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Identity & Relocation Policy:

Using Oral History to Affectively Map the Experience of
Relocated American Indians in Los Angeles.

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in American Indian Studies

by

Sonja Liza Dobroski

2012

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Identity & Relocation Policy:
Using Oral History to Affectively Map the Experience of
Relocated American Indians in Los Angeles.

by

Sonja Liza Dobroski

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Peter Nabokov, Chair

The relocation policy began in the early 1950's and ended in the 1970's. The policy was created to move reservation Indians into cities by providing relocation assistance in the form of housing, job placement, training, etc. This policy, and Federal Indian policies like it, present logics of assimilation. Existing scholarship has shared these views and has discussed the response to Urban Indian Identity in a variety of ways. In this thesis I will use the oral history accounts of eight relocated Indians in Los Angeles in conjunction with previous scholarship to discuss the experience of relocation. This thesis will pose the

narratives of the eight interviewees within the context of settler colonial structures and will explore how these eight relocatees re-envisioned Indian identity.

The thesis of Sonja Liza Dobroski is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2012

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I. Introduction

Between the years 1951-1973 more than 100,000 American Indians from reservation communities across the United States participated in a Federal plan known as the relocation program.¹ The relocation program provided American Indians with support to leave their reservations and move to urban areas. The relocation program has been characterized as an assimilation project, and as a response to the perceived inability of reservation economies and resources to support large populations.²

Existing studies have expressed varying positions on the ratio of Indians that stayed in the city and those that returned to the reservation. It is likely that political motives and manipulated statistics caused the inconclusive results.³ Nonetheless, many relocatees stayed in the urban destination and built lives for themselves and their families. How do these remaining relocatees respond to relocation as an assimilation project? How can the vibrant urban Indian culture in many US cities be explained in relation to relocation?

Each prospective relocatee was required to apply for the program and if approved was sent to one of the BIA field offices in the following US cities: Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Portland, Ore., Dallas, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Joliet and Waukegan, Ill.⁴ Once approved for relocation relocatees were transported by bus or train to the

¹ Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America*, The University of New Mexico Press, 2000, 25.

² Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 52.

³ *Ibid* 1. 20.

⁴ *Ibid* 2.

destination city, and instructed to go to the Bureau of Indian Affairs office upon arrival. The BIA afforded them transitional housing, “on the job” or vocational training, and eventually assistance with job placement.⁵

Out of the over 100,000 native participants, this work is concerned with a very specific group of 8 relocatees; who relocated to Los Angeles, and who not only stayed in Los Angeles, but felt that they had positive, successful experiences. This work focuses on Los Angeles as LA currently houses the largest urban American Indian population in the country. Native people from diverse tribes and many reservations across the United States came to Los Angeles through the Federal relocation program. Their individual experiences as relocatees interacting with an assimilation project reflected that diversity, but as relocatees they aided in the formation of the current urban Indian culture within the city.

In order to explore Native response to relocation as an assimilative project this work seeks to understand from specific relocatees why they chose the federal policy of relocation and left their reservation communities. This work also explores the experiences of individual relocatees to determine why and how they built lives in Los Angeles. The use of a micro approach is intentional in that it allows for the investigation of relocatees’ perspectives directly from those who settled in the same city and as a result had common experiences: the experiences of American Indians who, through a specific federal policy built lives in Los Angeles. These perspectives will be developed from direct oral history narratives of American Indian relocatees who settled in Los Angeles.

⁵ Ibid 1. 17.

The original narratives of the participants will be analyzed in the context of the work of notable scholars on relocation: Historian Nicholas G. Rosenthal, Historian Donald L. Fixico, and American Studies scholar Reyna K Ramirez. In addition, an application of Jonathan Flatley's concept of affective mapping will be employed to answer how relocatee's come to form urban Indian identity.

II. Literature Review

A. Donald L. Fixico, The Urban Indian Experience in America

In the 2000 addition of his book, The Urban Indian Experience in America, Historian Donald L. Fixico provides a comprehensive chapter on the history of the Relocation program. His book more broadly discusses Urban Indian identity formation with relocation being a catalyst for urban migration. In his introduction Fixico presents the relocation program as a product and a legacy of the assimilative logics that have often surrounded Federal Indian policy. He writes,

The Relocation Program has been instrumental in removing Indians, as many as one hundred thousand so that the majority of the 2.1 million Indians live in cities. Government officials envisioned relocation as a reform effort to assist American Indians in finding jobs and housing, but it was again Indian removal as in the 1830s and the following decades when the government ordered Indians moved to reservations. This time it was moving Indians to cities.⁶

Here Fixico acknowledges the Relocation program as a land dispossession project much like the removal policies of the earlier decades when Native people were forced onto reservations. Fixico shows that the connection between these policies is removal.

Fixico also speaks to the logics of assimilation present in the Relocation program, “One of the chief objectives of the Relocation program was desegregation of the reservation Indian population. Federal officials hoped relocation would assimilate Indians into Urban neighborhoods of the dominant society.”⁷ Fixico discusses the pressures that these logics placed on Indian relocatees noting that success for urban Indians meant

⁶ Ibid 1. 4.

⁷ Ibid 1. 24.

negotiating with identity formation in a dichotomous relationship between tradition and modernity, a key consequence of interacting with an assimilative policy.⁸

Fixico's focus is historical in that he spends the chapter primarily discussing the rise and fall of the relocation program through primary document use, mostly from BIA relocation reports. Fixico discusses the reasons why relocatees chose to come to cities. He cites economic difficulty, and pays special attention to the post war environment of the 1950's . He writes, "They chose to move to large cities far away from their homelands to escape poverty and perhaps to forgo their traditional heritage due to post war patriotism and McCarthyism."⁹ Fixico is describing a time when anything un-American was considered un-patriotic. Thus he theorizes that relocatees may have desired assimilation to avoid being different. However, he uses limited data when discussing Native response to relocation and the effects of postwar patriotism in relation to desired assimilation. Most of his data comes from second hand accounts from missionaries, federal officials, tribal leaders and social service administrators.¹⁰ He rarely uses testimony from relocatees themselves.

Fixico's chapter also briefly addresses the rise of Urban Indian programming through the establishment of Indian Centers that provided continued support and services for urban Indians, but does not discuss how this affected relocatees.¹¹ Fixico briefly discusses relocated Indians that stayed in the cities and what this experience has been like

⁸ Ibid 1. 7.

⁹ Ibid 1. 12.

¹⁰ Ibid 1.21.

¹¹ ibid 1. 24.

for them. He theorizes that many traded economic disparity on the reservation for urban slums and cultural suffering in the cities. It is important to note that Fixico is an urban Indian himself and as such presents his chapter with native voice. He writes, “It is an unfortunate fact however that success in the white world is costing them their native culture.”¹² Here Fixico assumes that moving away from the reservation and into the city automatically means culture loss, which also implies that Native culture is confined temporally and spatially.

Fixico’s work displays relocation as a portion of a larger part of Federal Indian policy with a legacy of assimilative logic. Furthermore, Fixico asserts that relocatees when interacting within this climate had a variety of different responses; some relocatees left and went back to the reservation, some stayed, and both had to renegotiate their identities as Indians. However, he places a large emphasis on tradition and modernity as the negotiating factors behind identity formation as relocatees and urban Indians.

B. Reyna K. Ramirez, Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond

American Studies scholar Reyna Ramirez’ book, Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond describes the urban Indian experience. Ramirez does not solely focus on relocation or on Los Angeles but does incorporate an extensive history and analysis throughout, as the urban Indian experience has been heavily influenced by the relocation program. First, Ramirez provides a plethora

¹² Ibid 1. 25.

of Native voice throughout her book dedicating multiple pages solely to quoting a Native informant or informants. In her introduction Ramirez writes, “Yet these urban Native peoples are not-as they are sometimes portrayed-living as exiles without a culture, inhabiting a netherworld between the traditional and modern.”¹³ Here, Ramirez challenges previous works that place native people in a static binary between modernity and tradition.

Ramirez takes a very different stance on Urban Indians asserting that the Urban setting is transformed into a space where native people connect with other native people in a trans-tribal communal relationship, what Ramirez calls “hubs.” These hubs reinvigorate Indian identity and exhibit the potential to create vast connections between Native people in the Urban and rural environments, both on the reservation and away. These spatially broad relationships have the ability to expand community organizing and create political and social change.¹⁴

This perspective offers a new way to look at relocatees and their experiences, by placing native people’s thoughts as active in understanding the manifestation of historical events. This way of looking at relocation assumes that Native people are coming to and staying in cities for a number of reasons, and these reasons are not limited to the static representations and models that scholars and policy makers have previously presented. When discussing termination rationale critiques assumptions of assimilation based on a tradition and modernity binary, Ramirez writes, “ Underlying this determination was the

¹³ Reyna K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond*, Duke University Press, 2007, 1.

¹⁴ Ibid 13. 2.

theory of assimilation, which assumed that absorbing ‘white habits’ somehow extinguished ones sense of Indian identity.”¹⁵ The hub does not fall into the static binary of tradition and modernity; instead it offers a transformative space where native people are active and responsive within our collective histories. Ramirez explains the hub through diaspora studies, asserting that diasporic dialogues usually focus on a sense of displacement and loss. She argues that the hub, “rather than focusing on displacement emphasizes urban Indians strong rooted connection to tribe and homeland.”¹⁶ Ramirez brings a flexible dynamic perspective to the urban Indian experience.

Ramirez uses a wheel to describe how urban Indians view themselves in relation to their reservation communities. The wheel does not explain why Native people may or may not migrate, instead the wheel offers an explanation of how migrated urban Natives view themselves in the urban space. The hub of the wheel is the urban center and the spokes are the connections to their reservation communities.¹⁷ This is the idea that many tribes are represented in the urban space because of programs like relocation. It is in this space where multiple tribes interact and create community. This hub then has spokes that go out to all the represented reservation communities as a way to strengthen Indian identity. This logic counteracts assimilationist stances and shows that the urban Indian space can be transformative.

¹⁵ Ibid 13. 42.

¹⁶ Ibid 13. 12.

¹⁷ Ibid 13. 2.

C. Nicolas G. Rosenthal Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles

In his book, Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles, historian Nicolas G. Rosenthal explores the long history of Indian migration and Identity formation in Los Angeles. Rosenthal dedicates a chapter to discussing the relocation program and examines the relationship between relocatees and Los Angeles. More broadly Rosenthal brings agency and power into question in terms of migration and identity. He calls for a contextualization of hegemonic forces and their effects on Indian forms of resistance:

Delving deeper into the complex relationship between power and agency, scholars can learn more about how hegemony works and the fashioning of counterhegemonic strategies. In the case of American Indians in cities such as Los Angeles, scholars should keep in mind this *tension* between power and agency and how it comes to characterize much of modern, urban life.¹⁸

Rosenthal is also responding to policy formation based on assimilative strategies and calls for a more complex analysis of urban Indian identity formation. He differentiates urban minorities from urban Indians in that urban Indians have a unique relationship with the Federal government. He writes, “Based on treaty obligations and Native people’s legal status, the federal government continued to operate institutions and programs in the city that sought to discipline American Indian behavior and eliminate cultural forms of expression.”¹⁹ Rosenthal characterizes the relocation program as one such disciplining mechanism.

¹⁸ Ibid 2. 7.

¹⁹ ibid 2. 7.

Rosenthal argues that a historicized discussion of Americanization, a concept popular with other migration scholars, and a discussion of Federal strategies of assimilation should be merged in order to accurately discuss relocation. He argues that the relocation experience is heavily influenced by larger migration logics during the 1950s and 1960s. Assimilation policy, he argues, was in congruence with larger Americanization themes that sought to create a unified American culture. He writes, “Relocation policy can be understood as another chapter in the history of state-sponsored efforts at Americanization that for the first time sought to use US cities as a way of integrating American Indians into the mainstream of American life.”²⁰ Rosenthal echoes both Ramirez and Fixico by characterizing Relocation as a state-sponsored assimilation project.

Rosenthal shows that this was also a reflection of broader political and cultural themes of the time that sought to design a common American society due to what Fixico characterizes as post war patriotism. Rosenthal cites specific strategies where this unification can be seen in the relocation application process. He writes, “officials worked to choose candidates whom they thought had the best chance of becoming the idealized American citizens they envisioned.”²¹ He explains that these strategies included favoring males as heads of household, the promotion of the nuclear family, and the proper urban dress and behaviors.

²⁰ Ibid 2. 51.

²¹ Ibid. 2. 51.

Rosenthal describes the many experiences that Native people had with relocation. The two primary characterizations are those of Indians that stayed in the relocation destination and of those that returned to the reservation. These two categories are present in both the Fixico and Ramirez texts. It is important to note, however, that within these two categories of relocatees, a variety of experiences also exist. Rosenthal throughout his contextualization of these experiences has running themes of sub-altern resistance.

Rosenthal sites anthropologist James C. Scotts' work as a useful tool to look at the boundaries of resistance and opposition, by asserting that resistance to hegemonic forces is not necessarily isolated to political protest.²² The varying and often overlapping experiences that relocatees had with the program is reflective of this resistance. Rosenthal asserts that many relocatees broke "relocation rules" by behaving in ways counter to BIA regulations and insisted on defining their own experiences. Often these rules expressed the Americanization and assimilation efforts discussed previously:

Another way in which relocation participants were able to define their own experience despite efforts by relocation officials was to join with other Indian people in creating urban American Indian communities. This practice rejected Americanization policies by strengthening rather than weakening Indian identity and reimagining rather than forsaking the notion of Indian country.²³

Here we see the resistance to assimilation strategies as challenging the notions that Indian identity is spatially confined to reservation communities. On the contrary resistance practices allowed for the re-imagining of Indian identity.

²² *ibid* 2. 7.

²³ *Ibid* 2. 69.

This community organizing according to Rosenthal was particularly concerning to relocation officials because these organizations eventually critiqued and infiltrated the relocation program itself. This is where Rosenthal shows the shift from Americanization to self determination. He writes, “This shift away from Americanization was not an isolated incident but was indicative of a larger transition in federal Indian policy that occurred in fits during the 1960s and 1970s.”²⁴ This shift to self-determination can be seen in the dramatic changes in the relocation policy. The program during the Americanization period reflected the logics of assimilation where relocatees were subject to conditioning mechanisms that placed them in middle class gender norms. Rosenthal writes, “This was all to serve the goal of cutting off their connections to Indian culture and identity and assimilating them into urban society at the lower rungs of the social and economic hierarchy.”²⁵ This is in contrast to the early 1970’s where urban Indians had taken over much of the programming for relocated Indians and made decisions for new relocatees.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid 2. 73.

²⁵ Ibid 2. 73.

²⁶ Ibid 2. 74.

III. Methodology

A. Synthesis

This study uses qualitative methodology to explore what I will call the identity response of urban Indians that came to the city of Los Angeles on the relocation program. I use the term response as it denotes how Native people themselves respond to relocation as an assimilative project. As stated previously this work attempts to unpack the relationship between policy as an assimilative project and the process by which Native relocatees have negotiated their identities within. The works of Rosenthal and Ramirez have both contextualized and re-imagined urban Indian identity formation. Rosenthal shows that relocation policy can be looked at through larger migration trends starting with the Americanization period and moving into self-determination. Ramirez shows that hub-making, or the formation of pan-Indian community activities, was critical for urban Indian identity formation. This work differs in that it seeks to describe why and how relocatees envision themselves within these contexts. I will employ English scholar Jonathan L. Flatley's concept of affective mapping in conjunction with direct oral historical accounts of eight Los Angeles relocatees in order to explore what I will call relocatee consciousness.

B. The UCLA Oral History Archives

In the winter and spring of 2011 the Oral History Archives at UCLA in conjunction with the UCLA American Indian Studies program conducted a series of oral history interviews with relocatees. These interviews were taken as part of a graduate

student course in advanced historiography. The interviewers come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. I was part of this course and conducted some but not all of the interviews. As part of the course the students had to design the interview questions, so although there were a variety of interviewers, the questions were all structured in the same manner, using the same template²⁷.

C. Process

The goal of the interviews was to gather as much knowledge about the relocatees experience as possible. The interview questions were designed primarily to understand the differences between reservation life and life in Los Angeles, why the relocatee chose to stay in Los Angeles, and how they felt about their experience as a whole. These interviews will be used in conjunction with the historical and theoretical foundations presented by Fixico, Rosenthal, and Ramirez to discuss the Native experience with relocation as an assimilative project.

This approach is limited in that it only surveys eight relocatees who all decided to stay in Los Angeles. However, these eight interviews present a group of people who have made the shift from reservation life to life in the urban setting. As discussed previously heavy emphasis is placed on the spatial confinement of tradition and modernity. The reservation is contextualized in assimilation logic as a space that harbors Native tradition, where they city is a space that promotes modernity. For this reason, relocatees that chose to stay in Los Angeles will be the source for analysis. This study is not comparative with

²⁷ See appendix.

those that decided to leave Los Angeles, this work will only account for these eight interviews.

Because this study is one sided it is important to note that other native people had differing experiences and opinions and these eight interviews are not to stand for the entire relocatee experience or consciousness. In addition, even those relocatees who were interviewed had a variety of different experiences and opinions on relocation and many responded in very different ways. That said, the specificity of this data set also allows for a very specific exploration of the thoughts and ideas of a group of people with similar life experiences. All of the interviewees were from reservation communities, all moved to Los Angeles on relocation and all have stayed in the relocation destination. I seek to understand why and how these relocatees responded to the program, why they chose to stay, and how they view relocation within their lives.

The analysis will account for these eight interviews, but will not attempt to make broader analytical assertions about the Los Angeles Urban Indian experience, the larger relocation experience or even the experience of all relocatees in Los Angeles. These topics would require a much broader data set. However, the analysis of these accounts using affective mapping in conjunction with the historical trajectories presented by Reyna Ramirez and Nicholas Rosenthal will show how these eight relocatees interacted with relocation as an assimilative project. In addition, this work can be viewed as a micro project that aims to use oral history accounts to pose Federal Indian policy as structure in which Native people are very active. Lastly, this work will complicate the term pan-Indian, particularly in relation to identity formation.

Each interview was an hour to an hour and a half long and was listened to in full length: several subjects were interviewed multiple times and many have three to four hours of recorded material. Each recording is narrative and it is easy to miss out on small details by looking simply at sections of the recordings. This approach was strategic in that the analysis relies on as much Native voice as possible. In order to understand these eight relocatees' experiences in Los Angeles each part of the interview was critical. The interviews were designed to document the entire life experience of the subject. Starting with their first memories growing up on the reservation all the way through the process and decisions that led them to relocation.

In these recordings I was looking for common themes particularly in relation to why relocatees felt compelled to leave home and why they stayed in Los Angeles instead of returning to the reservation. I also looked for what types of common or differing opinions the interviewees had on life in Los Angeles and life on the reservation. I attempted to look at each interview as a whole and paid special attention to each portion of the subject's life story to paint as complete a picture as possible of that relocatee's views and opinions.

Although this is a piece about a program that was a large part of American Indian policy it does not focus on the program itself. It will not address the specificities of the administration or of the process by which relocatees or BIA administrators designed and implemented the policy. The work of Donald Fixico explores these specificities in great detail. This work is ethno-historical in that it marries both historical analysis and the feelings and stories of relocatees in order to explore and contextualize how these eight

relocatees conceptualized relocation as an assimilative project. As stated previously, relocation is part of a legacy of policies that display this logic. This methodology can shed light on how Native people operate and perceive these structures.

Using strictly Native testimony was intentional particularly in response to previous works on relocation where Native voice was not used or was very limited. This piece will attempt to respond to these works by complicating assimilationist language and the placement of Native relocatees in a static binary between tradition and modernity, between the reservation and urban boundaries through the use of Native voice. In conjunction with the former, this approach was also used to decolonize this work as much as possible. Using native voice is an approach that I feel is critical to this work as it seeks to understand how Native people operated within a program that is imbued with western paradigms. The use of Oral history was critical to this approach because reading transcripts of interviews often provides the researcher with a limited relationship to the data. When listening to the actual voices of the relocatees the listener can hear voice inflections, pauses and emphasis that give life to the words being disseminated. I have used as many direct quotes from the interviews as possible.

The scholarship on the relocation experience is limited. Further research on the experience of relocatees should be completed. These works would have to be much larger and encompass a polyvocal approach from Natives that had differing experiences, opinions, and reactions. With several cities as relocation destinations there are a variety of studies that can be completed to understand the ways in which native people have responded to urban migration through Federal policy. Projects that document Native

voice, such as those conducted by the Oral History Archives at UCLA are key to understanding and preserving the history of these experiences and giving them their rightful voice within the ethnographic record.

IV. Presentation & Analysis of Data

A. Settler Colonization: The Logics of Elimination

This work will operate under the premise that the United States is a settler colonial society, and as such the policies projected onto Native people by the Federal government often adopt settler colonial structures. Patrick Wolfe, in his article, *Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native*, has characterized settler colonial strategies as adopting logics of elimination.

...settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of Native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the appropriated land base-as I put it, settler colonizer's come to stay: *invasion is a structure not an event.*²⁸

Wolfe articulates that settler colonialism denotes structures of power between colonizer and colonized, between settler and native. In order for a settler society to rationalize settlement these power structures must continue to operate. Nowhere is this operation more apparent than in Federal Indian Policy.

In order for the following analysis to be understood, relocation as an assimilative project must be contextualized within a legacy of Federal Indian policy. Policies that often reflect structures that operate with assimilative and extermination logics. As such, an application of settler colonialism in relation to relocation must be explored. As stated in the literature review Fixico has characterized the relocation program as being

²⁸ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native*, *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), 8(4), December, 388. Emphasis mine.

indicative of these processes.²⁹ Rosenthal places relocation in this legacy of logic, writing, “Relocation was based on the idea that a separation from extended kinship networks and Indian communities was necessary to facilitate the assimilation of Indian people, much like the off reservation boarding schools of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”³⁰ Here, Rosenthal likens relocation to the same assimilative logics that motivated boarding school policy. Both policies adopt the logics of assimilation as a strategy to naturalize settlement. By naturalizing settlement, I mean the structural process by which a settler colonial society continuously attempts to justify the occupation of Native lands.

These policies are all linked to the logics of a settler colonial society, whose main goal is land procurement. Patrick Wolfe writes, “Whatever settlers may say-and they generally have a lot to say-the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.), but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialisms specific-irreducible element.”³¹ As a settler society the United States was founded upon the doctrine of discovery where Indigenous people as inherent sovereigns are in conflict with the foundational principles of the nation-state. Ramirez shows that procurement of land and the logics of elimination are apparent in relocation policy:

...the federal government relocated thousands of Indians to California between the 1950s and 1970s as part of the era of termination that attempted to abrogate Indians’ status as sovereign nations; it was a strategic move that gave the

²⁹ see page 8.

³⁰ Ibid 2. 62.

³¹ Ibid 28. 388.

government access to reservation lands and resources under the guise of attempting to assimilate Indians into US society.³²

The relocation policy, by adopting the logics of assimilation to gain access to native lands is highly indicative of the structures of settler colonialism.

Wolfe characterizes settler colonial societies as highly complex and continuous over time. The key is that settler colonialism is a structure and Indigenous people are agents that interact in this highly complex relationship. For the purposes of this work I will view relocation policy as a strategy indicative of the structures of settler colonialism that is imbued with the logics of elimination. It is on this basis that I will consider relocation policy, identity formation, and the Indian actors within.

B. Pre-relocation: Melancholia & the Structures of Assimilation

In order to discuss Flatley's concept of affective mapping, an understanding of his reading of melancholia is critical as it is directly related to his use of the term. I will unpack his reading of melancholia and then apply that reading to the relocatee experience. Melancholia as Flatley sees it "forms the site in which the social origins of our emotional lives can be mapped out and from which we can see the other persons who share our losses and are subject to the same social forces."³³ In relation to relocation I will call this particular melancholia as it relates to this work, relocation consciousness. I will treat the analysis of these eight relocatees' whose interviews are used in this project

³² Ibid 13. 17.

³³ Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia & The Politics of Modernism*, Harvard University Press, 2008. 3.

as sharing in this consciousness. They share common social origins and experience loss as people who have interacted within structures of assimilation, which are, as stated previously indicative of a settler colonial society. More specifically, and pertaining to this work they have been subject to relocation as a structural force. This experience in conjunction with the legacy of other policies that often adopt oppressive logics presents a melancholia-a structure of feeling surrounding policy.

As a methodology Flatley's reading of melancholia asks the questions that this work seeks to explore from the perspectives of relocated Natives:

Whence these losses to which I have become attached? What social structures, discourses, institutions, processes have been at work in taking something from me? With whom do I share these losses or losses like them? What are the historical processes in which this moment of loss participates?³⁴

These losses, I argue in relation to this work, are the manifestation of the legacies of federal policy that these eight relocatees experienced throughout their lives. They hold many of these losses and experiences in common. These factors are illuminated in the narratives of the relocatees when asked why they chose to leave their reservation communities. The following data will present the common themes that the eight relocatees voiced when discussing reservation life and their decision to leave their communities.

³⁴ Ibid 33.

1. Education

The following themes were present in the interviews: Educational opportunities, employment, poverty, prejudice and racism. The subjects attended either a government school or a public school in a neighboring community. For some these were boarding schools where they were long distances from the reservation eight months out of the year and would return in the summer. For some these were local schools in the towns that bordered the reservation. Those that attended boarding school generally had positive experiences as they were surrounded with all native children who shared similar experiences. However, they did experience the logics of assimilation, as they were not allowed to speak their native languages and felt the pressures to assimilate. Boarding schools were the primary shared experience between all of the relocatees. Many that went to boarding schools understood that they had no choice in the matter. Sharon Buckley explains, “Boarding school was not a choice because there we so many of us to feed. That’s why most of us went.”³⁵ Donna Kuyiyeva explains that she remembers not being allowed to speak her language in boarding school and that she knew she was being subject to the “assimilation process.”³⁶ These are the responses that can be attributed to specific federal policies (removal, allotment boarding school).

Nonetheless, they saw the value in the education that they received. Many of those students that went into the bordering towns for school felt discriminated against in

³⁵ Sharon Buckley Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project, 2011.

³⁶ Donna Kuyiyeva Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project, 2011.

the schools by the other non-native children. They were often teased and bullied for being Native. They voiced that going on relocation was an opportunity to continue the education they received by accessing higher education. They graduated from high school in local and government schools and wanted to pursue a college degree. What pulled them to the cities was the opportunity for higher education or further vocational training.

2. Poverty & Employment

Access to education was closely tied to access to employment opportunities. All eight interviewees said that they experienced extreme poverty on their reservations due to lack of employment. Sharon Buckley describes the choices that had to be made due to lack of food for her family,

Boarding school was not a choice because there we so many of us to feed. That's why most of us went. Back and forth between boarding school and reservation, I would come home in the summers, I spent three months every summer on the res. The only jobs there were babysitting or working in the fields, pulling burs out of the corn.³⁷

This was the most common factor that prompted the subjects to leave. Many remembered having to work at a very young age, Donna Kuyiyvesa recalls her father dropping off her and her brother every day over the summer to collect empty bottles to make money at the recycling plant.³⁸ Many also voiced that they had no running water and had to travel several miles to the nearest water source.

Some of the interviewees' fathers were in the military service and were gone for large periods of time. This prompted them as well as their mothers to work, and many

³⁷ Ibid 35.

³⁸ Ibid 36.

voiced that it was more difficult for women to find work in and around the reservation. Loretta Flores, when asked what her life would have been like had she stayed on the reservation, explains, “I probably would be starving. Being a small place all the regular jobs were taken. Growing up I used to work for the bakery only in the summer and that was just seasonal.”³⁹ All interviewees shared similar stories of poverty, and many had stories of how their families survived financially when jobs were scarce. Some grew their own food, sold and bailed hay, or collected bottles and cans for recycling. All of the relocatees pointed to these struggles on the reservation as reasons why they wanted to go on relocation and gain more financial stability for themselves and their children.

3. Racism

The interviewees expressed that they felt discriminated against when living on the reservation. They voiced that they felt isolated and when they went into border towns they were racially profiled, they weren’t allowed to go into certain stores, and people watched and stared at them. Many voiced that you were either Indian or you were white and this distinction was often a source for great discomfort. Elaine Bisonette explains, “the restaurants had no Indians allowed, and they would follow you when you went into the stores. It was terrible, you couldn’t even look around.”⁴⁰ Many voiced that it was

³⁹ Loretta Flores Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project. 2011.

⁴⁰ Elaine Bisonette Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project.

racial discrimination that led to the lack of employment opportunities, and that white business owners would not hire Natives owing to racism. Randy Edmonds explains:

“When I grew up Indians were all poor. There was a prejudice against Indians to be allowed to do anything when you got out of boarding school you had no idea where you were going, you couldn’t get a job the white people aren’t going to let you work for them, they aren’t going to let you into their businesses and become a business person, there’s just discrimination, pure outright discrimination against Indians. And so the relocation program I think was an opportunity for Indians to be able to do that.”⁴¹

Randy is remembering the issues that racism presented in his life, and in his community. This racism can be attributed to the climate of a settler society. Sharon Buckley explains:

A lot of prejudice on the reservation, because you were either an Indian or you were a white person, in the surrounding area. A lot of prejudice against the Indians. That was some of the reason for wanting to leave but I was lighter skinned than a lot of my friends. If we went to a restaurant we wouldn’t get served. The white people would stick their noses in the air. Prejudice was rampant a lot of it was Indians getting drunk raising Cain. Because they’ve stereotyped us way back when.⁴²

Sharon shows that stereotypes of Indians had been going on in her community for quite some time. It is important to look at the entire narratives of the relocatees that have been interviewed, particularly when trying to understand why they all decided to leave their communities on the relocation program. These narratives show that although these relocatees come from very different communities spanning vast geographic boundaries they all experienced similar struggles surrounding reservation life.

⁴¹ Randy Edmonds Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project.

⁴² Ibid 35.

4. Enduring Legacies of Federal Policy

Many saw throughout their lives that they did not have very many choices due to the constraints of Federal policy just as Sharon Buckley articulates; her only option was to go to boarding school due to poverty. Several of the interviewees expressed that they had little to no choice when it came to going to boarding school. Many were forced to go by the government, others had no other educational opportunity, and others had families experiencing poverty. Sending them to boarding school was a way to alleviate the number of mouths to feed. These relocatees experienced from a young age the oppressive and at times damaging effects of Federal Policy. Sallie Cuaresma remembers being removed from her reservation at a young age during the allotment period.

She was raised on the Muskogee Creek reservation in Oklahoma and was raised in Creek traditions. Her mother was full blood Creek and her Father was full blood Cherokee. When allotment was given out they had to register as full blood Cherokee because her Father was considered head of household. As a result her family had to be moved to another part of the territory. She expresses their interaction with the BIA, “they said don’t worry about it, it will make no difference, but it made a great deal of difference. It was too late once we realized.”⁴³

⁴³ Sallie Cuaresma Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project.

At a very young age Sallie had already experienced having to operate under Federal policy⁴⁴. Sallie later in her narrative when describing life on her new reservation explains the legacy of relocation and removal that her family and tribe experienced,

“we lived in a community that was predominantly Anglo farmers, how they got that land /farm was due to relocation again from one area that they had settled in when they came over on the great removal. The land was taken. And the people were removed and given another 160 acres or whatever.”⁴⁵

Sallie is discussing two displacements, namely, the great Cherokee removal from the southeastern United States (that her parents and grandparents experienced) into Oklahoma and the allotment policy that allotted 160 acres of tribal land into individual Native ownership. The remaining lands were sold off to non-Indians, leaving what many have characterized as a checkerboard pattern on the reservation. Sallie shows that she understands the context under which her world was shaped. She knows that her tribe was forcibly relocated to Oklahoma and that furthermore, her surrounding community of “anglo farmers” acquired their land through a federal policy that attempted to disenfranchise Native people from their tribally owned land bases. Many relocatees throughout the interviews have shared similar life experiences with Federal policy.

The eight interviewees had immense experience with forced interaction with Federal policy, which they used and interpreted on their own terms in order to survive. The relocation program, as a federal policy was no exception. Donna Kuyiyesva shows

⁴⁴ The interviews are recollections of memories, some of which are decades old. As such, these interviews are the subject’s interpretation of the past. This work is not a commentary on how the relocatees felt *then*, but on how they feel about then, *now*.

⁴⁵ *ibid* 43.

us through her narrative how these connections between Federal policy, poverty and the decision to relocate are all connected. Donna's father was in the military, one of the other options available to Native men to make a living. Her Father was killed in action and her Mother was then responsible for taking care of Donna and her brother's and sisters. She explains that one of the only economic opportunities for her tribe, the Pima, was to lease their lands to non-native farmers, and work for them picking cotton.

During this time the surrounding non-native communities were stealing all the Pima's water that would be used to irrigate the land. As a result the land was very dry and undesirable for farming so the lease prices ended up being extremely low. The economic opportunities that would come from a fertile agricultural land base were impossible to attain due to a lack of water. According to Donna the Pima, only in the last five years have they been able to reclaim their water rights.⁴⁶

This lack of economic opportunity due to water rights issues prompted by a legacy of Federal policies motivated by colonial agendas left her mother with extremely limited options. She explains, "My mother had no choice but to do relocation, there wasn't much choices about what a person could do for a living, especially for a female."⁴⁷ Relocation then was the alternative for many experiencing the poverty, and prejudice that resulted from a reservation climate brought on by years of colonial and Federal interruptions.

⁴⁶ *ibid* 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid* 36.

The relocatees discussed thus far have adapted to Federal policies and often circumvented the goals that the government was attempting to achieve. Relocation policy as discussed previously was created during the Termination Era. During this time the government intended to end their trust relationship with tribes by literally terminating Federal acknowledgement of tribal nations. Relocation was used in part to decrease the amount of Native people living on reservation land in order to not only decrease reservation population but to assimilate Native people into the larger American culture.

The relocatees all experienced policies imbued with the structures and logics of assimilation. The testimony given thus far articulates how these relocatees historicized their experiences. Rosenthal writes, “American Indians had already endured a long and devastating history of European and American colonialism that had made the Indian communities among the poorest and most neglected in the country.”⁴⁸

It is important to note that these relocatees are presenting circumstances that can be attributed to the structures of assimilation and elimination found in settler colonial societies. Randy Edmonds, a relocatee, speaks to this oppression:

When you’re denied greater opportunities by the general society you know there is something wrong, there is some discrimination, some prejudice going on and you think you are just not good enough to attain whatever that is but it’s just the white system the way it’s set up it’s them first and then maybe we’ll let one or two of you in, it’s always been that way, unless you’re in charge as an Indian person, in our world we had to make those opportunities available to other Indians.⁴⁹

Native people have had to adapt and survive through hundreds of years of policies designed to exterminate, assimilate, and dispossess them of their lands and cultures.

⁴⁸ Ibid 2.7.

⁴⁹ Ibid 41.

These circumstances they note as common reasons why they wanted to leave their communities. The relocatees within this analysis are from different reservation communities over diverse and vast geographic boundaries. However, their common struggles as people from Indian communities affected by assimilation logics, are shown in these factors.

Viewing these relocatees as connecting with a common melancholia, we can begin to explore how relocation, as a structure imbued with logics of assimilation can be interpreted in terms of identity formation. I will argue that relocation was a site and a catalyst for urban Indian identity formation through a process that Jonathan Flatley calls affective mapping.

C. Post Relocation and Affective Mapping

1. From Melancholia to Affective Mapping

In order to continue with the analysis of the oral history data, a discussion of affective mapping will follow. Jonathan Flatley has used the concept of an affective map to complicate melancholias as purely a form of depression and angst. In his book *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* Flatley writes about melancholia through interacting with the authors of three specific texts.⁵⁰

He argues that by historicizing melancholic origins and sharing that with others who have the same melancholic consciousness can create an affective map. Flatley writes, “This knowledge, an ‘affective map,’ this book argues, is what, for them, and for

⁵⁰ These texts are as follows: Henry James’s *Turn of the Screw* (1898), W.E.B. Dubois’s *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and Andrei Platanov’s *Chevengur* (1928)

their readers, makes possible the conversion of a depressive melancholia into a way to be interested in the world.”⁵¹ Flatley is arguing that by creating connections with people who share similar historicized angst, a transformative process can occur. He writes, “This transformation can take place, I argue, not only because the affective map gives one a new sense of one’s relationship to historical forces but also inasmuch as it shows one how one’s situation is experienced collectively by a community of melancholics.”⁵² This mode of connection can turn melancholia into something positive and deserving of attention and reward. I will argue that this is exactly the transformative process that the relocatees experienced.

This work is interested in how relocated Indians experienced relocation, and how they view it as a process. Thus far I have posed the narratives of the relocatees through a melancholic reading. The relocatees melancholia, through this particular reading, are generated by the structures of a settler colonial society, i.e. poverty, assimilation, racism, etc. I will argue that the relocatees experienced and created an affective map by sharing in similar melancholias with other relocatees and migrated Indians in Los Angeles.

I am not arguing that this is how all relocatees experience settler colonialism, nor am I arguing that the process by which this happens is all the same. I am seeking to explain the process through which relocated Indians may have identified with one another to create community and identity in the urban space. By using relocatee narratives, I seek to illustrate this point. Dionne Helen explains, “I think what the BIA’s intentions were, to

⁵¹ *ibid* 33. 2.

⁵² *Ibid* 33. 4.

assimilate us into the mainstream and we were under the government, I didn't know that until later of course, but that's what the situation was."⁵³ Here, Dionne shows that as a young person going on relocation she did not understand the larger structures that she was operating under. This was a realization that she made later in life, post-relocation. This is perhaps indicative of the affective map.

How did Dionne and other relocatees make these contextualizations? It is clear that Dionne is not just talking about herself. She uses the word *us* in relation to assimilation logics, the government and relocation. Here she shows that she has made the realization that others have shared in this particular experience, and that it was only after she went on relocation that she made this connection. Thus far I have discussed the manifestation of assimilation logics as a source for a structure of feeling, a particular melancholia, present in the narratives of the relocatees. Applying Flatley's reading of melancholia as a potential site for a collective historicization is where the urban setting plays a critical role for relocated Indians.

2. Hub-making as an Affective Map

This is most apparent in Reyna Ramirez's work with hub-making, the site of affective mapping where native people, and many relocatees identified with one another as Indians who share a similar colonial history. All eight relocatees participated in some form of hub making. This data is consistent with Reyna Ramirez's research on Urban

⁵³ Dionne Helen Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project.

Natives. By hub-making they interacted with the relocation policy on their own terms and actually found ways to use the federal policy to reinvigorate and protect Indian identity from assault.

Hub-making in Los Angeles was the process by which the interviewees redefined their identities as Natives within the urban space and successfully adapted to Federal policy on their own terms. Randy Edmonds was responsible for creating a multitude of “hubs” for relocated Urban Indians in the Los Angeles area. When commenting on his decision to remain in Los Angeles and how hub-making affected his life he explains, “I think that we gave each other something to do, something to look forward to, become a part of, you can make that transition, if you’re not a part of that you can’t do it.”⁵⁴ Sallie Cuaresma, when she moved to Los Angeles with her family found and helped to create Native hubs at local churches. She comments, “The majority of the people that made these churches were relocatees. That’s how these churches happened. That’s where our strength came when we could participate in these churches.”⁵⁵ She explains that churches were not only a place to worship, but also a place to retain language and culture. Several of the churches that Sallie attended were tribal specific, where the language of the tribe was spoken during the service.

Inter-tribal pow-wows were another form of hub-making that the majority of interviewees participated in. Georgianna Shot comments, “I never knew there were so many tribes, I went to pow wows and took my kids, that’s how they met their friends and

⁵⁴ Ibid 41.

⁵⁵ ibid 43.

we met our friends.”⁵⁶ Interestingly, all of the activities that the eight relocatees involved themselves in when they came to Los Angeles were Indian centered events some pan-Indian and some tribally specific. In a city of millions of diverse people these relocatees were highly interested and influenced by *Indian* identity formation in the form of hub-making. I emphasize Indian here because the relocatees found other Indians from diverse tribal backgrounds, and connected with them in ways that were deeply influential to the success of their experience as relocatees. I have argued that this process can be viewed through Flatley’s reading of melancholia and his concept of affective mapping.

This process shows that modernity and relocation as an assimilative experience is inconsistent with the experiences and views of these relocatees. Instead, a re-envisioning of Indian identity is created in order to respond to the urban space. This is most important for relocatees as many had to choose relocation based on the necessity for survival, choosing relocation however, did not mean that these relocatees could not protect and continue to re-imagine who they are as Native people.

These relocatees did not see the reservation as simply a space of tradition and the city as a space of modernity and assimilation. Instead, they demonstrated that the reservation is indeed a place imbued with not only family ties and tradition but also with a long legacy of colonial and Federal oppression. Pan-Indian identity for these eight relocatees’ within the city can be attributed to this process of affective mapping.

⁵⁶ Georgianna Shot Interview, Center for Oral History Research, The University of California-Los Angeles, The Relocation Program Oral History Project.

The use of the wheel model is highly applicable to examining these eight narratives. As discussed previously the wheel offers the hub as the urban center where a variety of tribes interact and congregate, and the spokes offer the avenues to their specific communities. Throughout their narratives the interviewees demonstrated this perspective. Randy Edmonds explained that many of his friends came out to Los Angeles on Relocation and over several years networked, gained vocational and educational experience and returned to their reservation with new knowledge, became leaders in their communities, and assisted their tribes in improving reservation life.⁵⁷

The affective map is the site where the melancholic connects with others who share in this experience, and through these connections they can identify with others to find new ways of interacting with the world. Hub-making for these relocatees was this site. Relocation as a policy can be contextualized in two ways. First, relocation, as discussed previously, is another policy amidst many that harbor the structures of settler colonialism and the logics of assimilation. Second, relocation, for these relocatees was the beginning of their journeys to an affective map, the result of which has been called urban Indian identity.

This urban Indian identity is inter-tribal as migrants from culturally diverse tribes came to Los Angeles, relocation being one mechanism of migration. The narratives of the relocatees expressed that they felt at ease with other relocated Indians (regardless of tribal affiliation) *because* they shared the same experiences. I argue that these similar experiences are in large part the melancholias discussed previously. The broader common

⁵⁷ Ibid 41.

identification with other Indians was that they have also operated under the structures of a settler colonial society and have experienced the logics of assimilation as Indian people. Hub-making is the active site where these relocatees affectively mapped their lives into a transformative new space, an inter-tribal, urban Indian identity.

D. Challenging Spatial Confinement: Connecting with Reservation Communities and Identity Beyond Boundaries.

Hub-making, as a process, according to Reyna Ramirez also includes keeping connections with reservation communities. The relocatees' narratives expressed that they still held strong ties to their reservations. This is consistent with Reyna Ramirez' presentation of the wheel. Several relocatees still own land and property on their reservations and return frequently to visit family and reconnect. One striking example of this comes from the narrative of Loretta Flores. At the beginning of her interview she is asked what kind of activities she remembers participating in as a child on the reservation. She explains through a very beautiful, specific description that one of her fondest memories was picking wild berries, making jam and drying her own meats. After two hours of speaking about hardships and moving to Los Angeles the interviewer asks her if she intends on going back to the reservation to visit. She explains that she goes back frequently and that she is most looking forward to picking wild berries, making her own jam, and dry meat⁵⁸. Her complete narrative with this continuous practice, book ends a life story that is highly mobile, and contradicts the linear static stigma that relocatees

⁵⁸ Ibid 39.

have been subject to. Instead this narrative and many like it show that these relocatees conceive of their status as urban Indians to be highly fluid and consistently connected to their reservation communities through a variety of strategies.

In addition to physically returning to the reservation, the interviewees also expressed that maintaining Indian identity, more specifically, tribally affiliated identity is not spatially contingent. This process is expressed through a variety of strategies as well. Sharon Buckley explains that she passed down Lakota traditions to her family, she explains, “we have a star quilt that we make, I say ‘this is the sovereignty of the Lakota’. You feel it inside yourself. When my daughter is sick I tell her to get her star quilt.”⁵⁹ She further explains that once she was very ill and fell asleep and awoke to find that her son had wrapped her in the star quilt. She was touched that he had learned what to do through her teachings. Sheila maintains ties to her reservation community and her culture by passing down knowledge to her children and showing that expressions of tribal sovereignty are not limited to a land base.

The relocatees expressed that identity was not confined to spaces. Sallie Cuaresma discusses her views on community when she left Los Angeles for a period of time to take a job in Louisville, KY:

When I could get to those meetings (Native church meetings) I would go or if they had a pow wow I would go. My community was beyond Louisville... The ancestral home is Oklahoma, so I do give them two spaces, two places, well actually, when I was working I could say three well I tell you, I work in Louisville Kentucky, I maintain residence in California and my ancestral home is in Oklahoma.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid 35.

⁶⁰ Ibid 43.

Susan's key words here are, 'my community was beyond Louisville', signaling that community is not spatially contingent. This notion challenges previous work that has placed the reservation boundaries as boundaries for Native community, identity and tradition.

V. Conclusion

Fixico, Ramirez, and Rosenthal all agree that the Relocation program originally reflected the logics of assimilation that is an extension of a legacy of Federal Indian policy. In addition, it is apparent in all three texts that relocatees all had differing experiences producing a variety of different results. It appears, however, that as an assimilative project the relocation program like Indian identity was not static and changed with larger national dynamics.

Native people did not passively interact with relocation policy as an assimilative, hegemonic device. In contrast, Indian people employed a variety of resistive practices to re-envision Native identity, which operated outside a tradition-modernity binary. An examination of oral historical accounts can focus on the specific mechanisms by which Indian people interpreted and interacted with the logics of assimilation found in the relocation program. This examination explores their decision to leave the reservation and their re-conceptualization of their identities as Indians both spatially and temporally. The works of Ramirez and Rosenthal are particularly critical to the historical contextualization of this data. Exploring *how* Native relocatees came to know themselves as urban Indians operating within assimilative structures can be analyzed using Jonathan Flatley's reading of melancholia and his term "affective mapping."

These eight narratives from Natives across tribal and geographic boundaries all share similarities. They all participated in the relocation program and ended up staying in Los Angeles. It would be a gross over-simplification to merely say that these relocatees were and are moving from tradition to modernity by leaving the reservation. This

simplification in and of itself adopts the logics of assimilation by denying Native people voice and context within their own lives. It is important to look at the entire life story of the relocated urban Indian; this is critical in order to understand the conditions that prompted such a large move from reservation community into urban space. Furthermore, it is also critical to provide historical context to these choices as simply saying that the reservation is economically unstable, and that reservation Indians are enticed by wealth and modernity, elides hundreds of years of colonial violence.

Through the narratives of these eight interviewees we can see the complex and fascinating process by which these relocated Natives spent a lifetime interacting with Federal policy. The creation of the relocation program provided these relocatees with a great opportunity to escape some of the oppressive parts of reservation life, and allowed them to maintain their relationship to their reservation communities on their own terms. Furthermore, it allowed these relocatees to reinvigorate Indian Identity within the urban space, and assist their reservation communities in improving living conditions.

The relocation program as a structure presented logics that historically moved Indian people from their communities by modes of assimilation. These eight narratives show that in terms of identity formation, Native people did not interact passively and allow for these structures to dominate their experiences. Instead, relocatees continuously defined identity under these structures on their own terms. Hub-making as a site of community and affective mapping was a way that these relocatees shared in common historical melancholias. In this way, they were able to identify with one another and transform the urban space into a site of identity formation, a response to the logics of

assimilation. As Randy Edmonds says, “The traditions may not be all the same, culturally we are related but the traditions vary. But we have to keep that strong. We are still here.”⁶¹

⁶¹ Ibid 41.

VI. Appendix

Interview Outline for the Oral History Relocation Project

I. Life before Relocation

- Family Background
 - When and where born
 - Knowledge of ancestors: Where were they from? Stories passed down
 - Closest relatives/who was in charge of bringing them up. Description of what those people were like
 - What kinds of things family did together
 - Description of home: rooms, furnishings, appliances
 - Food
 - Dress
 - Parents' employment and other sources of income
 - Tribal/clan association/ family's role in tribal politics
 - Religious affiliations and activities. Holidays observed. Ceremonies or rituals
 - Languages spoken at home and in public
- Community
 - Physical description of community/reservation
 - Programs/social services on the reservation. Did BIA ever come to their home? What services did they provide? How did they get health care?
 - Employment available. Economic circumstances of neighbors and others
 - Knew anyone who had left the reservation or heard rumors?
- Growing up/Adulthood (If interviewees were adults when they came to Los Angeles)
 - Education: Facilities. What taught. Language taught in.
 - Employment
 - Changes in areas under Family Background

II. The Process of Relocation Itself

- Decision to relocate
 - How first heard about/what told
 - How came to make the decision
 - What appealed to them about relocating: factors influencing, expectations. Concerns?

- Conversations with family and other people about and viewpoints expressed
 - Any knowledge of/conversations with people who had already relocated? How did that influence decision?
 - BIA officials' input? Pressure put on them? If so, how?
- Process of Relocation
 - Preparations
 - Process of signing up: Where signed up? Why Los Angeles? What did they know about L.A.? Info given at that time?
 - Matters that had to be attended to: familial and community responsibilities, financing, and other logistical preparations, etc.
 - Who came with (family members, members of the community)
 - What brought with
 - Memories, if any, of the day they left
 - What they remember about the trip to Los Angeles
 - Year/season
 - Mode of transportation
 - Overnight accommodations
 - Sights they saw along the way/feelings about being off the reservation
 - Experience of discrimination? (e.g., in attempting to buy food or other services)
- Arrival
 - Description of what did when they first arrived/first days in L.A.
 - First impressions of the city itself
 - How accessed support services. What did they provide?
 - How got set up with housing.
 - Describe apartment/house. Number of rooms? Furniture? Appliances? How compared with home they had come from? With what they had expected?
 - Describe neighborhood: Where? Physical description? Who living there in terms of race, occupations, etc.? Other Native Americans nearby? Other Native Americans from their tribe or geographical region? Where shopped? Able to find food, clothes, other things they were used to?
 - How parents or how they found work. Describe the work. Vocational training or what skills had to learn? Pay? How got to

work each day. Relationships with co-workers? Their ethnicity and background? Racial tensions? Expectations around time, dress, etc., that were different than what used to

- Feelings
 - Feelings at first. Excited? Homesick? Ready to take on a new life? Regrets about coming here? Expectations for family and children? Rest of family's response to being here?
 - Best and worst parts about living in L.A.

III. Life after Relocation

- Years Immediately After
 - Changes in theirs/parents' employment: changes in jobs, opportunities for jobs (follow questions on employment above as appropriate) Other ways family got income. Extent to which children contributed
 - How accessed support services. What did they provide? Changing housing and domestic circumstances: moves, changes in composition of household (relatives moving in, spouses splitting up, etc.)
 - Relationships of parents and children: conflicts, differences in adaptation to city life, parents' advice or efforts to pass on values or ways of life, help/advice in coping with racism, expectations of children in education and work
 - Schooling: How felt about? How well did? What they enjoyed, what not. Ethnicity and backgrounds of fellow students? Conflict/discrimination? Parents' relationship to schools. Changes over time
 - Relationship with the BIA: Continued involvement? What kind of support?
 - Interactions with other institutions: Medical system. Police/legal.
 - Social life: Organizations belonged to: churches, etc. What did for recreation? Who with? Socializing with members of their own tribe? Other Native Americans? Non-Native Americans?
 - Contact with those back on the reservation/ visits to reservation? Family members returned or considered returning? Knew other people who returned?

- Adulthood

- Getting employment, moving out on own. What did in terms of education and employment, where lived. How did their circumstances compare to their parents? How were their lives different from the lives of their parents or grandparents?
 - Maintaining contacts with Native American communities: involvement in organizations, participation in gatherings, ceremonies, etc.
- Evaluation: How would your life have been different if you had stayed on the reservation?

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