

Teaching American Indian History with Primary Sources

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Cover: from *The Historical Atlas* by William R. Shepherd (1923).
This map shows the British colonies in North America from 1763 to 1775.

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Popovi Da, the great Pueblo artist, was quizzed one day on why the Indians were the first ones on this continent. "We had reservations," was his reply.

Another time, when questioned by an anthropologist on what the Indians called America before the white man came, an Indian said simply, "Ours." ...

Some years ago at a Congressional hearing someone asked Alex Chasing Hawk, a council member of the Cheyenne River Sioux for thirty years, "Just what do you Indians want?" Alex replied, "A leave-us-alone law!!"

— Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1988)

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In writing *Teaching American Indian History with Primary Sources*, I consulted several scholars. I benefited greatly from the advice of Ned Blackhawk and Colin G. Calloway, whose vast knowledge and wisdom left their mark on the content of this book. I am deeply grateful to my dear friends and colleagues Bethany Jay, Brad Austin, and Adam Strom, whose thoughtful suggestions made this book teacher-friendly and an accessible resource for middle- and high-school students. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the productive partnership I formed with Adam years ago. The lessons of this long-term partnership can be seen in many elements of this book.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our editor, Sam Gilbert, who made sure this book met the highest stylistic standards and the needs and expectations of teachers. His acumen, diligence, and skills are greatly appreciated.

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A Note on the Names of Indian Nations

Europeans have struggled to define and categorize the names of the New World's Indigenous peoples ever since their arrival. Where possible, in this book we refer to specific Indian nations by the name they gave themselves rather than using general terms such as "Natives" and "American Indians." The considerable variation among nations argues against lumping all of them together. Yet the terms "American Indian," "tribe," and "Native" are all accepted and used by the vast majority of the members of these groups, as well as academic, popular, and legal publications in the United States. For the most part, when a specific group name such as Cheyenne is not possible, we use terms such as "nation" or "people," which convey sovereignty and peoplehood. However, since "tribe" is a legal term, indicating a specific relationship between American Indian peoples and the federal government, we occasionally use it. The term is, for the most part, rejected in Canada due to its place in the racist lexicon of the 1800s, when Native peoples were viewed as primitive. Native Americans are generally referred to as "First Nations" in Canada. But I would be remiss if I did not mention Sherman Alexie's humorous remark during a reading in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 1993: "The white man tried to take our land, our sovereignty, and our languages. And he gave us the word 'Indian.' Now he wants to take the word 'Indian' away from us too. Well, he can't have it."

Where possible, in this book we refer to specific Indian nations by the name they gave themselves.

For information about American Indian nations, including the spelling of their names, please visit the Native Languages of the Americas website: <http://www.native-languages.org/home.htm>.

A Note to Educators

This is not a textbook. Rather, it is a supply of information, primary documents, and suggestions for how to incorporate Native history into the US social science curriculum. We believe that this book will transform not only your lessons but also how you think about the history of American Indians. The approach here is unabashedly critical. Given the subject matter, I feel that this is a good pedagogical and ethical choice.

Focusing on the period from the French and Indian War to the 1930s, this teaching guide explores themes essential to a twenty-first-century understanding of the American Indian experience. These include:

- The first encounters between Europeans and American Indians, 1492-1828 (pp. 27-28)
- Treaties, forced removal, and reservations 1830-71 (pp. 63-66)
- Assimilation, allotment, and boarding schools, 1879-1934 (pp. 117-122)
- The New Deal and the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45 (pp. 146-147)
- Termination, 1853-1968 (pp. 148-149)
- Self-determination, sovereignty, and renewal, 1870-present (pp. 149-150)

Be mindful that not all periods listed here receive the same attention in this book.

The smallest unit in the guide is a "Reading." Each reading provides background context, primary sources (including visual objects such as maps and pictures), and discussion questions. Select readings contain suggested classroom strategies and exercises. Nearly all of these readings can be taught as stand-alone activities, but each chapter has its own logic and progression, so you may consider teaching it as a whole.

Some of the readings introduce complex concepts that may be suitable only for high-school students and older (sovereignty, for example). But many of the readings are suitable for middle schoolers.

Suggested Classroom Strategies

Throughout this guide, you will find suggestions to help you teach specific areas of content. As you know, engaged students are better learners. We believe that the following teaching techniques and activities help engage students through four key elements: “success, curiosity, originality, and satisfying relationships.”¹

Chunk & Discuss

Before class, prepare photocopies of the document. Have just one section on each page—these are your “chunks.” You may choose to add to each page the number of key terms that appear in the chunk. For instance, a long paragraph might have three to five key words; shorter ones would have one to three. (If you are teaching online, the chunks should be assigned to individual students via Google Classroom, Canvas, or another learning management system.)

- Form groups of three or four students.
- Distribute the chunks. Each group has the whole reading, but it is divided among the students, each of whom has only one part of it. Don’t worry about repeating chunks.
- Students spend five to ten minutes reading their chunks, underlining and defining key words. Ask students to think about why these particular words are significant.
- Each student summarizes his or her chunk, using the key words.
- Students combine all of their summaries. A main point and two subsidiary points should be drawn up.
- When all groups have finished, bring the class together. Debrief, with each group summarizing its points. Discuss the important elements of the ruling.

Have just one section on each page—these are your “chunks.”

¹ Richard Strong, Harvey F. Silver, and Amy Robinson, “Strengthening Student Engagement: What Do Students Want (and What Really Motivates Them)?” *Educational Leadership* 53, no. 1 (1995), <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept95/vol53/num01/Strengthening-Student-Engagement@-What-Do-Students-Want.aspx>. Accessed September 6, 2020.

Group Work

We recommend using breakout groups to unpack complex readings. When properly implemented, this method helps engage every student and allows them to take advantage of each other's skills and knowledge. For optimal

Each student should have a specific duty.

outcomes, groups should be heterogeneous, and each student should have a specific duty. At the beginning of each group discussion of a document, have students investigate questions such as:

- How authentic is the document? Can you verify its truthfulness?
- Who is the author/creator of your resource, and what is his or her point of view?
- If the author or speaker is an American Indian, did they write in English? If not, who might have translated their original text? In what ways could the translation process affect the meaning of the document?

Close Reading

This takes place in two phases—getting acquainted with the text and then digging deeper. Particularly when leading students through a document that may offer some resistance, it is helpful to give them some targets. Before anything else, they should write down the basic facts about the source:

- When was it created?
- By whom?
- Where was it created?
- What is the subject?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What else is going on?

That last question, which invites exploration, leads to the real digging. Students should apply critical thinking to the source:

- What was the point of view of the creator of the source?
- What evidence do they provide to support their point of view?

- Does the creator (often an author, but at times a painter or a photographer) have a specific agenda?
- What evidence can you find for that agenda?
- How does the creator express their view? For example, are metaphors, emotional language/images, historical examples, or statistics used? How effective (deceptive?) are these strategies?
- Finally, how do the views in the source connect to the history of Indian nations in the United States? Would this contribute to the prejudices against Indians? For example, would it promote the landholding rights of settlers or Indians?

Image Analysis

Start by displaying the image. Then have students analyze it systematically. This strategy can be done as a whole class, in groups, or by individuals. Here are a few different approaches:

- Divide the image into quadrants (upper left, lower left, upper right, lower right) or strips (like a picket fence) and then divvy them up among students, who identify the key elements in their part of the image.
- Have students produce a title for their quadrant or strip based on key elements.
- Discuss the different takes of students assigned the same quadrant or strip.
- Using the titles proposed for the various parts of the image, create a new overall title for the image. What title did the original creator give it? How did breaking the image up change how it was evaluated?

Divide the image into quadrants and divvy them up among students.

Big Paper

To approach a complex topic, it is often best to break it down into a number of components, taking them on one at a time. Post a number of large sheets of paper around the classroom, each with a different image or piece of text on it. Students then circulate silently through the room, adding comments directly on

the large sheets of paper. Once all have finished commenting, they can discuss their thoughts in groups or as a class. Drawing on insights from the components, you then introduce additional information and provide questions to move beyond the students' initial reactions. (When images are used, this is referred to as a "Gallery Walk.")

Jigsaw Puzzle

This approach can empower students to manage their own learning.

This activity is divided into a number of parts, with individuals (or groups) uniquely responsible for their respective parts. To convey the lesson you wish to impart, each student (or group) must complete the part assigned to them. Using this cooperative method makes each student an investigator and a potential teacher; when properly explained at the outset and successfully modeled, this approach can replace lectures and empower students to manage their own learning. In fact, the whole class becomes responsible for weaving the story together. Where cell phones are allowed and the right equipment exists, students can record their comments, editing short videos to play them back to the rest of the class. Such "documentaries" can later be supplemented with additional images.

Fishbowl

Here a class is divided into two groups, and seating is rearranged to make inner and outer circles. The inner circle (those "in the fishbowl") discusses a teacher's prompt—a question or an argument—in detail, while the rest of the class (those "outside of the fishbowl") listen, take notes, and later respond. This method can highlight students who have prior knowledge about a specific topic; it also allows for a more direct and focused conversation than classroom discussions often do. It works best when the teacher's prompt can lead to a variety of opinions. To avoid sidelining the outer group, consider changing roles after one round is complete. (Note that this method is by no means reserved exclusively to the classroom. Every expert panel that discusses a topic in front of a general audience is a version of this technique.)

Timeline

Based on a preassessment about the basics of colonial and US history, post several milestones familiar to all on your classroom's wall (say, the arrival of the *Mayflower* at Cape Cod in 1620, the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the War of 1812). As your course progresses, your students add milestones that are essential to American Indian history to the original timeline. By comparing the two timelines, your students can reflect on their national history—what's taught and what's omitted, and why our nation's historians value some events more than others. In other words, this exercise can help students understand how national history is written (and who is written off its pages).

Students add milestones that are essential to American Indian history to the original timeline.

Blind Maps

This guide covers large geographical regions that may be unfamiliar to your students. Here I suggest a variation on the timeline exercise with partially or fully blind maps. Plot the thirteen colonies and the location of the Civilized Tribes, for example. Students can then fill in the missing or ignored information about Indian sites as the course proceeds. This would lay a foundation for an additional exercise with historical maps, exploring with your students what they emphasize, what historical moments and political views they reflect, and whom they ignore.²

Cell Phone Voting Apps

To gauge students' reactions to specific documents, to allow them to express their views, and to get a snapshot of their knowledge or prejudices regarding specific figures or events, cell phone apps can facilitate a quick assessment. In classrooms where cell phones are forbidden, printed cards known as "Plickers" may be distributed; when held up, the cards can be instantly read by the teacher's tablet or phone and the results digitally tabulated.

² Juliana Barr, "Borders and Borderlands," in *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians*, ed. Susan Sleeper-Martin et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 9-25. I thank Brad Austin for this and many other references.

A Brief Timeline of the History of Indian Nations in North America

15,000-12,000 BCE	The first human beings arrive in North America.
ca. 1,000 CE	Vikings establish a camp in Newfoundland and abandon it ten years later.
1492	Europeans arrive in North America.
1565	St. Augustine, Florida, is settled—the first European settlement of the future United States.
1607	Jamestown, Virginia, is founded—the first British settlement in North America.
1620	Puritans on the <i>Mayflower</i> arrive in Massachusetts.
1633	Smallpox kills thousands of Native Americans in New England.
1636-1638	The Pequot War; seven thousand American Indians are slaughtered by English settlers and their Indian allies.
1672	The term “noble savage” is coined by British poet John Dryden.
1754	The French and Indian War begins, pitting France and its Indian allies against Great Britain.
1763	The Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian War. Great Britain claims all French territories in North America. French forces desert their American Indian allies.
1763	King George III forbids European settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains.
1783	The American Revolution ends. Great Britain deserts its American Indian allies.
1784	The Treaty of Fort Stanwix opens land beyond the proclamation line of 1763 to American settlement.

1803	The Louisiana Territory is purchased by President Jefferson from the French, doubling the size of US territories.
1810	Tecumseh's War begins in the Indiana Territory.
1812	War breaks out between the United States and Great Britain, aided by their Native allies.
1813	Indian-settler tensions result in the Creek War.
1814	The Treaty of Fort Jackson is signed, ending the Creek War. Creek Indians cede much of their land in Georgia and Alabama.
1821	An Indian known as Sequoyah (George Gist) creates a writing system for the Cherokee language.
1823	The State of Georgia begins efforts to remove Cherokees from land claimed by the United States.
1823	The Supreme Court case <i>Johnson v. M'Intosh</i> deprives American Indians of the right to sell their land to private bidders.
1828	Andrew Jackson is elected president.
1828	The first American Indian newspaper, <i>The Cherokee Phoenix</i> , is published. It campaigns against Indian removal.
1828	The State of Georgia annuls the Cherokee Constitution.
1829	Gold is discovered in the Cherokee lands within Georgia's borders.
1830	The Indian Removal Act is narrowly passed, signed into law by President Jackson.
1831	The Supreme Court case <i>Cherokee Nation v. Georgia</i> declares the Cherokee a "dependent nation"; they may not seek redress in American courts for grievances incurred by state governments.
1832	The Supreme Court case <i>Worcester v. Georgia</i> , affirming Native sovereignty, constitutes a partial reversal of <i>Johnson v. M'Intosh</i> .

1833	The Second Treaty of Chicago is signed. The Potawatomi cede large parts of what will become Michigan, including the land where Chicago will be built.
1835	The Treaty of New Echota initiates the Trail of Tears. Scorned by most Cherokees, the treaty is signed by a small party of pro-removal American Indians.
1837	The first wave of Cherokees moves westward with Cherokee leader (and partisan of acculturation) Major Ridge.
1838	A deadline for voluntary removal is set for May; between fourteen and sixteen thousand Cherokees begin exiting their traditional lands.
1839	Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, and Elias Boudinot are murdered by fellow Cherokees incensed over removals.
1845	John L. O’Sullivan coins the phrase “manifest destiny,” labeling a new American ideology.
1860	The first Indian boarding school is established at Yakima Reservation in Washington.
1871	The US government ceases treaty making with Native nations.
1879	Richard Henry Pratt establishes the Training and Industrial School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (also known as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School).
1887	The Dawes Act is passed, encouraging American Indians to forsake tribal life and become independent farmers.
1893	The World’s Columbian Exposition takes place in Chicago, celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas.
1924	American Indians are granted US citizenship, partly because of high rates of enlistment for service during World War I.
1928	The Meriam Report is released, with much of its 847 pages lambasting the conditions of Indian boarding schools.

1934	President Franklin Roosevelt signs the Indian Reorganization Act, encouraging (and pressuring) tribes to adopt a constitution and develop self-governing institutions. Additional provisions revoke bans on Native dances, rituals, and spiritual practices (fully formalized in 1978).
1936	Federal recognition is extended to Alaska's tribes.
1941-45	American Indians enlist to fight in World War II in large numbers. Many of them serve heroically on the front lines and as code talkers.
1944	The National Congress of American Indians is founded by graduates of boarding schools, urban Indians, and others to form a united front in the struggle for American Indian rights.
1953-68	Termination: The government reverses the transition to self-government that started with the Indian Reorganization Act, seeking to dissolve Indian nations in an effort to assimilate them.
1968	The Indian Civil Rights Act is signed into law, ending the termination policy and granting Native Americans "the broad constitutional rights secured to other Americans" as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (1791).
1969	The group Indians of All Tribes occupies Alcatraz Island.
1970	President Nixon officially ends the policies of termination and assimilation and announces that henceforth "the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions" (i.e., self-government).
1988	Tribes begin to open casinos amid a continuous struggle with local and federal authorities. Revenues from gaming are spent on health care, infrastructure projects, and land purchases.

Identity

Stereotypes and Choices

Many factors determine how groups and individuals treat each other. When we begin to think about others, we often place them within groups—friend, foe, child, adult, neighbor, stranger. Whenever we place a human being in a group, we assign that person traits they may have never shown us; these traits are previously held in our ideas about that group. Sometimes grouping is just a means of ordering an unfamiliar world we face and causes no harm. But other times, it is harmful. The ideas that European Americans have held about Native Americans for the last four centuries have led to massacres, the breakup of communities, dispossession, and the destruction of cultures in whole or in part. In this chapter, we discuss how Westerners view American Indians and how American Indians view themselves. The main goal of this chapter is to involve your students in meaningful, engaging activities that explore how ideas about identity have been created.

The main goal of this chapter is to involve your students in meaningful, engaging activities that explore how ideas about identity have been created.

What Is Identity?

When people talk about “identity,” we too often take for granted what that term truly means. It is assumed that we always possess “it,” like a nose, a thumb, or “something” inside, and we do not think about the social factors that shape our identities.

The goal of this exercise is to reflect on the ways in which we and others shape our identities. In other words, we are seeking to help students question their identity as a fixed thing (like a nose) and help them gain insight into how our identities are really the result of many different factors that can change—stereotypes, social and political forces, and conscious and unconscious biases. Our identity is never fully under our control, and it is often hard to say who controls it.

Here are a few concrete questions that might help guide your students while working on this activity:

- 1.** What are the things that make up our personal and collective identities?
- 2.** Do our identities change over time? Are there core elements in our identity that remain unchanged?
- 3.** To what extent are we able to choose who we are?
- 4.** To what extent are our personal and collective identities assigned by others? (Ask students to think about depictions in the media, history, literature, art, stereotypes, common misperceptions, and so on.) Are there conflicts between the way we see ourselves and the way others see us?
- 5.** How are our identities connected to the different settings of our lives? Are we the same person at home, at school (in English class versus gym class), at work, or when visiting a foreign country?
- 6.** What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a defined identity?

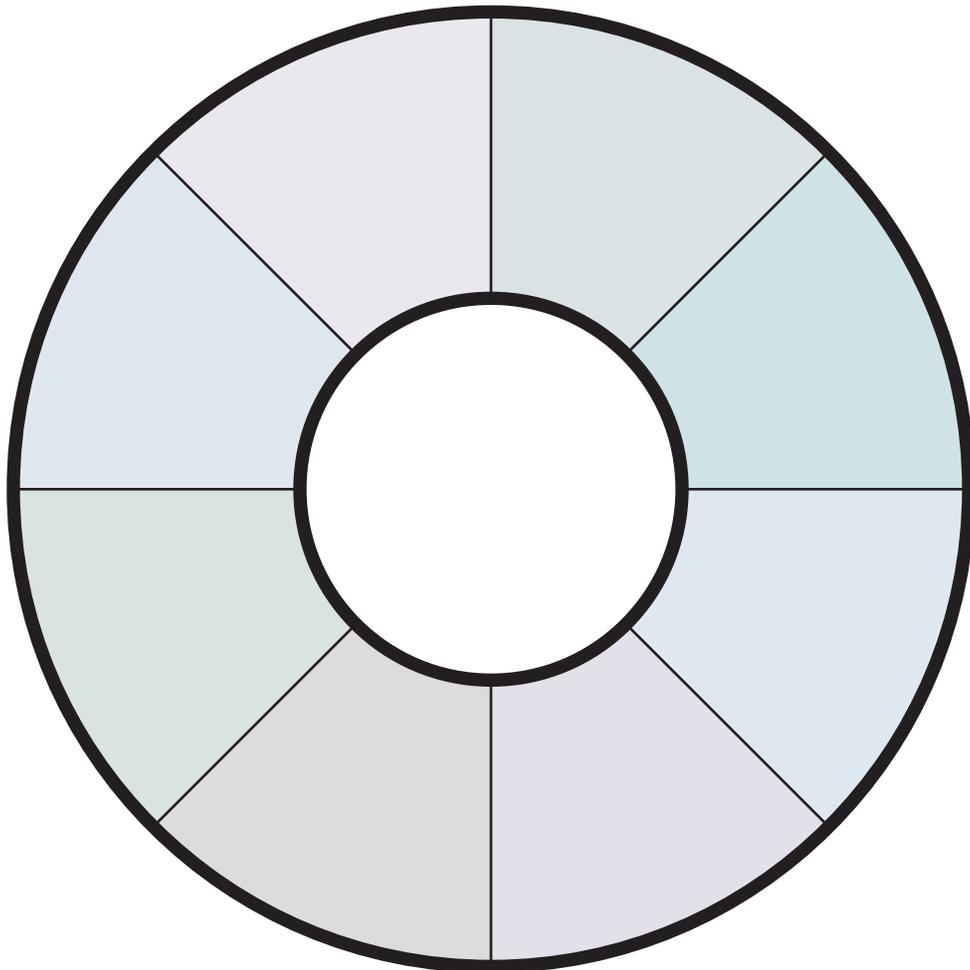
In this first stage, teachers can use a simple identity chart that can help students explore the relationship between various factors that shape their group and individual identities.

Exercises

Exercise 1.1

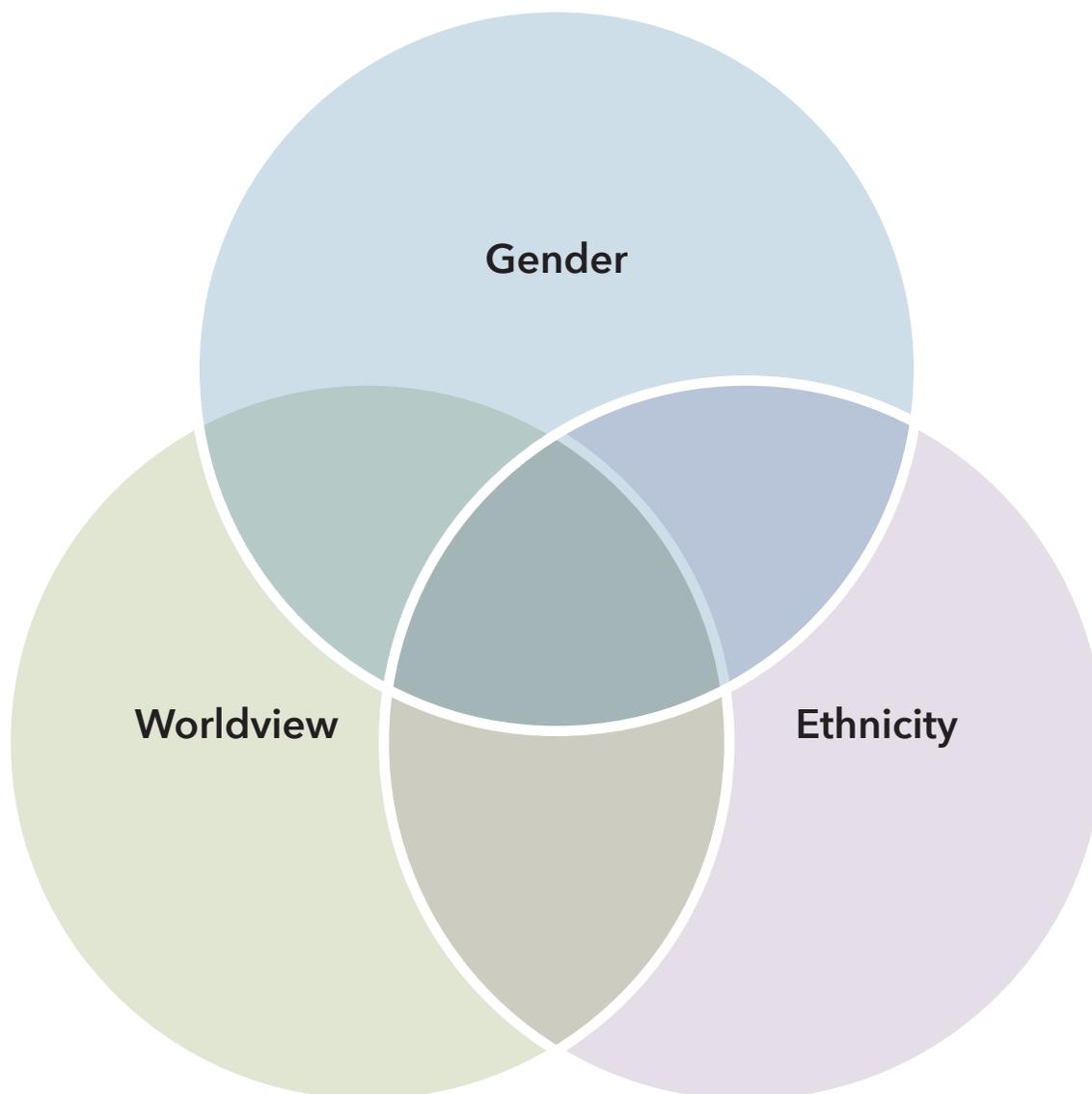
Wheel of Identity

Distribute copies of the circle-spoke diagram (provided below). Have students place themselves or their “group” (Dreamers, East Asians, tall people, girls) in the central circle; then fill in the outer segments with the things that characterize themselves or their groups. Almost anything can form the basis of a group, but students ought to focus on the groups that are most important to their identities. The main goal is to show that identity is a complex concept, made up of many elements.



Exercise 1.2**Venn Diagram of Identity**

Distribute copies of the Venn diagram provided below or make your own with more circles. Have students assign overlapping traits or attributes that characterize themselves or their group. The goal of the activity is to break down the notion of identity and show that it is shaped by overlapping elements, many of them outside our control. As an extension, you might ask students if they feel there is truly a “center” (the overlapping area) to their identity. Additionally, you can ask who is behind the elements in the diagram, what purpose they might serve, and whether they are empowering or harmful.



Exercise 1.3

Stereotypes

The last part of this exercise encourages students to reflect on how their identity is often prescribed by others (rather than chosen by them). The chart below summarizes some stereotypes about women, often ascribing to them traits some see as negative. Students may use the chart below to discuss the depiction of American Indians in our society.

While students should *not* be pushed to reveal their unconscious biases, they might discuss how members of minority groups and especially American Indians are popularly viewed and depicted. They should discuss how these perceptions of American Indians affect the identity and choices of individuals and what can they do, as a group and as individuals, to reject some of the negative traits some have assigned them.



Readings

Reading 1.1

How Are Stereotypes Created?

Thirty years ago, textbooks began the history of the Americas with the arrival of Columbus and the first colonists from Spain, who termed the Indigenous peoples they met *Indios* or *Indians*, believing that they had landed on the shore of the Indian Ocean. Thus the first colonial act carried out in the Americas was *linguistic*: the lumping together, under a false name, of peoples who were as diverse as the European colonizing nations themselves. However, the name stuck and is even accepted by most Native groups today.



A painting by Douglas Volk (1905) depicting Father Hennepin in front of St. Anthony Falls, which he had “discovered.” It shows Father Hennepin and his French companions preaching to Native Americans.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress. Photograph by Douglas Volk, “Father Hennepin Discovering St. Anthony Falls,” retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/95513283.

European views of American Indians reflected larger social and cultural changes: over time, Indigenous peoples were viewed as “heathen,” “noble,” “wretched,” “uncivilized,” and, with the rise of racial theory in the late 1800s, genetically “inferior.” Far from reflecting the many ways these groups viewed themselves, changes in terminology reflected changes in the cultures of the new arrivals in North America. For example, French priest Louis Hennepin brought harsh preconceptions to his encounter with American Indians in 1683. His report on the event included a crude assessment of these “uncivilized” people:

The Indians trouble themselves very little with our civilities, on the contrary, they ridicule us when we practice them. When they arrive in a place, they most frequently salute no one. ... If there is a chair before the fire, they take possession of it, and do not rise for any one. Men and women hide only their private parts. ... They treat their elders very uncivilly. ... There [sic] conversation whether among men or women is generally only indecency. ... They never wash their platters which are of wood or bark, nor their bowls or their spoons. ... They eat in a snuffling way and puffing like animals. ... When they eat fat meat, they grease their whole faces with it. They belch continually. Those who have intercourse with the French, scarcely ever wash their shirts, but let them rot on their backs. They seldom cut their nails. They rarely wash meat before putting it in the pot. ... In fine, they put no restraint on their actions, and follow simply the animals.¹

American Indians, in turn, were often dismayed by European habits and behavior. For example, here is the reaction of the Gaspesia (Mi'kmaq, whose lands lay in what is today Maine, Massachusetts, and Nova Scotia) to European foods, as recorded by Father Christian LeClerq in 1691:

It is certainly true that our Gaspesians had so little knowledge of bread and wine when the French arrived for the first time in their country, that these barbarians mistook the bread which was given to them for a piece of birch tinder, and became convinced that the French were equally cruel and inhuman,

¹ Louis Hennepin, *A Description of Louisiana by Father Louis Hennepin, Recollect Missionary ...*, trans. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John G. Shea, 1880), <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-prairie%3A1985>. Accessed September 5, 2020.

since in their amusements, said the Indians, they drank blood without repugnance. It was thus they designated wine. Therefore they remained some time not only without tasting it, but even without wishing to become in any manner intimate, or to hold intercourse, with a nation they believed to be accustomed to blood and carnage.²

In 1755 French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau offered a more positive—however idealized—view of Native Americans. Thinkers of Europe’s Romantic era projected their cultural frustrations onto Indigenous peoples, imagining that Natives lived a purer and freer existence. Rousseau, an outspoken critic of corruption and injustice in his own society, imagined that peoples without vast cities, carriages, wigs, and silverware might never have descended from a golden age into depravity: “So many authors have hastily concluded that man is naturally cruel, and requires a regular system of police to be reclaimed; whereas nothing can be more gentle than he in his primitive state, when placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes, and the pernicious good sense of civilized man.”³

“...nothing can be more gentle than he in his primitive state...”
— Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Radically different cultures collided in North America, and since we tend to define ourselves in terms of our language, our works of art, political arrangements, and differences can create uneasiness or even hostility. European perceptions, and particularly British perceptions, of American Indians shifted as the encounters between the two became more and more violent. When the colonies rebelled against King George III, most Indians sided with Britain. Up to that time, only the crown had taken meaningful steps to halt the settlers’ unruly expansion west from the Atlantic shores. The American Revolution drove all parties into either one camp or the other—patriots and loyalists. This led the authors of the Declaration of Independence to vilify American Indians. Famously

² Father Chrestieu Le Clerq, *New Relation of Gaspesia, with the Customs and Religion of the Gaspesian Indians*, ed. and trans. William F. Ganong (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1910), 109. I thank Tad Baker for this valuable reference.

³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Susan Dunn, essays by Gita May et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 119.

endorsing an egalitarian view—“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal”—they described America’s Indigenous peoples as “merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”⁴

In the decades leading to the War of 1812, and even more so in the 1820s, the lines between white settlers and Native Americans hardened. The new

In Europe, where social class, status, and nobility distinguished between sections of the population, race had seldom been an issue.

nation cataloged its Native neighbors according to a simple standard: they “were either pro-American or pro-British.”⁵

Through violent expansion, settlers provoked the ire of Indians, and when these last defended their homes and land, settlers retaliated with force. Unwilling to reflect on the causes of this cycle of violence, the settlers portrayed one side of the struggle as victims—the white side. Using skin color to define difference was a novelty. In Europe (the “Old World”), where social class, status, and nobility distinguished between sections of the population, race had seldom been an issue. Similarly, Americans solidified their

view that all Native Americans were one and the same, the enemies of the new nation, despite the spectacular diversity that existed among the various nations and tribes.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. How did Father Louis Hennepin perceive the Indigenous people he encountered in America?
2. What can the quotes provided here teach us about encounters between unfamiliar cultures? Based on what you know about the sources of the quotations, are they reliable?

⁴ The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription, July 4, 1776, National Archives website, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html. Accessed August 22, 2016.

⁵ John P. Bowes, *Land Too Good for Indians: Northern Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 21. See also John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Era of the Early Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 163.

3. What are the different images that you get of Native people from those various texts? How might those depictions have impacted the way settlers and policy makers treated Indigenous people?
4. What are stereotypes? Why do we use them so often? Are there ways to talk about groups and the differences between them without resorting to stereotypes? What are the dangers of stereotypes?

Suggested Strategies

- Show Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Danger of a Single Story” TED Talk to begin a conversation among your students about how stereotypes are created and how they affect our thinking. The talk can be found here: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en#t-21423 (2009, TEDGlobal). A transcription of the talk is provided below the video.
- Then, prepare a Big Paper (or Gallery Walk) activity with historical images of American Indians, reflecting different views and stereotypes. Draw from advertising images, portraits, political cartoons, documentary photographs, and images that show Indians in military, medical, and corporate uniforms.

See the “Suggested Classroom Strategies” section on page 11 to learn about these strategies and more.

Reading 1.2

Mascots and Stereotypes

The history of Euro-American abuse of Native images and symbols is as old as the republic itself. To give just one example, when a group of colonists decided to protest the tax on tea imposed by England, they defied the ban in protest and dressed as Mohawks before throwing into hundreds of chests of tea Boston Harbor. But even today, American Indians are portrayed as “the Noble

Savage, the Civilizable Savage and the Bloodthirsty Savage.”⁶ American-Canadian poet, scholar, and writer Thomas King (of Cherokee, German, and Greek descent) calls all of those the “Dead Indians.” His poem on this subject is included later in this chapter, in Reading 1.3. King explains:

The Dead Indians I’m talking about are not the deceased sort. Nor are they all that inconvenient. They are the stereotypes and clichés that North America has conjured up out of experience and out of its collective imaginings and fears. North America has had a long association with Native people, but despite the history that the two groups have shared, North America no longer sees Indians. What it sees are war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringed deerskin dresses, loincloths, headbands, feathered lances, tomahawks, moccasins, face paint, and bone chokers ... bits of cultural debris.⁷

Older generations should be familiar with *The Lone Ranger*, a 1970s television show (based on a 1930s radio serial). The show’s Indian sidekick Tonto—“fool” or “moron” in Spanish—promoted negative stereotypes of Natives as backward, uneducated, and animalistic. The 2013 film *The Lone Ranger*, starring Johnny Depp as Tonto, supposedly attempted to amend this tradition, but some critics think it did just the opposite. Television shows and motion pictures depict “reservation” Indians as addicts and drunks living in squalor, and evil casino owners as bloody-minded as any Mafia don. Stereotypes hurt.

To this day, American children play at “cowboys and Indians” (similar to “cops and robbers”), presenting the latter group as inimical to law, order, and morality. Curiously enough, the US Army uses tribal names such as Chinook, Black Hawk, and Lakota for its helicopters; the “Tomahawk” is a type of cruise missile. Enemy territory is frequently called “Indian territory” in military code (especially in the Middle East).

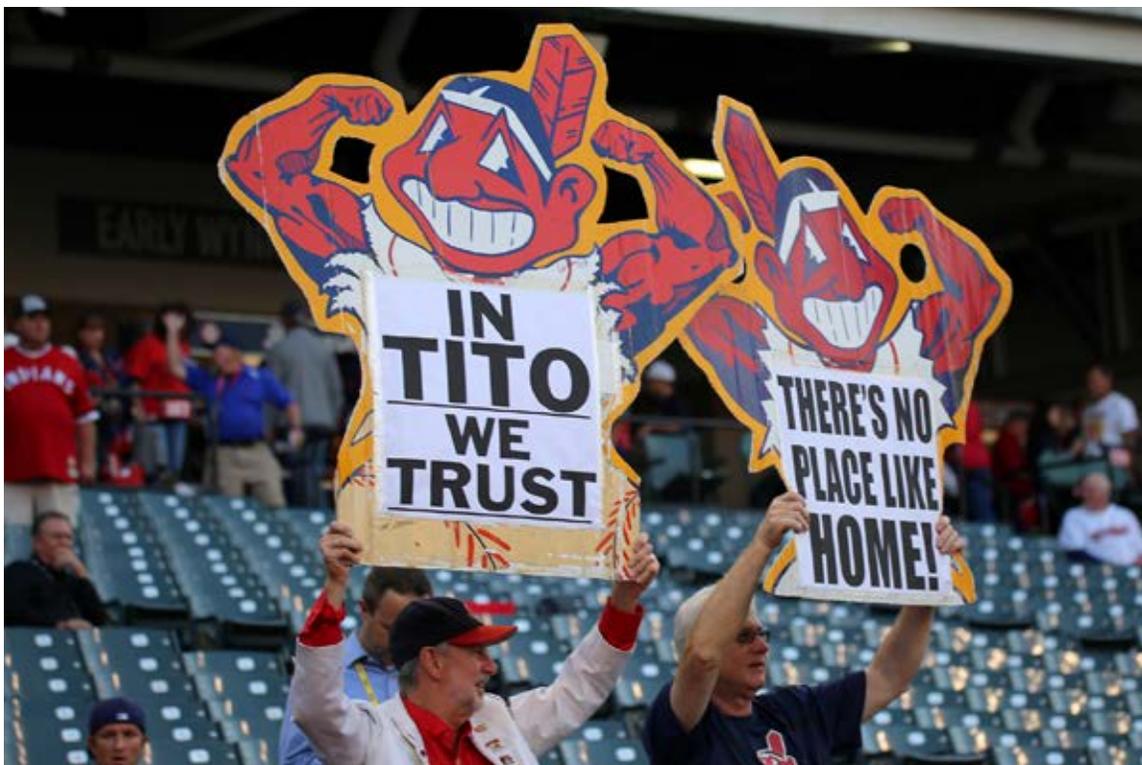
⁶ Michael K. Green, “Images of American Indians in Advertising: Some Moral Issues,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 12, no. 4 (1993): 324; Victoria E. Sanchez, “Buying into Racism: American Indian Product Icons in the American Marketplace,” in *American Indians and the Mass Media*, ed. Meta G. Carstarphen and John P. Sanchez (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 153.

⁷ Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 53-54.



Jay Silverheels and Clayton Moore pose as Tonto and the Lone Ranger in the *Lone Ranger* television series in 1960.

In addition, mascots and logos depicting Native characters or themes are used by hundreds of sports clubs. They perpetuate prejudices against Native Americans. The most notable are the Atlanta Braves, the Cleveland Indians (whose logo was, until 2018, the grinning Chief Wahoo), and the Washington Redskins (a term that is especially rife with derogatory connotations and historical racism). In 2020, under increasing public pressure, the owners of the Washington Redskins changed the team's name to the Washington Football Team.



Cleveland Indians fans hold up cutouts of the former mascot, Chief Wahoo, which was replaced as the baseball team's logo in 2018. Chief Wahoo was based on a 1930s caricature of a Native American that appeared in the *Plain Dealer*, a Cleveland, Ohio newspaper.

"Indians fans are pumped for the ALDS" by apardavila is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0.

Many American Indians and supporters of their causes object to the use of mascots because they reinforce racist stereotypes. The suggestion that a professional athlete must aspire to the qualities for which Indians were for so long despised—it was long assumed that they were “killers,” winners at all costs—offers a penetrating insight into the American spirit. Yet fans of the mascots reject that conclusion; they claim that the mascots honor the spirit, warrior tradition, and bravery of Apaches, Cherokees, and other nations known for their martial prowess. The debate rages on; some tribes support the use of Indian imagery. In response to widespread criticism, however, in January 2018 the Cleveland Indians announced that they would stop using Chief Wahoo on their uniforms and stadium signs.

Sterling HolyWhiteMountain, the director of writing at the Blackfeet Community College on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, contributed a series of reflections on the Wahoo logo and the use of Indian mascots in general to ESPN's website. The essay, "The Great Failure of the Indians Mascot Debate? Thinking of It Only as Racism," appeared while Cleveland played in the 2016 League Championship Series. Read the full article on espn.com at http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/17891581/great-failure-indians-mascot-debate-thinking-only-racism.⁸

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What does the Wahoo image suggest to you? Do you believe that it promotes prejudice against American Indians or honors their traditions? Why?
2. Why does HolyWhiteMountain say it is hard for Indians on the reservation to relate to the image?
3. According to HolyWhiteMountain, what is missing from the popular debate about mascots? Why does he continue to watch the Cleveland Indians?
4. In what ways is the debate about team mascots important?

Suggested Strategy

- Image Analysis. (See the "Suggested Classroom Strategies" section on page 11 to learn about this strategy and more.)

⁸ Sterling HolyWhiteMountain, "The Great Failure of the Indians Mascot Debate? Thinking of It Only as Racism," ESPN website, October 26, 2016, http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/17891581/great-failure-indians-mascot-debate-thinking-only-racism. Accessed September 5, 2020. The pipeline in question is the Dakota Access oil pipeline.



The Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been at the center of public debate. Rendered from original artwork by E. H. Garrett, published in 1901.

"The Coat of Arms and Great Seal of Massachusetts," New England Magazine 23(6): 623-35.

The image shown above is inscribed on the flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The flag is flown throughout the commonwealth, and the seal is used in official messages to the public. (Seals were formerly printed on official documents to indicate that governments approved them. They no longer have any legal status in the United States.) Official since 1907, the flag has recently been at the center of a public debate.

1. Project an image of the seal or distribute photocopies. Have students look at the blue seal (or coat of arms), break the image down to its elements, and make a list of them.
2. Ask students to research the elements they wrote down, then offer an explanation of why each is there. For example, they may want to look up the person in the middle, the arm that is hanging above the figure, and the Latin words around the coat of arms and seal. What do these elements mean?
3. Ask students to find a translation of the Latin words that appear on the seal: *ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem*. How does the meaning of that motto change the seal's message?
4. Why is this seal a source of ongoing debate?

Reading 1.3

“I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind”

Thomas King was born in Sacramento, California, and is of Cherokee, German, and Greek descent. King is a photographer, radio broadcaster, poet, and former professor of English at the University of Guelph, Canada. When asked about his poem, “I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind,” King said that it “challenges the stereotypical portrayal of First Nations peoples in the media. This spoken word ... offers an insight of how First Nations people today are changing old ideas and empowering themselves in the greater community.”⁹ (You may recall from Reading 1.2 that King refers to these stereotypical portraits as “Dead Indians.”) See a reading of the poem at <http://www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind>.¹⁰

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. How does the portrayal of Tonto in *The Lone Ranger* contrast with the image that Thomas King offers us?
2. What stereotypes does King try to dispel? What contrasting images of the Indian does he try to bring to the reader’s attention?
3. What is the impact of the poem’s repeated line “I’m not the Indian you had in mind”?
4. Do you think that King believes there is an Indian identity? Does the poem challenge your idea of identity?
5. Toward the end of the poem, King says, “Don’t look at me.” What might he mean? Who is looking at him? What are they looking for?

Suggested Strategy

- **Chunk & Discuss.** (See the “Suggested Classroom Strategies” section on page 11 to learn about this strategy and more.)

⁹ “I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind,” National Screen Institute website, <http://www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind>. Accessed September 5, 2020.

¹⁰ Ibid. Text transcribed from video.

Reading 1.4**Names Matter**

The proper terminology to describe the Native peoples of America continues to be debated by activists, scholars, and ordinary people, while Indigenous peoples continue to wrestle with the negative connotation attached to some of their labelings.

In a 2015 essay, activist Amanda Blackhorse (Diné, the preferred tribal name, or Navajo) presented a series of interviews with American Indians about what they preferred to be called. She explains, “As Indigenous Peoples, names and references to our race and ethnic identity are very important—especially in a time when names and pejorative references to Native people are being challenged in popular culture.”¹¹ Many Native scholars and activists agree with Blackhorse, and they routinely express frustration regarding the use of stereotypes and generalizations about Native Americans.

Among the people Blackhorse interviewed was Radmilla Cody, who is of Diné/Navajo, and African American descent. An award-winning musician and activist, she prefers to be called “Diné/Navajo” as an individual and “Indigenous” or “Native” as part of a collective.

I used to refer to myself as “Native American,” but over time I have learned more about colonization and the colonial terms that came with the assimilation process which continues today. We are original people of this so-called USA, therefore we should be acknowledged as such, but also to ourselves as indigenous, as the indigenous backgrounds we identify with; indigenous, or Native of our own territories. Not the European settlers’ or colonial settlers’ identification of who they think we should be. We must reclaim our identity and stop allowing the settler-colonialists to define who we are.

¹¹ Amanda Blackhorse, “Blackhorse: Do You Prefer ‘Native American’ or ‘American Indian?’” Indian Country Today website, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/blackhorse-do-you-prefer-native-american-or-american-indian-kHWRPJqIGU6X3FTVdMi9EQ>. Accessed September 5, 2020. All quotations in this reading are from this source.

Comedian Bobby Wilson is Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota. In the interview, Wilson says, “I say ‘Indian’ a lot. ... I’m around many Natives all the time, and using Indian seems to be universal and others can identify with it. ... When I say Indian it doesn’t take anything away from me. For some people it may. I’m comfortable with myself and with it.” While not rejecting the term “American Indian,” Wilson rejects the use of the word “chief” to refer to American Indians who lack special tribal status. He has heard this slur too many times throughout his life, which he feels is racist and disrespects Native elders and other leaders.

Douglas Miles is an artist who uses his artistic skills and public voice as an activist. In his interview, he indicates the following:

I refer to myself as American Indian. ... People look at it in both ways; “Indian” is from India, and when this country was “discovered” the people were looked at as godly people. ... I also refer to myself as “Native American.” I’m comfortable with both of them. ... What would be the better title is “First Americans” because, in reality, we are the first Americans. ...

We are also Americans, and we love America. Natives serve at a higher rate in the military because Native people know in their heart this is their country and it will always be. They will stand up and fight for the land. It’s not really about American patriotism, but it’s for the love of the land. ...

[But I reject] anthropological terms, because they weren’t written for us. Words such as “nomadic,” “hunter gather,” “urban Indian,” “rural Indian,” “reservation Indian”—they don’t accurately explain the Native experience in 2015.

**“What would be the better title is “First Americans”, because, in reality, we are the first Americans....”
— Douglas Miles**

In Amanda Blackhorse’s interview with young emerging political activist Kyle Blackhorse (Diné, Tlingit, and Yurok), Kyle rejects the term “Indian” altogether and prefers “Native American” to “American Indian.” “It is very important to identify ourselves in our way,” Kyle explains, adding, “I would also like to be called by my name, Kyle.”

Discussion Questions

1. Radmilla Cody questions the term “Native American.” Why? Why does she prefer “Indigenous” or “Native” to capture the identity of all Native peoples?
2. Cody sees naming as part of the “assimilation process” to which American Indians were subjected. What might she mean by this statement?
3. Bobby Wilson feels that there is no harm in using the term “Indian,” while Douglas Miles rejects it. What are their reasons for these decisions?
4. Kyle Blackhorse ends his remarks by saying, “I would also like to be called by my name, Kyle.” What do you think he is trying to say about the connection between names and identity?

Suggested Strategies

- Big Paper or Jigsaw Puzzle. (See the “Suggested Classroom Strategies” section on page 11 to learn about these strategies and more.)

God, Greed, and Violence

Colonialism

“Why do we find so much evil and wickedness practised by the nations composed of professedly “Christian” individuals? The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples, and obviously the world today has not outgrown this system. Behind the material and intellectual splendor of our civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded.”

— Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa, Santee Sioux),
From the Deep Woods to Civilization (1936)

“There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.”

— Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940)

The complex relationships between American Indians and British settlers are seldom explored in today’s classrooms. While the last half century witnessed a great wave of scholarship devoted to this topic, and state standards call for the inclusion of Indigenous history in public school curriculums, teachers often feel unprepared to go beyond a discussion of the Columbian exchange

and the Trail of Tears. To understand the place of Indigenous peoples in American society, this must change.

By combining a historical narrative that is rich in detail and contextualized historical documents, the guide you are reading offers middle-school and high-school teachers a rich tool for leading stimulating investigations into an essential aspect of the American experience. It also includes Native criticism of European seizure of lands, resources, and people, pointing up American Indians' incredible survival.

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Many books, articles, and teaching resources effectively explore French, Spanish, and (primarily) British perspectives on the settlement of North America. But all too often histories of the formation of the United States overlook the role of American Indians. When the massive impact of European settlement on Native peoples is acknowledged, it leaves many students with the impression that the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois or Five Nations, later Six Nations), Lakota, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Apache tribes were more or less extinct by the end of the 1800s—something that looks inevitable in hindsight. While the 1960s saw a number of Indians rise to national prominence, and newspapers around the country covered the occupation of Alcatraz from 1969 to 1971, there is a tendency, found even

among champions of Native culture, to view “the Indian” as an immutable being (say, a hunter, a warrior, a gatherer)—a person without history.

Too often the early meetings of American Indians and Europeans are presented as a series of conflicts. There was much violence, but there was much learning too. Historians such as James Axtell, Daniel M. Cobb, and countless others have taught us that early settlers needed Native technology, hunting methods, trade networks, and military tactics to survive; they often adopted American Indians' clothes, tools, and crops. Considerable mixing took place, both culturally and physically.

Readers should bear in mind while reading this book that the focus here is on the late 1700s and 1800s, a period whose brutality contributed to the myth of this “inevitable” destruction. David Treuer (Ojibwe) recently argued that Dee Brown’s masterful book *I Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (1970) contributed to the widespread acceptance of a narrative of violence and destruction perpetrated against American Indians between the 1860s and 1890s—trauma from which Indian peoples could not conceivably recover.¹ But while tens of millions of Natives were murdered by a series of unconscious and carefully premeditated impacts, many Native cultures survived. In an edited collection of American Indian essays, Frederick E. Hoxie rejects the myth that presents European culture as a steamroller obliterating Indian culture. Instead he, like Treuer, suggests that the history of the American Indian colonial experience must be supplemented (if not altogether supplanted) by a story of resistance, resilience, and survival.²

What is “American history”? Most respond to that phrase with a list of political achievements and military events, a roll call of luminaries—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Civil War, the founding fathers, perhaps a nod to Martin Luther King Jr. But such achievements, many of them remarkable and praiseworthy, can be viewed from another angle. At the end of his autobiography, Charles Eastman (also called Ohiyesa, a Santee Sioux who campaigned for Indian rights from 1910 to 1930) challenged the alleged civility of the American project: “Why do we find so much evil and wickedness practised by the nations composed of professedly ‘Christian’ individuals? The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples, and obviously the world today has not outgrown this system. Behind the

The focus here is on the late 1700s and 1800s, a period whose brutality contributed to the myth of this “inevitable” destruction.

² *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2001), vii–viii. Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, 11–12.

material and intellectual splendor of our civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded.”³

In other words, as this chapter’s epigraph from Jewish-German philosopher Walter Benjamin implies, behind the success story of the United States is a very different story: a long campaign against the culture, independence, and physical existence of American Indians. Consider Simon Pokagon, who as a child in 1838 witnessed the removal of the Potawatomi people, commenting: “Do not forget that [your] success has been at the sacrifice of *our* homes and a once happy race.”⁴

We hope that the resources and histories provided in this guide offer a broader perspective and a starting point for a reflective discussion about the history of this period.

Even when Americans extended a hand to Native peoples, both motive and consequences could be ambiguous. Historian John Demos reminds us, “At their best, our national traditions have fostered a generous spirit of outreach toward neighboring people and nations, a feeling of obligation—not to say ‘mission’—to make the world as a whole a better place. ... [But] generosity may slide into arrogant presumption, helpfulness into imperialism. ... It’s been creative and destructive, glorious and tragic, noble and ignoble.”⁵

We hope that the resources and histories provided in this guide offer a broader perspective and a starting point for a reflective discussion about the history of this period.

Settler Colonialism

While Europeans came to the Americas for many reasons, once in the New World, they all shared the experience of occupying a land where many millions of people already lived. A concept that unites European settlers and the people who were already long-term residents of North America is the process of

³ Charles Alexander Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916; repr., New York: Dover, 2003), 108-9.

⁴ Chief Pokagon, *The Red Man’s Rebuke* (Hartford, MI: C. H. Engle, 1893), 31.

⁵ Demos, *Heathen School*, 4-5.

colonization—it shaped both groups, in radically different ways. Indeed, European colonialism drastically transformed thousands of Indigenous groups around the world, often with severe tragic consequences.

In this guide, we discuss colonialism in two different ways:

1. “Colonialism” is the political and military power exerted over Indigenous groups to exploit their economic resources. (India, Brazil, and the Congo were colonized in this way.)
2. “Settler colonialism” is something more precise, as it involves the presence of large groups of Europeans living permanently in a territory taken from Indigenous peoples. Australia, North America, and South Africa were colonized through this process. In the eyes of historians, the destruction of many Native societies is directly linked to settler colonialism. Some go so far as to argue that settler colonialism is always destructive and in some cases should be considered genocidal.

If we adopt the idea of settler colonialism, we accept a change in perspective. For example, the “colonist” becomes the “colonizer,” “pioneers” become “settlers,” and so on. The Revolutionary War must also be reassessed. Previously it was a war of liberation from a tyrannical king who unjustly taxed the colonies; now we can see it as an attempt by settlers to free themselves from the constraints the crown put on their westward expansion.

In this guide, we discuss colonialism in two different ways: “Colonialism” and “Settler colonialism.”

This does not mean that every European who settled in North America was driven by the same motivation. Quite the opposite. As we explored previously, religious perspectives informed some of the early settlers, many of whom were Puritans who sought freedom from persecution. Others were driven by commercial and trade interests, a sense of adventure, and a mixture of Biblical myths and the pursuit of expensive metals. By that fateful summer in Philadelphia when the Second Continental Congress convened, the preoccupations of settlers had changed. Americans came to think of themselves less as God-fearing Christians and more as members of a white civilization that is superior to others (if these two perspectives can be clearly demarcated). The

rise of evolutionary theory and pseudosciences such as phrenology, physiognomy, and eugenics lent the chauvinistic self-image of white Americans a scientific tinge. Setting out to measure the moral, intellectual, and cultural differences between the “races” legitimated the abuse and destruction of nonwhite groups.

Yet when we look back to the arrival of those early settlers from England, Spain, and France, we see no master plan—only a set of ideas that produced a colonial project quite different (and far more tragic for Indigenous peoples) than other forms of European imperialism.

Colonialism and Its Critics

In the readings that follow, we will look at famous justifications for the colonization of North America. Rather than follow the evolution of these ideas chronologically, we shall explore a variety of arguments. These ideas did not go unchallenged. American Indians were keen to poke holes in the reasoning of the colonizers.

Readings

Reading 2.1

Who “Owns” America? The Doctrine of Discovery

Early explorers called it terra nullius—unoccupied or uninhabited land—although it had been the home of Indigenous people for millennia. The first explorers to discover America arrived during the last Ice Age, after spending millennia in the now inundated area called the Bering Strait, which lies between Siberia and Alaska. As long ago as twenty thousand years before the present, these travelers had made a decisive thrust and became “Americans.” Over the next eight thousand years, they divided into countless bands that populated much of North and South America. All that was roughly twelve thousand years before European settlement. Many scholars believe that these explorers pushed into new lands in pursuit of the now-extinct large mammals they hunted. But historian Colin Calloway reminds us, “Native traditions say [their] ancestors have always been here”; other Native groups claim otherworldly origins in their creation stories.⁶

Even though millions of the descendants of those bold explorers inhabited North America, Europeans believed that they, as white Christians, could claim ownership of these territories. This concept of discovery stood in stark contrast to American Indians’ relation to the land. Indigenous groups view the land holistically, as a form of *trust* to be protected, rather than a form of *private property* that can be bought or sold at will, where the owners can do whatever they please. Native land was held collectively. This is not to say that Native nations did not regard specific areas as theirs or that they never quarreled or

Indigenous groups view the land holistically, as a form of *trust* to be protected, rather than a form of *private property* that can be bought or sold at will.

⁶ Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2012), 12.

fought over their lands. But the land was revered and respected for the resources it provided. It served as the basis for tribal cultural spiritual life, and sovereignty.

Under pressure from settlers, some Native groups sold land to the newcomers. Others were forced to give it up for a pittance. But from the point of view of the settlers, Native Americans' rights were neither certain nor guaranteed. Could individuals buy Native lands? Was this held strictly by the states? The federal government? And what was the relationship between Native nations and the United States in general? As the number of those encroaching on western lands grew, the question was turned over to the US Supreme Court. In *Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823), Chief Justice John Marshall laid out the findings of the court's majority:

On the discovery of this immense continent, the great nations of Europe were eager to appropriate to themselves so much of it as they could respectively acquire. Its vast extent offered an ample field to the ambition and enterprise of all; and the character and religion of its inhabitants afforded an apology for considering them as a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might claim an ascendancy. The potentates of the old world found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the inhabitants of the new, by bestowing on them civilization and Christianity. ... But, as they were all in pursuit of nearly the same object, it was necessary, in order to avoid conflicting settlements, and consequent war with each other, to establish a principle which all should acknowledge as the law by which the right of acquisition, which they all asserted, should be regulated as between themselves. This principle was that discovery gave title to the government by whose subjects, or by whose authority, it was made, against all other European governments. ...

In the establishment of these relations, the rights of the original inhabitants were, in no instance, entirely disregarded; but were necessarily ... impaired. ... Their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations, were necessarily diminished, and their power to dispose of the soil at their own will, to whomsoever they pleased, was denied by the original fundamental principle that discovery gave exclusive title to those who made it.

While the different nations of Europe respected the right of the natives, as occupants, they asserted the ultimate dominion to be in themselves; and claimed and exercised, as a consequence of this ultimate dominion, a power to grant the soil, while yet in possession of the natives. These grants have been understood by all to convey a title to the grantees, subject only to the Indian right of occupancy.⁷

Although a later ruling altered this decision, it claimed for the federal government sovereignty over all land in the United States.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. How did John Marshall characterize Europeans?
2. What was the Doctrine of Discovery?
3. What did the concept of *terra nullius* mean? How might have it been used to justify European colonialism?
4. How did the European notion of ownership differ from that of American Indians?

Suggested Strategy

- **Chunk & Discuss.** (See the “Suggested Classroom Strategies” section on page 11 to learn about this strategy and more.)

⁷ *Condensed Reports of Cases in the Supreme Court of the United States ...*, ed. Richard Peters, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: Desilver, Jun., and Thomas, 1833), 528-29.

Reading 2.2**Creed or Greed?**

What were the first European settlers' motives? It is impossible to speak of individual motives, of course, but from the first men who sailed to the north Atlantic Ocean in search of fish to Puritan Pilgrims who landed on the shores of today's Massachusetts in 1621, many Europeans came to America to better their prospects. Others fled religious persecution; vast numbers believed that God had chosen them to enjoy the fruits of a "promised land." This belief was rooted in their reading of the Old Testament. The notion of divine duty—the Bible calls on believers to inhabit all the lands of the Earth—may have blinded settlers to the tragic destruction of Indigenous populations.

Such Puritan zeal was demonstrated not long after the settlement of New England. Land and trade proved sources of regular friction between Europeans; the Pequot, whose lands lay in modern-day Connecticut; and other local tribes. After a number of tit-for-tat murders, the settlers decided on a major strike. In 1637 the Massachusetts Bay colonists assembled their Native allies (the Pequot's enemies—the Mohegan and the Narragansett) and launched a brutal assault. John Underhill, a settler from the Massachusetts Bay Colony who fought in the Pequot War, provided the following description of the indiscriminate slaughter that became known as the Mystic Massacre:

Mercy they [i.e., the Pequots] did deserve for their valor, could we have had opportunity to have bestowed it. Many were burnt in the fort, both men, women, and children. Others forced out, and came in troops to the Indians, twenty and thirty at a time, which our soldiers received and entertained with the point of the sword. Down fell men, women, and children; those that scaped us, fell into the hands of the Indians that were in the rear of us. It is reported by themselves, that there were about four hundred souls in this fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands. ... It may be demanded, Why should you be so furious? (as some have said). Should not Christians have more mercy and compassion? ... [But when human sins are so great] the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents.

Sometimes the case alters; but we will not dispute it now. *We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.*⁸

In 1722 frontier pastor Samuel Stoddard, perhaps the most influential American religious figure of his time, answered several questions that troubled those who witnessed the dispossession and mass destruction of Native Americans in the Northeast:

Q[uestion] VIII. Did we any wrong to the Indians in buying their Land at a small price?

A[nswer]. 1. There was some part of the Land that was not purchased, neither was there need that it should—it was *vacuum domicilium* [empty dwelling]; and so might be possessed by virtue of God’s grant to Mankind, Gen. 1. 28[:] *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* The Indians made no use of it, but for Hunting. By God’s first Grant Men were to subdue the Earth. When *Abraham* came into the Land of *Canaan*, he made use of vacant Land as he pleased: so did Isaac and Jacob.

2. The Indians were well contented that we should sit down by them. And it would have been for great Advantage, both for this World and the Other; if they had been wise enough to make use of their Opportunities. It has been common with many People, in planting this World since the Flood, to admit Neighbours, to sit down by them.

3. Tho’ we gave but a small Price for what we bought, we gave them their demands. We came to their Market and gave them their price, and, indeed, it was worth but little. And had it continued in their hands, it would have been of little value. It is our dwelling on it and our Improvements that have made it to be of worth.⁹

⁸ Captain John Underhill, *Newes from America; or, A Late and Experimentall Discoverie of New-England ...* (1638), reprinted in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 6 of the 3rd ser. (Boston: American Stationers’ Company, 1837), 25. Emphasis added.

⁹ Solomon Stoddard, *An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country* (1722), reprinted in *The Magazine of History* 14, nos. 53-56 (1917): 204-5.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What happened at the fort during the Pequot War?
2. The description of the Mystic Massacre contains several different perspectives on how to treat human beings. What kinds of attitudes account for these contradictory attitudes?
3. What clues does Stoddard's testimony give us about how the English acquired Pequot land? Why does Stoddard use the term *vacuum domicilium* to describe the land?
4. How and why does Stoddard use Biblical references in this excerpt?
5. What sort of benefits did American Indians receive from settlers, according to Stoddard?

Reading 2.3

The "Thinning" of the American Indian Population

Invisible viruses and violent clashes condemned the Native population in the Americas to unimaginable destruction between the arrival of Columbus and the late 1800s. This is surprising, since only a small percentage of Indians had direct contact with settlers. War, migration, and trade threw them together, but

The effects of settlers' westward expansion ... laid waste to the traditional Native economy.

most Native groups lived far from the colonized area on the eastern edge of the continent. In 1800, for example, roughly five million settlers lived along the Atlantic, adjacent to the Great Lakes in the north, and along the Rio Grande in the south. The roughly 600,000 American Indians who had survived the previous colonial era lived in small bands and larger settlements near the Great Lakes, in the Southeast and Southwest, across the plains, and on the Northwest

coast. According to official federal records, at the turn of the 1900s, the settler population reached 76 million while the American Indian population had declined to about 230,000. Native numbers would bounce back thereafter, but

the effects of settlers' westward expansion—the overhunting of wildlife, the industrialization of agriculture, and animal husbandry—laid waste to the traditional Native economy. (In contrast to common misperceptions, many Native nations recognized this as early as the late eighteenth century, and they began to modernize their farming and commercial methods.) What historian Alfred W. Crosby called the “Columbian exchange”—the transfer of native plants, animals, and diseases between Europeans and the Native peoples of the Americas—profoundly altered the world.¹⁰

While new crops such as potatoes and corn fueled population surges throughout Europe and Asia, those on the other side of the exchange suffered. Infectious European diseases such as smallpox, measles, malaria, and yellow fever, to which the Indians had no immunity, spread rapidly. Modern scholars have studied the decline of the Native population in detail. In repeated epidemics that followed the settlers' push to the south and west, millions of Indigenous people were infected and soon perished. Of the estimated 50 to 100 million human beings who lived in the Americas before contact, only about 5 percent survived at the beginning of the 1900s.

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While settlers knew nothing about germs, they were aware of the diseases they spread, and on one infamous occasion, a militia captain named William Trent is said to have deliberately provided American Indians with textiles thought to harbor disease.¹¹ But settlers interpreted diseases through the prism of their religious beliefs. Thus smallpox epidemics that killed tens of thousands of American Indians in New England in 1633 were proclaimed a sign of God's favor for the English, God's “chosen people.” As the Puritan minister Increase Mather explained in the 1600s:

¹⁰ Alfred W. Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976): 289–99.

The *Indians* began to be quarrelsome touching the Bounds of the Land which they had sold to the *English*; but God ended the Controversy by sending the Small-pox amongst the *Indians* at *Saugust*, who were before that Time exceeding numerous. Whole Towns of them were swept away, in some of them not so much as one Soul escaping the Destruction.¹²

Mather's was not an isolated position. Many others agreed—if not explicitly, then implicitly—that diseases among the Natives signified God's design to give the land to the English. In 1707 John Archdale, governor of North Carolina, offered the following take on the destruction of Indian tribes:

I shall give you some farther Eminent Remark hereupon, and especially in the first Settlement of *Carolina*, where the Hand of God was eminently seen in thinning the *Indians*, to make room for the *English*. As for Example in *Carolina*, in which were seated two Potent Nations called the *Westoes*, and *Sarannah* [i.e., Savannah], which contained many Thousands, who broke out into an unusual Civil War and thereby reduced themselves into a small Number, and the *Westoes*, the more Cruel of the two, were at the last forced quite out of that Province, and the *Sarannahs* continued good Friends and useful Neighbours to the *English*. But again, it at other times pleased Almighty God to send unusual Sicknesses among them, as the Smallpox, etc., to lessen their Numbers; so that the *English*, in Comparison to the *Spaniard*, have but little Indian Blood to answer for. Now the English at first settling in small Numbers, there seemed a Necessity of thinning the barbarous Indian Nations; and therefore since our Cruelty is not the Instrument thereof, it pleased God to send, as I may say, an Assyrian Angel to do it himself.¹³

¹² Increase Mather, *Early History of New England; Being a Relation of Hostile Passages between the Indians and European Voyagers and First Settlers* ... (Boston: Printed for the editor, 1864), 110-11.

¹³ John Archdale, *A New Description of That Fertile and Pleasant Province of Carolina* ... (1707; repr., Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 6-7.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. How did settlers explain and justify the mass deaths caused by smallpox and other diseases?
2. How did settlers imagine the relationship between American Indians and God? How was that different from the relationship between the settlers themselves and God?
3. What role does religion play in colonists' understanding of the deaths of American Indians?
4. How might the ideas about God presented in the two passages presented here affect how settlers thought about themselves, their families, their government, and their connection to England?

Reading 2.4

American Indians Respond to Settlers' Religions

Charles Alexander Eastman (also called Ohíye S'a or "the Winner") was a Santee Dakota who, having adopted Christianity at an early age, went on to an outstanding academic career, graduating from Dartmouth College and, in 1889, Boston University Medical School. He served as a physician for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Indian Health Service on the Pine Ridge Reservation and the Crow Creek Reservation. During that time, he attended to the injured who survived the Wounded Knee Massacre, at the end of 1890. When he was forced out of his position by a corrupt BIA agent, Eastman opened a private clinic (which struggled), later taking up a role as an activist for the Sioux. He also served as a field organizer for the YMCA, which created a Native association in 1879. He became a prolific writer, and his autobiography, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, ends with the following passage:

**The YMCA
created a Native
association in
1879.**

From the time I first accepted the Christ ideal it has grown upon me steadily, but I also see more and more plainly our modern divergence from that ideal. I confess I have wondered much that Christianity is not practised by the very people who vouch for that wonderful conception of exemplary living. It appears that they are anxious to pass on their religion to all races of men, but keep very little of it themselves. I have not yet seen the meek inherit the earth, or the peacemakers receive high honor.

Why do we find so much evil and wickedness practised by the nations composed of professedly "Christian" individuals? The pages of history are full of licensed murder and the plundering of weaker and less developed peoples, and obviously the world to-day has not outgrown this system. Behind the material and intellectual splendor of our civilization, primitive savagery and cruelty and lust hold sway, undiminished, and as it seems, unheeded. When I let go of my simple, instinctive nature religion, I hoped to gain something far loftier as well as more satisfying to the reason. Alas! it is also more confusing and contradictory. The higher and spiritual life, though first in theory, is clearly secondary, if not entirely neglected, in actual practice. When I reduce civilization to its lowest terms, it becomes a system of life based upon trade. The dollar is the measure of value, and *might* still spells *right*; otherwise, why war?

Yet even in deep jungles God's own sunlight penetrates, and I stand before my own people still as an advocate of civilization. Why? First, because there is no chance for our former simple life any more; and second, because I realize that the white man's religion is not responsible for his mistakes. There is every evidence that God has given him all the light necessary by which to live in peace and good-will with his brother; and we also know that many brilliant civilizations have collapsed in physical and moral decadence. It is for us to avoid their fate if we can.

I am an Indian; and while I have learned much from civilization, for which I am grateful, I have never lost my Indian sense of right and justice. I am for development and progress along social and spiritual lines, rather than those of commerce, nationalism, or material efficiency. Nevertheless, so long as I live, I am an American.¹⁴

¹⁴ Charles A. Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1916), 193-95.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What is Eastman's attitude toward Christianity?
2. For Eastman, what do the terms "primitive" and "civilization" mean?
3. Reflecting back on what you have just read about Eastman's career, how do the major events link to his perceptions of religion and white society?
4. The last sentence of the passage above is the last line of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Why did Eastman end his autobiography with this declaration?

Reading 2.5

The Doctrine of Manifest Destiny

The first decades of colonialism in northeastern North America saw extensive trade between the British and the Natives. Relations between the two groups honored Native traditions, and Europeans generally treated their counterparts with respect. But as immigration from England ramped up in the early 1800s, the growth of settlements and expansion into the interior threatened the livelihood and the territories of local tribes. British colonialism became a classic example of what we earlier defined as "settler colonialism."

British colonialism became a classic example of "settler colonialism."

Unlike the British settlers, most of whom took up farming, the French were primarily interested in trading with the northeastern tribes. According to historian Ned Blackhawk, "The French did not intend to conquer Native territories."¹⁵

In the second and third decades of the 1800s, many immigrants to this new land whose predecessors had believed themselves chosen by God to stake

¹⁵ Ned Blackhawk, *A History of Native America*, transcripts of an audio recording of Ned Blackhawk's lectures (Prince Frederick, MD: Recorded Books, 2010), 22.

territorial claims began to develop a new ideology. Unshaken in their belief in Christian superiority, they began to emphasize the moral and civic duty of America to impart its “advanced” values and knowledge to the rest of the continent. This philosophy came to be known as Manifest Destiny. The term was coined by the influential political writer John L. O’Sullivan, editor of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, in an article published in 1845. O’Sullivan wrote the article to support the right of the United States to annex Texas and California; he felt it was “our *manifest destiny* to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”¹⁶

Six years earlier, O’Sullivan had published an essay entitled “The Great Nation of Futurity.” On the fiftieth anniversary of the enactment of the US Constitution (a document that denied many groups, including African Americans and women, the right to vote), O’Sullivan portrayed the nation as a promising child with many great achievements lying ahead:

As regards the entire development of the natural rights of man, in moral, political, and national life, we may confidently assume that our country is destined to be *the great nation* of futurity [i.e., of the future]. It is so destined, because the principle upon which a nation is organized fixes its destiny, and that of equality is perfect, is universal. ... What friend of human liberty, civilization, and refinement, can cast his view over the past history of the monarchies and aristocracies of antiquity, and not deplore that they ever existed? ...

America is destined for better deeds. It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battle fields, but in defence of humanity, of the oppressed of all nations, of the rights of conscience, the rights of personal enfranchisement. Our annals describe no scenes of horrid carnage, where men were led on by hundreds of thousands to slay one another. ... We have had patriots to defend our homes, our liberties, but no aspirants to crowns or thrones; nor have the American people ever suffered themselves to be led on

¹⁶ John L. O’Sullivan, “Annexation,” *United States Democratic Review* 17 (1845): 2. Emphasis added.

by wicked ambition to depopulate the land, to spread desolation far and wide, that a human being might be placed on a seat of supremacy. ...

We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us. ...

We must onward to the fulfilment of our mission—to the entire development of the principle of our organization—freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality. This is our high destiny, and in nature’s eternal, inevitable decree of cause and effect we must accomplish it. All this will be our future history, to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man—the immutable truth and beneficence of God. For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen.¹⁷

Discussion Questions

1. O’Sullivan claims that the United States has been chosen. What was the purpose for which it was chosen? How is the United States different from other countries?
2. What is “progress,” according to O’Sullivan?
3. O’Sullivan’s article speaks a great deal about the future. What is the difference between the United States O’Sullivan saw around him and the one he prophesied?

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

Suggested Strategy

- Image Analysis. (See the “Suggested Classroom Strategies” section on page 11 to learn about these strategies and more.)



John Gast's *American Progress* (1872) shows a female figure leading settlers westward, symbolizing the process of American westward expansion.

John Gast, *American Progress*, 1872. Chromolithograph published by George A. Crofutt. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Students often feel an instant connection to John Gast's famous painting *American Progress*, which is routinely reproduced in US history textbooks. Because it leads the viewer's eye so effectively across the canvas, from right to left, it works brilliantly as a puzzle sliced in four. Consider the following Image Analysis exercise using Gast's famous painting:

- Before class, make color photocopies of *American Progress*, with the image rotated on the page to fill as much of the paper as possible. (The number of copies you will need is roughly one quarter of your class headcount.) Use a paper cutter to slice the image into four equal vertical strips.
- Group students by fours; a few groups of three are also OK.
- Hand out one strip to each group.

- Each group analyzes its strip by identifying key elements.
- Then, bearing in mind that analysis, each group produces a title for its strip.
- Groups assemble their strips for all to see.
- One group at a time, students justify their key elements and title. If two groups have the same strip, discuss why their analyses were different.
- Using the titles generated by the groups, create a new title for the painting as a whole.
- Ask your students to answer the question, What was American progress?

Reading 2.6

The Red Man's Rebuke

Simon Pokagon was born in 1830. Three years later, his father, Leopold Pokagon, leader of the St. Joseph River Potawatomi band, completed a historic transaction. By selling most of the band's territory to the US government, Leopold ensured that his people could remain in Michigan (the St. Joseph River Potawatomi's resistance to removal is discussed further below). While sporadic Potawatomi villages survived the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, the St. Joseph group was the only band to survive in Michigan intact. Leopold believed in the importance of compromise: he convinced his entire band to convert to Catholicism in hopes that such an alliance would ensure protection by a powerful partner. The land he was forced to sell lay where Chicago stands today.

Simon became a well-known figure in his own right—though he was not universally loved. His easy intimacy with white Americans, his support of modern education, and his embrace of Western etiquette and attire made him an object of derision among Indians who claimed that he had taken the notion of Indian assimilation too much to heart. The very same qualities won him an invitation to speak at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, a world's fair held in Chicago to

While sporadic Potawatomi villages survived the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, the St. Joseph group was the only band to survive in Michigan intact.

The Red Man's Rebuke was a scathing excoriation of American colonial expansion, in defense of Native identity.

celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas and the prosperous journey taken by the United States since independence. It was said that more than twenty-seven million visitors attended the exposition. Alongside the material achievements that had become the staples of world's fairs, American Indians and Native people from around the world were exhibited to the fairgoers.

How better to celebrate the Gilded Age than with a debonair product of the Christian civilizing movement? An educated, eloquent speaker, Simon Pokagon appeared at the exposition's festivities, which included a reenactment of the signing of the Treaty of Chicago. He asked his white hosts to forgive him and his people for waging war on settlers.

Yet, throughout this performance, Pokagon circulated a pamphlet he had printed on white birch bark, entitled *The Red Man's Rebuke*. (In 1897, it was printed again as *The Red Man's Greetings*.) This was a scathing excoriation of American colonial expansion, in defense of Native identity. In a decision deeply symbolic of the essential—yet fraying—links between the Potawatomi and the natural world, Pokagon had the pamphlet printed on white birch bark, a substance imbued with great power and value:

On behalf of my people, the American Indians, I hereby declare to you, the pale-faced race that has usurped our lands and homes, that we have no spirit to celebrate with you the great Columbian Fair now being held in this Chicago city, the wonder of the world.

No; sooner would we hold high joy day over the graves of our departed fathers, than to celebrate our own funeral, the discovery of America. And while you who are strangers, and you who live here, bring the offerings of the handiwork of your own lands, and your hearts in admiration rejoice over the beauty and grandeur of this young republic, and you say, "Behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land," do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of *our* homes and a once happy race.

Where these great Columbian show-buildings stretch skyward, and where stands this "Queen City of the West," *once* stood the red man's wigwam; here met their old men, young men, and maidens; here blazed their council-fires. But now the eagle's eye can find no trace of them. ...

The pale-faces came by chance to our shores, many times very needy and hungry. We nursed and fed them—fed the ravens that were soon to pluck out our eyes, and the eyes of our children; for no sooner had the news reached the Old World that a new continent had been found, peopled with another race of men, than, locust-like, they swarmed on all our coasts; and, like the carrion crows in spring, that in circles wheel and clamor long and loud, and will not cease until they find and feast upon the dead, so these strangers from the East long circuits made, and turkey-like they gobbled in our ears, "Give us gold, give us gold;" "Where find you gold? Where find you gold?"

We gave for promises and "gewgaws"¹⁸ all the gold we had, and showed them where to dig for more; to repay us, they robbed our homes of fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; some were forced across the sea for slaves in Spain, while multitudes were dragged into the mines to dig for gold, and held in slavery there until all who escaped not, died under the lash of the cruel task-master. ...

The cyclone of civilization rolled westward; the forests of untold centuries were swept away; streams dried up; lakes fell back from their ancient bounds; and all our fathers once loved to gaze upon was destroyed, defaced, or marred, except the sun, moon, and starry skies above, which the Great Spirit in his wisdom hung beyond their reach. ...

To be just, we must acknowledge there were some good men with these strangers, who gave their lives for ours, and in great kindness taught us the revealed will of the Great Spirit through his Son Jesus, the mediator between God and man. But while we were being taught to love the Lord our God ... bad men of the same race, whom we thought of the same belief, shocked our faith in the revealed will of the Father, as they came among us with bitter oaths upon their lips, something we had never heard before, and cups of "fire-water" in their hands, something we had never seen before. They pressed the sparkling glasses to our lips and said, "Drink, and you will be happy." We drank thereof,

¹⁸ *gewgaws* refers to cheap trinkets.

we and our children, but alas! like the serpent that charms to kill, the drink-habit coiled about the heart-strings of its victims, shocking unto death, friendship, love, honor, manhood. ...

You say of us that we are treacherous, vindictive, and cruel; in answer to the charge, we declare to all the world with our hands uplifted before high Heaven, that before the white man came among us, we were kind, outspoken, and forgiving. Our real character has been misunderstood because we have resented the breaking of treaties made with the United States, as we honestly understood them. ...

Our sad history has been told by weeping parents to their children from generation to generation; and as the fear of the fox in the duckling is hatched, so the wrongs we have suffered are transmitted to our children, and they look upon the white man with distrust as soon as they are born. Hence our worst acts of cruelty should be viewed by all the world with Christian charity, as being but the echo of bad treatment dealt out to us.¹⁹

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What are Simon Pokagon's grievances against the white inhabitants of the United States? What sorts of actions does he find most deplorable?
2. Consider the literary devices used in the *Rebuke*. Why were these kinds of metaphors used? What is their impact?
3. Compare this document's take on discovery and settler motivation to the documents we read (and the painting we analyzed) about Manifest Destiny. Why do you think there are so many differences?
4. The Great Spirit is the source and director, for many American Indian groups, of all the things found on Earth and in the heavens. Why do you think the Great Spirit is mentioned here as the father of Jesus? How do Native ideas and Christian ideas connect in this document?

¹⁹ Simon Pokagon, *The Red Man's Rebuke*, in *American Indian Nonfiction: An Anthology of Writings, 1760s-1930s*, ed. Bernd C. Peyer (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 233-36.

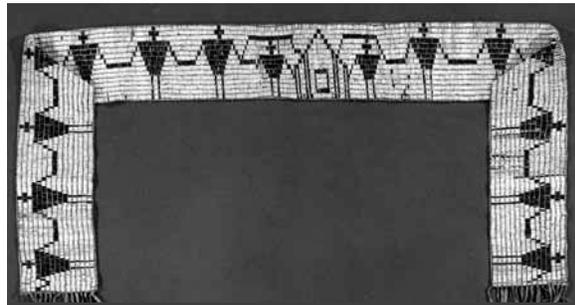
War, Treaties, and Betrayal

“Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people.”

— Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, 1784

Historical Background

So long as the settlers lacked the means to take Native lands by force, they engaged in treaty diplomacy on more or less equal terms with their Native counterparts. Treaties were negotiated between local governments or the national government and Native nations, in accordance with traditional Indian diplomacy, and were finalized with wampum belts—complex documents in the form of strings of shell beads. Wampum belts told creation stories and tribal histories, recorded special events, served as sacred gifts, and were dispatched to rival nations as declarations of political positions. They also served to record treaties and alliances. Indeed, Native tribes depended on them as much as Europeans relied on written contracts. While a treaty between nations took its material form in these belts, it had no authority until the contracting parties shared a ceremonial peace pipe.



The George Washington Wampum Belt represents a treaty between two sovereign nations, the Haudenosaunee (called the Iroquois Confederacy by the European colonists) and the United States. Wampum belts were Native Americans' way of making agreements formal and marking important events.

Courtesy of Richard Hamell.

Time and again, settlers fell afoul of these contracts, obliging the ultimate arbiter of colonial matters—the British king—to intervene. This is one of the many reasons why an understanding of American Indian history deepens our understanding of the history of the United States. In other words, the American Revolution was not only a battle for individual and community liberties. Crudely put, the settlers fought to usurp the king’s authority to sign (and to violate) treaties with American Indians. Since the crown had often been obliged to send troops to protect the rights of Indian tribes, it was generally viewed by those tribes as an ally against land-hungry farmers (and speculators like George Washington).

When treaties failed to keep the peace and groups of settlers headed into lands where Shawnee and others hunted, bloodshed was inevitable. To curtail the cycle of violence afflicting settlers and American Indians, the Confederation Congress, authorized by the Articles of Confederation to govern the United States between 1781 and 1789, declared: “The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never

be invaded or disturbed.”¹ This ordinance was violated frequently, but for decades, it remained the guiding policy for the new nation’s dealings with Native people: they were to be treated with respect and dignity, as sovereign nations.

But when the Revolutionary War with Britain was over, not a single Native nation was invited to the peace negotiations that yielded the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783. Moreover, the British ceded all the crown’s lands south of Canada, altogether deserting their former allies. In the eyes of US leadership, including the first president, the Indian peoples were defeated nations who had lost all rights to their lands. However, they had neither surrendered nor

When the Revolutionary War with Britain was over, not a single Native nation was invited to the peace negotiations that yielded the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783.

¹ “The Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787,” Yale Law School, Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/nworder.asp. Accessed September 7, 2020.

offered their land to the victors, whose 1783 agreements violated countless treaties from the colonial era.

But six years later, it became clear that the United States did not have the might necessary to back up its imperialist aspirations. Secretary of War Henry Knox, architect of the new nation's Indian policies, declared: "The Indians, being the prior occupants, possess the right of soil. It cannot be taken from them unless by their free consent, or by right of conquest in case of a just war. To dispossess them on any other principle would be a gross violation of the fundamental laws of nature, and of that distributive justice which is the glory of a nation."² He went on to argue that only the federal government could purchase land from or make treaties with American Indians. The United States thus ratified older British treaties and continued to employ treaty diplomacy. This approach won the consent of American Indians to cessions amounting to millions of acres. By 1871, when Congress ceased treaty making, it had adopted or authorized 367 agreements with tribes, most of which involved the surrender and sale of lands. Many of these were signed under duress; the government's representatives routinely engaged in corrupt practices, and many Native signatories were plied with alcohol.

The federal government was eager to placate the Indians, but it was no more successful than the officers of the British king in stemming the incursions of settlers, squatters, and land speculators. Routinely presented with frontier faits accomplis, it ended up backing white citizens who attacked and stole from American Indians in the Northeast and Great Lakes region, the Ohio Valley, and the Southeast.

US leadership shared with the settlers the belief that expansion was essential to the nation. Thomas Jefferson, much like Washington, believed that the nation's plains and forests should be cleared for the new arrivals. In 1784 he declared, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever

The government's representatives routinely engaged in corrupt practices, and many Native signatories were plied with alcohol.

² *Indian Tribes of California: Hearings on H.R. 8036 and H.R. 9497* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 2.

Jefferson boldly authorized the Louisiana Purchase (1803), doubling the size of the United States.

He had a chosen people.” Believing that only a nation of independent farmers could be free, he embraced the settler goal of dispossessing American Indians of their land. While president, mercantile ruthlessness appealed to him; frontier trading posts would tempt “the good and influential individuals” among the Indians to go into debt “because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by

a cession of lands.”³ That same year, Jefferson boldly authorized the Louisiana Purchase (1803), doubling the size of the United States. He planned to relocate the Native nations to lands distant from the shores of the Atlantic, so that settlements could freely expand.

The War of 1812

Tensions between American Indians and the American government rose to a head in the War of 1812. For years, the crown was trying to build an Indian Country just south of the Great Lakes by supporting local nations. The goal was to distance the Canadian territory from American settlers. Thus the conflict between British forces in Canada and the United States was fought on lands that had been the home of Indigenous peoples for millennia. Dozens of Native nations were embroiled in the conflict, with the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy in the north; the Ojibwe (formerly called Chippewa), Odawa (also known as Ottawa), Shawnee, and Potawatomi along the midwestern frontier; and the Cherokee, Creek, and Ojibwe in the south. Native leaders faced tough choices. As they had during the American Revolution, most American Indians supported the British, who had historically applied the brakes to American expansion and provided support to Native nations as part of their strategic effort to build that barrier—“Indian Country”—against US expansion. A few hoped to curry favor with the new government and sided with the United States.

³ “Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, February 27, 1803,” National Archives, Founders Online website, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-39-02-0500>. Accessed September 7, 2020.

Others chose neutrality. Political and military alliances split nations, with different tribes and bands guided by the needs of their communities.

The War of 1812 ended in 1815, with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent—another political treaty signed only by the white powers involved. Indeed, John Quincy Adams stoutly refused all British requests to include Native groups in the negotiations. (A decade later, he would become the sixth president of the United States.) Groups that had allied with the British were subject to formal and informal retribution; many were forced to sign devastating land cession treaties.

Tecumseh's War

The Shawnee Confederation's campaign against US expansion is often called Tecumseh's War, and while a number of confrontations and small battles transpired in 1811, the conflict eventually became part of the far larger War of 1812. Native armies forestalled settlers' westward drive for a time. But the pressure was growing. Incursion into Indian lands had been increasing for some time, and a strong alliance of Shawnees, Miamis, and Potawatomis had been formed to fend off US forces in 1790, 1791, and 1792. The immediate cause of the conflict was the arrival of settlers in the Ohio Valley, a place of fertile soils, ample rain, and extensive waterways.

Like other nations, the Shawnee were forced to choose sides during the War of 1812. They chose to fight the settlers, and their reasoning was simple: settlers had been eyeing their land for at least three decades, and an American victory in the War of 1812 would entail dispossession, no matter which side they fought on. Others saw the Indians as pawns in a larger game. "Americans all along the frontier," wrote Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "accused Britain of instigating Indian warfare against Americans."⁴ The accusation was not without grounds, as noted previously, but it's hard to portray the Americans as innocent bystanders.

The War of 1812 ended in 1815, with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, signed only by the white powers involved.

⁴ Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *The War of 1812* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, n.d.), 39.

Readings

Reading 3.1

The Royal Proclamation of 1763

Between 1754 and 1763, France and Britain fought a global colonial war known as the Seven Years' War. The part of that conflict that was fought in North America is known as the French and Indian War. A small colonial footprint in Canada and inland territories west of the British sphere forced the French to depend heavily on commercial and political ties with Native nations. Marriages between French trappers and Native women were not unusual. Most Natives rightly saw the war as an attempt by Britain and US settlers to seize their lands, while the French had never presented that kind of threat. Despite their different strategies, Natives sought the same goal: preserving their land and sovereignty. Britain won this colonial contest, and France ceded all its territories in the Americas to Britain, with the exception of the Louisiana Territory.

The Treaty of Paris did not address the fate of the Native nations that had fought on the side of the French.

The war between France and Britain ended officially with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on February 10, 1763. The peace treaty did not address the fate of the Native nations that had fought on the side of the French. Native lands were "handed" to the British as part of the territories they gained by defeating the French, even though Indian nations never surrendered or gave up their independence. Their land was nonetheless treated as a colonial possession to be given to the victor.

Nevertheless, after decades of settlers' provocations, King George III sought to contain the scope of his colonies' expansion, thereby reducing conflicts with American Indians. He was impressed by the Native uprising known as Pontiac's War. Under the leadership of the Ottawa chief, Pontiac, Natives from the Ohio and Illinois countries and the Great Lakes region launched a war for

independence in the former French territories. The British king thus issued the Royal Proclamation of October 1763, recognizing the right of Indigenous peoples to the territories west of the Appalachian Mountains. This document forbade all individual and private attempts to settle those areas, and it declared that all land sales would be negotiated exclusively with the crown. Settlers and rich speculators howled with anger. Frustration grew when Britain imposed the Stamp Act of 1765—driving patriots closer to revolution.



British, French, and Spanish territorial claims in North America, as well as disputed territories, are shown in this 1748 map.

"North America 1748" by Varing is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Despite the crown's efforts to halt settler expansion, settlers streamed west to the Ohio Valley, staking claims and squatting on Shawnee and Cherokee territories in today's western Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. With independence from Great Britain formally acknowledged, US citizens escalated their encroachment on Native American lands. During the War of 1812, battles over Indian land and sovereignty were fought in these territories. The 1815 Treaty of Ghent made no mention of these earlier assurances of Native sovereignty and rights to land.

In the following excerpt from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the determination of the British government to promote the interests of Indians becomes clear as a series of regulations is laid out:

Whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds—We do therefore ... declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our Colonies of Quebec, East Florida, or West Florida, do presume, upon any Pretence whatever, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass any Patents [i.e., property titles] for Lands beyond the Bounds of their respective Governments ... [and] that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our other Colonies or Plantations in America ... grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West or North West; or upon any Lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us as aforesaid, are reserved to the said Indians, or any of them. ...

And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without our especial leave and Licence for that Purpose first obtained.

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever who have either willfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described, or upon any other Lands which, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said Indians as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the great Prejudice [i.e., damage] of our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians; in order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do ... strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians ... but that, if at any Time any of the Said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be Purchased only for Us, in our Name, at some public Meeting or Assembly of the said Indians.⁵

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Who would benefit from this proclamation, and who would suffer?
2. According to this document, who had the right to make treaties with Native nations? What were the repercussions for disobeying the proclamation?
3. What was the status of Native peoples according to this document?
4. What evidence can you find in this document to support the position that Indian groups were nations?

⁵ "The Royal Proclamation, October 7, 1763," Yale Law School, Project Avalon website, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/proc1763.asp. Accessed September 7, 2020.

Reading 3.2

Broken Promises



The battles and massacres depicted in this map took place between 1775 and 1794 in the Ohio Country. They were part of the war between the United States and the Western Indian Confederacy of the Great Lakes region for control of the Northwest Territory.

Background map courtesy of Demis, <http://www.demis.nl>, and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 4: *History of Indian-White Relations*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.

The events described herein were repeated time and again whenever Americans coveted Indian land. This reading studies one such example in detail.

Unhappy with the line drawn by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, settlers and land speculators—often described as “pioneers” in traditional US textbooks—soon sought new private agreements and treaties to expand their existing holdings. Defeated in 1766, Chief Pontiac signed a treaty with Sir William

Johnson, a British agent with connections to the Haudenosaunee. Johnson served as superintendent of the Northern Department of Indian Affairs, a post that enabled him to amass a small empire of Native lands for himself. The treaty ended the war, but it did not resolve the issue of American Indian lands, and settlers continued to challenge the borders set up by the royal proclamation.

Tellingly, even George Washington sought “to secure a good deal of land” for himself, viewing the proclamation’s boundaries as temporary.⁶ Indeed, like other leaders in the colonies, he embraced the ideals of the English gentry, which prized not just liberty (for some) but the accumulation of land and power. Washington received 20,000 acres for fighting in the French and Indian War and secured large plots for his soldiers in the Ohio country. In a 1767 letter to William Crawford, his agent and fellow land speculator, he wrote:

I proposed ... to join you in attempting to secure some of the most valuable Lands in the Kings part which I think may be accomplished after a while notwithstanding the Proclamation that restrains it at present & prohibits the Settling of them at all for I can never look upon that Proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedien[t] to quiet the Minds of the Indians & must fall of course in a few years esp[eci]ally when those Indians are consenting to our Occupying the Lands. Any Person therefore who neglects the present opportunity of hunting ou[t] good Lands & in some measure Marking and distinguishing them for their own (in order to keep others from settling them) will never regain it. If therefore you will be at the trouble of seeking out the Lands I will take upon me the part of securing them so soon as there is a possibility of doing it & will moreover be at all the Cost & charges of Surveying [and] Patenting &ca after which you shall have such a reasonable proportion of the whole as we may fix upon at our first meeting as I shall find it absolutely necessar[y] & convenient for the better furthering of the design to let some few of my friends be concerned in the Scheme & who must also partake of the advantages.⁷

⁶ “From George Washington to William Crawford, September 17, 1767,” National Archives, Founders Online website, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-08-02-0020>. Accessed September 18, 2020.

⁷ “George Washington to William Crawford, September 17, 1767.”

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What images come to mind when you think of pioneers?
2. How did colonial settlers such as George Washington view the Royal Proclamation of 1763?
3. Judging by this text, how did Washington perceive American Indians?
4. How does reading this document affect your opinion of Washington?

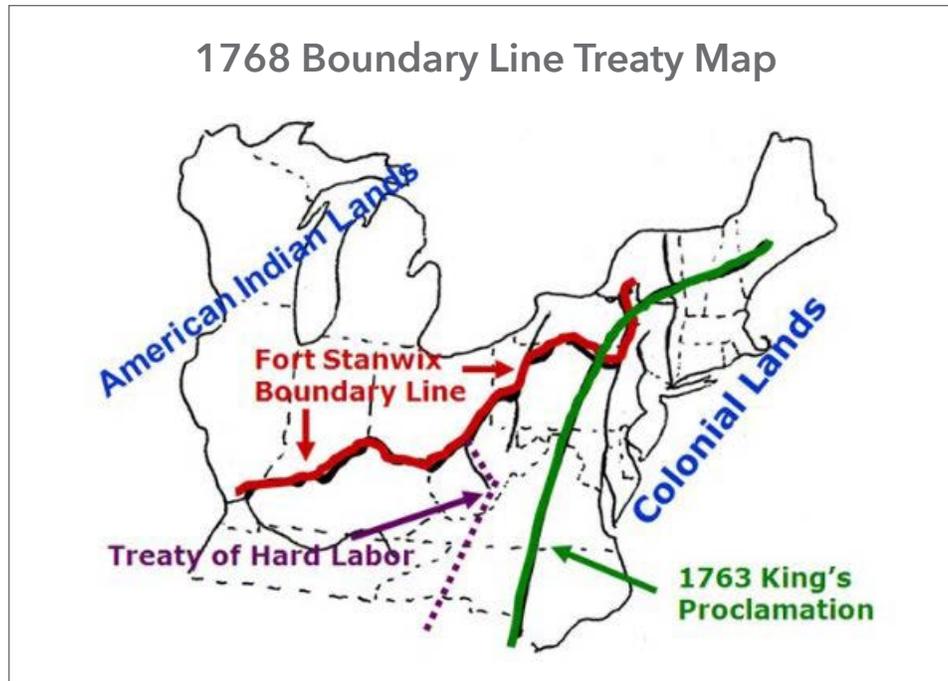
Reading 3.3

From the Treaty of Fort Stanwix to the Declaration of Independence

Despite the goal of Royal Proclamation of 1763 to reduce tensions between colonists and American Indians by establishing clear territorial boundaries, settlers continued to pour westward. Rather than policing them, the British sought another diplomatic approach. Sir William Johnson, superintendent of

The Treaty of Fort Stanwix was signed in 1768, yet settlers crossed the new treaty lines by the thousands.

Indian affairs in New York, and George Croghan, the deputy Indian agent in the Ohio region, were tapped to negotiate a treaty with Native American nations. Both men had strong ties with the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, a group composed of the Mohawk, Oneida, Tuscarora, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, and as was so often the case, the representatives of the United States stood to reap enormous riches from the agreement.



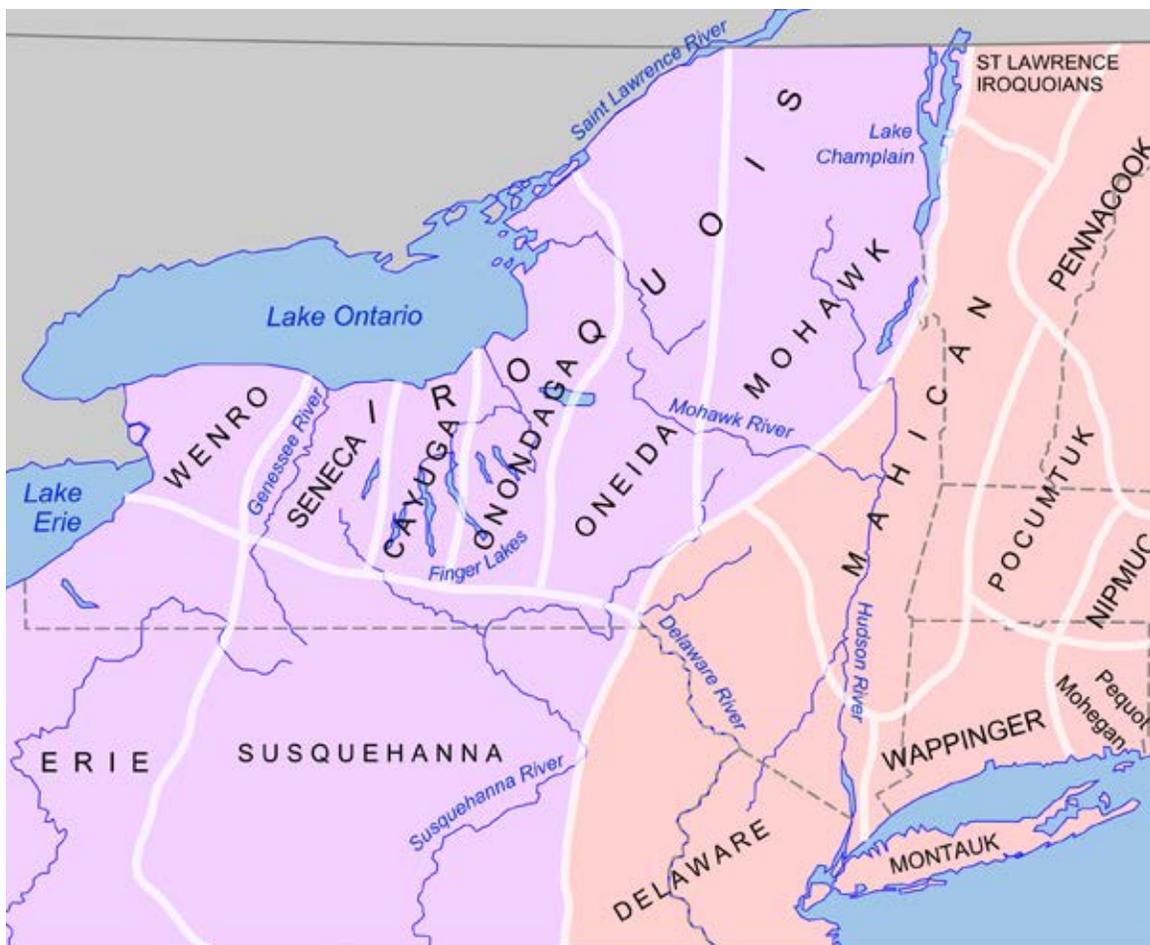
Against the wishes of the British crown, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix was negotiated in order to open the borders set by the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which restricted settlers to the Appalachian Mountain line.

Courtesy of the National Park Service.

Their efforts led to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, signed in 1768. To protect their interests, the Haudenosaunee nations gave up land that they neither owned nor, for the most part, inhabited—it belonged to Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, and other nations. The treaty set the western limit of colonial expansion far beyond the proclamation line—and four hundred miles west of the limit the British king had commanded Johnson and Croghan to honor. It made no difference. Settlers crossed the new treaty lines by the thousands.

Colonial authorities had few illusions. They knew that settlers paid no attention to the boundaries set by the treaties. Henry Knox wrote in a 1789 letter to George Washington, "The disposition of the people of the States to emigrate into the Indian country cannot be effectually prevented."⁸

⁸ "Henry Knox to George Washington, July 7, 1789," National Archives, Founders Online website, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-03-02-0067>. Accessed September 7, 2020.



The Haudenosaunee Confederacy—also called the Five Nations (or Six Nations after 1722) or the Iroquois by the colonists—originally inhabited land across upstate New York.

In 1774, during a meeting with Johnson, the lone voice of Seneca leader Serihowane registered the desperate protest of Indian nations:

Brother,

We are sorry to observe to you that your People are as ungovernable, or rather more so, than ours. You must remember that it was most solemnly, and publicly settled, and agreed to at the General Congress held at Fort Stanwix ... that the Line then pointed out and fixed between the Whites and Indians should forever after be looked upon as a barrier between us, and that the White People were not to go beyond it.

It seems, Brother, that your People entirely disregard, and despise the settlement agreed upon by their Supervisors and us; for we find that they, notwithstanding that settlement, are come in vast numbers to the Ohio, and gave our people to understand that they wou'd settle wherever they pleas'd. If this is the case we must look upon every engagement you made with us as void and of no effect.⁹

King George III was not happy either, and he increased his political and legal pressure on the colonies to halt westward migration. Spiking frontier violence forced the crown to deploy troops to defend the colonies, raise taxes, and take steps to curb immigration to America. Those who cried “No taxation without representation!” were not about to admit that reckless actions carried out by Americans had long drained the royal treasury.

In 1774 the British colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence is often read as an ambitious statement of state and individual liberties, but if we reread the document, fresh from a meditation on broken treaties, we catch echoes of another struggle. After declaring the “unalienable Rights” of all men to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” the declaration lists the reasons for colonial discontent:

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. ...

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. ...

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

⁹ John Romeyn Brodhead, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, ed. E. B. O'Callaghan, vol. 8 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1857), 476.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. ...

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Rather than think about Serihowane's statement and the Declaration of Independence in isolation, think of them together. In the two documents, what was the relationship between the authors and the people addressed? What does the language that is used tell you about those relationships?
2. Why do you think parties to agreements (contracts, treaties—we could even call government a kind of agreement between the governor and the governed) go public with complaints about violations?
3. The Declaration of Independence is often presented as the key to understanding the American Revolution. But it says nothing about the challenges the British government faced when it tried to clamp down on settler expansion. Why?
4. Why do you think the authors of the declaration depicted the king as a friend of the "merciless Indians"? Why did the Americans view the Indians as "merciless"?

Reading 3.4

Resisting US Expansion in the Northwest

Soon after the American Revolution, the new national government chalked up a great victory for the forces of expansionism in the Treaty of Fort McIntosh (1785). The Ojibwes (Chippewas), Delawares, Ottawas, and Wyandots signed away most of the territory of the future state of Ohio. For the next three decades, the Ohio country would be the focal point of settler expansion. Yet much of the land never belonged to the nations named in the treaty. Tribes who had historically occupied the lands immediately protested. (Even the Native signatory rejected the document, claiming that he had been deceived.)

Led by the Miami chief Little Turtle, the Shawnee, Miami, and Potawatomi formed a new alliance known as the Northwest Indian Confederation; the war they launched against the United States was Little Turtle's War (1790-94). A rare Native victory obliged the United States to enter peace talks. Among other proposals for resolving the land crisis, in July 1793 a US commission offered to pay for some of the lands under dispute. The American Indian council responded in August:

Brothers: You tell us that, after you had made peace with the King, our father [i.e., George III],¹⁰ about ten years ago, "it remained to make peace between the United States and the Indian Nations who had taken part with the King. For this purpose, commissioners were appointed, who sent messages to all those Indian nations, inviting them to come and make peace." ... Treaties were held at Fort Stanwix, Fort McIntosh, and Miami, all which treaties, according to your own acknowledgment, were for the sole purpose of making peace[. And] you then say: "Brothers, the commissioners who conducted these treaties ... sent the papers containing them to the general council of the States, who, supposing them satisfactory to the nations treated with, proceeded to dispose of the lands thereby ceded."

¹⁰ Natives commonly applied the word "father" to leaders whose authority they accepted. Note that in the Indian letter, the US commissioners are not addressed as "Father" but as "Brother," indicating that the Indians considered them their equals.

Brothers: This is telling us plainly what we always understood to be the case, and it agrees with the declaration of those few who attended those treaties, viz: That they went to meet your commissioners to make peace; but, through fear, were obliged to sign any paper that was laid before them; and it has since appeared that deeds of cession were signed by them, instead of treaties of peace.

Brothers: Money, to us, is of no value; and to most of us unknown: and as no consideration whatever can induce us to sell the lands on which we get sustenance for our women and children, we hope we may be allowed to point out a mode by which your settlers may be easily removed, and peace thereby obtained

Brothers: We know that these settlers are poor, or they would never have ventured to live in a country which has been in continual trouble ever since they crossed the Ohio. Divide, therefore, this large sum of money, which you have offered to us, among these people. Give to each, also, a proportion of what you say you would give to us, annually, over and above this very large sum of money; and we are persuaded they would most readily accept of it, in lieu of the lands you sold them. If you add also the great sums you must

expend in raising and paying Armies, with a view to force us to yield you our country, you will certainly have more than sufficient for the purposes of repaying these settlers for all their labour and their improvements.

Brothers: You have talked to us about concessions. It appears strange that you should expect any from us, who have only been defending our just rights against your invasions. We want peace. Restore to us our country, and we shall be Enemies no longer. ...

**“We want peace. Restore to us our country, and we shall be Enemies no longer. ...”
— American Indian council**

Look back, and review the lands from whence we have been driven to this spot. We can retreat no farther, because the country behind hardly affords food for its present inhabitants; and we have, therefore, resolved to leave our bones in this small space to which we are now confined.¹¹

¹¹ “Deputies of the Confederated Indian Nations to Commissioners of the United States, September 11, 1793,” in *Our Indian Wars*, by George Washington Manypenny (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1880), 67-71.

The talks broke down when the Native nations refused to give up any lands beyond the line established in the Fort Stanwix Treaty. But the negotiations had served its purpose—they had bought the American government time. President Washington had instructed General “Mad” Anthony Wayne to build an army that would defeat the Western Confederacy. Its debut was shaky, and it suffered several defeats before a decisive victory in August 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Capitalizing on this rout, the United States pushed the Northwest Indian Confederation to agree to the Treaty of Greenville. By the terms of the treaty, the confederation ceded massive territories—most of the future state of Ohio—and significant portions of what is today the states of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. In return, they received annuities and cash, a form of compensation that would dominate the land cessions that followed. The new posture of the American government became clear in the decades following independence: every suggestion of negotiation, every tentative of treaty diplomacy was a velvet glove concealing the very real iron fist of war—a perpetual threat that would strike if things went the wrong way.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. According to the letter drawn up by the Confederated Indian Nations in 1793, what was the purpose of the treaties contracted with the United States?
2. The authors of the letter write, “Money, to us, is of no value; and to most of us unknown: ... No consideration whatever can induce us to sell the lands on which we get sustenance for our women and children.” Why was money of no value to the American Indians? What did have value?
3. The Indian Nations suggested that the government pay the American settlers for the disputed lands. What kinds of differences might there be between Native American and European American economics?
4. What does this reading tell us about the cause of conflicts between American Indians and settlers?

Reading 3.5**Tenskwatawa's Vision**

When the War of 1812 embroiled the American armed forces in bitter battles south of the Great Lakes region, the Shawnees began to call on their neighbors and allies to help them retake the Ohio Valley. The American desire to settle the region started long before 1812. Although the Shawnees had lost the decisive Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794), or perhaps because the memory of that defeat still rankled, their movement soon gained support. The Shawnee revival is often traced to Lalawethika (literally the “Rattle” or “Noisemaker”), the Shawnee warrior chief Tecumseh’s younger brother, a man who until then had led an unpromising existence, drinking excessively and causing frequent disturbances. As a child, Lalawethika managed to shoot himself in one eye, lending him a forbidding appearance. This seemed just about right, as his was a family history rife with pain and loss; Tecumseh and Lalawethika belonged to a generation that came of age after decades of clashes with settlers.

The Shawnee revival is often traced to Lalawethika, who reinvented himself as a Shawnee prophet named Tenskwatawa.

In 1805, upon emerging from an epileptic seizure, Lalawethika had a revelation. He gave up alcohol and began to issue prophecies. He foresaw that a new confederacy of the wounded nations of the Great Lakes, the Ohio Valley, and the southeastern lands would soon rise. Together with his charismatic older brother, he traveled throughout these regions, drawing thousands of warriors to a new village called Prophetstown (est. 1808). While Lalawethika reinvented himself as a Shawnee prophet named Tenskwatawa (“Open Door”), Tecumseh emerged as the war chief of a coalition of young, militant American Indians.

Tenskwatawa’s vision was simple: break your ties to the white people, and rid yourselves of their harmful influence. He called on his fellow Shawnees to return to their traditional way of life, embracing ancestral values and ethics. His vision, reflected in his new name, was inclusive—it promised a revival that would improve the lot of all American Indians.

Appointed by Thomas Jefferson as governor of the Indiana Territory, William Henry Harrison sought to discredit Tenskwatawa's visions and to disrupt the emerging coalition. He issued a challenge to the prophet's followers: "Demand of him some proofs, at least, of his being the messenger of the Deity. ... If he is really a prophet, ask of him to cause the sun to stand still, the moon to alter its course."¹²



Tenskwatawa, known as the Shawnee Prophet, was considered a spiritual leader of the Shawnee. In the years before 1808, he and his warrior brother Tecumseh amassed a confederacy of tribes to fight the westward expansion of American settlers beyond the Ohio River.

George Catlin, *Ten-squát-a-way, The Open Door, Known as The Prophet, Brother of Tecumseh*, 1830, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison Jr.

¹² John B. Dillon, *A History of Indiana, from Its Earliest Exploration by Europeans ...* (Indianapolis: Bingham and Doughty, 1859), 462.

Harrison's challenge backfired. In 1806 Tenskwatawa successfully predicted an eclipse, which was so complete and awe-inspiring that nations as far north as the Ojibwe of Lake Superior and the Potawatomis joined the ever-growing coalition. The following excerpts are taken from an 1807 speech by a Native chief called Trout, who claimed he spoke for Tenskwatawa.

The Great Spirit bids me address you in his own words—which are these:

"My Children!

"You are to have very little intercourse with the Whites. They are not your 'Father,' as you call them—but your brethren. *I am your Father.* When you call me so, you do well—I am the Father of the English: but of the French, of the Spaniards, and of the Indians, I created the first man who was the common father of all these people, as well as yourselves: and it is through him, whom I have awakened from his long sleep, that I now address you. But the *Americans* I did not make—they are not my children—but the children of the Evil Spirit—they grew from the scum or froth of the great water, when it was troubled by the *Evil Spirit*; and the froth was driven into the woods by a strong east wind. They are numerous, but *I hate them. They are unjust: they have taken away your lands—which were not made for them.*

"My Children!

"The Whites I placed on the other side of the great lake, that they might be a separate people. To them I gave different manners, customs, animals, vegetables, &c., for their use. To them I have given cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry, for themselves only. You are not to keep any of these animals, nor to eat of their meat. To you I have given the deer, the bear, the buffalo, and all wild animals; and the fish that swim in the rivers, and the corn that grows in the fields, for your own use; and you are not to give your meat or your corn to the Whites to eat.

"My Children!

"You may salute the Whites when you meet them, but must not shake hands. You must not get drunk—it is a great sin. Your old men and Chiefs may drink a little pure spirits ... but you must not drink *one drop of whisky.* It is the drink of

the Evil Spirit. It was not made by me, but by the Americans. It is poison. It makes you sick. It burns your insides. ...

“My Children!

“You must plant corn for yourselves, for your wives, and for your children; and when you do it, you are to help each other: but plant no more than is necessary for your own use. You must not sell it to the Whites. It was not made for them. I made all the trees of the forest for your use—but the maple I love best, because it yields sugar for your little ones. You must make it only for them; but sell none to the Whites. They have another sugar, which was made expressly for them. Besides, by making too much, you spoil the trees, and give them pain, by cutting and hacking them; *for they have a feeling like yourselves*. If you make more than is necessary for your own use, you shall die, and the maple will yield no more water. If a White man is starving, you may sell him a very little corn, or a very little sugar. ...

“My Children! ...

“You must not dress like the Whites, nor wear hats like them; but pluck out your hair, as in ancient times, and wear the feather of the eagle on your heads; and, when the weather is not severe, you must go naked, excepting the breech-cloth: and when you are clothed, it must be in skins, or leather, of your own dressing.

“My Children!

“You complain that the animals of the forest are few and scattered. How should it be otherwise? You destroy them yourselves, for their skins only, and leave their bodies to rot. Or give the best pieces to the Whites. I am displeased when I see this, and take them back to the earth, that they may not come to you again. You must kill no more animals than are necessary to feed and clothe you. ...

“My Children!

“Your women must not live with traders, or other White men, unless they are lawfully married. But I do not like even this; because *the White and my Red Children* were thus marked with different colours, that they might be separate people.”¹³

¹³ G. Turner, *Traits of Indian Character, as Generally Applicable to the Aborigines of North America* (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1836), 1: 106-8.

When the War of 1812 began, Tecumseh assumed that the British would finally beat the United States, so he argued forcefully for allying with them. He was so influential that several of the nations in Tenskwatawa's coalition joined the British cause, largely due to his advocacy. But during the Battle of the Thames, on October 5, 1813, Tecumseh was killed, and his Native American coalition collapsed. In the eyes of many historians, had Tecumseh survived, his coalition could have changed the course of US westward expansion. Instead, more than eighty tribes signed the Treaty of Springwells (1815), ending the fight for the Northwest Territories and subjecting the Natives to US federal law.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Who are the "Children" and "Father," according to Tenskwatawa?
2. What kind of relationship did Tenskwatawa want his people to have with European settlers?
3. Do you think it was possible for American Indians to return to what Tenskwatawa considered their original way of life?



Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief, was the primary leader of a large Native American Confederacy. Tecumseh hoped to establish an independent Native American nation, but his death in 1813 caused the Native American alliance with Great Britain to fall apart. Soon after, the tribal lands of the Northwest were ceded to the United States.

Lossing Benson John, *Portrait of Tecumtha*, 1808, platinum print, colored with watercolor, Toronto Reference Library, Gift of J. Ross Robertson.

The Legacy of the War of 1812

“The Indians’ bones must enrich the soil, before the plough of civilized man can open it. The noble heart ... must fatten the corn hills of a more civilized race! The sturdy plant of the wilderness drops under the enervating culture of the garden. The Indian is buried with his arrows and bow.”

— Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies* (1843)

Historical Background

The various American Indian nations differed in their needs and intentions. During the colonial period, each applied a distinctive calculus to choosing sides; history, culture, and kinship were only a few of the variables involved. During the American Revolution and the War of 1812, a new government had to be reckoned with. From tribes that chose acculturation to those that took up arms, we cannot speak of Native Americans as one body or assume that their survival strategies were similar across the board. In some cases, nations split as each band pursued its own interests.

During a peace negotiation with the United States in Ghent, the British peace delegation tried to create an independent “Indian Country” as a barrier around the Great Lakes region. The Indians in question were never consulted, and the Americans rejected the idea altogether. The outcome was that once again, tribal nations were deserted by their allies and left at the mercy of the US government and settlers.

In the aftermath of the War of 1812, the scope of action narrowed. Because many American Indian tribes were treated as a common enemy, they found common cause. The American public would not readily forgive those who had sided with the British, who, for their part, continued to meddle in American politics along the Canadian border. Trade with British merchants remained important to the livelihood of the Ojibwe, Menominee, Sauk, and Fox.

Resistance continued. Settlers concluded that American Indians and their British allies might attack the United States again. So from that time on, many Americans perceived the removal of Native groups from newly opened territories as essential to national security and progress. As more and more immigrants arrived from Europe, this pressure grew.

With the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, lands west of the Mississippi instantly became “American.” A decade later, both the federal government and individual states decided it was time to clear a path for new settlements. Small groups of settlers—the “pioneers”—led the way, ignoring all formalities and legal restrictions. But other groups took an interest. Southern growers who relied on slave labor knew that their livelihood was contingent on the creation of new states in which slavery was legal. The goal of the various interests was to relocate all American Indians west of the Mississippi to lands described at the time as the “Great American Desert” (basically the future states of Arkansas and Oklahoma). This area would soon be designated as Indian Territory. As became clear during the removal period, the slaver states advocated the forced relocation of the nations of the old northwestern (south of the Great Lakes) and southeastern regions, who “knew almost nothing” about the “Great American Desert.”¹

The American Indian nations who were targeted by the cotton-growing slaver states vehemently objected to leaving their homelands. So did some

The goal of the various interests was to relocate all American Indians west of the Mississippi to lands described at the time as the “Great American Desert.”

¹ Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 20-22.

In the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, President Jackson's forces defeated the Red Sticks and forced them to sign a treaty ceding a vast tract of land.

liberal-minded settlers—mostly from the Northeast—who objected to the persistent erosion of Native rights, rejecting the popular depiction of these peoples as uncivilized and, more importantly, the inhumanity of the plan to forcibly remove them.² However, most settlers viewed the Native American people as inferior, particularly in the frontier states, where prejudice, greed, and fear intermingled. Even the beloved author Mark Twain called the Goshoot Indians “the wretchedest type of mankind.” He cruelly described them as “a silent, sneaking, treacherous-looking race,” as well as “indolent, everlastingly patient and tireless, like all

other Indians; prideless beggars.”³ Charles Dickens, known for his compassionate writing about the English poor, thought it “highly desirable” that these “savages” be “civilised off the face of the earth.”⁴

Such a project might nearly be ascribed to President Andrew Jackson, whose aggressive anti-Indian stance earned him the nicknames “Indian Killer” and “Sharp Knife.” A lawyer, judge, statesman, and wealthy slave owner, he developed his reputation as an unyielding military commander during the War of 1812. Between 1813 and 1814, he led US forces (with some Native allies) against the Red Sticks, a group of Creek Indians who resisted American expansion in today's Alabama. In the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Jackson's forces defeated the Red Sticks and forced them (along with the Creek who had fought on the American side!) to sign a treaty ceding a vast tract of land.

Much of Jackson's military reputation was built on the Creek War, but he also made a name for himself by invading Spanish Florida to fight the Seminole and “in negotiating nine out of eleven treaties which divested the southern tribes of their eastern lands in exchange for lands in the west.”⁵

² Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*.

³ Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, in *Collected Nonfiction*, vol. 2, *Selections from the Memoirs and Travel Writings* (New York: Modern Library, 2016), 248.

⁴ Charles Dickens, “The Noble Savage,” in *The Lamplighter's Story; Hunted Down; The Detective Police; and Other Nouvel-lettes* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson and Brothers, 1861), 128.

⁵ “Indian Removal,” PBS website, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html>. Accessed January 8, 2020.

Forcing Native nations to move west began well before Jackson became president and oversaw the passage of the Indian Removal Act (1830). At the end of the War of 1812, the Seminole allied with enslaved people who had fled to Florida to fight for their independence from Spanish control (1817-18). Soon they had to contend with invading forces under Jackson's command. At the end of the war, some three thousand were forced to take up residence on a four-million-acre reservation in Florida, which became part of the United States in 1821. Seminole resistance to the Indian Removal Act grew into the longest and costliest colonial war in US history, stretching from 1835 to 1842. Here, as in other areas of expansion, settler colonialism was hard to distinguish from a war of extermination. It was marked by a series of atrocities as US forces adopted scorched-earth tactics and flagrant violations of truces. The defeat meant yet another forced migration for most Seminoles to today's Oklahoma. Relict Seminole populations, lodged deep in the Florida Everglades, were to hold out, clashing again and again with federal troops, until 1858.

Resistance also arose in other parts of North America. In the Old Northwest, which bordered the Great Lakes, Sauk and Fox challenged the validity of a treaty from 1804 dispossessing them of land in Illinois. A band led by the Sauk warrior Black Hawk crossed the Mississippi River to reclaim land, triggering what grew into the Black Hawk War. State and territorial militias fought a series of engagements with Black Hawk's forces, which had grown to include warriors from other Sauk and Fox bands, eventually putting an end to their rebellion in the Battle of Bad Axe, in August 1832. In other words, American Indians did not go quietly when told to hand over their land.

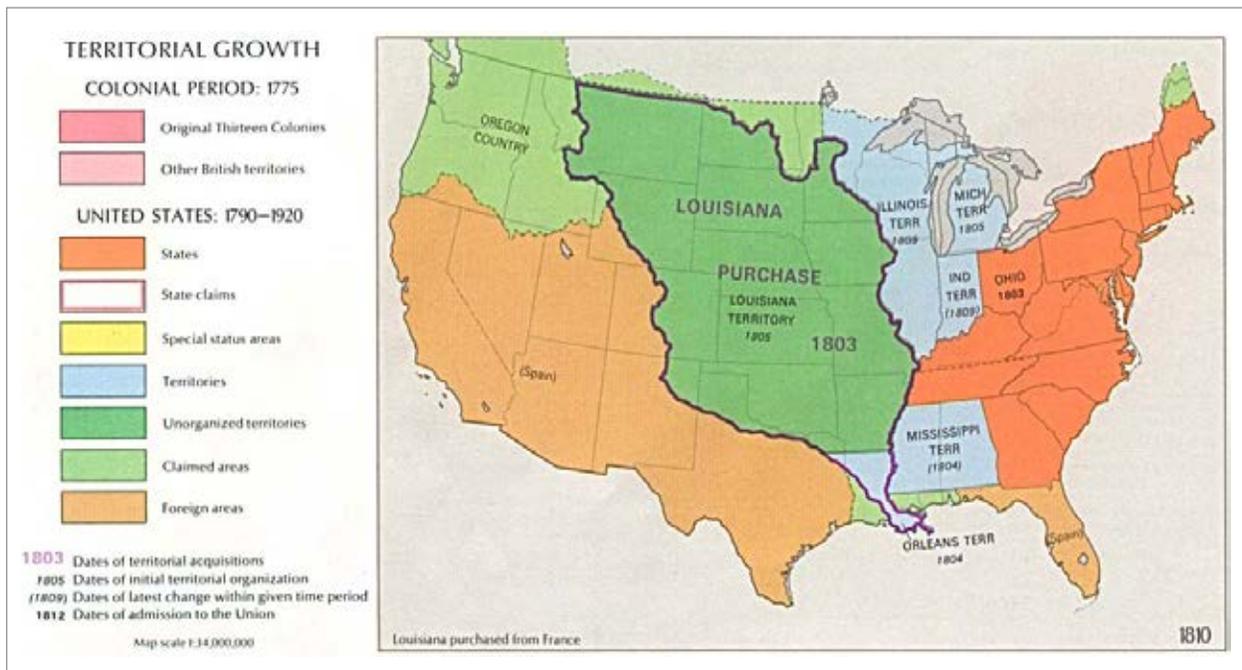
Seminole resistance to the Indian Removal Act (1830) grew into the longest and costliest colonial war in US history, stretching from 1835 to 1842.

Readings

Reading 4.1

The Idea of Removal

American expansionism gained a new impetus with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. In exchange for \$15 million, France handed over 827,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River. For American Indians, the impact of this transaction is hard to overestimate: doubling the size of the United States meant claiming many traditional homelands. In the minds of some policy makers, this also created a vast space to relocate the eastern tribes.



The Louisiana Purchase (1803) increased the United States' reach across the Mississippi River and nearly doubled the size of the young country. With this new land came increased tensions, as the United States now possessed more land occupied by Indian peoples who neither consulted nor accepted US authority.

Compiled by H. George Stoll, Hammond Incorporated, 1967; rev. by U.S. Geological Survey, 1970.

While early treaties respected Indigenous rights and sovereignty, settlers pushed well beyond stipulated boundaries and made the lives of American Indian peoples increasingly more difficult, as they were forced to move from site to site to eke out a living. Fear of Indian extinction became a prominent theme in the minds of contemporary reformers and politicians. The federal government played catch-up. Forced to defend the encroaching settlers, it negotiated a growing number of treaties (many of them achieved by questionable means). Thus by 1814 there was little public outcry when 21 million acres of Creek Confederacy land were ceded after a Euro-American victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, led by ambitious general and rising politician Andrew Jackson. By the mid-1820s, even the more tolerant (or liberal) President James Monroe began to entertain the idea of (voluntary) relocation to ensure peaceful coexistence and secure the survival of Native peoples. In January 1825 Monroe declared to Congress that he was “deeply impressed with the opinion that the removal of the Indian Tribes from the lands which they now occupy within the limits of the several States and Territories to the country lying westward and northwards ... is of a very high importance to our Union, and may be accomplished on conditions and in a manner to promote the interests and happiness of these tribes.” He went on:

For the removal of the tribes within the limits of the State of Georgia the motive has been peculiarly strong, arising from the compact with that State, whereby the United States are bound to extinguish the Indian title to the lands within it, whenever it may be done peaceably & on reasonable conditions. In the fulfilment of the compact, I have thought that the United States should act with a generous spirit; that they should omit nothing which should comport with a liberal construction of the instrument [i.e., the treaty] and likewise be in accordance with the first rights of those tribes. ... [T]he removal of the tribes ... which would accomplish the object for Georgia, under a well digested plan for their government and civilization, which should be agreeable to themselves, would not only shield them from impending ruin, but promote their welfare and happiness.

Experience has clearly demonstrated that in their present state it is impossible to incorporate them in such masses, in any form whatever, into our system. It has also demonstrated, with equal certainty, that without a timely anticipation of, and provision against, the dangers to which they are exposed ... their degradation and extermination will be inevitable.⁶

Monroe did qualify his support for relocation in his last annual message to Congress. The essential connection between American Indians and their land was such that he declared, "To remove them from it by force, even with a view to their own security and happiness, would be revolting to humanity and utterly unjustifiable."⁷

Still, some politicians began to question such ideas. Andrew Jackson had a reputation for staunch hostility toward Indians. As early as 1817, Jackson wrote to Monroe:

I have long viewed treaties with the Indians as an absurdity not to be reconciled to the principles of our Government. The Indians are subjects of the United States, inhabiting its territory and acknowledging its sovereignty, then is it not absurd for the sovereign to negotiate by treaty with the subject—I have always thought, that Congress had as much right to regulate by acts of Legislation all Indian concerns as they had of Territories. ... I would therefore contend that the Legislature of the Union have [*sic*] the right to prescribe their bounds at pleasure, and provide for their wants and whenever the safety, interest, or defence of the country should render it necessary for the Government of the United State to occupy and possess any part of the Territory, used by them for hunting, they have the right to take it and dispose of it.⁸

⁶ "Message from President Monroe on Indian Removal, January 27, 1925," in *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 39.

⁷ "State of the Union Address, James Monroe, December 7, 1924," State of the Union website, <http://stateoftheunion.onetwothree.net/texts/18241207.html>. Accessed September 7, 2020. Emphasis added.

⁸ "Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, March 4, 1817," in *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, vol. 4, 1816-1820, ed. Harold D. Moser, David R. Hoth, and George E. Hoemann (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 95.

The suggestion that all Indian claims to land ownership could simply be swept aside may have been radical in 1817, but soon it was widely repeated in southeastern states. Jackson became a populist hero over the course of the next decade, and in 1828 he was elected president, capturing fifteen states to the incumbent's nine. In his first annual message to Congress, Jackson proposed relocating the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Creek to lands west of the Mississippi River, beyond any state or territory; if any opted to "remain within the limits of the States they must be subject to their laws."⁹ He made it abundantly clear to Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama—the states bordering the so-called Civilized Tribes—that he supported their entry into Indian territories. Some believe that he told Georgia to increase pressure on the Cherokee until they were forced to leave. The discovery of gold on Cherokee land in 1829 made this a fait accompli. Hundreds of prospectors—perhaps as many as 2,500—stampeded in, destroying riverbeds, mountainsides, and forests in search of the precious metal.

Discussion Questions

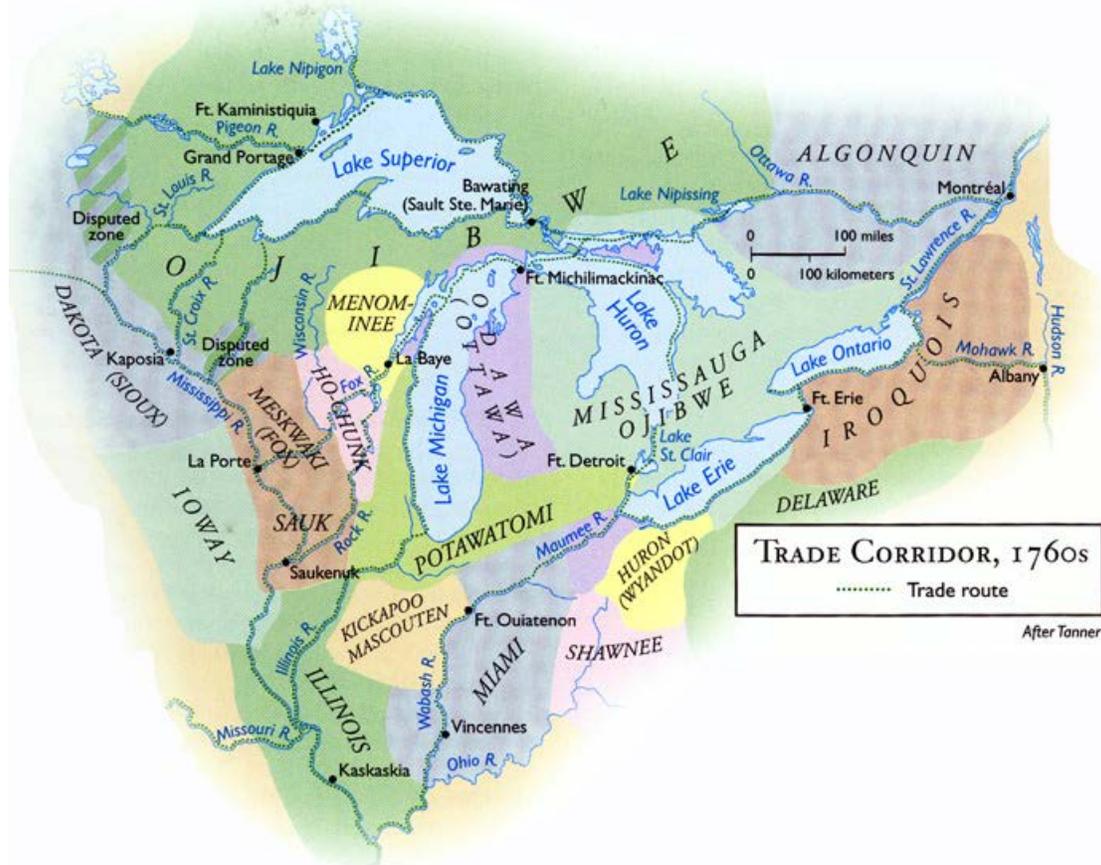
Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Why did President James Monroe and many other European Americans believe that Native Americans needed their own lands?
2. In the eyes of US leaders, what options were available to American Indians who survived contact with white settlers and "civilization"?
3. What arguments were used to support the idea of Indian removal?
4. Compare the thinking of James Monroe and Andrew Jackson on the subject of Native Americans. What did they see as the proper relationship between Natives and the American government?

⁹ "Andrew Jackson, December 8, 1829, First Annual Message," The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-3>. Accessed September 7, 2020.

Reading 4.2

The First and Second Treaties of Chicago (1821, 1833)



The Potawatomi, originally located in southern lower Michigan and southeast Wisconsin, ceded most of their lands to European settlers in the first and second Treaties of Chicago (1821 and 1833). The Potawatomi received promises of cash payments and tracts of land west of the Mississippi River in return.

(Courtesy of Randall Schaetzl by means of the GEO 333 website, <http://geo.msu.edu/extra/geogmich>.)

Oral tradition suggests that the Anishinaabe peoples (who shared the Algonquian languages) lived along the Atlantic seaboard before the arrival of Europeans in the New World, but for spiritual reasons, they moved inland. Some of them, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations, formed the Three Fires Confederation (sometimes known as the United Nations of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi Indians), within which each nation had a specific role. Conflicts with the Northeast Haudenosaunee and settlers pushed these groups farther

west to the Great Lakes region. By 1665, most of the Potawatomi were living east of Green Bay. Bands later spread to what are today Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and southern Canada.

Separated into various communities but united by tradition, several tribes attempted to preserve a connection to their birthplace by ceding enormous land tracts to the American government. The Ojibwe of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota had traded their vast homeland for a number of small reservations. Intense rounds of talks between the Potawatomi band known as the Gun Lake Tribe and the governor of the Michigan Territory, Lewis Cass, yielded the first Treaty of Chicago (1821). In return for a massive land cession in the Michigan Territory, today the Gun Lake Tribe retains a small tract of land in downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Even after they had settled on formally granted reservation lands, some Potawatomi bands were forced to move yet again. A few small groups stayed in Michigan, despite many efforts to remove them. Some fled to Canada. Most were forced to move west under the deplorable terms of the Second Chicago Treaty (1833), a cession total five million acres of Michigan lands.

Metea (Mdewé in Potawatomi), a Potawatomi chief, offered the following speech on the occasion of the first Treaty of Chicago, speaking directly to Governor Cass:

We meet you here to-day, because we had promised it, to tell you our minds, and what we have agreed upon among ourselves. You will listen to us with a good mind, and believe what we say. You know that we first came to this country, a long time ago, and when we sat ourselves down upon it, we met with a great many hardships and difficulties. Our country was then very large; but it has dwindled away to a small spot, and you wish to purchase that! This has caused us to reflect much upon what you have told us; and we have, therefore, brought all the chiefs and warriors, and the young men and women and children of our tribe, that one part may not do what the others object to, and that all may be witness of what is going forward. You know your children. Since you first came among them, they have listened to your words with an attentive

ear, and have always hearkened to your counsels. Whenever you have had a proposal to make to us, whenever you have had a favor to ask of us, we have always lent a favorable ear, and our invariable answer has been 'yes.' This you know! A long time has passed since we first came upon our lands, and our old people have all sunk into their graves. They had sense. We are all young and foolish, and do not wish to do any thing that they would not approve, were they living. We are fearful we shall offend their spirits, if we sell our lands; and we are fearful we shall offend you, if we do *not* sell them. This has caused us great perplexity of thought, because we have counselled among ourselves, and do not know how we can part with the land. Our country was given to us by the Great Spirit, who gave it to us to hunt upon, to make our cornfields upon, to live upon, and to make down our beds upon when we die. And he would never forgive us, should we bargain it away. When you first spoke to us for lands at St. Mary's, we said we had a little, and agreed to sell you a piece of it; but we told you we could spare no more. Now you ask us again. You are never satisfied! We have sold you a great tract of land, already; but it is not enough! We sold it to you for the benefit of your children, to farm and to live upon. We have now but little left. We shall want it all for ourselves. We know not how long we may live, and we wish to have some lands for our children to hunt upon. You are gradually taking away our hunting-grounds. Your children are driving us before them. We are growing uneasy. What lands you have, you may retain forever; but we shall sell no more. You think, perhaps, that I speak in passion; but my heart is good towards you. I speak like one of your own children. I am an Indian, a red-skin, and live by hunting and fishing, but my country is already too small; and I do not know how to bring up my children, if I give it all away. ... The Great Spirit, who has provided it for our use, allows us to keep it, to bring up our young men and support our families. We should incur his anger, if we bartered it away. If we had more land, you should get more; but our land has been wasting away ever since the white people became our neighbors, and we have now hardly enough left to cover the bones of our tribe. You are in the midst of your red children. What is due to us in money, we wish, and will receive at this place; and we want nothing more. We all shake hands with you. Behold our warriors, our women, and children. Take pity on us and on our words.¹⁰

¹⁰ James-Silk Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, vol. 3, (London: Fisher, Son & Co., 1842), 258-60.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What is the attitude of the Three Fires Confederation, represented by Metea, toward Lewis Cass?
2. What is the tone of the speech made by Metea? How do you think his hearers reacted?
3. How are important decisions made by the Three Fires Confederation? What are the consequences of this approach?
4. What sense of the Great Spirit do you get from this appeal?

Reading 4.3

Fighting for Sovereignty through Acculturation

In 1953 scholar Roy Harvey Pearce observed that “universally Americans could see the Indian only as a hunter” and thus as backward.¹¹ This idea sat well, he argued, with European notions about human evolution. Such schools of thought cast the Indian as an obstacle to human development, his vast hunting grounds wasteful when compared to the land needed for modern farming. In truth, many Native nations practiced agriculture and lived in villages long before 1492. Moreover, by the late 1700s, trade with Europeans was extensively practiced and European cultivation methods and technology were widely adopted.¹²

Among the nations that heeded the call to “civilize” were the tribes of the Southeast. Known informally as the Civilized Tribes, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole made significant adjustments to their way of life; they adopted not only modern farming, ranching, and various artisanal tools such as spinning wheels and looms, but (in some cases) Western education, religion, and cultural attitudes too.

¹¹ Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), 66.

¹² For an extensive discussion of Indian diplomacy, rules, and practices, see Colin G. Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft: Treaty and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 1.

A writing system for the Cherokee language was created in 1821 by the Cherokee Sequoyah, and before long, many members of the nation became literate.

Gallegina Uwati was born in 1802 to a family of Cherokee leaders. He was a nephew of Major Ridge and a cousin of John Ridge. Gallegina was educated in missionary schools, including the famous Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut. After meeting a former Congressman for the state of New Jersey named Elias Boudinot, Gallegina took the name Boudinot as his own. In 1820 he converted to Christianity. Like others in his family, Boudinot ardently believed that it was only through rapid acculturation (he himself married a white woman) that American Indians could survive the settling of the continent.¹³

A writing system for the Cherokee language was created in 1821 by the Cherokee Sequoyah (a blacksmith with the English name George Gist), and before long, many members of the nation became literate. In 1828 the Cherokee published the first American Indian newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Boudinot became its editor and used his pulpit to issue regular attacks against removal.

In 1826, two years before he became the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, he wrote an address staking out the claims that American Indians might make to achievements on a par with those of whites. He asked almost rhetorically, “What is an Indian? Is he not formed of the same materials with yourself?” And he added, citing the scriptures, “Of one blood God created all nations.” He then went on to describe the changes the Cherokees had made, to further prove his point:

It cannot be doubted that the nation is improving, rapidly improving in all those particulars which must finally constitute the inhabitants an industrious and intelligent people.

¹³ Students of minority interactions with dominant cultures reject the term *assimilation*, preferring the term *acculturation*, which implies an adaptation to the dominant culture whereby the minority retains significant elements of its culture and agency.

It is a matter of surprise to me ... that the Cherokees have advanced so far and so rapidly in civilization. But there are yet powerful obstacles, both within and without, to be surmounted in the march of improvement. The prejudices in regard to them in the general community are strong and lasting. The evil effects of their intercourse with their immediate white neighbors, who differ from them chiefly in name, are easily to be seen. ... In defiance, however, of these obstacles the Cherokees have improved and are rapidly improving. ...

In 1810 there were 19,500 cattle; 6,100 horses; 19,600 swine; 1,037 sheep; 467 looms; 1,600 spinning wheels; 30 waggons; 500 ploughs; 3 saw-mills; 13 grist-mills &c. At this time there are 22,000 cattle; 7,600 horses; 46,000 swine; 2,500 sheep; 762 looms; 2,488 spinning wheels; 172 waggons; 2,943 ploughs; 10 saw-mills; 31 grist-mills; 62 Blacksmith-shops; 8 cotton machines; 18 schools; 18 ferries; and a number of public roads. In one district there were, last winter ... 11 different periodical papers both religious and political, which were taken and read. On the public roads there are many decent Inns, and few houses for convenience, &c., would disgrace any country. Most of the schools are under the care and tuition of christian missionaries, of different denominations, who have been of great service to the nation, by inculcating moral and religious principles into the minds of the rising generation. ... Indeed it may be said with truth, that among no heathen people has the faithful minister of God experienced greater success, greater reward for his labour, than in this. He is surrounded by attentive hearers, the words which flow from his lips are not spent in vain. The Cherokees have had no established religion of their own, and perhaps to this circumstance we may attribute, in part, the facilities with which missionaries have pursued their ends. They cannot be called idolaters; for they never worshipped Images. They believed in a Supreme Being, the Creator of all, the God of the white, the red, and the black man. They also believed in the existence of an evil spirit who resided, as thought, in the setting sun, the future place of all who in their life time had done iniquitously. Their prayers were addressed alone to the Supreme Being, and which if written would fill a large volume, and display much sincerity, beauty and sublimity.¹⁴

¹⁴ Elias Boudinot, "An Address to the Whites, Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, on the 26th of May, 1826," in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Purdue (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 72-73.

The Cherokee also drew up a constitution (1827) similar to that of the United States. They developed schools, a court system, and other civic institutions befitting a sovereign state. They signaled that the nation aspired to remain sovereign throughout its land, managing its affairs in the same way American states did. While some followed the traditional ways, many Cherokee were so radically transformed that they resembled their white neighbors—from sewing needlepoint to saying grace before meals. But these revolutionary transformations were dismissed by the white Georgians who coveted the Cherokee’s rich land. A popular song in Georgia at the time included these lines:

All I ask in this creation
Is a pretty little wife and a big plantation
Way up yonder in the Cherokee Nation.¹⁵

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What do you think Boudinot was trying to accomplish in this essay?
2. Why was it important for the Cherokee to draw up a foundational legal document similar to the US Constitution?
3. What does the word “civilization” mean in the context of this document?
4. What sorts of accomplishments are emphasized? What sorts of things are not mentioned?

¹⁵ Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, ed., *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1995), 91.

Reading 4.4

Debating the Removal Act

When Andrew Jackson assumed the office of president in 1829, no one was happier than settlers eyeing western territories. Aggressive westward expansion had been a central pillar of Jackson's campaign. A keystone piece of legislation implemented by President Jackson was the Indian Removal Act, narrowly approved by Congress in May 1830. The eastern press waged an all-out war on the bill—in vain. During Jackson's State of the Union address, delivered on December 6, 1830, he celebrated the new legislation:

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government ... in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements, is approaching to a happy consummation. ...

It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments, on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. ... It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way, and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government, and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits, and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community. ...

Towards the aborigines of the country no one can indulge a more friendly feeling than myself, or would go further in attempting to reclaim them from their wandering habits, and make them a happy, prosperous people. ...

With a full understanding of the subject, the Choctaw and the Chickasaw tribes have, with great unanimity, determined to avail themselves of the liberal offers presented by the act of Congress, and have agreed to remove beyond the Mississippi River. Treaties have been made with them. ... They give the Indians a liberal sum in consideration of their removal, and comfortable subsistence on their arrival at their new homes. If it be their real interest to maintain a separate

existence, they will there be at liberty to do so without the inconveniences and vexations to which they would unavoidably have been subject in Alabama and Mississippi.

Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country; and philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it. But its progress has never for a moment been arrested; and, one by one, have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. To follow to the tomb the last of his race, and to tread on the graves of extinct nations, excite melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes, as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another. ...

Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did, or than our children are now doing? ... How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the west on such conditions!¹⁶

In Congress, southern white politicians supported Jackson's colonial ambition. With a combination of "humanism" and self-interest, they argued for the deportation of tens of thousands of Indians to "save" them from Western civilization, while at the same time seeking to expand southern slave-operated cotton plantations westward. Progressive representatives (primarily from the Northeast) were quick to expose their hypocrisy and the extraordinary inhumanity of the deportation, only to be criticized for their own treatment of American Indians a few decades earlier in the Northeast. "And yet," argues historian Claudio Saunt, "drawing in part on the discourse of indigenous activists, the petitions [were] also deeply radical," calling the settlers "invaders" and insisting "that indigenous peoples had a perfect right, by possession from time immemorial, to their lands."¹⁷

¹⁶ President Jackson's Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, in *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States ... December 6, 1830* (Washington, DC: Duff Green, 1830), 25-27.

¹⁷ Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, 66-67.

Jackson's language contrasts sharply with that used six months earlier by Edward Everett, a congressman from Massachusetts, who bitterly admonished the president for the measures he proposed:

The evil, Sir, is enormous; the violence is extreme; the breach of public faith deplorable; the inevitable suffering incalculable. Do not stain the fair fame of the country. ... Nations of dependent Indians, against their will, under color of law, are driven from their homes into the wilderness. You cannot explain it, you cannot reason it away. The subtleties which satisfy you will not satisfy the severe judgment of enlightened Europe. Our friends there will view this measure with sorrow, and our enemies alone with joy. And we ourselves, Sir, when the interests and passions of the day are past, shall look back upon it, I fear, with self-reproach, and a regret as bitter as unavailing.¹⁸

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Who, according to Andrew Jackson, stood to gain from the separation of American Indians from settlers? Explain why.
2. Jackson, like many others at the time, condemned the destruction of Native peoples. He presented removal as a way to prevent the further destruction of Native peoples. Explain how.
3. Edward Everett suggested that the Indian Removal Act be viewed from a foreign point of view (European). Why? And why would that point of view be so different?

¹⁸ "The Substance of the Speech of the Hon. Edward Everett," *Speeches on the Passage of the Bill for the Removal of the Indians, Delivered in the Congress of the United States, April and May, 1830* (Boston: Perkins and Marvin, 1830), 299.

Reading 4.5**Resisting in Court—
Rulings of the First Chief Justice**

Georgia, supported by President Jackson, led the southern states in an effort to deport Indian nations from their homelands. The insincerity of the situation could not have been starker: The states that continued to cruelly subjugate African slaves (against a growing national opposition) also claimed their “freedom” to impose their laws well beyond their borders without federal intervention. Indeed, as historian Saunt argues, “The anxieties of white southerners about their tenuous control of hundreds of thousands of enslaved people were surpassed only by their interest in profiting from native dispossession.”¹⁹

Resistance to forced removal soon became violent, as nations like the Florida Seminole rejected the barren land offered to them west of the Mississippi. They stood their ground and were dragged into a war with the United States, which refused to accept “no” for its questionable generosity. (The outcome of this costly war of aggression was equally questionable, as at least several hundred Seminoles remain in Florida to this day.) The same situation occurred with the Creeks of Alabama, who ceded more than 20 million acres of land in Alabama and Georgia only to find their remaining land barraged by white settlers. The

**In 1831,
representatives
of the Cherokee
nation turned to
the Supreme
Court.**

latter attacked them and defrauded or stole their treaty-guaranteed lands. Responding to Creek resistance to the widespread injustice, Jackson mobilized US troops and Alabaman and Georgian militiamen to quash the uprising and expel the defeated Creek west, as he intended to do since his election, in Second Creek War (1836–37).

In 1831, when the state government of Georgia infringed on Cherokee lands, representatives of the Cherokee nation turned to the Supreme Court. Presiding over the case was Chief Justice John Marshall.

¹⁹ Saunt, *Unworthy Republic*, 245.

The Cherokee claimed the status of a foreign nation. Former attorney general William Wirt presented the plaintiffs' case: "They have been true and faithful to us and have a right to expect a corresponding fidelity on our part. Through a long course of years they have followed our counsel with the docility of children. *Our* wish has been *their* law. We asked them to become civilized, and they became so."²⁰

John Ridge, a leading member of the Cherokee National Council, repeated the same argument to an audience in Philadelphia in 1832:

You asked us to throw off the hunter and warrior state: We did so—you asked us to form a republican government: We did so—adopting your own as a model. You asked us to cultivate the earth, and learn the mechanic arts: We did so. You asked us to learn to read: We did so. You asked us to cast away our idols, and worship your God: We did so.²¹

Though sympathetic to the plight of the Cherokee, Marshall argued in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* that the Constitution regarded Indian nations as "domestic dependent nations." This precedent markedly undermined Native independence. Since the Cherokee were neither a foreign nation nor US citizens, Marshall declined to hear the case. Meanwhile, Congress deliberated President Jackson's removal bill. The bill's narrow passage proved that "civilization" did not protect Natives from the private interests and racial prejudices of US citizens.

The Cherokee soon devised another strategy. Samuel Worcester, a US citizen and longtime friend of the Cherokee, agreed to work with the nation. A practitioner of civil disobedience before Thoreau had the chance to describe it, Worcester was a missionary who had previously collaborated with Elias Boudinot in publishing the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Acting according to plan, Worcester and other missionaries were arrested for refusing to obtain a license from Georgia in

²⁰ John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 241.

²¹ Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1970), 234.

order to live on Cherokee land. Since he was a United States citizen, American courts were obliged to hear the case. When *Worcester v. Georgia* reached the Supreme Court, almost precisely one year after *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, the court reversed its previous ruling, finding in favor of Worcester and the Cherokee nation. The court ruled that by invading Cherokee lands and imposing its laws on Georgians (Indigenous or otherwise), the State of Georgia had violated previous treaties with the Cherokee and contravened the US Constitution, which authorized only the federal government to negotiate with Indian nations. Citing existing treaties with the Cherokee, Marshall wrote in his ruling that the Treaty of Holston (1791) “explicitly recogni[z]ed the national character of the Cherokees, and their right of self-government.” He firmly declared:

The treaties and laws of the United States contemplate the Indian territory as completely separated from that of the states; and provide that all intercourse with them shall be carried on exclusively by the government of the union. ...

The Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities, retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil, from time immemorial. ... The constitution, by declaring treaties already made, as well as those to be made, to be the supreme law of the land, has adopted and sanctioned the previous treaties with the Indian nations, and consequently admits their rank among those powers who are capable of making treaties. ...

The Cherokee nation, then, is a distinct community occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent of the Cherokees themselves, or in conformity with treaties, and with the acts of congress. The whole intercourse between the United States and this nation, is, by our constitution and laws, vested in the government of the United States.

The act of the State of Georgia, under which the plaintiff in error was prosecuted, is consequently void, and the judgment a nullity.²²

²² *Worcester v. Georgia*, 31 U.S. 515 (1832), Justia website, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/31/515>. Accessed September 7, 2020.

Worcester v. Georgia upheld tribal sovereignty (albeit limited) and would long be a point of reference for American Indian political claims. The ruling was clear: only the federal government could have official dealings with American Indians.

President Jackson made it clear that he had no intention of enforcing the decision. He ignored the Constitution, which gave the Supreme Court the power to decide matters of tribal rights. It is alleged that he said, “John Marshall made his decision: *now let him enforce it!*”²³ Georgia’s Supreme Court and governor understood. Shortly after the decision was announced, when gold was discovered on Cherokee lands in Georgia, the state arranged a lottery to divide the territory among settlers. A land rush followed: squatters, farmers, and gold prospectors charged in and seized Native land. All the while, the Cherokee vainly worked to resist their influx, exhausting all legal options. Thumbing its nose to the Supreme Court, and with the tacit support of a sitting president, Georgia effectively annexed the Cherokee country.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What does *sovereignty* mean? What does *national independence* mean? Look these terms up. Why do Native people demand them?
2. According to Chief Justice John Marshall, what was stopping Georgia from imposing its laws on the Cherokee? Why did he rule that Georgia had broken federal law?
3. According to Justice Marshall, what category did Native nations fall under, according to US law? In your opinion, what might be the long-term consequences of Marshall’s ruling for the legal status of Indian nations?
4. When he ignored the Supreme Court’s ruling on *Worcester v. Georgia*, what basic Constitutional principle did President Jackson violate? How could this have affected the power shared by the three branches of the federal government?

²³ Edward A. Mills, “After John Marshall’s Decision: *Worcester v. Georgian* and the Nullification Crisis,” in *The Trail of Tears*, by Sally Senzell Isaacs (Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2004), 283.

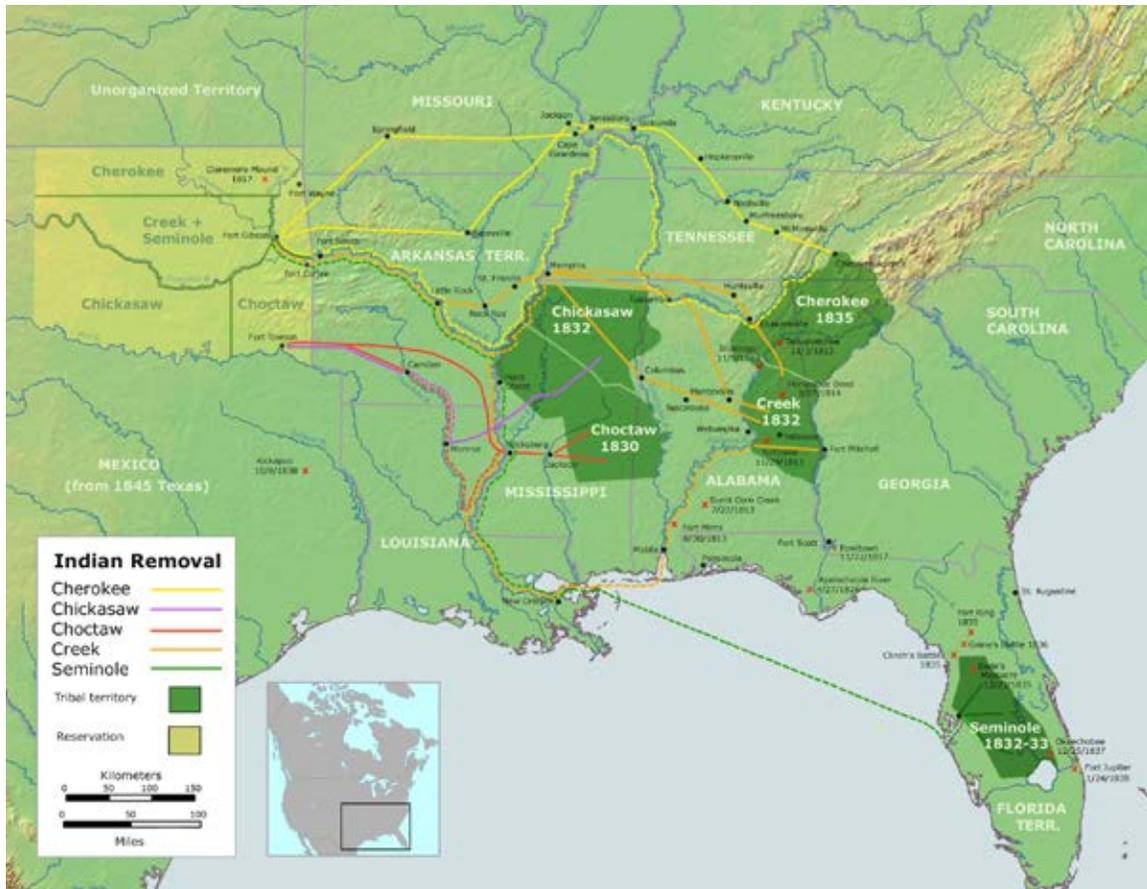
Reading 4.6**The Trail of Tears**

While some Native leaders reacted furiously to the passage of the Indian Removal Act, a minority concluded that the time had come to strike a deal—different reactions could happen within the same family, let alone the same nation. Consider the Cherokee. John Ross, the nation’s principal chief, continued to resist removal through the courts and shuttle diplomacy with Washington. But he now found firm opponents in his former partners, John Ridge (his father and veteran Cherokee leader), Major Ridge, and Elias Boudinot, who all accepted the federal government’s offer for moving the Cherokee off their land. Ridge, who was not an elected chief, and twenty others (“the Removal Party”) met with US government representatives General William Carroll and John F. Schermerhorn. On December 29, 1835, the Removal Party signed the Treaty of New Echota. In exchange for \$5.5 million, the Cherokee would give up their claim to lands in the Southeast and settle in the newly formed “Indian Territory” in present-day Oklahoma. As with so many previous treaties, the Native signatories had no authority; they acted without authorization from the Cherokee tribal council. Indeed, Cherokee laws banned the sale of tribal lands; the prescribed punishment was death.

The first wave of refugees headed west voluntarily, led by Major Ridge.

In 1835, the Removal Party signed the Treaty of New Echota. As with so many previous treaties, the Native signatories had no authority.

When the period allocated for voluntary removal expired in May 1838, General Winfield Scott and the seven thousand soldiers serving under him began to remove those who refused to leave—that is, most of the Cherokee nation—by force. Unprepared, terrified, and angry, the Cherokee were pushed off their lands in Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina; rounded up; and forced to construct rude camps in Tennessee and Alabama. They had already sown their beans and corn in the false belief that they would be home for the harvest.



“The Trail of Tears” was the name the Cherokee gave to their forced relocation from the southeastern United States to the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). US government authorities forced about sixty thousand Native Americans to leave their ancestral homelands and endure the long trek to their newly designated land. Thousands died along the way from exposure to the elements, starvation, and disease.

Background map courtesy of Demis, <http://www.demis.nl>, and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4: *History of Indian-White Relations*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.

Once the Cherokees had been rounded up, the US Army forced more than thirteen thousand people on a long, dangerous westward march. The heat was stifling, and disease spread quickly among the detainees; many died even before the march started. When it became clear just how disastrous a summer removal would be, it was postponed until the fall. Yet the filthy, crowded camps may have been more hazardous than the road.

Then removal began in earnest. Throughout October and early November, thirteen different parties left their camps and began their journey. Mistrustful of transport along waterways, most of the Cherokee chose to make the thousand-

mile journey on foot via the so-called Northern Route (see the “Trail of Tears” map provided). At first, the heat was unbearable; then rain turned the dirt roads to endless mud, unpassable for supply wagons. As soon as the rain let up, cold weather set in. Standing on the east bank of the Mississippi, the convoy faced a new challenge: the ice formed on the river was too thick for the ferryboats to break through but not thick enough to support wagons, beasts of burden, and people. When the river ice finally broke up, floating chunks damaged the ferries, threatening to upend them and their human cargo.

After four months of wretched travel, the emaciated caravans finally arrived in their new lands. Many had died along the way and few were properly buried properly. Evan Jones was a white Baptist missionary who refused to abandon his Cherokee congregation. In his letters to the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, he provided a firsthand account of the deportation of the Cherokee Nation:

May 21

Our minds have, of late, been in a state of intense anxiety and agitation. The 24th of May is rapidly approaching. The major-general [i.e., Winfield Scott] has arrived, and issued his summons, declaring that every man, woman and child of the Cherokees must be on their way to the west before another moon shall pass. The troops, by thousands, are assembling around the devoted victims. The Cherokees, in the mean time, apprized of all that is doing, wait the result of these terrific preparations, with feelings not to be described.

Camp Hetzel, near Cleveland, June 16

The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners. They have been dragged from their houses, and encamped at the forts and military posts, all over the nation. In Georgia, especially, multitudes were allowed no time to take any thing with them, except the clothes they had on. Well-furnished houses were left a prey to plunderers, who, like hungry wolves, follow in the train of the captors. These wretches rifle the houses, and strip the helpless, unoffending owners of all they have on earth. Females, who have been habituated to comforts and comparative affluence, are driven on foot before the bayonets of brutal men. Their feelings are mortified by vulgar and profane vociferations. It is a painful sight. The property of many has been taken, and sold before their eyes for

almost nothing—the sellers and buyers, in many cases, being combined to cheat the poor Indians. These things are done at the instant of arrest and consternation; the soldiers standing by, with their arms in hand, impatient to go on with their work, could give little time to transact business. ... Many of the Cherokees, who, a few days ago, were in comfortable circumstances, are now victims of abject poverty. Some, who have been allowed to return home, under passport, to inquire after their property, have found their cattle, horses, swine, farming-tools, and house-furniture all gone. ...

They are prisoners, without a crime to justify the fact. ...

The principal Cherokees have sent a petition to Gen. Scott, begging most earnestly that they may not be sent off to the west till the sickly season is over. They have not received any answer yet.

July 10

The work of war in time of peace, is commenced in the Georgia part of the Cherokee nation, and is carried on, in most cases, in the most unfeeling and brutal manner; no regard being paid to the orders of the commanding General, in regard to humane treatment of the Indians. I have heard of only one officer in Georgia, (I hope there are more,) who manifests any thing like humanity, in his treatment of this persecuted people.

The work of capturing being completed, and about 3,000 sent off, the General has agreed to suspend the further transportation of the captives till the first of September. This arrangement, though but a small favor, diffused universal joy through the camps of the prisoners.

[July] 11

I have omitted till now to say that as soon as General Scott agreed to suspend the transportation of the prisoners till autumn, I accompanied brother Bushyhead, who, by permission of the General, carried a message from the chiefs to those Cherokees who had evaded the troops by flight to the mountains. We had no difficulty in finding them. They all agreed to come in, on our advice, and surrender themselves to the forces of the United States; though, with the whole nation, they are still as strenuously opposed to the treaty [of New Echota] as ever. Their submission, therefore, is not to be viewed

as an acquiescence in the principles or the terms of the treaty; but merely as yielding to the physical force of the U. States.

On our way, we met a detachment of 1,300 prisoners. As I took some of them by the hand, the tears gushed from their eyes. Their hearts, however, were cheered to see us, and to hear a word of consolation. Many members of the church were among them. At Fort Butler, we found a company of 300, just arrived from the mountains, on their way to the general depot, at the Agency. Several of our members were among these also. I believe the Christians, the salt of the earth, are pretty generally distributed among the several detachments of prisoners, and these Christians maintain among themselves the stated worship of God, in the sight of their pagan brethren, and of the white heathens who guard them. ...

Little Prairie, Missouri, Dec. 30, 1838

We have now been on our road to Arkansas seventy-five days, and have travelled five hundred and twenty-nine miles. We are still nearly three hundred miles short of our destination. We have been greatly favored by the kind providence of our heavenly Father. We have as yet met with no serious accident, and have been detained only two days by bad weather. It has, however, been exceedingly cold for some time past, which renders the condition of those who are but thinly clad, very uncomfortable. In order, however, to counteract the effects of the severity of the weather in some degree, we have, since the cold set in so severely, sent on a company every morning, to make fires along the road, at short intervals. This we have found a great alleviation to the sufferings of the people. ...

I am afraid that, with all the care that can be exercised with the various detachments, there will be an immense amount of suffering, and loss of life attending the removal. Great numbers of the old, the young, and the infirm, will inevitably be sacrificed. And the fact that the removal is effected by coercion, makes it the more galling to the feelings of the survivors.²⁴

²⁴ Rev. Evan Jones, "Cherokees. Extracts from the Letters of Mr. Jones," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 18 (1838): 236-38; "Cherokees," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 19 (1939): 89.

Dr. Elizur Butler, a missionary physician who, like Rev. Jones, accompanied the Cherokees and cared for the sick American Indians and enslaved Africans during the traitorous journey to Indian Territory, estimated that more than four thousand people died. The Cherokee called it the “Trail of Tears”; the name has survived.

Historian Colin Calloway describes the Cherokee removal as “illegal” and “self-serving” on the part of the US government. He argues that in the Treaty of New Echota, “twenty Cherokees signed away the tribal homeland in exchange for \$5 million and lands in the West ... in clear defiance of the will of the majority of the Cherokee.” The treaty, he continued, gave the United States justification to “relocate the Cherokees beyond the Mississippi” and had the effect of “plung[ing] the Cherokee Nation into enduring internal conflict,” leading to the death of the removal party’s leaders and many others: In 1839, shortly after arriving in their new territory, Major Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and other signatories to the Treaty of New Echota were assassinated by fellow Cherokees for selling Cherokee land.²⁵

The Indian Removal Act was catastrophic for the eastern tribes. Some eighty thousand American Indians (including their African slaves) were forced to relocate to Oklahoma between 1831 and 1842. In the process, the United States dispossessed them of twenty-five million acres, which contributed dramatically to the expansion of Southern slavery. In return, Indian tribes received small plots of mostly undesired land to settle as “reservations.” The process of forced removal and the creation of reservations continued well into the 1890s.

... “twenty Cherokees signed away the tribal homeland in exchange for \$5 million and lands in the West ... in clear defiance of the will of the majority of the Cherokee.”

²⁵ Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft*, lxiv.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What does the document tell us about what happened to the Cherokee people *before* the march even began? Why does Reverend Jones call the people on the journey “prisoners”?
2. What were some of the challenges that the Cherokee faced on the journey? Does it appear that the government was prepared to support them?
3. Whom does Jones hold responsible for the fate of the Cherokee? In your opinion, what were the main factors that contributed to the removal of the Cherokee from their ancestral lands?
4. In his book *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, historian John Ehle wrote, “Also of weight was the hurt in the minds and bones of people taken from their homes, removed from their way of life, their will broken like a twig, their friends dispersed, their family ill” (p. 354). What is he describing here?

Suggested Activity

- Have students select phrases from Reverend Jones’s reports to create a poem that summarizes the experience of the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears.

Indian Boarding Schools in the Age of Assimilation

“There is something greater in life than being like someone else, there is something better in life for the Indian than being like a white man. An imitation is at best a cheap thing and all men of true culture despise it. The Indian must understand the ways of the white race ... but all civilization does not lie in the ways of the white race—far from it.”

— Arthur C. Parker (Seneca),
“The Real Value of Higher Education for the Indian” (1913)

Historical Background

Many tribes underwent the cataclysmic removals that began in the late 1830s and continued into the 1840s. After the Civil War, Native nations were torn apart by massacres, land concessions, and more relocations to desolate reservations. By the 1880s, most of the tribes that had initially resisted the iron grip of the United States had surrendered. Nations that chose to make peace were forced to accept annuities and reservation lands (a complex process that had begun decades earlier) but were spared, for the most part, military violence. Those who chose to fight—the Creek, Lakota, Comanche, Apache, and others—were crushed by overwhelming firepower in a series of wars and genocidal massacres. When gold was discovered in northeastern California in 1848, militias forced American Indians off their land to make room for gold prospectors and the towns that grew up around them, killing thousands of children, women, and men indiscriminately.

By the late nineteenth century, the education of American Indians, long left to Christian missionaries, formally became the responsibility of the federal government.

Formal treaty making ended in 1871. This decision marked the end of the centuries-long tradition of treating Native nations as sovereign bodies. The message from Washington was clear: American Indian tribes must cease to exist as independent cultural and political entities. “They were now deemed wards of the government, a colonized people,” wrote David Wallace Adams.¹ It was time, some policy makers argued, for American Indians to assimilate. Although weakened and dispossessed, many nations continued to resist the political, military, cultural, and ecological pressure to melt into the American pot.

By the late nineteenth century, the education of American Indians, long left to Christian missionaries, formally became the responsibility of the federal government. And after the removals, additional schools appeared in the new Indian enclaves and reservations. In all schools, instruction was primarily delivered by missionaries. Yet while instruction was frequently promised in treaties, high-quality education remained possible only for a small number of prosperous Native families.

As the end of the “Indian Wars” fought in the 1870s came into sight, the process of cultural assimilation, led by the educational branch of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, began in earnest. Having defeated the bodies of the Native people, the United States turned to what it saw as the final frontier: their minds. And reformers were eager to help. Considered progressive and humane by many of their contemporaries, these activists argued that only full assimilation into mainstream American culture and society would stem the decline of American Indians. In the 1870s and 1880s, the assimilationists conceived and began to implement a two-pronged strategy to accomplish this goal. First, those lands held in common by tribes would need to be privatized so that Indians might farm individual parcels, as did the white settlers now living and working on expropriated lands. This process was known as “allotment” or “severalty.” In

¹ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995), 7.

return, American Indians were to receive full citizenship (a status not fully granted until 1924). Second, American Indian children would have to be severed from the influence of the tribes and provided with a Western education, with the goal of assimilating them into mainstream American society. Congress provided the teeth for the “new” approach: In 1882 it authorized the construction of five off-reservation boarding schools. It also approved withholding rations, annuities, and clothing—guaranteed in former treaties—to force parents to send their children to schools (under the 1891 “compulsory attendance” law).

The process of assimilation could only start once the links between American Indians and their past had been removed. Historians call this process “detrribalization.” In an 1892 address entitled “A Plea for the Papoose,” reformer and former Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan offered an argument that had become familiar. Civilization, Morgan explained, could not be achieved without both education and allotment: “A wild Indian requires a thousand acres to roam over, while an intelligent man will find a comfortable support for his family on a very small tract. ... *Barbarism is costly, wasteful and extravagant. Intelligence promotes thrift and increases prosperity.*”²

**In 1882,
Congress
authorized the
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five off-
reservation
boarding
schools.**

In 1887 reformers saw the fruits of their labor when Congress passed the General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Severalty Act, named for Henry L. Dawes, the Massachusetts senator who sponsored the bill). The act allocated 160 acres to every family that chose to leave its tribe and embark on a journey to citizenship and independent farming, protected by US law and the Constitution. Citizenship was in many cases elusive and took decades to achieve. However, the Dawes Act did succeed in its goal of destroying the structure of many tribes while “divesting native people of approximately two-thirds of the property still in

² T. J. Morgan, “A Plea for the Papoose,” *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly* 18, no. 12 (December 1896): 407. Emphasis added.

their possession.”³ Those most directly responsible for disastrous policies realized that a radical approach was needed for assimilation to work. Let’s turn once again to Thomas Morgan, from that same 1892 address:

We have excluded them, have kept alive between them and us bitter antagonisms, and have made of them a peculiar and alien people, rendering it morally impossible for them either to accept of our civilization or to become assimilated with us. At the same time, by the very necessities of our national growth and the expansion of our population, we have deprived them of their natural resources, made it impossible for them to secure a livelihood by fishing and hunting; have destroyed the buffalo. ...

Ought we not to offer them a substitute for all this? And what is that substitute?⁴

As compulsory education expanded into the Native community, some reacted positively. They believed that school would help their children escape poverty. They soon found that the schools were unduly focused on discipline and that the education offered amounted to “industrial training.” It had been assumed that American Indians would aspire only to blue-collar jobs.

Under the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, the Board of Indian Commissioners embraced “aggressive assimilation.”⁵ The board had followed earlier attempts to educate Native Americans, including day schools and boarding schools on the reservations. Early residential schools run by Christian missionaries existed as early as 1754. The first were founded in New England “praying towns,” where refugees from destroyed Native communities gathered in close proximity to their Puritan neighbors. But now, reformers and policy makers decided that all of the earlier schools had been doomed to fail because they kept students in their tribal communities.

³ George E. Tinker, preface to *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*, by Ward Churchill (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004), xvii.

⁴ Morgan, “Plea for the Papoose,” 406.

⁵ Dan Eshet, *Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools* (Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves, 2015), 40–41; Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 69.

A new paradigm had emerged: Richard Henry Pratt's Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The school was destined to serve as the model for American Indian education from the late 1800s until the 1930s and, in some places, the 1970s. A regimented, highly structured curriculum was designed to instill self-reliance, hard work, and discipline; boys would master the principles and practice of farming and craftsmanship, while girls would master domestic work. Adopting the Carlisle Indian Industrial School model and curriculum, by 1902, the federal government funded 25 off-reservation schools with some 6,000 students. According to the Oneida leader Laura (Minnie) Cornelius Kellogg, in 1913, close to the height of the boarding-school movement, there were "357 government schools; 70 of these reservation boarding schools, 35 non-reservation boarding schools, and 223 day schools."⁶ Kellogg indicates that as many as 9,000 Native youths received no formal education at all.

The schools were unduly focused on discipline and that the education offered amounted to "industrial training."

What sorts of differences existed among the three types of the school listed by Kellogg? It appears that teachers and staff at all Indian schools shared a commitment to strict pedagogy and devout Christianity. In an essay published in 1913, Yale-educated anthropologist Arthur C. Parker, who was part white and part Seneca, stated, "The government Indian school is a very low-grade school. It takes Indian pupils to about the eighth grade," leaving them wholly unprepared for higher education or white-collar jobs.⁷

While some attended the off-reservation boarding schools at their parents' suggestion, most students had been forced to enroll by government agents. Either way, for many (though by no means for all) the boarding school experience was traumatic.⁸ Students received a poor education that left them at

a disadvantage in American society; their years away from home left them without the language and culture they would have needed to return to their tribes. Rather than promoting integration, the schools ensured the marginalization of many of their alumni. Despite these negative outcomes, the sheer number of young Indians who passed through the boarding schools permits some to argue that they contributed to pan-Indian solidarity. Certainly the 1900s did witness the rise of Indian consciousness, a sense of shared experience that fed naturally into the drive to reclaim Indian rights, breathe new life into traditional culture, and achieve self-determination.



In a booklet published by the Carlisle Indian School, student Tom Torlino is pictured as he entered the school in 1882 and as he appeared three years later in 1885.

This before-and-after picture was used to raise money for the school and prove the school's "civilizing" effects on Native Americans.

John N. Choate, *Souvenir of the Carlisle Indian School*, 1902,
Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections, CIS-I-0039.

Readings

Reading 5.1

The Case for Indian Boarding Schools

Sited in inhospitable and economically isolated backwaters, Native reservations suffered constant incursions by settlers looking for grazing lands and mineral resources. The government annuities provided in return for land cessions did something to alleviate poverty, but there was no telling when they would arrive; at times they were withheld or embezzled. Progressive reformers grew less concerned about Native independence and more focused on integrating American Indians “humanely” into mainstream society. Reformers tried several approaches, all of which undermined “Indianness”—those traits that made each American Indian nation distinctive. To “civilize” the people of the plains and forests would mean converting them to the dream of progress, to Western values, to Christianity. Education was presented as the key.

In its annual report for 1880, the Board of Indian Commissioners issued the following recommendation:

The most reliable statistics prove conclusively that the Indian population ... instead of dying out under the light and contact of civilization, as has been generally supposed, is steadily increasing. The Indian is evidently destined to live as long as the white race, or until he becomes absorbed and assimilated with his pale brethren.

We hear no longer advocated among really civilized men the theory of extermination, a theory that would disgrace the wildest savage.

As we must have him among us, self-interest, humanity, and Christianity require that we should accept the situation, and go resolutely at work to make him a safe and useful factor in our body politic.

As a savage we cannot tolerate him any more than as a half-civilized parasite, wanderer, or vagabond. The only alternative left is to fit him by education for civilized life. ...

It is this, supplemented and reinforced by a pure morality and the higher principles of Christianity, that is to enable him to resist the old currents of habit, which, like a mighty river, would otherwise sweep him to certain destruction. ...

"...self-interest, humanity, and Christianity require that we should accept the situation..."
— 1880 Board of Indian Commissioners

The nation learned by costly experience that "it was cheaper to feed than to fight the Indian," and the same common sense teaches "it is cheaper to teach than to feed them." Throughout the country is the promise of men and women competent to undertake and carry forward this important work.

The question which now presses for an early solution is, as to the best methods of meeting the demands of the situation.

The practice now largely prevailing of establishing day schools upon the reservations is attended with so many

difficulties as to raise serious doubts of its wisdom or efficiency. These schools have usually scanty and imperfect appointments, presenting a cheerless aspect within and without, better calculated to repress than to stimulate thirst for knowledge in the minds of the young.

Industrial or boarding schools, on the contrary, have achieved most satisfactory results. Here mental training is combined with industrial and mechanical pursuits. ...

If suitable boarding and industrial schools could be established and properly managed, a compulsory attendance of the youth enforced, as is practiced by some of the governments of Europe, the next generation of Indians would unquestionably be found far in advance of what may be expected from many years of schooling under the present, imperfect, and unsatisfactory methods.⁹

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. What led reformers to call for a new educational approach?
2. Why, according to the authors, would American Indians welcome educational reforms? Imagine the reactions of the Indians themselves. What might they have been?
3. What sorts of outcomes did the authors hope industrial schools might produce?
4. What roles were boarding-school graduates expected to serve in their communities?

Reading 5.2

“Kill the Indian in Him, Save the Man”

Before he took up education, Richard Henry Pratt served for more than a decade as a military officer in the US Army. That history cast a long shadow over Indian boarding schools in the following decades. Pratt’s foray into education began in 1875, when he was entrusted with the transfer of seventy-two Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, and Caddo—prisoners taken during the so-called Red River War—to quarters in St. Augustine, Florida. He hatched the idea of turning the prison into an educational experiment, a boarding school where his Indian prisoners would be trained for integration into American life.

Having worked closely with American Indians for years (he oversaw the scouts enlisted in the US Army), Pratt had noticed that when some Natives mixed socially with whites, they became “civilized.” At first glance, Pratt’s role as an educator would seem to be far removed from his previous role as a military captain, but the two roles were not, in fact, so disconnected (as the quote in the title of the reading suggests). His pedagogical philosophy was realized in the most famous of all Indian boarding schools: the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. More than ten thousand students passed through the Pennsylvania school between its opening in 1879 and its closing in 1918.

In 1892 Pratt reflected on the school's achievements. He summarized his approach in the infamous words, "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." One might see Pratt as a fascinating figure, as he expressed great faith in the abilities of many groups whom his contemporaries treated with scorn. But while he meant to convey a humane and progressive pedagogy, his words are bound to strike modern readers as racist:

The Indians under our care remained savage, because forced back upon themselves and away from association with English-speaking and civilized people, and because of our savage example and treatment of them. ...

We have never made any attempt to civilize them with the idea of taking them into the nation, and all of our policies have been against citizenizing and absorbing them. ...

We have another plan thrust upon us which has ... secured the favor of Congress to the extent of vastly increasing appropriations. ... In its execution this means purely tribal schools among the Indians; that is, Indian youth must continue to grow up under the pressure of home surroundings. Individuals are not to be encouraged to get out and see and learn and join the nation. They are not to measure their strength with the other inhabitants of the land, and find out what they do not know, and thus be led to aspire to gain in education, experience, and skill,—those things that they must know in order to become equal to the rest of us. A public-school system especially for the Indians is a tribal system; and this very fact says to them that we believe them to be incompetent, that they must not attempt to cope with us. Such schools build up tribal pride, tribal purposes, and tribal demands upon the government. They formulate the notion that the government owes them a living and vast sums of money; and by improving their education on these lines, but giving no other experience and leading to no aspirations beyond the tribe, leaves them in their chronic condition of helplessness. ...

Purely Indian schools say to the Indians: "You are Indians, and must remain Indians."...

It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the infant white to the savage surroundings, he will grow to possess a savage language, superstition, and habit. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit. ...

The school at Carlisle is an attempt on the part of the government to do this.¹⁰

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

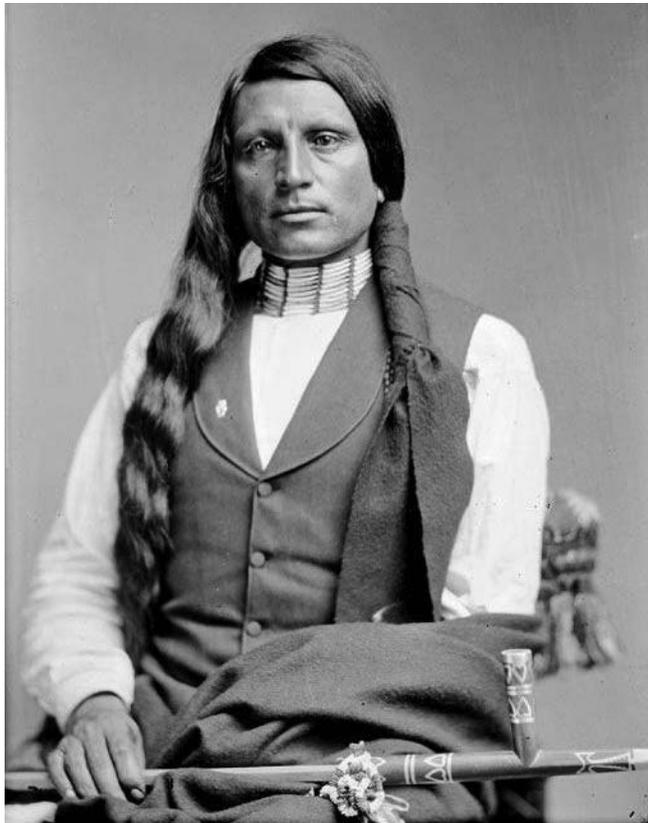
1. What does Richard Henry Pratt mean when he says “Kill the Indian in him, save the man”? Why, in his mind, is this better than other approaches to improve the situation of American Indians?
2. Pratt says, “Purely Indian schools [on the reservations] say to the Indians: ‘You are Indians, and must remain Indians.’” What do you think he means?
3. How does Pratt perceive the relationship between “nature” (genetics) and “nurture” (environment)?

Reading 5.3

First Days

Historian Brenda J. Child studied students who attended three Indian boarding schools: the Flandreau Indian School (South Dakota), the Pipestone Indian School (Minnesota), and the Haskell Institute (Kansas). She showed that many of the students had been forced to leave their families, sometimes by the local police force. In some cases, because tax monies allocated to the schools were based on enrollment, Native children were practically kidnapped to fill classrooms. In other cases, government agents threatened to withhold annuities and supplies (both guaranteed in official treaties) unless parents sent their children to boarding schools.

Upon arrival at the schools, incoming students underwent rituals designed to strip them of their ethnic identities. The idea was to make students look as Western as possible, jump-starting the “civilizing” process. Most found these processes humiliating. First, every student’s hair was cut, partly as a measure against lice and partly to erase part of their Indian identity. Many Native American men and women wore (and still wear) their hair long. This long hair, often braided, can represent pride, a sign of vitality, an extension of the spiritual world, and a connection to the land and tradition. Many cut it only in times of mourning or tragedy. (However, one should of course avoid sweeping generalizations here. Hair meant different things to different nations.) So upsetting was the approach of the scissors that adolescent students were known to rise up in rebellion.



Among many Native Americans, it is believed that hair is a symbol of spiritual strength. It was not common for Native Americans to cut their hair because they viewed it as a something that weakened one’s spiritual health and pride.

While being introduced to a new and regimented lifestyle, every student received a uniform and European boots. Military-style uniforms signaled the disciplinary organization of the schools, compounded by drills and the separation of boys and girls. Every part of the new regimen was calculated to instill discipline, self-control, and obedience.

When interviewed about her experience in a boarding school, Rose Whipple Bluestone (Dakota) elaborated:

When I went those schools were very strict. And we had restricted areas which we had to maintain. It's a borderline, you might say. The boys could not come over on the girl's side; the girls couldn't go over onto the boy's side. And we were marched, mind you, in military style, to school, to meals, to church on Sunday mornings and to the gymnasium for our social hours or our physical education programs. And we had to wear uniforms. We could not be on the grounds there without a government dress. ...

I had to wear, from head to feet, you might say, wore clothes, government clothes—government shoes, government stocking, government underclothing, government dress, government uniform, government coat.¹¹

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Why was it important for the school staff to cut American Indians' hair? Why were students given uniforms?
2. Why was military discipline (marching, uniforms, roll calls, etc.) central to the boarding schools? Why was this strictness enforced so vigorously?
3. How do you think students reacted to the introduction of this military lifestyle?

Reading 5.4

Criticism of the Boarding Schools

Zitkála-Šá (also called Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), a survivor of the boarding school system, made good use of her education. She became a successful writer, musician, and educator. In the excerpt that follows, she describes her first day at school:

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled [i.e., bobbed] hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt.

A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me.

Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English, and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judéwin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes, - my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judéwin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath, and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.¹²

With short hair and Native clothing swapped for Western uniforms, the new arrivals encountered a faculty typically composed of priests and nuns. The first order of business was the choosing of Christian names. While some Native names could readily be translated to English, others could not. Since naming was deeply important in both cultures, the renaming process became an essential part of forced assimilation, a form of christening. Thus a Native child named after a special skill, event, or ancestor in her or his tribal language now became a Mary, Caroline, Charles, George, or Elizabeth—each of which had a distinct Christian meaning. Just like that, the identity of every student in the incoming class had been erased and a rather different new one set up in its place.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. These days, school uniforms are less common than forty years ago. How do uniforms change the school experience?
2. Why, judging by Zitkála-Šá's story, was the cutting of the hair so traumatic for Native students? What did it symbolize for them? What were teachers trying to achieve by cutting students' hair?
3. Why do you think the meal schedule was ruled by bells? Why was it important that everything ran so precisely on time?
4. What does your name mean to you? What is the relationship between names and identity?

¹² Zitkála-Šá, "The School Days of an Indian Girl," *The Atlantic Monthly* 85, no. 508 (February 1900), 186–87.

5. What were the goals of the reformers who championed assimilation? How did Zitkála-Šá's school try to impose them?

Reading 5.5

Attacks on Language

Minor offenses regularly drew swift punishment at the Indian boarding schools; new arrivals soon learned not to be overheard speaking their native language. While some reported continuing to speak their language in private, many gave it up out of fear.

D. J. Battiest-Tomasi (a Choctaw) is a flute player and storyteller; he works as a family counselor and ambassador of his people in Oklahoma, where most members of the Choctaw nation live. In the 1830s, the Choctaw, like the Cherokee we discussed earlier in this guide, were removed from their homeland to what was then designated Indian Territory, an area west of the Mississippi in today's Oklahoma and Arkansas. In a presentation at the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center, Battiest-Tomasi discussed his great-grandmother's experience at a boarding school run by Christian missionaries.

And as soon as we got to the line—Arkansas and Oklahoma—they actually stepped one step over and said, “We will move no further.” In that area was my great-grandmother, who didn't speak English. She understood it a little bit. And then one day the government came in and assist—and in giving her assistance she didn't know she would lose her children. But because they didn't speak English they were put in a boarding school called Dwight Mission [also called the Dwight Indian Training School]. My mother said she wasn't frightened because her dad had worked on a train. So, she wasn't afraid of trains, but her uncles and aunts had never seen a train, and they were terrified. ...

I said, “Mama, what did you do [at school]?” She was about fifth grade. She said most children didn't speak any English at all. So, they were punished if they were caught speaking their language. They were Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminoles, [inaudible], Comanches, Chihuahuas, lots of different tribes,

mostly Cherokee in that part. She said she was around Cherokees so much and heard the language, she thought she was Cherokee. But we're Choctaw and Chickasaw—or Chikta [?] which is the way you pronounce it—and "Chickasaw," who were brothers.

I said, "What was your primer? What was your English book? What did you study?"

**"She said three hours a day they were taught with the Bible, six days a week."
— Battiest-Tomasi, speaking of his great-grandmother**

She said, "It was only a Bible, the King James version of the Bible was our English book."

I couldn't imagine getting through all those "begats," even as a child in a second language. She said three hours a day they were taught with the Bible, six days a week. They didn't on Sunday.

She said, "But we were punished if we were caught speaking our language." And they kids thought they were kind of clever, so you know what they did, they waited until the lights were out at night, and she said languages would just rattle all

through the dorm beds, the little bunk beds. And then the matrons came in and said, "Let's call one for all and all for one. If one of you speaks your language, then all of you will be punished." Some were whipped, but the last time she remembers the punishment, she said it was just that they got them up in the early morning like two or three in the morning and had the children scrubbing wooden floors with toothbrushes on their knees until breakfast. But they didn't talk, and they were quiet it seemed. ... They were quiet, and she said would they try ... They wanted to learn this language now, because this is what was being forced to them, and punished if they didn't, and so maybe they need to try to learn this language. But some of them, they couldn't get it all. And one would know this word, and a few would know this word, and so they decided to try to put their words together. But they had to sneak off, you know, like under the bushes or trees or the fence line where the matrons or ladies or people of authority couldn't hear them.¹³

¹³ "Tim Tingle and D.J. Battiest-Tomasi," Library of Congress webcast, <https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-5229>. Accessed September 3, 2020.

An alumna of the Wrangle Institute, infamous for its harsh treatment of Alaskan Indian students, reflected on the suppression of Native languages and cultures in the boarding schools:

But at home I remember on Christmas we'd sing our songs and our dances and then my cousin was telling me this he said, this one kid from (a village), on Christmas they went into the shower room to sing and they were caught and beaten and whipped for singing their songs—our Athabascan songs. So that was really hard, you know? Not only did I feel like they were taking away our identity, they were taking away our language and our culture and they were trying to make us into another culture that we were not familiar with or at least I wasn't.¹⁴

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Several readings have covered the ban on Native languages at the Indian boarding schools. What were the goals of that policy? How did the students at the Dwight Mission school react to the rule?
2. Are there things you can say in your first or second language that cannot be precisely expressed in a different language?
3. Why is language a vital element of a person's culture? Can a culture exist without a language? (Think of rituals, holidays, prayers, and so on.)
4. Despite the tragic loss of tribal languages, what tools could a common language (such as English) provide American Indians with for their struggle?

Reading 5.6

Regimented Schedule

The schedule below was followed in 1912 at the Cushman Indian Trades School (previously the Puyallup School for Indian Education) in Tacoma, Washington. Terms like “reveille” and “tattoo” would have been more familiar to a soldier than to a student, but they convey a sense of the military atmosphere that “became the norm at government boarding schools.”¹⁵ Reformers thought that running a school like a boot camp would combat the American Indians’ presumed deficiencies in discipline, organization, rationality, and good work habits.

Monday

5:45 A.M.	Reveille.
5:55 to 6:10	Setting Up Exercise & Drill
...	
6:55	Assembly. Roll Call.
7:00	Breakfast.
7:30 to 7:35	Care of teeth.
7:35 to 7:40	Make beds.
...	
8:50	First School Call. Roll Call and Inspection.
9:00	School.
11:30	Recall. Pupils at liberty.
11:55	Assembly and Roll Call.
12:00	Dinner.
12:30	Recreation.
12:50	School and Industrial Call. Inspection.
...	
4:30	... Drill and Gymnasium classes.
5:15	First Call.
5:25	Assembly. Roll Call.
5:30	Supper.
...	
7:25	Roll Call. Inspection.
7:30	Lecture. This period varies in length. Men prominent in education or civic affairs address the pupils.
...	

8:45 Tattoo [a drum or bugle that recalls students to dormitories].
Pupils retire.
8:55 Check.
9:00 Taps.¹⁶

The following is an excerpt from an interview conducted by sociologist K. Tsianina Lomawaima with a graduate of the Chilocco Indian School:

[Question:] Did they have a schedule during the day that you had to follow?

[Answer:] Oh, every second, just about. [Laughter] There wasn't a lot of playtime time really. You got up early in the morning and got dressed, went down in the basement and had roll call, and marched to the dining room. And then from the dining room we went back to our rooms, and we went on our way. There were schedules all *over* the place. [Laughter] You had to have a schedule or you never would know where you belonged. It was very hard when I left there because there were no schedules, there were no bells ringing and no whistles blowing: I didn't know what to do. And I didn't do very well. I couldn't stand noise, because we had to be quiet there. ... And it's hard. And that was too, I think, things that Indians had to cross. A lot of 'em, it was the tribe and growing up where they did, it was hard for them to make the transition to this world. And, too, you had that training at Chilocco, that told you everything to do. That was one of the big complaints that I heard from kids that left Chilocco, especially if they spent a lot of years there.¹⁷

¹⁶ Carolyn J. Marr, "Assimilation through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest," University of Washington website, <https://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr.html>. Accessed September 4, 2020.

¹⁷ K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 122.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

1. Break down the provided schedule according to students' activities. What were the essential parts of a normal day? What do you make of the ratio of work to study?
2. Compare your school schedule with the above schedule. Do you notice any similarities or differences?
3. Identify the military elements of the schedule. Why do you think these were used? What did the boarding school's schedule teach the students?
4. On balance, taking both readings into account, how would you rate the strict schedule adopted by several Indian boarding schools?

Reading 5.7

The Boarding Schools' Long-Term Effects

Many students appreciated the structure of the schools, but the pain of their separation from their homes and families could be acute. Those who had come from far away might not see their parents and siblings for years. Homesick students resisted their schools in several ways. A few attempted to set fire to their schools. Some ran away. For instance, "Carlisle reported 45 runaways in 1901 ... [and] Chilocco a staggering 111 boys and 18 girls ... in 1927."¹⁸

Violent punishments followed the most harmless offenses, and there is growing evidence of rampant sexual abuse in Indian boarding schools in the United States and Canada.¹⁹ Social science research has related the residential schools to long-term trauma (including transgenerational trauma), lower self-esteem, alcoholism, illegal drug use, unemployment, and suicide.

Lynn Eagle Feather (Sicangu Oyate) of Denver, Colorado, is among the survivors of the boarding schools. Her great-great-grandfather, Felix Eagle

¹⁸ Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 59.

Feather, was the first in the family to become a student of the Indian boarding schools. He attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1882, more than 1,400 miles away from his home.



This studio portrait shows Felix Eagle Feather wearing his school uniform. Many of his descendants attended boarding schools much like the Carlisle Indian School.

Portrait of Felix Eagle Feather in school uniform, Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, by John N. Choate. Photo Lot 81-12 06850700, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Note: The following reading deals with sexual abuse. Some descriptions may not be suitable for students.

We didn't have a home. I was born in Rosebud, if you want to call that my home.

My mother abandoned us at the Saint Francis Mission School in Mission, South Dakota, in the early 1960s.²⁰ I was about 6. My sister Janice was about 14 months younger than me.

My mother didn't tell us what she was doing. I saw her filling out the papers and then, all of a sudden, she was gone.

I remember being scared.

²⁰ The St. Francis Indian School was founded by Jesuit priests in 1886. In the 1970s, the Jesuits transferred control of the school to members of the Lakota Nation.

We just huddled on the playground because we didn't know anybody and they were kind of mean to us.

They'd put us out there on the playground in the dark, at night. We had bathrooms inside, but when we were outside playing at night, we had to use the outhouse. And we would be scared to go into the outhouse, 'cause the older girls told us there were ghosts in there.

We were woken up at the crack of dawn by a nun with a huge bell. They don't have bells on the reservation, unless they are their feet dancing.

We had to wear uniforms. We were woken up at the crack of dawn (before the sun came up) by a nun with a huge bell. She would walk up and down the aisles between the beds with this huge bell to wake us up. I mean, we weren't used to that. We're coming from the reservation. They don't have bells on the reservation, unless they are their feet dancing.

In the mornings, I remember brushing our teeth. We would all have to brush our teeth, then go to Mass first before we could eat. Every morning.

I remember the food was nasty. The only good thing was the nuns would make buns for our afternoon snack. Some of the

girls were lucky enough to have parents or family members who would give them peanut butter or jelly to put on their buns. But me and my sister didn't have anybody. So, we would sit and eat our buns without anything on them.

I had a spinal tap done at the school because I was having headaches. I was really sick with a very high fever. I couldn't even walk. I remember collapsing, and the priest picking me up and carrying me into the emergency room.

And after I got out of the hospital, I didn't have my homework done, so the teacher, a nun, hit me on the head with a pair of silver-handled scissors, multiple times. And that was the first time I had ever been hit by anyone in my life.

I was there for a total of maybe four months until they found us a foster home. They kept my sister and I together. The home was horrible.

Later, me and my two younger sisters were forced to go out—they would give us big hats to put on, and we would pick the potato buds off the potato plants. We would pull weeds and hoe. And all the while, my white foster sister would

be sitting inside, eating a bowl of ice cream, watching us work out in the fields. ...²¹

When the molestation started, we complained to the head policewoman in Lincoln, Nebraska, but she did nothing.

They found me years later. They said they caught the abuser abusing someone else and they wanted me to come back and testify against him. And I told them, if you had listened to me and my sisters, that would not have happened to that little girl. He eventually went to prison.

I ran away from foster home when I was 15 and I've been on my own ever since. Don't ask me how I did it. If I had to do it nowadays, I don't think I could.

I didn't have any children 'til I was 18. I am so grateful that the good Lord didn't let me get pregnant when I was still young, because that would have changed everything.

I was abused for years, most of my life. That's why I didn't ever get married. I chose to be on my own.²²

Lynn Eagle Feather's son, Paul Castaway, was killed by police in Denver in July 2015. He suffered from mental disabilities and emotional disturbances. Eagle Feather filed a wrongful-death suit against the policeman who shot her son.

The first boarding schools for Native peoples opened in Alaska in the twentieth century. In a recent study, researchers reported the ordeal of a girl removed from a loving family at the age of five because her village had no primary school. Together with all the community's other children old enough for elementary school, she was sent to the Wrangell Institute, an American Indian boarding school that opened in 1932.²³ Her story demonstrates the devastating effects that an abusive school can have on a young life.

²¹ Information deleted from this part of the document was deemed unsuitable for some students.

²² Cecily Hilleary, "Indian Boarding Schools: One Woman's Tragic, Triumphant Story," *Voice of America*, October 20, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/usa/indian-boarding-schools-one-womans-tragic-triumphant-story>. Accessed September 4, 2020.

²³ The exact dates of her attendance are not provided in the article, but all the interviewees in the study attended the Wrangell Institute from the late 1940s through the early 1980s.

This respondent told of leaving a fully intact and healthy family for a punishing school experience. Her experiences at Wrangell ranged from corporal punishment for speaking her first language to mandatory delousing showers and the abuse of matrons when she used the restroom at night. She attended Wrangell for nine years, and spoke of forgetting what her parents looked like: “Eventually, I didn’t know who my parents were.” After Wrangell, she went to Mt. Edgecumbe [High School] for a year, but did not have a good experience there either. That summer she attempted suicide and was placed in foster care. As a foster child, she attended a local high school and attempted suicide again. This time she was sent to a psychiatric facility. She continued to attend a local high school while living in the psychiatric facility, and eventually was released to another foster home. She ran away from this home, where the adults were neglectful, and was confined to a juvenile detention facility. In the juvenile facility, she suffered an injury—her fingers were cut off in an accident—and she was sent outside to attend a psychiatric care school in the Lower 48. Despite finding herself in yet “another school with the criminals, prostitutes [and] murderers,” she was able to graduate from high school.²⁴

Eventually, this young woman reconnected with her biological family. A healing process helped her regain a sense of self-worth and stability. Many others continue to struggle in this way.

They talked about experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder and social phobias as well as lasting emotional scars. One even talked of contemplating suicide. Several interviewees talked about their own struggles with alcohol abuse that they felt were a direct outcome of their boarding school experience.²⁵

Despite the grim picture painted in these passages, some graduates of the boarding schools went on to successful careers and became leaders in their

²⁴ Diane Hirshberg and Suzanne Sharp, *Thirty Years Later: The Long-Term Effect of Boarding Schools on Alaska Natives and Their Communities* (Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage, 2005), 14-15.

²⁵ Hirshberg and Sharp, “Thirty Years Later: The Long-Term Effect of Boarding Schools on Alaska Natives and Their Communities,” 18.

communities, and quite a few formed a movement to resist US policies, demonstrating resilience in the face of great adversity.

Discussion Questions

Support your answers with evidence from the text.

- 1.** How did boarding school students' separation from their homes and families affect them in the short term and long term? Why did some students want to run away?
- 2.** What boarding school practices most affected students' well-being?
- 3.** Research the term *PTSD*. What does it mean? How is it connected to the long-term effects of the boarding schools on Native communities?

Resilience and Resurgence

“All these stories that we haven’t been telling all this time, that we haven’t been listening to, are just part of what we need to heal. Not that we’re broken. And don’t make the mistake of calling us resilient. To not have been destroyed, to not have given up, to have survived, is no badge of honor. Would you call an attempted murder victim resilient?”

— Tommy Orange, *There* (2018)

From Allotment to the Meriam Report

The next few pages are not designed to summarize the history of American Indians in the 1900s and early 2000s. They are merely a road map to help students and teachers who seek to explore this period. But these pages are also designed to assure the reader that the history of American Indians did not end with the boarding schools or the Wounded Knee Massacre (when US soldiers killed 150–300 Lakota men, women, and children near the Wounded Knee Creek in 1890). It is a living, resilient, and thriving history that continues to unfold today.

By the year 1900, American Indian numbers had been reduced to an all-time low. As a result of centuries of colonization, a population very roughly estimated at several million at the time of Columbus had been chopped down to 230,000, according to the US Bureau of the Census. In sharp contrast, the 2010 census indicates that roughly 2.9 million identified as either American Indian or Alaskan Native, while another 2.3 million identified as American Indian plus something else. This growth has continued over the last decade. “Within one hundred years,” points out historian Donald A. Fixico (Shawnee, Sac and Fox, Muscogee

Creek, and Seminole), “the tribes began to rebuild their nations and had succeeded in the early stage of achieving Indian self-determination by the late twentieth century.”¹ Other socioeconomic indicators such as income, education, and home ownership follow the same pattern of rapid growth. The dilemma many American Indians face is clearly fleshed out in Tommy Orange’s debut novel, *There* (2018), which presents a mosaic of Indians, part Indians, and others living in or around Oakland, California. The title of the book paraphrases a famous quote by Gertrude Stein (also borne in Oakland), claiming in her 1937 book *Everybody’s Autobiography* that after so much change and destruction (including her own home), “there is no there there.” In his novel, Orange presents the issue in the form of a question: Is there enough there—after centuries of mass killing and physical and cultural destruction—to rebuild?²

Multiple and contradictory policies, often reflecting broader changes in America, have attempted to address the so-called Indian problem. But Indian land remained at the center of most of them. In the last half-century, removal was less about creating new settlements than using Native lands for commercial development, infrastructure projects (hydroelectric dams, roads, pipelines), and the extraction of natural resources. As a result of centuries of broken treaties and dispossession, Indian country became a “desolate landscape,” while Native lands with economic potential ended up in the hands of corporations, the government—everyone but American Indians.

And yet the American Indians persisted—as peoples, cultures, and individuals.



The Dawes Act of 1887 divided tribal lands into 160-acre privately owned plots to create a new society of independent, entrepreneurial farmers.

¹ Donald L. Fixico, *Indian Resilience and Rebuilding: Indigenous Nations in the Modern West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 9.

² See especially, Tommy Orange, *There There* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2018), 148-50.

The Dawes Act of 1887 divided tribal lands into 160-acre privately owned plots to create a new society of independent, entrepreneurial farmers. This process of allotment affected three quarters of all Native tribes, and many in Oklahoma, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, New

The Meriam Report of 1928 laid the foundation for a radical transformation of Indian policies in the 1930s.

Mexico, Oregon, and Washington were practically liquidated. As the so-called Meriam Report of 1928 stated, “In justice to the Indians it should be said that many of them are living on lands from which a trained and experienced white man could scarcely wrest a reasonable living.”³ Among the authors of the report, besides the progressive Lewis Meriam of Salem, Massachusetts (whose name became synonymous with the text) was Henry Roe Cloud (Ho-Chunk, Winnebago), an ordained minister and reformer

who promoted humane education for American Indians. (Roe Cloud made excellent use of his years in government schools, graduated from Yale University, and went on to have an outstanding career as an educator and federal officer.) The critical report laid the foundation for a radical transformation of Indian policies in the 1930s, recommending among many other reforms the closure of boarding schools and the termination of the policy of allotment.

The Indian Reorganization Act

The 1929 Merriam Report did not make its full impact until the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose administration revolutionized tribal organization and the relationship between the Indian nations and the federal government. In 1933 Roosevelt named John Collier Sr. to serve as commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Collier had been “the driving force behind the *Merriam Report*”; at last, American Indians had an outspoken advocate in Washington.⁴ A critic of modern life and its fragmenting effects on traditional communities, Collier hoped to restore tribal autonomy and free Indian nations from the paternalistic and inept authority of the BIA.

³ Lewis Meriam et al., *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), 5.

At the heart of Collier's and his team's efforts was a piece of legislation called the Indian Reorganization Act (1934). This act, universally referred to as the IRA, called for a tribal vote on self-governance and the creation of new tribal councils. At the foundation of these new organizations was to be a constitution modeled on that of the United States; it was hoped that each tribe would draw one up. Once its constitution had been adopted, the tribe could become a self-governing unit, running its own affairs and emerging from the unwelcome authority of the BIA. Still, many tribes and pueblos that already had an elaborate regulation and a formal system for decision-making rejected the constitution model, despite substantial pressure from the federal government.

In addition, through additional legislation, such as the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934, Collier brought many aspects of President Roosevelt's New Deal to Indian country, including construction projects and skill retraining programs, financial assistance for the unemployed and struggling businesses, health services, the funding of cultural projects, and the construction of tribal schools (with some including instruction in Native languages). Boarding schools were mostly closed or defunded. Moreover, the "Indian New Deal" began a process of protecting and reclaiming land and reinstating hunting and fishing rights. In addition, bans on cultural and religious practices—long resisted—were lifted.

In the meantime, Felix Cohen, a brilliant Jewish lawyer at the Department of Justice who, with Roe Cloud, served as a member of Collier's team, compiled a catalog of all the laws pertaining to American Indians. The book remains to this day one of the most important references in Indian law. In it, Cohen went back to the Supreme Court rulings of Chief Justice John Marshall, which permitted him to establish that Indian rights preceded all treaties and superseded state laws.⁵

The "Indian New Deal" began a process of protecting and reclaiming land and reinstating hunting and fishing rights.

Termination

As significant as it was administratively and symbolically, the IRA did not improve the lot of most American Indians. Activist and scholar Vine Deloria Jr. argued that too much damage had already been done:

While a number of opportunities for Indian revitalization were initiated under the IRA, its promise was never fully realized. The era of allotment had taken a heavy toll on the tribes. Many of the old customs and traditions that could have been restored under the IRA climate of cultural concern had vanished during the interim period since the tribes had gone to the reservations. The experience of self-government according to Indian traditions had eroded and, while the new constitutions were akin to the traditions of some tribes, they were completely foreign to others.⁶

After World War II ended, a new administration with a strong belief in “small government” and minimal spending targeted the budget of the BIA. Arthur Vivian Watkins, a senator from Utah, called for termination—ending the special status American Indian tribes have historically enjoyed as sovereign nations. Between 1953 and 1964, the federal government applied tremendous pressure on tribes to terminate. In an infamous example, Washington threatened to withhold millions of dollars it owed the Menominee tribe (Wisconsin) if it did not accept termination. More than 100 reservations ceased to exist; 1,365,801 acres became available for private purchase.

Encouraged by the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, tens of thousands severed their ties with their tribes and migrated to urban centers. The government devised programs to “urbanize” individual American Indians. Many who relocated experienced isolation, discrimination, and racism; they suffered the health problems associated with poverty and marginalization (e.g., high rates of alcoholism and suicide). More than half of the Indian population now lived off of reservations; more than 13,000 had lost their status as American Indians.

⁶ Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 15.

It took a decade or so for young American Indians to find their footing in the cities and to begin to fight for their rights in unison. But as urban life became familiar, they began to feel truly both American and Indian at the same time (to use David Treuer’s terminology), though in many cases, the connection to their specific tribal identity had frayed.

Self-Determination

Termination lost its momentum in the late 1960s, as the American people became more sensitive to minorities’ rights. The government began to invest in Indian reservations. The term “self-determination” gained currency. In a message delivered on July 8, 1970, President Richard M. Nixon promised to increase federal assistance to Indian tribes, while also insisting that the federal government respect its centuries-long commitment to Indian independence:

The first Americans—the Indians—are the most deprived and most isolated minority group in our nation. ...

This condition is the heritage of centuries of injustice. ...

But the story of the Indian in America is something more than the record of the white man’s frequent aggression, broken agreements, intermittent remorse and prolonged failure. It is a record also of endurance, of survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country—to its art and culture, to its strength and spirit, to its sense of history and its sense of purpose. ...

The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions. ...

Self-determination among the Indian people can and must be encouraged without the threat of eventual termination.⁷

⁷ Richard Nixon, “Special Message to the Congress on Indian Affairs. July 8, 1970,” in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1971), 564–66.

The lands owned by Indian nations are arguably among the least desirable in America.

These years, marked by the passage of significant laws and the announcement of crucial legal decisions, also saw the rise of American Indian activism. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, Charles Wilkinson argues, “the modern Indian movement had crystalized.”⁸ In the most famous attempt to draw

attention to Indigenous rights, a group of activists who called themselves Indians of All Tribes occupied the abandoned federal prison on Alcatraz, an island in San Francisco Bay, for a year and a half.

For a decade, the struggle for Native rights was led by the American Indian Movement (AIM). Inspired by the growing militancy of the civil rights movement, AIM did not

hesitate to deploy more aggressive tactics. Yet Vine Deloria Jr. was at pains to point out that the two movements had radically different purposes. “Peoplehood,” he claimed, “is impossible without cultural independence, which in turn is impossible without a land base. Civil Rights as a movement for legal equality ended when the blacks dug beneath the equality fictions which white liberals had used to justify their great crusade.”⁹ In fact, few American Indians see themselves as a minority group that needs to be integrated into the mainstream. They see the restoration of all land rights—as happened when the Menominee Restoration Act became law in 1973—as far more important. The goal is to be separate, not integrated.

Economic Development

The lands owned by Indian nations are arguably among the least desirable in America. One extreme example is the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of the Oglala Sioux in southwestern South Dakota. The reservation suffers from high rates of poverty and unemployment; the social and psychological profile of its population speaks of chronic neglect and economic marginalization. Many others are in a similar state.

⁸ Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (New York: Norton, 2005), 177.

But buried under the arid land of Indian reservations lie vast mineral riches (in the area known as Four Corners, for example). “Tribes possess a little over 2 percent of the entire land in the United States, yet approximately 30 percent of the fossil fuels consumed in the country come from this small percentage of Indian lands.”¹⁰ In Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and Oklahoma, tribes like the Blackfeet, Navajo, and Hopi had to learn how to fit into an extractive economy. There are also cases of cash-strapped reservations turning to unappealing sources of revenue: some have contracted with waste companies that dump America’s garbage on their land. While oil and trash fill tribal treasuries, waters run cloudy, the air reeks, and soils are poisoned—as is the case of a large number of reservations. In 1979, when a dam at the Church Rock uranium mill on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico collapsed, radioactive waste poured into the Puerco River, permanently polluting the tribe’s source of water. High rates of cancer and radiation illness haunt the inhabitants of the polluted areas. In the face of such atrocities, activists call on their nations to remember their heritage—one of deep compassion for the land and all its creatures.

Over the last two decades, some tribes have discovered that the forests, waterways, and sheer beauty of their land will draw eco-tourists and adventurers. From the Native Alutiiq of the Kodiak Archipelago in Alaska to the Pyramid Lake Paiute and the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes in the Florida Everglades, educational programs have been developed for visitors who come for spectacular sight-seeing and a glimpse at a culture that is starkly underrepresented in urban America.

Yet none of these new enterprises generates anything like the revenue tribes make from gambling. In the past three decades, nearly half of the five hundred federally recognized tribes have opened Indian casinos and resorts. While only

Tribes possess a little over 2 percent of the entire land in the US, yet approximately 30 percent of the fossil fuels consumed in the country come from this small percentage of Indian lands.

¹⁰ Fixico, *Indian Resilience and Rebuilding*, 165–66.

about 20 percent of the tribe-run gaming operations turn a profit, gambling revenues from Indian casinos exceeded \$33 billion in 2018. Reservations have seen a positive impact on employment, the return of young adults to the reservations, and wealth. For some, gambling has become so significant that it has been dubbed “the new buffalo.”¹¹

The troubles that have beset the Indigenous peoples of North America since the arrival of visitors bearing firearms, alcohol, and viruses show no sign of relenting. Let us consider again the Navajo Nation. Though oil and uranium deposits have provided some income in the past, they have hardly presented a solution to the inequalities faced by the Navajo (instead, in a majority of cases, serving to benefit the corporations operating the mines with exploitative labor practices). Poverty and unemployment both stood near 40 percent before the COVID-19 crisis. The water crisis caused by the Church Rock radioactive spill has had consequences both predictable and surprising. When irrigation could not be carried out, agricultural income ceased. And then there was another viral challenge: the water shortage made basic handwashing—key to reducing viral transmission—unthinkable in more than a third of the tribe’s territory. Thus, by mid-May 2020, the tribe suffered the highest COVID-19 infection rate of any community in the United States. By July 2020, 3,000 people were infected (out of some 150,000 living on Navajo land). And it was not just the handwashing factor that led to widespread infections among the Navajo: due to poverty, residential buildings were crowded, medical facilities were beyond capacity, equipment was antiquated, and very few masks and gloves were to be had. And this was by no means the fate of the Navajo alone.

The battle against COVID-19 continues, with certain nations combatting the pandemic with exemplary wit and determination. In November 2020, the Cherokee launched one of the most successful campaigns against COVID-19, far exceeding the outcomes experienced in other states. Led by Lisa Pivec, senior director of public health for Cherokee Nation Health Services, and the tribe’s leadership and elders, health care workers followed scientific advice and

¹¹ King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 179.

implemented a vigorous public-health campaign to halt the spread of the disease and protect the vulnerable. Brown University's Ashish Jha, one of the leading national figures in the fight against the coronavirus, remarked: "[The Cherokee response] fits with what I've seen in the world. You see countries like Vietnam. They're not a wealthy country, but they've been following the science and doing a great job."¹²

Linguistic and Cultural Revitalization

Centuries of violence, forced relocation, dispossession, and the suppression of Indian religions and rituals also threaten the main lifeline of nations: their languages. Colonial programs to convert, "civilize," and educate Natives, all aimed at bettering their condition by making them more like George Washington and Abigail Adams, have not just eroded Native languages—in some cases, they have terminated them.

There is a close connection between land, legacy, and language. While the land provides the physical structure upon which tribal life evolves, tradition and culture reflect tribes' unique way of life. Language is the thread that ties them all together; it is the backbone of a tribe's creation stories, myths, prayers, and songs, which in turn shapes the identities of its speakers. "Origin myths," explains American Indian scholar Jace Weaver,

are not about the creating of the entire cosmos or whole world, even when they appear to be. They are about the creation and identity of a people and how they came to be in their place in the world. ... They say that if the Hopi forget their creation story, the world will end. This is true. If the last Hopi forgets their origins, they cease to be Hopi. It will be the end of *their* world.¹³

¹² Usha Lee McFarling, "'They've Been Following the Science': How the COVID-19 Pandemic Has Been Curtailed in Cherokee Nation," *STAT*, November 17, 2020, <https://www.statnews.com/2020/11/17/how-covid19-has-been-curtailed-in-chokeee-nation>. Accessed December 10, 2020.

¹³ Jace Weaver, *Notes from the Miner's Canary: Essays on the State of Native America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 222–23.

Of the roughly 150 Indigenous languages still spoken in the United States, “half are spoken by only a handful of elders over 70 and are not being taught to children.”¹⁴ Language preservation is an urgent matter for many tribes. Not all face crises. The language of the southwestern Navajo, with more than 100,000 speakers, is considered rather safe. So is Ojibwe, which “has about 10,000 speakers distributed around the Great Lakes and up into northwestern Ontario and eastern Manitoba.”¹⁵ But the Alaskan Eyak language ceased to exist a few years ago when its last speaker died. Some languages have had to be rescued by enlisting the surviving speakers; others, such as the Wampanoag of Massachusetts, have been revived after extinction through written records and audio recordings.

Would it go too far to speak of the premeditated destruction of a language as a form of genocide? We might think here of the words of Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust—it was he who, in fact, coined the term “genocide.”

The world represents only so much culture and intellectual vigor as are created by its component national groups. Essentially the idea of a nation signifies constructive cooperation and original contributions, based upon genuine traditions, genuine culture, and a well-developed national psychology. The destruction of a nation, therefore, results in the loss of its future contribution to the world. ... Among the basic features which have marked progress in civilization are the respect for and appreciation of the national characteristics and qualities contributed to world culture by different nations—characteristics and qualities which ... are not to be measured in terms of national power and wealth.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ellen L. Lutz, “Saving America’s Endangered Languages,” *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, June 2007, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/saving-americas-endangered-languages>. Accessed September 1, 2020.

¹⁵ David Treuer, “Language Too Beautiful to Lose,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 2008, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-feb-03-bk-treuer3-story.html>. Accessed September 1, 2020.

¹⁶ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*, 2nd ed. (Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2008), 91.

Glossary

American Indian Movement (AIM). An activist organization. AIM was established in 1968 to fight for Indian treaty rights and self-determination. Among its memorable actions was the seizure of the headquarters of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC, in 1972, which ended in the burning of bureau offices. Uniquely among organizations promoting justice for American Indians, AIM did not steer away from violent actions.

Bering Strait. A narrow passage between northeastern Russia and Alaska. During a prolonged cold period (roughly 30,000 to 20,000 years ago), sea levels were lower, exposing a “land bridge” connecting the two sides of the strait. Many archaeologists believe that the ancestors of American Indians crossed from Asia to North America during the latter part of the Ice Age.

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831). A Supreme Court case whose ruling deprived Native Americans of the right to sue as “foreign nations.” To stop the state of Georgia from imposing its laws on the Cherokee nation, the nation brought a lawsuit accusing the state of undermining Cherokee independence as established in previous treaties. The court ruled that it could not hear the case because the plaintiff was a “dependent nation” rather than a foreign state. This demeaning label was a blow to the status of all American

Indian nations. (The Supreme Court shifted away from its position a year later in **Worcester v. Georgia.**)

Church Rock Dam collapse (1979). When a dam at the Church Rock uranium mill on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico collapsed, radioactive waste poured into the Puerco River, permanently polluting the tribe’s source of water. This contamination contributed to Navajo vulnerability during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic: one-third of the Nation still does not have safe drinking water and could not implement simple precautions such as handwashing.

Colonialism. The control and exploitation of one area by a foreign country.

Columbus, Christopher (1451-1506). An Italian explorer. Commissioned by the king and queen of Spain to find a maritime path to East Asia by traveling west from Europe, Columbus arrived instead in the Bahamas. He founded a colony on an island he called Hispaniola—the location today of Haiti and the Dominican Republic—thereby introducing European colonization to the western hemisphere. Long celebrated for his remarkable feats as an explorer, Columbus has in the last decades been assailed for enslaving and nearly exterminating the Taíno people of Hispaniola.

Dawes Act (1887). An act passed by Congress to encourage American Indians to abandon tribal life and take up farming. Sponsored by Senator Henry L. Dawes, the General Allotment Act of 1887 offered 160 acres of land to any American Indian who relinquished all claim to traditional tribal lands and severed all tribal ties.

Doctrine of Discovery. A principle of land ownership that empowered the subjects of European rulers to lay claim to lands unclaimed by powerful centralized states. The doctrine became a part of US law following the ruling in **Johnson v. M'Intosh**. The Supreme Court ruled that the "discovery" of America by Europeans gave them the right to seize all lands occupied by Native peoples, whether by purchase or by force.

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiye S'a, Santee Dakota). Having adopted Christianity at an early age, he went on to have an outstanding academic career, graduating from Dartmouth College and, in 1889, Boston University Medical School. He served as a physician for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Indian Health Service on the Pine Ridge Reservation and the Crow Creek Reservation. During that time, he attended to the injured who survived the Wounded Knee Massacre, at the end of 1890. He also became a prolific and passionate advocate for his people.

Elias Boudinot (1802-1839). Gallegina Uwati (also known as Buck Watie) was born in 1802 to a family of Cherokee leaders.

Gallegina was educated in missionary schools, including the famous Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut. After meeting a former Congressman for the state of New Jersey named Elias Boudinot, Gallegina took the name as his own. In 1820 he converted to Christianity. Boudinot ardently believed that American Indians could only survive the settling of the continent through rapid acculturation. He was a writer, the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* (the first American Indian newspaper), and a passionate advocate for the Cherokee Nation. Initially rejecting President Jackson's plan to remove the Cherokee and other tribes westward, Boudinot, his elderly nephew **Major Ridge**, and his cousin John Ridge eventually decided that fighting removal was futile. In 1835, they signed away the Cherokee homeland without tribal approval, an act that later led to their deaths for treason according to Cherokee laws.

Five Civilized Tribes. The Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole nations. These five tribes adopted governments, constitutions, and farming methods described as "civilized" by Americans of European descent (other tribes followed a similar path). Uprooted from their ancestral homelands to make room for settlers, by 1850 some 60,000 members of these tribes were settled in what is today Oklahoma. In July 2020 the Supreme Court determined that much of eastern Oklahoma belonged to American Indians. These are not ancestral lands, but

lands granted to the tribes in nineteenth-century treaties gradually eroded over the years.

French and Indian War (1754–1763). A conflict between France and England, along with their American Indian allies, fought in North America. The French and their Indian allies lost, resulting in a massive territorial windfall for the British. Many American Indians—tribes were not consulted in the peace negotiations between the two European nations—refused to accept the transfer of their lands to the British.

Indian Boarding Schools. Government schools established to “civilize” American Indians. Starting in the 1880s, in line with **Richard Henry Pratt’s** famous educational experiment, the US government subsidized boarding schools run by private (usually Christian) groups far from tribal reservations. By the 1920s, at the height of the government attempts to “civilize” American Indian children, there were 357 on- and off-reservation federally funded boarding schools (some 100 of them were off-reservation). While some boarding-school graduates went on to develop remarkable careers, many others reported lifelong traumas.

Indian Removal Act (1830). A law signed by President **Andrew Jackson** that obliged Indian nations living in the eastern United States to move to designated lands west of the Mississippi River. The act lent legitimacy to and accelerated the

westward expansion of the United States. As a result, the **Five Civilized Tribes** were forced to relocate to what is now Oklahoma.

Indian Reorganization Act (IRA, 1934). A law that encouraged American Indian nations to adopt a government similar to that of American municipalities. Responding to the scathing criticism that the **Meriam Report** assigned to the federal administration of Indian affairs, the IRA (also called the Wheeler-Howard Act) was the centerpiece of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “Indian New Deal,” which ended the **Dawes Act**, began phasing out the **Indian boarding schools**, restored to tribes the administration of Indian lands and resources, and created programs and grants to support Indian self-sufficiency.

Jackson, Andrew (1767–1845). An American general and the seventh president of the United States. He was responsible for the **Indian Removal Act** and the forced and bloody removal of southeastern American Indian tribes (notably the **Five Civilized Tribes**) to reservations west of the Mississippi River.

Johnson v. M’Intosh (1823). A Supreme Court case that formally embedded the **Doctrine of Discovery** in US law. The court ruled that Native Americans had no right to sell their ancestral lands because the land was owned by the United States government. The Indians merely “occupied” the lands.

Marshall, John (1755-1835). The fourth chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Three decisions issued by the court during Marshall's tenure—***Johnson v. M'Intosh***, ***Cherokee Nation v. Georgia***, and ***Worcester v. Georgia***—defined American Indian nations as “dependent nations” and “wards” of the federal government, which functioned as their landlord. But the Marshall court also ruled against state intervention in reservation affairs and accorded a special, independent status to American Indian nations.

Massachusetts Bay Colony. A British settlement founded in 1628 with its center in Boston but extending beyond Massachusetts to what is now Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Maine. Formally recognized by royal charter, the colony was settled by English Puritans, whose fear of religious persecution drove them to emigrate. During its first years, the colony enjoyed a peaceful relationship with its Native neighbors, but the colonists carried out massacres during the **Pequot War** and King Philip's War (1675-78).

Meriam Report. See ***The Problem of Indian Administration***.

Noble Savage. Term coined by British poet John Dryden in 1672. Dryden, **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**, and other Europeans pictured Indians as romantic, virtuous figures uncorrupted by civilization. Since they believed that the material conditions of city life encouraged men and women to

sin, a person without many possessions who lived in the forest and prairie represented humanity in its purest form.

O'Sullivan, John L. (1813-95). An influential American columnist and editor who coined the term “Manifest Destiny” in 1845. In his essays, O'Sullivan promoted the God-given right of white settlers to claim all of North America from ocean to ocean. The term is often connected with John Gast's painting, *American Progress* (1872), which depicted similar themes.

Pequot War (1636-38). A conflict that pitted the Pequots against a coalition of colonies. Intertribal strife and the killing of a British colonist triggered a series of clashes, including a chaotic attack on a Pequot village that ended in a massacre. The destruction of the tribe opened southern New England to British settlers.

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. The Pokagon originated in bands who lived in what are now southwest Michigan and northern Indiana (and especially those who lived along the St. Joseph River). They were led by Leopold Pokagon (c. 1775-1841), who sought the protection of Catholicism in order to resist removal from Michigan by the federal government in the 1830s. His band was the only Potawatomi band to escape removal to west of the Mississippi as a group.

Pokagon, Simon (c. 1830-1899). Simon Pokagon, son of the St. Joseph River Potawatomi band (later named the

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi after Leopold Pokagon) and its chief. Pokagon authored multiple books and essays, becoming a prominent Indian writer. He was featured in the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in America and the United States' prosperity). During the Exposition, he published a pamphlet entitled *Red Man's Rebuke*, which served to remind his hosts that America's success was built on Indian stolen lands and murdered bodies.

Pratt, Richard Henry (1840-1924). A professional soldier who founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. After introducing educational programs to Native prisoners of war, he opened a boarding school for American Indians in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Pratt's famous dictum, "Kill the Indian . . . save the man," could easily have served as the motto of a movement that endorsed severing the ties of American Indians with their traditions so that they might be assimilated into mainstream society.

The Problem of Indian Administration (1928). A publication, better known as the Meriam Report, that detailed the colossal failures of the federal government's Indian policies. A bureaucrat with significant government experience, Lewis Meriam led a team that produced an exhaustive report on the role of the Department of the Interior in undermining the health, education, prosperity, and family structure

of Native Americans. The report served as the foundation of the **Indian Reorganization Act**.

Reservation. A federally designated zone assigned to a Native American tribe. When tribes were ordered to abandon lands desired by settlers, they were granted reservations (along with cash payments) where they would be self-governing. While reservations are larger and more numerous in the American West, more than half of the states are home to at least one of the 326 existing Indian reservations.

Ridge, Major (1771-1839). A leader of the Cherokee nation who endorsed acculturation and opposed American seizure of Native lands. When President **Andrew Jackson** ordered the removal of the Cherokee Nation, Major Ridge decided that negotiating a removal treaty was wiser than resisting it. He led a small breakaway group that signed a treaty and safely abandoned tribal lands before the **Trail of Tears**. He was murdered by members of the antiremoval party for having given up Cherokee land.

Ross, John (1790-1866). The principal chief of the Cherokee nation during the Indian removal period. Faced with a choice between urging his people to compromise or to resist the US government, Ross opted for resistance, only to see his cause undermined by younger men including **Major Ridge**. His legal and diplomatic efforts proved useless.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712-78). A Swiss philosopher whose ideas about politics, society, and education were central to the European Enlightenment. A champion of political freedom and democracy, he famously developed the idea of a “social contract” by drawing on his understanding of the customs of American Indians. His rather rosy picture cast the original Americans as innately noble, peaceful, and egalitarian.

Royal Proclamation of 1763. A decree issued by the British crown that forbade British subjects from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains and recognized the sovereignty of Native nations.

Settler Colonialism. The practice of colonists settling in a region inhabited by indigenous people. This was the nearly unavoidable outcome of the **Doctrine of Discovery** and a belief in Manifest Destiny.

Tecumseh (1768-1813). A Shawnee warrior chief. Tecumseh participated in several successful battles in the 1790s, but at the Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794), he and other warrior chiefs were decisively defeated by General “Mad” Anthony Wayne. In 1808, Tecumseh mobilized a pan-Native American confederacy (with his brother, **Tenskwatawa**) in a final effort to stop the United States’ westward expansion. Despite early victories, the confederacy collapsed after Tecumseh was killed in the Battle of the Thames (1813).

Tenskwatawa (1775-1836). Known as the Shawnee Prophet and or Lalawethika, Tenskwatawa was considered a religious and political leader of the Shawnee. Alongside his older brother the warrior **Tecumseh**, Tenskwatawa traveled through most of the Northwestern tribes, enlisting warriors to a confederacy of all Native Americans on the frontier to drive back the whites and defend the Native American’s territories and way of life.

Termination. A formal policy of denying American Indians any self-determination, any tribal lands, and any further services or payments—all in violation of treaties and other formal agreements. In the 1940s, state governments and the federal government began to advocate a return to assimilation policies. In 1953 Congress made these trends an official policy. Five tribes were marked for immediate termination. More than 100 reservations ceased to exist. In addition, the Indian Relocation Act (1956) encouraged American Indians to migrate to urban centers and sever their ties with their tribes.

Trail of Tears (1838-1839). The forced removal of roughly 16,000 Cherokee from Georgia to Oklahoma. In response to the **Indian Removal Act**, the vast majority of Cherokee refused to leave the lands where they had settled over the previous century. Rounded up by US soldiers, they were forced to march in several groups to their new land in today’s Oklahoma. Thousands of natives died on this grueling trek.

Virgin soil epidemic. An outbreak of disease caused by a virus or bacterium that is new to a region. The term was coined by historian Alfred Crosby to describe the danger a community faces when exposed to an infectious disease to which it has no hereditary immunity. The classic case is that of American Indians, who had no exposure to such diseases like smallpox, cholera, and malaria prior to the arrival of Europeans in the New World.

Worcester v. Georgia (1832). A Supreme Court case in which the US Supreme Court, led by John Marshall, denied states the right to impose regulations on Native American lands. Writing for the court, Marshall declared that the Cherokee “is a distinct community occupying its own territory in which the laws of Georgia can have no force.” According to the ruling, only the federal government had the right to negotiate legal, economic, and similar matters with Native nations. Although President **Andrew Jackson** defied this ruling, the decision helped establish the sovereignty of American Indian tribes.