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Coll Thrush. *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007. Maps, illustrations. x + 326 pp. $28.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-295-98700-2; $22.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-295-98812-2.

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Rewriting Seattle's Place-Story

While most U.S. cities have American Indian origins, none advertises its native heritage quite like Seattle, Washington. Residents and visitors regularly encounter indigenous place-names and images, celebrate the city's "founding days" with native cast members, and hear how Indian ghosts continue to haunt the metropolis. Even the city's namesake, Seeathl (more commonly known as "Chief Seattle"), reflects a foundational Native American identity. To author Coll Thrush, however, these "place-stories"–a formulation derived from the idea that places are shaped in our imagination, through popular stories–tell more about the needs of Puget Sound's American colonizers than the native people who have persisted in making the region their home. In short, such narratives place indigenous people in the distant past, while obscuring the realities of urban native life. Academic scholarship, furthermore, has only legitimized popular understanding of the city's Indian foundations by failing to connect urban and Native American history.

Thus, with *Native Seattle*, Thrush works to "challenge the assumption that Indian and urban histories are somehow mutually exclusive" (p. 13). Examining Seattle's history from its founding in 1851 to the early twenty-first century, Thrush explores how Native Americans and the development of the city have been inextricably linked. More specifically, even as place-stories featuring indigenous people justified the dispossession of native people while appropriating indigenous identity, American Indians took part in the massive changes brought by the growth of the city. In the end, Thrush hopes to "reorient Seattle's urban story by placing its Native histories at the center" (p. 16).

This goal is best achieved in the book's early chapters on Seattle's "village period," from the 1850s through the 1870s. According to popular history, Seattle's founding dates to the 1851 landing of the Denny Party and their reception by local native people. But for Thrush, this "creation story" epitomizes the sense of predestined urban growth and Indian disappearance that dominate narratives of the city's history. Seattle's early decades were actually characterized by an intricate web of native and nonnative interactions. Native people came to town for various reasons that included gawking at the newcomers, experimenting with Christianity, trading for goods, forging political alliances, and, especially, participating in the labor market. Indeed, Seattle would hardly have survived without native people to work in the mills, provide food for sale, haul mail and goods by canoe, clear the land, build houses, and work in the city's brothels. These close connections are wonderfully illustrated by an anecdote that closes chapter 3, in which a European American judge requires a Chinese American resident to prove his residency by answering a query in Chinook jargon (which he does, successfully). Finally, another short chapter examines federal census data to "highlight the diversity of Native experiences within the urban weave and provide a glimpse into the complexities of a developing urban Indian population," by showing native people settled in small enclaves around the city, working as domestic servants, living as members of mixed-race families, and residing in tribal communities alongside the expanding suburbs (p. 70).

The next set of chapters covers Seattle's growth into a major metropolitan area in the half century from 1880 to 1930, focusing on how native people became central to the stories Seattle began to tell about itself. Living Indians appear in this section primarily as victims dispossessed of their lands due to massive engineering projects and housing developments that destroyed native places. Thrush argues that Seattle ceased to be an indigenous place in this period even as some numbers of native people continued to reside in the city (another short chapter uses the 1930 census to show native people living in working-class neighborhoods, on Skid Row,

and in the city's institutions, augmenting a brief discussion of native peddlers and artisans). Meanwhile, Seattle came to articulate and mark a story of Indians vanishing from the landscape. City leaders and businessmen promoted the tourist industry by appropriating native place-names and imagery, as exemplified by the 1899 erection of the Chief-of-All-Women Pole in Pioneer Square, the city's first public art. Similarly, Seattle's 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was rife with Indian imagery, including ethnographic displays, an Eskimo village, and a Wild West show. These and additional variations of Seattle's place-story, including the celebration of Chief Seattle Day, potlatch festivals, and Indian-themed fraternal organizations, worked to "recast [local Indians] as stock characters in melodramatic stories about urban progress, representing both the inevitability of indigenous decline and the inexorable ascent of metropolitan Seattle" (p. 88).

Two final chapters cover the period following World War Two. The first, on American Indian community organization and social activism, emphasizes that native people from many tribes and nations came to Seattle in the postwar years. Thrush highlights the American Indian Service League, a group that began in the late 1950s and worked to create an urban Indian community, establish an Indian presence through civic activities, and advocate for Indians on political issues. Building on this foundation, the urban Indian organizations of the 1960s and 1970s adopted more radical tactics, such as occupying Fort Lawton, a decommissioned military base, in 1970. Ultimately, these organizations also worked to establish new Indian places in the city, such as Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Discovery Park. By the early twenty-first century, many Indians living in Seattle were telling place-stories that reflected Seattle's long history as a pan-tribal place. Descendants of the area's original peoples, meanwhile, "began to exert new influences over both urban environmental affairs and the civic story" (p. 186). The book's final chapter documents how these local Indian tribes became more assertive in assuming roles within the region as both ecological stewards and cultural authorities. During the fish-ins of the 1970s, for instance, native people reclaimed their rights to Seattle's fisheries, waterways, and shorelines. Other groups, such as the Duwamish, began to question Seattle's time-honored origin stories and played an especially large and controversial role in the city's 2001 sesquicentennial celebration. Thrush concludes by asserting that we have to be more critical about the place-stories that define our urban centers and that new place-stories can inspire and inform new actions.

The accomplishments of this book are many, most notably the merging of Native American and urban history, which for too long have developed as fields isolated from one another, or have even been considered antithetical. Furthermore, Thrush writes with great skill, combining an engaging narrative with sharp analysis that moves fluidly between social and cultural history. The end result is that this is a book that will serve a variety of audiences, including scholars across a range of disciplines and fields, undergraduates in urban studies and Native American studies courses, and interested readers among the general public. The majority of the book is so thoughtfully and meticulously constructed, in fact, that the fifty pages of text covering the post-World War Two era stand out in contrast. While this period saw the urbanization of American Indians on an unprecedented scale, both in Seattle and in other cities across the country, the patterns characterizing this demographic shift are only very lightly documented and analyzed. The last two chapters might thus be seen as a jumping off point that identifies topics for others to treat in greater depth.

Finally, *Native Seattle*'s introductory chapter claims that this study can be a model for thinking about other cities, but that it is ultimately a local history. More explicit connections to scholars thinking in similar ways would serve the former cause while taking little away from the latter. Over the past decade, several historians of American Indians have examined native people's experiences as they adapted to life in and around European American centers of population. Specifically, the chapters on the village period seem to follow recent work both on American Indian presence in colonial North American settlements and on native wage labor.[1] Similarly, the cultural analysis of Seattle's place-stories in the middle chapters could have better engaged literature on regional identity in the American West.[2] This book certainly has the potential to reorient both Native American and urban studies scholars, as the author intended, but better contextualization within emerging bodies of scholarship would have furthered this goal. Nonetheless, *Native Seattle* succeeds by forging new ground, in creative ways, provocatively rewriting Seattle's place-story.

Notes

[1]. For a sampling of a wider literature, see Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, eds., *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996); Colin G. Calloway, ed., *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997); Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: In-*

dian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Brian Hosmer, *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation among the Menominees and Metlakatlans, 1870-1920* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill, eds., *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004); and Colleen O'Neill, *Working the Navajo Way: Labor and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005).

[2]. David M. Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, eds., *Many Wests: Place, Culture & Regional Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

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