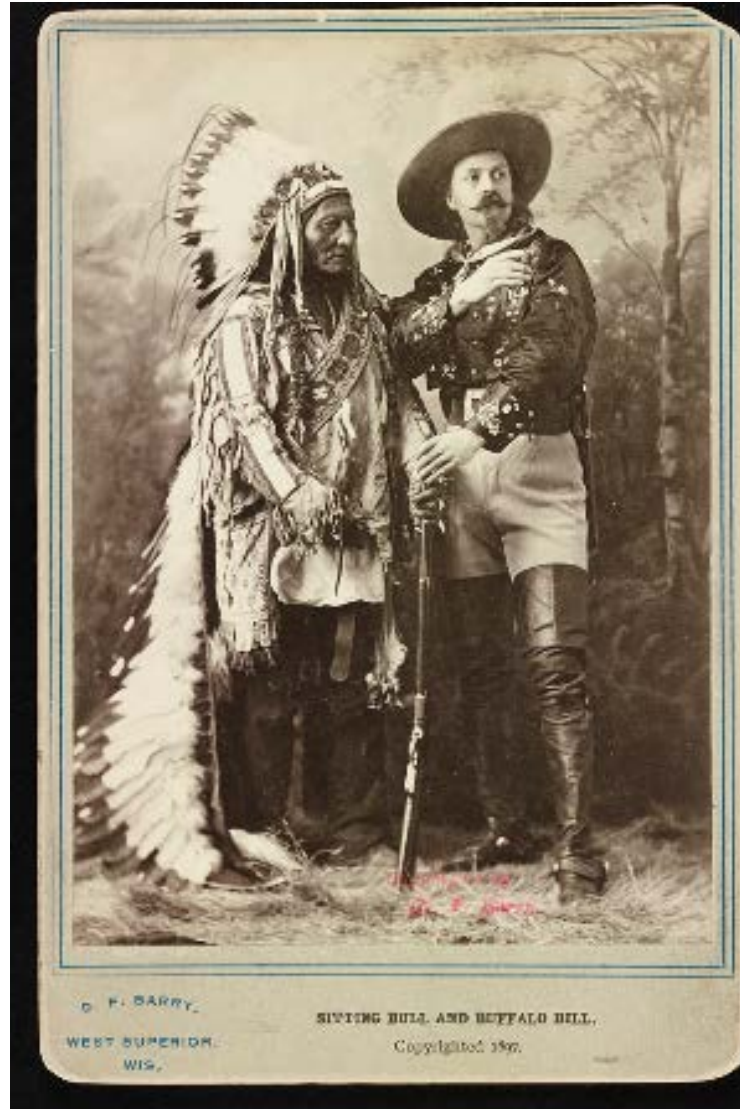


Last of the Plains Indians:
Westward Expansion
and Native Americans
1860–Present

Year 2
History Unit 3
Sourcebook

Lesson 1: The Western Frontier



Photograph of Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill, taken by D. F. Barry, 1897 (Library of Congress)

How have Native American and settler encounters on the western frontier evolved over time?

The Civil War and Reconstruction in the American West

The following text was adapted from historian Elliott West's essay "The Civil War and Reconstruction in the American West" published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Since the arrival of the first Europeans in the Americas, Native Americans and Europeans have had a complex relationship. While some Europeans, like the French, traded with the Native Americans, other Europeans, like the Spanish, conquered the Native Americans and destroyed their civilizations. Over the course of early United States history, these complex relationships did not go away. However, until the mid-19th century, Native Americans in the West were mostly unaffected by the new nation.

In the East, Indian Removal policies had forced tribes from their homes, forcing them onto reservations in the West. Still, few Americans had moved further west than the Mississippi River, leaving many native lands still relatively untouched. Some Americans did encounter Native Americans, like the adventurers Lewis and Clark and some Christian missionaries, but on the whole, these encounters were peaceful.

The histories of the Civil War and of the emerging West were tangled together from their beginnings. Although the Civil War was fought mostly in the East, the events that caused the war emerged with the expansion of the 1840s, and the war and its aftermath shaped western development between 1861 and 1877.

During the War, Congress passed and President Lincoln signed three measures of great significance for the coming decades. On May 20, 1862, the Homestead Act became law. It granted 160 acres of unclaimed public land to any adult who worked and improved the land for five years. On July 1, Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act, providing land and government loans to construct the first transcontinental railroad.

As a result of the Homestead Act, tens of millions of western acres were settled by its end in the 1930s. The Pacific Railway Act began a bold plan to build roads, wires, and rails across the nation. By 1883, several more transcontinental railroads had been built, all with federal support.

Meanwhile, the West was being integrated politically into the nation. Between 1859 and 1876, Oregon, Kansas, Nevada, and Nebraska became states, and the rest of the West was organized into territories. National laws and institutions were in place from one side of the continent to the other.

Expansion to the Pacific left the government no place farther west to send Native Americans. Reservations provided a kind of internal removal. Many American Indians, fully content with their traditional spiritual and economic lives, resisted the reservation efforts.

The effect of the Civil War and Reconstruction on American Indians was catastrophic. The war divided tribal communities, many of whom who had been "removed" to Indian Territory in the West not much earlier. An uprising of Minnesota Sioux in 1862 left hundreds of white settlers dead before it was crushed. Thirty-eight of its leaders were hanged, and nearly 2,000 Sioux were removed to South Dakota. The next year in Arizona, a military campaign shattered the power of the Navajo. Conflict in Colorado, from 1864 to 1868, destroyed the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. After 1865, the U.S. Army destroyed the remaining native military resistance in the West. The last true Indian Wars were against the western Sioux in 1876 and the Nez Perce in 1877.

West, Elliot, Civil War and Reconstruction of the American West. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document A
Chief Luther Standing Bear: Sioux Cultural Beliefs

Luther Standing Bear, an Oglala Sioux chief, describes the culture of the Sioux and their neighboring tribes in the Great Plains before the Civil War and the arrival of American settlers.

The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forests, plains, **pueblos** [*clay homes built often by the Pueblo Indian tribe*], or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that made the continent also made man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers, he belongs just as the buffalo belonged

Out of the Indian approach to life there came a great freedom, an intense and full respect for life, a faith in a Supreme Power, and the principles of truth, honesty, generosity, equity, and brotherhood as a guide to **mundane** [*dull, everyday*] relations.



The buffalo were an essential part of culture and life for the Native Americans of the Great Plains. The print above is entitled The Buffalo Hunt and was published by Currier and Ives between 1856 and 1907. (Library of Congress)

*Adapted from Standing Bear, Luther. Land of the Spotted Eagle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933
Courtesy of Encyclopedia.com.*

Document B

Chief Joseph: Settlers and the Nez Perce Tribe

The Nez Perce were a tribe northwest of the Great Plains whose encounters with the western settlers were similar to those of the Plains Indians. Below is an excerpt from a speech given by Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce in 1874, describing his tribe's early relationships with the white settlers coming to the West.

The first white men of your people who came to our country were named Lewis and Clark. They brought many things which our people had never seen. They **talked straight** [*were honest*], and our people gave them a great feast as proof that their hearts were friendly. They made presents to our chiefs, and our people made presents to them. We had a great many horses of which we gave them what they needed, and they gave us guns and tobacco in return. All the Nez Perce made friends with Lewis and Clark and agreed to let them pass through their country and never to make war on white men. This promise the Nez Perce have never broken.

Chief Joseph. 1874. Courtesy of PBS.org.

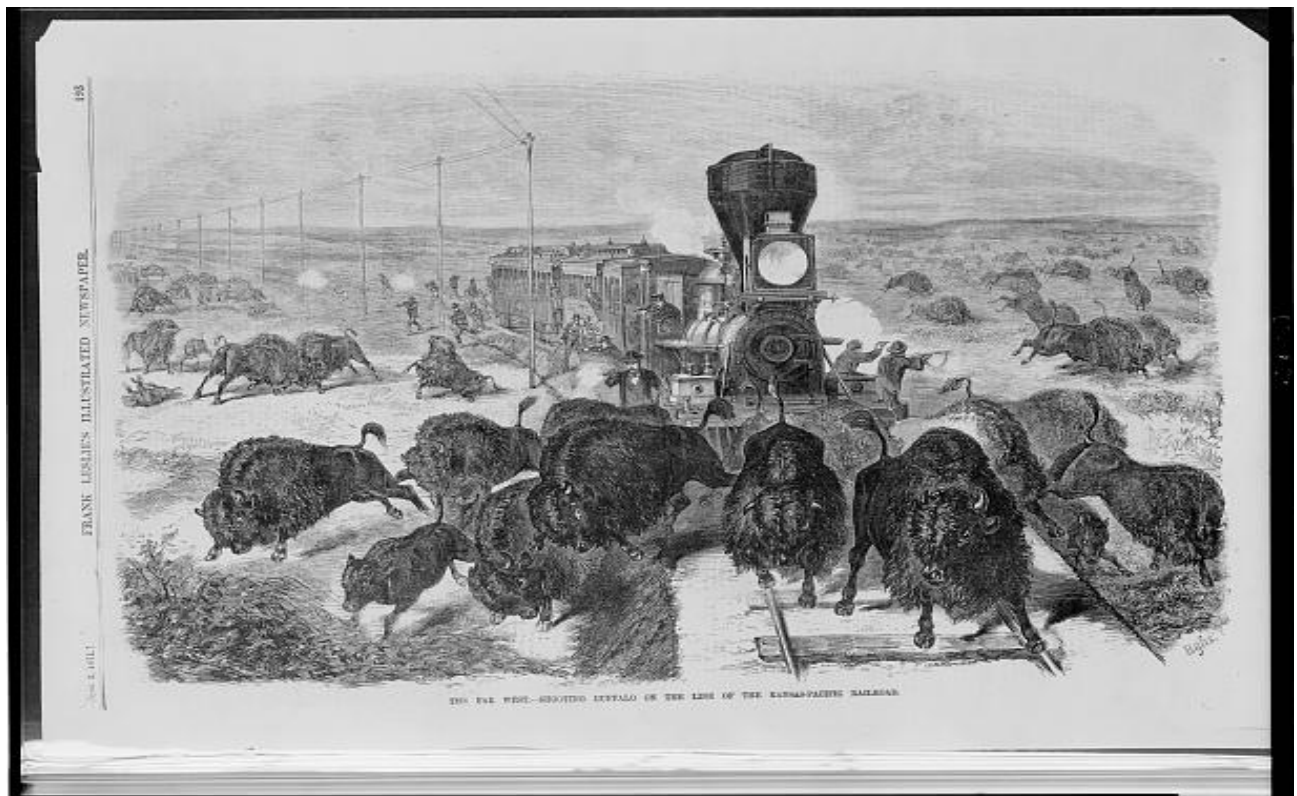
Document C The Buffalo

As settlers expanded further into Native lands, they encountered the buffalo. Settlers began hunting for buffalo themselves, limiting the Plains Indians' main food supply. To make matters worse, the buffalo got in the way of the construction of railroads across the Plains. To facilitate railroad construction, many more buffalo were killed. As a result, by the end of the 19th century, the buffalo population was all but destroyed.

In 1867, one U.S. commander reportedly gave his troops the following command:

Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone.

Unnamed U.S. Army commander as quoted in 1867. Accessed via Merchant, Carolyn. American Environmental History: An Introduction. 2007. Columbia University Press. Pg. 20



This engraving, Shooting Buffalo on the Line of the Kansas-Pacific Railroad, appeared in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper in 1871.

Document D
Arizona Apache Massacre

The following text was adapted from an article published by the Arizona Miner newspaper on May 27, 1871, entitled “Righteous Retribution,” meaning “just revenge.” The article was published following a settler-led massacre of a local Native tribe, killing 125 Apache Indians.

For weeks it had been known that a band of Indians were camped in that area, and numbers of animals stolen from American settlers around Tucson and San Xavier had been trailed into the canyon. Evidence was found proving that four [settlers] were murdered by [these natives]...

We applaud and glorify the action The best defense is to show these devils in human shape [the Apache] that we can whip them and will do it The blood of our relatives and friends, [spilled] on nearly every road and trail in every farming settlement and mining district in Arizona, cries out to us from the ground to rejoice that they are partially avenged.

Righteous Retribution. May 27, 1871. Courtesy of Brown University Library.

Document E
Sherman Alexie: “The Poem That Made Sherman Alexie Want to ‘Drop Everything and Be a Poet’ ”

Read “The Poem that Made Sherman Alexie want to ‘Drop Everything and Be a Poet’ ” by Sherman Alexie, author and member of the Spokane tribe Sherman Alexie. It is on the Atlantic website.

Lessons 2–3: Western Settlers and Native Americans



Indian delegations at Washington—presentation to the president, from a photograph by Alexander Gardner, 1867 (Library of Congress)

How did western settlers and Native Americans view one another following the Civil War?

Homework
The Image of the Indian

Read "American Indians: The Image of the Indian," by historian Brian Dippie on the National Humanities Center website.



*The Course of Empire, published in Harper's Weekly in June 1867.
(Internet Archive, Archive.org)*

Document A

General Custer: *My Life on the Plains*

General George Armstrong Custer was a war hero in the Great Plains. An avid frontiersman, he had many experiences and encounters with the Plains Indians. In 1874, he published a memoir, My Life on the Plains; or, Personal Experiences with Indians. Below is an excerpt from his book, explaining how he and other settlers perceived the native peoples they encountered.

We see him [the American Indian man] as he is, and ... as he ever has been, a savage in every sense of the word ... one whose cruel and ferocious nature far exceeds that of any wild beast of the desert. No one who has been brought into intimate contact with the wild tribes will deny Nature intended him for a savage state

All were too familiar with the horrid customs of the savages to hope for a moment that the [white settler] captive would be reserved for [anything] but a slow lingering death from torture the most horrible and painful which savage, blood thirsty minds could suggest Never shall I forget ... how he was tied to a stake, strips of flesh cut from his body, arms, and legs, burning brands thrust into the bleeding wounds, the nose, lips, and ears cut off, and finally, when from loss of blood, excessive pain, and anguish, the poor, bleeding, almost senseless mortal fell to the ground exhausted, the younger Indians were permitted to rush in and **dispatch** [*finish off*] him with their knives.

Custer, George. My Life on the Plains. 1874. Courtesy of Internet Archive, Archive.org.

Document B

Chief Joseph's Speech

In the 1860s, miners swarmed over Nez Perce land, looking for gold. Settlers followed, often trespassing on tribal lands. Below, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce describes his perception of the western settlers in a speech delivered in 1874.

For a short time we lived quietly. But this could not last. White men had found gold in the mountains around the land of the Winding Water. They stole a great many horses from us, and we could not get them back because we were Indians. The white men told lies for each other. They drove off a great many of our cattle. Some white men **branded** [*marked, as a sign of ownership*] our young cattle so they could claim them. We had no friends who would plead our cause before the law councils. It seemed to me that some of the white men in Wallowa were doing these things on purpose to get up a war. They knew we were not strong enough to fight them. I labored hard to avoid trouble and bloodshed. We gave up some of our country to the white men, thinking that then we could have peace. We were mistaken. The white men would not let us alone. We could have avenged our wrongs many times, but we did not. Whenever the Government has asked for help against other Indians, we have never refused. When the white men were few and we were strong, we could have killed them off, but the Nez Perce wishes to live at peace.

On account of the treaty made by the other bands of the Nez Perce, the white man claimed my lands. We were troubled with white men crowding over the line. Some of them were good men, and we lived on peaceful terms with them, but they were not all good. Nearly every year the agent came over from Lapwai and ordered us to the reservation. We always replied that we were satisfied to live in Wallowa. We were careful to refuse the presents or annuities which he offered.

Through all the years since the white man came to Wallowa, we have been threatened and taunted by them. They have given us no rest. We have had a few good friends among the white men, and they have always advised my people to bear these taunts without fighting. Our young men are quick tempered, and I have had great trouble in keeping them from doing rash things. I have carried a heavy load on my back ever since I was a boy. I learned then that we were but few while the white men were many, and that we could not hold our own with them. We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears. We had a small country. Their country was large. We were contented to let things remain as the Great Spirit Chief made them. They were not and would change the mountains and rivers if they did not suit them.

Chief Joseph. 1874. Courtesy of PBS.org

Document C

Sitting Bull's Speech

Sitting Bull was a Sioux chief and Holy Man who led much resistance to western settlers during the late 19th century. Below is an excerpt from his speech at the Powder River Council, 1877.

Behold, my brothers, the spring has come; the earth has received the embraces of the sun and we shall soon see the results of that love! Every seed has awakened and so has all animal life. It is through this mysterious power that we too have our being and we therefore yield to our neighbors, even our animal neighbors, the same right as ourselves, to inhabit this land. Yet hear me, my people, we have now to deal with another race—small and feeble when our fathers first met them, but now great and overbearing. Strangely enough they have a mind to till the soil and the love of possessions is a disease with them They claim this mother of ours, the earth, for their own, and fence their neighbors away; they **deface** [*destroy*] her with their buildings and their **refuse** [*waste*]. They threaten to take [the land] away from us. My brothers, shall we submit, or shall we say to them: “First kill me before you take possession of my Fatherland.”

Sitting Bull. 1877. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Document D

Frank Mayer and Charles Roth: *The Buffalo Harvest*

*Frank Mayer and Charles Roth were settlers on the western frontier who worked for the U.S. Army as buffalo hunters. Mayer and Roth wrote the book *The Buffalo Harvest*, describing their lives as buffalo hunters and their encounters with Native Americans. Here is an excerpt from their book.*

The menace from Indians was prevalent all the time. What could you expect with Apaches and Comanches in the south; Sioux, Crows, and Blackfeet in the north; with Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and minor tribes too numerous to mention around us most of the time . . . ? Everybody, white, red, yellow, or breed, carried chips on their shoulders and the chips were frequently being knocked off.

Pawnees were the only Indians who were “good.” Some of the others pretended to be friendly, but if you let smaller groups of younger **braves** [*Native Americans*] get close enough for practical petting, you had a surprise coming. You sure had! Indians were always ready to take advantage of you. I made it a rule to keep them at a comfortable distance.

That a considerable number of **runners** [*raids*] were done in by the Indians there is no doubt. We'd find **them** [*settlers*], scalped, of course, sprawled out on the prairie, their clothing gone, their rifles stolen. Mostly the Indians killed for loot, rather than to protect their homes Just between you and me, I doubt if there ever was such an animal among the “noble Redman.”

*Mayer, Frank and Roth, Charles. *The Buffalo Harvest*. Courtesy of PBS.org.*

Lesson 4: The Indian Wars



The Custer Fight, by C.M. Russell, 1903 (Library of Congress)

Why did war erupt on the western frontier?

Homework
The Indian Wars

Read “*The Price of Freedom: Western Indian Wars*” on the Smithsonian National Museum of American History website, as well as “*The Battle of Little Bighorn*” on the History Channel website.

Document A
The Cameron Report

The president of the United States asked Secretary of War J.D. Cameron for a report of the military actions leading up to the Battle of Little Bighorn. This is Secretary Cameron’s response.

To the PRESIDENT:

Washington, July 8, 1876

There have been certain wild and hostile bands of Sioux Indians in Dakota and Montana. I refer to Sitting Bull’s band and other bands of the Sioux Nation. These Indians continue to rove at pleasure, attacking scattered settlements, stealing horses and cattle, and murdering peaceful settlers and travelers.

The present military operations are not against the Sioux Nation at all, but against certain hostile parts of it that defy the Government. No part of these operations are on or near the Sioux reservation. The accidental discovery of gold on the western border of the Sioux reservation, and the settlement of our people there, have not caused this war. The young Indian warriors love war, and frequently leave the reservation to go on the hunt, or warpath. The object of these military operations was in the interest of the peaceful people of the Sioux Nation, and not one of these peaceful Indians have been bothered by the military authorities.

Very respectfully,

J. D. CAMERON, Secretary of War

Cameron, J.D. July 8, 1876. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Document B

Kate Bighead Interview

Kate Bighead, a Cheyenne Indian, told this story to Dr. Thomas Marquis in 1922. Dr. Marquis was a doctor and a historian of the Battle of Little Bighorn in the 1920s. He interviewed and photographed Cheyenne Indians.

Little Bighorn was not the first meeting between the Cheyennes and Long Hair [General Custer]. Early in the winter of 1868, Long Hair and the Seventh Cavalry attacked our camp on the Washita River, killing Chief Black Kettle and his band, burning their **tipis** [*the tentlike homes of the Plains Indians*] and destroying all their food and belongings. In the spring, Long Hair promised peace and moved the Cheyenne to a reservation. When gold was discovered, white people came and the Indians were moved again.

My brothers and I left for the open plains, where our band of Cheyenne was again attacked by white soldiers in the winter of 1875. We were forced to seek help from a tribe of Sioux. We joined Sitting Bull and the Sioux and decided to travel and hunt together as one strong group.

As conditions on the reservations became worse, more and more Indians moved west joining our group. Six tribes lived peacefully for several months, hunting buffalo, curing the meat for the winter months, and tanning buffalo hides.

In the early summer, 1876, we set up camp near Little Bighorn River. Soldiers were spotted by some hunters to the south of the camp.

Marquis, Thomas. 1922. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Document C

Crazy Horse Account

Crazy Horse was a legendary warrior of the Lakota tribe who led the Lakota to victory in the Battle of Little Bighorn. Here is an account of the causes of battle.

I was not hostile to the white men. We had buffalo for food, and their hides for clothing and for our teepees We preferred hunting to a life of idleness on our reservations. At times we did not get enough to eat and we were not allowed to hunt. All we wanted was peace and to be let alone. We were no expense to the government Soldiers were sent out in the winter, they destroyed our villages. The "Long Hair" (Custer) came in the same way. They say we massacred him, but he would have done the same thing to us had we not defended ourselves and fought to the last. Our first impulse was to escape with our **squaws** [*wives*] and **papooses** [*babies*], but we were so trapped that we had to fight. After that I went up on the Tongue River with a few of my people and lived in peace. But the government would not let me alone. Finally, I came back to the Red Cloud Agency. Yet, I was not allowed to remain quiet. I was tired of fighting. I went to the Spotted Tail Agency and asked that chief and his agent to let me live there in peace. I came here with the agent to talk with the Big White Chief but was not given a chance. They tried to confine me. I tried to escape, and a soldier ran his bayonet into me.

Crazy Horse. 1877. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Document D
General Miles: Report for the Secretary of War

The following excerpt is from General Miles's statement in his Report of the Secretary of War in 1891.

The causes that led to the serious disturbance of the peace in the northwest last autumn and winter were so remarkable that an explanation of them is necessary in order to comprehend the seriousness of the situation For several years following their **subjugation** [*forced control*] in 1877, 1878, and 1879, the most dangerous element of the Cheyennes and the Sioux were under military control. Many of them were disarmed and dismounted; their war ponies were sold and the proceeds returned to them in domestic stock, farming utensils, wagons, etc. Many of the Cheyennes, under the charge of military officers, were located on land in accordance with the laws of Congress, but after the vast herds of buffalo and large game had been destroyed, their supplies were insufficient, and they were forced to kill cattle belonging to white people to sustain life.

The fact that they had not received sufficient food is admitted by the agents and the officers of the government who have had opportunities of knowing Many of the tribes became rearmed and remounted. They claimed that the government had not fulfilled its treaties and had failed to make large enough appropriations for their support; that they had suffered for **want** [*lack*] of food, and the evidence of this is beyond question. The statements of officers, inspectors, both of the military and the Interior departments, of agents, of missionaries, and civilians familiar with their condition, leave no room for reasonable doubt that this was one of the principal causes

Miles, Nelson A. 1891. Courtesy of PBS.org.

Lessons 5–6: The Impact of the Indian Wars



Starting Supper, Flathead Reservation, *photography by N. A. Forsyth, 1908*
(Library of Congress)

How did the Indian Wars affect Native American communities in the West?

Homework

The Impact of the Indian Wars

Read “The Reservation System” on the Khan Academy website and “Wounded Knee” on the History Channel website.

Document A

Chief Joseph: Unjust Treatment of the Nez Perce

From June to October of 1877, the Nez Perce tribe of the Pacific Northwest had fought in a series of battles and skirmishes against the U.S. Army. In October, the Nez Perce were once and for all defeated by the U.S. Army at the Battle of Bear Paw and sent to reservations. In 1879, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce traveled to Washington, D.C., to discuss the unjust treatment of the Nez Perce in the American West. Below is an excerpt of his speech.

I have seen the Great Father Chief [U.S. President Hayes]; the Next Great Chief [Secretary of the Interior]; the Commissioner Chief; the Law Chief; and many other law chiefs [congressmen], and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice, but while all their mouths talk right, I do not understand why nothing is done for my people Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father’s grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words do not give me back my children It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises

If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike

If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in a country where my people will not die so fast When I think of our condition, my heart is heavy. I see men of my own race treated as outlaws and driven from country to country, or shot down like animals

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself—and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying.

Chief Joseph. 1879. Courtesy of PBS.org.

Document B
General Sheridan: The Buffalo

The Texas legislature, sensing the buffalo were in danger of being wiped out, proposed a bill to protect the species. Below is an excerpt from American General Sheridan's response.

These men [who hunt buffalo] have done more in the last two years, and will do more in the next year, to settle the vexed Indian question, than the entire regular army has done in the last forty years. They are destroying the Indians' life source. And it is a well known fact that an army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage. Send them powder and lead, if you will; but for a lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies can be covered with speckled cattle.

Sheridan, Philip. Courtesy of Smithsonian Magazine.

Document C
Chief Santana: Reservations

As the Indian Wars came to a close, the U.S. government began forcing more and more tribes off their land and onto reservations. Below is an account from Santana, the chief of the Kiowa tribe, expressing his opinions on moving to the reservations in the 1880s.

I love this land and the buffalo and will not part with it. I want you to understand well what I say. Write it on paper ... I hear a great deal of good talk from the gentlemen the Great Father [President] sends us, but they never do what they say. I don't want any of the medicine lodges [referring to schools and churches] within the country. I want the children raised as I was.

I have heard you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don't want to settle. I love to roam over the prairies. There I feel free and happy, but when we settle down we grow pale and die.

A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up to the river I see camps of soldiers on its banks. These soldiers cut down my timber, they kill my buffalo and when I see that, my heart feels like bursting.

Santana. Courtesy of iihwaii.net.

Document D The Messiah Letter

Followers of the Ghost Dance movement believed that if they practiced the Ghost Dance, they would put an end to white expansion and recover what they had lost during the Indian Wars.

James Mooney, an ethnologist with the Bureau of American Ethnology, was sent to investigate the Ghost Dance movement in 1891. He obtained a copy of Wovoka's (religious leader of the Paiutes) message from a Cheyenne named Black Short Nose, who had been part of a joint Cheyenne-Arapaho delegation that visited Wovoka in Nevada in August 1891. Wovoka (also known as Jack Wilson) delivered his message orally, and it was transcribed by a member of the group.

When you get home you must make a dance to continue five days. Dance four successive nights, and the last night keep the dance until the morning of the fifth day, when all must bathe in the river and then disperse to their homes. You must all do in the same way.

I, Jack Wilson, love you all, and my heart is full of gladness for the gifts you have brought me. When you get home I shall give you a good cloud which will make you feel good. I give you a good spirit and give you all good paint. I want you to come again in three months, some from each tribe there [the Indian Territory]

Grandfather [a universal title of reverence among American Indians] says, when your friends die you must not cry. You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life

Do not tell the white people about this. Jesus is now upon the earth. He appears like a cloud When the time comes there will be no more sickness and everyone will be young again.

Do not refuse to work for the whites and do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. When the earth shakes [at the coming of the new world] do not be afraid. It will not hurt you.

I want you to dance every six weeks. Make a feast at the dance and have food that everybody may eat. Then bathe in the water. That is all. You will receive good words again from me some time. Do not tell lies.

Black Short Nose. August 1891. Courtesy of PBS.org.


Lesson 7: The Dawes Act

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME
OF
YOUR OWN

*

EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE

*

POSSESSION
WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED GRAZING AGRICULTURAL
IRRIGABLE DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **350,000 ACRES** WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Hoopa. COLORADO: Ignacio. IDAHO: Lapwai. KANSAS: Horton. Nadeau.	MINNESOTA: Onigum. MONTANA: Crow Agency. NEBRASKA: Macy. Santee. Winnabago.	NORTH DAKOTA: Fort Totten. Fort Yates. OKLAHOMA: Anadarko. Cantonment. Colony. Darlington. Muskogee, <small>W. S.</small> Pawnee.	OKLAHOMA—Con. Sae and Fox Agency. Shawnee. Wyandotte. OREGON: Klamath Agency. Pendleton. Roseburg. Siletz.	SOUTH DAKOTA: Cheyenne Agency. Crow Creek. Greenwood. Lower Brule. Pine Ridge. Rosebud. Sisseton.	WASHINGTON: Fort Simcoe. Fort Spokane. Tekoa. Tulalip. WISCONSIN: Oneida.
---	---	---	---	---	--

WALTER L. FISHER,

Secretary of the Interior.

ROBERT G. VALENTINE,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

United States Department of the Interior advertisement offering "Indian Land for Sale," 1911 (Wikimedia)

Why did the United States pass the Dawes Act?

Homework

The Dawes Act

Read “The Dawes Act” on the Khan Academy website and “This Day in History: Cleveland Signs the Dawes Severalty Act” on the History Channel website.

Document A

The “Proposed” Dawes Act

Below is an excerpt of the proposed Dawes Act.

An act to provide for the [giving of individual pieces of land] to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted, that in all cases where any tribe of Indians has been located upon any reservation created for their use, the President of the United States is authorized to **allot** [*give, assign*] the lands in said reservations in individual plots to any Indian located there in quantities as follows:

- To each head of a family, one-quarter of a section;
- To each single person over eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section;
- To each orphan child under eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section; and,
- To each other single person under eighteen years, one-sixteenth of a section . . . ;

SEC. 5. That upon the approval of the land provided for in this act . . . the United States will hold the land, for the period of 25 years, for the sole use and benefit of the Indian to whom such land was given . . . , and that at the expiration of said period, the United States will get rid of of this holding of land

SEC. 6. That upon the completion of this assigning of land, each and every member of the respective tribes of Indians shall have the benefit of and **be subject to** [*must follow*] the laws of the State or Territory in which they may reside . . . ; And every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States to whom land has been given because of this act, and every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States . . . is now declared to be a citizen of the United States, and is entitled to all the rights and privileges of such citizens.

Dawes Act. 1887. Courtesy of PBS.org.

Pro Position #1
Document B
Issue #1

Many Americans believed that Native Americans needed to be assimilated into white society to become civilized. Some Americans even argued that, as society advances, the only way for Native Americans to survive was to join white society and benefit from its technology and innovations.

President Chester A. Arthur, who was president in the years leading up to the passage of the Dawes Act, was a strong supporter of breaking up the reservations and “civilizing” the Indians. The following is an excerpt from President Arthur’s First Annual Message to Congress on December 6, 1881.

It has been easier to resort to convenient and temporary plans for tiding over temporary difficulties than to deal with the great permanent problem, and accordingly the easier course has almost always been pursued White settlements have crowded the borders of reservations Indians transferred to new hunting grounds (which have soon become) new homes desired by adventurous settlers. Frequent and disastrous conflicts between the races have resulted ... thousands of lives have been sacrificed and ... millions of dollars expended to solve the Indian problem which exists today as it did half a century ago. The very future existence of the Indian prompts us to act now, to introduce among the Indians the customs and pursuits of civilized life and gradually to absorb them into the mass of our citizens, with equal sharing of rights and responsibilities, before the very Indian culture itself evaporates.

Arthur, Chester A. December 6, 1881. Courtesy of PBS.org.

Document C
Issue #2

Many Americans believed that the reservation system was faulty. As American settlers continued to move westward, to avoid future conflicts like the Indian Wars, proponents of the Dawes Act argued that assimilating Native Americans into white society would unite them and prevent future violence.

Below is an excerpt from President Grover Cleveland in his 1866 State of the Union address.

When the existing system was adopted, the Indian race was outside the limits of organized states ... beyond the immediate reach and operation of civilization. All efforts were mainly directed to the maintenance of friendly relations and the preservation of peace All this is now changed. Civilization, with the busy hum of industry and the influences of Christianity, surrounds these people at every point. None of the tribes are outside the bounds of organized government It is no longer possible for them to subsist by the productions of the earth Their inclination is to cling to the habits and customs of their ancestors and struggle against the change of life which their altered circumstances press upon them. But barbarism and civilization cannot live together They are a portion of our people, are under the authority of our government and ... are entitled to the fostering care and protection of the nation. The government cannot relieve itself of this responsibility until the Indians are so far trained and civilized as to be able wholly to manage and care for themselves.

Cleveland, Grover. State of the Union. 1866. Courtesy of Berkley Center, Georgetown Center, BerkleyCenterGeorgetown.edu.

Pro Position #2
Document B
Issue #1

Some Americans argued that the Dawes Act would help Native Americans. These Americans believed Native Americans were becoming dependent upon the American government while living on reservations, and having their own plots of land would allow them to become independent. Furthermore, the government in the past had always neglected or broken its treaties with Native Americans, while the Dawes Act promised a more permanent solution.

Cook Meeker was an Indian Agent in White River, Colorado. The following is an excerpt from his Second Annual report on the American Indians in his region, written on August 16, 1879.

I should like to have land [given to Native Americans] in cultivation, with tools ready; take away their horses; and then be given the word that if they do not work they will get no rations. As to how much they would work and produce in such a case, and as to how fast they would adopt a civilized life, is [unknown], but my impression is they would not starve. In the past on the failing reservation system, the Indian idea of an agency was that it should be a place where they get supplies. All they wanted was their regular supply of rations and goods. Those [who work] are forced to work by the influence of their chief. They are more subject to him than they would be if they were slaves The remedy for this condition is to provide small allotments of land for each working Indian . . . and thus become independent of his chief. The treaties of the past solved the immediate problem of the time. The reservation system gave birth to new problems creating a race of people who do not and cannot think Passage of this act will breed necessity and ambition into the Indian culture and end the great debates over the hundreds of Indian treaties of the past decades.

Meeker, Cook. Second Annual Report on the Indians in White River, Colorado. August 16, 1879. United States Office of Indian Affairs, Annual Report for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1879.

Document C
Issue #2

By 1887, Americans had used Manifest Destiny to justify national expansion for half the century. They believed it was their destiny to control the continent.

In 1889, future president Theodore Roosevelt wrote the book The Winning of the West about the United States' expansion westward and interaction with native peoples. Below is an excerpt from his book.

It was wholly impossible to avoid conflicts with the weaker race [Indians], unless we were willing to see the American continent fall into the hands of some other strong power It cannot be too often insisted that they did not own the land; or, at least, that their ownership was the same as that claimed often by our own white hunters To recognize the Indian ownership of the limitless prairies and forests of the continent—that is, to consider the dozen squalid savages who hunted at long intervals over a territory of 1,000 square miles as owning it outright—necessarily implies a similar recognition of the claims of every white hunter, horse thief, or wandering cattleman Yet they certainly had as good a right to the country as the Sioux have to most of the land on their present reservations The different tribes have always been utterly unable to define their own boundaries Nowadays, we undoubtedly ought to break up the great reservations, disregard the tribal governments, allot the land, and treat the Indians as we do other citizens . . . for their own sakes as well as ours.

Roosevelt, Theodore. Winning the West, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York: 1917, pg. 76

Con Position #1
Document B
Issue #1

Some Americans and many Native Americans believed it was unjust to force Native Americans to adopt white American culture. Theodore Frelinghuysen was a politician and champion of Indian rights during the mid- to late-19th century. Below is his perspective on the rights of Indians from a speech to Congress in 1830.

It is not denied that the Indians are men, like any other; that they have a place in human sympathy, and are justly entitled to a share in the common gifts of God. And, with this [agreed], I ask, in what code of the law of nations have their rights been **extinguished** [*destroyed*]? How can a government desire or attempt, and how can we quietly permit it, to invade and disturb the property, rights, liberty, and very civilization of the Indians? How can we allow the government to make laws, whose ... **avowed** [*sworn*] purpose is to inflict the [cruel] injustice of breaking up their government (older than our own), of **abrogating** [*getting rid of*] their long cherished customs (older than our own), and of annihilating their existence as a distinct people, a distinct civilization?

Frelinghuysen, Theodore. 1830. Courtesy of Internet Archive, Archive.org.

Document C
Issue #2

Native Americans argued that they, not American settlers, had a right to the land. The speech below was allegedly given by Chief Seattle in 1854. The speech was undocumented, so historians debate its authenticity. Regardless, the speech conveys the argument many Native Americans used to challenge the Dawes Act.

Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been **hallowed** [*made sacred*] by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks that seem to lie in the sun along the silent seashore thrill with memories of past events connected with the fate of my people, and the very dust under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors, for the soil is rich with the life of our [ancestors] At night when the streets of your cities and villages shall be silent and you think them deserted, they will [be full] with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land.

Chief Seattle. 1854. Courtesy of University of Washington.

Con Position #2
Document B
Issue #1

Some opponents of the Dawes Act wanted to preserve reservations. Reservations allowed Native Americans self-rule and a place to practice their culture and traditions. The speech below was allegedly spoken by Chief Seattle in 1854. The speech was undocumented, so historians debate the authenticity of the speech. Regardless, the speech conveys the argument many Native Americans used to challenge the Dawes Act.

The reservation is our last hope, our final hope. Today it is fair, but tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. The white man has little need of our friendship, because his people are many. They are like the grass that covers the great prairies, while my people are few and resemble the scattering trees of the storm-swept plain There was a time when our people covered the whole land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor. But that time has long since passed away. Let us hope that hostilities between the red man and his pale-faced brother may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain We are two distinct races and must ever remain so. There is little in common between us Day and night cannot dwell together.

Chief Seattle. 1854. Courtesy of University of Washington.

Document C
Issue #2

Opponents of the Dawes Act argued that the law treated Native Americans unfairly; to many, it was no different than any of the previous treaties with the U.S. government that attempted to take away native lands.

Sitting Bull was a chief of the Sioux who actively worked to get fair Indian legislation passed in Washington, D.C. Below is his perspective on the Dawes Act, delivered in a speech in July, 1889.

The commissioners bring a paper containing what they wish already written out. It is not what the Indians want, but what the commissioners want Sometimes the commissioners say they compromise, but they never change the document. . . . What is it they want of us this time? They want us to give up another chunk of our tribal land They are again telling us what they intend to do if we agree to their wishes. Have we ever set a price on our land and received such a value? No, we never did. What we got under the former treaties were promises of all sorts. They promised how we are going to live peaceably on the land we still own and how they are going to show us the new ways of living But all that we realized out of the agreements with the Great Father [President] was this: We are dying off in expectation of getting things promised us. Something tells me that the Great Father's representatives have again brought with them a well-worded paper, containing just what they want but ignoring our wishes in the matter Our people are blindly deceived. I, for one, am bitterly opposed to it.

*Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull, the Collected Speeches, ed.0
Mark Diedrich, Coyote Books, 1998, pg. 171*

Lesson 8: Assimilation



*Native American men and a boy posed outside the Carlisle Indian School, 1890
(Library of Congress)*

Why did the United States adopt assimilation policies in the late 19th century?

Homework

Indian Boarding Schools

Read "How Boarding Schools Tried to 'Kill the Indian' Through Assimilation" by Becky Little on the History Channel website.

Document A

A School for Savages; or, Teaching the Young Idea Not to Shoot

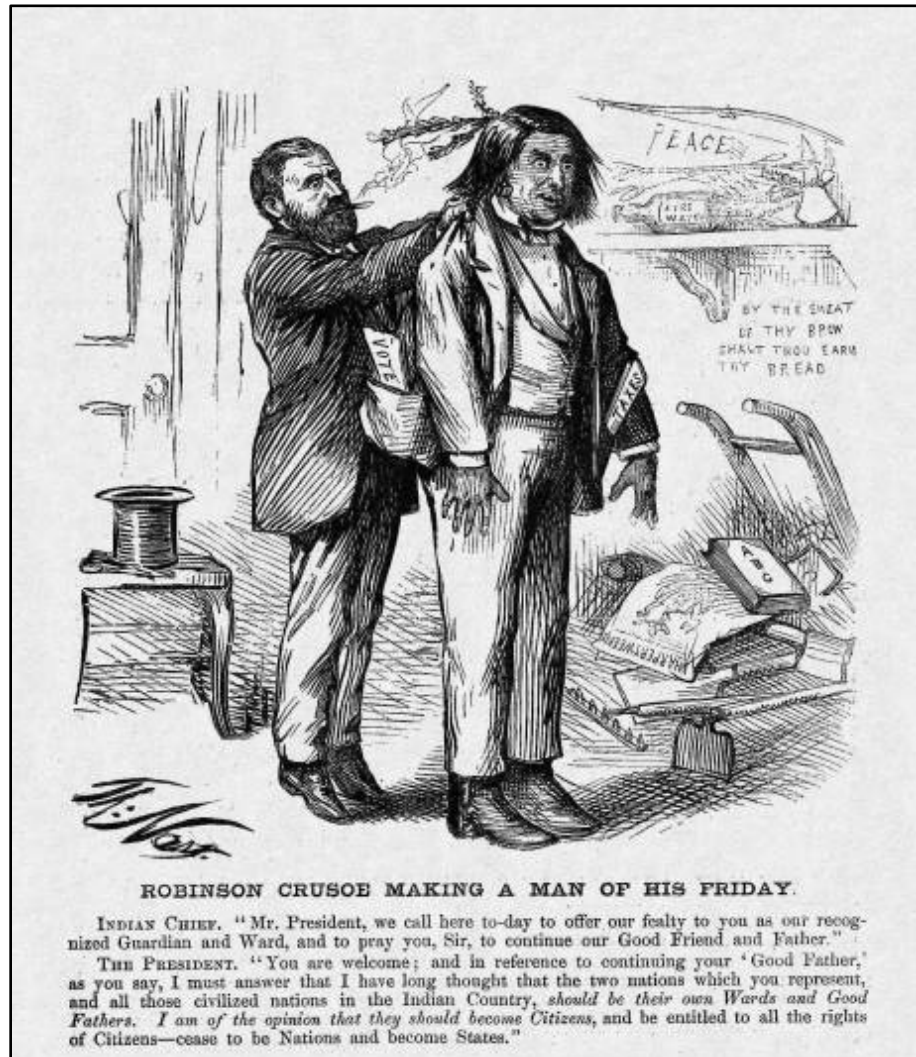
As Americans continued to settle the American West in the decades following the Civil War, the question of Indian policy remained controversial and hotly debated. Few white Americans argued for the Native Americans to retain their traditional customs and lands. Rather, on the one side were those who favored defeating the Indians militarily, even if it meant their extermination; on the other side were those who advocated peaceful relations through the transformation of the Native Americans into educated, Christian, landowning farmers. The following cartoon, *A School for Savages; or, Teaching the Young Idea not to Shoot*, by Frank Bellew was published in *Harper's Weekly* on January 16, 1869.



*Big Injun. "White man, hold on; we want to Big Talkee."
General Sheridan. "No, no. I'll Whip you first, then you can Big Talkee afterward." (HarpWeek)*

Document B
Robinson Crusoe Making a Man of His Friday

This Harper's Weekly cartoon, Robinson Crusoe Making a Man of His Friday, by Thomas Nast (February 12, 1870) incorporates some of the major assumptions and biases of reformers concerning federal policy and Native Americans. The cartoon's title conveys an image from Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe, written in 1719: The Native American ("Friday") must mimic President Grant ("Robinson Crusoe").



The cartoon's caption reads: "Indian Chief. 'Mr. President, we call here to-day to offer our fealty [loyalty] to you as our recognized Guardian and Ward, and to pray you, Sir, to continue our Good Friend and Father.'

The President. 'You are welcome; and in reference to continuing your 'Good Father,' as you say, I must answer that I have long thought that the two nations which you represent, and all those civilized nations in the Indian Country, should be their own Wards and Good Fathers. I am of the opinion that they should become Citizens, and be entitled to all the rights of Citizens—cease to be Nations and become States.' " (HarpWeek)

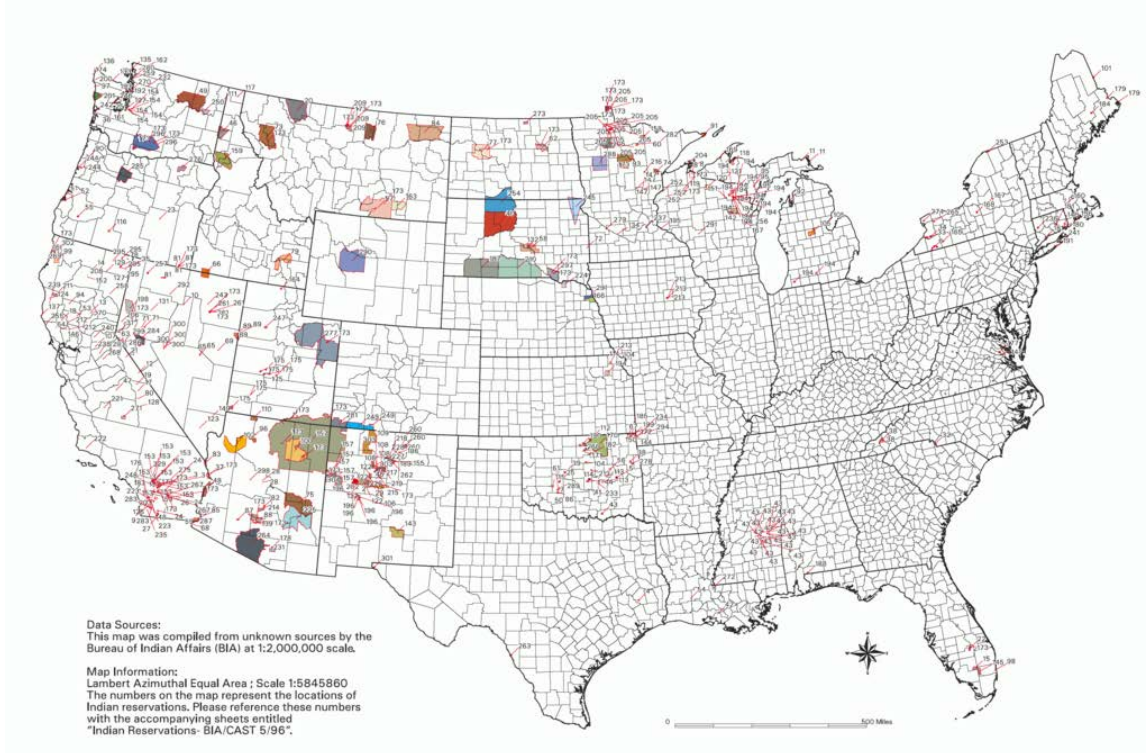
Document C
The Reason of the Indian Outbreak

After the Dawes Act, the U.S. government controlled Indian land. This cartoon suggests that the money and resources owed to Indians to get their own lands and assimilate into American society as part of the Dawes Act often stayed in the hands of corrupt federal agents.



The cartoon reads: "The Reason of the Indian Outbreak. General Miles declares that the Indians are starved into rebellion." (Library of Congress)

Lesson 9: Tribal Territory throughout American History



Map of present-day Native American reservations (Wikimedia)

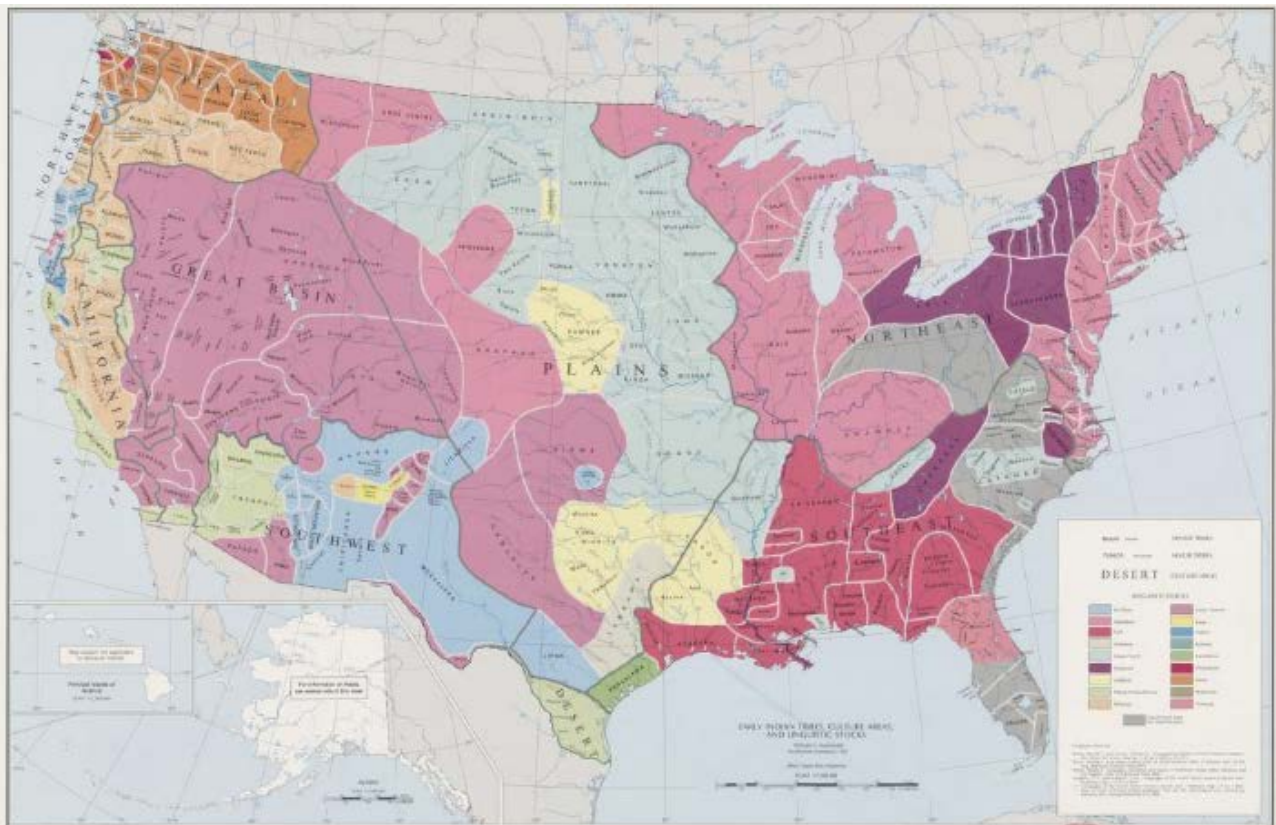
How did U.S. government policies affect Native American territories over time?

Homework
Native American Policy over Time

Read “Indian Policy, U.S.” on Encyclopedia.com and “Obama’s Indian Problem” on the [Guardian website](http://Guardian.com).

Document A
Native American Tribes Before Europeans (Map)

The map below illustrates culture groups of Native Americans—the Great Plains, the Northeast, etc.—as well as which tribes lived in each culture group.



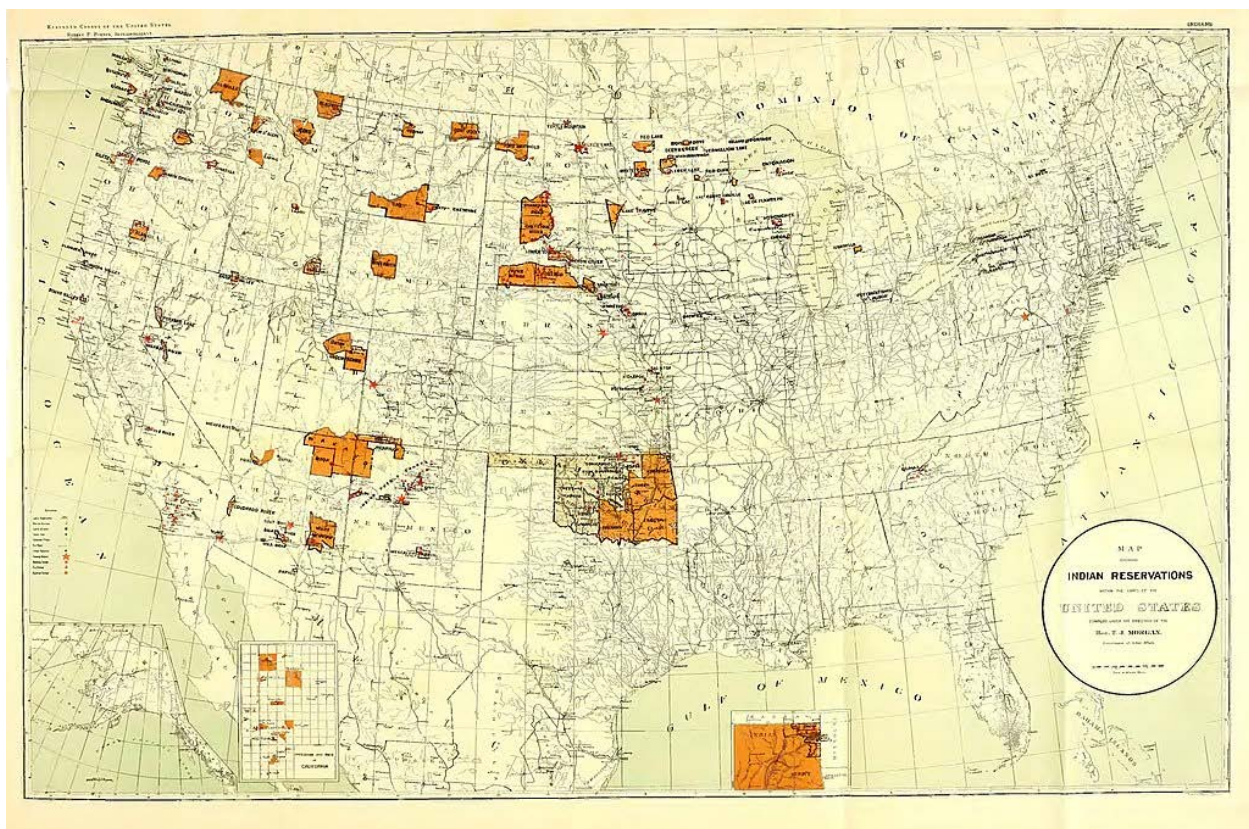
(Library of Congress)

Document B
Native American Reservations, 1865 (Map)

View the map of Native American reservations in 1865 on the Invasion of America project's map on the ArcGIS website.

Document C
Remaining Native American Land, 1894 (Map)

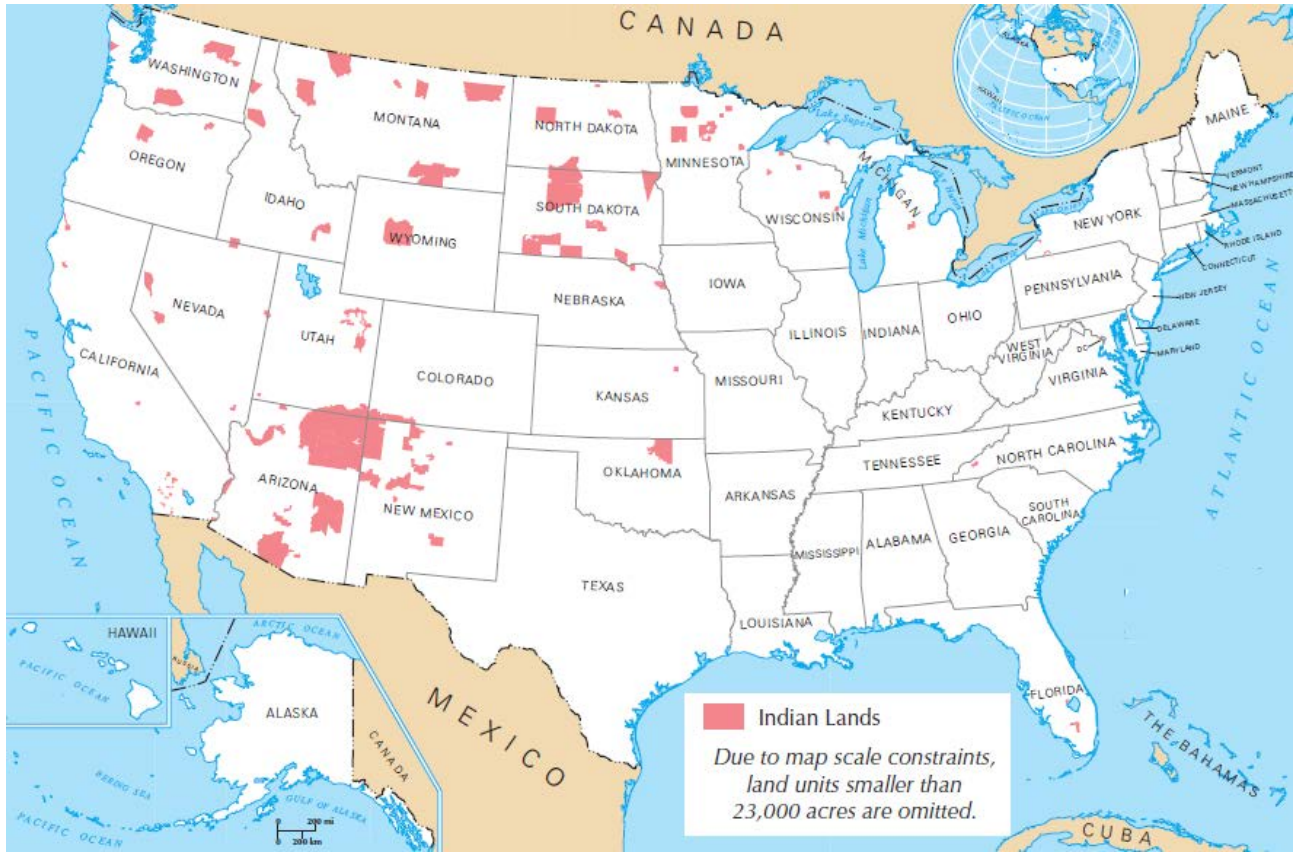
This map illustrates much of the land lost by Native tribes after the Dawes Act. All light area is land transferred from Native Americans to the United States; all dark area is land held by or returned to Native Americans.



(Internet Archive, Archive.org)

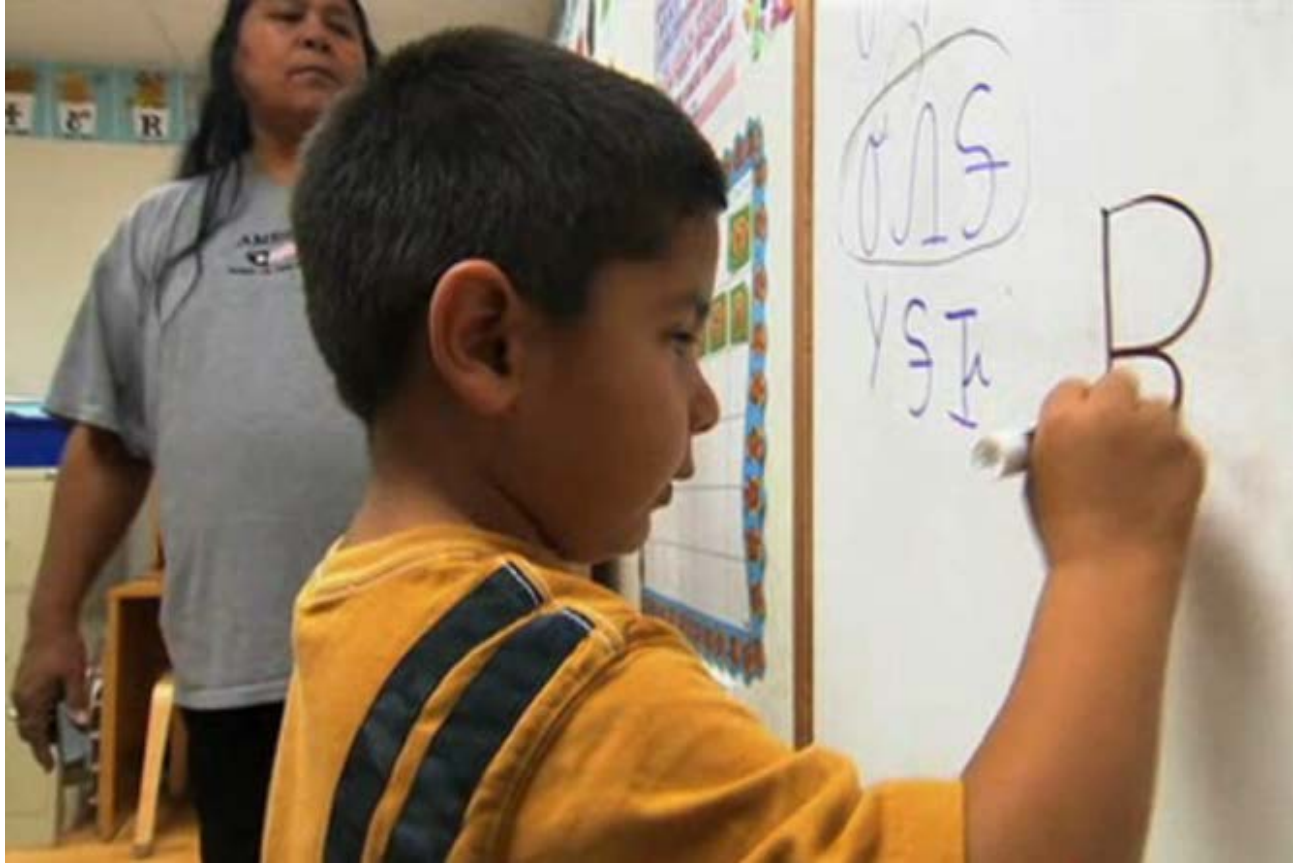
Document D
Native American Reservations Today (Map)

Today, Native Americans have regained ownership over some tribal land through the reinstatement of reservations in the 1960s. Many Native Americans also live in American towns and cities.



(United States Geological Survey, NationalMap.gov)

Lessons 10–12: Native Americans Today



A Cherokee student studying the Cherokee language (Wikimedia)

How does federal American Indian policy continue to affect Native American communities today?

Homework**Native American Communities Today**

Read “13 Issues Facing Native People Beyond Mascots And Casinos” on the Huffington Post website, “Indian Reservations” on the Gale Group website, “What to Know About the Dakota Access Pipeline” on the Time magazine website, and “Preserving Native America’s Vanishing Languages” on the National Geographic website.