

History 422: Lecture 12

[Professor Hirt]: This lesson covers the two decades between World War I and World War II, a period that once again reflects the theme of progress and poverty in a particularly dramatic manner as it covers the so called roaring 20's as well as the Great Depression of the 1930's. Your textbook labels the decade of the 1920's as "The Birth of the Modern", it might also be labeled a decade of contrasts, both the contrasts between affluence and poverty and a contrast between liberalism and intolerance. These were national trends that had their own expressions in the Northwest.

World War I had stimulated an economic boom in the United States that greatly benefited farmers, loggers and ship manufacturers, especially in the Northwest, but the sudden decline in production at the end of the war dealt a sharp blow to the Northwest economy. Some sectors of the Northwest economy fared better than others, however. Inflation, what we refer to as the high cost of living, rose dramatically during the war and for a short period afterwards. For example between 1913 and 1920 the cost of living rose 70%, that's two thirds rise in the cost of living in just seven years, that's fairly dramatic. The cancellation of government orders for war materials and the cancellation of orders for food for feeding the troops as well as declining purchases from Europe, which was growing its own food now that the war was over in Europe led to a short but severe depression in the United States and especially in the Northwest. It lasted from about 1919 to 1921. Manufacturing output fell by one half in Washington State during these years and payrolls declined by a million dollars in those two years in Washington. Unemployment shot up, wages stagnated and declined and this led to renewed labor agitation and strikes, some of which we'll deal with a little bit later. Farm prices, importantly, plummeted. Wheat for example dropped from \$2.06 per bushel to 86 cents per bushel between 1919 and 1921, this was devastating on farmers who had taken out loans during World War I to expand production in order to meet the sudden demand for food during the war and suddenly afterwards the demand is gone and the prices drop as I said from \$2.06 to 86 cents per bushel. Many of them lost their farms and had their homes and property foreclosed on them. The lumber industry in the state of Washington laid off 15,000 workers in this two year period and in Oregon, 7,000 lumber workers were laid off. The lumber industry [*photos of people working in timber*] does, by the way, pick up after 1923, something that the agricultural industry, farmers did not experience any boom later in the decade. The World War I ship building industry in the Northwest essentially closed down entirely. There was really no ship building industry in the Northwest after World War I and it didn't appear again until World War II. Rural areas [*photo of children standing outside of a home*] were hardest hit nationwide and in the Northwest in this brief early depression in the 1920's, cities and manufacturers after 1921 experienced most of the decade as a boom period. Though farmers benefited from more and better roads in the 1920's and from new technologies that revolutionized farming, such as gasoline powered engines, trucks and tractors, run by gasoline engines and combines, they still experienced the decade, essentially as one long, dismal depression, mostly due to devastatingly low crop prices which were in turn caused by over production and under consumption, farmers were producing more than the market could bear and with the glut of those crops on the markets farm prices remained low and

farmers just had an increasingly difficult time in the 1920's. On the other hand due to the construction boom in the cities, and a booming demand for wood, especially in Japan, the market for lumber rebounded [*photo of logs*] by 1923. The lumber industry in Washington State in fact reached all-time production records in the 1920's. Those production records in the 1920's have never been reproduced since then, that's when Washington State produced the highest volume of timber on an annual basis. Manufacturing fared quite well after 1921; Boeing for example which started as a little airplane shop on Lake Union in 1916 was building fleets of mail and passenger planes by 1927. The mining industry [*picture of miners*] benefited from technological innovations like electric lighting that extended and improved work hours and seasons in the mines. For example miners in the Coeur d'Alene's often wintered in Spokane instead of working year round before electricity and electric lighting came to the mines in the 1920's. Other booming sectors in the Northwest economy included the construction industry, especially those connected with highway construction. Consumer products manufacturers, merchandisers, the energy industry, the entertainment businesses, and the service sector were all booming in the 1920's. Now the one innovation that is most closely associated with the 1920's and with affluence and modernity is the automobile. The personal auto made affordable in the 19-teens by Henry Ford's methods of assembly line mass production literally transformed American life. Let's go to our interview, again, with Carlos Schwantes for a discussion of this most potent symbol of the 1920's and how it played out in the Northwest.

We're back again with Carlos Schwantes to talk again about transportation, this time the 20th century. For this lesson you read a chapter on the 1920's and there is a section in there in which Carlos Schwantes talks about the transportation revolution of the 1920's. Carlos what was so revolutionary about changes in the transportation system in the decade of the 20's.

[Carlos Schwantes]: Well the automobile swept, all before it in the 20's in a way that that automobile had never done before. You can look at statistics of automobile ownership and they go up dramatically at that point. You can look at statistics of railroad rider ship and they go down dramatically at that point. You can look at the consolidation of rural communities and the school systems that most historians would attribute to the impact of the automobile [*photo of men with an automobile*] and it's a dramatic impact. So as I looked at this, the collapse of the electric inner urban systems that once connected Portland and Eugene and Tacoma and Seattle and Everett and Spokane and Moscow and other places they virtually collapsed in the 20's and the rider ship of the railroads [*picture of a train*] goes down dramatically in the 20's. The railroads cut off a lot of the branch line trains. Motor transportation really comes into its own, you get the first commercial bus lines in the Northwest in the 20's in some cases instituted by railroads who are simply tired of empty passenger trains and figure it's a way to cut costs. So, to me the impact of the automobile and motorized transportation in general is very dramatic. Plus after 1919 you have gasoline tax money from motorists buying gasoline and you have a big building revolution on the support structure that's necessary for this new machine to drive on. So you have an enormous amount of money injected into the Northwest

economy to build highways and bridges and beautiful new roads in the 20's and even a little bit before in some cases.

[Professor Hirt]: Like this road near where we are now?

[Carlos Schwantes]: Yes. This road here that spiraled up the grade from Lewiston to connect northern and southern Idaho was apparently quite a marvel when it was completed shortly before the decade opened. I think at the time it was gravel and the cars chugged up here, laboring on a hot summer day and when people got to the top they seemed to buy postcards [*postcards showing the spiral highway*] to send to people with this highway on it, I've got a number of those at home and I've seldom seen that for most roads in the Northwest, but this one was so difficult and so dramatic because of all the curves in it that I think people liked to say to themselves, I made it, I'm going to verify that by sending a postcard to a friend. So, given the technology at the time this road was a rather remarkable creation.

[Professor Hirt]: And on a hot summer day like this getting up in one of those old jalopies could be something.

[Carlos Schwantes]: That's right. There were some places here, I think we're probably standing at one where there were groves of trees with water I can actually hear water off to the side here where the creek goes down, so I'm sure this was a welcome site to pioneer motorists in their Model T's and other cars.

[Professor Hirt]: Radiator water... Let me ask you, often when an industry goes bust and you're saying when the automobile came in it really sounded the death mill for the inner urbans. When an industry goes bust in which a lot of people have invested capital and their jobs and lives in, there's often a human cry about this and an attempt to keep it from falling apart. In the 1920's did we hear people saying, oh this is terrible and we have to do something about it like we hear nowadays in some rural communities with the decline of the timber industry?

[Carlos Schwantes]: There's very little talk about that governments should step in the prop up the electric inner urbans. I don't recall reading anything like that. People simply seemed to see this as an ongoing evolution of transportation or revolution and they were simply the losers in the revolution. Many people who invested in electric inner urban stock lost everything. Yet, I just this week, I was reading in a Boise newspaper where they call the electric inner urban, and this was in 1908, the greatest transportation innovation of the age because it makes possible people to live in the country and work in the city and this is some of those suburbs of Boise where people could live in the garden like areas, and Spokane too and virtually any other large city and go into the city to work. So people were investing big bucks into this new technology but it went bust very quickly and most people who invested in electric inner urbans I think lost big time.

[Professor Hirt]: And there was no way to change and invest in the roads because those were being built by governments.

[Carlos Schwantes]: That's right. One of my favorite books which Orson Wells actually made into a film was *The Magnificent Ambersons* and in that film there is a rather egotistical young man who is a proponent of the horse culture and the girl that he sometimes courts, her father is a new manufacturer of automobiles and this is a long and involved story, but in the end he is redeemed, his ego is deflated and he becomes human by being run over by an automobile and put in the hospital where the father can now come and smooth things over. It's a very dramatic story and it actually won a Pulitzer Prize when it was published a number of years ago about how the automobile is seen as an agent of redemption, today we think of the automobile as a curse, creating all the pollution and the traffic jams and what not, but in the early 20th century many people saw it as a wondrous machine full of potential, full of promise.

[Professor Hirt]: Democratic potential.

[Carlos Schwantes]: Very much so, and I think that's why nobody got anywhere by saying the government should bail out the holders of inner urban railroad stock, it was just too bad [*photo of people around an automobile*].

[Professor Hirt]: Well, the automobile revolutionized the transportation system and caused big disruptions in other competing transportation systems, it also revolutionized American lives. How did people's lives in the Northwest change in the 20th century after the advent of the affordable automobile?

[Carlos Schwantes]: Well, many areas that had been dependent on what we might call street car tourists saw their business shift to people coming by automobile. Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for example drew a lot of people out of Spokane in the summer time who would ride out on the electric inner urban to get on steam boats [*photo of a steam boat*] to tour Lake Coeur d'Alene and that was a way of getting cool in the summertime before there was air conditioning and with the advent of the automobile you begin to see more and more people who say we're not going to take the streetcars, we want our own car and so places like Liberty Lake, which is a suburb of Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Lake and you can see this all over the Northwest began to see people arriving by car instead of by public transportation and they had to accommodate them and many of the forms of entertainment changed as a result. They had to build parking lots and large parks and things such as that.

[Professor Hirt]: Another element of this decade of contrast in the 1920's besides affluence and poverty was the simultaneous growth of liberalism and intolerance or we might say the growth of modernism and conservatism together. Modernism brought many changes to the Northwest, many of which we discussed in previous lessons, for example [*slide: Changes brought by Modernism*] it brought the growth of a wage labor class and conflict between labor and capital. Modernism saw a rise of powerful corporations in the United States and their growing influence on government. In the modern era we saw the increase in urban populations and in the 1920's in particular an explosion in suburban growth. Here's a few statistics for you. The urban population, that is people who live in

towns of 2,500 population or more, finally exceeded the rural population in the United States in the year 1920, that is in the year 1920 more people were living in urban areas than in rural areas. This transition to a predominately urban population occurred in Washington State ten years earlier in 1910. It occurred in the state of Oregon in 1930, interestingly, the state of Idaho didn't reach a predominately urban population until the year 1970. There was an increase in cultural diversity in the modern era, partly related to a population explosion that was in part due to immigration. Immigration in the United States reached a peak in the 1890 through 1920 period, we had a tremendous boost in immigration, and the immigrants coming to the United States at that time were not, well historian referred to them as the new immigrants rather than the old immigrants; rather than being predominately from western Europe and northern European countries, Scandinavian countries and the British Isles and France and Germany as the old immigrants were, the new immigrants were predominately coming from eastern and southern European countries and from Asia and from Mexico. This was troubling to the predominately white Anglo-Saxon Protestant population that had achieved political dominance and cultural dominance in America by the late 19th century. This led to a series of immigration restriction laws passed by Congress in the 1920's specifically in 1921, 1924 and 1927, it greatly restricted immigration in the United States and fell particularly hard on eastern Europeans and Asians. In the 1920's the immigration restriction laws essentially barred Asians from coming to the United States. Part of modernization included a growing nationalization of popular culture through the increasing distribution of national magazines, the rise of movies, Hollywood begins pumping out of movies at a tremendous pace, the rise of the national radio, national name brands in clothes and other consumer products helped to create a kind of national culture, which seemed to many small town people to be kind of an invasion from without and it troubled many people. We see increasing personal mobility and freedom as part of modernism in the 1920's, increasing freedom for women in particular. Suffrage, the amendment to the constitution that gave all women the right to vote was passed in 1920. We get Bertha Knight Landis elected mayor in 1926, mayor of Seattle in 1926, the first female mayor in the United States. Women are working more often outside of the home, dressing differently, engaging in what Victorian American would have considered inappropriate behavior, fraternizing with men openly in public, women had more mobility in Victorian and rural America and this challenged the old classic doctrine of separate spheres for men and women, men in the public sphere and women at home in the private sphere. Efforts to segregate the genders, segregate men and women in the 19th century were beginning to break down in the 1920's and that challenged a lot of conservative thinkers. The 1920's were a period of rising hedonism, pleasure seeking philosophies, increasing over sexuality, the rise of dating as we now think of it today, movements of anti-conventionalism, slumming in the downtown bars by middle class and upper class men and women, going to jazz joints and listening to sensuous African rhythms, as they were referred to at the time. We get a lot of cynicism in American literature at the time, criticism of the status quo and we get a rise in radical politics, all of this a product of rising modernism. Now there are many forms of social and political resistance to this modernization. A fear of and suppression of political radicalism was one response. Rising expectations of laborers in World War I were dashed in the post war depression and so laborers started agitating for better hours and better conditions. One

result was the famous Seattle general strike of 1919, in which workers from a wide variety of industries all struck together on the same day, it essentially shut Seattle down. Now, it didn't achieve its goals and it was very short lived, but it was bloodless, there was no loss of life or violence in this strike, but nevertheless it did strike fear in the hearts of many conservatives who were becoming extremely nervous about the possibility of a class war in the United States, similar to the kind of revolution that had taken place in Russia just a few years earlier, the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. So, there as a great deal of nervousness about strikes on the part of many people in the United States. We had the development of anti-Communist and anti-radical rhetoric and activity such as the famous Palmer Raids when US Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in 1919 got together a bunch of henchmen and on the behest of the US government arrested up to 5,000 political radical and "subversives" and detained them without due process and many of them were actually deported from the country without any due process of law, it was one of the most egregious examples of the violation of civil liberties that had occurred in America up to that time. Seattle's former Mayor Ole Hanson who was very much anti-labor union, anti-strike went on a lecture circuit preaching ideas from his book he published called, *Bolshevism versus Americanism*. There were bloody confrontations between the radical labor union The Wobblies and the super patriotic Legionnaires in Centralia, Washington in the 1920's. There was a resurgence of the [video: scenes from "Birth of a Nation] Ku Klux Klan which sought to return America to what they thought was an older and purer past before America had become polluted by too many immigrants of the wrong genetic stock. The Klan was persecuting anything and anyone that was not 100% American in their definition of the term that of course included blacks and Catholics and Jews and political radicals and essentially immigrants of just about any stripe. In 1922 the Klan backed an initiative in Oregon requiring all children to attend public school and this was a backdoor way of keeping children out of Catholic parochial private schools so that every child in America was educated in the public schools which were dominated by Protestant ideology. One flag, one school, one language was their rallying cry in this campaign. This initiative passed by a wide majority, it was very popular in the state of Oregon and it was only later struck down by the Supreme Court. There was a governor of Oregon sympathetic to the Klan in the 1920's and the Speaker of the House in the legislature of Oregon was also sympathetic to the Klan. Now, generally the Klan can be conceived of as a conservative reaction to modernism, but that's perhaps too a little too simplistic. In many ways they drew from the old populists and progressive traditions too, from the turn of the century and so their politics was both reactionary and to a certain extent progressive on some issues, so it's hard to categorize the Klan. But in any case the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan nationwide and in the Northwest is a good example of the resistance to modernism. Political conservatism was triumphant at all levels of the government in the 1920's. All three presidents during that decade were very conservative Republicans, Congress was dominated by conservative Republicans, state legislatures in the Northwest were generally conservative and Republican and most mayors of large cities in the Northwest were conservative. There was immigration restriction laws passed at the national level in 1921, 1924 and 1927, which greatly restricted the ability of immigrants to come in from other countries; in particular eastern and southern European immigrants were discriminated against in these three laws of Congress. In the states of California, Oregon and Washington there were anti alien land laws passed by the

legislatures of those states that barred non-citizens from owning, renting, leasing or sharecropping on any lands in those states and since Congress defined, in its own legislation the US Congress determined that Japanese born citizens, people born in Japan could never become citizens of the United States, no matter how long they lived or worked in this country a Japanese person not born in the United States could never become naturalized as a United States citizen, so what that meant when Oregon and Washington passed alien land laws saying no non-citizens could own, rent, lease or sharecrop land in the state, that meant no Japanese person could own, rent or sharecrop land in those states. The essay by Gail Nomura Tuzki, "A Grafting" talks about how Taeko Tomida's family lost their farm in the 1920's as a result of these anti alien land laws. Indeed this was an interesting period of rapid modernization and forceful resistance to much of the effects of modernization in the country [*picture of a building*]. The 1920's, as I said, were an odd decade of extreme contrasts, an endlessly fascinating period for historical study. They abruptly came to an end, however, in 1929 with the stock market crash, which led into the Great Depression of the 1930's. That Great Depression lasted almost right up until the US entry into World War II in 1941. When we come back we'll discuss Northwest history during the 1930's.

I thought Bonneville Dam would make an appropriate backdrop for a discussion of the Great Depression in the Pacific Northwest [*photo of a family*]. When the Great Depression hit the nation in 1929, the Northwest suffered severely, yet the Northwest also benefited greatly from government efforts to relieve that suffering and stimulate the economy. Significant milestones in the development of the modern Northwest occurred during this time period of economic collapse. Now the magnitude of the economic collapse is astounding, we need to get a sense of it to really understand what people were going through at that time. We've experience nothing like it in the last 60 years. 90% of Oregon's lumber companies were on the verge of bankruptcy for over a decade. Personal income, that is salaries or wages, for people in Idaho, plunged by approximately 50%, now we complain nowadays when we go a year or two without a cost of living raise or when our salaries are stagnant, people back then were experiencing significant drops in their wages or salaries, imagine trying to live with that. Unemployment in Seattle ranged from 23% to 60%, depending on the years that you're looking at. Seattle also had one of the nation's largest Hooverville's; Hooverville is the name that was given to large homeless camps where people that had no place to live would set up ramshackle shacks [*photo of three men with a tent*] or temporary tents and live and they were called Hooverville's because during the presidency of Hoover a lot of these sprung up. Refugees from southern plains states that were experiencing a severe drought at the same time they were experiencing a depression were losing their farms and migrating to the west coast, California and the Pacific Northwest searching for rain and searching for construction jobs in the Northwest where there were a lot of dams being built to open up new irrigation lands during the 1930's. Banks closed, life savings were lost, homes and farms were foreclosed on; this was a crisis of epic proportions. Now, one of the problems at this time, besides the fact that everything was falling apart was that there was no safety nets to catch those that were falling through the cracks. Only private charity and local government relief efforts were available to help people who lost their jobs, lost their homes and had nowhere to turn to. States and municipalities, however and private

organizations, private charities like the Salvation Army and other church organizations were not capable of meeting this emergency because it was so large and it continued for so long. Now, the depression lasted from 1929 until World War II, with it bottoming out essentially in 1932. This was a long time and people became desperate. Desperation, in part, bred radicalism and the Northwest had its share of political radicals and other eccentric politicians. Since the capitalist system seemed to have failed so spectacularly at this time, many political reformers and radicals with anti-capitalist messages gained large followings. This was at a time when there were 48 states in the United States and the fact that the Northwest was so full of political radicals and eccentric politicians led the US Post Master General to quip, “there really in the United States were only 47 states and the soviet of Washington.” With so many people clamoring for government aid and intervention, the administration of Franklin Roosevelt [*photo of Franklin Roosevelt*] who was elected in 1932 at the bottom of the depression too on the challenge. In Roosevelt’s famous phrase [*slide: quote from Roosevelt*]: “What this country needs is bold, persistent experimentation.” As explained in the Schwantes text in chapter 15 that you read for this lesson, an alphabet soup of experimental government programs developed in the 1930’s. These programs and the agencies created to implement them had basically three main objectives: relief, recovery and reform. Under relief [*slide: Objectives of Government Programs*], basically it was relieving the homeless and the hungry. The FERA, one of the alphabet soup agencies, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, pumped a couple of billion dollars into relief efforts, soup kitchens, providing homes for the homeless, jobs, shelters et cetera. Under recovery, the WPA, Works Progress Administration was probably the most significant of the alphabet agencies pumped billions and billions of dollars into the economy building public works, public buildings, roads, bridges et cetera. Preexisting agencies like the COE, Corps of Engineers and the BOR, Bureau of Reclamation, who were actually in existence long before the depression had their activities beefed up significantly, they were given lots of money to engage in construction activities as part of the effort to recover the economy and put people back to work. The CCC was another one of these agencies, it stood for the Civilian Conservation Corps, which specialized in hiring young males in their late teens or early 20’s and that population in particular was one that could cause problems in the cities if that population was unemployed and they were hanging out on the streets, they could cause a lot of trouble, so the government thought, let’s get those guys employed, we’ll pay them minimum wages, we’ll bring them out to the country, out to rural areas, out to the forests and parks and they’ll do conservation work, planting trees, building roads, building trails, doing firefighting, bridges, roads, et cetera. We’ll come back to the CCC in just a few minutes. Reform, the third of the three R’s during the Depression era, legislation and government agencies designed to alter the system enough to see, hopefully, that a such a depression would never occur again. A few examples of this, the FDIC, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Anybody who has walked into a bank and seen a little sticker next to the front door that says insured by the FDIC, that was created during the Depression era was an insurance program for banks because so many banks had foreclosed and people lost their life savings. One of the most visible means for achieving both relief and recovery goals in the Northwest involved constructing huge dams on the Columbia River [*photo of dam construction*] such as Bonneville Dam where we’re at today and Grand Coulee Dam. Construction of these dams [*slide: Benefits of Dam*

Construction] provided construction jobs for people who were unemployed, stimulated the cement and steel industries and other support industries required for these mammoth construction projects, generated vast amounts of cheap hydroelectric power to support cities and industries and this would become particularly important in World War II, which you'll read about in the next lesson, eased navigation on the lower Columbia to aid the transportation of people and goods and finally provided flood control allowing for more security for businesses along the rivers [*video of Bonneville Dam*]. Bonneville Dam, authorized in 1932, finished in 1938. Grand Coulee Dam [*video of Grand Coulee Dame*] started a year after Bonneville in 1933. Both are monuments to progress and to the alleviation of poverty in the Northwest. Now, Portland historian Paul Pitzer has written a magisterial history of Grand Coulee titled *Grand Coulee: Harnessing a Dream*. We'll go now to our interview with Paul Pitzer in Portland.

Paul thanks for coming out here this evening and talking with us. You've written, in your book on the Grand Coulee Dam, that the Grand Coulee Dam itself is only one component of a massive reclamation project undertaken by the Bureau of Reclamation, the largest ever undertaken in the US as a matter of fact. Can you give us a sort of a sense of the scale and extent of this dam project and irrigation project?

[Paul Pitzer]: The project all together includes the dam, which is the main piece, 11 million cubic yards of concrete poured into the river, essentially just a big block that sits there and blocks water. That funnels water into pumps, which raises it up the side of the hill into the old ancient Grand Coulee where it flows through a group of canals, small minor canals, distribution system which takes it to roughly an area covering 2,500,000 acres, of which about a million acres give or take can ultimately be irrigated. Right now it irrigates about 5,000 acres. The project, the irrigation part of the project is half done, the generating part of the project is pretty nearly finished, they can add about three more generators to the new power house and that will pretty much take up all that the river can produce.

[Professor Hirt]: How tall is the Grand Coulee Dam?

[Paul Pitzer]: It's about 500 feet from bedrock. You see about 300 feet of it when you look at the dam, the rest of it is below the surface of the water. So it's a pretty large structure, you really don't get a sense of how big it is, unless when you look at the dam you see a person somewhere near it and then you get some idea of how big it really is, otherwise it's so large that you really lose perspective.

[Professor Hirt]: Now, Grand Coulee Dam, which is the third dam that was built on the main stem of the Columbia River, started during the New Deal Era in the 1930's under Franklin Roosevelt's administration. It was in a sense it was very much a part of the relief and recovery parts of the New Deal. Can you put it sort of into historical context for us?

[Paul Pitzer]: Well in historical context the people there had been talking about doing something to irrigate the land ever since the turn of the century and there was an idea to let the water flow down on the land from in Idaho and Montana, there was another idea to

bring water up from the river and the bright idea was, let's build a dam because if you build a dam high enough to direct water directly into the project you would have to pump water clear back into Canada. So that would have been an enormous dam that was simply too high and the international problems were too big. So, let's build a dam that will back water right up to the border, which it does, and generate electricity and let's sell the electricity to pay to pump water the rest of the distance up onto the land. The New Deal came along and said we can do this and we can put people to work, maybe as many as 10,000 people and they never quite got to that number, but they came fairly close at two or three points during the construction. So, now you've got the best of both worlds together with the New Deal, you can have this irrigation project, which you can plan so that you will undo nature. You've got guaranteed water so you don't have to worry about drought, you can plan the use of the land, you can set out so many acres for each farmer in nice little units they can work on, so you got sort of the planned promise land that will be the perfect environment for farmers, you'll put in some cities that will service these farm communities, you'll generate electricity, it will pay all the bills and you'll electrify all of the countryside, you'll also bring industry in to use the rest of the power, you've got everything all put together and this was really the New Deal master plan. Cheap electric power, cheap irrigation for farmers, a planned community, a controlled economy, remember, the New Deal was big in planning, most of it never came to fruition, but they talked about planning, planning as a way to see to it that you never had another depression like they were having in the 1930's, particularly a depression that was devastating farmers nationally, really since the 1920's.

[Professor Hirt]: You mentioned in your book that Grand Coulee [*video of Grand Coulee Dam*] was being heavily touted by publicists and that everybody in the country knew about Grand Coulee. Was this part of the reason that we had so many people migrating from, say, the southern plains in the dust bowl area up to the Northwest?

[Paul Pitzer]: Certainly there was a lot of publicity and that added to the number of people who came, many of whom were disappointed when they got here because the law said you had to give preference to local people for jobs first. Nevertheless people came but a great many of the people who got jobs came off of other government projects. Many of the came up from Hoover Dam as it was completed, then the Boulder Project, and worked at Grand Coulee. The contractors of course would have preference for their own people, who had worked with them before, so there was a lot of talk about all of the jobs created, but it really was a little less than met the eye, but people did flock in from all over the country. Probably not as many as old timers recall but there were people who showed up in rattle trap trucks and managed to get there, there were even stories of people who walked there from Seattle just to get a job at this big dam that they were building and it did provide a great deal of relief for the people who got jobs. It was really, while they were working a prosperity zone over in eastern Washington. It also changed the politics, suddenly that area voted Democratic and then when the dam was done and the people moved away it reverted back to being a Republican area curiously enough.

[Professor Hirt]: Now, you mentioned a little earlier that the project itself never realized the grand visions that its originators started out with. Can you explain to us why it never achieved those grand visions completely?

[Paul Pitzer]: Sure. Since the 1930's in through the 1960's time have changed dramatically. World War II really brought the most dramatic change. It turned the country from being a country of great unemployment and depression to being a prosperous country and brought on the prosperity of the 1950's. Suddenly the vision of the 1930's, the planned economy didn't mean anything anymore. Suddenly the idea of transporting dust bowl farmers to this new region in eastern Washington didn't have any validity. Now, in the 1940's they talked about veterans coming. Well not that many of the veterans were interested. Some did come and it turned out to start a farm required a whole lot more money than the planners had thought in the 1930's. You needed tens of thousands of dollars in order to get a farm going and this was more than most common people could afford. Furthermore, the Republicans got in with the Eisenhower years and weren't as favorable toward planning, which they saw as socialism, and large federal projects that were taking many federal dollars and while they didn't totally stymie or dramatically cut back on the project they certainly didn't follow through with the original plans. The Columbia Basin project was dramatically planned with huge studies in the 1930's prior to beginning of actual construction and most of these turned out to be simply lost in time, times changed, which shows how hard it is to plan really for the future, it's very difficult to do.

[Professor Hirt]: Now, I mentioned the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC that hired young men between the ages of 18 and 21 to work out in areas like this here at Dry Falls near the Grand Coulee to do conservation work. One of the things they're most famous for, the CCC, all over the west is stone work, lots of fire towers and cabins and bridges and pathways and guard rails like this, gazebos like this. This was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. We're overlooking Dry Falls and this is not too far from Grand Coulee Dam and of course the Grand Coulee Dam was one of the big projects built during the depression and they had a couple of CCC camps in the area doing work like this. This is keeping people from falling over a fairly precipitous edge there, but you can see a beautiful stone work, they hired lots of stone masons that were very, very skilled to do this kind of construction work, although some of this has gone dilapidated and they've done some reconstruction and made a little mistake here. As you can see they added a little section here and used river rock, just regular old stuff from the river rather than basalt which you see here so you can clearly tell where somebody has come in and added something afterwards; not a good example of renovation or reconstruction, they should have used the basalt, but here's an old remnant of the depression days when young men were put to work instead of hanging out on the streets making trouble.

Let's turn now to a discussion of the Mexican American or Chicano experience in the Northwest and for this topic we interviewed Jerry Garcia who is a doctoral candidate in history at Washington State University and teaches courses in Chicano history at Eastern Washington University.

When we do we actually get a significant Spanish or Mexican or Mexican American population in the Northwest and when do they come and why do they come and where do they settle?

[Jerry Garcia]: That's a very good question. The biggest impact that we have that still remains today began in the early part of the 20th century and there was a variety of reasons for that. One of the earliest reasons for that were the reclamation projects that were instituted after the 1902 Reclamation Act that the US Congress passed in order to funnel money to the west in order to develop arid regions for agriculture and other industries. The Southwest was obviously the first area to be hit with that type of development but eventually the Pacific Northwest received money for reclamation projects in the region, more specifically it would be the Yakima Valley which became the first agriculture region from the state of Washington developed in the early part of the 20th century. So, that was one of the reasons why Mexicans began to migrate up into the Pacific Northwest, specifically for the need for laborers and the development of the region. A couple of other reasons that are very important during the earlier part of 20th century would include the Mexican revolution in Mexico in about 1910, the battle part was about 1910 to about 1917 with tremendous upheaval in that country and it's estimated approximately 10% of that population, which was about 15,000,000 Mexicans during 1910 fled Mexico into the United States and so there was a great push out of Mexico because of the revolution and the Mexican people migrated initially along the US/Mexican border, but eventually because of the tight competitive employment market in the region people began to finally move out of that region first into the Rocky Mountain region into California then eventually by 1918, 1919, 1920 we begin to see the first settlements of Mexican people in the Pacific Northwest in Oregon, specifically in the Willamette Valley, down the southern part of Idaho and then of course the Yakima Valley in Washington State.

[Professor Hirt]: All the classic agricultural regions.

[Jerry Garcia]: Right, exactly and that's one of the main focuses of the Mexican migration during this time period, it's very much related to the agricultural development and the need for laborers to come in and work that because very intensive labor positions were available during that time period. Most of the agriculture was the sugar beet industry in Idaho and Was and then also in Oregon we had a variety of other types of crops being grown, strawberries and a variety of berries that needed to be picked were being developed during this time period as well and so very intensive labor is a common theme among all three states.

[Professor Hirt]: Are these primarily short term or temporary agriculture jobs, so we have a migratory labor force up in the Northwest as in other parts of the country?

[Jerry Garcia]: Right, this would definitely be seasonal work. During the early part of Mexican migration of the 1920's, definitely seasonal work; Mexicans would come up here and work during the season, you know preparing the crops for harvest, then they

would harvest them and the once the work was completed most of them would return back to their place or origin. Another impetus for the Mexican migration into the Pacific Northwest was the US entry into World War I, approximately 1918, 1919 time period. There was a great mobilization effort on the part of the United States and of course one of those big demands was the need for food stuff and with the great demand more food was created and so a lot more agriculture went to production during this time period and of course with that there was a great need for workers to harvest the crops and so you see again a big influx of Mexicano's not only entering in from Mexico, but also migrating up to the Pacific Northwest with the mobilization effort of the United States into World War I.

[Professor Hirt]: So, the government is encouraging workers to come from other parts of the United States and from Mexico to agricultural regions to help.

[Jerry Garcia]: That's correct. Something that makes that very clear is in 1917 the United States enacted some immigration laws to restrict immigration to the United States from almost all points of the world including Mexico but because of the strong lobbyist efforts from the agricultural businesses along the Southwest area, particularly in the Southwest in California, Arizona and Texas they were able to wave all those restrictions on Mexicans entering the United States because of the need for their labor.

[Professor Hirt]: Mexican labor in particular.

[Jerry Garcia]: And there are a lot of reasons for that. First of all it was very cheap labor, they paid very low wages. Second of all they were considered very temporary workers; they would come in, work seasonally and then return back to Mexico which was very close in proximity to the United States as opposed to bring people from China or Japan or Europe, where those people coming over the Atlantic or Pacific weren't coming over for a short duration but were coming for a long stay because of the cost of coming over here, but with Mexican workers the United States waived all of those restrictions which included a head tax, literacy test, those were all waived for Mexican nationals coming over because they wanted their cheap labor and they would return back to Mexico, that was the hope of the US government anyway, but history shows otherwise.

[Professor Hirt]: Did any of those laborers that came up to the Northwest fall in love with the Northwest and stay in those years, 19-teens, 20's?

[Jerry Garcia]: Absolutely, and the Yakima Valley is probably the biggest area where we see settlements of Mexican families during this time period and so it's from the Yakima Valley that we get, later on in the history of the Pacific Northwest, families leaving Yakima into other parts of Washington, so Yakima definitely was a hub of the Mexican settlements during the teens of the 1900's and the 20's and you being to see communities develop along the Yakima Valley in Yakima and of course Toppenish, Wapato, and those are very historic to the state of Washington when we're talking about Mexican communities.

[Professor Hirt]: Many Chicanos, Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals were migrating up to the Northwest during and after World War I and were beginning to stay. How did they experience the 1920's up here in the Northwest? What was the economy like for them and life like and what happened after the stock market crash in the 1930's for the Chicanos?

[Jerry Garcia]: For the logic stance the 1920's was pretty good for everybody here in the United States. It wasn't until the end of the 20's the beginning of the 30's with the stock market crash and of course the Great Depression that we begin to see the economy fall in the United States and not only Chicanos were hurt but society at large was hurt. However, one of the things you do see happening during this time period is that a cycle that began to occur in the late 19th century towards immigrants begins to happen again and that's of course immigrants are blamed for the economic yield of the United States. What we see happening here is deportation efforts on the part of the United States to send back Mexicanos or Chicanos who are of course US citizens but of Mexican descent, back to Mexico. So we see a great drive up to 300,000 people between 1929 and 1933 are sent back to Mexico during this time period and a vast majority of those people are US citizens of Mexican descent but it's just based on color of skin these roundups happen and many people are sent back to Mexico and this is a cycle that's been occurring over and over again well into almost the 1960's. We'll see these deportation efforts happen again in the 50's and of course in 1996 we see that whole immigrant bashing continue to happen and it's been around in this country since at least the beginning of the 20th century. So the late 1920's, early 30's were not a good time to be a Mexicano or Chicano in the United States at large or the Pacific Northwest. There are newspaper articles we can look up from the Spokesman Review where they actually had a roundup in Spokane of 8 Chicanos and sent them back to Mexico in the 1930's which is very prevalent for the country at large particularly in the Southwest where a majority of Mexicanos lived, in the Midwest where there was of course heavy agricultural areas where a lot of Mexicanos were working and so the 30's were a rough time but things change of course when what happened: World War II.

[Professor Hirt]: A great deal happened in the Northwest in the two decades between World War I and World War II. Population increased dramatically, especially in the cities. The personal automobile brought tremendous mobility to that growing population. Both progressive and reactionary politics flourished from both public power advocates to the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. Natural resource industries suffered hard times for most of the period, though manufacturing prospered for most of the period continuing the shift toward an urban industrial economy. The Depression brought especially hard times but it also brought dams like Bonneville and Grand Coulee, a boost to irrigation projects, widespread electrification of the region, what Carlos Schwantes refers to as the wired Northwest and it brought the establishment of the Bonneville Power Administration. It also brought public roads, and buildings and bridges and the development of recreation resorts, especially ski resorts and a major boost to conservation efforts. As Schwantes notes in a conclusion to chapter 18, New Deal programs provided not only jobs and economic stimulation during the Depression, but they also initiated the modern era of big business and comprehensive economic planning. Americans in general and North

Westerners in particular asked for and increasingly came to depend on an active government promoting the welfare of society. Local, state and especially federal government agencies were expected to play an important role in promoting development, maintaining a stable economy, protecting the vulnerable and restraining the powerful. In short, North Westerners wanted the government and the private sector to work together cooperatively in the pursuit of social justice and economic security. World War II would both reinforce and threaten those hopes and dreams but that is the subject of the next lesson.