neil, Doris Duke Number 1029, box 17, folder 40, American Indian History Project, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

problem is to wipe out the reservations and scatter the Indians and then there won't be Indian tribes, Indian cultures, or Indian individuals," Nash asserted. "This is not the right solution; this is not a good solution; it is not one that is acceptable to a thinking person, but this is an area where we often reason by analogy, and if we think the melting pot was a good idea, then we think it would be good to melt off the Indians in the reservations."[20]

Advocacy for an Indian relocation program was not solely the province of BIA experts. Nor was the Voluntary Relocation Program exclusively an extension of the War Relocation Authority, the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation program, or even the trends that a generation of Indians who supported America's war effort and wanted steady work opportunities in return. Not unlike the termination policy also gaining traction at the time, relocation at times found allies in tenacious politicians who implored President Truman to help impoverished Indians.[21]

In October 1951, U.S. Representative from Oklahoma and Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs Toby Morris personally wrote President Harry S Truman to warn him that Congress's budget for the BIA's new relocation program was far too insufficient. "I believe stepped up expenditures are absolutely necessary if we are ever going to make the Indians economically independent and have them take their proper place in our American society," Morris shared. He then pointed to a contradiction in the federal government's spending of vast sums of money on behalf of

[20] Interview with Philleo Nash, 5 June 1967, pgs. 695-696, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.
[21] Concerning termination, I am referring to R. Warren Metcalf's emphasis on Utah Senator Arthur V. Watkins's forceful advocacy of an Indian "emancipation proclamation." See Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

foreign peoples while "neglecting our first Americans." According to Morris, roughly fifty percent of all Indians were incapable of supporting themselves on reservations. Relocation, he ventured, would "integrate these people into the overall economy and would solve once and for all their special status problems." Tugging at Truman's heartstrings, Morris pleaded, "Knowing your great interest in all downtrodden peoples, I am sure that you want to do everything possible to help this group."[22]

Looking through Toby Morris's personal papers, one can piece together the sources of information, and perhaps inspiration, for his position on relocation. In May 1951, influential Oklahoma historian Angie Debo sent representative Morris a copy of her recently published *The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Report on Social and Economic Conditions*, which detailed the impoverished living conditions with which Oklahoma's Native people wrestled daily. Chapter two, titled "Poor Indian on Poor Land," might have made the strongest impression on Morris. The chapter illustrated Indian lives marked by dilapidated cabins, disappearing fruit orchards, and a diminishing land and water base. "I talked with scores of families living on undivided inherited land, paying no rent, squatting there as a natural right," Debo wrote. "Most of them seemed not to realize the precarious nature of their tenure, or to look ahead to the day when their refuge would crumble beneath their feet."[23]

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[22] Toby Morris to Harry Truman, 19 October 1951, box 9, folder 88, Toby Morris Papers, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

[23] Toby Morris to Angie Debo, 7 May 1951, box 9, folder 88, Toby Morris Papers, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman; Angie Debo, *The Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma: Report on Social and Economic Conditions* (Philadelphia: the Indian Rights Association, 1951).

Perhaps a letter that Dr. George B. Roop sent to Morris in June 1951 also made a strong impression on the congressman. Dr. Roop wrote to apprise Morris of conditions at Oklahoma's Anadarko agency, where he practiced medicine and had been the only doctor at the agency for the past three years. The nearest hospital was an hour away in Clinton—a trip most of the local Cheyenne and Arapaho people could not easily make. When they did, they were frequently sent home without care if their problems were not deemed severe enough for hospital treatment. Roop explained that he tried to help as many Native people as he could, even though most could not afford to pay him. "They live in very poor, sordid surroundings, many of them in tents," he wrote. "They cannot possibly have anything simulating a normal diet. Hence, they are ill frequently, especially the children." Further elaborating, Roop concluded with a particularly grim story: "Recently, a week old baby died of lock jaw, due to infection from contaminated umbilical cord. There was no doctor present at the birth."[24]

Whether or not Congressman Morris was aware, limitations on the delivery of health care in fact posed serious problems on numerous reservations, especially those in more remote areas that lacked modern infrastructure. For example, during the 1950s South Dakota's Cheyenne River Reservation Indian Hospital provided only 30 beds. It proved easier for many Cheyenne River people to wait for the hospital's three doctors to come to them during "clinic days," when the doctors made forays out into rural communities. Because of the hospital's limited facilities, Native people who required emergency surgery had to race to capital city Pierre, 65 miles to the south. Those who

[24] Dr. George B. Roop to Toby Morris, 15 June 1951, box 9, folder 92, Toby Morris Papers, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

needed ear, nose, or eye treatment required a referral to Aberdeen, 125 miles to the northeast. Tuberculosis patients had to trek even farther away, to Rapid City, 250 miles to southwest. Finally, those in need of diagnostic procedures had to take referrals across the state border to Omaha's Creighton University, 350 miles southeast.[25]

Also in Toby Morris's possession was a copy of an essay titled "How Fare the Indians?" that Library of Congress sociologist William H. Gilbert drafted in 1950. In the essay, Gilbert refers to Native people as an "outdoor race" and "marginal people" who profoundly suffered from poor health conditions, a lack of steady employment, deficient reservation resources, and substandard housing. "The Indian, then, is partly in and partly out of our society," Gilbert stressed, before concluding, "There is an American Indian problem in this country which apparently will not settle itself." It is unclear whether or not Toby Morris's strong support for relocation as a solution to the Indian problem was the product of a deep personal conviction, or a reflection of his responsibility to help the roughly 55,000 Native people who lived in his state. It was most likely a product of both, and these documents in his possession at the very least provide some sense of the prevailing ideas and concerns that shaped his thinking when he wrote President Truman.[26]

Federal officials were not alone in their call for a new solution to the enduring and elusive Indian problem. For example, some members of New York City's

[25] Reservation Conditions Summary, box 1, folder 1: Cheyenne River Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, Ayer Modern Manuscript Collection, The Newberry Library, Chicago.
[26] "How Fare the Indians?" box 9, folder 74, Toby Morris Papers, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) supported an intervention against what they perceived to be paternalistic overreach. In an editorial for the organization's magazine, Alexander Lesser roundly rejected the "Overprotected Indian":

> Many of us who have seen the hopelessness and the attitudes of dependence that are widespread on the reservations today—the preoccupied helplessness with which many Indians become involved with the officialdom around them in so many incidents of their daily lives, their timidity to venture into the off-reservation stream of American life, the apathy and low level of aspiration that are all too frequent, and the easy turning back homeward to the reservation of thousands of younger Indians—must increasingly recognize these as symptoms of the overprotected environment of Indian life.

Interestingly, earlier in his piece Lesser decried prevailing stereotypes that cast Indians as "gullible and incompetent." Yet, he quickly emphasized the supposed "timidity" of reservation-based Indians, as though their failure to clear wide paths toward mainstream America reflected some sort of inherent fear of modernity. If Native people were so "preoccupied" with "helplessness," why then did Lesser want to expedite their plunge into the mainstream of American life? While attempting to deconstruct one stereotype he effectively constructed another. Such was the confused nature of policymakers' and Indian rights advocates' proposed solution to the Indian problem during this period.[27]

What apparently became lost in politicians' and social theorists' collective confusion was the fact that many Native people were already quietly pursuing a course of action similar to that which policy architects were busy debating. Through that process, however, Native people with few exceptions did not proceed as though urbanization would necessarily advance an assault on tribalism. Native people who fashioned their own socio-economic strategies independent from their tribal base mostly understood that they were exercising a choice for which they accepted personal

[27] "The Overprotected Indian," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v6, n1 (Summer 1951), 1-2.

responsibility. They were simultaneously trying to take control of their own affairs and expand their economic prospects without attacking tribalism, an approach that policymakers and some social reformers could not seem to reconcile. In no uncertain terms, this reflected the earlier generation of Indian rights advocates from the late-nineteenth century who convinced themselves that Indian progress could only rise from the ashes of tribal culture.[28]

In an essay by a second AAIA leader and one of the most influential Indian rights advocates of the twentieth century, Oliver LaFarge described the deteriorating economic conditions on the Navajo reservation, and how they were exacerbated by substantial population increase. Agricultural and railroad work, he insisted, was not the answer to the Diné people's problems. "If that is the best future we can offer a small nation which we have conquered, our whole civilization is a fraud and our boasted democracy nothing but a myth," he expounded. "The Navajos must be enabled to enter upon all levels of our economic life… as freely as do any of their fellow citizens." LaFarge's critique illuminates how non-Indians' solution to the Indian problem not only reflected concern for Native people, but also concern for America's legitimacy as a right and responsible nation. Such arguments mattered in the context of the United States' efforts during the Cold War to portray representative democracy and capitalism as the supreme foundation of a just and prosperous society.[29]

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[28] On the influence of late-nineteenth-century Indian rights advocates see historian Frederick E. Hoxie's seminal work *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

[29] "A Way Out for the Navajos," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v6, n1 (Summer 1951), 14. On the Cold War's impact on ideas about Indian tribalism, see Paul C. Rosier, "'They are ancestral homelands': Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America," *Journal of American History* 92

Interestingly, some Indian rights advocates welcomed the migration of Native people to urban centers not only as a solution to reservation socio-economic distress or as a panacea for Americans' anxiety over the treatment of poor Indians, but also for their potential positive cultural influence. For example, in 1952 Los Angeles Indian Center director and former director of the University of Wisconsin's School for Workers Alice Shoemaker wrote an essay that championed Native people's "tremendous vitality, humor, deep religious feeling, an appreciation and sense of oneness with nature, democratic procedures" and more. She threw perceived Indian cultural purity in relief against the "gaudy merchandise" on display in Wilshire Boulevard shop windows, and promised that Indians would "bring rich treasures to our frantic, fearful, jaded, over-mechanized civilization." Shoemaker's positioning of Native people as potential conquerors of the type of vapid postwar materialism that Herbert Marcuse would soon forcefully critique evoked the sentiments of John Collier, Mabel Dodge, D.H. Lawrence and their social reform cohort that promoted the "Red Atlantis" they discovered in Pueblo Indian communities around Taos, New Mexico during the early 1920s as a solution to all of America's societal ills. Departing from their logic, however, Shoemaker wanted Native people to exercise their socio-cultural purity not in their tribal homelands, but in urban metropolises that appeared to be drowning in consumerism. At the same time, like Collier and his colleagues, Shoemaker failed to realize that many Native people in fact wanted the opportunity to purchase "gaudy merchandise" on Wilshire Boulevard. Putting her slightly ahead of the

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(2006): 1300-1326, Daniel M. Cobb, "Talking the Language of the Larger World: Politics in Cold War (Native) America," in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900*, ed. Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler (Santa Fe, NM, 2007), and Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*.

intellectual curve, however, Shoemaker did seem to realize that "Indian" and "urban" were not mutually exclusive concepts.[30]

At times, social experts who critiqued relocation recognized not only the importance of giving the program a sincere opportunity to succeed, but also the urgency in providing some sort of complementary program to encourage reservation development for those who elected to remain in rural Indian Country. For example, anthropologist and Indian rights advocate Betty Clark Rosenthal wrote Indian Rights Association representative Theodore Hetzel to offer advice on an article he was developing on Indian migration to Chicago. Rosenthal suggested that Hetzel "emphasize the success of Indian men and women at work in the city and town situations—and then point up their adaptability." While she admitted that relocation had its "faults, and sins of omission or commission," she claimed that "picking on the relocation program" only emboldened local leaders who would rather criticize the initiative than help Indian families in need. But then she made certain to stress the crucial import of bringing reservations into the discussion. Lack of economic

[30] "In the Hands of its Users," *The American Indian* (newsletter of the American Association on Indian Affairs), v6, n3 (Spring 1952), 38. On America's degrading postwar obsession with material wealth, see Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). On Collier, Dodge, and Lawrence, see Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); and Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880-1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), chapter nine.

development on reservations, she believed, was what social scientists really needed to "fix upon out of the relocation story."[31]

An informational pamphlet that the National Social Welfare Assembly (NSWA) created in 1953 identified four supposedly common Indian character traits that prospective urban social workers should consider before attempting to assist newly arriving Native people: distrust of "the white man and his motives"; insecurity and lack of self-confidence; concern for personal privacy; and finally "lack of acquisitiveness and drive for personal achievement." The NSWA seemingly failed to realize that Indians' main motivation for migrating to cities was in no uncertain terms a reflection of their drive for personal achievement, and in many cases, acquisitiveness. In fairness, the pamphlet's authors admitted, "One cannot generalize about 'the Indian' any more than one can generalize about the 'white man,' 'the Chinese,' or 'the Negro.'"[32]

Notwithstanding that important admission, the authors essentially pinned their potential Indian welfare recipients to a past that never existed, or at the very least an exaggerated notion of Indians as people who lacked motivation and thought only of their immediate needs. Perhaps the authors also failed to realize that such sweeping stereotypes about Indian indolence likely played a role in Native people's supposed "insecurity and lack of self-confidence, which may be expressed in timidity and diffidence." Indeed, these are the types of socio-cultural assumptions that so often governed non-Indian bureaucrats, social workers, employers, and community

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[31] Elizabeth Clark Rosenthal to Theodore Hetzel, 24 June 1957, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 28, folder 11, Center for Southwest Research, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

[32] *The Reservation Indian Comes to Town* (New York: National Social Welfare Assembly, 1953).

neighbors' interactions with Indians. Yet, as discussed in the next chapter, urban Indians' actions—both prior to and after arriving in various urban centers—consistently challenged such burdensome expectations.[33]

In addition to federal policymakers and public social theorists, Indian boarding school administrators continued playing a key role in both critiquing and encouraging Indian migration toward mainstream urban America as the most expedient path toward socio-economic progress and equality. Whereas the former groups' intellectual musings mostly manifested within elite circles, however, boarding school messages of mainstream uplift directly washed over the ears of impressionable Indian students. For example, in his commencement speech to the Flandreau Indian School graduating class of 1956, school superintendent H. Bogard outlined three key strategies for success in the "dominant prevailing society." First, he encouraged graduates to recognize the centrality of time as a governing force in their lives. "The Indian, to get ahead, must recognize this and practice it so it will also be a part of his culture," Bogard orated. Second, Indians must prove their facility for steady, reliable, and high-quality work. Finally, he assured Flandreau graduates that success in the "American way of life" depended on investing income in order to "let your wealth work for you as you are earning."[34]

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[33] *The Reservation Indian Comes to Town* (New York: National Social Welfare Assembly, 1953). On the discursive power of expectations for Indian behavior in the early twentieth century, see Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

[34] *The Flandreau Spirit: Senior Souvenir edition*, vol. 26, number 11, 9 May 1956, box 2, folder 2: Sisseton Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

Similarly, in its final issue before May graduation of 1953, the Haskell Indian Institute school paper led with a piece that reflected the school's enduring message of Indian uplift. "How Will You Face It?" the piece prodded beneath a cartoon portraying an apprehensive young boxer squaring off against an anthropomorphic Earth depicted with boxing gloves and a menacing visage. "Yes," the article began, "how will you, as a graduate of Haskell Institute, face the future? Will you be a success? Will you use what you have learned here at Haskell, or will you sit back and wait for a 'handout'?" The message must have rung as clear as a ringside bell. Imploring graduates to embrace the "real struggle" set to begin, and to think of future jobs and a metaphoric ocean lying before them, the article jabbed, "Are we going to attempt to cross the ocean? Or are we going to stand and look across it?" before concluding, "Let's cross the ocean… to success!"[35]

Despite their personal claims to a share of the economic and social fruits stemming from America's postwar ascendance, enterprising Indians often had to contend with low expectations and a fate tied to menial labor opportunities. In a speech delivered to Indian boarding school superintendents toward the end of World War II, BIA education director Willard Beatty insisted that Indians' future in America lay in "service occupations," and that Indian girls "should be taught to bake pies and cakes for commercial purposes." Beatty suggested that boys from Haskell Institute could work in Lawrence, Kansas, as long as they made sure to "charge a full price and not work for a cheap wage." Finally, he implored superintendents to bend their respective school

[35] *The Indian Leader*, v56, n15 (May 1953), published by the Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas.

curriculums to trends in the marketplace and avoid teaching a particular subject "just because it is there."[36]

Beatty's message registers as much more cynical than the ideas of Indian uplift that school administrators and Indian students alike had set in motion in previous decades. To some degree, Beatty's emphasis on service occupations for Indians reflected the larger ideologies that took shape in the Indian bureau after World War II and John Collier's retirement from the Indian commissioner post. Vocational instruction, policymakers increasingly concluded, formed the most socially and economically expedient strategy toward weaving America's Indian population into the nation's postwar plan. Above all else, federal policymakers became increasingly supportive of the most practical and cost-effective solutions to their Indian problem. Their collective strategies left little room for John Collier's and Native people's premium on cultural pluralism. Whereas boarding school progenitor Richard Henry Pratt once suggested that America needed to "Kill the Indian, and save the man," postwar policymakers seemed intent on killing the Indian in order to save the vocational worker, and money.

At times, pressure to succeed in modern American society descended not from teachers at school, but from the ambitious example that one's parents previously established. In January 1969, a teenage Rosebud Sioux girl wrote Indian rights advocate Theodore Hetzel to request his support for her application to Haverford College, a liberal arts school outside of Philadelphia where Hetzel taught. In her letter, she

[36] "Notes and Impressions from the Superintendents' and Principals' Meeting, Oklahoma City, November 20-22, 1944," Haskell Indian Nations University, Decimal Correspondence File, 1925-1959, RG075, Box 41, Folder: Memo—Notices, 1948-1956, NARA Great Plains Branch, Kansas City, Missouri.

explained that her desire to attend Haverford stemmed from three primary personal convictions: she welcomed new challenges; her reservation offered a substandard education at best; and "going to school there would also prepare me to face the world by myself and solving my own problems."[37]

The teenage girl's father was none other than the legendary Rosebud Sioux tribal chairman and national Indian rights activist Robert Burnette, a divisive firebrand who passionately argued from a position of ethnic Indian pride. As a soldier in the United States Marine Corps during World War II, Burnette came to realize that "there were good men of every race who could be rallied to correct a wrong." Upon his discharge he became a force in reservation politics, where as tribal president he challenged Indian business leaders who exploited their own people. He also served a turn as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, and in 1972 participated in "Red Power" advocates' militant takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington, D.C. Robert Burnette's father, Grover, was also no stranger to the wider world and an exhaustive career. Grover Burnette first found success as a cattle rancher, but eventually moved his family to Sioux City, South Dakota where he labored in a sawmill. Coming full circle, he later returned his family to Rosebud where he worked as a tribal policeman and operator of heavy construction equipment for the Indian office before serving as a tribal judge, councilman, and treasurer. In sum, by refusing boundaries on where and how they could participate in the wider world, both Grover and Robert Burnette established what likely resonated as a

[37] Letter to Thedore Hetzel, 26 January 1969, box 30, folder 8, Theodore Hetzel Papers, Center for Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

challenging legacy for their children and grandchildren to replicate, although Robert's daughter seemed to be up to the task.[38]

At other times, pressure from within the family resulted less from concern for matching a relative's success and more from a desire to help one's elders. Matthew Pilcher, who would eventually serve as director of Chicago's St. Augustine's Center for Indians, board member of the Chicago American Indian Center, and Winnebago tribal Chairman in Nebraska, recalled the urgency he felt to stake out a future in urban America, where jobs awaited. After a brief stint in Los Angeles rooming with a cousin who worked in Disneyland's Indian Village, Pilcher sought a way out through military service:

> My grandmother was very poor. I came back from government school and knew I was a burden on her. There was no work. So three other guys my age went and joined and they said, "Matt, why don't you join too?" I did. I found out you can make an allotment. So I made a twenty-five-dollar allotment to my grandmother. My base pay was only 75 dollars at that time. Survival, you know.

Pilcher's grandmother supported his decision. "I was on my way to Korea. She took me out and held me and prayed for me and said, 'Be safe.'" "There's one trait American

[38] Richmond L. Clow, "Robert Burnette: A Postwar Lakota Activist," in Benson Tong and Regan A. Lutz, eds., *The Human Tradition in the American West* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2001), 193-200; Grover C. Burnette Sr. Obituary, *Rosebud Sioux Herald*, 27 April 1970. For further background on Robert Burnette see his personal memoir, *The Tortured Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971).

Indians have, we are very adaptable people. Give us a situation and we just do it," he added.[39]

According to an interview with Stanley Lyman, who served as area relocation director in both Denver and Chicago, Indian war veterans proved most enthusiastic about relocation: "They had found that there was a big wide world out there, and there were not any jobs at home… So it was natural for people to want to leave." Lyman then explained that numerous Indian tribes had long followed their own migratory labor patterns that they established for themselves. Pine Ridge Lakota people traditionally found work in Denver. Navajo and northern Pueblo people had typically ventured to Denver and Los Angeles. Tribes from Fort Peck in Montana for years had followed the Great Northern Railroad west into Portland, Oregon. "So this thing was catching on, not because we were so good, but it was already there because of the migratory patterns established," Lyman concluded. Asked to clarify whether Indians demonstrated enthusiasm for urban life, Lyman responded, "Well, it was the kind of enthusiasm that sends you over the hill to that green valley if the valley you're in is all dried up." Interestingly, Lyman made certain not to suggest that Indians were necessarily exceptional in the problems they faced when attempting to adjust to the big city. "And of course, here you're talking about the problems of rural America, complicated only a little bit by reservation ownership and the outlook resulting from being an Indian," he suggested. "But basically this is a rural America problem."[40]

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[39] Matthew Pilcher interview with author, 12 July 2012, Winnebago, Nebraska, transcript in author's possession.

[40] Stanley Lyman Interview by Floyd O'Neil, box 17, folder 41, Doris Duke Number 1030, American Indian History Project, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. In his analysis of Pueblo railroad workers who established

In the years leading up to the Indian Bureau's formal introduction of its relocation program, thousands of Native people from across Indian Country gradually inched away from reservations in search of reliable income and greater opportunities in postwar American society. But for many the trajectory rarely represented an expedited flight straight from rural reservation space to mammoth metropolises like San Francisco and Chicago. Rather, as a nascent first step, migrating Indians often occupied spaces in between, just as they had done in previous decades and would continue to do even after the relocation program became an option. As Native people achieved greater familiarity with mainstream American life and became more comfortable with living away from reservations they increasingly expanded their affinity for negotiating the migratory process on their own terms, and whenever possible, for their own benefit.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, many northern Minnesotan Native people were already taking advantage of work opportunities that demanded geographic separation of varying distances from tribal life. Primarily adhering to a seasonal work cycle, thousands of Minnesotan Indians worked beet and potato fields in the northwest, pulp mills in north central, and mines in the northeastern portion of the state. Native mineworkers, in particular, made certain to return to their respective reservations for wild rice harvesting and duck hunting. In 1951, the Consolidated Chippewa Agency relocation placement officer wrote his superiors to explain that he was having trouble

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boxcar communities in Richmond, California in the first half of the twentieth century, Kurt Peters argues that, "The myth that Native American urban migration stemmed only from mid-century termination and relocation policies has persistently obscured historical reality." Kurt M. Peters, "Watering the Flower: Laguna Pueblo and the Santa Fe Railroad, 1880-1943," in *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, ed. Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack (Norman, OK, 1996), 177.

creating any enthusiasm for the program because Indians in his district preferred traditional, seasonal work, and did not want to migrate out. Simply put, Indians' ability to exert influence over the process caused the program to stumble out of the gate.[41]

A majority of Indians from Minnesota's Prairie Island Dakota community preferred working in the nearby town of Red Wing to distant, permanent relocation. In late 1951, numerous Prairie Island people were busy manufacturing miniature drums and moccasin souvenirs, which they then sold to LeRoy Shane of Rochester and the Arrowhead Company of Minneapolis for statewide marketing. Others held construction positions for an outfit based in Hastings. Still others were waiting to see if they could get work at a new hospital development before entertaining the possibility of going on relocation. BIA Area Placement Officer Kurt Fitzgerald offered his approval. "Our support of this enterprise may seem to run counter to the objectives of the placement program, but I doubt that it does seriously," he wrote his superiors. "I think it is incumbent upon us to help these people economically in any way that we can."[42]

In neighboring Wisconsin, BIA relocation officers struggled to convince Menominee Indians to apply for relocation because the tribe had recently been awarded an 8.5 million dollar Indian Claims Commission settlement and were afraid that they would not receive their share if they left. At Stockbridge and Oneida, relocation officials reported that practically all employment eligible adults were already working

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[41] Consolidated Chippewa Agency, Placement Narrative Report, October 1951, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Minneapolis, 1952, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

[42] Reports on Trips to Prairie Island Community, 20 November 1951 and 18-19 December 1951, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Minneapolis, 1952, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

at a tractor manufacturing plant in Clintonville, and shipyards at Manitowoc and Sturgeon Bay, respectively. Fitzgerald, however, did not trust those opportunities as permanent solutions. He remembered how all the Indians from his district were working during the war. But then the shipyards closed, the mills slowed down, servicemen came home, and newspaper headlines announced "Starving Wisconsin Indian Communities." "Though the present good employment conditions at Stockbridge and Oneida may make us forget January 1950, we should not forget that no permanent industry is coming into these places and the population continues to grow. This is no time to relax," he warned.[43]

Throughout 1951, BIA placement officers spent a substantial amount of time and energy trying to enroll Indian people in the program and prepare them to leave early the next year when the actual migratory support system would be in full operation. Still, Indian agents' overtures and the attraction of urban work opportunities often were not enough to convince Indians of the program's merit. For example, in August 1951, Harold Gronroos, placement director for the new Juneau, Alaska relocation office, arranged for Eskimo people to work at the U.S. Naval Station in Kodiak, but the Eskimos he approached expressed no interest in the opportunity because they were looking forward to a two-week fall fishing trip. Gronroos mostly struggled to convince the Eskimos to surrender their seasonal work patterns and accept the benefits of permanent, reliable employment. Gradually, however, his efforts were met with some success as he continued cultivating a relationship with those assigned to his agency. For

[43] Narrative Report – January 1952 (MPLS Area Office), Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Minneapolis, 1952, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

example, in November 1951, when the Eskimos' fishing trip failed to produce its typically bountiful catch, Gronroos helped those in need of work secure positions at a salmon cannery on Kodiak Island.[44]

Meanwhile, Alaskan employers were also warming to the idea of Indian employees after realizing the benefits of a permanent local work force, as opposed to the typically transient work force that populated most of the area labor ranks. The American Federation of Labor's Anchorage office aggressively recruited Eskimo workers when they negotiated short-term contracts that demanded an immediately available labor force. In June 1951, a construction company that landed a building contract 200 miles north of Kotzebue on the Chukchi Sea hired 158 Eskimos. By August fifty of them were working as carpenters, several more operated bulldozers and oiled machines, and seventeen of the company's eighteen truck drivers were Eskimo. In fact, with the exception of four white men, the entire crew was Eskimo.[45]

Certainly Alaskan Native people must have posed an especially difficult challenge as a result of their more extreme cultural isolation from mainstream America. At the same time, this should not be construed as evidence of their complete indifference toward work and cross-cultural explorations. Rather, it was indicative of Alaskan Natives' use of the Juneau relocation office according to their own agreed upon needs. In 1958, San Jose relocation field agent Marie Street wrote BIA Chief of Relocation Services Charles F. Miller to advise him that some Native Alaskans who

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[44] Monthly Reports, August-November 1951, box 1, folder: Reports-Narrative, Juneau, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.
[45] Monthly Reports, August-November 1951, box 1, folder: Reports-Narrative, Juneau, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

migrated through her office divulged that they relocated only to "see what the states look like," and that they "just plan to stay until fishing season."[46]

Indeed, Eskimo loyalty to fishing cycles came first. If and when that source of income and food failed them, however, many proved willing to consider alternatives. For example, in August 1953 a particularly unsuccessful fishing trip sent "countless" Eskimos into Gronroos's office in search of relief. Gronroos did his best, but had to confess that, overwhelmed, he simply could not meet all of their needs. Perhaps this played a role in his decision to quit the position at the end of the year. Still, much of his tenure had been a success. At times during his leadership, the Juneau relocation office ranked third behind only Anadarko and Gallup in total relocation departures. (Considering the substantial, more acculturated Indian populations in Oklahoma and New Mexico, this is a remarkable statistic.)[47]

In 1951, the Baxco Company in The Dalles, Oregon, just east of Portland along the Columbia River, hired forty Navajo people to help make railroad ties for the Union Pacific. The Union Pacific employment supervisor based in Denver, who was responsible for assembling the team of workers, assured Baxco foremen that Navajo labor was reliable and "no different than other nationalities." One of the Navajo men, Hugh Plummer, rose to the position of leader and interpreter among his fellow tribesmen. Plummer was therefore responsible for telling Portland area placement

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[46] Marie Street (San Jose Field Office) to Charles F. Miller (Chief, Branch of Relocation Services), 17 July 1958, box 102, folder: Counseling Relocatees, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949-1973, NARA Washington.

[47] August Placement Report, 1953, box 3, folder: Reports – Narrative, Juneau, 1954, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

officer George LaVatta that the Navajo men were unhappy with their meat rations, that they needed more meat because the work was so physically demanding. They also complained that they needed more bedding, as well as better toilet and bathing facilities. The disgruntled Navajo workers could have turned to the American Federation of Labor, with which they were in "good standing" according to union representative George Gray.

That proved unnecessary as Baxco responded to the Navajo workers needs. Moreover, the company promised the Navajo workers that there were opportunities to rise among the labor ranks, but they first needed to improve their English so they could understand orders. As a result the Navajo men expressed enthusiasm for night classes in English and math. Answering their call, two teachers at the nearby Dalles High School offered their services for night school instruction. The Navajo men also expressed interest in bringing their families to Oregon and putting their children in the local public school if they could earn a higher salary to support them. The running theme here it is that employment in The Dalles was a negotiated process over which the Navajo people made a series of demands and exerted a significant amount of influence.[48]

The BIA's official launching of the Voluntary Relocation Program on January 1st, 1952 did not necessarily render the recruitment process any easier. Less than a month into the program's full operation, the Chicago relocation office sent representatives into wintry Wisconsin's Menominee, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee

[48] George LaVatta (Portland Area Placement Officer) to Allan Harper (Area Director, Window Rock, Arizona), 29 October 1951, and Monthly Summary Report, October 1951, box 1, folder: Narrative Reports, Portland, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

reservations on a recruitment mission, but they found little interest among Indians who preferred to keep the steady jobs they had already landed in nearby Green Bay and Manitowoc. If any field representatives were tempted to ignore mandated discretionary procedures in order to meet their recruitment goals Acting Field Placement Officer Mary Nan Gamble was quick to remind them that they were not to enroll Indians who demonstrated a history of bad work habits. "If he fails to measure up on the above-listed points he should be refused early consideration for placement as a disciplinary action," she stipulated.[49]

That same month, Peter Walz, placement officer for the Red Lake agency in Minnesota, reported similar disappointment in his attempts to recruit local Ojibwe people for relocation. Living conditions on the reservation had temporarily improved as a result of quarterly payments that came in from land sales, therefore resulting in scant enthusiasm for urban migration. Moreover, Walz mentioned that Indians from his agency were finding sufficient employment opportunities in northern Minnesota.[50]

Salt Lake City Field Placement Officer Rudolph Russell expressed a similar acute frustration with the Navajo people who filtered through his office during summer 1952. He found positions for them on area railroad gangs, but complained, "These people come and go whenever they please. Their placement is not much of a problem; it's their failure to remain on jobs indefinitely that causes some difficulty." In his

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[49] January Narrative Report, 1952, Mary Nan Gamble (Acing Field Placement Officer) to Selene Gifford (Chief Relocation Officer), box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

[50] Mary Nan Gamble to Selene Gifford, 10 January 1952, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

observation, a language barrier created a lack of understanding, which resulted in many of the Navajo workers becoming discouraged and leaving the job. Russell also complained that drinking had been a real problem, and had resulted in the death of one Navajo worker—notorious for starting fights—from a blow to the head by a blunt instrument. This tragedy profoundly shook up the placement office and the Navajo work community. "All sorts of leeches emerge and take advantage of the Indians by selling them intoxicants," Russell lamented. Perhaps these disastrous events affected Russell personally. After all, he was himself a Navajo man.[51]

During a July 1956 meeting with Indian commissioner Glenn Emmons, Standing Rock tribal chairman Dan Howard explained that enrolled members of his tribe were hesitant to leave on relocation because the tribe was awaiting the verdict on a land settlement that would potentially grant enrolled members a $5000 rehabilitation loan, with one caveat: they had to reside within reservation limits. Therefore, not only were current residents wary about leaving, many of the 1700 tribal members living off-reservation could potentially return home to be eligible for their share of the tribal settlement. Assistant Indian affairs commissioner Thomas Reid, also present, agreed with Howard: "Commissioner, we have had it hit us square between the eyes… The minute they complete [vocational training courses] they go right back to the reservation;

[51] June 1952 Monthly Statistical Report Summary, box 2, folder: Reports – Narrative, Salt Lake City, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

they wont go and get a job because under this act we have, they say 'Heck I am going to sit there until we find out how this is going to work out.'"[52]

Just over a year after the relocation program's inauguration, the Portland, Oregon placement office was still struggling to meet with any success. Because the Portland office did not station placement officers on reservations within its district it depended on the formation of tribal employment committees to help raise interest in the program. This strategy initially proved ineffective, however, because various tribal councils wanted to make sure they completely understood what was at stake in relocation and how the process would unfold before partnering with the Portland office. The Lummi Nation employment committee, for example, insisted on a face-to-face meeting with BIA personnel to discuss the program's merit. Portland Area Placement Officer George LaVatta answered their call and traveled north to meet with the tribe in Bellingham, Washington, just outside of the Lummi reservation. Desperate to make a positive impression on the Lummi employment committee, LaVatta arrived with an entire team of representatives from the Washington State Employment Service, the State Vocational Department, the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union, and the Bellingham School District, among other groups, who worked together to convince Lummi leaders that they could trust the program. There is perhaps no more illustrative example of the degree to which relocation was a negotiated process, and not merely one of the BIA moving Indian people against their will. Indeed, in this inversion of the relocation

[52] Minutes from Standing Rock tribal leaders' meeting with Indian Affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons, 20 July 1956, Glenn Emmons Papers, box 3, folder 1, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

program, a prostrate BIA agent, hoping to succeed in mainstream America, was forced to travel at an Indian tribe's behest.[53]

In December 1951, relocation placement officer Kurt Fitzgerald met with the Grand Portage Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee to request their support for the new program. The tribal council expressed that while it was not entirely against the idea of permanent relocation, it also did not feel compelled to support the program. This was primarily because tribal council members feared that children born away from the reservation would lose tribal privileges. As a solution, the council passed a resolution that guaranteed tribal enrollment for any children born off-reservation. With this action, the Grand Portage tribal council reflected an important theme in Native people's evaluation of relocation as valid panacea to some of their problems. They did not consider urban life in isolation from reservation life. They did not consider urban migration a symbolic split with tribalism, nor did they consider it a legal split. Regardless of the Indian bureau's use of the term "permanent relocation," Minnesota Chippewa people refused to allow the reservation to disappear in the minds of those ambitious enough to leave it behind. And herein lies a problem with most scholarship on this topic. Too often those who discuss Indian urbanization fail to devote even a backwards glance to the rural Indian Country. But Native people consistently thought about the city and the reservation as two points on a circular continuum.[54]

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[53] February Placement Report, 1953, box 3, folder: Reports – Narrative, Portland, 1953, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

[54] Consolidated Chippewa Agency, Placement Narrative Report, December 1951, box 3, folder: Reports – Narrative, Minneapolis, 1952, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington. Interestingly, although the tribal council's resolution benefitted his efforts,

In their formative years, successive BIA commissioners during the Johnson and Nixon administrations Robert L. Bennett (Oneida) and Louis R. Bruce (Mohawk) both professed strong support for Indians who pursued success in mainstream American society. In 1955 Bennett argued "integration without loss of racial or cultural identity is a monumental task." Likewise, Bruce penned a guest editorial in 1953 championing young Indians who rejected patronage from the "great white father" while "proving their right to have a voice in their future as modern Americans." In the process, they captured the full extent of an impulse within Indian Country to benefit from exposure to off-reservation society, an impulse among Native people that stretched from specific reservation-based tribal governments all the way to the federal Department of Interior. Bennett and Bruce in problematic fashion, however, advertised these integrative ideologies just as the termination policy most forcefully threatened Indian country. Yet, that did not necessarily mean that Native urban migrants explicitly recognized off-reservation employment as an accomplice to termination. Bennett, who early in his career worked as a relocation placement officer for the Aberdeen area office, insisted that economic development and stability was essential for Native people in their efforts to protect their culture, and that a sound economic base that allowed an Indian family to choose between living either apart from or with their tribe was imperative. In sum,

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Fitzgerald explained that it would not be binding until the secretary of the interior approved it.

Bennett did not see urbanization and Indian cultural preservation as mutually exclusive concepts. Rather, he expressed the potential for one to benefit the other.[55]

Indeed, prospective Indian urban migrants' aspirations for city living often dovetailed with those of the Indian Bureau. This point is perhaps best captured in a Civil Service Commission relocation job announcement from 1951, which stated, "The objectives are to assist Indians to become self-supporting on a standard of living compatible with decency and health and to become a part of the normal social and economic life of the nation." But what should be apparent is that if Indians' ideas about urbanization at times agreed with those of federal bureaucrats that was not necessarily the result of an entire generation of Indians being duped by the system. Rather, it was in many cases a reflection of an enduring impulse in Indian Country to resist any limitations on how Native people could resolve either their collective or individual hardships, and to reject any restrictions on how and where Native people could belong in society at large.

In December 1952, closing the book on relocation's inaugural year, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dillon S. Myer went out to sell social and political powerbrokers on his burgeoning program's promise. During a speech he delivered in Phoenix to an audience of western state governors he emphasized an overpopulation and poverty crisis that was engulfing numerous Indian reservations. According to Myer, most Indian reservations had devolved into a despairing state of miasma marked by "broken homes, juvenile delinquency, bad health conditions, and general hopelessness."

[55] Guest Editorial by Louis Bruce Jr., *The Amerindian*, v.1, n.6 (July-August, 1953); Guest Editorial by Robert L. Bennett, *The Amerindian*, v.3, n.6 (July-August, 1955).

Myer proceeded to discuss the larger nation's gradual shift away from agricultural work as small family farms gradually diminished during previous decades. At present, he explained, only seventeen percent of America's population resided on farms. Moreover, Myer claimed that even if all Indian lands were developed to their fullest capacity there would still be a surplus of roughly half the Native population that would need to depend on outside resources for survival.[56]

Myer also appealed to the state governors' political power by candidly confessing how much he needed their help. Convincing Indians to leave their reservations, he explained, was a monumental task because Indians, at least in his imagination, lacked communication skills, rarely interacted with non-Indians, and feared the outside world. He also mentioned that Native people feared "relocation" because they associated that term with a legacy of pain rooted in nineteenth century forced removals. While Myer certainly exaggerated the former point he was perhaps onto something with the latter. For example, in 1960 Northern Cheyenne tribal president John Woodenlegs expressed reservations about relocation as a solution for his tribe's problems. He explained that the Cheyenne had already been "relocated" once before to Oklahoma, and it failed. Rather than push Indians away to distant metropolises, he wanted to improve his reservation's economic prospects, and specifically mentioned that a sanitation modernization project could provide one viable

[56] The Federal Government and the States in Indian Administration: An Address by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Dillon S. Myer before the Western Governors' Conference at Phoenix, Arizona, 9 December 1952, box 2, folder: 1950-1953, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Notes and Talks, Papers of Dillon S. Myer, Government Agencies File, 1950-1953—Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Memoranda and Reports, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

source of employment for his people. "Our land is everything to us, where we talk Cheyenne," he stressed.[57]

Taken together, Myer's points suggest that he was just as much concerned with relocation's potential for solving the federal government's Indian problem as he was with helping Native people achieve their own goals, based on their own ideas. (And to be sure, those two agendas should not be confused with one another.) Indeed, Myer's following statement is particularly revealing: "If we miss this opportunity to relocate and raise the standard of living of the surplus Indian population, it will mean a continued subsidy either by the Federal Government or the States indefinitely for the social and welfare services that will be necessary for these overpopulated and poverty-stricken areas." Mention of state subsidies certainly must have perked up the ears of a room full of governors.

Ironically, the Indian bureau's attempt to brand Indians as a people who thought only of their immediate needs perhaps more accurately characterized its own governing ideology during this period. When Commissioner Myer considered Indians' role in negotiations over relocation he only imagined that they would demonstrate a childlike fear of the entire enterprise. That assumption was patently false. If and when Indians proved difficult to recruit for relocation it was much more a reflection of the fact that many among them had already fashioned their own employment networks and were

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[57] Travel Notebook Five, entry: 2 May 1960, box 1, RG1, Theodore Hetzel Papers, CSWS, Fort Lewis College. Woodenlegs is referring to the "Cheyenne Exodus" from Indian Territory to their Northern Plains homelands during 1877-1879. On this topic see John H. Monnet, *Tell Them We Are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), and Peter J. Powell, *Sweet Medicine (Volume I): The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, the Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969).

busy entertaining their own ideas about how they could fit urban employment into their plans. This is not to suggest that they did not appreciate the opportunity extended to them, or recognize that relocation *did* offer one strategy for survival in an ever-changing world. (Indeed, the next chapter will focus on thousands of Indians' enthusiastic embrace of the program.) But they wanted relocation to work on their own terms. And to a large degree that meant making sure that tribal lands and tribal culture would be protected in the process. While Indian ideas about relocation often converged with those of federal bureaucrats, they certainly diverged on this point. As former Denver and Chicago relocation field office director Stanley Lyman put it in 1972, "Actually, an individual who was going on relocation did not think of it as national policy. He saw it as a means of satisfying his own needs."[58]

[58] Interview with Stanley Lyman, 1972, box 17, folder 41, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Chapter Four—"Relocating is Not Easy": Indian Initiative In Urban America

"And so away he goes, hurrying, searching. But searching for what?"

- Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1964)[1]

"We must make him feel just a little bit special. We must cushion the impact of a strange new city upon him… We must prepare him to solve his own problems within the community just as anyone else does."

- Denver Field Relocation Office Operating Manual[2]

On May 6, 1958, a tall bespectacled man sat in rural Wisconsin's Stockbridge-Munsee Indian agency office and filled out an application for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Adult Vocational Training Program, a relatively recent supplement to the BIA's larger Voluntary Relocation Program. Reaching the end of his application, he had one final clause to consider: "I further understand that the money is to be made available to me only on the express condition that I faithfully discharge my obligation to carry out to the best of my ability the vocational training for which I am accepted." Given his prior experiences, he probably did not hesitate to sign his name underneath: "Myron E. Miller Jr."[3]

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[1] Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon Publishers Inc, 1964), 12.

[2] "Denver Field Relocation Office, 201 Old Custom House, Denver, CO: Office Policy and Procedure," box 14, folder 19, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

[3] Pursuant to Public Law 959, enacted in 1956, the BIA introduced the Adult Vocational Training Program in 1957. Open to Native people between the ages of 18-35, the program filtered prospective urban relocatees through a vocational training program before releasing them to workforces in various urban destinations. By 1969, there were 125 occupational training schools in operation in 26 states. Most of them were in urban areas and demanded that Indians leave the reservation for training. See Keith L. Fay, *Developing Indian Employment Opportunities,* study commissioned by the U.S. Department of the Interior (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1976), 38.

Myron Miller had initially hoped for an on-the-job training opportunity, but settled for an Adult Vocational Training course in nearby Wasau, Wisconsin. Where he would end up from there was still a mystery, but he could in fact point to a vast array of off-reservation experiences prior to enrollment in the program. Born in 1934, Miller grew up in Bowler, Wisconsin, where he lettered in basketball and baseball at the local high school. Upon graduation in May 1952, he joined the United States Air Force and served four years as Staff Sergeant in the Strategic Air Command branch, where he split time between various bases in the U.S. and England. Immediately upon his honorable discharge he enrolled in a special electronics course at Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. Upon completion, rather than return home to his Stockbridge-Munsee reservation, he instead elected to join the UAW-CIO Local 348 union in Milwaukee where he worked for Allen & Bradley Co. as a machine operator and maker of electronic resistors and control boxes.

Therefore, when the BIA accepted Miller's application enrolled him in an electronics program, it proved less an innovation in his life trajectory and more a *continuation* of a pattern he had already established through his own independent efforts. The only real innovation stemmed from the BIA's decision to subsidize Miller's efforts. At the Wausau Adult & Vocational Training School Miller took courses in electronic drafting, math, psychology of human relations, A.M. radio, American institutions, and economics. He earned all A's and B's while his new bride excelled in her nursing courses. In support of Miller's training, the Indian bureau awarded him hundreds of dollars for subsistence, tuition, supplies, and required books, including

Math Essential to Electricity & Radio, *American Politics*, *Political Science*, and a *Basic TV Lab Manual*.

The program paid off. In May 1960, the Remington Rand Univac Company offered Miller a position paying $364 per month—in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Despite the distance, he did not balk at the opportunity. At 5:30pm on June 9, 1950, Miller, along with his wife and newborn daughter, climbed into their 1956 Tudor Ford and set a course toward the birthplace of American independence.[4]

Myron E. Miller Jr. was not naïve, uninitiated, inexperienced, helpless, desperate, nor dim when he submitted his application for BIA support. The Adult Vocational Training program did not reduce him to a victim—quite the opposite, to be sure. Miller alone controlled his destiny, within which the Adult Vocational Training Program was simply another opportunity that he exploited in a life marked by socio-spatial mobility and a tenacious desire to get ahead.

Miller also was not exceptional. In fact, he was quite representative of a generation of enterprising young Native people who embraced spatial mobility as a means toward survival in America's new postwar landscape. When the Bureau of Indian Affairs offered a potential way out of the socio-economic quagmire it proved instrumental in creating, thousands of Native people accepted it, while adding new layers to their already dynamic identity and capacity. Moreover, in addition to adding layers to their complex cultural selves, Native people who practiced socio-spatial

[4] Employment Assistance Case File, folder: Myron E. Miller, Jr., RG75, Minneapolis Area Office, Employment Assistance Case Files—Selected Files from Boxes 390, 393, 398 (All Subjects Are Deceased), NARA Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.

mobility during the twentieth century also *recovered* a traditional socio-cultural practice that had diminished, if not completely died, as a consequence of colonialism. Of course, few sweeping generalizations apply to Native people across space and time. But perhaps one enduring assertion that holds up under deep analytical scrutiny is that Native people were not traditionally provincial. Rather, they had traditionally embraced cosmopolitanism. Throughout their histories, Indian tribes were comprised of people not only in the world, but also of the world.

Standard scholarship on this topic has typically packaged relocation as part of a larger, reawakened assault on tribalism at the hands of the federal government and Bureau of Indian Affairs. To be sure, relocation program architects *did* promote relocation as a panacea for what it deemed overcrowded, resource-deficient, prison-like reservations—an interpretation that Native people at times corroborated, as previous chapters have demonstrated—that sapped Indian people of their capacity for exercising American citizenship and contributing to the nation's economic bottom line.[5]

Moreover, as historian Wendy Wall has convincingly argued, during the immediate aftermath of World War II and the onset of competing Cold War ideologies, America generally privileged socio-cultural consensus while warning away socio-cultural pluralism as a threat to unity.[6] Indians, in no uncertain terms, were impacted by this historical phenomenon. More specifically, as historian Paul Rosier explicated,

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[5] See for example Larry W. Burt, *Tribalism in Crisis: Federal Indian Policy, 1953-1961* (Albuquerque, 1982); Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, 1986); and Kenneth R. Philp, "Stride toward Freedom: The Relocation of Indians to Cities, 1952-1960," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 16 (1985): 175-190.

[6] Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

numerous federal officials worried that the Indian tribes persisting in their backyards were miniature bastions of communism, or at the very least blatant contradictions within an American capitalist democracy that emphasized individual enterprise.[7]

Perhaps the problem with much of the foundational scholarship on relocation, however, is that it evaluates the program with not only the benefit of hindsight, but also according to a legacy of pain and bewilderment that many Native people emphasized when sharing their experiences with yet another myopic federal program. Scholarship too often and too comfortably conforms by reducing the relocation program to a monumental sham, within which Indians toiled due to a lack of facility for urban living, scheming BIA agents, or some combination thereof. Such an interpretation inadvertently (or perhaps intentionally?) lends legitimacy to the era's angry urban "Red Power" advocates who readily accused their parents of buying into the white man's ways while playing the role of "Uncle Tomahawk."[8] But if we zoom in on the relocation program's inauguration, and appraise it from an unemployed Native person's perspective, we perhaps see a bit less victimization and a bit more agency than prior scholarship has acknowledged. Relocation for many participants was liberating, and much more complicated than a mere process of transforming rural poverty into urban poverty.

This chapter seeks to build on studies by Donald Fixico, James LaGrand, and Nicholas Rosenthal by even more explicitly elucidating how "going on relocation"

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[7] Paul C. Rosier, "'They are ancestral homelands': Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America," *Journal of American History* 92 (2006): 1300-1326.
[8] On the young generation of "Red Power" advocates that gained influence during the 1960s see Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

looked, felt, and unfolded for the average Indian urban migrant.[9] Additionally, rather than privilege statistical analyses or rigid theoretical frameworks that in spite of their value fail to humanize the relocation experience, this chapter instead seeks to position Indian agency at the center of the relocation process.[10] Within that, rather than suggest that urbanization and wider participation in mainstream American culture stripped Native people of an essential layer of their cultural being, I argue that off-reservation experiences, even those resulting in catastrophe, *added* a dimension to what it meant and could mean to be "Indian" in postwar America.

More simply stated, this chapter's overarching goal is to achieve a more nuanced understanding of Indian urban relocation that focuses less on the program, about which we already know a great deal, and more on the people, about whom we know very little. Bureau of Indian Affairs employment assistance case files that heretofore have not made their way into studies on this topic help meet this objective. Individual case files allow greater access into and a more comprehensive understanding of what Native people found at stake in going on relocation. This chapter also draws heavily upon the handwritten letters that Native people sent to relocation officers in hopes that the program could lift them from dire socio-economic circumstances. The value of such an approach has perhaps been best demonstrated by historian Brenda

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[9] Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); James B. LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
[10] For excellent volumes containing useful statistical data on Indian urban relocation see Elaine M. Neils, *Reservation to City: Indian Migration and Federal Relocation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1971) and Alan L. Sorkin, *The Urban American Indian* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1978).

Child, whose *Boarding School Seasons* employs handwritten letters by Native parents and children to devise a more nuanced understanding of a comparably complicated and maligned program devised by Indian service experts as a means toward producing Indian uplift and assimilation.[11] The picture that individual case files and handwritten letters produce is one of prevailing Indian initiative—fueled by Indians' own aspirations for their future—that resulted in a program that took on a life of its own, regardless of its temporal relationship to the Indian bureau's disastrous attempt to terminate tribal sovereignty and erode Indian cultural distinctiveness.

In 1950, the BIA launched a pilot relocation placement program at its Aberdeen, South Dakota and Muskogee, Oklahoma area agencies. On New Year' Day 1952, satisfied with pilot program results, the bureau officially inaugurated its national relocation program by opening field relocation offices in Chicago, Salt Lake City, Denver, San Francisco, and San Jose. In 1957, the BIA expanded the program to include an "Adult Vocational Training" counterpart that filtered Indian migrants through urban vocational training programs before releasing them to the general metropolitan workforce. That same year, the Branch of Relocation Services total personnel increased from 90 to 240, while the number of reservation agency relocation offices increased from 14 to 41. Demonstrating the program's protean range of destinations, in 1958 six total field relocation offices expanded to twelve, with new offices in Oakland, Joliet, Waukegan, Dallas, Cincinnati, and Cleveland. The Joliet,

[11] Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

Waukegan, and Cincinnati offices all failed to gain much traction, however, and all closed within a few years.[12]

Indeed, the BIA at times proved unpredictable as it constantly contracted and expanded area relocation offices in alternating fashion, thus rendering a negotiated process even more inconsistent. Not unlike individual Native people who went on relocation, however, this was a reflection of the BIA's continuous effort to chase the best possible destinations based on local employment and housing prospects. For example, the Minneapolis Area Relocation office closed in July 1954. Yet, daily requests for relocation assistance persisted from Indians who came to the Twin Cities without benefit of bureau support. The BIA simply referred them to the U.S. Employment Service until area director E. Morgan Pryce insisted on the Minneapolis office's reopening. During May 1955, the pending arrival of warm weather resulted in many Indians withdrawing their applications altogether or asking that they be put on hold until fall. This reflected a decrease in unemployment rates typical of Minnesota during the summer. By that point the BIA was considering reopening the Minneapolis office, but it now worried that it lacked a sufficient number of prospective migrants to make use of potential funds. At the end of the month, however, applications inexplicably began pouring in—more in fact than the BIA could process or fund. "From the backlog of inquiries, we may assume that Indians of this jurisdiction have developed a great interest in this program," the Cass Lake, Minnesota reservation superintendent

[12] "Summary of History—Nationwide," Report on Branch of Relocation Services, 18 October 1957, box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; LaVerne Madigan, *The American Indian Relocation Program* (Association on American Indian Affairs, New York, 1965).

stated. Finally caught up and prepared to meet Indians' needs, the BIA reopened the Minneapolis office in October 1955.[13]

The avowed objectives of the relocation program were to assist Native people "to become self-supporting on a standard of living conducive to economic security and to become a part of the economic and social life of the nation." Pointing to a specific example illustrative of how the relocation process unfolded, program officers in Gallup, New Mexico interviewed Navajo people interested in relocation, and helped them decide on a destination based on both their individual work experience and the currently available work opportunities in prospective cities. Once awarded relocation support, the Navajo individual or family in question had to take a physical exam and produce necessary documents, such as birth certificates, social security cards, military service discharge papers, and marriage certificates. From there a departure date would be established and individuals or families would prepare to leave. On the Navajo reservation in particular, because transportation networks were so lacking, Gallup relocation office personnel would typically collect a departing family from their home and drive them to the bus or train station. Prior to leaving, the relocation officer would also provide an individual or family with a small amount of cash to eat en route to the city, and to rent a hotel room upon their arrival.[14]

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[13] Narrative Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1955 (MPLS Area Office), box 13, folder: Narrative and Statistical Records, 1955-1958 and Monthly Narrative Reports (May-June 1955), box 13, folder: Superintendent's Narrative Reports, 1955, RG75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793 – 1999, Consolidated Chippewa Agency, Cass Lake, Minnesota, Annual Reports 1942-1946, NARA's Central Plains Region, Kansas City, MO.

[14] Assisted Navajo Relocation, 1952-1956, prepared by Gallup Area Relocation Specialist Robert M. Cullum for Gallup Area Relocation Director W. Wade Head

To recruit Native people for its new relocation program, BIA representatives began hosting informational sessions and hanging bright posters featuring homes furnished with radios, televisions, and refrigerators around various reservation offices. "They are available to families now! See your Relocation Officer," one poster enthused.[15] An Indian Bureau presentation to the Navajo boasted that Indians in Chicago "live like kings and have apartments with sewerage."[16] Especially absurd, the cover illustration for a Billings Area Office relocation services pamphlet depicted the arm of "DESPAIR" pushing down on an Indian man wrapped in a blanket with the words "Hunger & Cold" scrawled across it. "Stuck in Your Tepee?" the caption asked, "A Way Out Through Relocation Services for Heap-a-lot of living."[17] Such promotional materials only failed to mention that jobs were not guaranteed, housing was often substandard, BIA services might not be available, and weekly stipends frequently proved insufficient.

It is difficult to overstate the particularly patronizing and paternalistic tone of a 21-page informational booklet that the BIA designed for Native people interested in the relocation program. Indeed, the booklet suggests that BIA personnel still thought of its Indian charges as children, even after a substantial number of them had fought and worked valiantly on behalf of America's successful World War II effort. The booklet's

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(October 1957), box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

[15] Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection, box 2, folders 24 and 26, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

[16] "Navaho Program Newsletter," 1 May 1953, AAIA Records.

[17] BIA Billings Area Office Relocation Information Pamphlet, box 17, folder "Reports, 1951," 8NS-075-97-270 BIA Billings Area Office "Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960," National Archives and Records Administration Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado (NARA-RMR).

central protagonist appears as a rather odd amalgamation of Warner Brothers' then popular "Porky Pig" cartoon character and a Mohawk brave, who leads readers through a series of replies to hypothetical questions about the program. "Maybe you have found that around here you can only work a few months each year, and that during the other months, there is no work," the booklet opened. "That is the reason why Field Relocation Offices were started in the larger cities—because there are jobs there all year round."

After discussing the application process, and the types of questions prospective relocates should be prepared to answer, the booklet arrives at a page with the cartoon brave in a medical examination room having his blood pressure read. "This too is done only to protect you," the booklet assured. "When you get to your new location, you must be physically able to work." It further explained that, "Your wife must be able to take care of the family, so she, too, must have a physical examination." The next page featured the now clearly confused brave with dilated pupils and a thought-bubble containing three question marks hovering above his head as he browsed a rash of needed documents: social security card; marriage certificate; military discharge papers; and birth certificate.

Having successfully surpassed the application and preparation stage, the cartoon brave, now donning pressed slacks and necktie, boards a train and waves goodbye. Relocating families were allowed to ship up to 1000 pounds of personal belongings, which a relocation officer would be willing to help them select for the voyage. Depending on arrival time, families were to go straight to a preselected hotel, or to the destination's relocation office, where they received instructions on local bus routes and

tips on how to hail a taxicab. Either way, the booklet promised, "There is one thing of which you can be sure—you will find a friendly welcome."

Settled into his new surroundings, the cartoon brave—now donning overalls and workboots, and inexplicably much more muscular than before, but still with a feather darting upward from his mohawk—heads to work, firmly gripping his lunchpail. The booklet promised a rewarding job, but confessed that the market was competitive: "It may take several tries before you get a job. Remember, there are always several people after jobs, so you have to look your best and **really try** to get a job. If you are not hired, go back to the office and try again—and REMEMBER—NO ONE HAS YET FAILED TO GET A JOB—AND **YOU** WILL GET ONE."[18]

Of course the booklet warned prospective relocatees that they would need to be thrifty in order to survive in the city. Now the cartoon brave appears with his pants pockets turned inside-out, hands outstretched, shoulders shrugging, and a new thought-bubble above his head containing the following symbols: "$$??!" His muscles have noticeably atrophied, and he now wields a distended belly. The message should have been clear: cling to your cash in the city!

Perhaps the final cartoon frame most poignantly and succinctly captured the BIA's comprehensive vision for how relocation should unfold, and that to which the entire process could amount. The relocated brave now faced a stairway, with each step containing the following inscriptions from the bottom up: low income; seasonal jobs; desire for change; sincerity; careful planning; good work habits; educational opportunities; better jobs; better housing. Reaching the top step depended on the

[18] Bold and capitalized text are true to the original document.

cartoon brave's own agency: He stares at the stairway, stroking his chin, contemplating that first step, with that incessantly confused thought-bubble still hovering above his head: "??!!" We can never know if he made it to the top step, but the booklet concluded with a disconcertingly mixed message: "**ONE FINAL WORD, RELOCATING IS NOT EASY**. Relocation Services can help only those who help themselves! We wish you **GOOD LUCK** and we hope you like your **NEW HOME**."[19]

In related fashion, the St. Louis relocation field office disseminated to prospective relocatees a panoramic brochure that boasted the myriad modern attractions waiting in the "Gateway to the West," through which famed explorers Lewis and Clark once passed in search of a wider America. Included within the brochure were photos of massive suburban shopping centers, "pretty girls" dancing at the Muny Opera, sun bears swimming at the zoo, a chimpanzee jazz band performing at Forest Park, the colorful Missouri Botanical Gardens, and Stan "the Man" Musial swinging for the fences at Busch Stadium. Taken together, the photos portrayed urban modernity and its concomitant cultural curiosities par excellence.[20]

The St. Louis brochure, in particular, likely succeeded in simultaneously intimidating and attracting Indian browsers. Indeed, as historian Coll Thrush discusses in his study of Indigenous people in Georgian London, Western people's overt display of modern metropolitan splendor and spectacle is an age-old colonization strategy

[19] "Information About Relocation Services," Box 27, folder 13, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
[20] St. Louis City Attractions Brochure, box 3, folder 36: St. Louis Field Office, Education, Entertainment, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

intended to overwhelm supposedly "primitive rubes" into submission.[21] Yet, although a significant number of Native people did experience profound culture shock upon arriving in the city, which could result in terrible tragedy (as the next chapter will discuss), previous chapters have hopefully suggested that the BIA exaggerated the amount of paternal hand-holding that many migrating Indians would need when they solicited and accepted relocation assistance.

Relocation officers did not limit their recruitment venues to those of reservation agencies. Boarding schools, as they had since the turn of the century, continued to function as a sort of rotary that spun Native graduates outward toward unpredictable, but typically urban, destinations. For example, Brigham City Utah's Intermountain Indian School, the largest BIA-operated off-reservation school during the 1950s, provides an illustrative example of this process. Between the school's first graduating class in 1953 and winter of 1957, a total of 714 graduates had achieved placement in urban employment positions, with an estimated 200 more set to graduate at the end of Spring Semester 1958. The graduates mostly emerged from a special program designed for Navajo students, in which they typically learned one trade, alongside the English language.

The school in fact claimed its own relocation officer in Jack Womeldorf. In an example of Womeldorf's efforts on behalf of graduating students, during December 1957 he wrote field agent Rudolph Russell at the BIA's new relocation office in distant Joliet, Illinois to see if Russell could find work in and around Chicagoland for 57 Navajo boys. To support his inquiry, Womeldorf prepared a brief statistical overview

[21] Coll Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and Isuma in Inuit London," *Journal of British Studies* (winter 2013).

and photo album of each of the boys in question. The album included snapshots of Navajo students working on cars, operating machinery in a metal shop, and studying an anatomical map of a dairy cow, thereby suggesting their preparedness for vocational labor positions.[22]

As part of a newspaper story that interviewed Intermountain students on why they elected to attend a school so far from their Navajo homes John B. Helen claimed, "When I saw boys and girls come back from school in the spring they looked so nice." Joe R. Lee insisted, "No one told me to go, I decided myself to go this fall." Finally, Ruth Denetclaw elaborated:

> I didn't know why I left the reservation until I came to Intermountain. Now I know why I left the reservation. It is because I wanted to have an education. I left the reservation so my kids will not have the same kind of life that I have had. Now our people are having a hard time and there are not many jobs on the reservation for all the Navajo people. They just don't have much food to feed their children, and there are not much water or grass for the animals. I want my life to be better than this.[23]

In addition to young Indian students, a corpus of evidence suggests that relocation officials often directed many of their recruitment efforts and recommendations for adjusting to the city to Indian mothers and wives. This was arguably an extension of 1950s Cold War motherhood, in which American women were supposed to create a tranquil home atmosphere where hardworking husbands could rest

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[22] Jack Womeldorf (Intermountain School Relocation Officer) to Rudolph Russell (field relocation officer, Joliet, IL office), 3 December 1957, box 1, folder 6: Intermountain School, 1957, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, Ayer Modern Manuscript Collections, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

[23] "Why We Left Our Reservation Homes," newspaper clipping from unidentified source (responses range from years 1956-1960), box 5, folder 14, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

their feet and release their worries after an exhausting shift.[24] For example, a counseling manual designed for relocation officers in Chicago suggested, "After decision has been made by the family to relocate, the wife should be discouraged from starting new allegiances or community ties such as acceptance of a job, membership on a committee or ay other activities which would strengthen her desire to stay in the community." Relocation program architects expected women to serve as both household supervisors and as model representatives of the program's most ambitious goals. Relocation officers advised Native women to manage the family budget, nurture friendships with neighbors, and stimulate their children's "interest in the adventure of new experiences." Moreover, they needed to aspire to an immaculate household. Relocation officers emphasized the value of a tidy abode, as it "relates to community recognition of the family and its influence in the family's acceptance in the new community."[25]

Program representatives not only expected Native women to facilitate good relations with fellow community members and with their children's school, they also expected Native women to protect the family from the city's unsavory characters. For example, the Chicago relocation manual encouraged field representatives to inculcate a certain degree of suspicion and vigilance within Native women: "DO watch for pickpockets"; "DO carry proper identification"; "Don't sign any papers without the advice of someone who is a reputable person in the community, such as ministers,

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[24] On the role of wives in Cold War American marriages, see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (Basic Books, 1992) and Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

[25] "Suggestions for Counseling Prospective Relocation Applicants" 12 March 1952, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

employment advisors, etc." At times, such warnings must have made an impression. Mrs. Atone, a Kiowa woman who worked for a Texas A&M program that dispatched home visitors to teach urban Indian women about nutrition, hygiene, and other housekeeping skills, recalled an experience with a Navajo housewife living in Dallas, Texas: "She told me that if I had not been an Indian she would not have let me in… People feel that you will understand them if you are Indian."[26]

At the same time, the BIA tried to entice women with the promise that they would personally benefit from escaping what it perceived as the drudgery of reservation life. "The wife (homemaker) benefits from the added comforts and conveniences in the urban area where better housing with modern utilities is available," a BIA relocation manual from 1960 suggested. The same manual encouraged relocation officers to convince Indian women that modern appliances and hot running water available in cities would significantly reduce their daily workload.[27]

Because relocation officers often made unannounced visits to check up on migrated families Native women had to constantly be on their toes—keeping their homes clean and their children behaved. When relocation officers dropped in on the Carson family's Cincinnati abode they found Mrs. Carson and her three children at home; Mr. Carson was downtown cashing his salary check. Mrs. Carson could rest easy: her house appeared clean, and the sparkling new furniture and television

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[26] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 9.

[27] "Manual Supercessions and Additions, 1960," box 1, folder 11, Bureau of Indian Affairs Records, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

occupying the family room must have delighted the visiting team of agents. Indeed, Mr. Carson did not allow a disabled arm to prevent him from earning $125 on 44 hours of work per week at the Heekin Can Company. The family managed its finances to the relocation office's satisfaction, putting away ten dollars every payday. Mrs. Carson had also managed to save $100 of her own money. The visiting BIA personnel were so impressed by the family that they took six pictures of them with plans to promote the Carsons as a model for success. That "success," however, came at a cost that the visiting BIA agents might not have fully appreciated. One bureau representative noticed that the three children all spoke English. Indeed, Mrs. Carson explained, they could no longer speak their native Navajo.[28]

The Cincinnati relocation office's visit with the Whitehorse family failed to deliver a similar model of success. In fact, the Whitehorse family was barely getting by. Mrs. Whitehorse was working tenaciously to finish a nursing course by the end of the year so that she could supplement the family's income. This proved an especially vital concern because Mr. Whitehorse had recently been hospitalized. When healthy, Mr. Whitehorse worked as an x-ray technician at Christ Hospital. The Whitehorses occupied a nice home across from Xavier University, but they struggled to pay a high rent rate that gradually drained their finances. Still, Mrs. Whitehorse refused to move because "the less the rent, the poorer the neighborhood and environment, and she would not want to subject her children to a poor environment." If it became necessary, she promised to "sacrifice other items" in order to remain. The next day the Cincinnati

[28] Home Visit Report, Carson Family, Cincinnati, Ohio, 21 April 1961, box 102, folder: Community Living Home Visits, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949 – 1973, NARA Washington. This family's name has been changed to protect their privacy.

relocation team visited Mr. Whitehorse in the hospital, at which point he mentioned that he was having trouble with a collection agency that was garnishing his wages for an unpaid furniture bill that he co-signed for a fellow relocatee who had split for the army.[29]

BIA representatives did their best to overwhelm Native people with overtures about relocation's promise, but Indians exercised their own motives for pursuing opportunities in cities. At times those motives overlapped with the relocation program's stated goals. At other times they reflected the subjective desires and circumstances of individual Indians, whose life experiences may or may not have prepared them for urban living. Some Indian urban migrants built on their parents' brand of Indian racial uplift, facilitated by socio-spatial mobility and a desire to prove that Indians could belong in modern metropolitan America. Others responded to more concrete circumstances at home and sought to transcend reservation limits as an escape from an inimical situation. In still other cases, such pull and push factors could merge into one powerful motive for seeking a better future elsewhere. Underneath this, it is also important not to overlook the catastrophic impact of continued tribal land divestiture, which formed an especially acute push factor. Between 1953-1957, the Department of

[29] Home Visit Report, Whitehorse Family, Cincinnati, Ohio, 21 April 1961, box 102, folder: Community Living Home Visits, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949 – 1973, NARA Washington. This family's name has been changed to protect their privacy.

Interior opened 1,790,650 acres of Indian land to individual tract ownership and fee-simple titles, thus making it susceptible to taxation and vulnerable to dispossession.[30]

Perhaps most indicative of Indian attitudes toward relocation and what Native people felt was at stake in seeking opportunities away from home are handwritten letters that several Indians sent directly to their respective relocation officers in request of assistance. "I have been unable to find any type of steady employment in Ponca City and must depend on odd jobs for a livlihood [sic]," wrote Arnold Conrad (Ponca). Admitting that he was blind in one eye, he claimed, "I am otherwise in good health and able to do most any type of manual labor." Conrad had been working as a day laborer unloading crate cars and furniture vans. "I am 29 years old, single, and can take work in any locality," he insisted.[31] Hannah Dodson's (Ponca) letter made sure to specify exactly where she wanted to go: "We are just willing to go to Los Angeles Calif. Where it is warmer we don't have enough clothes for Colorado [sic]. Please help us and get us out of Oklahoma. We both have nothing."[32] Fred Henderson (Pawnee) wrote, "We are wanting to go on relocation work but not at Colorado but to St. Louis Missouri if we

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[30] *A Program for Indian Citizens: a Summary Report*, prepared by the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian (page 16), box 1, folder 4, Tom Greenwood Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago. Authors of this piece included W.W. Keeler (Cherokee Nation Principal Chief), Karl Llewellyn (law professor at the University of Chicago), Arthur M. Schlesinger (professor emeritus, Harvard), Charles Sprague (editor and publisher of *The Oregon Statesman*), and Meredith Wilson (president of the University of Minnesota).

[31] Letter to Charles Penoi, Concho Area Field Office, 18 March 1957, RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, 1952-1956, box 1, NARA-SB. "Arnold Conrad" is not the real name of this correspondent. I have elected to change this person's name and omit the folder number in an effort to protect their identity. This is true for all personal correspondence materials I used from RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, NARA-SB.

[32] Letter to Charles Penoi, 7 October 1957, RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, box 1, NARA-SB.

can get the kind of work we want."[33] George Wolf hoped relocation would provide a path toward higher education upon his release from the army. He was specifically interested in a career as a mechanic or ranch manager. "Will you please send me all the information you have about the educational benefits for Indian students under the relocation program?" he wrote his area officer.[34] Edgar Hillman (Ponca), a disabled veteran with a child on the way, specifically wanted to go to Denver, Oklahoma City, or Omaha. "I can learn any kind of work," he insisted.[35] Finally, Catherine Cloud (Assiniboine) told her relocation officer that she wanted to leave the reservation because "she didn't care to haul water anymore or build fires in this cold weather." Furthermore, Cloud was "used to the facilities they have in the cities and likes that way of living."[36]

Single mother, Mrs. Baker, brought her three children with her on relocation from the Mesquakie settlement in Tama, Iowa to Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood in 1953. She specifically lobbied for relocation to Chicago because it was the nearest major relocation center to her tribal home and she had heard that it featured the best employment prospects. Sure enough, Mrs. Baker found employment in a bakery, and in time advanced to the position of supervisor. When asked to give advice to other Native people considering relocation, she offered, "They should make up their minds to stick to

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[33] Letter to Charles Penoi, 15 November 1957, RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, box 1, NARA-SB.
[34] George Wolf to Relocation Services, 6 March 1959, box 25, folder "Relocation Correspondence, FY 1957-1959," 8NS-075-97-270 Billings Office "Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960," NARA-RMR.
[35] Letter to relocation officer, 10 September 1955, RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, box 1, NARA-SB.
[36] "Relocation Information Record," 1958, box 1, RG 75, Billings Office, Mixed Vocational and Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA-RMR. I have elected to omit the folder number for this source in an effort to protect the subject's identity.

their jobs, be dependable, and give themselves a chance before giving up," and that they should practice "the ability to get along with all kinds of people."[37]

Not only did Native people play an active role in requesting relocation assistance, many disappointed relocatees took every opportunity to criticize the program. Charles Willing (Umpqua) moved from Oregon to Los Angeles where a relocation officer promised him two years of schooling. When that promise fell through, Willing wrote the Indian Bureau to complain that the devious relocation officer was "harder to hold than a greased pig."[38] A second Native man from Oregon insisted that the relocation office misled him about the amount of job training he would receive: "Now I am 'high and dry' in Denver with a sick youngster and my savings gone. It is a crime the way these people operate and always have operated."[39] Indians from Oklahoma who struggled to find work in Dallas vociferously criticized their field office's lack of support. Roughly 200 of them organized the "Intertribal Club" in a West Dallas housing project to help each other cope with unemployment and alcoholism.[40]

In an attempt to repair their lives, some applicants embraced relocation as a unique opportunity to escape problems that haunted them at home. A disabled Kiowa veteran wanted to go on relocation to beat alcoholism, earn a steady paycheck, and hopefully get his five children out of foster care. Having already attempted relocation twice before, he confessed, "Things did not work out for me so well at that time due to

[37] Wade B. Arends, *A Socio-Cultural Study of the Relocation of American Indians to Chicago* (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1958), 49-51.
[38] Charles Willing to AAIA, 28 October 1956, AAIA Records.
[39] Albert Allard Jr. to Denver Indian Office, date unknown, AAIA Records.
[40] Willie C. Jones to Angie Debo, 25 September 1959, AAIA Records.

my own fault. The relocation office in Oakland did everything possible to help me. I realize now that I must be man enough to carry out and do the things that are right."[41]

Similarly, in 1959 Lewis Carter, an Assiniboine member of Montana's Fort Peck tribe, sent a handwritten letter to Chicago relocation director Mrs. King with a few questions about the program she administered. A Korean War veteran, Carter pursued a series of temporary jobs all the way to the State of Indiana, but struggled to land anything permanent due to a lack of education and experience. He tried to enroll in the relocation program at his reservation office in Montana, but failed to meet a six-month steady residence requirement. He did not qualify because he had no home there to speak of. Indeed, it seems Mr. Carter carried with him a troubled past. "Mrs. King, I'm a veteran of the Korean War, however, I'm not proud of my record," he confessed in his letter. Following an "Undesirable Discharge," Carter took work in California and Idaho—"…any type of Labor work I could find"—before arriving in the faraway Hoosier State. He begged Mrs. King to help him, while pleading that he is a "family man" who lacked a means of support on his home reservation.[42]

In one final example, applying for relocation in 1963, a Ponca man named Nathaniel Johnson explained, "Although I and my wife went on it in 1956, which we eventually came home, but I realize now the mistake I done since then, which now, I want very much to better myself." Johnson then proceeded to confess that he had served time in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester. One can argue that, knowing his

[41] Letter to relocation officer, 22 February 1961, RG 75, E.216 Employment Assistance Case Files, box 2, NARA-SB.
[42] Lewis Carter to Mrs. King, 15 February 1959, RG 75, box 25, folder: Relocation Correspondence, FY 1957-1959, Billings Area Office Papers, NARA-Rocky Mountain, Denver, Colorado. "Lewis Carter" is not this person's real name. I have elected to change his name in order to protect his privacy.

criminal past would weigh negatively in the minds of relocation officials charged with deciding his fate, Johnson had an incentive to be especially apologetic and obsequious. Read from a different direction, however, there is perhaps no stronger evidence that relocation was often so much more than a dead end that ground urban hopefuls down to a victimized pulp. For Nathaniel Johnson, a second chance at relocation would be his salvation, or so he believed when he penned his application's personal statement.[43]

Either unaware of potential program flaws, desperate enough to confront them head on, or confident enough in their ability to overcome them, thousands of Indians applied for relocation while countless others self-relocated without benefit of Indian Bureau support. Many Indians demonstrated profound enthusiasm for the program and some, like Chicago migrant Ben Bearskin (Ho-Chunk), suggested the influence of a generation gap: "They've kept the old folks as museum pieces, through ignorance and idleness, but we young Indians are going to free ourselves by education and work."[44] Tinker Air Force Base employee Fred Tsoodle (Kiowa) dismissed any notion of Native people sacrificing their "traditional" culture in exchange for mainstream American citizenship. "We can be good Americans, making a decent living and still keep our Indian culture," he stressed. Tsoodle placed responsibility for success or failure directly in Indians' hands: "They'll have to do it themselves. They have to adjust… buckle

[43] Nathaniel Johnson Relocation Subject File, box 2, RG75, Employment Assistance Case Files, NARA Southwest Branch, Ft. Worth, Texas. I changed this individual's name to protect his identity.
[44] O.K. and Marjorie Armstrong, "The Indians Are Going to Town," *The Reader's Digest*, January 1955, 42.

down. It's within ourselves."[45] Likewise, L.A.-based Lockheed Company bookkeeper Patricia McGee (Yavapai) stated, "Whether we Indians make the grade in the city depends on the individual."[46] Finally, Korean War veteran Alfred Boneshirt (Lakota) and his wife Mary Sue regularly migrated back and forth between Colorado, Nebraska, and their home in South Dakota in pursuit of jobs during the 1950s and 1960s. When asked about their future plans, Mary Sue responded, "I think what we want to do is work…"[47]

Rather than dismiss traditional Indian values as an impediment to success in modern America, some Native advocates of relocation directly appealed to tradition as a source of strength. Former IRA field agent and military policeman Benjamin Reifel (Sioux), who in 1956 became the first Native person to serve as superintendent at Pine Ridge, encouraged his Indian constituents to be optimistic and resist defeatism that stemmed from prolonged dependence on the BIA. He advocated a "change of attitude for Indians to make the cultural adaptation necessary to function within the economic and social systems of the mainstream society." Further, he equated the Lakota's tradition of bravery with the necessary qualities to succeed beyond the limits of the reservation when he told his constituents to "be proud" and "think of Red Cloud and Crazy Horse."[48]

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[45] Ivy Coffey, *The Urban Indian* (a reprint from *The Sunday Oklahoman* and *The Oklahoma City Times*), WHC.
[46] "Navajos Lead Movement From Wilds to City Life," *Los Angeles Examiner*, 1953 (month and day unknown), AAIA Records.
[47] Alfred and Mary Sue Boneshirt, interview with Herbert T. Hoover, 10 July 1970, American Indian History Research Project, Northern State College (AIHRP-NSC), Aberdeen, South Dakota.
[48] John S. Painter, "Benjamin Reifel: Transitional Sioux Leader," included within Carl Whitman Jr. interview with John S. Painter, 3 June 1982, AIHRP-NSC.

To be sure, enthusiasm for new surroundings and an appeal to stereotypes of Indian bravery could only carry a family so far once the reality of a tenuous labor market, urban congestion, language barriers, and geographic distance, among other hazards, manifested. Still, unemployment, alcoholism, and a retreat back to the reservation were not the only potential outcomes for hopeful Indian migrants. Many relocatees achieved varying degrees of success through relocation. If they struggled, it was not necessarily with the idea of working and living in the city. More often, their struggles instead reflected their divergent socio-economic strata prior to going on relocation.

When a relocation counselor visited the Morrises one summer afternoon in July she found the family's four children gathered around a new television to watch a children's program. Each morning Mr. Morris drove a 1950 Studebaker to the Chrysler Corporation where he worked. The family occasionally attended the Drive-In Theatre together and Mrs. Morris was fond of a new sewing machine. The family's real dream was to purchase their own home, which Mr. Morris contemplated putting his GI Bill loan toward.[49]

A relocation officer who checked in on the Blake family in San Francisco concluded that they were well adjusted and happy. Earl Blake worked for the State Harbor Commission after Buzell Electric Company laid him off. He and his wife were active members of the San Francisco Indian Center Picnic Committee and they also met

[49] Home Counselor's Report, Los Angeles, 2 July 1957, box 19, folder: Assistance to Individuals (Crow, N. Cheyenne, Wind River), 8NS-075-97-270 Billings Office "Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960," NARA-RMR. I have elected to change this family's name in an effort to protect their identity. This is true of all vocational and subject case files that I viewed at the NARA Rocky Mountain branch.

every Monday night with a local square dance group. After each meeting, the group would attend dinner together at a nice restaurant. The three Blake boys were all excelling in San Francisco: the first served in the navy, the second attended electric welding school, and the third split time between ROTC and the high school debate team while landing on the high honor roll. The third son also washed cars on the weekend for extra spending money and helped his mother wash dishes at the Indian Center. Mr. Blake admitted that the family occasionally became "homesick" for Montana before mentioning "it doesn't take long for it to wear off."[50]

Letters from ready and willing urban Indian migrants demonstrate the active and energetic role they often played in soliciting Indian bureau support, but their capacity for influencing the relocation process did not subsequently diminish, even under the auspices of programmatic paternalism. For example, on September 25, 1959, Earl Sargent and his wife drove their 1952 Ford sedan to the Red Lake Indian Agency to interview for the Adult Vocational Training Program. Earl did most of the talking; his wife only chimed in to voice her support for their decision to apply. In response to the interviewer's question about what he hoped to gain by enrolling in the program, Sargent responded, "A lifetime career, a skill, something to look forward to so that the family would be able to live off the reservation." For Earl Sargent, the Adult Vocational Program provided a way forward.

In fact, the off-reservation world was not uncharted territory for Sargent. He could point to an abundance of experiences in Indian Country, mainstream America,

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[50] Wilbur Peacock (Field Relocation Officer, San Francisco Office) to Reuben Fuhrer (Flathead Agency Relocation Officer), 21 May 1958, box 20, folder "Assistance to Individuals—Blackfeet, FY 1958," 8NS-075-97-270 Billings Office "Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960," NARA-RMR.

and beyond. Born on Minnesota's Red Lake Chippewa Reservation in 1932, Sargent first gained vocational training at the age of fourteen when he took a one-year course in carpentry, auto mechanics, masonry, and drafting at South Dakota's Flandreau Indian School, where he also traveled with the school's boxing and football teams. At age eighteen he enlisted for service in the U.S. Army, and received an honorable discharge after returning from Korea in 1952. During his service he took a ten-week training course in engineering at Fort Belnoir, Virginia, and also trained in heavy military equipment. Upon his discharge Sargent labored as a sawyer for the Marvins Cedar and Lumber door factory in Warroad, Minnesota, but was fired for attempting to unionize the plant. He then returned to Red Lake and worked seasonally with the U.S. Public Health Service. In 1959, he landed a job as a truck driver with a construction outfit based in Brainerd, Minnesota, but when his hours, and by extension income, diminished, he saw an opportunity in the Adult Vocational Training Program.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs accepted Sargent's application and enrolled him in an auto mechanic training course in Minneapolis during January 1960. Having lost interest in the program, however, Sargent suddenly quit in May and instead took a job with a Minneapolis construction crew that he found through his own efforts. The scorned BIA spent $1609.19 on Sargent's relocation and vocational training and in return received a reminder that some program participants would succeed in guiding their own relocation process to reach their own ends, no matter how much the BIA intervened.[51]

[51] Folder: Earl F. Sargent, RG 75, Minneapolis Area Office, Employment Assistance Case Files—Selected Files from Boxes 390, 393, 398 (All Subjects Are Deceased), NARA Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.

In a contrasting example that the BIA likely embraced as a model of "success," Gary Lawrence wrote from his Bell Gardene, California home to assure his relocation officer back home on his Sisseton Dakota reservation that he and his wife were "coming along just great" at their new place of residence. In fact, Lawrence mentioned that, "I only wish I would have come sooner." The Lawrence family benefitted from Gary's job working on cars at the Chrysler Corporation, a job that Gary had "always wanted." He also mentioned that he and his wife enjoyed the weather, and that he preferred walking to work. Gary was earning $2.08 per hour, and predicted a pay bump to $2.17 per hour soon. "I know I couldn't beat that anywhere around there," he asserted. Gary did admit that his wife was scared to walk around downtown Los Angeles, before concluding that, "I guess she will get used to it though."[52]

In a similar relocation experience that the BIA in fact *did* promote as a example of success, Mr. Charley (Apache) moved to Chicago precisely because it was not the closest, but rather the *farthest*, relocation center from his reservation home in Arizona. He and his family resided in a Chicago Public Housing project predominantly occupied by African Americans. While he did not mind his children playing outside with black children, he did introduce a curfew for his children. The fact that his neighbors did not, however, bothered him. Prior to migrating to Chicago he had labored as a clerk in a tribal store, and briefly as a farmer in Pomona, California. His reason for applying for relocation was less a matter of wanting to be in Chicago as it was a matter of wanting to leave his reservation, which he resented because he was repeatedly refused a tribal loan,

[52] Gary Lawrence to Mr. Maggart (Sisseton Area Field Office Relocation Officer), 20 March 1957, box 2, folder 2: Sisseton Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

an outcome he blamed on what he perceived to be a lack of personal "influence" with tribal leaders. That is not to suggest that he did not look forward to seeing the country, which he claimed Apache people traditionally embraced. "The Apaches are wizards in emulating one another in this aspect," he surmised.

In Chicago Mr. Charley only wrestled with two main problems: He struggled to master the English language at an adequate pace, and he failed to get along with his African American neighbors, whom he insisted were "always looking for a fight." Despite those setbacks, he experienced relative success and attended evening college courses on a scholarship. Additionally, the Chicago relocation office handpicked him as a model for relocation success. The office even featured Mr. Charley in a short promotional film on relocation to be shown to prospective migrants back on reservations, but they did so in deceptive fashion. Most of Mr. Charley's friends knew that he aspired to be a butcher; so Indian bureau personnel photographed him cutting meat at a local butcher shop. However, Mr. Charley did not actually work at the butcher shop. In fact, he was not a butcher at all. The promotional broadcast also betrayed his struggle to master English (and perhaps a Freudian slip) when Mr. Charley proudly declared, "The relocation program is the ultimatum." Notwithstanding his relative success in the city, Mr. Charley ultimately desired to one day return to his reservation and purvey his conviction that education is "good for anybody," but not too soon, lest he be branded a "failure" for returning too quickly.[53]

Even as the relocation program matured, Native people continued dictating its terms and potential for success. For example, via the "Moccasin Telegraph," Indians

[53] Wade B. Arends, *A Socio-Cultural Study of the Relocation of American Indians to Chicago* (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1958), 52-54.

who had migrated to California from Montana's Fort Belknap and Rocky Boys Reservation encouraged their tribespeople back home to cancel plans to join them in California during December 1953 because the North American Aviation Company plant where they labored was in the midst of a heated strike and labor dispute. "Reports from the workers in California continue to be blue and discouraging," Fort Belknap superintendent J. Wellington noted. Adding to Wellington's frustration, Indians from the Fort Belknap Reservation tended to migrate according to weather patterns. "The mild winter weather has contributed to a lack of interest for relocation away from the reservation," he reported in February 1954, before elaborating that the heavy snows and extreme cold weather during the previous month had temporarily sharpened his subjects' enthusiasm for relocation. In yet another sudden shift in enthusiasm, during the following month of March, Wellington was inundated with more relocation applications than available funding could possibly support.[54]

Despite many Indian urban relocatees' prior off-reservation experiences, tenacious efforts at making it in the city, and strong individual motives for having left in the first place, BIA field relocation officers found it necessary to maintain a high degree of paternalistic oversight. At times, however, paternalism worked in that the BIA often *did* help Native people who took a chance on relocation. Such assistance often arrived in the form of food, shelter, and clothing. In other instances it simply came in the form

[54] George Barrett to Paul Fickinger (Area Director), 5 March 1954; Monthly Report 1 February 1954; and Monthly Report 31 December 1953, box 17, folders: Area Relocation Reports, FY 1954 and Monthly Reports from Agencies, FY 1954, RG75, Billings Area Office: Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.

of useful advice for the job market. During the early 1970s, for example, Lee Cook, director of the Minnesota Indian Resource Development Inc. in the Twin-Cities, kept black socks in his desk drawer, which he would distribute to Native American people who came in seeking help with finding a job. "[Employers] expect certain kinds of people to come through the door," he explained, "and if you are noticeably Indian, you wear white socks, you don't shake hands, you are dead before you say 'hello.'"[55]

In a parallel example, a 23-year-old Chippewa man from Stone Lake, Wisconsin landed a job at Chicago's Republic Steel in advance of his actual departure. Upon his arrival, the company learned that the new Chippewa worker was "industrially blind" in one eye and subsequently dismissed him. The BIA helped the man purchase new eyeglasses and land a job at Lindberg Engineering in the insulating department. Before long, he had saved enough money to bring his father to Chicago. He too found steady work, not through the relocation program, but through his son's initiative.[56]

In some instances, Indian relocatees burned through their supporting funds and threatened their potential for a successful adjustment before they even arrived at their first scheduled job shift. Relocation field agents would then scramble to conduct triage in hopes of saving the mutual investment. For example, in April 1952, two Indian friends in their late twenties relocated together to Chicago, where they hoped to find work at the same company because they "felt strange in Chicago." They successfully

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[55] "Bridging the Gap: The Twin Cities Native American Community," report conducted by the Minnesota State Advisory Committee under the auspices of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975).
[56] Placement Narrative Report 1952, Chicago Field Office, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

landed jobs as mechanics in a photography firm for 50 dollars per week. But the night they arrived in the city they met with a friend from their reservation, had "a good time," and spent all of their money. The next day, one had enough change to make it to his first day of work, while the other called the Chicago relocation office asking for money. Making matters worse, neither had made a down payment on their hotel room. After the men pleaded for another chance, the Chicago office called their employer and talked him into keeping the men employed. To help them get established, he agreed to let the two men draw daily pay, as opposed to weekly pay, and "offered to take a personal interest in the two young men." After three weeks both men were still employed with no counts of absenteeism. "At the end of the second week, one of the men proudly showed us his bank book with an initial deposit of $5.00," relocation officer Kurt Dreifuss shared.[57]

Among the Chicago-based institutions with whom the Indian Bureau contracted to administer technical training as part of its "adult vocational training" program for Native relocatees was the Metropolitan Business College, founded in 1873. Here relocated Indians could take courses in bookkeeping, clerical work, stenography, and accounting. According to figures for the 1963 school year, 80 Indians total were currently enrolled while 35 completed training that year. Of those 35 graduates 31 were employed in Chicago, 21 of whom found a position in their field of training. Course length ranged from eight months to two years. Regarding course length, a school brochure urged its students to "Be more concerned with what you will get rather than

[57] "Chicago Field Placement Office Report, April 1952," box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, NARA Washington DC.

how long it will take!" "Remember," it concludes, "the average American works many years. Preparation is the key which will make your years happy and productive."

More revealing were the school's efforts at teaching Native students exactly how to succeed in "mainstream society" as it provided instruction in proper professional etiquette and attire. Relocated Indians who read the school's welcoming brochure would learn that "The natural, well-bred look is the METROPOLITAN LOOK" and that "Your first impression is a lasting one." Female students were required to wear one-inch minimum heels to class. Excessively long fingernails and "extreme hairstyles" were against the rules, as was excessive makeup. Male students needed to arrive clean-shaven with shined shoes, pressed trousers, and a shirt and tie. Levis were forbidden. Finally, both sexes were expected to demonstrate well-mannered and courteous etiquette because "business demands it."[58]

When relocation's promise broke down sometimes the only help a confounded relocation official could offer was a vote of confidence or inspirational platitudes. During an interview in 1972, former Denver and Chicago relocation field officer Stanley L. Lyman recalled the measured role he would play in convincing struggling Indians not to give up hope: "Then much of it was in the form of a pep talk, you know, kind of like sending a replacement into a football game." For all its paternalistic overreach, however, the BIA occasionally seemed to explicitly concede that success in the city boiled down to Indian initiative. Lyman confessed that his relocation offices at

[58] Metropolitan School of Business Student Guide Addendum and Chicago Field Employment Assistance Office Memo, 22 July 1963, box 151, folder: Chicago Field Employment Assistance Office, Philleo Nash Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

times intentionally avoided meeting with newly arrived migrants because that "was the time when this shock of looking at that damn city had to be felt."[59]

At the same time, relocation officers received instructions to be especially hands-on when managing relocated Indians' affairs. The *Denver Field Relocation Office Operating Manual*, for example, instructed field officers to monitor their subjects' job activity and financial planning. Moreover, they were encouraged to conduct several follow-up reports and interviews while encouraging relocated Indians to confide in them in most candid fashion. "His telling of his experience will make him feel at ease," the manual suggested. "An effort must be made to get his opinion. If the counselor does all the talking, a one-way conversation may ensue in which the relocatee gains nothing from the interview. Take plenty of time. Try to pitch the level of the discussion to the relocatee's background and apparent experience."[60]

In 1958, Randolph Lussier migrated through the Minneapolis Area Office to Los Angeles, where he enrolled in a Dental Laboratory Technician training program. The BIA funded his transportation and food costs to the tune of $91.00. Shortly before departing, he elected to change to a drafting program at Long Beach City College. On May 5, 1959 Los Angeles Field Relocation Officer George Felshaw attempted to visit Lussier at his home on East 15th Street in Long Beach for a follow-up report. To Felshaw's dismay, he learned that Lussier, with no notice, had returned home on May 1st. He was apparently doing well in his training course, but Felshaw concluded that

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[59] Interview with Stanley Lyman (1972), box 17, folder 41, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
[60] "Denver Field Relocation Office, 201 Old Custom House, Denver, CO: Office Policy and Procedure," box 14, folder 19, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Lussier was a "chronically dissatisfied person." Lussier was in fact upset over his failure to find part-time employment to supplement his school stipend. He had worked over Easter vacation as a ride operator at Disneyland, but was otherwise upset over his lack of a permanent part-time job.

On May 27, 1959, Lussier wrote Felshaw asking for another chance and help returning to L.A. After admonishing Lussier for the manner in which he "simply disappeared," Felshaw arranged to have Long Beach City College take Lussier back. Felshaw also stipulated that Lussier return with a "positive attitude" and that he provide his own transportation funds to return to Long Beach. On June 30, Lussier returned to Long Beach, where he lived in a hotel for two weeks before moving into a communal house shared with other vocational training students. Lussier's trajectory provides an illustrative example of how "going on relocation" was often so much more than a straight shot from rural reservation to city. Numerous relocatees in fact possessed years of off-reservation experience and engaged in several migratory attempts before landing in a place that was right for them.[61]

Lussier's close relationship with Felshaw also reflects the manner in which relocation officers received instructions to be something of a personal friend and confidant to Indians in their care. "If an individual loses his job, the Relocation Officer (Employment) will listen to the relocatee's story in considerable detail," the Denver operating manual instructed. Not only did relocation officers need to provide a sympathetic ear, their superiors also expected them to boost migrated Indians' morale,

[61] Relocation Subject File, folder: Randolph Lussier, RG75, Minneapolis Area Office, Employment Assistance Case Files—Selected Files from Boxes 390, 393, 398 (All Subjects Are Deceased), NARA Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.

should it wane at any point. "The family needs to be proud of themselves in their new environment," the manual suggested. "Help in the proper selection of clothes can insure this pride." Denver relocation officers were even supposed to document migrated families' or individuals' adjustment through a series of before-and-after pictures taken upon arrival, and three to six months later, when the family or individual should be settled in and ready to smile for the camera.[62]

Above all else, relocation field agents were supposed to assume Indians' lack of facility for city living while nurturing their acculturation, often by soliciting supplemental support from local mutual aid societies and religious groups. For example, between October 1956, when the BIA officially designated St. Louis a relocation center, and February 1958, 375 Indians had migrated to the "Gateway to the West." To assist them, a group of various civic, social, and religious groups formed a base of operations at the Kingdom House, with financial support from the United Fund Agency. To help Native people overcome loneliness in St. Louis the group sponsored the All-American Indian Club several Saturdays each month at the Kingdom House. Director of the St. Louis field office Charles Coffee admitted that the office's initial policy of separating relocated families in order to expedite assimilation had been shortsighted. The office backed away from that policy, and allowed the development of Indian communities within larger housing projects. Indeed, Ralph Koeppe, director of the Kingdom House, confided that, "The most horrible thing that could happen would be if the Indian were

[62] Ibid.

swallowed up and didn't retain his heritage… We hope we're never guilty of trying to over-Americanize the original American."[63]

One typical task of a relocation officer was to take an Indian family or individual on their first trip to the grocery store. What was likely an exciting experience for Native families that had long been at the mercy of government commodity food and limited options on remote reservations, however, could itself turn into an exercise in Indian bureau paternalism. For example, Chicago Field Relocation Officer Joe La Salle escorted a newly arrived family to a grocery store and apparently upset the family's mother when he reached into her cart, removed the chicken she had selected, and instead replaced it with beef. La Salle stressed that the Native mother was not allowed to purchase chicken because it was too expensive. He then proceeded to remove a package of cookies from her cart. They were, after all, a luxury. "This is all too fast," the mother replied. As historians Philip Deloria and Alexandra Harmon have noted, such destructive and restrictive stereotypes suggesting that Native people suffered from a natural tendency to "squander" their money ran rampant throughout the twentieth century.[64]

One might be forgiven for assuming that Eskimo people from Alaska would need the most help in adjusting to urban mainstream America, but if that was the case

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[63] "Integrating the Indian in Big City Life," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 28 February 1958.
[64] "Narrative of Incidents Relating to Assignment of Joe La Salle to Chicago Field Relocation Office, 20 November 1959," box 14, folder 20, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. On stereotypes about Indians' supposed propensity for "squandering money," see Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 151, and Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), especially chapter five.

their enthusiasm for relocation certainly must have rendered the process a little easier. Indeed, at times the Juneau relocation office was one of the busiest in the nation. Eskimo people typically filtered through the Seattle Orientation Center, which a newspaper reporter describes as a "motel unit near the University of Washington campus." In pursuit of better jobs and social opportunities, Eskimos could be seen walking across campus in heavy parkas, wool clothing, and mukluks. Illustrative of its at times sarcastic, mocking even, attitude toward exotic Eskimo people, the BIA referred to the Seattle Orientation Center as a "half-way house"; a shopping center near the motel as a "school"; and supermarkets, banks, dime stores, the post office, and drugstore as "textbooks."[65]

For the most part, relocation offices were typically understaffed and underfunded, and because relocation officials often lacked a deep understanding of the unique challenges Native people encountered during their attempts to live alongside their fellow American citizens, many Indian urban migrants truly were on their own.[66] During an interview in 1983, Marlene Strouse recalled how her family of Pima people migrated through the relocation program from their tribal home in Arizona to Chicago during 1952. In order to establish residence and employment, and thereby make the transition process easier, her father and his best friend left in advance of the larger

[65] "U.S. Trains Eskimos for Large City Jobs," *New York Times*, 6 January 1969.
[66] Interestingly, these are precisely the reasons why former Associate Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the Kennedy administration, James E. Officer, argued that historians are remiss when they suggest that relocation should be understood as a key component of the termination policy. If relocation provided the primary economic safety net for terminated Indians, why then was the program so consistently underfunded, understaffed, and mismanaged? See James E. Officer, "The American Indian and Federal Policy," in Jack O. Waddell and O. Michael Watson, eds., *The American Indian in Urban Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 45-47.

family. At home on their Pima reservation, Marlene recalled, her father could not earn enough money through his position as a farmhand to support his six family members. "And so when they heard about the relocation program, they jumped at it," Marlene explained.

Growing up, Marlene was used to her father being gone sometimes as long as six months per year as he pursued wheat-harvesting jobs in Kansas and Nebraska. This time was different, however. Marlene's father succeeded in his relocation to Chicago, and subsequently sent for the whole family. According to Marlene, relocation was "practically a life saver you might say." And to be sure, all due credit for the Strouse family's success went to their own hard efforts. When Marlene's family first arrived, she elaborated, they were "practically on [their] own. You were just pushed out there right away, you know… Sink or swim." Indeed, her mother struggled in Chicago; she lost weight and refused to leave the family's apartment. In time, the family made a successful adjustment. Later Marlene met her husband in Chicago when he came in for a haircut from Marlene's father, who was something of a community barber for Indian men in Chicago.[67]

Such inspirational examples of individual and family resolve proliferate across space, time, and tribal lines where stories of relocation are concerned. In 1969, a Cheyenne veteran Dallas police officer told sociologist James Goodner, "I came from a town of about three hundred, and that was when you counted all the dogs and cows.

[67] Interview with Marlene Strouse (Pima), Chicago American Indian Oral History Project, 18 July 1983, box 2, folder 10, The Newberry Library and NAES (Native American Education Services) College Library, Chicago, Illinois.

Here you just do like the Romans and you'll make it."[68] Likewise, according to a Native woman who migrated from Oklahoma to Dallas, Texas, "At home we were isolated by tribes and we get along fine. But here we search for each other. My husband drives a bread truck and if he sees an Indian he will go around the block and search him out."[69]

Roughly half of the 1,487 relocated Navajo people surveyed for a 1957 report on relocation sponsored by the Navajo tribal council mentioned that they struggled to adjust in their new places of residence, and many felt compelled to return after only a short period. Their reasons for returning, however, were as diverse as their reasons for leaving. In fact, no single reason for return accounted for more than even five percent of all responses to a survey on this question. Reasons given mostly proved subjective and complicated. For example, one Navajo man insisted on walking to work each day, and developed such a terrible case of blisters that he elected to ride home to the Navajo reservation with a friend, rest his feet for a period, and then try again. In a second possibly apocryphal, or at the very least exaggerated, example, a Navajo man was asked to work the "graveyard shift" at his job. A Navajo cultural fear of the dead, however, supposedly resulted in him telling his employer that he "wanted no part of any graveyard." In a final, more concrete example, a Navajo man became terribly sick in Chicago, and as a result of being bedridden for a protracted period began running out of money. Afraid he would become stuck in Chicago with no lifeline, he returned to

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[68] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 2.

[69] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 8.

Gallup. Yet, he expressed an ambition to return when healthy. In fact, he personally wrote the Chicago relocation office staff to assure them of his resolve: "I really did like my job and I like the town of Chicago. I like to go back there again some time. I would have stayed if I have gotten over my illness in less time that I did. I am sorry it happen that way."

Indeed, supposed "failure" in the city did not necessarily result in failure upon returning home. For example, the same 1957 report mentions a Navajo man who spoke very little English, and had virtually no work experience, but somehow through his "determination" gained programmatic support for relocation to Chicago. Within six months, he was back home on the Navajo reservation, but not defeated. Rather, he was a "considerably more knowledgeable person" who immediately secured work at a reservation uranium mill, a position that the report's author insists he would not have gained in the absence of off-reservation work experience. "For a goodly number of those who have returned," the report suggested, "relocation, although temporary, has been the equivalent of a short course in modern living."[70]

Indeed, not every relocated individual or family necessarily planned to gain permanence in the city. Some Native people made the decision to eventually return *before* they left home. For example, in 1963 Carl Larson (Aleut), his wife Dorothy (Eskimo), and their three children migrated all the way to Chicago from Anchorage, Alaska. An army veteran who worked in Alaska as a fisherman, bus driver, and mailman, Carl began taking electronic technician courses upon his arrival in the Second

[70] Assisted Navajo Relocation, 1952-1956, prepared by Gallup Area Relocation Specialist Robert M. Cullum for Gallup Area Relocation Director W. Wade Head (October 1957), box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

City. Rather than remain in Chicago permanently, however, he planned to migrate back to Alaska and open a television repair shop. 3600 miles from their Alaskan home, the Larsons from the outset understood their journey as a transient opportunity to improve their economic standing not in Chicago, but back home among their people in Alaska.[71]

Similarly, when St. Louis relocation officers went to check up on the Millers they found a seemingly content Meskwaki family occupying a four-bedroom apartment. Mr. Miller was holding down a steady job at McDonnell Aircraft, earning $2.43 per hour. Still, Mrs. Miller claimed that relocation was "only a temporary thing as home will always be Tama, Iowa." She explained that the family would return to Iowa as soon as their two daughters graduated high school. Suggesting a generational divide, although her daughters objected and told the relocation officers that they wanted to stay in St. Louis, Mrs. Miller insisted that the "city is too crowded."[72]

Native people who persisted in the city and remained determined to succeed often faced more than just a competitive job market and the occasionally condescending attitudes of BIA representatives. In many instances they were met with frustrating, even painful, stereotypes about their character and expectations for their behavior.[73] One strategy that some urban Indians deployed in an effort to rehabilitate non-Indians'

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[71] Profile of Carl Larson Family, 1964, Nash Papers, box 151, folder "Chicago Field Employment Assistance Office."
[72] Home Visit Report, Miller Family, St. Louis, Missouri, 12 April 1961, box 102, folder: Community Living Home Visits, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949 – 1973, NARA Washington. This family's name has been changed to protect their privacy.
[73] For an in-depth analysis of the discursive nature of expectations about and for Native people see Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

negative perceptions was that of "group discipline." For example, a Native dance group in Dallas did not allow its members to drink alcohol at events. "We don't want people thinking that we are just a bunch of drunken Indians," their leader explained.[74] Still, despite Native people's better efforts, a system of negative stereotypes about Indians manifested in mainstream America long before Indians arrived to overturn them.

A newsletter titled "A Brave Move" from the Joliet, Illinois-based Fox Valley Manufacturers' Association provides a useful window into the types of stereotypes and assumptions relocated Indians faced as they made forays into the industrial labor force, as well as the ideas that non-Indians shared with each other about the Indians joining their communities. "It is a very worthwhile idea to try to take these red-blooded Americans off the dole-like existence of the reservation and make useful taxpayers and citizens of them," the article suggested. "Our observation has been that they are usually very hard workers… not often skilled or well educated but very useful in the proper job and naturally dexterous craftsmen."

At the time of the article's publication in May 1958, Joliet was mired in the adverse consequences of a nationwide recession. The article therefore put added pressure on Fox Valley businessmen to quickly repair the local economy in order to play a productive role in relocation's success. Indeed, the author stressed that "we can foresee a time when Navahoes, Choctaws, Winnebagoes, Cherokees and Apaches will once more be hunting the buck in the Valley." Mention of distant tribes such as the Navajo and Apache "once more" hunting in Fox Valley, Illinois, as well as the mention

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[74] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 6.

of "taxpayers," both betray non-Indian middle America's profound ignorance concerning Native people. Indians relocating from reservations to cities were in large part concerned with breaking down stereotypes, while non-Indians, at least in this case, treated relocation as an opportunity to deploy every Indian stereotype and joke in the community book. "As we described this program to Bill Gramley, personnel 'chief' at All-Steel," the article concluded, "he observed that this would be welcomed since we frequently had too many Chiefs and not enough Indians—Ugh! (They have squaws, too!)"[75]

Although the process of going on relocation demanded a potentially dangerous degree of separation from tribal communities and loss of tribal support, tribal governments did not wholly forget or resent their citizens who felt compelled to seek better opportunities in cities. Indeed, several tribal governments aggressively attempted to make certain that their people were being cared for in distant metropolises. Many tribal councils kept open files on their relocated citizens, conducted surveys, and met with BIA representatives to make program recommendations. Some tribes even formed committees to go visit their people in distant locales and gather a firsthand impression of relocation that they could deploy if they felt program officials were being misleading, or downright dishonest. In the process, some tribal councils offered profuse support for the program, while others vehemently criticized it.

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[75] "The Valley Breeze: Fox Valley Manufacturers' Association Newsletter," v.2 , n.4 (May 1958), RG75, box 6, folder: Joliet Field Relocation Office Narrative Reports for Relocation Services Prior to July 1, 1958, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

For example, the San Ildefonso Pueblo tribal council complained that the BIA should try harder to locate jobs for Indians closer to their tribal homes while claiming that program publicity "is not honest, it breaks up the Indian family."[76] In related fashion, the Cahuilla complained that the Indian Bureau "is using destitution as a club to achieve unwanted assimilation."[77] Finally, the Goshute tribe officially stated, "We here disapprove the relocation program because we do not know how we will manage without a reservation."[78]

By contrast, the Sac and Fox Tribe of Oklahoma claimed that its members liked relocation and felt that the program had been adequately explained during the interview process. All that mattered, they insisted, was that their people had steady work.[79] The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe also claimed to be "in complete agreement with the relocation program. The rapid shrinkage of Indian owned land on the reservation makes it impossible for most of this next generation to make a living on the reservation."[80] Echoing the sentiment of Sac and Fox and Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders, Cherokee Principal Chief W.W. Keeler wrote Executive Director of the Association of American Indian Affairs Sophie Aberle and her husband, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Brophy, to share his opinion on relocation. "My hope has been that when Indians want to work and there is none in the area, that government will help

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[76] Adam Martinez (San Ildefonso Pueblo Governor) to AAIA, 4 June 1956, AAIA Records.
[77] Torres-Martinez (Desert Cahuilla) to AAIA, 25 May 1956, AAIA Records.
[78] Ennis Moon (Skull Valley Goshute Reservation, Utah) to AAIA, no date, AAIA Records.
[79] Sac and Fox Tribe of Oklahoma to AAIA, no date, AAIA Records.
[80] "Relocation for the Indian," Letters to the Editor Section, *Minneapolis Tribune*, 6 March 1956.

them find opportunities to do so," Keeler stated. While he admitted that the program had been "far from perfect," he generally approved of the basic concept.[81]

In June 1956, eight tribal presidents personally met with Indian Commissioner Glenn Emmons in Washington to request a full evaluation of the program. They demanded improvements in administration and greater involvement by tribal officials. Neither for nor against what they termed "integration," they insisted that the socio-economic merging of Indians and non-Indians was inevitable and that "Indian people know this is the direction in which they are going." "Integration," they reasoned, "has already taken place with half the American Indian people, and with relatively little difficulty as compared with other minority groups in this country."[82]

Six months later, twelve tribes from Oklahoma, alongside the Mississippi Choctaw, met with Commissioner Emmons for similar purposes. Under the leadership of chairman Napoleon Johnson, the intertribal committee officially stated: "We favor the expansion of the present relocation program in all areas wherever practical and feasible." Yet, the committee did not want to see relocation's expansion result in a wider gulf between tribal homelands and enterprising Native people. The committee would rather see those Native people work closer to home, where their talents could more easily benefit their tribe. "It is recommended that employment be obtained as near the Indian population as possible," the committee added, while recommending that the

[81] W.W. Keeler to Sophie Aberle and William Brophy, 15 October 1960, box 22, folder "Keeler, 1957-1959," Papers of William Brophy, Truman Library.
[82] The eight tribal presidents represented The Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest. Helen Peterson, "NCAI Looks at Relocation," 20 June 1956, AAIA Records.

BIA open vocational training program branches within the Anadarko and Muskogee areas.[83]

During a meeting in Omaha between the Winnebago tribal council and Indian affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons in 1956, Winnebago vice-chairman Charles LaMere expressed sincere support for the relocation program, especially its ability to help Indian people get into good homes. Yet, he wanted to know if some of his young people who went out on their own, such as a Winnebago mother and her three children who went to Omaha, were eligible for relocation benefits. Emmons informed LaMere that the answer was no, because relocation was "all sort of a trial basis" and Omaha technically was not a relocation center. BIA area superintendent Alan Adams then explained to commissioner Emmons that in fact numerous Winnebago and Omaha Indians had self-relocated to nearby urban communities, with Omahas mostly going to Omaha, and Winnebagoes typically going to Sioux City. At that time, for example, 24 Winnebago families consisting of 58 total persons were living in Omaha, and 15 Winnebago families consisting of 55 total people were living in Sioux City. According to reports, the families were doing well and benefitting from "the finest relationship and cooperation" with the State Employment Office—a relationship that the Winnebagoes had actively constructed without BIA assistance. Winnebago tribal chairman Frank Beaver then added that several members of his tribe had been living in Los Angeles and Detroit, having migrated of their own accord. Clearly, Beaver argued, Winnebago

[83] Recommendations, 13 December 1956, box 10, folder 5: Indian Affairs, Bureau of (1958), Toby Morris Papers, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, Norman, OK. The tribes that formed the committee included the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Seminole, Oklahoma Choctaw, Creek, Eastern Shawnee, Mississippi Choctaw, Quapaw, Iowa, Seneca-Cayuga, Kaw, Sac and Fox, and Osage.

people were enthusiastic about working and pursuing opportunities. So why not establish Omaha as a relocation center?

Assistant Indian Affairs commissioner Thomas Reid pushed back. He explained that the BIA was hesitant to open relocation centers in too close proximity to reservations because "there is a great tendency to go back home and not be back to work on time and that is the first reason of falling down on the job." Reid championed the Winnebagoes' and Omahas' strong relationship with the state employment agency, and encouraged Beaver to have his tribespeople apply for training at a new Western electric factory that was preparing to hire 3000 people at a new plant in Omaha. But he made it clear that the BIA would not establish Omaha as an actual relocation program destination.[84]

In October 1956, 68-year-old Chippewa tribal representative W.D. Savage ventured from his Fond du Lac reservation outside of Duluth, Minnesota to a meeting with Indian Affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons and a handful of other Minneapolis area tribal leaders and Washington bureaucrats. The three-day conference's central agenda included forums on the Indian Bureau's relocation program and plans for reservation economic and education development. Savage was certainly up to the task of conferencing with the commissioner. Despite only possessing a fourth grade education, he claimed to have "learned a lot in travel… among Indians of different tribes in the United States and Canada."

[84] "Winnebago Meeting with Commissioner Glenn Emmons," 20 July 1956, Glenn Emmons Papers, box 3, folder 1, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Indeed, Savage did not hesitate to expose his avidity right from the meeting's outset. Commissioner Emmons had not yet completed his opening remarks when Savage interrupted him to explain that he was on special orders from his tribe "not to accept absolutely nothing." Emmons immediately pushed back while attempting to explain the potential benefits of the programs his administration was busy fashioning. Unconvinced, Savage first pointed to unfair blood quantum requirements for Indian scholarships and then expressed distrust over Emmons's economic rehabilitation overtures. "Your economics, all these other things and social standing, we have that on the Fond du Lac Reservation," Savage asserted. "We can stand among the white people just the same as I am now."

The eager Chippewa leader then proceeded with details. "I can show you letters of recommendation from the Weyerhauser Lumber Company," he submitted, "and my name is pretty good there, and you can take the whole tribe there, and anybody that isn't working, it is his own fault. We have one of the biggest paper mills in the world. We have the Diamond Match Company." When Emmons asked if most of the Fond du Lac Chippewa were steadily employed, Savage assured him, "Yes, at one time we had 1400 on the reservation; we only got 300 now. 99% work and own their homes, and we own tribal property." Savage eventually revealed his own personal incredulity over the notion that Indians needed the federal government to arrange jobs for them. "I was only 14 years old when I went out to work at $2.50 a day, and I have practically been working ever since… What is to prevent other Minnesota Indians from doing the same?" he urged. Momentum suddenly shifted in Emmons's favor. If initially troubled by Savage's rousing intervention, Emmons was now delighted by the Fond du Lac

ambassador's message. After all, Savage's appeal fit the Bureau of Indian Affairs' then overarching tribal termination policy like a glove. "I want to hand it to you people," Emmons praised. "You have what it takes."[85]

However insensitive Savage's remarks were toward tribes that lacked such a vibrant reservation economy, the Fond du Lac tribe's general position on Emmons's relocation and reservation economic rehabilitation programs pointed to an important quandary where relocation was concerned: not all tribes needed it. In no uncertain terms various tribes' divergent positions on relocation and the invasive, unpredictable nature of the BIA's cyclic initiatives were typically directly proportional to their degree of economic desperation. On the pressing matter of whether or not to embrace urban work opportunities, tribal governments proved no more passive than the thousands of Indian individuals who enthusiastically accepted or rejected relocation services.

Indeed, official tribal involvement in the relocation program at times meant more than simply offering praise, criticism, or useful recommendations. Some tribes fashioned their own supplemental programs to facilitate off-reservation employment for their citizens. In 1956, Colorado River Indian tribal chairman Pete Homer introduced a program to place his tribe's female high school graduates in Los Angeles homes where they could labor as domestic workers. An announcement in support of the program stated, "We think it is high time that our old custom of caring for our youth is changed to one that encourages our youth to go out and seek new avenues of self help, and not to be dependent on the old folks, parents, the tribe or the government for help." At the

[85] Minneapolis Area Indian Affairs Conference (held in Des Moines, IA), 15 October 1956, box 3, folder 7, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

time of the article's printing, nineteen girls had been successfully placed in jobs in and around L.A. Domestic work was common among Indian women relocatees in all urban destinations. Working from a position of hindsight, scholars have often dismissed such work as regressive and telling of Native people's subordinate position within American society during the 1950s. This comment by the Colorado River Tribes, however, suggests a different way of thinking about admittedly menial work's value to Native people at that time.[86]

The following year the Colorado River Indian Tribes' official newsletter ran a series of articles in support of the Indian Bureau's relocation programs. One particularly illustrative piece offers behavioral tips to prospective relocatees: "You don't have to be a fashion plate, but—a bath is important"; "Fellows—a tip—get that hat off as soon as you enter a room"; "No matter how tired you are, a slouch isn't fashionable"; "Girls—a tip—not too much makeup. You aren't a movie star yet"; "When the interview is over, don't jump up like a scared rabbit. Few interviewers hire on the spot." These bits of advice demonstrate that paternalist attempts at controlling Indian behavior stemmed not only from BIA agents, but also from some tribal leaders.[87]

As the national relocation program continued gaining traction during the 1950s, some tribal leaders also made certain to advocate for a similar brand of economic rehabilitation and vocational training for those who elected not to migrate to cities. If the Indian bureau had any intentions of abandoning reservation based Indians, some tribal leaders worked to keep the Indian bureau honest in its obligations. For example,

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[86] *Smoke Signals: Colorado River Indian Tribes*, newsletter printed in Parker, Arizona, v.1, n.1 (July 4, 1956).
[87] *Smoke Signals: Colorado River Indian Tribes* (December 1957).

in October 1955, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Glenn Emmons announced that the bureau was preparing to introduce a new education program for adult Indians who chose to continue residing on reservations. The Indian bureau selected five tribes—Florida Seminoles, Papago, Rosebud Sioux, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Shoshone-Bannock—for participation in a pilot version of the program. Credit for the program's genesis, however, went not to Commissioner Emmons, but to Seminole tribal leadership, whom Emmons had conferenced with one year prior in Florida. Seminole tribal leaders were satisfied with efforts to educate their children in modern curricula. Adult members of the tribe, however, mostly lacked language and writing skills necessary to compete in the modern American economy. According to Emmons, "These people, like those on many other reservations, are at a definite disadvantage because they are separated by a language barrier from the modern world in which they find themselves."[88]

The Navajo tribal council officially supported relocation, and it in fact arrived at that conclusion through its own extensive process of researching the program's merit. During fall 1956, the tribal council formed its own four-man program investigation committee that visited its tribal citizens in their new urban homes. The committee, and by extension Navajo tribal council, offered firm support for the program. As one committee member wrote:

> I pictured before them the Relocation Program, because of necessity we cannot and will not attempt to say this is a bad program…

[88] Department of the Interior Internal Memo, 25 October 1955, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 28, folder 14, Center for Southwest Research, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

> We have taken advantage of it and many reports have reached me from those who have benefitted and holding a permanent job in some town, in some city quite a ways from home. They tell me 'This is the first time I have had steady income for so long and my family has benefitted greatly'… We feel that it is not right to deny to any of our people the right to seek a job somewhere to better their condition, since we cannot offer these individuals anything in the way of a steady income on the reservation… We are not forcing anyone to go off and seek a job. It is up to them.

The report took care to explain that Navajo people had pursued distant work opportunities "as far back as recorded history goes," and that therefore the relocation program's assistance marked the only real innovation.[89]

The report also mentioned that nearly all of the relocated Navajo people could at the very least point to seasonal off-reservation work experience, and that most had worked off-reservation or enlisted for military service during World War II. Still, the report was also careful to note that prior off-reservation experience did not guarantee success. Relocation "pioneers," the report explained, were anxious to try something new "without thinking through all the possible results." By the end of the program's first year of operation, roughly half of all Navajo relocates had returned home. Yet, discussing their experiences at times registered as a challenge to other Navajo people who became convinced that they could improve on their fellow tribespeople's unsuccessful attempts. "As time went on," the report suggests, "a number made substantial adjustments, and this report also came back to the reservation." During 1952—the Voluntary Relocation Program's first year of operation on the Navajo

[89] Assisted Navajo Relocation, 1952-1956, prepared by Gallup Area Relocation Specialist Robert M. Cullum for Gallup Area Relocation Director W. Wade Head (October 1957), box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

reservation—only 22 Navajo people migrated out with program support. That number steadily increased over subsequent years. In 1953, 140 total Navajo persons went on relocation; during 1956 that number had risen to 877.[90] Additionally, thousands of Navajo people must have practiced self-relocation, without BIA support, during this period. According to Indian Rights Association representative Theodore Hetzel, who toured numerous reservations during the 1950s to gather data and impressions on the relocation program, among the roughly 75,000 total Navajo people in 1955, approximately 15,000 were working away from the reservation.[91]

This wave of attempts, regardless of successful or unsuccessful, created a new "common experience" around which Navajo people bonded. In this respect, relocation not only had the power to separate people from their tribes, but also to bring them more closely together. According to the report, "People undertake this step for a definite reason, invariably economic. They are not led to expect an easy time, and they go with the knowledge that they are taking a hard path." This perhaps invokes the Diné people's 1864 "Long Walk" from Fort Defiance to Bosque Redondo. Such an observation can admittedly be construed as an overstatement in that Navajo people endured the "Long Walk" by gunpoint. Still, the process of trauma and triumph through movement might have resonated in the minds of contemporary Navajo people as an analog to their ancestors' experience. And while they were not forced into the relocation program by

[90] Assisted Navajo Relocation, 1952-1956, prepared by Gallup Area Relocation Specialist Robert M. Cullum for Gallup Area Relocation Director W. Wade Head (October 1957), box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
[91] Travel Notebook Zero, entry: 26 June 1955, box 1, RG1, Theodore Hetzel Papers, CSWS, Fort Lewis College.

gunpoint, incessant advocacy on the part of Indian bureau personnel and Navajo tribal council leaders alike certainly produced its own, albeit softer, form of coercion.[92]

In their survey of the Adult Vocational Training program the Navajo Relocation Committee found the 1957 Adult Vocational Training Program especially impressive. In particular, they pointed to a solid record of job placement for Navajo graduates. On the other hand, a few observations failed to meet the committee's approval. They did not, for example, like the fact that area offices competed with each other by placing Native students in the same fields where opportunities were already scarce. Additionally, those students who failed in their coursework, the committee found, might not have been properly screened at the reservation level. In a final criticism of the program, the committee called for increased school-sponsored recreational opportunities for Native students. Among the 189 students interviewed, church attendance was the most popular non-school-related activity with participation at Indian centers a close second. Although it is not clear why the committee was dissatisfied with the current recreation opportunities, they did mention that they would like the training school's extracurricular activities to more closely mirror those found at regular colleges.

In 1962, the Navajo Tribal Council formed another Relocation Committee that made a two-week visit to California's Bay Area and Los Angeles. With assistance from area offices in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, and Los Angeles they visited relocated Navajos and documented their experiences as part of the Adult Vocational

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[92] Assisted Navajo Relocation, 1952-1956, prepared by Gallup Area Relocation Specialist Robert M. Cullum for Gallup Area Relocation Director W. Wade Head (October 1957), box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. On the Navajo "Long Walk," see Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), chapter two.

Training program. A total of 1,028 Navajo persons and 619 family units migrated through these offices from 1960 through 1961. Of them, 353 total people and 217 total unites returned to the Navajo reservation. According to the committee's observations, however, most of those who returned were single people who only left temporarily due to job lay offs and planned to return if and when rehiring occurred. In addition to those who returned home, 286 total Navajo men and women left their respective jobs to attend trade schools.

In sum, despite some criticisms of housing, the committee had a generally favorable impression of Navajo relocation to California. They found especially impressive a Navajo family who relocated to Newark, California where the father worked as a cable splicer for General Electric. A second relocated Navajo family in Gardena, California earned mention for their "lovely home comparable to those of the non-Indian neighborhood in which they reside." At the end of each visit in Oakland in Los Angeles the committee met with over 200 relocated Navajos to hear of their experiences in their respective cities. The meetings, which were conducted in the Navajo language, further convinced the committee that relocation was a relative success for their people. Additionally, the committee visited several factories that employed Navajo people where they gained the impression that "in every instance the Navajo employees were well liked." Moreover, they found that local church influence had helped abate the destructive effects of alcohol among transplanted Navajos. In conclusion, committee Chairman Haska Cronemeyer exclaimed that "seeing is believing; hearing is misinformation." He invited fellow tribal council members to accompany him on any future visits to relocation centers and "see for themselves."

Whereas the BIA can easily be accused of bias in promoting its own program, the Navajo Tribal Relocation Committee's assessment of relocation program perhaps provides a more honest rendering of an initiative that hardly proved disastrous for all concerned parties.[93]

On July 11, 1968, an inmate at El Reno Federal Reformatory in Oklahoma wrote employment assistance officer Jim Huff at his Shiprock, New Mexico BIA office to request information about the relocation program. "I'am an inmate of this federal reformatory, voluntarily would like to correspond through you," he wrote. "Concerning my plans for a parole plan in the near future, want to take this relocation program. While on parole if possible," he elaborated. The letter's author, who had been working in the prison hospital as a nurse's aid, was in fact referring to a special parolee release program that the BIA added to its relocation program during the late 1960s. Ostensibly, he envisioned relocation as an opportunity to take a practical male nursing course and then "work my way up as an x-ray tech." It hardly bears explication that relocation must have meant much more to him than that.[94]

The El Reno prisoner's letter perhaps delivers the most striking and convincing example of how Native people often were so much more than victims of the "Voluntary

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[93] "Navajo Tribe Memorandum on Relocation Committee visit to San Francisco, Bay Area, and Los Angeles between March 10-24, 1962," box 148, folder: San Francisco Bay Area Branch Employment Assistance, Philleo Nash Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

[94] El Reno Federal Reformatory Inmate to Jim Huff, 11 July 1968, box 170, folder: Parolee Release Program, El Reno, Oklahoma Federal Reformatory, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949 – 1973, NARA Washington. The BIA also negotiated an American Indian parolee release program with the Federal Youth Center in Englewood, Colorado.

Relocation Program." In many respects, hopeful Indian relocatees sought to exploit cities less as a terminal geographic destinations and more as roundabouts or rotaries through which they could exit in any number of directions, and of their own accord.[95] Ultimately, a certain amount of agency must be granted to Native people who accepted relocation's challenge—not to render them culpable for the program's failures (which the next chapter will address), but rather to restore to them and appreciate the difficult and demanding decisions they made on behalf of themselves and their families. Native people contended with rigorous promotion on the part of the Indian Bureau, but this did not necessarily result in an entire generation of Indians being duped by the system. To suggest otherwise would in effect render Indians incapable of reading between the lines or seeing value in off-reservation employment. What should be clear is that a generation of Native people refused to allow themselves to be further subjected to the limited potential of reservation economies. When given the opportunity to transcend reservation boundaries and second-class citizenship, Native people weighed the circumstances and made bold decisions about their future.

[95] In her ethnographic study of Native people in California's Silicon Valley anthropologist Renya Ramirez imagines urban Indians as the occupiers of a central hub, who nurture "unbounded connections" to their tribal homelands. Her urban Indian protagonists exploit urban space as venues within which to gain new socio-political insights on their way to becoming transmitters of knowledge. See Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

Chapter Five—Suffering in the City: Relocation's Catastrophic Potential and the Problem of "Success"

"Relocation has degraded Indian people." – Father Vine Deloria Sr (Dakota)[1]

"On a reservation, you know everyone. Here, no one." – William Redcloud (Ojibwe)[2]

He needed to be there by 6am sharp or his entire day would be wasted, something he could ill afford. Arriving even one minute late could mean missing the bus that collected pools of hopeful workers each morning. Alongside a Norwegian immigrant also out learning the ropes, he would need to keep close to their official chaperone upon their arrival, as not to get separated in the throngs of desperate individuals. When the bus finally reached its destination, they stepped off and descended into the pits of Chicago's frenzied day-labor office.

Once inside, the relocated Native American man first encountered a fleshy-jowled fixture, barking aloud want-ad capsules between puffs on his cigar, whose pungent fumes must have been an eye-opener if the Native man needed a second alarm. Surveying the room, the willing Native worker observed men in motion, donning anything from threadbare work clothes to pressed grey flannel suits. The wardrobe hierarchy notwithstanding, the men were created equal in that they could at best only anticipate eight hours of work for a mere eight bucks—that is if they came away with

[1] Philleo Nash notes from meeting with tribal leaders, Pierre, South Dakota, 27 March 1961, box 147, folder: March 5-7, 1962, Papers of Philleo Nash, Truman Library.
[2] "The Urban Indian: He Has Become a Stranger in His Native Land," *Chicago Tribune,* 22 August 1971. William Redcloud served as program director for the Chicago American Indian Center.

any opportunity at all. In the nearby "female section," Caucasian, Mexican, and American Indian women with "poor clothes and unkempt" features listened intently for their name to be attached to a daily assignment while an overflow crowd stood outside in the cold. Those who were lucky then made a mad dash to the "El" station and hopped on a train, hoping now to arrive on time at the random job site. Those who were not emerged crestfallen from the day-labor office—some scanned the sidewalk for cigarette butts worth a drag or two. Chicago relocation officer Stanley Lyman called these offices "slave markets." For the Native man taking in the experience for the first time, they would be his salvation. The next morning he was on his own.[3]

This study has thus far aggressively argued against urbanization as a process of victimization. Instead, it has argued for urbanization, both within and independent from the Indian bureau's relocation program, as an *Indian process*, in which Indians played a substantial role in negotiating the end results. At the same time, the point has not been to suggest that urbanization, especially under the auspices of the federal program, could not and did not prove disastrous for thousands of Native people. It most certainly did. Among over one-hundred individual subject case files sampled for this study, over half included Indian urban relocatees who quit work, failed to show up for interviews, suffered from alcoholism or other ailments, returned to their reservations, or some combination thereof. This chapter is designed to confront those outcomes head on.[4]

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[3] "Narrative of Incidents Relating to Assignment of Joe La Salle to Chicago Field Relocation Office, 20 November 1959," box 14, folder 20, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah.

[4] In sum, I reviewed 67 subject case files from the NARA Rocky Mountain Branch in Denver, Colorado, 25 from the NARA Great Plains Branch in Kansas City, Missouri, and roughly 20-30 from the NARA Southwest Branch in Fort Worth, Texas.

In the process, however, I seek not to undermine one of my overarching theses, but rather to demonstrate continuity by suggesting that explanations for "failure" in the city were just as subjective and deserve just as much careful consideration as explanations for why so many Native people enthusiastically embraced metropolitan life in the first place. Simply put, why relocation broke down and failed for so many is an equally complicated historical problem that no sweeping conclusion can satisfy. Moreover, a jeremiad of anything and everything that could go wrong for Indians in the city does not necessarily confirm prevailing conclusions that Indians en masse were victims of the relocation program, or that policy architects and administrators were necessarily intent on destroying Indians' lives. Instead, if read from a more forgiving and nuanced direction, we might appreciate the following corpus of evidence as being further reflective of Indians' resolve during the twentieth century, and that they fought tirelessly to improve future prospects if not always for themselves, then at least for their children, even as many among them well understood that the odds were frequently against them.

Before engaging in an appraisal of the profound problems Indians might confront upon their arrival in various cities, it is worth emphasizing that numerous Indians' problems began at home, and that notions of "failure" were not unique to urban destinations. At times, tribal leaders suggested as much. For example, in 1956, Colorado River Indian Tribes chairman Pete Homer authored an article for his tribal newspaper that discussed how his people applied for expanded relocation services as part of the Adult Vocational Training program, set to begin the following year. In the

article he explains that, "While we regret very much the conditions which necessitated your voluntary decision to leave the reservation, we also would like to commend you and your families on the wise move you are making under the circumstances." He then expresses regret that the tribe's land had not been adequately developed to support the people as a permanent home. "It seems that we have failed miserable [sic] in our obligation to you and for the welfare of the others who are taking the same initial step."[5]

Similarly, in 1959, influential Northern Cheyenne tribal president John Woodenlegs expressed his frustration not only about the relocation program, but also concerning the BIA's general attitude toward Indians who made meaningful attempts to improve their economic conditions. Woodenlegs pointed to six of his people who went on relocation to California, immediately returned, and ultimately wasted $600 of programmatic support each. But if he felt that relocation was not a viable solution to his people's problems, he was not gaining much BIA support for reservation-based economic initiatives either. Woodenlegs claimed that the "BIA blocks everything" and that they "laughed at us for building in winter." More specifically, the BIA first encouraged the tribe to develop its "endless" coal resources, but then shipped in its own coal from Wyoming as a reservation fuel source, thus undermining the tribe's opportunity to capitalize on its own resources.[6]

In addition to their efforts to place Indians at jobs through the relocation program, relocation officers occasionally worked hard to find employment for their Native charges on and around their respective reservations. But too often their efforts

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[5] *Smoke Signals: Colorado River Indian Tribes* (Undated, but must be between 1 December 1956 and 12 December 1956, and is likely volume one, number six).
[6] Travel Notebook Four: entry 26 July 1959, box 1, RG1, Theodore Hetzel Papers, CSWS, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

unfolded in vain as reservation and rural economies proved limited in their ability to offer stable and gainful employment. What this amounted to was a decisive push factor that diminished rural Indian Country's value in the eyes of enterprising young Indians. For example, relocation officers in Montana established connections with local contractors, farmers, ranchers, and railroad lines to find employment for Native people. "We have canvassed the hotels, motels, and larger stores for jobs," one relocation officer informed his area director. Local employment opportunities were especially important when relocation assistance funds ran out, as they frequently did throughout the year. However, local employment was problematic in that it often was only of the seasonal variety. "It does seem to me though that due to lack of relocation funds we are putting too much emphasis on seasonal employment," relocation officer William Ames wrote. "This type of employment has been a curse to the Indian people for many many years in the past… It is so bad in this area that many of the Indian workers have accepted the fact that they are only seasonal workers and will not accept employment for any great length of time."[7] In referring to seasonal employment as a "curse," Ames failed to appreciate the fact that some Indian tribes had worked tirelessly across several decades to nurture seasonal employment networks. Through that process, migratory labor for some tribes amounted not to a "curse," but rather to a tradition that informed their collective identity.[8]

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[7] Fort Belknap Consolidated Agency Relocation Officer's Monthly Report, July 1, 1955, Box 17, Folder "Monthly Reports from Agencies, FY 1954," 8NS-075-97-270 BIA Billings Area Office "Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960," National Archives and Records Administration Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.
[8] See for example Bauer, *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here* (2009) and Raibmon, *Authentic Indians* (2005).

Taken together, these examples provide a brief of illustration and important reminder of how reservations were often sources of suffering as well. Cities introduced their own series of potential pitfalls (as the remainder of this chapter will emphasize), but it is important to acknowledge that cities and reservations did not reinforce Indians' socio-economic problems in isolation from each other. Rather, Native people consistently put both spaces in dialogue with each other when evaluating the challenges that lay ahead. The reservation mattered not only as a push factor, but also as a comparative socio-economic venue. The most astute observers of Indians' efforts to overcome poverty and social marginalization understood that they were facing a systemic problem. Spatial movement alone did not necessarily mitigate that problem for all concerned parties. But neither did repetition of the same fruitless strategies that at best only preserved Native people's second-class citizenship status.

In addition to providing a migratory push factor, reservations were at times places where prospective relocatees first encountered problems specific to the program. Those intent on exposing the program's potentially false promises often needed to look no further than the posters and advertisements displayed on reservation agencies' windows and bulletin boards. For example, Mr. Able recalled how prior to relocating his family to Chicago relocation officers enticed him with pictures of a "successfully relocated" family from his own reservation. One step ahead, Mr. Able did not hesitate to point out that the family in question had in fact recently returned to the reservation. The relocation officers' no doubt embarrassing oversight proved to be something of a portent of things to come for the Able family. They ultimately arrived at severe

disappointment with their relocation experience, and like the family in the picture, returned home. Able reached for some solace in explaining that back home on the reservation his family might go hungry, but his fellow tribespeople would never allow them to outright starve. "I can stand poorness, I have been poor all my life," Mr. Able regretted. "It is my children, I want something for them."[9]

Misleading advertising was perhaps a byproduct of the profound pressure that the federal government placed on relocation to succeed. After all, alongside the simultaneously unfolding termination policy, relocation was supposed to finally provide a solution to the enduring Indian problem—failure was not an option. Yet, as previous chapters have discussed, urbanization was a negotiated process that Indians often controlled. Therefore, relocation officials must have felt compelled to twist arms and practice subtle coercion. "There were quotas to be filled and I have this on the information of one of the relocation officers himself," Chicago's St. Augustine's Center for Indians director Father Peter Powell recalled. "The Indian Bureau was giving the relocation staff here a quota of people to bring into [Chicago], such as they were being brought in, the initial follow-up was made, and then they were dropped."[10]

During a speech delivered to the Indian Rights Association in 1959, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Interior Roger Ernst broke BIA character by pointedly criticizing the relocation program. In particular, he took umbrage with the same false advertising that the Able family experienced, and the pressure exerted on relocation officials to meet the same quotas that Father Powell decried. "I have been on

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[9] Wade B. Arends, *A Socio-Cultural Study of the Relocation of American Indians to Chicago* (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1958), 48-49.
[10] Father Peter Powell, interview with author, 9 December 2009. Transcript in author's possession.

reservations where I've seen beautiful views of beaches in Southern California posted on bulletin boards," Ernst revealed. "Also pictures of homes with swimming pools… certainly things [an individual Indian] is not going to be in a financial position to have right away." Ernst maintained that the program had much to recommend if conducted honestly. Pointing to misleading relocation advertisements, however, he could only conclude, "This seems to smack a little bit of meeting a quota."[11]

At the same time, BIA officials were often quick to suggest that they too wrestled with their own problem of misinformation and sensationalized conclusions about the relocation program. "It sure burns me up when I read an article written by some person that says the purpose of the relocation program is to get Indians off the land so that white men can steal it," Commissioner of Indians Affairs Glenn Emmons confessed in 1956. "That makes me pretty mad when I read things like that and a lot of people when they read that, a lot of them believe it and it makes it sort of discouraging sometimes."[12]

Problems with misinformation or lack of information often persisted when relocatees arrived at their new urban destinations. Numerous Native people insisted that the BIA could be willfully elusive when asked about exactly how much financial support was available, and for how long. When weekly stipends did run out, relocated Indians often expressed confusion over where to turn for help should they become

[11] "A Policy to Meet Indian Needs Today," *Indian Truth* (published by the Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia), v36, n1 (January-April, 1959), 2.
[12] "Winnebago Meeting with Commissioner Glenn Emmons," 20 July 1956, box 3, folder 1, Glenn Emmons Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

desperate. Oftentimes, both relocated Indians and non-Indian city officials seemed unclear on whether or not BIA services were still an option. Some relocated Indians learned this the hard way when they went to urban social services agencies only to be turned away by social workers who insisted that Indians were supposed to get help from either their respective tribes or the federal government. For example, during an interview in 1971, Jim Olquin (Ute) maintained that relocation failed because the BIA offered so little in the way of meaningful or substantive support. In and out of jail repeatedly, Olquin mentioned that when he did want to reach out for help he had no idea where to go, or to whom to turn.[13]

In his "Special Message to the Congress on Indian Affairs" on July 8, 1970, President Richard Nixon acknowledged this same problem when he remembered to include urban Indians in his list of recommendations for improving American Indians' socio-economic position within the United States. "Lost in the anonymity of the city, often cut off from family and friends, many urban Indians are slow to establish new community ties," he suggested. "Many drift from neighborhood to neighborhood; many shuttle back and forth between reservations and urban areas." In the city, Nixon pointed out, roughly 75 percent of Indians lived in poverty, but BIA services were no longer available to them after their initial adjustment period. Native people who struggled with language and cultural differences often failed to locate, or even recognize, urban social welfare services available to them in the absence of BIA support. "As a result, Federal, State and local programs which are designed to help such persons often miss this most

[13] Interview with Jim Olquin, 1971, box 26, Ute Indian Interviews, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Sources on the duration of financial support unreliably vary from two weeks to ninety days.

deprived and least understood segment of the urban poverty population," Nixon concluded.[14]

A primary goal of the Voluntary Relocation Program and its ancillary services was to facilitate the "melting down" of culturally distinctive Indian tribes into the mainstream American population. In prior decades, especially during the onset of the Indian boarding school system, many federal policymakers and social reformers alike seemed to believe that Indians could figuratively become white through a structured process of assimilation. Indians' wider acceptance in mainstream America therefore should have come more easily than it did for other marginalized groups, but that often was not the case as Indian families often pointed to racial discrimination as a major reason for their failure to gain firmer footing in urban America. For example, an Indian family of four from an unspecified tribe relocated together to Chicago after the family's female head refused to let her husband first go alone and establish residence and employment. Things seemed to be going well when they located an "unusually desirable" two-room kitchenette apartment and made a $5.00 deposit. But when they arrived at the apartment to begin moving in they learned that the owner had ordered the manager to refuse them entry and to return their deposit because they were Indian. Coming to the rescue, the BIA fought on the family's behalf and threatened to enlist the

[14] "Special Message to the Congress on Indian Affairs," 8 July 1970, *Public Papers of the President of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1970), 564-576.

Better Business Bureau, at which point the apartment owner finally relented and allowed the family to move in.[15]

In 1960, Chicago Indian community leader Benjamin Bearskin (Winnebago) experienced a similar, albeit more dangerous, situation. After relocating his family to Chicago from South Dakota in 1948, Bearskin had worked for twelve years as a welder and construction laborer by day and board chairman of the American Indian Center by night and on weekends. All of his hard work seemed to be paying off when he proudly moved his family of seven into a new four-room apartment in Humboldt Park, a neighborhood that was 99 percent white at that time.[16] "We spent all day May 14 moving into our flat after we had worked hard to clean and decorate it," Benjamin's wife Fredeline (Winnebago) recalled. "That night we went to a party at the Indian Center. When we reached home, we found the windows had been smashed by stones." The Bearskins' new front room was filled with stones and broken glass; vandals had in fact broken every window in the building. Attached to one stone read a note: "You mex, get out of here. This is only the beginning. No kidding. [Signed] The Whites." However shaken, Benjamin Bearskin refused to let the incident compromise his resolve, or his sense of humor: "I feel it's an honor to be taken for Mexican."[17] Ten days later a frightened landlord evicted the Bearskins from their new apartment as a result of

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[15] "Chicago Field Placement Office Report, April 1952," box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, NARA Washington DC.
[16] Chicago Historical Society, Encyclopedia of Chicago History: http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/617.html, accessed 12 March 2014. The neighborhood was in fact just beginning to receive a substantial influx of Puerto Rican migrants during this period, which might explain some of the ignorant Caucasian residents' confusion about the Bearskin family's race.
[17] "Bigotry Here – An Indian Home is Stoned," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 May 1960.

persistent threats. "They fear the neighborhood will be overrun by Negroes, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, I guess," Bearskin reasoned. "But my ideal neighborhood is one where you might find 10 or 12 nationalities all getting along together." After sharing an experience in which a stranger threatened to beat one of the Bearskin children for dropping a gum wrapper, Fredeline concluded, "It's tough to have to take such treatment—we belong to this country."[18]

The Bearskins' pursuit of better housing is understandable. They were after all supposed to be demonstrating racial uplift, joining their white American brethren, and setting an example for other Native families. The more immediate underlying concern, however, was that the BIA channeled a majority of relocated Indians straight into substandard housing immediately upon their arrival. Indeed, during the programs initial phase, substandard housing proved the main obstruction to "successful" relocations in Denver. "True enough, there is some cheap rental housing but such housing very definitely is undesirable as quite often the so-called cheap housing may be converted sheds, garages, barns; yes, and even chicken coops," Denver field placement officer Leigh Hubbard advised acting relocation program chief Charles Rovin in September 1952. "We do not feel that it is advisable to ask people to move into Denver when we can offer them no better than this latter type mentioned."[19]

On at least one occasion, relocated Indians did gain access to the most desirable tier of urban housing. Sociologist James Goodner, who during the late 1960s conducted

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[18] "Bearskin Family to Move from W. Side," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 26 May 1960; "Indian Family Hunting Home After Eviction," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 May 1960.
[19] Leigh Hubbard to Charles Rovin (Acting Chief, Branch of Training, Placement and Relocation), 12 September 1952, box 2, folder: Reports—Narrative, Denver 1953, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

an extensive study of Dallas's Native community, cited a non-Indian pastor who only scoffed at his inquiry about Indians living in luxury apartments. "As a matter of fact," Goodner later confirmed, "the luxury apartments were exactly where I did find the young Indian people, and within a few blocks of this pastor's church!" At the very least, the pastor's disbelief over Indians' potential for such socio-economic advancement betrayed his prejudiced expectations for where Indians could belong within mainstream America, and he could not have been alone in his thinking.[20]

Relocated Indians could also run into problems with discrimination at their new places of employment. For example, during the 1960s most Minneapolis industries proved resistant to the idea of hiring Indians. According to a study conducted by the Minnesota State Advisory Committee, only the Honeywell Corporation had made serious efforts to recruit Native workers.[21] Although there were some available jobs in surrounding suburbs, Indians mostly failed to apply for them simply because they lacked reliable transportation. When local Twin-Cities employment agencies attempted to envelop prospective Native workers within their system they faced additional problems, including changing skill requirements, lack of tools, lack of educational credentials, and, at times, Indians' "disillusionment" with the employment process. According to employment services agents, suburban corporations were more amenable to filling their affirmative action quotas with Indians, but their uncertainty about

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[20] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 5.

[21] Indeed, famed American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks worked for Honeywell as a job recruiter during the late 1960s. Dennis Banks with Richard Erdoes, *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004) 346.

Indians' ability to adequately adjust to contemporary working and living patterns often precluded further interest.[22]

Indians who did not suffer housing and employment discrimination might have been struggling just to be noticed at all. In some instances, the comparatively small number of urban Indians resulted in their presence and needs being obscured by larger minority groups that commanded greater attention. In 1956, for example, an official from the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights in Chicago explained why 3000-4000 Indians residing in the Windy City were not the focus of urban welfare initiatives. "Look," he said, "We have almost that many colored people moving into the city every two weeks from the South. We simply don't have the resources to give time or attention to so small a minority." "This is profoundly regrettable," Indian Rights Association representative Harold E. Fey countered, "not only because of the long delay in justice to the Indian but also because it is wrong to apply a numerical standard to a problem of human relations as old and as important as this one."[23]

Native people residing in Gallup, New Mexico decried a different brand of invisibility when they disseminated controversial pamphlets titled "When Our Grandfathers Carried Guns" during the city's "A Tribute to the American Indian" public ceremonial. The fiery polemic argued that the City of Gallup only presented Indians as two-dimensional stereotypes from the past, while failing to draw needed attention to

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[22] "Bridging the Gap: The Twin Cities Native American Community," report conducted by the Minnesota State Advisory Committee under the auspices of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975).

[23] Harold E. Fey, "Our American Indian Neighbors" (address to 73rd Annual Meeting of IRA, on Feb 2, 1956), *Indian Truth* (published by the Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia, PA), v.33, n.1 (Jan-Feb, 1956).

modern Indians with modern problems. Simply put, the pamphlet insisted that Gallup officials exploited the Indian image for public entertainment, but offered no substantive, reciprocal service in the ceremony's aftermath:

> "The Ceremonial does not give a true picture of the Indian. Just because Indians sing and dance for you, that does not mean that they are happy… Do not believe it. At the night performances, you will hear what a proud and happy people we are. Do not believe that either. Do not think that the City of Gallup respects the Indian because it gives them a free barbecue."

The pamphlet then proceeded to highlight Native people's high unemployment and low income rates, alongside high suicide and infant mortality rates. Next, the pamphlet cited a study that claimed that while 72 percent of all commercial businesses in Gallup conducted commerce with Native people, the city in general devoted little to no attention to its Native population's socio-economic health. Moreover, the pamphlet characterized the "Indian Capital of the World" as a sort of social cesspool in which visitors could witness local police "savagely beating helpless drunk Indians." Finally, the fiery polemic railed against the fact that municipal leaders had recently been designing a Gallup city flag that included Indian imagery, despite the designers' failure to invite any creative input from the city's Native community.[24] It is important to note here that racism and discrimination that Native people experienced in Gallup was likely more acute than that which Indians experienced in a more cosmopolitan community

[24] "When Our Grandfathers Carried Guns," *The Gallup Independent*, 11 September 1969, found in box 11A, folder 3, Theodore Hetzel Papers, Center for Southwest Research, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

such as Chicago. After all, Gallup is a reservation border town, where, according to anthropologist Thomas Biolsi, Indians' "deadliest enemies" often reside.[25]

Indians who did not take to the streets to protest racist stereotypes might simply have been too busy trying to keep their job, or even just find steady work at all. Father Peter Powell, who founded and administered St. Augustine's Center for Indians in Chicago and worked with thousands of relocated Indians across several decades, explained how Indians in his city who lacked secondary education and by extension could only perform unskilled labor fell victim each year to typically high lay-off rates between November and March. Those unfortunate Indian workers fell under the banner of "last hired, first fired." "After they have lost their jobs, in most cases they are ineligible to receive Welfare assistance, as they do not meet the year's residency requirement," Powell elaborated, before adding, "Most of them do not desire Welfare assistance anyway."[26]

Betty Jack, an Ojibwe woman who relocated to Chicago's Uptown neighborhood in 1951 in search of better employment opportunities, is perhaps illustrative of the daily grind Indians experienced in Chicago's day-labor system. As she expressed to a news reporter in 1971, those opportunities were hard won. Jack detailed the particularly inimical grind of the day labor system, to which she and several of her Chicago Indian community cohorts were subjected:

> I'd get up at 4:30 a.m. to go over and get in line to try for day labor," Mrs. Jack said. "We'd get on the bus at 6:30 a.m. and be at work by 8. It

[25] Thomas Biolsi, *Deadliest Enemies: Law and the Making of Race Relations On and Off the Rosebud Reservation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2001).
[26] Saint Augustine's Center Annual Report, 1962, unpublished papers of Father Peter Powell housed at St. Augustine's Center for Indians in Chicago, Illinois.

> was mostly packing plants. The guy in charge speeds up the conveyor belts to get more work from us, since we're not union and can't scream. Then at 5, we get on the bus and come back. They take 50 cents for the bus, and you get low pay. You've spent all that time, and you get maybe $12 for the day. They don't want you to get ahead. You never get far enough ahead to take time to look for a regular job. At the end of the day, every place is closed but the bars; so that is where you go to cash your check. Working day labor is like a drug addict. You can't get out of it. That's one reason all of us live together in one apartment. There's no choice.[27]

In 1965, Charles Munson held a job as a maintenance supervisor for the Jewish Home for the Aged in Los Angeles making $53 per week. According to Munson, he was hired as a painter, but the home only reserved room in its budget for two painters, and two Mexican men ahead of him had seniority and families to support. Therefore, when the home needed to make budget cuts it dismissed Munson first. He subsequently struggled to make a weekly $5.00 rent payment on a room he did not like. "Just a sleeping room is never any good wherever your [sic] at," he expressed. "Just four walls if you know what I mean. No phone in the building, just pay phones on the home grounds." In an individual relocatee progress evaluation he requested info on locating an Indian club or Episcopal church where he could meet other Indians. "There's none around here," he explained, "just Mexicans and Japanese mostly." Despite his struggles to maintain steady employment and afford adequate housing, his chief complaint concerned smog: "I couldn't take another summer of this smog. I don't see how anyone can stand it in summer, burns your eyes and lungs." Moreover, he expressed particular

[27] "The Urban Indian: He Has Become a Stranger in His Native Land," *Chicago Tribune,* 22 August 1971.

frustration over his inability to purchase either a coffeemaker or a television, two modern conveniences often featured in BIA relocation promotional materials.[28]

In a final example of the tenuous nature of relocation's promise of employment, in 1954 two Cree men from Montana's Rocky Boy's Reservation returned home from California because they had only made the "extra board" for railroad work, but needed full time to survive. Upon their return home, both complained about high deductions for income tax and railroad retirement, and that living costs far exceeding their earnings. Moreover, they expressed disappointment in their inability to land aviation work, which was their primary goal in attempting relocation in the first place.[29]

The Bureau of Indian Affairs tended to count any relocated Indians who simply remained in the city for at least one year as a "success." Beneath that assumption however, many Native people struggled to adjust to their new surroundings even as they persevered. Father Peter Powell, who worked closely with relocated Indian families in Chicago, could only describe the early years of the relocation program as "indescribable." "Families were brought in here on a one-way ticket," he recalled. "After a month, it was assumed the Indian family had adjusted and all aid was

[28] Field Employment Assistance Office Questionnaire, Los Angeles (1965), box 102, folder: Relocatee Progress Evaluation, RG75, Records Relating to Employment Assistance Programs, compiled 1949-1973, NARA Washington. Charles Munson is not this individual's real name. The questionnaire to which he responded did not specify his tribal designation.

[29] George Barrett to Paul Fickinger (Area Director), 5 March 1954, box 17, folder: Area Relocation Reports, FY 1954, RG75, Billings Area Office, Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Rocky Mountain Region, Denver.

dropped."[30] During relocation's peak period of activity, he insisted, "the present policy of the Indian Bureau is the most immoral one in over half a century."[31]

During an academic conference held at Chicago's Newberry Library in 1980 to discuss the topic of urban Indians, eminent University of Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax emphasized a similar negative evaluation of relocation. Tax recalled how during the 1950s the Chicago Field Relocation Office refused to tell those who desired to help relocated Indians—including local social services agencies, private citizens, and the Chicago Indian Center—precisely which trains relocatees were arriving on because the BIA sought to avoid outside interference with its program. Tax claimed that the field offices would only support one change of employment, and then after that they would tell struggling relocated Indians to "get lost."[32]

Tax suggested that the fundamental flaw with the relocation program was that it was a one-way bus ticket when it should have been round-trip. Guaranteeing Indians the opportunity to return, he argued, would have rendered the program far less disastrous in that it would have allowed Indians greater flexibility in deciding whether or not adjusting to urban life was something that was indeed right for them and their families. Moreover, Tax argued, relocated Indians could have returned home and shared the knowledge they gained about mainstream America. In sum, he regretted that the relocation program was not more of an extended urban education program, wherein Indians could have gained valuable experiences that would allow them to help their

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[30] "Father Peter Powell: a white man they can trust," *The Sunday Herald*, 18 November 1979.
[31] *Episcopal Church News*, 3 March 1957.
[32] *Urban Indians: Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference on problems and Issues Concerning American Indians today* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1981).

people back home. In the absence of such an outcome, he asserted, relocation could only be branded a "scandal."[33]

Hunkpati Dakota tribal councilman Paul Harrison expressed a similar line of reasoning for his objection to relocation as a solution for his people's problems. "Sure, if he at least maybe had a high school education he can do it," he conceded. "But why send a person out there who has only an eighth grade education or a fifth grade and then assist him for about a year," he begged. "I think that's the way the program operates, and then drop him all of a sudden." Further Harrison pointed out that some tribes, including his own Crow Creek tribe, disenfranchised their relocated Indians and denied them tribal services. A better strategy, he suggested, was to have tribal people work in towns closer to reservations so that they would not be stranded and desperate if the situation proved unsatisfactory. He mentioned that many of his people had found steady employment in nearby Pierre and Rapid City, South Dakota[34]

At times even boarding schools that had reliably demonstrated buoyant enthusiasm for cities as venues for Indian uplift began souring on BIA efforts, or the lack thereof. For example, in 1962 the Haskell Institute solicited Minnesota Labor Committee director Louis Lerman's help in securing jobs for five recent graduates. Lerman successfully landed the students positions in the Twin-Cities, but in a letter to

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[33] *Urban Indians: Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference on problems and Issues Concerning American Indians today* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1981). Further demonstrating the tendency among critics to characterize relocation as a "one-way ticket," former Indian affairs commissioner Philleo Nash, who worked to improve the program when he took over during the Kennedy administration, stated, "Myer's relocation program was essentially a one-way bus ticket from rural to urban poverty." See Kenneth R. Philp, ed., *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995), 166.

[34] Interview with Paul Harrison, 28 July 1968, AIRP 0051, American Indian History Research Project, Northern State College, Aberdeen, South Dakota.

influential Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey he expressed frustration in his efforts. "The BIA has not done a thing outside of educating these Indian youth," he railed. "We have to look for subsistence to other sources until they get their first pay check… The local BIA office is helpless." He also pointed to ideological gridlock within the Indian bureau that stemmed from a lack of personnel turnover. "The bureaucrats who are between Nash and the field staff run things," he insisted. "They are there for 40 years under all administrations and run things as they see fit."[35]

When relocation's promise began breaking down some Indian bureau officials would do their best to try to salvage the situation and convince their charges not to give up. In a letter to a Native man who was struggling to adjust after relocating from Montana to California, Fort Belknap Agency Superintendent J. W. Wellington provides an example of the persuasive nature of Indian Bureau agents' messages to Indians on relocation. Wellington repeatedly implores his letter recipient to stay in California and resist any temptation to return home. According to Wellington, many people were out of work on the reservation as a result of bad winter weather. "It is much better to live where you can earn a living the year round than to be unemployed and unable to have the necessities of life six months out of every year." After challenging the relocated Native man to resist the pull of homesickness, he added, "You are aware of conditions on the reservation and know the hardships that many of the people face, particularly during the winter months. After giving careful thought and weighing the opportunities and conveniences which you now enjoy I feel confident that your judgment will advise

[35] Jobs for Minnesota Indians: In Cooperation with the Minnesota Labor Committee for Human Rights and the Governor's Human Rights Commission, box 148, folder: June 4-10, 1962—Minneapolis Trip—Correspondence (3 of 4), Papers of Philleo Nash, Truman Library.

you to stay and to exert further effort to make a success and permanent home in the community where you now reside."[36]

For some Indian urban migrants, no amount of individual fortitude or Indian bureau advocacy could prevent a descent into socio-economic despair. While no exact figures exist, a substantial number of Indians did succumb to alcoholism and ended up homeless and unemployed. This tragic outcome alone perhaps explains relocation's much-maligned legacy. Richard Elm (Oneida) shared his impression of directing St. Augustine's Drop-In Center for Chicago Indians who struggled with alcohol and substance abuse: "They just can't handle the city. They come here from the reservations to get jobs. But there were none. That's why they turned to drink. All I can do is keep them alive a little longer." Contextualizing relocation within a historical legacy of colonialism and Indian military defeat, Elm poignantly concluded, "They used to just blow you away. Now they do it in other ways."[37] Similarly, a relocated Chippewa man's candid statement to a news reporter perhaps reflects the sense of defeat some members of Chicago's Indian community must have felt when they accepted social welfare:

> "I ain't no Chicago Indian. I'm from the Bad River reservation in Wisconsin. There was nothing up on the reservation. I wanted to come down to see the big city. All my friends came too. I show up here [the Readyman day-labor office] everyday. When they don't send me out, I go get drunk. I can't hold a steady job. You know how Indians are. Once

[36] Fort Belknap Consolidated Agency Superintendent J.W. Wellington to Paul Plummage, 16 December 1953, box 17, folder: Monthly Reports from Agencies, FY 1954, RG75, Billings Area Office Vocational and Subject Case Files, 1951-1960, National Archives and Records Administration Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.
[37] "The Uprooted Americans," *The Sunday Herald*, 18 November 1979.

> we start on the bottle, we're stuck. I'd like to go back to the reservation now. Give me the money to live on and I'd go back tomorrow."[38]

When Korean War veteran Darrell Gardner (Ute) and his wife went on relocation to Denver during the 1950s things initially seemed promising. Gardner recalled that he liked his job, and that his wife was happy to attend beauty school. Before long, however, he concluded that relocation was a mistake. Speaking generally about the program during an interview in 1986, he claimed, "They tried to push them out too fast. You can't change a people. What's in their heart and their souls, you know. You can't change it over night." Gardner expressed particular frustration over how relocation precipitated many Indians descent into alcoholism. No amount of cosmetic veneer could mask alcoholism's pernicious effects, he reasoned. "Maybe the outside appearance: they put a suit on them," he expressed. "But they're not the same inside." Moreover, he claimed that many relocatees' pride had been hurt when they realized white workers earned higher wages for working the same positions as Indians. He also felt that the city was bad for Indian children in that it rendered parents' responsibility for looking after their children more difficult. He did however confess that he appreciated the opportunity to "see a little bit different point of view," and that the only thing he initially missed from the reservation was the smell of sagebrush.[39]

Taos Pueblo leader Telesfor Romero shared his conviction that relocation did "a great deal of damage in breaking down the old ways and religion" among young people from his tribe. Those who left, he asserted, essentially forgot that Taos existed. "Their

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[38] "The Uprooted Americans," *The Sunday Herald*, 18 November 1979.
[39] Interview with Darrell Gardner, 18 October 1986, box 1, folder 9, Ute Indian Interviews, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

property goes to pieces, they lose their water rights on the reservation," he elaborated. But the city provided no benevolent solution to Indians' problems, he argued. He claimed that in the city Indians were vulnerable to unscrupulous salesmen who "have sugar talk and they get [Indians] to buy more than they can pay for."[40]

At times city officials took note of the relocated Indians who struggled within their jurisdiction, and at times they became the targets of distressed Indians' anger over the situation. In 1956, Minneapolis Mayor Eric Hoyer confessed that there were a disproportionate number of Native people residing in the city's welfare workhouse. In 1955, for example, Indians comprised twelve percent of the Minneapolis workhouse population despite comprising less than .5 percent of the city's total population. Mayor Hoyer mentioned that some Indians confronted him in his office with accusatory questions that reflected their profound anger and desperation: "Why do you let us come into Minneapolis and make drunkards out of ourselves and prostitutes out of our women and daughters?"[41]

Given such potentially catastrophic conditions, it is understandable that thousands of relocated Indians returned to their tribal homes in order to regroup and try urban life again at a later date, or to remain home on the reservation permanently. When surveying prevailing reasons for return, however, it is important to note that they often proved just as inconsistent and unpredictable as reasons for initially leaving. In response

[40] Relocation Memo, 10 July 1959, box 7, folder 40, Sophie Aberle Papers, CSWR, UNM.
[41] "Relocation Not Full Answer," *Devils Lake Journal*, 23 November 1956, found in box 13, folder 12, William Zimmerman Papers, CSWR, UNM. In 1960, Minneapolis's total population of 482,872 people included 2007 American Indians. See Sorkin, *The Urban American Indian*, 11.

to a survey on relocation conducted by anthropologist Sophie B. Aberle, Domingo Tenorio (Pueblo) shared his experiences going on relocation to Inglewood, California. For recreation he drove his car around town, visited the Indian Center daily, caught a movie once per month, occasionally bowled and shot pool, and enjoyed reading sports magazines and newspapers. He only went to the bar "once in a while." A visitor lived with him briefly, but failed to help with rent. Tenorio claimed that he did not see much benefit in relocation, and eventually returned home. He did express pride in the three cars he purchased while on relocation, and brought one home with him as a souvenir from his experience. Happy to be home again, he shared in his survey a somewhat vague impression of what he appreciated about reservation life: "It's benefits living are reservation supporting mother. And work on farm and jewelry work [sic]." Asked to specify what he considered the disadvantages of urban life, Tenorio responded, "Traffic violations—strict laws on streets and strict rules on paying room and board." Prior to relocation, Tenorio had served in the military and worked for two years on railroad gangs in Texas. He therefore had off-reservation experiences, and demonstrated no profound character flaws. Urban life, it appears, simply did not agree with his individual character.[42]

World War II veteran and fellow Pueblo relocatee Joe D. Chavez expressed a negative appraisal similar to that of Tenorio. In California Chavez only socialized with other Indians he knew from New Mexico, especially his Jemez Pueblo neighbors. He mentioned that he liked relocation at first because he enjoyed the steady work and was able to purchase clothing for his children. Moreover, he loved reading popular

[42] Relocation Survey Questionnaires (1959), box 6, folder 8, Sophie Aberle Papers, CSWR, UNM.

magazines that were unavailable back home, and enjoyed going to the movies. He was bothered by a particular brand of urban confinement, however. Whereas numerous Native people discussed throughout this study pursued urban life as an escape from reservation confinement, Chavez's experience marked an inversion of that concept. "In Reservation it our own living home. No taxable and can do any other things when on the reservation," he wrote on a relocation questionnaire. "In city can not do as we please when have three or four children they don't allowed our children to be on the street," he elaborated. When the questionnaire asked if he was happy, he responded, "Yes, right where I am again going back and forth into city of Albuquerque N. Mex. and back to Pueblo of Santo Domingo Pueblo." Upon his return home, Chavez first landed a job with Chrysler earning $320 per month. After being laid off, he shuttled back and forth between his Santo Domingo reservation and Albuquerque, where he worked on bridges for a local contracting firm, before self-relocating permanently to Albuquerque for a warehouse stockman position. Relocation to California did not prove suitable for Chavez. At the same time, his return did not render him a victim of the program. He was in control of his own fate every step of the way. California merely proved another stop on a life trajectory marked by mobility.[43]

The first Cherokee family to relocate from Oklahoma was the Doubleheads, who went to Chicago during the program's pilot stage in 1951. During a newspaper interview in 1976, patriarch Hiner Doublehead recalled how his family immediately struggled to adjust to their new setting. Most problematically, his two oldest children only spoke Cherokee, and could not communicate with their intended peers. Moreover,

[43] Relocation Survey Questionnaires (1959), box 6, folder 8, Sophie Aberle Papers, CSWR, UNM.

Hiner pointed to Chicago's overwhelmingly labyrinthine arrangement as a source of difficulty: "I know people who used to get lost in Stillwell. By God, they're up in Chicago now. No wonder they turn into alcoholics." After twelve years, the Doubleheads returned to Stillwell, Oklahoma, where they owned over ten acres of property. Hiner called their return "the best decision I ever made," and mentioned that he only missed Chicago's famous Polish sausages.[44]

In 1956, during a meeting in Omaha with various tribal councilmen and Indian affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons, Aberdeen Area BIA Director and future U.S. congressman Ben Reifel (Lakota) delivered a brief synopsis of how relocation could problematically unfold: "Here's what happens—a family leaves the reservation and goes to Omaha, Chicago, or Denver. He gets a job which may pay him around $250 a month. A salesman comes along and sells him a television set, or a car on the installment plan and before long he will have more payments than he can pay and he does not have anything with which to pay the grocery bill. He gets discouraged and comes home."[45]

Reifel's account is packaged so neatly and efficiently one gets the impression that he had perhaps recounted or heard it numerous times. The overarching problem he identified was one of budgeting and income. On one hand, federal officials attempted to sell Indians on the promise of owning televisions, automobiles, and even new homes. But then, at least in this instance, those same federal officials reduced relocated Indians to a brisk talking point that emphasized their inability to manage finances. It almost

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[44] "Chicago, it was a jungle," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 September 1976.
[45] Meeting Minutes, Tribal Council Conference with BIA Commissioner Glenn Emmons, Omaha, Nebraska, 19-21 July 1956, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, box 3, folder 1, CSWR, UNM.

seemed as though Indians were being punished for wanting to live as equals alongside non-Indian people, which was of course the comprehensive goal of the relocation program.

A 1959 study of returnees who initially passed through the Billings Area relocation office in Montana demonstrates the particularly subjective and unpredictable nature of reasons for waving goodbye to various urban destinations. John M. Old Coyote claimed that his reason for returning to his Crow reservation had everything to do with insufficient work wages in Dallas. For unexplained reasons, however, his family back home on the reservation told a BIA representative that Old Coyote returned because he "was always spoiled." Harvey Driftwood mentioned that his family simply could not get along with each other in the city, and felt that a change of scenery would help. Benjamin Cloud mentioned that because his family was lonely in the city they made a visit home during Christmas, but consequently exhausted their finances and as result could not get back to Los Angeles. Joseph Longjaw mentioned that he was doing fine in Dallas before a "reservation buddy" with a drinking problem showed up and drained his energy and finances. Finally, Gerald La Franier departed Los Angeles after he was almost hit by a car and could not shake the frightening experience.[46]

Interestingly, tribal cultural tradition at times provided a direct obstacle to Native people's achievement of the BIA's idea of "success." Most notably, commitments to reciprocal generosity burdened numerous families who struggled to make ends meet, and therefore had little to offer. On a related note, some urban Indian

[46] Survey of Reasons for Return, box 19, folder: Special Study of Returnees, FY 1959, RG75 Billings Area Office, Mixed Vocational and Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Denver.

migrants upheld the idea that any relative or tribesman had the right to visit for as long as he or she liked, and the host was expected to provide for them. For example, sociologist James Goodner, who conducted extensive research on the Native community living in Dallas during the late 1960s, claimed that several Indians he interviewed suffered as a result of unproductive family and friends visiting and draining their finances.[47]

Indian Bureau personnel, whom critics of the relocation program frequently accused of being careless in their treatment of Native relocatees, often went to great lengths to help families adjust to their new homes. On occasion, however, relocatees arrived in their care with personal problems that simply could not be rehabilitated through the offer of steady employment and new surroundings. In 1959, the Wilson family from Montana relocated to Chicago, where Mr. Wilson was offered a job as a grinder and polisher at Consolidated Railway Equipment. He quickly lost the job, however, as a result of his struggles with alcohol. Mr. Wilson earned some money shoveling snow before the relocation office found him a second job at Corn Products Refining Company. But Wilson was fired from that job too. Chicago Field Relocation Officer Stanley Lyman paid the struggling Native man a visit, at which point he "reviewed our services again and stressed his obligation in this relocation which meant he must work everyday." According to Lyman, Mr. Wilson had decided that since his employer had been calling his home looking for him that he would "get even with them by not going to work." The relocation office attempted damage control by moving the

[47] James Goodner, *Indian Americans in Dallas: Migrations, Missions, and Styles of Adaptation*, sponsored by the Training Center for Community Programs in Coordination with the Office of Community Programs Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1969), 4.

family into a new home and making amends with Mr. Wilson's employer, but within a few weeks he had again quit going to work and was descending ever deeper into alcoholism. With both food and hope running out, and Mr. Wilson's "inability to hold a job, drinking patterns, and immature attitude regarding family responsibilities" persisting, Lyman decided to send the family back to the reservation.

Tragically, this resulted in the partial breakup of the family as two children stayed in Chicago to live with Mr. Wilson's sister. The point here is not to dwell on alcohol abuse while advancing a negative stereotype of urban Indians. Nor is it to simply assign all culpability for the family's failure to adjust to Mr. Wilson. Rather, the idea is to complicate the assumption that Indians *en masse* were victims of a nefarious Indian Bureau scheme to destroy them. Mr. Wilson already wrestled with alcoholism before he ever arrived in Chicago. The BIA's grand mistake was in not recognizing that character flaw before accepting Wilson's application. But in the aftermath of that crucial mistake, what was relocation officer Stanley Lyman to do? Perhaps most importantly, the example of Mr. Wilson suggests that in the end the onus for making a successful transition to urban life and new work environments rested squarely on the shoulders of relocated Indians, for better or worse. It also suggests that some relocatees not only wrestled with new problems unique to urban life, they also struggled to overcome old problems that chased them from the reservation, and haunted them in the city.[48]

[48] Stanley Lyman (Chicago Field Relocation Officer) to Crow Agency Superintendent, 3 April 1959, box 1, folder (anonymous), RG 75, Billings Area Office, Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, box 1, folder (anonymous), National Archives and Records Administration Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, Colorado.

Taken together, these examples should remind us that Indians were three-dimensional people before they departed for distant cities. They certainly added layers to their being once arrived at cosmopolitan crossroads, but they also brought a lifetime of experiences to those crossroads. In the best-case scenario, cities could provide a panacea for myriad personal problems. A successful turn in the city could potentially bring new life to an anguished Indian individual. But again, most did not envision the city as a venue within which they could finally become modern, three-dimensional people. Rather, most carved paths to the city *because* they were three-dimensional people, and were tired of being restricted in their movement, both socially and spatially. Being three-dimensional, however, meant being flawed, and urban life could quickly amplify, rather than relieve, those flaws.

Returning home, however, did not necessarily provide an end to discrimination and pain. Upon their return, some Native people encountered resentment on the part of fellow tribespeople who remained home on the reservation and had no metropolitan sojourns to speak of. This could cause a significant rift between reservation and urban Indians. Department of the Interior information specialist Pauline Bates Brown, who had previously worked with the War Relocation Authority, hosted a relocation informational session in Phoenix on December 1956 that acknowledged just such a problem. She warned Native people interested in the program that they would officially represent the United States federal government and would therefore incur suspicion from those who avoided the program. "Our Bureau is often the whipping boy for the sins of others," she goaded.[49]

[49] *Smoke Signals: Colorado River Indian Tribes*, v.1, n.7 (January 11, 1957).

In December 1959, future Taos Pueblo council secretary and interpreter Telesfor Romero wrote anthropologist Sophie B. Aberle to apprise her of information he gathered after visiting relocated Pueblo people in an unspecified city. Whatever he found was in his words "not so satisfactory." Moreover, alluding to a pervasive sense of shame among those who supposedly failed in the city, Romero concluded from his discussion with Pueblo returnees that they "do not seem to want to tell out right on account they do not want to be embarrass [sic]."[50]

Despite the fact that many relocated Indians were at the very least struggling to adjust, the Bureau of Indian Affairs worked hard to promote the benefits of its pet program, and in the process likely inflated statistics on "success." In 1960, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Glenn L. Emmons claimed that 70 percent of all relocated Indians had "become self-supporting in their new homes." The most "successful" year, according to Emmons, was 1955, in which 76 percent of relocatees achieved urban independence. Problematically, however, Emmons's definition of "success" was any Indian individual or family that remained in their urban destination for at least one year.[51]

Emmons touted these figures as evidence of what Indian people could achieve "if they are only given a reasonable opportunity." Emmons also pointed to vociferous

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[50] Telesfore Romero to Sophie Aberle, 1 December 1959, box 6, folder 8, Sophie Aberle Papers, CSWR, UNM. In his evaluation, Romero also felt compelled to share with Aberle that relocatees were "classified as color race would be classified. And some are actually live amongs them [sic]."

[51] "Emmons Cites Evidence of Indian Success in Relocation," Bureau of Indian Affairs Internal Memo, 29 February 1960, box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

support from a four-man Navajo committee, formed in the fall of 1956, which visited numerous relocated Navajo families in their new urban homes. In the group's final report on their findings, committee chairman Haska Cronemyer, who also served on the general Navajo tribal council, chastised those who emphasized the difficulties relocated families experienced and exploited those difficulties as part of their own agenda to "fight the Indian affairs bureau and the whole relocation program for their own purposes or publicity." "We think the relocation program is one of the best plans the Federal Government has ever had," Cronemyer elaborated, "Had it been in effect 50 years ago, the Indian would be much better off today."[52]

Some Native people refused to accept such triumphant claims, however, and spoke out accordingly. In 1959, *Dallas Morning News* correspondent and Osage person Richard Freeman wrote influential Oklahoma senator Robert S. Kerr to rail against suggestions that Indians who relocated to Dallas were living comfortably. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst, for example, had claimed that only twenty percent of Dallas relocatees had returned to their reservations, and that only one in 130 Indian families living in the Dallas Housing Authority project experienced housing eviction. Freeman countered that wage earners were not necessarily better equipped to provide for their families in Dallas, as compared to their reservations. Even if that were true, Freeman argued, the federal government should not boast about it because their treaty obligations are to help Indians on their reservations and not in cities. Freeman pointed to an unspecified study conducted the prior fall that found 25-33 percent of relocated

[52] "Emmons Cites Evidence of Indian Success in Relocation," Bureau of Indian Affairs Internal Memo, 29 February 1960, box 10, folder 9, Sophie Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Indians in Dallas were unemployed or only working part-time. Moreover, he insisted that too many relocated Indians ended up in "slums of the city" or "hobo jungles." "Apparently, only the success cases are important to the Bureau, with the unsuccessful ones being immaterial," Freeman scoffed.[53]

Father Peter Powell, founder of Chicago's St. Augustine's Center for Indians, a community church and Indian social welfare agency, recalled how his impression of Indians' experiences in Chicago hardly squared with BIA claims of high success rates. The BIA claimed that among the 35,000 Indians who relocated between 1953 and 1960, more than 75 per cent demonstrated a successful adjustment to city living. "This was an absolute lie," Powell countered. "Our people were in the midst of the most terrible turmoil one could imagine." Powell claimed that education and employment promises frequently failed, and that most relocated Indians could not take advantage of city welfare programs because they lacked a one-year residency requirement.[54]

While both Freeman and Powell were authorities on relocation's relative "success" in their respective cities, they also serve as a reminder that the potential for success typically depended on the subjective socio-economic conditions of a particular destination. Regardless of Commissioner Emmons's "success" rates, faceless statistics in fact tell us little about relocation's efficacy across space and time. Indeed, no one city can possibly speak for the value of the entire relocation program.

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[53] Richard Freeman: "Rebuttal to Form Letter Written by Ass't Secretary of the Interior Roger Ernst to Various Members of the Congress and Senate Concerning My Letter of Recent Date and News Clippings Concerning Relocation" (March 1959), Robert Kerr Departmental Papers, box 12 folder 29: Interior: Indian Affairs: General (Mar. 1959), Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, Norman, Oklahoma.
[54] "Cheyenne Warrior," *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, 2 May 1982.

In an annual report from 1958, the Joliet, Illinois relocation office explicitly confessed that it was failing to meet its objectives, which it blamed on a national recession that resulted in a paucity of low-rent public housing and job openings. Relocation to Joliet in general, alongside that of Waukegan, reflected the BIA's short-lived attempt to filter Native people not into a major urban area, but to a major suburban area. These smaller communities, however, proved more susceptible to potentially negative consequences of protean capitalist markets. Moreover, the actual Joliet office—managed by Rudolph Russell, a Navajo man who previously headed the Salt Lake City relocation office—betrayed a somewhat slapdash operation: "one dirty room about 9x12 feet in size, with one borrowed desk and a telephone."[55]

When asked why Los Angeles and Chicago typically ranked as the two cities where relocatees had the most success, former relocation field officer Stanley Lyman took care to note that it was not a matter of those cities having better personnel. Rather, Los Angeles and Chicago consistently featured an adequate number of job openings, even during economic recessions. "At a time when there were 250,000 unemployed in the Chicago area, we were still able to find jobs for Indians," he recalled. This mostly reflected those particular offices' strategy of matching an Indian to a job, rather than a job to an Indian. Simply put, the L.A. and Chicago offices produced better results by finding work that made sense for Indians' skill levels, rather than trying to shoehorn Indians into industries that would never welcome them. This point perhaps demands that we think more critically about the BIA's practice of intentionally routing relocated

[55] Annual Report, 1958, RG75, box 6, folder: Joliet Field Relocation Office Narrative Reports for Relocation Services Prior to July 1, 1958, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952 – 1960, NARA Washington.

Indians toward low-wage jobs. To be sure, such low-wage jobs were not a feature of relocation recruitment propaganda. Yet, such propaganda was beside the point when relocation officials needed to make pragmatic decisions to salvage something profitable when the program faltered.

According to Lyman, the Los Angeles failed at first because it worried too much about securing Indians jobs well in advance of their reservation departure. Chicago, by contrast, was more successful because the office there brought a set number of Indians in first and then found them a job; this worked because it allowed relocation agents to spontaneously jump on openings and then quickly fill them. Los Angeles found greater success when it adopted the Chicago strategy.[56]

Despite the BIA's public assertions that relocation had so far been a smashing success, behind closed doors numerous federal officials confessed that relocation was not an infallible program. They frequently shared ideas on how to strengthen the program, and attempted damage control as efficiently as possible (which oftentimes was not efficient at all). During a conference with tribal officials in Rapid City, South Dakota during December 1957, BIA officials gathered information on relocatees' reasons for return. Additionally, both parties collectively brainstormed strategies for improving the program. Taken together, their collective findings are quite revealing about some of the struggles urban Indians faced. Among the meeting resolutions for improving program mechanics were to announce home follow-up visits in advance so that families could clean up and be prepared: "If you drop in they close up on you and

[56] Stanley Lyman Interview with Floyd O'Neil, Doris Duke Number 1030, American Indian History Project, BOX 17, Folder 41, Lyman Papers, Marriott Library.

won't talk." A second solution was to be honest about the possibility of a "colored family" living nearby, suggesting that some relocated families found such an outcome disconcerting. "We must all be very frank with them in explaining possible conditions," the resultant report stipulated. Finally, meeting members resolved that they needed to improve housing conditions after acknowledging that too many relocatees were subjected to apartments that were dirty and infested with cockroaches.[57]

Notwithstanding these important concerns about the program, leading officials who attended the Rapid City meeting also suggested that everyone involved simply needed to relax their hyperbolic and cynical assessments of the program. Chief of Relocation Services Charles F. Miller insisted that all concerned parties were devoting too much attention to return rates. "If you are helping the people you should be helping, and not those who didn't need help to begin with, then naturally you will have returnees, they are struggling because they need help integrating," Miller elaborated. Relocation placement officer Mary Nan Gamble agreed: "They are only going to overcome it if they make themselves available by recognizing that the guy next door may not have been there any longer than he has, go do the normal things that come, speak to people." Finally, Gamble suggested that some relocatees never had any intention of staying in the city permanently, that they were only pursuing "a nice vacation at government expense."[58]

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[57] Rapid City Conference Meeting Minutes, 2-3 December 1957, box 28, folder: Meetings and Reports (Conferences Attended), 1957-1958, RG75, Billings Area Office Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Denver.
[58] Rapid City Conference Meeting Minutes, 2-3 December 1957, box 28, folder: Meetings and Reports (Conferences Attended), 1957-1958, RG75, Billings Area Office Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Denver.

During a newspaper interview in 1971, acting director of Chicago's relocation office Virginia Roberts expressed a similar dismissive attitude toward Indians who may or may not have been simply taking a vacation on the government's dime. After elaborating on an Eskimo family from Alaska who despised Chicago, Roberts rebuked, "They want to be sent back home. But that will cost $694 and they want this office to pay it all. I don't have that kind of money for pleasure."[59]

If he was in attendance at the aforementioned Rapid City conference Billings Area Office relocation specialist Jacob Ahtone likely would have agreed with Charles F. Miller that all involved parties needed to take a deep breath and remember that relocation was never going to be an easy endeavor. Himself a Native person, Ahtone, during a round of correspondence the following year, expressed acute frustration over how Indians were so quickly labeled as failures if they moved or changed jobs subsequent to their initial relocation. This assessment lacked fairness, Ahtone asserted, because roughly twenty percent of the national population, regardless of race, relocated each year in response to changes in economic markets. "Too many of our critics expect Indian people to maintain their initial employment and remain forever at their original destination," Ahtone stated, before concluding that spatial mobility is but a natural feature of American employment.[60]

Pleas for greater patience and understanding were in fact nothing new. As early as relocation's inaugural year of 1952, Chicago relocation field placement officer Kurt

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[59] "The Urban Indian: He Has Become a Stranger in His Native Land," *Chicago Tribune,* 22 August 1971.

[60] Jacob Ahtone to K.W. Bergen, Coordinator, State of Montana, Dept. of Indian Affairs, 15 October 1958, box 3, folder: Relocation Correspondence, FY 1957-1959, Billings Area Office Mixed Vocational & Subject Files, 1939-1960, NARA Denver. The document specified that Ahtone was Indian, but did not specify tribe.

Dreifuss expressed a similar conviction that relocation could work if given more time and wider support. He claimed that he needed more community help on Indian social adjustments, and insisted that most Indians who returned to reservations did so because of "confusion and loneliness in a strange environment. An illusory escape through excessive drinking too often was the only alternative to constructive preoccupation."[61] Dreifuss also implored his BIA superiors not to give up on Indians who went on "benders" once arrived in the city. He sent Assistant Chief of Relocation Placement Charles Rovin several examples of relocatees who demonstrated inauspicious attempts at initial adjustment, but eventually achieved stability. He requested that the BIA make stronger attempts at individual counseling while trying harder to understand that such benders were not necessarily an indication that relocated Indians were naturally bibulous, or collectively suffering from acute alcoholism.[62]

Taken together, this series of competing assessments should suggest that federal officials lacked both a coherent understanding of the underlying causes of Indians' problems in the city and a unified set of solutions for those problems. In the simplest of terms, they seemed to make it up as they proceeded. Indeed, relocation's promise could deteriorate just as unpredictably as it once materialized. There appears no discernible rhyme or reason on either end of the trajectory. Relocation at best proved a lofty experiment. It seems the only reliable given was that Native people would play a

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[61] "Chicago Field Placement Office Report, April 1952," box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, NARA Washington DC.
[62] Kurt Dreifuss to Charles Rovin (Assistant Chief, Placement Section) 17 June 1952, box 1, folder: Reports – Narrative, Chicago, 1952, RG75, Field Placement and Relocation Office Employment Assistance Records: Narrative Reports, compiled 1952-1960, NARA Washington DC.

subjective role in determining the outcome of a process that inherently featured a wide margin for error.

Ultimately, fleeting and competing notions of "success" and "failure" mattered little to an Indian individual on the frontlines of the urban relocation experience. In the end, the relocated individual would have to do most of the heavy lifting to make the program work. Moreover, there were few, if any, reliable predictors of whether or not a particular individual had the necessary mettle to make it in the city. Indeed, if it was mental and physical toughness which relocation screeners sought, then they were remiss in that pursuit. After all, even Indian war heroes were not entirely immune to the potentially catastrophic effects of urban relocation.

Pima World War II hero Ira H. Hayes, perhaps the most famous twentieth-century Indian war hero of all, supports this assertion. After serving bravely and hoisting the American flag as part of a legendary photo shoot during the Battle of Iwo-Jima in February 1945, Ira Hayes returned to the United States as a decorated war icon. Capitalizing on an opportunity to exploit Hayes's celebrity, the Bureau of Indian Affairs recruited him as a poster boy for its Voluntary Relocation Program. Hayes chose relocation to Chicago in 1952 to work for International Harvester as a tool grinder. Behind the scenes, however, Hayes increasingly fell victim to a terrible drinking problem that he initially picked up touring U.S. cities as a featured participant in World War II victory celebrations. Reportedly, it was common for admirers to buy him a drink in tribute to his battlefield courage, and Hayes always felt compelled to accept the gesture. Friends in Chicago noted that this resulted in a bad case of "heroitis."

Despite his sincere attempt to carve out a new life as an industrial laborer in Chicago, he repeatedly landed in prison for public intoxication. On one occasion, the *Chicago Sun-Times* raised bail, got him released, and sponsored his brief stay in an area sanitarium. Hayes again tried to start a new life in Beverly Hills working as a chauffer for "Rat Pack" entertainer Dean Martin's estranged wife, Elizabeth Martin. In Beverly Hills Hayes was again arrested for public intoxication. Given a choice between prison and going back to his Pima reservation in Arizona, he chose the latter. The return home did not however restore his health. In late 1954 he was arrested in Phoenix, at which point Indian bureau officials made a deal with Hayes: if he agreed to stay out of the city the BIA would in exchange provide him with steady work on the reservation. It was a last chance to get his life together. Alas, in January 1955 Ira Hayes's dead body was discovered in a ditch outside a reservation village where his parents resided. Prior to his death, he told friends and family that he hoped to someday get back to Chicago and resume his training as a tool grinder.[63]

[63] Albert Hemingway, *Ira Hayes, Pima Marine* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 149-156; "Ira Hayes, 32, Iwo Jima Hero, is Found Dead," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 1955.

Chapter Six—"They Always Come Back": Urban Indians' Return to and Influence on a Changing Indian Country

This summer I shall
Return to our Longhouse
Hide behind a feathered hat,
And become an Old Man.

"Ambition" - Phil George (Nez Perce, born in Seattle)[1]

One enduring criticism of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' mid-twentieth-century urban relocation program is that it drained reservations of an entire generation of promising young Native Americans. As influential former Pine Ridge tribal president Gerald One Feather recalled, "Many people who could have provided tribal leadership were lost because they had the motivation to go off the reservation to find employment or obtain an education. Relocation drained off a lot of potential leadership."[2] Indeed,

[1] Excerpts from *The Indian Youth*, 22 September 1968, published biweekly in Philadelphia by United Church Press, Hetzel Papers, Box 3, Folder 10, Fort Lewis College, Center for Southwest Studies, Durango, Colorado. Phillip William George was born in Seattle in 1946, and passed away in October 2012. A Vietnam veteran and esteemed poet in Indian Country and abroad, his more famous poem, "Proviso," was once read by Vincent Price on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show." See George's obituary: http://lmtribune.com/obituaries/article_5d4ef97c-9417-55e2-b7ec-679ab6f32ada.html?mode=jqm, accessed 18 October 2013.

[2] Kenneth R. Philp, ed., *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1995), 171. In a study of the relocation program that the Association of American Indian Affairs published in 1965, LaVerne Madigan reported that numerous tribal leaders had complained that the program robbed tribes of potential leadership and in its place left behind "irredeemable misfits." See *The American Indian Relocation Program* (New York: Association of American Indian Affairs, 1965), Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman. In a third example, Potawatomie agency superintendent Harold E. Bruce explained in his commencement speech to the Haskell Institute graduating class of 1941 that "It has been our observation that relatively few Haskell graduates remain long in their reservation communities. Usually they must go away from home to find employment in the fields for which they have been trained.

emigration of the best young Indian minds no doubt compromised various tribes' fight against termination and ongoing land and resource dispossession.

Yet, concluding in such fashion neglects an equally important potential outcome concerning urbanization's impact on tribal sovereignty and self-determination. For countless urban Indians, metropolitan experiences facilitated the attainment of advanced intellectual and economic skills that they either immediately or eventually deployed on behalf of their people not in the city, but back home on reservations. Throughout the twentieth century, Native people's antecedent exercises in individual self-sufficiency fostered the paramount pursuit of tribal self-determination.[3] Moreover, Native people understood this long before and well after the federal government devised a relocation program to support Indian social and geographic mobility. It is therefore important to consider the historical implications of a process of "reverse relocation"—from new, "reimagined" urban Indian Country to old, albeit *changing*, rural Indian Country—that

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Thus on our reservation we have been deprived of valuable, potential trained leadership." See *The Indian Leader: Commencement Number 1941* (Lawrence, KS: Haskell Institute, 1941), box 31, folder 5, Stanley Lyman Papers, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. In a final example. Winnebago tribal chairman complained to Indian affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons during a meeting in 1956 that the "better qualified" Winnebagoes were "going out by natural process" and as a result leaving only "no the best quality part of the tribe" behind on the reservation. See "Winnebago Meeting with Commissioner Glenn Emmons," 20 July 1956, Glenn Emmons Papers, box 3, folder 1, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

[3] As Shawnee legal scholar Robert J. Miller argues, self-sufficiency makes self-determination possible. He defines self-determination as Indian tribes' right to administer federally funded contracts, and by extension, their own affairs. Self-sufficiency, by contrast, refers to Indian people's ability to rely solely on themselves, their communities, and their governments to provide the majority of their needs. See Robert J. Miller, *Reservation "Capitalism": Economic Development in Indian Country* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2012), 160.

proved nascent during the 1960s, but gained greater traction and influence during the 1970s and 80s.[4]

Problematically, however, even the best scholars of Indian relocation and urbanization typically conclude their studies with a crisis.[5] Caught in the gravitational pull of Red Power, they nurture a narrative in which urban Indians, having exhausted their patience for the pace of change, finally turn to high-visibility activism to press their concerns.[6] Such narrative emphases encourage a self-fulfilling prophecy in their

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[4] My use of the term "reimagined" is a reference to historian Nicolas Rosenthal's impressive study of how Native people in twentieth-century Los Angeles actively reimagined Indian Country as a place that included urban space. See Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012). I attempting to build on Rosenthal's work by arguing that Native people also reimagined old, rural/reservation Indian Country as a place that could benefit from and support metropolitan and cosmopolitan socio-economic strategies while providing satisfying life opportunities for a new generation of college-educated Indians.

[5] For example, historian Donald Fixico's study of Indian urbanization concludes with Indians facing an identity crisis. See chapter ten in Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000). Historian James LaGrand's study of the formation and evolution of Chicago's Indian community arrives at a chapter on the Chicago Indian Village, a militant urban activist group in the mold of the American Indian Movement. See chapter eight in LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). Historian Nicolas G. Rosenthal's *Reimagining Indian Country* easily ranks among the best monographs available on the topic of Native Americans and cities in the twentieth century. But even his work concludes with a chapter on how Red Power emerged as a response to urban dilemmas. That said, he makes important strides in focusing on Red Power at the local, grassroots level in Los Angeles. In doing so he posits a much needed social history of the phenomenon that subsequent scholarship will hopefully build upon. See chapter six in Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[6] My comment concerning the "gravitational pull of Red Power" is greatly influenced by Daniel Cobb and Loretta Fowler's edited volume of essays that collectively argue for scholarly inquiries that look beyond the Red Power watershed moment of the late 1960s and early 1970s in order to locate overlooked forms of socio-political activism in overlooked locales. I am explicitly attempting to build on Cobb, Fowler, et al. by arguing that it is important to see beyond militant urban activism as the overarching,

subtexts: Indians failed in the city because of inherent character flaws—they never had a chance to succeed.[7] Yet, for many Native urbanites the metropolitan experience did not conclude with a crisis that necessitated catharsis. Simply put, a historical declension narrative centered on urban Indians in distress too neatly circumvents the wider experiences of a significant number of Native sojourners who viewed their tenure in the city as beneficial, if not altogether easy. Moreover, rather than lunge forward into the heady and perilous ranks of militant urban activism, numerous Indians instead gravitated back toward a quieter, though again, not altogether easy, existence in old Indian Country. And some among them even laid eyes on the reservation for the first time.

In recent years a handful of scholars have succeeded in pushing the urbanization narrative in vital new directions. In her ethnographic study of Native people in California's Silicon Valley, anthropologist Renya Ramirez imagines urban Indians as

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most salient outcome of Indian relocation and urbanization. See Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler, eds., *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007). From the other direction, scholars of the Red Power movement appropriately cite urban crises and disappointments as primary motives for Red Power's coalescence. See for example Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996) and Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). To be sure, these scholars, among others, are correct in their assessments. But the end result, nonetheless, is a process of relocation and militant activism, as scholarly inquiries, becoming so inextricably entangled that they obscure equally important outcomes of the urbanization phenomenon, and perhaps even overlooked causes of the Red Power movement.

[7] My argument here is influenced by Coll Thrush's study of Native people's long, complicated history with the City of Seattle. In it he argues for the eradication of the Indian (past) versus City (present/future) binary that too often governs analyses of Indian urbanization. See Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

the occupiers of a central hub, within which they nurture "unbounded connections" to their tribal homelands. Her urban Indian protagonists exploit urban space as venues within which to gain new socio-political insights on their way to becoming transmitters of wider cultural knowledge.[8] In similar fashion, American Indian Studies scholar Myla Vicenti Carpio devotes significant space in her study of Pueblo people who regularly shuttled back and forth between Albuquerque and their nearby reservation homes.[9] This chapter attempts to build on these scholars' works by introducing illustrative examples that render the connections that urban Indians maintained with their tribal homelands more explicit. In a departure from their studies, this chapter focuses on urban Indians who did not necessarily enjoy the benefits of having their reservation homes in close proximity to their respective urban locales. Ultimately, this chapter establishes a macro view of reservation-metropolitan connections that includes discussion of Indians who attempted permanence in either destination, and did not simply bounce back and forth with particular ease. Moreover, I attempt to explicate the reasons why many members of an emerging generation of urban Indians began looking toward rural Indian Country as a land of opportunity.

Historian Nicolas G. Rosenthal's pathbreaking study of the maturation of Los Angeles's urban Indian community across the twentieth century succeeds in pushing the relocation narrative beyond the standard coverage of American Indian Movement (AIM) media exploits. He instead emphasizes a changing trend in which Red Power activism shifted from "street demonstrations to grassroots Indian activism." Ultimately

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[8] Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).
[9] Myla Vicenti Carpio, *Indigenous Albuquerque* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2011).

he delivers a community, social history of Red Power with a special emphasis on constructive activism that helped establish improved health care and education facilities for urban Indians. “The full impact of the Red Power movement,” Rosenthal writes, “can ultimately be seen in the tremendous influence it exerted on these grassroots community activists who raised doubts about or even repudiated it but nonetheless were empowered by it and came to espouse and implement its goals.” Notwithstanding his essential contribution, however, Rosenthal still arrives at Red Power as the prevailing outcome of Indian disappointment with urbanization.[10] I seek to build on his work by placing the prevailing Red Power narrative conclusion in its rightful place—equal among other important historical outcomes that have been obscured by militant Indian activism’s ability to so easily capture one’s imagination. Rather than sidestep Red Power activism altogether, however, it is perhaps necessary to instead approach it from a different angle that contextualizes it within a larger historical phenomenon, and divests it of its persistent capacity for stealing the show.

When a cohort of urban Indians famously began an occupation of Alcatraz Island in November 1969, Dakota intellectual Vine Deloria Jr.—the voice of the Red Power generation—was on hand to record and critique the spirited event. In an essay he penned for *The New York Times*, he described Alcatraz as a microcosm of barren, prison-like Indian reservations. "The new inhabitants have made ‘the Rock’ a focal point symbolic of Indian people,” he wrote. “Under extreme difficulty they have worked to begin repairing sanitary facilities and buildings.” Scholars of Native America

[10] Nicholas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), chapter six, quote from page 140.

subsequently latched onto Deloria's analogy, treating the publicity stunt as a watershed moment in the gradual emergence of an aggressive Indian rights campaign, and rightfully so. Moreover, scholars have also fixated on "the Rock" as the fullest expression of Native people's profound disappointment with urban relocation, and again, rightly so. But most scholars emphasize Alcatraz to the exclusion of other important historical outcomes that the urbanization phenomenon set in motion. Indeed, history did go in different directions that perhaps fell into obscurity simply because they lacked the exhilarating appeal of a larger-than-life cohort of leaders who made for good media copy.

But before descending Alcatraz's craggy perimeter in pursuit of other historical outcomes, it is worth pausing for a moment to consider "the Rock" not as a microcosm of reservations, but as an allegory for the relocation process. Writing about the waves of Native people who joined the occupation, Deloria carefully noted that, "The population has been largely transient, many people have stopped by, looked the situation over for a few days, then gone home, unwilling to put in the tedious work necessary to make the island support a viable community." These words could just as easily describe many Indians' general experience with the Indian bureau's relocation program. What scholars often fail to emphasize in their analyses of the Alcatraz Occupation is that, while a group of San Francisco-based Indians—including numerous college students—lit the spark of protest, it was reservation-based Indians whose successive pilgrimages kept the protest alive for seventeen-odd months. Indians who made the sojourn to Alcatraz typically returned to their respective homes enlightened and confident in their capacities for meaningful political activism, which ultimately assumes many forms. In this respect,

they were not unlike thousands of Indians who relocated to cities during World War II and subsequent decades. They left for individual pursuits, and returned with fresh ideas about how to improve tribal socio-economic viability. This process was not necessarily by design, but neither was Alcatraz's inspirational legacy.[11]

Searching for additional important historical outcomes that did not result in clashing protest or profound disappointment with urban life does not necessarily amount to an upward revision of the relocation program. Rather, a wider appraisal reveals how Native people practiced a particular brand of socio-economic ingenuity—couched in a language of Indian uplift that stretched back to the turn of the century—while exploiting an undeniably problematic, at times *catastrophic*, program paradoxically designed to both liberate and control them. More specifically, this chapter offers a series of vignettes on the liberation aspect of that historical paradox, and even more specifically on how Native people, and not federal policymakers, both interpreted and practiced liberation.[12]

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[11] Vine Deloria Jr., "This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It," *New York Times*, 8 March 1970. Useful introductions to the San Francisco Indian community and the Alcatraz occupation can be found in Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1999) and Kent Blansett, "San Francisco, Red Power, and the Emergence of an 'Indian City,'" in *City Dreams Country Schemes: Community and Identity in the American West*, Kathleen A. Brosnan and Amy L. Scott, eds. (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2011), 261-283.

[12] Here I am thinking of termination policy architects such as Arthur V. Watkins and Dillon S. Myer, who advocated "emancipation" for Indians. The central protagonists of my study also advocated freedom and liberation, albeit particular manifestations of those ideas—manifestations based on self-sufficiency and the power to positively impact Indian Country, and not destroy it. On federal policymakers' advocacy of termination see R. Warren Metcalf, *Termination's Legacy: The Discarded Indians of Utah* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

Representing the Red Lake Band of Chippewa during a conference with Indian affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons in 1956, Joseph Graves projected mixed feelings about the Indian bureau's relocation program. "If you want relocation you will have to destroy the Reservation first. They always return. There seems to be an instinct similar to the fish," he suggested. Graves in fact spoke from a position of extensive off-reservation experience. In addition to attending school in Philadelphia and working in a steel mill for several years, Graves, on Hall-of-Famer and fellow Chippewa Indian "Chief" Bender's recommendation, played professional baseball for the Philadelphia Athletics during the early 1920s. Moreover, he was but one member of a prominent Red Lake Chippewa family that included his father Peter, who served as chief of the original Red Lake General Council, and his daughter Verna, who regularly traversed the nation as an educator, political activist, and Episcopal minister. If the Graves family did indeed resemble fish, then it is fair to say they had collectively swum far and wide.[13]

It is not surprising then that Graves did not position himself against the relocation program in principle. He bristled at the notion that Indians had been "chained down on the Reservation," only to be freed by relocation. At the same time, he felt a strong "instinct of returning to the Reservation," an impulse he also witnessed among young people from Red Lake. He therefore advocated healthy maintenance of the reservation, especially as a refuge during times of illness. Still, citing examples of Red Lake boys who failed to return to work after a reservation respite, he did not want

[13] Minneapolis Area Indian Affairs Conference, Des Moines, Iowa, 16 October 1956, box 3, folder 7, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; "Bender Digs Up Another Indian for Connie Mack," *Toronto Sunday World*, 15 February 1914; Joseph Graves obituary, http://olsonschwartzfuneralhome.com/book-of-memories/1201039/Graves-Reverend/obituary.php, accessed 5 August 2013.

Indians to get too comfortable in any place. Ultimately, he promoted movement, because movement promoted growth. Satisfied with his own life, he only regretted that it had not been easier. "I wish I was living in their age where I would be relocated," he reflected. "That would be real valuable."[14]

Among tribal leaders, Graves was not alone in his trust that young Indians would only benefit from time spent away from Indian Country. During a Taos Pueblo tribal council meeting in 1959, Severino Martinez expressed no reservations about young Indians leaving the pueblo. He was confident that Pueblo youth had been sufficiently trained in the Indian ways and religion and therefore "would someday come back to the pueblo and follow the old customs." Regardless of geographic distance, Martinez seemed to suggest, Taos Pueblo people would always be tethered to the tribe through spiritual faith.[15] In 1968, Navajo tribal councilman Howard Gorman gathered a similar impression about young Navajo men and women who mingled with mainstream America. "There is probably a certain amount of custom and tradition that they hang on to which causes them to come back," he speculated. "Every now and then when vacations roll around instead of going down to Mexico or down to Florida or someplace back east, they come right straight home."[16]

Matthew Pilcher provides a fitting example of the types of ambitious, young Indians whom tribal leaders trusted would one day return to help their people. In the

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[14] Minneapolis Area Indian Affairs Conference, Des Moines, Iowa, 16 October 1956, box 3, folder 7, Glenn L. Emmons Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
[15] Pueblo of Taos Council meeting minutes, 6 October 1959, Sophie Aberle Papers, box 7, folder 40, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.
[16] Interview with Howard Gorman (Navajo Tribal Councilman), 25 October 1968, American Indian Oral History Project, Center for Southwest Research, University of new Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

early 1950s Pilcher left his Winnebago reservation for a brief stint in the army. Once discharged, he migrated from Los Angeles to Chicago, where he found steady work as a construction company foreman. By 1970, he had assumed the assistant directorship of St. Augustine's Center for Indians, a busy social-services agency and community church in Chicago's Uptown Indian neighborhood. His successful trajectory from military serviceman to construction foreman to social-services agency administrator fueled his belief that Indians needed to strive for something more satisfying and profitable than vocational training projects that "served to stymie and to negate the intellectual growth of our young people." Better opportunities, he argued, waited within the walls of academic institutions, such as the University of Illinois Circle Campus, where he helped establish a Native American studies program. "It is heartening to see [Indians] studying in areas of academic endeavor that were unattainable to [them] only a few short years ago, simply because Indians were shackled to the myth that we are incapable of intelligent thought," he reflected.[17]

Yet, Pilcher ultimately cast his vision for Native American intellectual growth beyond the confines of Chicago. He preferred to see a generation of young, college-trained Indians "carry this education back to the reservation areas" while serving as "models for other Indian youngsters." He appreciated old Indian Country as a sort of sanctuary where educated Indians could escape "the throes of economic deprivation in urban areas." In the clearest sense, he embraced the city more as an economic means than a geographic end. Indeed, he returned to Winnebago in the early 1980s, at which point the tribal government quickly recruited him into its fold. The skills Pilcher

[17] Matthew Pilcher, "American Indian Scholarships: A Primary Concern for 1971," *The Cross and the Calumet*, Winter Issue, 1970.

developed in Chicago played an essential role in his successful tenures as tribal councilman, treasurer, and finally, president. Drawing upon administrative experience gained in Chicago, he successfully secured numerous private and government grants, supervised audits, and balanced the tribal budget. Pilcher's story represents a larger process that noticeably shifted in reverse. Whereas Native people from earlier decades fanned out toward cities in order to escape the limited potential of reservation economies, by the early 1970s urban Indians had begun reimagining tribal lands as places of opportunity and respite.[18]

Lack of gainful employment opportunities and growing disenchantment with the city played a significant role in this reversal. But underneath that cynical surface persisted a trend of Native people above all else pursuing opportunities wherever they could find them. As painful as relocation might have been, most Native people seemed wiser for the experience, with a newfound sense of inner strength. That was no small achievement. Indeed, if it took a great deal of strength and resolve to have initially departed the reservation in pursuit of an uncertain future, then certainly it took wisdom and strength to return home with head held high.

Lac Court Oreilles tribal councilwoman Violet Hayes mentioned that during the early 1970s her reservation instituted a land-assignment waiting list for people who wanted to come home—a complete reversal of the early years of the relocation program when many reservations featured a waiting list to leave. National Congress of American Indians acting executive director Leo Vocu claimed, "I know very few urban Indians

[18] Matthew Pilcher, "American Indian Scholarships: A Primary Concern for 1971," *The Cross and the Calumet*, Winter Issue, 1970; Matthew Pilcher, interview with author, 12 July 2012, Winnebago, Nebraska. In my interview with Pilcher he mentioned that he always thought of Winnebago as "home," and that he was only *"living"* in Chicago.

who intend to die in the urban areas in which they live… All of them want to go home." Vocu's theory was that Indians had begun realizing that without a land base they would cease to exist as a distinct people group within the United States. "Can you understand that?" he asked. "They would look like Indians, or act like Indians, but they would have no home." A Native man from Chicago's Uptown Indian neighborhood summarized numerous Indians' dismay with the relocation program when he sarcastically quipped, "We want the Indian to get off his reservation and get a welding job in Detroit so he can afford to buy a steak which he won't be able to eat because he has gotten ulcers, or, in other words, 'Why don't you get a mortgage like us?'" Finally, William Wildcat, who had operated a gas station in Chicago for 15 years, appreciated his Lac du Flambeau reservation as a sort of paradisiacal sanctuary. "White people work all year so they can have a couple weeks to vacation here," he claimed. "Well, we live here year 'round—with 126 lakes."[19]

In 1971, Tim Wapato, a Chicago-born member of the Colville Tribes who migrated to Los Angeles and climbed to the rank of lieutenant in the LAPD, noted how the Indian Bureau misled Indians into believing that simple vocational skills prepared them to compete in the city. "I bet I have talked to a thousand Indian welders in the city of Los Angeles," he reasoned. "I don't think there are jobs for a fifth of that number, and yet we seem to keep training Indian welders." Wapato's observation reflected a larger unemployment epidemic among the nation's urban Indian population. In 1971, the national Indian jobless rate registered at 39 percent, with an additional 19 percent who could only cite seasonal work. Given these figures, it is not surprising that a cohort

[19] "Reservation Lures Urban Indian," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 August 1971.

of educated urban Indians, not unlike Matthew Pilcher, began looking beyond the city limits and across distant prairies for new socio-economic opportunities.[20]

Yet, those who remained home on those distant prairies did not sit idly by, waiting for a generation of college-educated Indians to return and save the reservation. Rather, they actively worked to facilitate their own opportunities, and in the process engaged in their own "reimagining" of Indian Country, to borrow and build on historian Nicolas Rosenthal's term.[21]

Those who began returning home in pursuit of new opportunities often encountered a situation in which BIA representatives and tribal leaders alike scrambled to rehabilitate neglected reservation economies.[22] Indian affairs commissioner Glenn Emmons deserves credit for at least recognizing that there was a deficiency of reservation development projects capable of challenging the appeal of urban work opportunities. In a letter to Indian Rights Association representative Theodore Hetzel, Emmons claimed, "I do not believe and never have believed that relocation is the only way of providing Indians with broader and better opportunities for making a decent living." Acknowledging that some Indians would always prefer to remain at home, Emmons explained, "So it is now definitely a part of our program to encourage the

[20] "Stranger in His Native Land," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 August 1971.
[21] Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
[22] For some tribes, "rehabilitate" is an inaccurate term. Some tribes had yet to ever enjoy the benefits of a thriving economy within reservation boundaries.

establishment of industrial plants in the vicinity of important reservation areas."[23]

In 1956 the Bureau of Indian Affairs proudly announced a series of new reservation industrial development projects. Out east, Cherokee Leathercraft in North Carolina hired 40 Eastern Cherokees to produce moccasins. Up north, 100 Northern Cheyenne labored at a fishing tackle plant in Lame Deer, Montana, and 100 Sioux workers helped construct trailer homes in Rapid City, South Dakota. To the southwest, 125 Pimas and Papagos sewed garments at Casa Grande Mills in Arizona. Sanctioned by a tribal council vote of 56-0, the Navajo tribe drew $344,000 from its own tribal funds to help attract two corporations based in California to the west. The plan succeeded. Lear Navajo, affiliated with Lear Electronics from Santa Monica, and Navajo Furniture Inc., a subsidiary of Baby Line Furniture from Los Angeles, moved in and hired 100 Navajo workers each. Interestingly, Baby Line Furniture's decision to contract with the Navajo was in part influenced by the corporation's positive experience in employing Indian workers at its Los Angeles plant. This should perhaps be appreciated as a uniquely important linkage between urban Indian Country and rural Indian Country.

One year earlier in 1955, BIA commissioner Glenn Emmons installed Carl Beck to the new position of Assistant to the Commissioner, a position created in part to help oversee these important business operations. Beck had worked in the Indian service for 21 years, only interrupted by a brief foray into Arizona's private business sector. His duties were not limited to the supervision of reservation economic development, however. Emmons also appointed Beck to the post of relocation program supervisor. It

[23] Glenn Emmons to Theodore Hetzel, 2 December 1955, Hetzel Papers, box 28, folder 14, Center for Southwest Research, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado.

proved a fateful decision.

By 1957, the entire operation was in disarray. Lear Electronics in Flagstaff was closed; Casa Grande garment factory went bankrupt and closed; Baby Line Furniture, supported by the Navajos' $344,000 investment, faced trouble for violating minimum wage laws; and Beck had been dismissed. According to Neal Jensen, relocation officer at the United Pueblos Agency, Beck fell victim to jealous, competitive conflicts between the relocation and the reservation development branches of the BIA's operation in the Southwest. At the same time, Jensen faced his own obstacles in trying to find jobs for Pueblos in nearby Albuquerque and Alamogordo, which were experiencing something of an economic boom. As Jensen explained it, New Mexico Senator Dennis Chavez had warned him against interfering with the New Mexico Employment Security Service.[24]

Rather than succumb to defeat, however, Pueblo and Navajo entrepreneurs dusted themselves off and demonstrated a brand of mettle and tenacity similar to their fellow hundreds or thousands tribespeople who wrestled with metropolitan machinery many miles abroad. In 1964, for example, several Laguna Pueblo Indians gained employment at a new electronic components factory that the tribe built for $450,000

[24] Department of Interior Internal Memo, 17 December 1956, Bureau of Indian Affairs website document archive: http://www.bia.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/text/idc016179.pdf, accessed 22 October 2013; Department of Interior Internal Memo, 9 August 1955, Bureau of Indian Affairs website document archive: http://www.bia.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/text/idc016256.pdf, accessed 23 October 2013; "Notes on a Conversation with Neal Jensen, Relocation Officer, United Pueblos Agency" (by William Brophy), 30 November 1957, Sophie Aberle Papers, box 10, folder 9, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Glenn Emmons, "Industry Moves to Indian Country," *Industrial Development Magazine*, June 1957, found in Toby Morris Papers, box 10, folder 32, Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

from mineral resource funds and subsequently leased to New York-based Burnell & Co. Excited about the new potential for steady income, tribal chief Irvin Santiago declared, "This could mean a new life for the Indian." Raymond Nakai, chairman of the nearby Navajo tribe, expressed similar optimism: "With a situation like this, our only direction can be forward and upward." Santiago and Nakai had good reason to express enthusiasm. At that time roughly 50 percent of all reservation-based Indians counted themselves as unemployed.[25]

From 1958 through 1963 only four industrial plants opened around the Navajo and Pueblo reservations in New Mexico. By contrast, in just the first half of 1964 alone seven corporations had arrived in pursuit of profits. But credit for corporate investments often went to the tribes. The Laguna Pueblo, for example, had in the previous ten years invested $12 million in corporate securities. Outside corporations, then, could enjoy the benefits of accessible workers and resources without fear of a losing business venture. Still, while the situation was clearly advantageous to corporations such as Burnell, the Laguna Pueblo did not play the role of victim. Recognizing the limitations of mining, Chief Santiago actively solicited the Bureau of Indian Affairs' assistance in attracting industry.[26]

The Laguna were not the sole practitioners of this economic strategy. Alongside them in the early 1960s the Jicarilla Apaches, Navajos, and North Carolina Cherokees had in similar fashion attached their hopes to high-risk capitalist endeavors. Both the

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[25] "Indian Territory: Tribes Draw Industry To Reservations With Cheap Labor, Financing," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 1964; "Plant Will Help Jobless Indians," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1966.

[26] "Indian Territory: Tribes Draw Industry To Reservations With Cheap Labor, Financing," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 1964; "Plant Will Help Jobless Indians," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1966.

tribes and the businesses they attracted believed in the potential for a righteous outcome. For example, in 1966, B.V.D. underwear corporate executive Harry Isaacs claimed that his company's plan to open a manufacturing plant near the Hopi reservation would result in a "high social good" for prospective Hopi workers. Tribal leaders must have agreed. To get the project started they invested $1.5 million from their own tribal funds, which at that time registered as the single largest tribal commercial investment ever. To demonstrate their enthusiasm for the burgeoning factory, several of the 200 Hopi new-hires donned buttons that read "Ask Me About B.V.D."[27]

Pursuing every feasible strategy toward economic rehabilitation, numerous tribes embraced America's expanding family-roadtrip vacation trend and the growing popularity of western tourism. A Red Lake Indian Reservation informational brochure from 1963 invited tourists to visit the "scenic, historical" reservation in Minnesota's northern paradise. Instructing prospective tourists to "Bring Your Camera," the brochure paradoxically proclaimed that Red Lake was a venue within which visitors could "…see the Past at the Present…" Indeed, on the same south shore of Lower Red Lake tourists could visit both the "Site of the Last Battle in 1765 between Sioux and Chippewa Indians where the Sioux were annihilated" and the tribe's pristine electric, automated sawmill that replaced an obsolete steam-driven sawmill that very year. Included among the brochure's myriad photos and colored-pencil drawings were black-

[27] "Indian Territory: Tribes Draw Industry To Reservations With Cheap Labor, Financing," *Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 1964; "Plant Will Help Jobless Indians," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1966.

and-white snapshots of the Red Lake Tribal Council studiously poring over a mess of documents in their office; two young Red Lake girls outfitted head-to-toe in beaded buckskin as they staffed an arts and crafts table at the Tribal Office; Senator Hubert Humphrey posing alongside tribal chairman Roger Jourdain and a troop of Indian Girl Guides; and a photo of beloved Indian Affairs commissioner Philleo Nash, dressed in a contemporary suit and black tie that clashed with an oversized feathered headdress that swallowed his stern visage, casting a dark shadow across his furrowed brow as he gazed into the sun. The brochure's overarching message was explicit: Red Lake offered tourists a vibrant cultural experience that allowed them to intimately mingle with a romantic American past—without fear of getting lost, hurt, or even dirty.[28]

Calculated promotion of exotic Indian cultural traditions also played a feature role in some tribes' efforts to lure outside business interests across reservation lines. In September of 1963, as part of an effort to attract the A&E Tool and Gage Company from Rockford, Illinois to the communities of Wolf Creek and Poplar on Montana's Fort Peck reservation, the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes prepared a book of facts that juxtaposed the tribes' exotic past with a capacity for modern ingenuity. For example, the book opened with a dazzling photo of Williamette Belle Youpee, winner of the tenth annual Miss Indian America pageant. Outfitted in beaded buckskin and wrapped hairbraids that framed her gleaming face, her poised expression delivered a convincing invitation. The book boasted of Wolf Creek and Poplar's excellent schools, churches,

[28] Box 47, Folder 35: Tribes, Chippewa, Minnesota, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, and Chicago. This folder also contained several tourism brochures from other reservations and tribes, including Mille Lacs, Leech Lake, and Cass Lake in Minnesota; Lac du Flambeau in Wisconsin; Okmulgee (Creek) in Oklahoma; and Crow in Montana, among others.

hospitals, and civic organizations before emphasizing its valuable agricultural and oil resources. Demonstrating Fort Peck leaders' business acumen, the promotional book provided an outline of typical utility rates before concluding with a detailed breakdown of Montana's state tax system.[29]

In similar fashion, a brochure that the Oneida tribe of Wisconsin disseminated in the late 1960s to attract industry highlighted their reservation's numerous selling points. First, the brochure emphasized that the Oneida tribe "is a sophisticated and progressive tribe, which employs approximately 400 people and provides governmental services to 3,000 tribal members." The brochure then specifically cited a "progressive effort" currently underway to construct a $10.5 million hotel project. Pointing to the reservation's close proximity to Green Bay, the brochure listed the bustling nearby industries: papermaking, food processing, metal work, textiles, cheese, and meatpacking. The tribe's central selling point, however, was its 32-acre industrial park, "located on prime land within the Green Bay metropolitan area," and zoned for light manufacturing. In closing, the brochure assured prospective industrial partners that "The Oneida tribe stands ready to assist private industry in the areas of venture capital, and to construct buildings that suit the needs of a company." In one final stipulation, the brochure mentioned that companies that hired Oneida workers "will be provided with lease payment reductions and a job training subsidy package."[30]

A second brochure apologized for the Oneida's past course of "passive aggression" before claiming that, "Now that we are actively seeking ways of becoming

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[29] Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Relocation Records, box 1, folder 3: Fort Peck Agency Facts, 1963, The Newberry Library, Chicago.
[30] Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, Box 50, Folder: Tribes—Oneida, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

more involved with industry and the 'world of work' we have established and developed The Oneida Industrial Park," which, as the informational brochure stressed, came with a readily available labor pool of Indian people. Emphasizing a promising intersection of the romanticized Indian of the past and modern Indian of the present, the tribe artfully manipulated their own stereotype by promising prospective employers that "Indians have inherent manual dexterity and eye/hand coordination."[31]

Some tribes engaged in economic rehabilitation not by attracting businesses to indulge in tribal tradition within the vicinity of reservations, but rather through the exportation of factory-produced ephemera posing as traditional cultural artifacts. In 1966, as part of its on-the-job training program, the Aberdeen Area Indian Office contracted with Golden Eagle Arts and Crafts to establish a manufacturing plant in Macy, Nebraska, on the Omaha Indian Reservation. The contract amounted to $5050.00 and employed twelve Omaha Indians who crafted khaki-colored tipis that sold for $14.49 at Brandies Department Store in Omaha. According to one business executive, the Indian workers produced "top quality" work. In this case, the production of traditional Indian ephemera from a bygone era provided the Omaha workers an opportunity to engage in modern industrial labor within their reservation limits. Simply put, Omaha workers merged past and present as a process of survival. The Plains Indian tipis that filled urban department store shelves contradictorily contributed to the

[31] Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, Box 50, Folder: Tribes—Oneida, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

endurance of a romantic Indian past while reservation-based producers practiced a modern Indian present—the fruits of urban relocation inverted.[32]

At times the same penchant for paternalistic domestic guidance that the BIA practiced in its relocation program overlapped with reservation development projects. This could result in a negotiated process in which it was unclear who was exploiting whom. For example, in 1963 the Indian bureau advertised "A Living Dream for Pine Ridge Indians" that arrived in the form of a modern housing project supported by the federal government's Housing and Home Finance Agency. For some Lakota residents, life in the new addition meant first exposure to a confined neighborhood, community codes, and monthly rent. Indeed, some residents were quick to complain about "losing their freedoms." For all its restrictions, however, the housing development did provide access to some semblance of mainstream American modernity. And those Lakota men who labored on the new homes to some degree actively participated in the construction of their own modernity.

Similar to the experiences of thousands of urban relocatees, Lakota residents of Pine Ridge's "Living Dream" had to navigate a team of BIA domestic experts who descended upon them with tutorials in meal preparation, house cleaning, and furniture arrangement. Also similar to relocation program paternalism, BIA agents monitored family budgeting and finances, and made unannounced visits to grade Lakota women on their performance of housekeeping duties—even disseminating booklets on how to

[32] "Documentation of Record," 12 April 1966,Winnebago Agency Employee Assistance Decimal Correspondence—Select Files, box 3, folder: Contracts, Golden Eagle Arts and Crafts, NARA Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.

conduct chores and how to use an electric stove. To encourage enthusiasm for the new addition the BIA distributed posters that resembled relocation flyers in their emphasis on new appliances and living-room leisure. One might have concluded that Indians who dismissed the relocation program were going to have it brought to their doorstep anyway.[33]

At times, the clashing agendas of urban Indian "Red Power" activists and those of reservation-based entrepreneurial activists undermined efforts at reservation rehabilitation. On February 24, 1975, the American Indian Movement tried to solidify their popularity on the Navajo reservation by staging an armed takeover of the Fairchild electronics plant. The Fairchild plant had recently laid off 140 Indian employees. AIM answered with a 7.5-day occupation, which largely backfired. In response to AIM's occupation, Fairchild elected to close its Shiprock, New Mexico location, which had inestimable negative consequences for the Shiprock community. To fill the tribe's now vacant manufacturing plant, tribal leaders began courting other electronic corporations, including Texas Instruments and Motorola. AIM maintained that Fairchild was going to terminate operations in Shiprock anyway, and that the corporation had for too long been exploiting Indians as a cheap labor source. Tribal leaders, however, argued that the corporation had a sound, working relationship with Navajo people. Among the company's 473 employees, most were Navajo women. In fact, the company was to that

[33] "A Living Dream for Pine Ridge Indians," *Dakota* Magazine, 15 August 1963, Stanley Lyman Papers, box 15, folder 22, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. To cite a second example, The Fort Peck Tribes of Montana engaged in a similar housing development project at Poplar and Wolf Point. The project employed more than 40 Fort Peck Indians in the construction of 40 homes outfitted with electricity and modern plumbing. See "Fort Peck Tribes to Dedicate Homes," *Billings Gazette*, August 1963, Lyman Papers, box 15, folder 22.

point the largest non-federal, non-tribal employer of Indians in the country. In the debacle's aftermath, tribal employment director Jack Silango maintained, "All we want is to be recognized as a people equal to our counterparts bordering the reservation."[34]

The opportunity for industrial employment near reservations did not always guarantee satisfaction among the local Indian population. In July 1962, the Omaha tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs entered into a partnership with the Chairs Unlimited Corporation to provide industrial training and employment for Omaha Indians as part of the BIA's vocational training program, sanctioned by Public Law 959, enacted in 1956. Chairs Unlimited initially installed their factory in Omaha with the promise of relocating to Macy, Nebraska on the Omaha reservation within six months, once the company had gained a viable foothold in the area and had adequately trained the requisite number of Indian employees. Under that agreement, Omaha workers began carpooling and commuting 75 miles from their reservation to new worksite. But relations between Chairs Unlimited and the Omaha tribe deteriorated as quickly as they came together.

By December of 1962 the Omaha tribal council expressed deep discontent over Chairs Unlimited's policy against hiring female workers. By that point the Omaha tribal council had also begun to doubt the sincerity of the corporation's promise to relocate to Macy. In April 1963, the Omaha tribe attempted to force the company's hand by discontinuing their bi-weekly supplementation of trainees' salaries. Chairs Unlimited fired back, claiming they could never make the move because there was so much absenteeism on the part of Omaha trainees that they could not get production up to a

[34] "Plant Closing Deepens Navajo Plight," *Washington Post*, 17 March 1975.

viable level to support the move. The BIA tried to arbitrate and convince the Chairs Unlimited that if they moved to Macy attendance would stabilize. Alas, the BIA's plea initially fell on deaf ears. By August, however, there was a break in the impasse as Chairs Unlimited announced that they were ready, albeit eight months late, to begin planning a move to Macy. But in a bold move, the Omaha tribal council officially voted against the move because the corporation had "let them down." On one hand, the Omaha tribe perhaps sacrificed an opportunity to lure industrial work within the reservation limits. On the other hand, the Omaha tribal council clearly demonstrated that they would not be exploited by outside interests, and that the ultimate fate of reservation economic rehabilitation would rest in their capable hands.[35]

Native people were not one-dimensional in their pursuit of a more comfortable and sustainable existence. Indeed, there were no easy fixes or simple solutions. Dating back to World War II's aftermath Native people had continually called for their own Point IV program that would sanction the United States federal government to rebuild Indian Country as it did war-torn Europe.[36] But as the preceding series of examples hopefully demonstrate, the rehabilitation of Indian Country proved incredibly difficult. The process unfolded in fits and starts, in no small part due to the fact that Indians demanded a voice in the proceedings. Indeed, by 1970 Native people had embraced

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[35] "Monthly OJT Narrative report, 31 December 1962;" "Monthly OJT Narrative Report, 5 April 1963;" "Monthly OJT Narrative Report, 8 August 1963;" "Chairs Unlimited, On-the-Job Training Program, 1962," RG 75: Winnebago Agency Employee Assistance Decimal Correspondence—Select Files, box 3, folder: Contracts, NARA Central Plains Region, Kansas City.

[36] See for example Paul C. Rosier, *Serving Their Country* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), chapter four.

modern economic strategies with such enthusiasm that the otherwise sagacious Vine Deloria Jr. seemed mystified over whether or not the ever-evolving "Indian problem" and the contemporary meaning of "tribe" had become inextricably wrapped up in corporate culture. "Is [a tribe] a traditionally organized band of Indians following customs with medicine men and chiefs dominating the policies of the tribe," he rhetorically wondered aloud. "Or is it a modern corporate structure attempting to compromise at least in part with modern white culture?"[37]

Regardless of the answer, while portions of Native America's tribal base envisioned a future in urban metropolises, those who remained on reservations reimagined the contours and meaning of old Indian Country, making it new in the process. What should be abundantly clear is that by the 1970s a new Indian Country demanded a new brand of confidence and ingenuity from those who sought to improve it. Old solutions to old problems were no longer socially or economically expedient. Acknowledging this throws into relief the absolute vitality of the young generation of Indian leaders' modern skills.[38]

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[37] Vine Deloria Jr., "This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It," *New York Times*, 8 March 1970.

[38] I am not alone in my conclusion that Native people were not merely victims of, nor consistently resistant to, capitalist markets. See for example Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley, CA, 1998) and *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in American History* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), Brian C. Hosmer, *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation among the Menominees and Metlakatlans, 1870-1920* (Lawrence, KS, 1999), Brian C. Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill, eds., *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder, CO, 2004), Colleen O'Neill, *Working the Navajo Way: Labor and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence, KS, 2005), Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (London and Durham, NC, 2005), and Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indian Work: Language and Livelihood in American History* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

In 1980, influential anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz recalled how during the 1960s Indians from the Southwest living in San Francisco and Los Angeles heard calls from back home for technically-skilled professionals to help administer "Great Society" programs. This resulted in a process of reverse relocation of skilled and talented Indian people. His own San Juan Pueblo community, for example, had increased from 720 people in 1964 to 1200 in 1980, and not because of natural population increase. Rather, it was because several hundred of his people had concluded that the "California dream was dying."[39]

Writing in 1970, Vine Deloria Jr. bore witness to a similar trend that was taking shape in Indian Country. What he felt was most at stake was Native people's attempts to assert their rights to exercise self-determination away from the paternalistic gaze of BIA chaperones. "By 1967 there was a radical change in thinking on the part of many of us," he wrote. "Where non-Indians had been pushed out to make room for Indian people, they had wormed their way back into power and again controlled the major programs serving Indians." According to Deloria the gains that Native people and tribal governments had made in recent years were being undermined by yet another intrusive cycle of non-Indian socio-political experts who refused to acknowledge Indians' capacity for managing their own affairs. The moment was ripe then for a new breed of Indian leadership—one that could beat federal bureaucrats at their own game—to

[39] *Urban Indians: Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference on problems and Issues Concerning American Indians today* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1981), 178. For an in-depth study of the impact of "Great Society" programs on Indian Country see Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold war America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Press, 2008).

emerge and take the reins of tribal governance. "So, in large part, younger Indian leaders who had been playing with the national conference field began working at the local level to build community movements from the ground up," Deloria explained. And to be sure, many of those younger Indian leaders were emerging from urban metropolises.[40]

After a stint in the navy, Lester Chapoose landed not on his feet, but on his back in Los Angeles, where he ended up jobless and homeless, sleeping in parks and vacant buildings, biding his time in the Indian bars at Third and Main streets. Fortunately he lived to tell about it. "The only way to [survive] is you don't take any shit from anybody and you don't give anybody a bad time," he declared. "There was no picnic out there for anybody who didn't belong..." Chapoose eventually climbed his way back and gained admission to the University of Utah, where he earned an accounting degree that rendered him a viable candidate for tribal chairman back home on his Ute reservation. Winning his first election in 1973, Chapoose's administration established a successful tannery, fabric factory, bowling alley, and cattle enterprise while lowering tribal unemployment to 14 percent, a remarkable figure for that time. Proudly citing golf outings with Bob Hope and Gerald Ford, Chapoose credited much of his success to his ability to negotiate with non-Indians, a skill he developed away from the reservation. "[It's] not all that hard," he insisted. "Because I've done it so damn many times. I could be an Indian here at the Fourth of July powwow and wear my boots and Levis and talk

[40] Vine Deloria Jr., "This Country Was a Lot Better Off When the Indians Were Running It," *New York Times*, 8 March 1970.

to the Indian people. And I can be in the Governor's Ball the next night and be in an entirely different outfit, and an entirely different conversation…"[41]

Former National Congress of American Indians representative, Brigham Young University political science graduate, and Muscogee Creek tribal member David Lester embraced a similar set of values. Having accepted the directorship of the Los Angeles Urban Indian Development Association shortly after its formation in 1970, he primarily valued the city as a temporary training ground within which Indians could gain valuable experience to benefit their people back home on reservations. "You don't find the talent for development in rural areas in America; you find them in the cities," he asserted. "I think for too long the Bureau of Indian Affairs ignored that fact." Lester wanted to see the BIA "subsidize the qualified Indians, take him back to the reservation, because he's taking the unqualified Indian off the reservation to train him in the city and leave him there." Above all, Lester promoted what he termed "re-relocation," which involved "rekindling [Indians] desire to do something for their own people."[42]

Joseph Vasquez echoed David Lester's loyalty to reservations while promoting a modern, entrepreneurial spirit. And like his larger cohort of emerging socio-economic savvy leaders, he spoke from experience. Vasquez began working at the L.A. Indian Center in 1937, and then bounced from aeronautics school to the Navy to jobs in San Diego, El Paso, and Mexico before finally landing at Hughes Aircraft back in L.A. His own wide travels notwithstanding, he agreed with David Lester that those who gained skills in mainstream society were obliged to make a meaningful contribution to the

[41] Lester Chapoose Interview, 25 October 1986, Ute Indian Interviews Box 1, Folder 3, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
[42] David Lester Interview (1971), 19-21, Doris Duke Oral History Collection, Box 26, item no. 1008, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

tribe. “The people who are running the programs on the reservations… are the people who have gone out, become urbans and got an education and have gone back…” he explained. “I maintain, and I’ve said it time and again… the day of the bow and arrow is gone, the only way to fight the White man is to fight him with the white man’s ways.” The modern weapons at Indians’ disposal, Vasquez concluded, were “words, contracts, and money.”[43]

Had the leaders of the Sac and Fox tribe read Vasquez’s proclamation about the new trinity of modern weaponry—words, contracts, and money—they certainly would have agreed. Indeed, they had learned that lesson the hard way. By 1980, the Sac and Fox tribe of Oklahoma found itself $250,000 in debt, while operating on a $200,000 annual budget. The problem was so severe that the BIA took over management of the tribe’s affairs. 48-year-old Jack Thorpe, son of legendary athlete Jim Thorpe, stepped into the breach as principal chief and worked to deliver the tribe from tragedy. His first move was to forfeit his $18,000 per year salary. Then, inspired by the business strategies of H. Ross Perot, he embraced the role of administrator while designating responsibility to a team of experts capable of saving the tribe from financial ruin. “One of the main mistakes a lot of tribal leaders make is to try to run everything themselves when they don’t have the expertise,” he explained.

Thorpe’s leadership and business acumen proved successful. By 1986 the tribe had paid off its debts, was operating on a $3.2 million annual budget, and even boasted a modest cash surplus. Moreover, the tribe was making forays into the oil and gaming industries while working on a plan to purchase and move a Tulsa-based textile factory

[43] Interview with Joseph C. Vasquez (unspecified tribe) (1971), Doris Duke Oral History Collection, Box 26, item no. 1009, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

to a small plot of land that at one time fell within the original Sac and Fox reservation. The BIA, however, appeared to be standing in the way, and was moving slowly on signing off on the tribe's textile factory plan. Still, tribal general manager Gene Bread held out hope that BIA obstinacy would diminish as they grew to understand the initiative. "We've simply surpassed the ability of the BIA to deal with us," he reasoned. "Many of the things we're doing as a tribe are beyond the BIA bureaucrats' technical knowledge and background to understand." Responding to a journalist's inquiry about the implications that risky, big business ventures held for traditional tribal culture, tribal Second Chief Gaylon Franklin defied assumptions when he asserted, "We're becoming more Indianized again. Instead of trying to assimilate ourselves to white America, we're taking what white America has to offer and assimilating it to us." Explicitly connecting modern entrepreneurship to tribal self-determination, Franklin elaborated, "The Sac and Fox tribe has decided to have a hand in its own destiny… I call it the new Indian frontier."[44]

Some members of the new wave of tribal leadership skillfully managed to keep one foot firmly planted in urban Indian America and the other in rural Indian America, maneuvering between the two for the mutual benefit of Native people in both vicinities. 35-year-old Haskell Institute graduate and citizen of the Potawatomie nation Wah-Wah-Suk juggled such a role when he made regular pilgrimages from his family's home in

[44] "No Land, No Money, but a Tribe Rebounds," *Insight Magazine*, 1 September 1986, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, box 34, Folder 331: reservations, The Newberry Library, and Chicago. Jack Thorpe was born in Hawthorne, California in 1937. He entered the army after high school in Kansas, and then after his discharge migrated to Oklahoma in 1970 where he entered the University of Oklahoma for one year. He became tribal councilman in 1971, and tribal chief in 1980. He died in 2011. See his obituary: http://www.tnonline.com/2011/feb/24/jim-thorpes-son-jack-dies (accessed 10 October 2013).

Philadelphia's Mt. Airy suburb to his reservation home in Mayetta, Kansas. Upon discharge from the U.S. Army, Wah-Wah-Suk settled in Philadelphia, where he first saw the Liberty Bell and concluded that it "held no liberty for me." He supported his family by driving a bleach truck around the Delaware Valley metro area. In his spare time, he practiced what he deemed his real calling in life, to provide legal council to his Potawatomie tribesmen back in Kansas, with whom he conferenced four to five times per year. Something of a legal autodidact, his Mt. Airy home was filled with legal tomes and documents that he pored over each evening. On Sundays he regularly met with roughly two-dozen Indians who formed the United American Indians of the Delaware Valley social activist group. Regardless of which community he served, his mantra remained consistent: "What can I do for my people?"[45]

During a series of interviews in 1974 and 1977, Quechan tribal historian Lee Emerson spoke to a similar strategy of borrowing from urban America in order to strengthen Indian America when he claimed, "We ought to be progressive." Discussing the potential benefits of tribal hydroponic farming initiatives, he elaborated, "We have to get into the mainstream of the white society life." He insisted that his fellow tribespeople needed to begin using their own "initiative-ness" to establish more businesses like the new hotel the tribe was busy building at that time. "We are trying to emulate white citizens of Yuma, both in religion, development, and education," Emerson stated. He stressed that creating a thriving reservation economy was essential in keeping aspiring Indian professionals tied to their tribal land and culture. While he

[45] "Philadelphia's Indians Return to the Warpath," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 January 1972; "Indian in Mt. Airy Tells of Bigotry and Poverty," *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 3 March 1970.

confessed that certain professions demanded proximity to mainstream urban America, he insisted that those in agriculture school, real estate, and business administration could "come back and use their expertise." After explaining that Quechan people had in recent decades dispersed "all over the states," Emerson proudly mentioned that when they returned home they witnessed a growing reservation economy: "They come back through at times to see how we are and, every time they come back they notice the difference from when they left the reservation. We've increased our enterprises, increased our land development. We need more land."[46]

Penning a guest editorial for Chicago Indian community newsletter *The Amerindian* in 1955, future commissioner of Indian affairs and current Ute agency superintendent Robert Bennett (Oneida) argued that economic rehabilitation for rural Indian Country should not solely depend on developing "things" on reservations. Rather, he argued that the development of *people* should be the first order of business. "Many members of such a tribal group never participate in any of the benefits of tribal economy and are destitute," he wrote. Therefore, efforts at reservation economic development would never succeed if investors and tribal leaders continued failing to create outlets for young Indian people to practice their talents on behalf of the tribe. Everyone needed to play a substantive role in reservation economic rehabilitation, Bennett implored. But his ultimate goal was not to see tribal homes evolve into gentrified American communities. Rather, he appreciated economic stability as the best

[46] Interview with Lee Emerson (Quechan/Mojave - Quechan tribal historian), 1974/1977, in Clifford E. Trafzer, ed., *Quechan Indian Voices* (Riverside, CA.: California Center for Native Nations, 2012).

strategy toward preserving "the remaining vestiges of our culture without sacrificing them to economic need." Bennett wanted Indians to succeed at the white man's game so they could remain *Indians*. He did not see "Indian" and "economic strength" as mutually exclusive concepts.[47]

Similarly, in 1967, one year after he retired from his commissioner of Indian affairs post, Philleo Nash reflected on his administration's overarching, dual program of tribal resource development and Indian individual development. Nash argued that giving Indians choices about how and where to achieve economic stability was of vital importance. "The theory here," he explained, "is that the individual should be put in the best possible position to take advantage of whatever opportunity he can find wherever he chooses to find it, so that if he chooses to find it in New York with the New York City Ballet, like Maria Tallchief, or in Beverly Hills as its mayor, which Will Rogers, Jr. did for a while, or in the oil fields of Los Angeles, as some people have done, or on a skyscraper in New York as some of the Iroquoian groups have done, this is their business, their right, and we have an obligation, I think, to maximize their opportunity for success." With these words Nash perhaps synthesized both the general process that was unfolding across Indian Country—both urban and rural—during the 1960s. Moreover, his sympathetic perspective captured what was really at stake for Native people during this period: freedom of movement and choice, and a firm belief in Indians' capacity to achieve great things while defying expectations. And he was sure to stipulate that freedom of choice needed to include the right to maintain connections to tribalism. "[T]here will always be many Indian people who prefer rural life," he

[47] Guest Editorial, *The AMERINDIAN*, v3, n6 (July-August, 1955), Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

reasoned, "and the continuance of this rural life should not be at the price of a standard of living which is so much lower than the rest of us that it's a serious deprivation to the individual and an embarrassment." Simply put, Nash argued that the Indian bureau needed to make less demands on how and where Indians belonged and instead support their own creative visions for a stable, productive future.[48]

That sentiment was shared by a new generation of ambitious young Indians who refused to allow past experiences and contemporary assumptions about Indian potential to prevent them from attaining their individual goals, be they a life independent from the tribe, or a life intimately devoted to the greater good of the tribe. By the late 1960s young Indians had almost 20 years of history to reflect on when considering whether or not their parents had made the right decision in migrating away from reservations in search of jobs and social dignity. Needless to say, Indian youths' attitudes toward their socio-economic prospects were essential when considering various tribes' intensifying efforts to secure a federal policy of tribal self-determination. As Standing Rock Sioux and Crow Creek Community Action Program administrator Floyd Taylor put it, "The success or failure of the Indian, or any race, lies in its youth—how well trained and experienced they are."[49]

Understanding that the future of their respective tribes rested on their shoulders, many Indian youth were apprehensive about attaching their hopes to any one solution. Others seemed to be waiting for any window of opportunity to open on their behalf.

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[48] Oral History Interview with Philleo Nash, 5 June 1967, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri.

[49] *The Indian Youth* (published biweekly in Philadelphia by the United Church Press), 22 September 1968, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 3, folder 10, Fort Lewis College, Center for Southwest Studies, Durango, Colorado.

Either way, most expressed mixed opinions on how and where to secure the most profitable future. For example, a circle of Crow Creek Sioux girls projected a deep resentment against tribal life, and maintained that they were only waiting for an opportunity to transcend what they considered a stifling reservation existence. 16-year-old Blossom insisted that, "We just live here 'cause we have to." Her friend Sandy chimed in, "I hate it; I just maintain my cool." When a journalist mentioned to the girls that the tribe was pursuing plans to bring industry to the reservation, a third friend named Carole scoffed, "So, what do you expect us to do, pack meat?" Carole then explained that she was planning to spend the summer in Boston before entering school to become a medical technician.[50]

In stark contrast to the Crow Creek girls, some young Crow Creek boys seemed bewildered by expectations to live up to their parents' model for success, and mired in a general state of ennui. When visited at home by a journalist, former Crow Creek tribal councilman Joe Wounded Knee sat at his kitchen table and proceeded to reprimand his son Pat as though he was not sitting in the same room. "The trend of young people seems to be to congregate to recreate," Joe inveighed. "They have beer parties and stuff, and you can't get them interested in nothing… Pat's 25 years old now, and he ain't got nothing other than the clothes he's wearing," Joe continued. "When I was his age I had horses and wagons and all kinds of stuff like that." This finally roused Pat from a nearby couch. "It kind of gets me 'cause I can't get a job," he defended. "I've got to get

[50] *The Indian Youth* (published biweekly in Philadelphia by the United Church Press), 22 September 1968, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 3, folder 10, Fort Lewis College, Center for Southwest Studies, Durango, Colorado.

away from here… There just isn't anything here." Pat only held out hope that he could try the relocation program in the fall.[51]

At times such generational disconnects could defy assumptions about young people and elders' divergent views on where Indians belonged. Evelyn Prue, a Rosebud Sioux woman who migrated from South Dakota to Chicago, recalled the way she would dream about life away from her reservation: "Back in the 1930s I used to look across those sand hills on the reservation and wonder what it was like out there when I listened to the radio and heard all those big bands." By the mid-1970s Evelyn and her son Mickey were struggling against a generation gap. A Vietnam veteran who fought to kick a drug habit, and a staunch supporter of AIM, Mickey wanted to return to Rosebud, where he felt he could make a real difference in his people's lives. Ironically, it was his mother who insisted on remaining in the city. She believed that her children's future lay in embracing the non-Indian world. "You can't live in the past," she explained. "If you dwell on all the bad things that happened to us, you cant ever live with yourself."[52]

In addition to a disconnect between young and old, some reservations became venues within which competing visions of Indians' futures caused a rift between young urban Indians who returned home, and those who never left. Echoing the experiences of Indian boarding school students around the turn of the century, Duane Birdbear, a freshman at Dartmouth College, mentioned that he felt alienated from his fellow tribesmen when he returned to his Mandan-Hidatsa reservation in North Dakota. I feel

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[51] *The Indian Youth* (published biweekly in Philadelphia by the United Church Press), 22 September 1968, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 3, folder 10, Fort Lewis College, Center for Southwest Studies, Durango, Colorado.

[52] "Between Chicago and the reservation is a generation gap," William Mullen, *Chicago Tribune*, 15 September 1976, 12.

almost a total stranger coming back, and I just can't re-establish the same friendships we had before, because we think different thoughts," he explained. "My idea of what a good time is isn't their idea of what a good time is." In similar fashion, David Redhorse, a Navajo sophomore at Amherst College, theorized that exposure to modern middle-class conveniences and technologies bred resentment against reservations among young Indians who ventured beyond reservation limits. For Redhorse, however, spending substantial time away from New Mexico resulted in an appreciation for tribal tradition and reservation land that he otherwise would not have realized. "The farther you go away from the reservation, you strive harder to preserve it," he concluded.[53]

In 1969, Wallace Coffee, a 23-year-old Cherokee and Choctaw, paused from his studies in business, psychology, and sociology at Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma to reflect on urban relocation's implications for reservation life. Coffee regarded relocation as a distinct opportunity to practice self-sufficiency and gain a "sense of direction" that reservation life could not deliver. Interestingly, one specific benefit of relocation that he promoted was its capacity for separating ambitious young Indians from delinquent peers who preferred to "run off and get drunk." This sentiment is important to note in light of the fact that critics of the relocation program typically dismissed the process as a one-way ticket to a life of "Skid Row" poverty and alcoholism. But Coffee worried not about such pitfalls. He confessed that relocated Indians might "be lost for quite a while," but he maintained that even that could result in a positive outcome in that it would force Indians to "work and think about work."

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[53] *The Indian Youth* (published biweekly in Philadelphia by the United Church Press), 22 September 1968, Theodore Hetzel Papers, box 3, folder 10, Fort Lewis College, Center for Southwest Studies, Durango, Colorado.

Still, for all his enthusiasm for relocation, Coffee ultimately envisioned a life in which he would return home and help his people. He only felt that he first needed to "learn more about the Indian and more about white ways first" and "realize what society is all about." Doing so, in his estimation, did not threaten tribalism. "More than likely the Indian will come back to Oklahoma," he surmised. "They love their home. They love their people. They can't stay away from the people."[54]

Whether or not young Indian urban sojourners would elect to one day return to their rural Indian Country roots ultimately depended on their own subjective experiences and circumstances. Still, regardless of their competing visions for how and where to best achieve a most profitable future, one theme remained consistent among them: education and experience in the wider world were essential ingredients for success, both at home and abroad. During an interview in 2009, Father Peter Powell, who for over five decades at St. Augustine's Center for Indians has worked on behalf of Chicago's Indian community, spoke to this fundamental assertion:

> They took that practical savvy that they learned here in the city back to the reservation, remained certainly traditionally and spiritually as strong as ever, and yet at the same time have become tribal leaders today. The city experience gave them the practical know-how. It gave them the experience in working with other organizations and working with the government agencies that would not have been possible on the reservations. It has strengthened them in better serving their people back on the reservation.[55]

Suggesting an important continuity across space and time, in 1970, William Wiley, who directed a special Indian education program at Riverside City College in California,

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[54] Interview with Wallace Coffee (T-484), 31 July 1969, Doris Duke Oral History Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.
[55] Father Peter Powell, interview with author, 9 December 2009. Transcript in author's possession.

seemed to witness the end result of the process that Father Powell later outlined. Wiley noted how Native students who were interested in leading their tribes clearly recognized the importance of a college degree. "They do see, wherever they go on the reservation now, that people who are running things are Indians, white collar Indians, with a big hat," he stressed.[56]

What this chapter suggests is that while it is certainly important to understand how and why many Native people failed in the city, it is also important to consider how Indians' urban experiences might have prepared them to positively impact tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Relocated Indians did not en masse physically abandon reservations; nor did they abandon them intellectually. Focusing on this point potentially provides an escape from a problematic assimilation/resistance binary: Indian assimilation into modern, mainstream America, or Indian gravitation toward a traditional warrior spirit best encapsulated within the Red Power ethos. The Native protagonists discussed here perhaps seem exceptional, but they are merely representatives of a much larger generation of tribal leaders who aggressively pursued opportunities wherever they found them, including reservations that might have felt as exotic and intimidating as metropolitan life once felt to an earlier generation. Of course they all endured their own hardships. But when they eventually returned home they often did so in spite of those hardships, and not because of them.

On January 12, 1972, pointing to Indians' apparent refusal to be "melted down," the federal government officially renounced its relocation program. Between its official

[56] Interview with William Wiley, item No. 1019, Doris Duke Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

introduction in 1952 and its rather inconspicuous conclusion in 1972 more than 100,000 Indians had migrated through the program—a figure that does not account for tens of thousands more who relocated without benefit of Indian bureau support. According to the BIA's notoriously unreliable statistics, at least 40 percent of those who received government support eventually returned to reservations. In 1971 alone, roughly 10,000 Indians migrated through the program, and roughly half of them returned.[57]

According to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce (Mohawk), the government's annual $40 million training and job-assistance programs would be relocated to reservations. "I want to see Indian economies where dollars move from Indian hand to Indian hand and are not drained out by those non-Indian cities that develop and grow and feed upon Indian reservations," Bruce explained. Reflecting the federal government's recent commitment to a policy of tribal self-determination, his plan was to immediately shift $7 million of the program's total budget to ten "Indian-Action Teams" that would prepare various tribal corporations for the management of reservation building trades and heavy construction jobs.[58]

To be sure, the BIA promoted a worthy agenda. By taking complete credit for it, however, the Indian bureau overlooked the essential role Native people played in the paradigmatic shift. What transpired was less a matter of Indians' resistance to being "melted down," and more a matter of Indians' insistence on freedom to exercise mobility and pursue opportunities wherever they could find them. The federal

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[57] "U.S. Shifts Indian Focus from City to Reservation," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 13 January 1972, found in box 19, folder 50: Urban Indians, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

[58] "U.S. Shifts Indian Focus from City to Reservation," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 13 January 1972, found in box 19, folder 50: Urban Indians, Virgil J. Vogel Research and Personal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

government officially sanctioned Indian mass urban migration in 1952, but Native people had by that point already been exploiting urban resources to the best of their ability for decades. Likewise, numerous Native visionaries had already refocused their attention on reservation rehabilitation long before the federal government officially sanctioned that process in 1972. Simply put, Indian initiative consistently outpaced Indian bureau indecision. Moreover, in direct opposition to the federal government's overarching agenda, Native people never had any intention of relinquishing reservation space. The most talented and ambitious young Indians demonstrated this throughout the postwar period while building what historian and legal scholar Charles Wilkinson termed an "Indian professional middle class."[59] Because they sought to expand their world, and not reduce it, they kept their finger on the pulse of reservation developments (or the lack thereof). In an interview from 1970, Navajo tribal councilman Howard Gorman spoke to this distinct brand of loyalty to tribal homelands when he movingly repeated, "They always come back, they always come back, they always come back."[60]

[59] Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, 85.
[60] Interview with Howard Gorman (Navajo Tribal Councilman), 10 July 1970, American Indian Oral History Project, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Conclusion

In 1908, Thomas Greenwood was born to parents of Cherokee and Scots descent residing in Hayti, Missouri—a village community nestled in the state's swampy bootheel. Growing up he roamed the countryside and hunted ducks alongside other young boys from the community. In 1925, seeking opportunities beyond his rural confines, Greenwood hopped on Highway 61 out of Hayti and headed 500 miles north to the Midwest's largest metropolis: Chicago. There he found work as a blacksmith and boilermaker, and began forming bonds of friendship with fellow Native Chicagoans who regularly met at John Hunter's, an "Indian hang-out" located within Chicago's artist colony. Within one year he had become something of a social ambassador for the city's burgeoning Indian community. In this capacity, Greenwood befriended legendary Chicago mayor "Big Bill" Thompson, who introduced him to heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey, Chippewa baseball star Charles "Chief" Bender, and other celebrities who passed through the "Second City."

In 1933, Greenwood put his political connections to good use when he helped found Chicago's Grand Council Fire (later rechristened the "Indian Council Fire"), an Indian rights organization that represented 1200 Native people living in Chicago during that time. In 1935, he first gained experience as a job creator when he served as co-director of New Deal Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration projects in nearby Lyons and Berwyn Townships. Despite his successful maneuvering within mainstream America, however, he maintained focus on preserving and teaching tribal culture. A central part of his WPA and PWA initiatives concerned the establishment of community Indian arts, crafts, and lore groups. He did not consider his

dual roles as political mainstreamer and preserver of Indian culture to be mutually exclusive endeavors. Rather, he demonstrated pride in putting the two seemingly opposed agendas in dialogue with each other. "I like to think my most satisfying experience was in actuating Whites and Reds as Brothers working to have a true and real relationship," he reflected in 1983.[1]

At the beginning of 1942, as America dove deeper into the depths of World War II, Greenwood hoped to advance his service to community and country when he went to his local Navy office to enlist for service. He was rejected, however, on account of blindness in his left eye that stemmed from an industrial accident years prior. Still, the Navy's denial of his services did not prevent him from making a contribution to the nation's war effort. In April 1942, Greenwood drew upon his industrial labor experience and political connections to land a position as organizer of a new shipyard in quaint Seneca, Illinois, 80 miles southwest of Chicago along the Illinois-Michigan Canal. He quickly climbed the ranks to the position of Chairman of Management and Labor. Tasked with quickly amassing a team of energetic laborers, he thought immediately of his fellow Cherokee people back in Oklahoma, and brought upwards of 200 of them to distant Seneca to help build not only a fleet of warships, but also a new city where once stood a village.

In the postwar period, Greenwood tirelessly persisted in his activism on behalf of both Indian Country, which by that point had unpredictably expanded as both an idea and a literal place, and the American nation at large. In 1948, alongside fellow Chicago Indian community leader Albert Cobe (discussed in chapter one), Greenwood organized

[1] Thomas Greenwood to Brian G. Bardy, 22 February 1983, box 1, folder 19: Correspondence, Tom Greenwood Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

both the Indian Service League of Chicago and a YMCA-sponsored Indian basketball team that traveled throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan to compete with other teams. In 1953, Greenwood helped found the Chicago American Indian Center, still in operation today. That same year, still maintaining a professional partnership with Albert Cobe, Greenwood became active in the National Congress of American Indians, and in 1961 helped organize the American Indian Chicago Conference, for which he served as chairman of the ways and means committee. He also joined a team of AICC representatives that hand-delivered their final conference report and series of recommendations to President John F. Kennedy, whom Greenwood revered as the "Red Man's Moses."[2]

In the late 1960s, Greenwood permanently retreated from the big city to a home he purchased in idyllic Willow Springs, Illinois—a village community in southwest Chicagoland that he had long cherished. In Willow Springs, Greenwood quickly ingratiated himself to local mayor John Rust, and landed a position on the town planning committee and board of trustees before advancing to chairman of the police and fire commission, for which he helped erect a new firehouse. In the process, he never surrendered what was important to him as an American Indian person who cared about the old ways. In Willow Springs he worked as conservationist, assisting a project to turn a landfill into a forest preserve, and in 1972 served as chairman of the local powwow committee. In 1976, Greenwood located the Sacred Indian Stones in the Healing Waters

[2] The AICC marked a watershed moment in Native people's movement toward national political unity and advocacy of a self-determination policy For a discussion of the AICC's importance, see Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War American" The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), chapters 2-3.

around Willow Springs that Potawatomie people once used in spiritual ceremonies prior to being forcibly removed from the area, and hosted a public ceremony to help recognize and preserve the sacred stones.

Even in his twilight Greenwood persisted in tying together the seemingly disparate strands of his dynamic life into a coherent statement. In 1984, Greenwood helped found the Isle a la Cache Museum on the Des Plaines River Island near Romeoville. The museum commemorated Indian people's importance to the local history and included exhibit materials from the fur trade era.[3] Finally, in 1986, an august 78-year-old Thomas Greenwood continued his efforts at community restoration and historical preservation as he almost single-handedly led a local initiative to establish a park adjacent to the I-M Canal along Willow Springs. His primary agenda was to eradicate the dilapidated factories, junkyards, and tank farms that spoiled 25 miles of scenic river from Summit to Joliet. He tirelessly worked for the betterment of his local community in Willow Springs right up until his death in 1988.[4]

Reflecting on the sum of his life experiences, Greenwood arrived at a sense of optimism: "I have lived to see poverty in its worst and progress unthought of 50 years ago. I've seen Indians become laborers, clerks, nurses, salespersons, business persons, owners of companies, doctors, lawyers, teachers, in the arts (actors, sculptors, artists, musicians), politicians, and yes beggars and thieves—entertainers."[5] The means by which so many Native people arrived at so many destinations that so many would have

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[3] "Tribute recalls significance of waterways," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 January 1984.
[4] "Parade is 1st step in rescuing canal from stagnation," *Chicago Tribune,* 29 August 1986.
[5] Thomas Greenwood to Brian G. Bardy, 22 February 1983, box 1, folder 19: Correspondence, Tom Greenwood Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

deemed antithetical to Indianness at the turn of the twentieth century are perhaps reflected in Greenwood's own life trajectory, which cycled between rural and metropolitan space; local and national activism; nature preservation and industrial labor; and loyalty to both tribal and U.S. citizenship and culture. Greenwood lived as though none of these endeavors were diametrically opposed to each other.

Betraying no underlying crisis of character, his life wholly undermined the "two worlds" trope that Indian and non-Indian writers alike perpetuated at the turn of the twentieth century when convinced that Native people—especially boarding school graduates—had effectively become torn between two conflicting approaches to life ("white" and "Indian"), and therefore incapable of fully participating in either. Ultimately, Greenwood represented a larger generation of Native people who resented the inherent limitations of "two worlds' bullshit," to quote LaDonna Harris (Comanche), whose influential legacy as an Indian socio-political activist also stemmed from an enthusiastic rejection of socio-cultural boundaries.[6]

Thomas Greenwood's life perhaps seems exceptional, and to be sure he certainly did cover a substantial amount of ground, both figuratively and literally. But as

[6] For the LaDonna Harris quote see Daniel M. Cobb, "'born in the opposition:' The Intellectual Life of D'Arcy McNickle According to his Diary," paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory Ottawa, Canada, October 2010. This paper by historian Daniel M. Cobb provides a critical ethnobiography of legendary Flathead activist D'Arcy McNickle, who similar to Greenwood consistently added complex layers of meaning to "Indian" as that term applied to his own life. Interestingly, Greenwood worked closely with McNickle at the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, and most likely in other capacities as well. On LaDonna Harris's life and legacy, see her autobiography, *LaDonna Harris: A Comanche Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

extraordinary as his life appears, he was not alone in his trajectory. There were thousands like him. And those thousands who over the course of the twentieth century demonstrated a fighting spirit to overcome binding expectations on how and where Native people could belong within mainstream America and modern global society gradually, but energetically, and at times *painfully*, paved the way for not thousands, but millions of Native people today who deny any and all limits on the visions they cast and choices they make for their own lives. From boarding school halls that resonated with messages of racial uplift to streetwise urban-educated Indians' attempts to rehabilitate reservation economies, one overarching message linked together what might otherwise appear to be a disparate set of historical phenomena: Native people can and will fashion their own life course, either as individuals, part of a tribe, or both, while managing their own affairs and maneuvering freely within their own sets of expectations.

This is not to suggest that there was no profound assault on tribalism and Indianness throughout the period covered in this study. But because of Native people's sharp social ingenuity and collective resolve, the termination-relocation-assimilation Hydra unleashed from the depths of federal policymakers' conference rooms never quite succeeded in its mission to devour the Indian problem, nor by extension, Indians. As St. Augustine's Center for Indians director Father Peter Powell recalled:

> Native people on their own were able to maintain and attain lives of dignity and decency here in the city of Chicago. They did it without the Bureau of Indian affairs. For many it was long, and slow, and heartbreaking, but they made it. Now there are three generations of our people here, and I would say, three generations who are still at heart very much committed to maintaining their Indianness, and they have done this on their own.[7]

[7] Father Peter Powell, interview with author, 9 December 2009. Transcript in author's possession.

Powell's assessment is convincing. The permanence and wider acceptance Native people achieved in urban America primarily resulted from a process they nurtured long before and long after the Bureau of Indian Affairs introduced a modicum of support. The transportation expenses, low-wage job leads, and meager weekly stipends that the relocation program briefly provided pales in comparison to what Indians provided for themselves across several decades in numerous American cities.

In 1953, a successful Mohawk-Sioux dairy farmer from upstate New York authored a guest editorial for *The Amerindian*, the Chicago Indian community's bi-monthly newsletter. The author discussed how the nation's 400,000 Indians in years past "have been skeptical of their chances of getting ahead in competition with the white man." Pointing to a lingering inferiority complex among Native people who experienced "de-Indianization" in schools and on reservations, he regretted that Indians who in previous decades succeeded in "the white man's sphere" could only be labeled "unusual" at best. Championing that cohort of Indians' courage and fortitude, the author concluded, "Today, more and more Indian people have gone out into the world because of these trail-blazers," and, having learned self-reliance, they were no longer bound to the patronage of the "great White Father." The author was none other than future commissioner of Indian affairs Louis Bruce, who in 1972 carried out orders to dismantle the relocation program that supported this process he so valued.[8]

During the late 1940s, the BIA began invoking reservations as "prisons," a notion around which it crafted a termination policy and relocation program. Indians too, from the initial reservation period onward, proved complicit in encouraging a similar

[8] Guest Editorial, *The Amerindian*, v1, n6 (July-August, 1953), Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

evaluation of reservation space. Yet, there was a stark contrast between the two groups' motives for deploying the "prison" analogy. Congress and the Indian bureau wanted to free Indians from what they perceived as cultural deficiencies. In their collective minds reservations were not the only prisons from which Native people needed to break free; as far as they were concerned the very idea of "Indian" was itself a prison. By contrast, Indians wanted to free themselves from artificial constraints placed on their capacity for self-sufficiency while returning to lives of freedom and choice that their ancestors had once enjoyed. Essentially, urban Indian migrants exercised the freedom to determine who they could be and where they could belong. When they ventured beyond reservation limits, they were rarely rejecting Indian culture as much as they were seeking new means to preserve, restore, and even expand it.

For all its tragedy and resultant trauma, the twentieth century can be appreciated as more than a period in which federal Indian policy terrorized Native cultural traditions. In his introductory remarks for an academic conference on urban Indians held at Chicago's Newberry Library, influential Pueblo anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz confessed that, "In the past it has been all-too-true that we, especially anthropologists, romantics that we are, followed Indians to the cities to find vestiges of 'tribal' life, concentrating almost exclusively on understanding how they managed to survive as culturally "Indian" in the urban context." Ortiz then cited conference presenter Ann Metcalf's argument that such scholarly pursuits were at best myopic in that they denied

the many examples of creative, dynamic, and successful adjustments that many relocated Native people made. Ortiz and Metcalf were correct.[9]

Moreover, cultural adaptation, facilitated by spatial mobility, is itself an Indian tradition from which Native people have consistently drawn strength for survival. Paying close attention to how and where Native people maneuvered within the United States, and how they defied reservations' socio-economic and spatial limitations, facilitates a deeper understanding of and appreciation for Indian ingenuity and resolve during the twentieth century. Indeed, how do we historically reconcile accounts of Indians starving on reservations during the late-nineteenth century with such modern day events as the Florida Seminole Tribe's $965 million purchase of the Hard Rock chain of casinos, restaurants, and entertainment complexes, or the airing of Chickasaw Nation commercials during the Super Bowl? How do we reconcile the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre with Native American participation in the United Nations? Simply put, how did Indians progress from point A to point B on such a rigorous historical trajectory? Perhaps the foregoing study forms some small portion of that no doubt unwieldy answer.

[9] *Urban Indians: Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference on problems and Issues Concerning American Indians today* (Chicago: The Newberry Library, 1981).

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