

History 422: Lecture 14

[Carl Abbott]: After World War II, the United States really began the, or continued really the, shift from the northeast and middle west as the concentration you know area of heaviest population concentration, a shift toward the t south east, the southwest and the west coast. Some people some this up within the term Sunbelt. It's hard to think of Oregon and Washington as part of the Sunbelt, but in economic turns they really are the same economic and demographic shifts that were affecting Florida and Georgia and Texas and Arizona and California were also being played out in the northwest.

[Professor Hirt]: The titles of the chapters in the Schwantes textbook covering the post-war era indicate some of the themes that mark this particular era in Northwest history. The 1950's to the 1990's were a time of rapid change, booms and busts, social progress and social protest, liberalism and conservatism, in short they were roller coaster years of affluence and anxiety. Let's consider the economy first. Military spending continued a pace in the immediate decades after World War II, keeping the aluminum industries and companies like Boeing in a boom phase. In fact, military spending kept the whole regional and national economy booming. Puget Sound's strategic harbors guaranteed that the region would benefit from this continued militarization after World War II. Now, remember military spending *[photo of military trucks]* for World War II had lifted America out of the Depression, finally, and now the Cold War spending would keep the economy primed, although eventually it would lead to the massive budget deficits that we so ominously face today. The post-World War II nuclear arms race ensured that Hanford would expand and further led to the building of a second nuclear production facility in Idaho on an 870 square mile chunk of land in the Snake River Plain, an area now known as the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. Many of the fastest growing industries in the nation after the war were tied to the military and this was certainly true for the Northwest also. For example, arms and munitions manufacturing *[video of military manufacturing]* semiconductors and computers were among the fastest growing industries all tied by one degree or another to the military. By the way, even the internet today, which everybody uses, was originally initiated as a government defense project. It's probably no coincidence that Washington is both a leader in the computer software industry and a center of military installations and defense related production. Interestingly, even the highway system and construction industries boomed in the post war years from military related programs, specifically the interstate highway system which was initiated in the 1950's as a national defense measure. Not all of the economic boom was military related, however, the Northwest's population continued to soar and this created a housing boom, rapid urbanization, both of which stimulated the timber, mineral, aluminum and glass industries, the road construction industry, the home building industry, the electric power industry, and countless small business and service industries; growth was evident everywhere in the region. With nearly full employment, good wages, more mobility and leisure time, the American middle classes adopted such rituals as: the summer vacation, the weekend camping trip, Sunday picnics and hunting and fishing outings to the abundant public lands and parks and forests of the Northwest. This widely studied phenomenon that sociologists now call the post war outdoor recreation boom, gave a major impetus to the tourism industry, which now represents one of the top

income generators of all industries in the Northwest, including the Pacific Northwest. The era of major dam construction on Northwest rivers that started in the 1930's, peaked in the 1960's, about a decade and a half after the war. Now, these dams were massive projects each lasting for years and employing thousands of people. Like military spending dam construction depended largely, but not exclusively on the federal government [*video of US Army Corps of Engineers office*]. Two federal bureaus, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation built most of the big dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers in these years and they are thus responsible for most of the benefits that flow from those dams [*slide: Benefits of Dams*], benefits that include hydropower, navigation, irrigation, recreation and flood control. Of course the cost benefit ledger for the dams is not entirely one sided. Damming the Northwest river system [*slide: Costs of Dams*] was incredibly costly both in terms of direct monetary investments and indirect or delayed costs related to environmental losses, the devastation of the salmon runs and expenses associated with continual maintenance of the dams, the power turbines, the navigation locks, the fish bypass facilities and other structures related to the control of the rivers. Now, it's interesting to note how profound an affect the federal government and government investments have had on the Northwest economy since midcentury. First, as I said, [*slide: Economic Benefits of Federal Government*] there's military spending, then there's the federal management and maintenance of all the public lands in the Northwest, the national parks, the national forests, the Bureau of Land Management Lands in the arid regions, wildlife refuges, all the places where we ski and hunt and hike and pleasure drive, where we get much of our timber and our water and by the way Portland's drinking water supply comes from a national forest, the Bull Run water shed, where much of the regions livestock graze and where much of the regions minerals are extracted, all from public lands. All of the recreation and resource development on these public lands are in part and sometimes wholly subsidized by the federal government, that is by tax payers. Most of the roads comprising our regional transportation system are either funded by or heavily subsidized by the federal government. Finally, most of the dams on our big rivers and the hydropower derived from them are funded sponsored and fed maintained. In light of all this it's ironic that so many people in the Northwest today rail against the government and how it shackles their liberty and their businesses. Without the feds, many of the liberties and many of the businesses in the Northwest would simply not be here today.

Let's turn now to a consideration of population changes and social relations in the Northwest in the years following World War II. First we'll return to our interview with Carl Abbott of the Urban Studies Department at Portland State University for a discussion of changes and growth in the cities in the Northwest in the years after the war. After that we'll return for a discussion of the experiences of minorities in the Northwest and the civil rights movements as they played out in this region of the country.

Carl, there was a population explosion that you mentioned earlier, during World War II, this continued after the war. Can you tell us a little bit about the large population shifts that were occurring essentially all over the country in the decades after World War II and how those population shifts affected the Northwest?

[Carl Abbott]: After World War II the United States really continued the shift from the Northeast and Midwest as the area of heaviest population concentration, a shift toward the Southeast, the Southwest and the West coast. Some people summed this up in the term sun belt. It's hard to think of Oregon and Washington as part of the sun belt, but in economic terms they really are. The same economic and demographic shifts that were affecting Florida, and Georgia and Texas and Arizona and California were also being played out in the Northwest. The growth of the leisure industries, tourism, local recreation, retirement, driving, the growth of attractive amenity regions, whether it's central Oregon or northern Idaho or the Puget Sound it's certainly the defense industry that continues very strong, especially the Puget Sound and it's also the development of the high tech industry, the electronics industry, an important development in the growth of Portland beginning in the late 50's, and 60's with Tektronix, as well high tech industry very important in the Seattle area, especially with the gradual development of the software industry and by the 1970's and 80's spreading as well into areas like Boise where you have micron technologies as a locally based high tech industry. Most of these changes actually brought relatively highly educated people into the Northwest. They brought, especially the technical industries and defense industries, brought people with technical and scientific educations, people who were bringing brain power as well as person power to the Northwest economy. I think that the changes you see in the 1950's and 1960's then build the base for a real take off, real explosion of the region economy in the 1980's and 1990's, which is affecting all of the states in the Northwest, it's affecting Idaho, it's affecting Montana, it's affecting Oregon, it's affecting Washington, it's affecting smaller cities like Boise and medium sized cities like Spokane, as well as affecting the big cities of Seattle and Portland.

[Professor Hirt]: This brain migration that you mention, it's an interesting concept. Do you think that had anything to do with the development of the university systems in the Northwest? Did it influence the legislature to fund universities better?

[Carl Abbott]: Well, what happened actually, this is the time period when the University of Washington really takes off as the premier research institution in the Northwest. It's a time, perhaps because of the advantage of its location in Seattle, also because of some leadership in the university within the city, you know the period around the late 50's and early 60's is a time when Seattle really takes off and the University of Washington is a very important element there, becoming a major attractor of federal research grants which then creates spin off research activities and industries and I think it's really in the Seattle area that you see this kind of research/brain power economy really taking off. Less so in Oregon, less so in Idaho, for example, where the university system, while certainly growing rapidly in this time period, remains more of a local service orientation.

[Professor Hirt]: You mentioned that the continuation of the defense industries in the Northwest were very important to the Northwest economy and the growth of cities. The Cold War, when World War II ended, we continued in arms buildup in this Cold War stimulated and even expanded in some cases the contribution of the defense industry to the Northwest economy. Now that the Cold War is over have you seen any changes in Northwest economy and Northwest cities as a result or do you foresee that coming?

[Carl Abbott]: I only see minor changes, actually. In part Oregon was never heavily defense dependent, nor was Idaho deeply defense dependent, so we're really talking about the state of Washington and interestingly the round of military base closures in the 1990's has actually benefited the Tacoma area economy with the actual transfer of some units from California to the Tacoma area bases. Boeing as well seems to be pretty successful in being able at this point to stand military and civilian markets and the electronic industry which in many ways got its start in California and Massachusetts in the 50's and 60's serving defense industry needs now has such a huge civilian market that I think it's really growing independently of that old Cold War boost.

[Professor Hirt]: Let's turn now for a brief look at the experiences of African Americans, Hispanics and Indians in the Northwest in the post-war decades, first blacks. Prior to World War II African Americans were a very small minority in the Pacific Northwest, during the war however, the African American population in the Northwest in general doubled. Five years later by 1950, the black population in the Northwest had tripled. A total of about 30,000 African Americans had moved to the Northwest in the 1940's. In major cities, where the war industries were concentrated, the black populations grew even faster; the fastest was in Portland where between 1940 and 1945 the black population went from 2,000 to 22,000. Although blacks moved to all parts of the Northwest, the vast majority moved to cities. As the essay by Quintard Taylor notes, three quarters of Washington's black population lived in Seattle and 95% of Oregon's black population lived in the city of Portland. As their numbers increased, racial tensions became more common and more visible. In these days, before the Civil Rights Movement, many public business establishments barred *[slide: Racism Against African Americans]* blacks or maintained segregated facilities. Most labor unions either segregated blacks into less desirable jobs or barred them entirely from the union or from specific occupations. Even the military remained segregated. Occupations available to blacks were the least desirable and the lowest paying jobs, somewhat like the Chinese experience about 70 years before. And in a replay of the Chinese exclusion movement of the 1870's and 1880's many whites blocked the migration of blacks into their towns, into their neighborhoods and even sought to remove them from areas where blacks already lived and worked. Racial tensions escalated in this atmosphere. Blacks who worked in the war industries or who served in the military, especially in bases in the Northwest, felt particularly affronted by this racist refusal to recognize or respect their citizenship, their patriotism and their right to earn a decent living, as well as other basic human and civil rights. World War II industries had given blacks experience with higher status, better paying jobs and this led to rising expectations, much as it had for women who got their first taste of decent salaried work during World War II. After the war these rising expectations came into conflict with efforts by many whites to reassert the old status quo and to deny blacks many of their wartime gains. As the black communities sought to increase their social and economic opportunities a powerful new civil rights movement in the post-war era evolved; in fact it evolved all over the nation but the Northwest had its own experiences with this civil rights movement. Some of the first successes in breaking down the old discrimination barriers came in the military and in labor unions. For example, black and Asian Boeing employees banded together with sympathetic whites to convince the

international association of machinists in the year 1948 to eliminate from the union's constitution, the whites only clause that was in there. For almost a century the union had a clause in its constitution saying our union is for whites only, non-whites need not apply and they successfully got the union to eliminate that clause in 1948. Even more significant the state legislatures of both Washington and Oregon passed fair employment practices laws in the 1940's, placing these two states among only 8 states in the nation to enact these workplace anti-discrimination laws before 1950, many more states passed these laws after 1950. As you might imagine small but significant successes like this raised the expectations of minorities while at the same time increasing resistance among racist non-minorities who sought to maintain their privileged positions in the job market and in the wider world. This increased the potential for conflict. Economic justice would remain a long and still continuing battle for blacks and other minorities but that was only part of the fight. Achieving greater social freedom and political rights proved just as difficult, or more so, than dealing with discrimination in the workplace. Part of the problem was that most whites, even those who were generally supportive of racial justice and civil rights for minorities were committed to retaining their own gains and privileges and they were susceptible; thus, to the fear that another's gain might mean their own loss. As long as whites held most of the positions of power in the society, they could easily defend the status quo or resist change, especially if they felt their benefits or interests would be harmed by raising the status of another group and many people suffer from that closed system assumption that every gain for another group means a loss for another group and so that was a cause for a lot of resistance to the civil rights movement. Another obstacle to progress for blacks and other minorities was their own lack of solidarity. Factions in groups and antagonism between racial groups could and did hinder efforts to unite minorities to achieve civil rights. The relationship between blacks and Asians, for example, could be quite strained, the Boeing employees coalition effort that I mentioned in 1948, was as much as an exception than it was the rule. Nevertheless the swelling black population in Northwest cities strengthened the civil rights movement that was growing around the country in mid-century. Sensing that a united effort would be more successful than the alternative, many civil rights organizations were concertedly interracial. Quintard Taylor mentions several of these in the essay that you read [*slide: Some Civil Rights Organizations*] including regional groups, like the Oregon Committee for Equal Rights and the Seattle based Christian Friends for Racial Equality as well as local chapters of national groups like the Urban League and the NAACP, as testimony to how fast these groups were growing Professor notes that in the Seattle branch of the NAACP went from less to 100 before World War II to more than 1,500 at the end of World War II. These civil rights organizations often banded together with churches and some progressive labor unions, men's and women's clubs and other associations to promote social justice. When organized in such large coalitions they could be quite affective as in their success in winning fair employment practices laws in Washington and Oregon that I mentioned earlier. Also, in 1953 the Oregon Committee for Civil Rights succeeded in getting the Oregon legislature to pass a law banning discrimination in public accommodations. This reflected the larger national effort to ban discrimination of public accommodations such as buses and restaurants and waiting rooms and so the Pacific Northwest could be considered at the forefront of the national civil rights movement. These various organizations continued to grow and achieve moderate

successes in the 1950's and 1960's especially as the larger national civil rights movement accelerated throughout the nation.

Now, another minority group in the Northwest that experienced dramatic changes after the war decades were Chicanos or Mexican Americans for this topic we turn now to our interview with Jerry Garcia who we spoke to extensively in our last lesson on World War II.

[Jerry Garcia]: Where I'm from, Quincy, Washington, where I grew up, Quincy is a perfect example of the impact of the Grand Coulee Dam on the community for many decades Quincy was basically a family oriented agricultural business. There were very small farms run strictly by families, small acreage, but with the water coming in it developed quickly and of course with the expansion of the acreage of crops no longer could one family provide maintenance to the crops by themselves, they needed additional help, so Mexican laborers, workers had to come in, actually in the late 40's early 50's. From a personal standpoint my family actually migrated from the Southwest, Texas, eventually made it to the Yakima Valley where a vast majority of families all came to the Yakima Valley and then from there spread out to other parts of Washington... Mexican American families, Chicanos who had left the Southwest, particularly Texas and would arrive in Yakima and eventually spread out to other areas and by word of mouth would find jobs. My dad, who came here with his father, eventually heard of needed workers in Quincy, Washington. So, my dad and his father were kind of like the pathfinders for the family so to speak. They went there to check it out, worked for a while and finally decided to bring the whole family up to Quincy in the mid 1950's and our family has been in Quincy, Washington ever since and I think my family experience is probably very typical of many families in the state of Washington who came either from the early part of the 20th century or the mid part of the 20th century into the Northwest. They came as agricultural laborers, farm workers and then eventually moved into the Columbia basin, such as my family and then from there became very stable families, children went to school, graduated from high school and then moved on from there. So, I'm considered first generation because my father was born in Mexico, my mother being born in the United States and of Mexican descent and so I could be categorized as first generation or second generation.

[Professor Hirt]: You were born in Yakima or Quincy?

[Jerry Garcia]: Quincy, Washington. It's a little community. Actually, it's a community that's dramatically changed because of the Mexican population particularly in this last period of migration that we'll probably get into in a little awhile, but the Mexican population has dramatically risen in the last 15 years in Quincy, that's changing the makeup of Quincy totally. By the late 1960's, early 70's the Chicano movement had hit the Pacific Northwest and if we're looking at the state of Washington we see the Chicano movement happening here with the development of grassroots organizations for instance... the reason I talk about Quincy so much is because I did my master's thesis on Quincy and so I hate to call myself the expert on Quincy but I know a little bit about it. But in Quincy, Washington for example we being to see grassroots organizations looking

to help the Chicano community, the Mexican community that is living there, we begin to see organizations such as PLUMA [slide: PLUMA], the Progressive League of United Mexican Americans coming out of Quincy, Washington, which was a grassroots organization looking out for the welfare of the Chicano community, looking out for housing needs, looking out for employment needs, if there is discrimination happening against Chicano's in the Quincy community it was that type of organization that came in and tried to help out these individuals or families that were having problems in those areas. So, that is a part of the Chicano movement, we wouldn't have those types of organizations coming up in the 1960's without the major movement in other parts of the country. Then we also have, if we transition into the university level, we begin to see organizations such as MECHA [slide: MECHA] here at Washington State University, University of Washington and Eastern Washington University in Cheney, have MECHA which was a student organization established in the 1960's and stands for *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*, which basically translated means The Chicano Student Movement and we begin to see chapters arising at the community college level and at the university level, which was basically looking at what the educational rights of Chicano students from the high school level on up. So, definitely Washington was impacted by the Chicano movement because many organizations began to spring up during this time period.

[Professor Hirt]: Welcome back, for the remainder of this lesson we're going to focus on the experience of Indians in the Northwest in the post-World War II decades. Indians had their own civil rights movement, primarily in the 1960's and 1970's, sometimes called the "Red Power Movement." For a summary of these years we spoke with author Alvin Josephy who is the former president of the Western History Association and has written numerous books on Indian history including a book with the title *Red Power*. We'll go to that interview now.

Alvin, you've written at length on the Red Power Movement can you tell us a little bit about the cultural revival and the political changes that have been happening regarding Native Americans in the last 25 years here in America.

[Alvin Josephy]: Well, yes. I've been writing on the American Indians since the early 1950's and I can say now, looking back, that a tremendous revolution has taken place really starting in the late 1960's that is probably the most dramatic thing that has happened with the relations between non-Indians and the Indians people themselves, certainly since the early 19th century. The Indian world has done a complete reversal in the last 20 or 30 years and has done it because of the kinds of people who stood up to fight for Indian rights and Indian justice, these were Indians in the 1960's and 1970's. They managed to put some backbone in the generation of their parents who had gone to the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools [photo of an Indian school] and drilled into them that you cannot be Indian anymore if you want to get anywhere in this world you've got to be white; you've got to think white, you've got to act white, you've got to stop talking your Indian language, you've got to give up all the Indian myths and lore and just forget your tribal connections. In 1961 I went to a meeting in Chicago of all the Indian tribes it was astounding because, first of all, the main resolution that the Indians passed at that

meeting was that they were asking, not demanding, they were asking for the right to participate in devising all Indian policies and programs and not just have just white people in the Bureau of Indian Affairs putting out a policy or a program that willy nilly affected every tribe in the country and they were doomed to failure, one administration after another, speaking for Indians and doing things for Indians and the thing would just collapse after a while, the Indians wouldn't accept it or couldn't accept it and you, even on reservations, you ran into people who were fighting hard to try to keep kids from learning their Indian language or acting like Indians, having Indian values, but in recent years that's all changed about, Indians now are proud of the fact that they are Indians, they are proud of the fact that they are Lakota's or Dakota's or Nez Perce or whatever and that was not true 30 or 40 years ago and that kind of resolution has done miracles because now the non-Indians all they can do really is say, gee look at the Indian gambling casinos, they're making millions, they shouldn't be allowed to do that, the gangs will take over, but this is ridiculous, it's nonsense and Indians are coming back to their own value systems and making that a part of their life again.

[Professor Hirt]: There's been a shift in the court systems that has helped a great deal and helped the Indians advance in their causes. What do you see as the cause of this shift and how it played out?

[Alvin Josephy]: Well, it's part of a movement that took place and I have to explain it in a little detail. In the 1950's the government tried to put through a termination policy, it did put it through and it began to terminate relations between tribes and the federal government, which in affect said that's the end of reservations, it's the end of you as a tribe, end of you as Indians and this was hoisted on a lot of tribes, but mostly temporarily because they...it was supposed to be permanent, but was such a failure and caused so much suffering and hardship and Indians fought back against it and it was just silently abandoned as a policy at the end of the 1950's, but out of that came a new policy which was summed up by President Nixon in 1970 and Nixon incidentally was probably the best president for Indians, certainly in this century. He himself, no, but his advisors, people who he put in positions that dealt with Indians and they told Nixon what to do and why and he did it and the Indians benefited from it. Now, what he did is he said termination is dead from now on, it's self-determination which was a complete reversal and this was accepted by all branches of the federal government eventually and the courts really went along with this new idea that the way to handle Indian affairs was to strengthen the tribal governments and do whatever was necessary to give them the ability to take care of their people and get them off the backs of tax payers and so forth and so on, those were the hard facts. But what emerged was a trend to strengthen the tribal governments and the courts then began to rule in a way that gave the tribes police powers, taxation powers, powers over their water rights and so forth. That was a period of maybe 15 or 20 years of good help from courts. Now, I detect a reversal going on in the courts, where the courts are really ruling against Indians and what they're trying to say is Indians are like everybody else or should be like everybody else but it's coming too late, because in the period that just preceded it when the Indian's own governments were strengthened, that coincided with this revival of the Indian culture, revival of Indian self-esteem and pride in themselves and now that cannot be just forgotten and people say

look, you're not an Indian anymore. They are Indians, they are members of their tribes; their culture may not be the culture of their great grandfathers mounted on horseback with shields and chasing buffalo and so forth. These people saying Indians are dead and there are no more Indians are phonies, they just dislike Indians and always have and they'll find any reason to try to get rid of the Indians.

[Professor Hirt]: Personal testimonials are helpful in bringing historical generalizations to life and we have spoken in past lessons about Indian education efforts at the turn of the century, which were aimed at promoting assimilation of Indians by eliminating tribalism and tribal culture through forced or compulsory attendance at off reservation boarding schools [*photo of Indian Training School*]. Now, many of these Indian boarding schools were still in existence and use after World War II. The next two interviews provide contrasting views of the boarding school experiences, the first is from the 1940's and the second one from the 1960's. Our first interview is from John Grant, who is today a practicing Colville Indian artist and the second interview is with Marilyn Malatare who works at the Yakama Culture Center in Toppenish, Washington. Consider their differing experiences and imagine how you yourself might have responded in similar situations.

When you got to be school age you went off to an Indian boarding school in Oregon, the Chemawah School.

[John Grant]: Yes, I went to the Chemawah Indian School in Oregon, that's about seven miles north of Salem, Oregon. That was the old school, now they have a new school there and the other one is torn down, but the old school, I like the school, I asked to go there in the first place.

[Professor Hirt]: You asked to go there? How come?

[John Grant]: Because I was getting to the age where I wanted to do something else, move somewhere.

[Professor Hirt]: How old were you?

[John Grant]: I was about 13 or 14.

[Professor Hirt]: Ready to get out and see the world.

[John Grant]: Yeah, I wanted to go somewhere. So I was asked if I wanted to go to school in Chemawah and I told him, sure I'd go. It took me a couple weeks to think about it before I went though and decided I'd go.

[Professor Hirt]: What were you thinking about for those two weeks? What did you have to consider?

[John Grant]: I thought I'd be alright and my mother thought it would be okay too, she was for it and I liked the school and half the day you went to farm work, things like that

and then half your day you went to school and school the next morning and then shop following in the afternoon, like that, that's how you went to school, you didn't get a full day in class, you'd change off, you learned a trade, you learned the trade of farming and the trade of the shops they had like shoe shop, carpenter shop, paint shop, bakery, like those things there, just teaching you how to work.

[Professor Hirt]: How long were you there?

[John Grant]: I was there for about four years.

[Professor Hirt]: Did you come out with any particular trade skills that you used afterwards to make a living?

[John Grant]: Well, a lot of those things I learned how to do come in handy in the household, you know in your own house like painting, I like to paint, but my painting skills, my art skills didn't come until later.

[Professor Hirt]: Let me ask you about...some of the Indian school experiences that some students had differ pretty remarkably. Do you feel that part of the reason you had a good experience at the Chemawah Indian School is because it was run well at the time, or do you think it was your personality that made the difference.

[John Grant]: I like it, but it was really rough.

[Professor Hirt]: How was it rough?

[John Grant]: It was rough because the discipline was something unheard of nowadays where if you...we had a couple of guys that stole somebody's mail and they held it up to a light and they could see that there was money in the envelope and they took that and what they used to do to the guys to punish them was put them over a desk in the principal's office and throw a blanket over the top of them and strap him, strap him with a leather strap and other times they did something wrong all of us would catch it and the lettermen would come through the rooms, they were all grown up the lettermen and they played sports and they would come each room with a board a little over a foot long with a handle on it and with holes in it and they'd have us pull down our pants and they'd whack us like that with it maybe five times each and that would straighten us up a little bit.

[Professor Hirt]: Whether or not you were guilty of anything?

[John Grant]: Yeah, make everybody pay for it, so we'd have to jump on the person that's at fault.

[Professor Hirt]: We were looking at a photo earlier of the Simcoe Indian Boarding School and the Chemawah Indian Boarding School and you mentioned that both your father and your grandfather were at Indian boarding schools.

[Marilyn]: Yes they were.

[Professor Hirt]: Then you surprised me and mentioned that you yourself went off to an Indian boarding school in Oklahoma. Can you tell us about that?

[Marilyn Malatare]: Yes. I was sent away to the Shalako Indian School in Shalako Oklahoma , which is a pretty good sized boarding school in the north part of Oklahoma about three miles from the Kansas border, which was a boarding school out in nowhere, literally out in the fields and the only thing there out in the middle, it was in a huge field and the only thing there was the school itself and the only transportation out there because it was next to the state lines was by the boarding school guardians, officials and teachers and counselors.

[Professor Hirt]: When was this?

[Marilyn Malatare]: This was in the late 60's, 1968, 69.

[Professor Hirt]: Now you said you were sent off, or they sent me off. Who made the decision that you would go to Oklahoma for boarding school and how old were you at the time.

[Marilyn Malatare]: I was 17, and it was my grandparents who I stayed with and the Bureau of Indian Affairs who decided that I would be better off going to a boarding school away from the reservation.

[Professor Hirt]: So the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the late 1960's is still had the policy of sending Indians children away from their homes away from their communities, off to boarding schools for their own good. What was your experience like and how do you feel now about that experience?

[Marilyn Malatare]: When I do reflect back now to the time that I did attend the Shalako Indian Boarding School I still have a lot of hard feelings and I still have a lot of animosity. I experienced a lot of loneliness [*photo of Indian boarding school students*] in a place where I didn't want to be, I was sent when I didn't want to go, against my own will. We were treated mostly like... almost like prisoners, it was very strict. The teachers were very, very strict. We had to attend church there. There was a Protestant church available, there was a Baptist church available, there were three different denominations and I myself come off the Yakima reservation. On Sundays you were not allowed to do anything but go to Sunday services and if you didn't go to one of those Sunday services you had to stay in your room, literally and just do your homework and work on your books. I saw a lot of mistreatment of students, not only from the Pacific Northwest, but we had students there from Alaska, all the way to Florida, all the way to California, Montana, there was a lot of Eskimo's there, a lot of Navaho's, they were from all over the United States and we were all thrown into one school which made it hard because, like a lot of the young people from Alaska, only spoke their own language, so they all stayed in their little click, the Navaho's only spoke Navaho so they stayed in their own little click,

Montana were mostly Crow's and they spoke only Crow, so they stayed in their own little click, the Seminole's only spoke Seminole so it was quite a time and like I said I saw a lot of mistreatment by the teachers, the counselors, supposed to be guidance people. I saw things that shouldn't have happened in a government, so called Bureau of Indian Affairs, I saw students whipped, I actually saw some of my friends who were tied to trees behind our dorm for doing thing they shouldn't have done, such as young people will be young people... they snuck in a six pack of beer, let's say, so for punishment they were actually strapped to trees behind my dorm; I saw it with my own eyes, my friends and I who were staying in this dorm we went out back and we were told that we weren't to ever tell anyone what we say. We saw some people who went out on Easter leaves and who were gone for an extra day or would come back and maybe had had a couple of beers while they were gone and came back and were literally locked and chained in rooms, such as we had laundry rooms where everyone had to do their laundry. One girlfriend of mine came back and she had been drinking so what they did is they took handcuffs, took her into the laundry room and handcuffed her on the floor, underneath the sink where the pipe is there and they left her there all night, just closed the door on her and left her there all night and they said they were teaching her a lesson and the next day they let her out and she was all dirty and crying and that left a really bad memory for me. I do have a lot of bad memories from the boarding school. I did make some good friends that I am still in contact with today, but to be honest with you a lot of us don't like talking about boarding schools to this date. I have a good friend who I have been friends with since we graduated from high school at Shalako, we don't even talk about those days, we talk about afterwards and I stayed there for the one year and I graduated, we graduated in the morning and were on a Greyhound Bus that afternoon and everyone was sent back to their perspective reservations and at this time was the famous relocation act, had come through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I came home for approximately 30 days, my grandparents told me don't even bother unpacking your suitcase and I said, why and they said because you're off to California next, so I had turned 18 but I realized I guess that was it, the Bureau of Indian Affairs decided I was going to be sent on relocation next, so they put me on another Greyhound Bus and I was headed south to San Jose, California to go to a business school for six months and I couldn't understand why I had to go all the way down there when they had perfectly good schools here in Yakima, but I got sent all the way to California, I stayed down there and by that time I had become pretty bitter and mad and angry, not only at my... I thought it was my grandparents and my dad, but I was mad at the system, I was mad at the tribe, I was mad at the Bureau of Indian Affairs for... I felt like they condemned me, they sent me away and said you're just going to stay here and get in trouble, you'll turn into what everybody else is, like they were telling me what I could do, I wasn't told I could go onto a four year college. I got straight A's through high school but that wasn't one of the opportunities I was given, they didn't ask, do you want to go on to college Marilyn? No, they were saying you're going to go to a six month business school and you're going to be a secretary. I did finish that up and I stayed in California for seven years because I was bitter and resentful. I lived in California, I moved around the bay area, I had some good jobs, got my first job experience, the time came I moved home and that's when I met my husband and put myself back through college. I went to the University of Montana and got my degree, now I'm back here working.

[Professor Hirt]: This is with maybe 30 years of hindsight now that was the late 60's. We're almost 30 years later, a full generation later. Looking back on that time now, how can we understand what was going on in the 60's that made something like that possible? Why were those decisions made, do you think? Who was making those decisions and for what reason? How can we understand? Because I assume this is not happening today.

[Marilyn Malatare]: There are still boarding schools. Where my father went to school at Chemawah in Salem, Oregon is still being run and there are still students being sent off to boarding schools to this date, there are some in California, Montana, there's one in Nevada; they are still going. But I guess back to your question, what they were trying to do was they were more or less trying to assimilate me into the system saying that I was too much Indian, I was trying to exercise my culture and be myself and the system would not accept it, they decided for me that I needed to be more white.

[Professor Hirt]: Is that, maybe, if we look for an explanation between the late 60's and today, maybe that's part of the explanation, that in the late 1960's it was still not okay to be different, it was not okay to be an Indian, it was not okay to be a minority in this country, everybody was assumed by the dominant or the white population, it was assumed that everybody would eventually become more like them. Subsequently, starting in the 60's, but really in the 70's we get a period of ethnic pride. Do you see that and do you see that having an impact on the history of the Yakima people in recent decades?

[Marilyn Malatare]: Yes, I do. It kind of goes back to my early 70's when I was living in California, I was an environmentalist and I joined some pretty radical groups. I was a member of the American Indian Movement, AIM back then and I was pretty radical back then. I was young, in my 20's and I like I said I was mad at the system and like I said I became an environmentalist, I became pretty radical back then and I still am a little radical to be honest. But I do see where it had an affect here on the Yakima reservation to where a lot of our people, like my grandfather, who was sent to Fort Simcoe Indian School [*photo of Fort Simcoe students*] and he was but a young boy and he told me he was about six or seven and my grandpa is since gone now, but when he got there his braids were cut and he was put into uniform that he had to wear every day. My grandfather spoke his language fluently, but when he got to Fort Simcoe he was told not to speak his own language and he was severely punished and hit when he tried to speak his own language and my father also when we was sent to Chemawah by then my grandfather had reverted to, he was a Catholic, which my father also grew up also as a Catholic and so we kind of lost a bit of our culture there in between generations where my dad didn't really even practice our tradition and cultures, we lost it there for quite a while and I think this generation now, we're trying to pick it up again, we're trying to revive a culture that we're losing. I feel that the baby boomers of our group are really striving... we're trying to learn ourselves so that we can teach is what we're trying to do.

[Professor Hirt]: Is that a part of the mission of this museum here?

[Marilyn Malatare]: Yes, it is. That's why this culture center is here is to preserve and promote and save our culture, our traditions, so that the people here at this museum and this culture center, because we know we won't be here forever, what we're doing is we're planning for the future, for generations yet to come, like my children, I hope my children and my grandchildren will be able to walk through this museum someday and say my grandma used to work here and she helped preserve this culture, that's my dream for the future.

[Professor Hirt]: Thanks Marilyn.

[Marilyn Malatare]: Thank you.