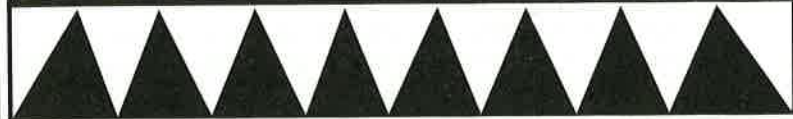


Like a Hurricane

*The Indian Movement
from Alcatraz
to Wounded Knee*



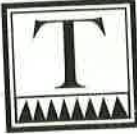
Paul Chaat Smith
&
Robert Allen Warrior



New York • New York

Chapter 3

Fancydance Revolution

he remarkable—if perplexing—story of Alcatraz was hardly the first moment of mid- to late-twentieth century Indian radicalism. The press missed the point, but nearly everything that was happening in the Bay begged for context about what had happened between the end of the Indian wars in the nineteenth century and the emergence of raggedy Indian students on a decrepit island prison in 1969.

In one way, in fact, the only new thing about Alcatraz *was* the press attention. The Bay Area, after all, had an organized Indian community before the takeover, even if Oakes and others on the island disagreed with the politics of its leaders. Island leaders appealed for support from established national Indian political organizations that could draw several times as many people to their meetings than the failed Christmas meeting on Alcatraz had, even if most Indian people didn't have a clue as to what those groups were doing. And some of the strongest supporters of the occupation were leaders of urban radical Indian groups that were publishing newsletters and attending national conferences years before the island became a matter of national concern.

Fancydance Revolution

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The occupation was a fulcrum, a turning point, but it wasn't the genesis or ground zero. And what had gone on in the years previous to Alcatraz and the forty-two months of intense activism that followed is at least as important as what happened during or after—especially since a number of people had predicted that the Indian world was going to erupt in almost exactly the way in which it did.

Clyde Warrior was one of those who had seen it coming.

"What it amounts to," Warrior said in 1966, "is that the Indians are getting fed up. It's just a question of how long the Indians are going to put up with being took every day." In a moment of prescience, he spoke of the situation Indian people found themselves in vis à vis American society, "How long will Indians tolerate this? Negroes, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans could only take colonialism, exploitation, and abuse for so long; then they did something about it. Will American Indians wait until their reservations and lands are eroded away, and they are forced into urban ghettos, before they start raising hell with their oppressors?"

People like Warrior had seen the wave coming in spite of the fact that among national Indian organizations the idea was still current that Indian people distinguished themselves from other 1960s groups by patience as opposed to unrest, level-headedness as opposed to riotousness. Outsiders might see Indians as passive in the midst of societal upheaval. But many within groups like the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest and most established of Indian advocacy groups, wore their steadiness as a badge of pride, a symbol of moral fortitude in the midst of anti-Vietnam rallies and race riots that increasingly seemed to them protest for protest's sake. Indeed, as late as 1967 the National Congress flew a large banner proclaiming "Indians Don't Demonstrate."

But to those who had a finger on the pulse of Indian country, that was wishful thinking. Since the late 1950s, student groups had been working on campuses and in communities, producing cohorts of college-educated tribal officials and administrators. At the same time, traditional people and local poor and working-class people had been getting to know each other around the country and staging courageous, if often ignored, protests. Indians in the cities were organizing themselves into impressive organizations that could swing

deals with city halls. War on Poverty money was making new programs possible on reservations.

Threatened by federal policymakers—like 1950s BIA Commissioner Dillon Myer, who wanted to terminate the relationship between American Indians and the United States—national Indian organizations went through purges that opened up space for new leaders and fresh ideas. The United States itself was shifting under the pressure of students, minority groups, women, and others, to make the U.S. a fundamentally different place to live.

The changes were anything but subtle, but the broad base of Indian people saw evidence of them in the presence of new offices in their communities, more young people from their families having educational opportunities, and increased energy among some people for community organizing. When the press painted Alcatraz as the story of the Indian world suddenly and unexpectedly waking up, joining the rest of the armies of the discontented in protest politics, they chose flashier copy over a reasoned recitation of just how much struggle, how much sacrifice, and how much rock-hard tenacity had gone into trying to make things better for Indian people long before Indians of All Tribes set foot on Alcatraz.

Many could lay claim to their stake in being part of the process of change. Various individuals had transformed national organizations, turning them from groups concerned only about the bottom lines of federal budgets into groups whose leaders grappled with fundamental questions of the future of Indian communities. Others could point out how their administration of federal programs created new opportunities for Indian people to access funds for community-based education and economic development. Still others could display the physical scars from standing against racist thuggery in local protests that most people never heard of.

New energy among Indian young people cut across all the developments. The story of Ponca activist Clyde Warrior, with little doubt the most compelling and important leader of this emerging youth movement, qualifies as the top story the press missed in the years leading up to Alcatraz and demonstrates that press attention and significance are not always the same thing.

As a teenager in the late 1950s, Clyde Warrior posed for a souvenir postcard that featured him and another young Indian man in their powwow clothes. In the colorized black-and-white postcard, the slim, slightly smiling Warrior is standing on small boulders on the Oklahoma prairie. He is wearing an eagle feather bustle, an intricately beaded belt, beaded armbands and wristbands, a blue broadcloth breechclout with colorful flower embroidery, a bone chestpiece, and bells around his calves. On his head he has a beaver quill roach with an eagle feather standing atop it. In his left hand he carries a long, beaded dance stick; in his right, an eagle feather fan.

At powwows and tribal dances, he had earned the right to wear it all. Often he found himself in the middle of victory photos as the fancydance champion. One photo shows him downing a Nehi as he struts about the powwow arena in full dress. By many accounts of those who saw him dance in his prime, he could be a formidable fancydancing presence, one of the rare people who could swing his dance sticks, his bustle, and the rest of himself in fluid motion, spinning himself into a blur of light-stepping color.

He would later work at Disneyland as a costumed Indian character paddling a canoe, but his background and upbringing were at odds with the simulated consumerism of the happiest place on earth. As the sixties wore on and he heard leaders talk of alienation, cultural revival, and renewed pride in Indianness, Warrior would bristle at such language. How, he asked, can you revive something that is living and breathing? Indian people, perhaps even most of them, needed renewal, but Indian culture?

Born in 1939 near Ponca City, Oklahoma, his grandparents had raised him in the bosom of Ponca language and culture. A relatively small group living in north-central Oklahoma, many Poncas have clung tenaciously to their way of life—elaborate dances and ceremonies, a complex system of clans and extended families, and ancient values, such as “visiting” relatives and people from other tribes for days on end. In the nineteenth century the Poncas had been batted around the Plains by a pernicious U.S. government and their struggle for justice was, for a brief time, a *cause celebre* among the literati and genteel liberals of Boston and Philadelphia.

In spite of their relatively small numbers and endemic economic

poverty (or maybe because of them), Poncas have produced some of the best fancydancers and southern Plains drum singers. Various Buffaloheads, Rough Faces, Warriors, and Camps have sung and danced their way into the histories and legends of powwows and ceremonies around the country. Clyde Warrior was among the leading singers and dancers of his generation.

Typical of Ponca people, he was comfortable and respectful no matter what tribal tradition he found himself in as he wandered the country, first as a powwow dancer, then a political organizer. Without passing judgment, he learned the protocol of ceremonies, the words and music of songs, the meaning of symbols. And unlike an invasive anthropologist, he wasn't in the business of collecting anyone's tribal secrets. But whatever people were free to share, he loved. He was an always-growing walking library of intertribal songs and stories.

Given his profile, Clyde Warrior's path should have been college, a job as a tribal administrator, then later a career as an elected tribal official and high-level government employee. Instead, like many of his generation, he began questioning the assumptions behind that appointed path.

Central to the emergence of this new generation was a summer program that brought students from around the country to the University of Colorado at Boulder to learn about the state of Indian affairs. For three weeks in the summer, the young Indian students lived in dorms and attended classes taught by anthropologists, BIA administrators, and others who knew the inside story of the way the United States conducted its business with Indians. At night and on the weekends, they would head off to one of the canyons near Boulder and "49," the term for backroads parties where young people sang social songs like "You know that I love you sweetheart, but every time I turn around I see you with another one. You know god-damn well that I love you. Way yah he, way yah he." The unwritten rule at the workshops was, stay out as late as you want. Just don't miss class.

Since Warrior traveled to powwows in faraway states, he had seen a lot of the Indian world. But it wasn't until the workshops and his involvement with the Southwest Regional Indian Youth Council—a group that started in New Mexico in 1955 with the purpose of drawing young people from various tribes together for educational

activities, that he started talking much about that world in terms of where it was headed socially, politically, and economically.

One of his earliest existing writings is an essay titled, "What I Would Like My Community to Look Like in Ten Years." His first priority was in the area of Indian-white relationships at the local level, where "the white man tends to rate the Indian as being lazy and worthless." Stemming from that, according to the young Warrior, was the root problem. "The Indian," he writes, "seems to make it a point to act and be exactly as he's rated." Yes, Warrior argued in this essay and other forums, Indian people needed economic development programs, educational opportunities, and technical assistance, but not until Indian people changed their view of themselves and took pride in who they were would any form of assistance make any real difference.

When Warrior made statements about Indian pride around other students, many of them started getting uncomfortable. They had been bombarded with the opposite message their entire lives; being Indian was a problem, life in Indian communities was backward, copying whites as closely as possible was the only way out of poverty. For this handsome, articulate, twenty-year-old Ponca to stand up and say something different was nothing short of revolutionary for many of them. Some considered him an arrogant blowhard. Others secretly agreed with Warrior and admired his boldness. Still others whispered in horror that Warrior and his kind were taking Indian people in the direction of those southern Negro agitators. Most importantly, though, Warrior found people, including Mel Thom, and Bruce Wilkie, who shared many of his opinions, even if their styles were less confrontational.

As Browning Pipestem, an Osage and Oto who became friends with Warrior at the workshops, says, Warrior exploded the notion that "Indian people must change." That notion and its expression in political ideologies and government policies had been around for centuries. The effect on the self-image of many, perhaps nearly all, Indian people, was that, in Pipestem's words, "People had made peace with a lot of untruths and plugged the gaps with half-truths." What Warrior did was to "take that negative image of Indians and shove it down people's throats."

One example of that comes from Warrior's bid to become presi-

dent of the Southwest Regional Indian Youth Council in 1960. His opponent's campaign speech stressed the standard lines of the day—the need for education and professionalism. Warrior mounted the podium, pushed his cowboy hat back on his head, and rolled up his sleeves. Pointing to his bare arms, his speech consisted of two lines: "This is all I have to offer. The sewage of Europe does not flow through these veins."

Warrior won the election that day in a landslide, but making significant inroads into the scarred psyche of Indian youth over the long haul would prove to be more difficult. "It's painful," as Pipestem put it, "to have to admit you'd given yourself over to self-hatred." Plenty of Indian people, especially those most invested in the status quo, rejected the message and the messenger. "They hated him," says Pipestem, "because they knew he was right."

But no amount of rejection deterred Warrior. Frustrating as it may have been, he loved Indian people too much to turn his back on them. That love was as much for the most down-and-out, denigrated Indians who lived on the edges of society as it was for the most honorable traditional people. Within his own family and community, he intimately knew the full range. For the many young people who had nagging doubts and insecurities, Warrior's embrace of them, as they were, made all the difference.

By the end of the summer of 1961, the growing group of vocal discontents was in the middle of a whirlwind that was heading far beyond the confines of student workshops. That summer, students from Boulder participated in a national conference on Indian affairs in Chicago. Later in the summer, in Gallup, New Mexico, they met again and formed the National Indian Youth Council. Clyde emerged as one of the leaders of the small group.

After the meeting was over, Mel Thom, another student leader from the workshops who would later earn the nickname Mao-Tse Thom, wrote a statement of purpose. In it, he says, "With the belief that we can serve a realistic need, the National Indian Youth Council dedicated its activities and projects to attaining a greater future for our Indian people. We believe in a future with high principles derived from the values and beliefs of our ancestors." It sounds inno-

cent enough—an organization of young people concerned for their own future.

It represented, though, a major change. For two decades, only one viable national Indian-run organization, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), had existed. Founded in Denver in 1944 by tribal leaders and former employees of the BIA, the NCAI became the sole intertribal rallying point from which Indians could engage Congress and the federal bureaucracy on an ongoing basis. In starting the Youth Council, Thom, Warrior, and the others were breaking ranks with the way things were done. And at a time when young people of all sorts outside the Indian world were making their voices heard, the creation of the NIYC was a major event for those in the world of Indian affairs. Suddenly, a loose cannon had appeared. What would it do?

For its first two years, the answer was, attend more meetings and workshops. Warrior and Thom, whose more deliberate, consensus-centered approach to leadership complemented the Ponca leader's abrasiveness, started sitting on the boards of groups like the United Scholarship Service, a group in Denver that provided scholarships to Indian and Mexican American college students. But the steady flow of meetings and conferences was not exactly the earthmoving stuff of revolutionaries.

If they didn't immediately make fundamental changes in the Indian establishment, they did commit themselves to doing things differently in their own fledgling organization. For instance, the Youth Council decided to hold its annual meetings on Indian reservations rather than in convention hotels in major cities, as was the custom of the NCAI. And they ended every meeting by gathering around a drum and sharing tribal songs. The leader of those songs was often Clyde Warrior, who astonished many in the NIYC with his memory for songs from all over.

By the time the group met for its annual summer meeting at Fort Duchesne, Utah, in 1963, Warrior was ready for the NIYC to do more than attend board meetings. He brought actor and civil rights activist Marlon Brando to the meeting. Fresh from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington, Brando advocated the Youth Council's involvement in civil rights protests. Not many people thought doing so

was such a good idea. What was the use, after all, of becoming a small part of an established movement? Negro causes carried little credibility in most Indian communities. Still, some people liked the idea of public protest.

Clyde Warrior was the loudest advocate for moving away from educational and organizational initiatives to direct, local action. Mel Thom preferred a more measured, waiting-for-a-consensus approach, and many in the NIYC agreed with him. The group never moved without consensus, so they tabled the idea of taking up direct action.

But at the group's winter meeting, those who were timid stayed away and Clyde Warrior won the day. Hank Adams, a young Sioux/Assiniboiné who had grown up on the Quinalt Reservation in Washington, was also enthusiastic about direct action, and headed home with Bruce Wilkie, one of the original members of the NIYC, to help organize a protest.

The issue they targeted for their protest was a straightforward one, as was the plan. For a century, fishing tribes along rivers in the Pacific Northwest had battled Washington state and Oregon over their rights to fish, in the words of treaties they had signed in the nineteenth century, in "usual and accustomed" places. In spite of the treaties, Indians who fished found themselves harassed, often arrested, for dropping their nets and catching fish.

Hank Adams, who would carry the NIYC's organizing torch at the fishing protests was, at nineteen years of age, already a seasoned and in some ways disillusioned activist. At age fourteen in 1958, he had watched the state government in Washington and the federal government in Washington, D.C. foist Public Law 280 on the Quinalt Reservation. The law, which Congress passed in 1953 as a companion to its termination legislation, made it possible for states to assume jurisdiction on Indian land. Before the new law, Indian groups were by and large responsible for policing their own people on their own lands, which gave them a measure of protection against racist police and policies in the states surrounding them. Adam lived with his mother and his Quinalt stepfather in one of the communities the law affected.

Adams, like others, was outraged when the state imposed itself

and its rules on a community that had been successfully dealing with its own problems. The arbitrary enactment of the statute—over the strenuous, near unanimous objection of the Quinalts—saw the county, where alcohol had been legally prohibited under tribal jurisdiction, inundated with alcohol readily available to young people. Soon the communities on the reservation were in a form of communal chaos and had only limited means by which to intervene in their mounting social problems. Suicide among the growing group of alcoholic youth became epidemic.

Though still a teenager, Adams was one of those who sought to intervene. He was part of press conferences and lobbying efforts. Regional and national Indian leaders, impressed with his work, began grooming him for leadership.

By 1963, though, he had vast doubts about any approach to changing the Indian situation centered in the established Indian organizations. He attended his first meeting of the National Indian Youth Council that summer and sided with Clyde Warrior and those who favored more radical tactics. In the fall, as a sophomore at the University of Washington, he decided to give up on the standard approach of going to school, gaining skills, and returning to his home community to help build something. He wanted something different, and dropped out of college the same month John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

These events were propelling him into working with the Youth Council. After the December meeting in Denver, he worked as a liaison between the Youth Council, the local people, and Marlon Brando in early 1964 as they sought to shine the light of national attention on Indians who fished the rivers of the Pacific Northwest under treaty rights from a century before.

The Youth Council and Brando arrived in the Pacific Northwest in March of 1964. The plan was for Brando to get into an Indian fishing boat in full view of state fishing wardens and national media and commence fishing. In spite of complications, the protest, which the media dubbed a "fish-in," went well. Although wardens apprehended Brando, but they soon released him, fearing his celebrity would add to the media tide rising higher for the Indian cause, the action surpassed the organizers' expectations.

More fish-ins happened over the years, though the national

media usually showed up only when a star like African-American comedian and activist Dick Gregory or Jane Fonda joined in. Some local people were dissatisfied with the Youth Council's involvement from the start, accusing NIYC of being college kids in sports jackets who showed up merely to make themselves look good. The presence of the charismatic, media-savvy Youth Council had certainly ruffled the feathers of some local activist leaders. But Clyde Warrior's vision—supported by a growing cast of like-minded people such as Hank Adams—of a Youth Council engaged in actions in the same vein looked to be the shape of things to come.

Though the National Indian Youth Council was the cutting edge of national Indian politics in the mid-1960s, plenty of other factors were coming into play as well. At about the same time as the fish-ins, for instance, the federal government was deciding where Indians fit into the Office for Economic Opportunity (OEO), the bureaucracy set up to administer the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty programs. National Indian advocacy groups that feared Indian communities would be overlooked as state agencies divvied up the new monies succeeded in getting the bureaucracy to set aside a portion of the program specifically for Indians.

Almost overnight, the increasing numbers of educated young Indian people emerging from American colleges had opportunities to return to their communities as directors of OEO programs. Within a few years, new educational, social, and health programs began popping up with regularity in Indian communities.

The National Congress of American Indians, the major national Indian organization, was also undergoing wholesale changes. Always understaffed and underfunded, NCAI's effectiveness varied based on the enthusiasm and purse strings of its member tribes. In 1964, the group swept out an older generation of leaders in favor of younger people. Its membership chose Vine Deloria, Jr., a thirty-year-old Standing Rock Sioux as NCAI's new executive director.

Deloria, who had grown up the son of a Sioux missionary on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, had attended prep school, college, and seminary. Foregoing a career in the ministry, he worked in the early sixties at the United Scholarship Service, a group in

Denver that supported American Indian and Mexican American college students. Before leaving for the NCAI, Deloria had developed a program through which Indian students attended east coast prep schools like the one he had graduated from. Like Warrior, Thom, and Adams, he added a particularly intellectual bent to a milieu dominated by organizational types up to that point.

While the world of Indian organizations was changing, impressive numbers of younger people were running for and winning election as tribal officials, replacing older, more conservative leaders. In a 1966 interview, Deloria was able to list over a dozen talented young people who had recently assumed leadership positions in their tribes. The youth movement in Indian affairs effected changes that would alter the Indian world for decades to come.

Beyond the youth movement, in the harder-to-find nooks and crannies of the Indian world, local people like the ones in the Pacific Northwest were coming together and making a network of their own outside the official channels of the BIA, NCAI, or NIYC. They stayed in touch through mimeographed newsletters, often providing more support for one another across hundreds of miles than the bureaucrats in the BIA offices did just steps from their homes. The reform-minded Deloria, when he discovered this network of people in the mid-1960s, encouraged them to become part of the NCAI and mix things up among the more conservative elements in the organization.

Reaves and Clydia Nahwooksy predated the youth movement by a few years, but their lives are an example of how the once constricted and insular bureaucracy affecting Indians changed over the course of the decade, offering new possibilities for activists determined to force change on seemingly immovable agencies. They had arrived in Washington, D.C. from Oklahoma in 1961, feeling something like their ancestors before them. "You meet the Great White Father on his own ground," Clydia had thought as they considered the move, "and maybe . . . you'd change things."

In certain ways they were old-fashioned. Reaves, Comanche and Kiowa, grew up speaking Comanche near Lawton, Oklahoma. Clydia's Cherokee folks were people who isolated themselves from

modern tribal governments and federal programs in eastern Oklahoma. But the Nahwooksys hadn't come to Washington decked out in tribal vestments ready to deliver impassioned pleas for justice in the manner of a nineteenth-century tribal delegation. They were, instead, a highly modern couple. Reaves's Baptist parents had expected both he and his sister to go to college and worked hard to make that possible. He had done a tour of duty in Korea, so had seen something of the world outside of rural Oklahoma.

They met each other as students at the University of Oklahoma in 1952, after Reaves returned from the service. Within three months, they were married. Reaves graduated in 1955 and they went to Fort Sill, near where Reaves had grown up, so he could work in the Indian school there as a teacher and athletics coach. By returning home to work with Indian kids, they hoped to change some of the experiences they had had growing up.

Many were the times, for instance, when as a young man Reaves would accompany his grandparents to the BIA agency, where he would translate for them from Comanche as they were put into the position of having to virtually beg for their own money. That process of Indian people being able to access more than a few hundred dollars of their own money was often a long-drawn-out nightmare of red tape in which the local agency superintendent, the Secretary of the Interior, and every bureaucrat in the chain of command between them would have to sign off.

Reaves had also watched as his father worked hard to farm 320 acres on two tracts of land. He had to take out a large loan to get the operation running. In spite of being "very frugal," the family struggled. Then, in the early 1940s, they were blessed with a bumper crop. Reaves's father came home one evening bubbling with excitement. In one swoop, he could pay off the loan. "Tomorrow," he said, "we will go up there and slap this [money] down and tear our note up."

The next morning, though, before they could get to the agency, a car pulled up to the house. Bureaucrats—including some of their Indian relatives—piled out of the car, came to the door, and condescendingly said they knew that things weren't going well and the family was struggling, but that the Nahwooksys were going to have to pay off the loan anyway and they were there to work out arrange-

ments. They didn't stop to ask how things were going. They didn't entertain the possibility that maybe Reaves's father was taking care of the problem himself. They just barged in and assumed control.

Reaves's father told them, "I will pay it when I good and well please! It's not due yet," and soon asked them to leave. The next day, he paid off the note on his own terms.

Clydia's family stayed away from that kind of involvement with the local, federal machinery that attempted to run the lives of Indians. But she had still seen her share of bureaucratic indifference. Late one night, she went to an Indian hospital with a sick child, only to find the hospital waiting room full of sick children. A doctor was in attendance, but he looked at the room full of sick children and said, "Well I don't have time to fool with these people right now. I have to go home and eat dinner." He walked right out through the waiting room.

These and a thousand other incidents drove the young couple to ask themselves, "How can this change? How can we have some, or how could anyone have some effect on what's going on?" When the opportunity arose for Reaves to enter a federal management training program in D.C. in 1961, they decided to seek answers to their questions at the source of U.S. government power. Over the next ten years, they would be a part of a process of significant change in the way that Washington, D.C. conducted its business with Indians.

Not long after his management training program was over, Reaves used some of his new connections to get a federal position working with the Shoshone and Bannock tribes at Fort Hall, Idaho. For four years, he and Clydia worked at Fort Hall to make things better from within the BIA. But they increasingly believed that changing things was not simply a matter of better people doing a better job. The Bureau, most people agreed, was an institution gone terribly awry. Instead of managing forests or regulating the railroads, Bureau employees micromanaged the lives of Indians. Reports on the endemic structural failings of the Bureau had issued forth in a steady stream since before the Great Depression. The findings were consistent across decades: The treatment of Indian people at the hands of the federal bureaucracy was a moral outrage that could only be addressed by the most drastic of means. But perhaps the biggest

problem with the exposés and the attempted reforms that came from them was that, finally, the Bureau was holding no smoking gun. No reformer could point to a single straightforward fact, or small set of facts, that they could change.

The problems were more endemic; the Bureau was at its roots a federal agency. Those employees who weren't political appointees were civil servants and, as such, couldn't be gotten rid of. Outrage over the system occasionally would register with members of Congress, other Washington politicians, members of various Indian reform organizations, and sometimes even with the national public. But the outrage never lasted long enough. The numerous commission and task force reports gathered dust on shelves.

Meanwhile, it was always the hundreds upon hundreds of stories of neglect and humiliation that revealed how real people in real time experienced the Bureau and its agencies. The major crimes of the Bureau, in fact, were small potatoes in comparison to the cumulative effect on Indian communities of the message from the U.S. government that said they couldn't manage their own affairs without the bungled and inept assistance of federal bureaucrats.

Some Indian people implicitly concurred with that sentiment, preferring a system that didn't work to the possibility of shutting down the Bureau and ushering in termination of their relationship to the federal government. As the disastrous effects of the termination policy set out by Congress in the 1950s were playing themselves out in select locations around Indian country, few were willing to undo the Bureau without having something concrete to put in its place. Whatever else the system was, Indian people could figure out who was in charge, and navigate the red tape.

Given the Bureau's shortcomings, in 1967, when Reaves Nahwooksy was offered a position back in Washington with a civil rights project of the Public Health Service—a government office outside the BIA—he got out of the Bureau for good. The Nahwooksys wouldn't work within the system, but they wouldn't work completely outside of it either.

The Washington scene the couple returned to was changing from what it had been in 1964 when they had left for Idaho. For one thing, more and more Indian people were working in the capital due to the

proliferation of War on Poverty programs targeting Indians. Clydia, in spite of still shouldering the majority of the responsibilities to her family after their return to D.C., took a position with the Smithsonian, hoping to find out what she could of the institution's resources and how she might make them available to Indian people. Reaves, not long after taking his new position in the Public Health Service, was detailed to Vice President Humphrey's National Council on Indian Opportunity (NCIO), which started not long after the Nahwooksys returned to Washington. The Council was to coordinate an administration response to the now burgeoning activity in Indian communities.

One of Reaves's first responsibilities was to help make arrangements for a series of hearings the NCIO planned in order to hear about the problems and concerns of Indian people living in cities. By that time, nearly half of American Indians were living in the cities. While some were recent arrivals from the Bureau's relocation programs, others had been around for generations.

As Reaves met the urban leaders in setting up the hearings, he noticed that "These guys were really confronters and they were hurting and searching for ways to become effective." He met them officially and unofficially in the process and was impressed, since, "You began to see what was going to form and the people were mad! They had to be responded to."

When Republicans came to power in January, 1969, Reaves was out of a job with the National Council on Indian Opportunity. He returned to the Public Health Service, surveyed the landscape, and decided to throw his lot with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As colleagues in other agencies in the capital were doing, he worked to establish an "Indian Desk" at the department, a central place within the bureaucracy from which to coordinate federal housing programs for Indians. Though he didn't have the same amount of clout as the Commissioner for Indian Affairs, he did have access to people in high places.

Old-liners in the BIA normally fought against such separate offices as the emerging "Indian Desks," arguing that non-Bureau programs would siphon money away from the BIA's budget. In fact, though, the Indian desks prompted new initiatives and new sources

for funding without making an appreciable impact on the Bureau's budget.

The Indian desks were a small, mostly unnoticed change in the larger scheme of things. But they made a difference. With people like Reaves and Clydia Nahwooksy in key positions, Indian people could enjoy the same informal back-and-forth that others who dealt with the federal bureaucracy enjoyed. For once, when Indians testified before representatives of a federal agency, an Indian face looked back at them. And afterwards, in the more informal setting of a hotel corridor, they could communicate with another Indian about what the people they represented really needed.

The Nahwooksy home in suburban Virginia was a place where tribal and organizational leaders could stay while they visited the capital. Often strapped for cash, elected tribal officials could find a little slice of home as they confronted whatever bureaucrats they were in town to see. Reaves and Clydia gleaned from their guests a sense of what was happening at the local level. And Clydia, in her position at the Smithsonian, would sometimes escort her guests to the vaults of the museum, standing by as older people wept openly as they saw sacred objects and artifacts that had been gone from the lives of their communities for over a century.

A few years later, in the firestorm of activism that was jump-started by Alcatraz, the Nahwooks and other Indians in the capital would play host to a much larger, much angrier crowd.

Meanwhile, half a continent away from D.C., Clyde Warrior watched as his fame and constituency grew, especially among American Indian college students. In December of 1964, he published an essay in the NIYC's newsletter called "Which One Are You?: Five Types of Young Indians" that laid out much of his ideology.

Those types were, according to Warrior: the Slob or Hood (the young person who lives up to their problematic status as defined by society); the Joker (the young person who makes a fool of him or herself in front of non-Indians in hopes of gaining acceptance from them); Redskin "White Noser" or Sell-Out (someone who ingratiate him or herself to non-Indians and accepts the values of non-Indian society); the Ultra-Pseudo Indian (one who is proud in a general way

of being an Indian person, but who doesn't have a knowledge or experiential base in Indian community life, so tries to copy popular and academic images of Indianness); and the Angry Young Nationalist (one who rejects American society, but is too ideological and abstract to have an impact among local Indian people).

The fifth group, according to Warrior's essay, comes closest to being "the ideal Indian," but he argues that something to connect young Indian anger to people in local communities was necessary for real social change to occur. "It appears that what is needed," he says, "is genuine, contemporary, creative thinking, democratic leadership to set guidelines, cues, and goals for the average Indian. The guidelines and cues have to be *based on true Indian philosophy geared to modern times.*"

That, in a nutshell, was the challenge. Warrior could give voice to it. He could embody it. After all, here was a man with a rare gift and passion for being a culture-bearer who kept track of what was happening in the decolonizing world of Africa and Asia. His first language was Ponca and he was an avid reader of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and his favorite, *The New Republic*. What would be for most people vivid contradictions were for Clyde Warrior just a day in the life of what he believed the shape of the future must be.

But over the next two years, he would find his ideas pushed increasingly to the margins. He remained a central figure in national Indian politics, but by 1966 it was clear that attention-grabbing protests like the ones in the Pacific Northwest were not going to happen on a broad scale anytime soon. His role became that of being the outrageous alternative that set the table for more moderate, pragmatic proposals. Increasingly, Warrior, Hank Adams, and Mel Thom were among the few who remained committed to a political program that called into question fundamental realities in Indian-white relations. People would still talk about radical ideas, but when it came to action, the vast majority were content to steer a moderate course.

By then, Warrior was a different man than the slim twenty-year-old who had shocked the sensibilities of other students at the Boulder workshops. In 1965 he married Della Hopper, an Oto-Missouria woman he had gone to college with. They had one daughter and would soon add another. They took up residence in Tahlequah, Ok-

lahoma, the capital of the Cherokees, where Clyde worked as a field researcher for Murray Wax, a white anthropologist from the University of Kansas who had spent his career working in Indian programs like the Boulder workshops.

Warrior's weight had increased dramatically since his slender workshop days. The culprit, most people agreed, was alcohol. He was a drinker of legendary proportions among a group of people in Indian affairs—both Indians and whites—for whom drinking was a constant theme. Stories abound of board meetings where board members would close down bars then begin work the next morning through the hazy eyes of hangovers. Warrior's Tahlequah house, as well, was a place where young people gravitated to party late into the night as their host threw back I. W. Harper or Jim Beam while expounding on his latest ideas. The physical toll was immense. Warrior's face grew rounder and puffy. His increased girth and increased family responsibilities led him to hang up his fancydance clothes and put on the outfit for the straight dance, a slower event.

His life remained a steady flow of board meetings, conferences, and college speeches, but the possibility that the NIYC would be a major agent of change became more and more remote. In an interview in 1966, Warrior commented on the irony of how the NIYC had been such a force when it was founded five years before, but was increasingly little more than a training ground for jobs in the status quo National Congress of American Indians, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Office of Economic Opportunity programs.

Still, he predicted that the growing instability of mainstream America would continue to foster unrest. And, Warrior predicted new groups would pick up the mantle of radicalism from NIYC. As he told a predominantly white college audience in 1966, "I . . . see an alliance between these young educated nationalists with the old traditionalists who are still very nationalistic in their own thinking. And when this alliance comes about," he warned, "there are several towns . . . in this country that better look out, . . . because it is liable to make the mau-mau of Africa look like a Sunday school meeting."

When he resigned from the NIYC, the group offered him its presidency, a position that various of the founders had filled over the years. Warrior relented, but he could do little to change the group's direction. Testifying for the group before a presidential advisory

commission in February of 1967, he presented perhaps his most mature articulation of the challenges Indian people faced in confronting the future. The basic problem, he pointed out, was that Indian people "are not free. We do not make choices. . . . Choices and decisions are made by federal administrators, bureaucrats, and their 'yes men,' euphemistically called tribal governments."

He dismissed the efforts of the War on Poverty programs that were springing up in Indian communities. "We know that no one is arguing that the dispossessed, the poor, be given any control over their own destiny." To him, those programs Washington bureaucrats considered to be working the best were those that created the least "static," when what was really needed were programs that inspired local people to forcefully and even clumsily take control of their own futures.

That, in the end, was the nub for Clyde Warrior—Indian people helping themselves and, perhaps most importantly, learning from their own mistakes. "We must be free in the most literal sense of the word," he told the commission, "not sold or coerced into accepting programs for our own good, not of our own making or choice. Too much of what passes for 'grassroots democracy' on the American scene is really a slick job of salesmanship. It is not hard for sophisticated administrators to sell tinsel and glitter to simple people—programs which are not theirs, which they do not understand and which cannot but ultimately fail and contribute to already strong feelings of inadequacy."

Warrior's solution was much the same as he had proposed in his "What I Would Like My Community to Look Like in Ten Years" essay from years before. Indian people must, at whatever slow speed necessary, move from underneath the cloud of dependency and learn to take care of their own affairs. Only in that act of imagining themselves the authors of their own futures, Warrior argued, could Indian people assume the mantle of responsibility for themselves, their children, and their grandchildren. "Programs," he said, "must be Indian creations, Indian choices, Indian experiences. Even the failures must be Indian experiences because only then will Indians understand why a program failed and not blame themselves for some personal inadequacy."

Frustratingly to him, even his own comrades in the NIYC were

less and less willing to listen to his solutions as various governmental War on Poverty programs expanded. But Warrior, who returned to the Boulder workshop each year as an instructor, could look to the new groups of young people coming up and hope that they would gain from the collective wisdom of his generation.

In spite of the setbacks, he held on to a hope for change. His passion for politics and his abiding love for Ponca and other Indian culture were seamlessly woven into his personality. And as a father, he did what he could to raise his daughters with the same sort of Ponca traditions that he had had. He "paid" for both of his daughters (initiated them into the traditional ways of the Poncas) when they were both young. The youngest, in fact, was still on her infant's cradleboard when she went through the ceremony.

Murray Wax, the anthropologist who hired Clyde Warrior to work in Tahlequah, hadn't crossed paths with his field-worker for several months when he saw him in the fall of 1967. Warrior's work on the project in Tahlequah had been a disappointment to the academic. Wax chalked up Warrior's lack of productivity to his packed schedule and his drinking. In October of 1967, though, Wax saw a much different Clyde Warrior. Through the ministrations of Tillie Walker, a Mandan woman who had been sort of a big sister to the NIYC, and others, Clyde had entered an alcohol rehab center in Los Angeles. It was one of two attempts at sobering up, the other being at a program in Colorado.

The program in Los Angeles used techniques such as berating the families of its clients and shouting them down into submission; methods that were so against the fabric of Warrior's being that he didn't last long. But he resolved to quit drinking in spite of the bad experience. As Wax said in a letter to Walker, "Clyde is back, looking chipper and healthy. . . . For the time being he is off liquor and making a genuine try at graduate studies." And, he added, "the man is indestructible."

That's what many of his friends and admirers had thought, too. But over the course of the next eight months, Clyde Warrior would prove them wrong, as whatever resolve he had had melted away at conferences and board meetings. He fell off the wagon, and he fell

hard. He continued to balloon as his liver failed. His doctor warned him that his next drink might be his last.

In the spring of 1968, Clyde's mother, Anita Collins, died in Oklahoma and the family moved back to Ponca City to be with his grandparents. When Browning Pipestem arrived to pay his respects, Clyde, who had adored his mother, told him, "I hurt all over."

That summer, Della was to run a six-week OEO kindergarten program on the Navajo Reservation. After arriving there, Clyde took seriously ill. They headed back to Oklahoma. In Enid, Oklahoma, where Della's folks were living, Clyde's liver failed. Though he was not in pain, he was failing fast. Della took him to a hospital, where in just a few days, he died. He was a month shy of turning twenty-nine.

For four days before his funeral, the haunting, mourning voices of Ponca singers singing tribal family songs to the steady beat of a drum rose in the Oklahoma summer night. The mourners ate and sang together at breakfast, dinner, supper, and a late lunch after the songs at night. A local couple the family had called on cooked for everyone who showed up. The funeral took place in the heat of July, south of Ponca City at Warrior's grandparents' place.

The fourth day, Della dressed their two daughters and put on the white blouse and blue suit that her mother had brought over from Enid. In a daze, she received the several hundred people from around the state and around the country who had come to pay their respects. She reminded some of Jackie Kennedy and Coretta Scott King.

Area Indian people who had known Clyde Warrior as a powwow dancer and singer of tribal songs joined in with those who had known him as a political leader, in finding places to sit for dinner under cottonwood trees or in a plowed field at his grandparents' house. Many of the Poncas and other locals, accustomed to such feasts, brought their own folding chairs, utensils, and TV trays. Warrior's male relatives served the food to the gathering. They served corn soup, pork and hominy, chicken, fry bread, coffee, Kool-Aid, cakes, pies, canned peaches, apples, and oranges.

After they ate, Della got up and did a giveaway to honor those who had helped her and supported her during the first days of mourning. Many had reached out to her, including many who could not be there that day but who had sent telegrams. To those who did

make it, she gave away basket after basket of shawls and blankets. Finally, they moved to the nearby Ponca cemetery for a final service, where Clyde was buried next to the still fresh grave of his mother. The headstone that would later mark his grave has NIYC logo at the top and the epitaph, "A Fresh Air of New Indian Idealism."

Around the time of Clyde's death, Stan Steiner's book *The New Indians* appeared and Clyde was a major character. The book billed itself as "The first report on the growing Red Power Movement" and named Clyde Warrior the "prophet of Red Power." In one place, Steiner has Clyde at the house in Tahlequah, defying stereotypes of Indians in buckskin, beads, and feathers by appearing in a loud Hawaiian shirt and bermuda shorts. Steiner quotes Warrior as saying, "And, as I see it, before we change, things are going to get worse. There are going to be more riots. And if it doesn't change, then the students and the Indians might just smash it, and change it themselves. These people are going to get so angry, so mad, that they're going to destroy the American society, without any thought of what to replace it with."

Until his death at the age of twenty-eight, Clyde Warrior had been the epic example of the struggle his still young generation faced. The gorgeous fancydancing, the near constant joking and laughing, the assault upon worn-out structures and tired ideas, and the willingness to stop pulling punches made him a symbol of what was possible. He and people like Mel Thom and Hank Adams had convinced themselves and lots of others that Indians deserved not only more, but the best. They envisioned a world in which the necessities of modern culture could exist alongside elaborate, old-fashioned, community and family-centered feasts and ceremonies. But the decade was coming to a close, and the prophet of Red Power wasn't around to see what would become of his prophecies.

Warrior, in fact, was standing on the tip of an iceberg. Plenty of Indian people, in spite of their stated values to the contrary, had seen over a decade of the Civil Rights then Black Power movements and felt a yearning for the same kind of attention. They had watched nations in Africa and Asia assert and fight for their independence and freedom and wished something of the same for themselves. They had

supported their sons, cousins, brothers, and uncles as they headed out for Vietnam but at the same time were gnawed in their consciences by a war against brown people twelve thousand miles away, a war whose frontiers military brass still called "Indian country."

Hank Adams had watched all the twists and turns. Though he had parted ways with the Youth Council in 1966 in a disagreement over what he saw as the group's lack of commitment to the fishing rights struggle in the Pacific Northwest, he kept in touch with Clyde Warrior all the way until Warrior's death. Together, they had worked on the Indian involvement in Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign. Clyde Warrior's death came just a few months later, while the Poor People's Campaign was going on in Washington, D.C. Adams and others arranged for a press release in honor of Warrior's contribution to the struggle for justice.

As the NIYC became more and more centrist, Adams remained committed to Frank's Landing and the national fishing rights protests that had begun there over five years before. New radical leaders were emerging on the scene. Some of them, like Richard Oakes, would make a deep impression on Adams, the still young veteran of Indian affairs. But no one, according to Adams, came close to the sheer vision, analytic capacity, and willingness to confront established bases of power as did Mel Thom and Clyde Warrior. As Adams has said of Warrior, capturing in one phrase the complexities of his political acumen, his love for Indian people, and the way in which he could never resist the beat of a drum, "his life was in the song."