

remote facility employed Pueblos from New Mexico, as well as Shoshones, Arapahos, Apaches, Sioux, and Utes. The labor foreman of the depot praised this multiracial work force in 1945: "I have never had an Indian in my office for disciplinary action."

Some of the new wartime employment opportunities for Native Americans were in cities far from the reservations, and thus thousands left their homes for places like Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, and Albuquerque. There they worked as machinists, steam fitters, and electricians in munitions factories, aircraft plants, shipyards, machine shops, and military installations. Less-skilled Indian workers also traveled long distances to take advantage of new job opportunities. Members of the Cheyenne and Blackfoot tribes moved to the Northwest and were employed as maintenance workers for the state highway systems. Chippewa tribesmen relocated to Minneapolis and St. Paul to work for the Northern Pacific Railroad on track gangs and construction crews. Indian women joined the ranks of "Rosie the Riveter" and found jobs in defense plants, not only as riveters but also as machinists and inspectors. Women from the Pueblo reservations received training as auto mechanics and worked hauling freight throughout the Southwest. By 1943 more than 12,000 Indian women had left their reservations for war-related work.

Native American defense workers, like their counterparts in the armed forces, faced relatively little discrimination during the war. Defense contractors, desperate for workers, were eager to hire Indians, and Indian workers compiled an enviable record as conscientious and hard-working employees. Relations between Indian and non-Indian workers also were generally free from serious problems, excepting the usual border-town prejudices encountered by Native workers at job sites near their reservations. One of the few reported instances of institutional discrimination was at the Fort Wingate ordnance depot in New Mexico where Indian workers received less pay than whites. The Navajo tribal council filed a formal complaint, but the inequity was not remedied. The local chapter of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) argued successfully that since Indians did not pay taxes on their land they were entitled to lower wages.

The new wartime employment opportunities proved to be a mixed blessing for Native Americans. The Bureau of Indian Affairs reported in 1945 that the average annual income of Indian families was \$1,200, three times what it had been in 1940. At some of the remote wartime job sites, the government provided housing and other social services

for Indian employees. But many workers who moved to the cities lived in substandard housing and faced difficult problems of adjustment. Absenteeism, delinquency, and public intoxication were signs of the strain experienced by many rural Indians who had to adjust to the new urban environment. The movement of workers to the cities also depleted the supply of manpower needed to tend the flocks and work the fields back on the reservation. "Few men were left to plow for the women, aged, and children," the All-Pueblo Council of New Mexico reported. On the Mescalero reservation, Apache women worked in the fields for the first time in their history.

Obviously the war was breaking down traditional patterns of life of Native Americans who stayed on the reservations as well as of those who moved away to work in the defense industries. For many who left, it was their first opportunity to be away from their home environment for an extended period of time. They experienced anew the forces of assimilation, conducting their lives in ways that conformed to that of the mainstream culture and compromising traditional values in order to contend with the outside world. And yet the disruptive experiences of the war also encouraged a greater cultural awareness and led many Native Americans to continue traditional lifestyles. Even in the crowded conditions of wartime boomtowns, Indian defense workers retained many of their old attitudes and folkways. Likewise, there was a pronounced strengthening of Indian traditionalism on the reservations even as outside influences were hastening the process of assimilation. Under the stress of war, traditional prayers and dances were performed that had not been practiced for many years. On the Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota in 1942, the Sioux danced their first battle Sun Dance in more than fifty years, praying for victory over the enemies of their country and for the safe return of the 2,000 tribesmen in the armed forces. War chants and prayers for victory also experienced a revival among the Navajo. As one observer commented in 1942, "War has aroused long dormant instincts in the First Americans of our Southwest."

In the midst of these conflicting pressures of traditionalism and assimilation, tribal leaders generally were willing and eager to contribute the resources of their reservations to the war effort. Tribal governments donated funds and bought war bonds, as did thousands of individual Native Americans. Secretary of the Interior Ickes announced in 1943 that Indians had purchased \$12.6 million in war bonds. "This," he observed, "equaled the per capita contribution of

any racial group including the whites.” Meanwhile, Crow leaders in Montana sent a telegram to President Roosevelt volunteering all of their reservation’s resources to the War Department with “no strings attached,” and the Klamath Indians voted to build an airfield on their Oregon reservation for the training of military pilots. Conflicts occasionally arose between tribal leaders and federal officials over the appropriation of Indian lands for bombing and gunnery ranges. When the army proposed acquiring 400,000 acres from the Tohono O’odham reservation, the chairman of the tribal council asked that alternative sites first be considered. On the Sioux reservation at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, several Indian families were ordered from their homes to make way for an aerial gunnery range for the army. “The War Department was ordering us out,” complained one bitter evacuee, “and the superintendent of the reservation said that we would be shot if we didn’t leave.”

The most controversial use of Indian resources during the war was the leasing of tens of thousands of acres of reservation lands for the internment of Japanese Americans. In 1942 Indian Affairs Commissioner John Collier suggested that the War Relocation Authority build internment camps on reservations for the “colonization of the Japanese.” Collier believed the camps would economically benefit the reservations, and he argued further that the Bureau of Indian Affairs was well suited to assist in the relocation of the Japanese Americans because of its “long experience in handling a minority group.” Ultimately two relocation camps were built on Indian lands—one along the Colorado River at Poston, Arizona, and the other on the Gila River reservation near Phoenix. Pima tribal leaders at Gila River expressed disappointment that they were not consulted earlier in the decision to locate a camp on their land, and Indians along the Colorado River were openly hostile to the idea of placing Japanese Americans in their midst. In any event, the Japanese Americans were only temporary residents on the reservations. At the war’s end, the internment camps were dismantled, and the reservations prepared for the return of tens of thousands of veterans and war workers.

Most of the returning Indian veterans received a hero’s welcome when they arrived back on their reservations. Parades, festivals, and public ceremonies celebrated their return. The tribal council of the Cheyenne River Sioux even voted to give each of its 350 veterans a twenty-five dollar bonus. In some instances, however, the veterans

were viewed with misgivings. Older residents feared that the returning soldiers had been contaminated by the spirits of enemy soldiers and must undergo purification rites. The Zunis, who had tried desperately to keep their young men out of the war, required every returning veteran to pass through a special ritual before being accepted back into tribal society. One Zuni mother greeted her returning son at Gallup but refused to touch him until he had been decontaminated. Elders and traditionalists also were concerned that those who were returning from the “War of the Whites” had been changed by their experiences and would disrupt tribal values and traditional practices.

The elders were correct in their assessment that the war had changed the returning veterans and defense workers. As anthropologist Peter Nabokov observed, “The Indian veterans who came back to their reservations after World War II were different men. They felt worldly, returning with awareness of lands and people beyond America. They had been brothers-in-arms with non-Indians, and had learned more about their own nation in the process.” It is difficult to generalize further about the experiences of those who returned to the reservations. Some returned permanently while others came to regard the reservations as halfway houses between their military service and peacetime assimilation. Many stayed on in the cities, hoping to find jobs in the booming postwar economy. Their numbers swelled the ranks of urban Indians from 24,000 in 1941 to 56,000 by 1950. When these new urbanites failed to find jobs, or were employed only temporarily, they often returned to the reservations until other opportunities became available.

The difficulties of postwar adjustment, for rural and urban Indians alike, were daunting. The war had disrupted the familiar patterns of their lives and changed their expectations in fundamental ways. Stories of maladjustment among Indian veterans became a familiar and tragic refrain in the national press. The story of Ira Hayes (Pima) came to symbolize for many Americans the failure of Indians to make a successful transition to civilian life. Hayes had gained national fame as one of the six marines who had raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi during the battle for Iwo Jima. A photograph of this dramatic scene was reproduced on millions of posters and became one of the most familiar images of the war. After the war, Hayes returned to the Pima reservation in Arizona. There he encountered a series of personal and social problems, having difficulty resuming his place in tribal society