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# History of Indigenous Peoples of the United States

United States Genealogy • Indigenous Peoples of North America • Indians of the United States and Their Records

To get started in American Indian Research

The native people who lived on the North American continent at the time of the first contact with European explorers and settlers were called Indians by the Europeans. They lived in families which often grouped themselves together in larger bodies, often given the name of tribes by the newcomers. For the purpose of studying the native population, they can be divided into classifications of different-sized groups -- Indigenous Peoples of North America, Indians of the United States, Canada First Nations, Indians of a particular state or province, or by individual tribes. All of these levels will be represented in this wiki. This article will begin to present the history and records of groups in the United States.

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# American Indian History

The following events affected the American Indian way of life, determined political and geographic boundaries, and the records to be kept.

Much of the following calendar of events was taken from:

 Chronology of the American Indian, by Americana Indian Publishers, Inc. c. 1985. New Beach, CA 92663 (First published in 1975 by Scholarly Press, Inc.) FHL book 973 F25e no. 1 (https://web.archiv e.org/web/20220706042328/https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/257504), no film available. 970.1 So59c (https://web.archive.org/web/20220706042328/https://www.familysearch.org/search/ca talog/1472210), no film available.

1710: Tuscarora Indians petitioned the Pennsylvania provincial government to move to Pennsylvania from their home in North Carolina, as they were losing their land and being enslaved by white settlers.

1711-1712: Angered at losing their land and being enslaved, the Tuscarora aided by Coree, Pamlico, Machapunga and other tribes fought the colonists.

1712-1713: Second Tuscarora War in North Carolina; the Tuscarora migrated north to join the Iroquois Confederacy.

1715: Chickasaw and Cherokee Indians formed an alliance to drive the Shawnee Indians out of the Cumberland Valley of Maryland and Pennsylvania into the Kentucky-Tennessee area.

1723: The First permanent school for Indians in the British colonies was opened at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia. The school was maintained by funds left for this purpose by the British scientist Robert Boyle, one of the founders of modern chemistry.

1751: The Delaware Indians left Pennsylvania to live among the Huron Indians in Ohio.

1754-1763: The French and Indian War, fought by the British and their Indian allies against the French and their Indian allies. The Iroquois Six-Nation Confederacy allied with the British, many Algonquian tribes sided with the French.

1758: The first Indian reservation was established in New Jersey in Burlington County. Edge Pillock a 3,000 acre tract was settled by mostly Unami Indians.

1763: The Proclamation of 1763 was issued by the British, forbidding settlers to move across the Appalachian watershed into Indian Lands.

1763: The Calusa Indians of Florida were forced to migrate to Cuba when the British gained control of the

1775: The Continental Congress created three departments of Indian affairs - northern, middle, southern and appointed eleven commissioners including Benjamin Franklin and Patrick Henry to staff these departments.

1775: The education of Indian youth at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, was the object of a five hundred dollar appropriation by the American Continental Congress on July 12. The amount was raised to five thousand dollars five years later. Dartmouth had been an outgrowth of Moor's Indian Charity School, founded by the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock in Connecticut in about 1754 providing a free school where Indian and white children could be educated together.

1775: Treaty of Sycamore Shoals -- the Transylvania Land Company acquired 20 million acres of Cherokee land.

# **Native American Topics**



Buffalo Hunt under the Wolf-Skin Mask

#### **Beginning Research**

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- Starting Native American Research
- Indigenous Peoples of North America A Beginner's Guide

#### **Tribes**

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# **Record Types**

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- Military Records Newpapers
- Correspondence and Reports
- Online Records
- Court Records
- Oral Histories
- Enrollment Records
- Probate Records
- Dawes Rolls
- Register of **Families**
- Guion Miller Rolls
- Removal Records Sanitary Records
- Factories/Trading
- Schools
- Treaties
- Vital Records

#### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- Area Offices
- Agencies
- Reservations Superintendencies

# **Other Topics**

1775-1783: The Indians of eastern North America were drawn to both sides of the American Revolution. The colonists made efforts to secure neutrality a bit unsuccessful as the Indians reasoned that an American victory would result in more settlers moving into their lands. The Oneida Indians were the largest group to support the American cause. The American colonists did borrow some military methods from the Indians: fighting from cover, camouflage, ambush, harassment, and other guerrilla tactics.

1778: The Delaware Indians became the first tribe to sign a treaty with the United States, at Fort Pitt (Pittsburg) on September 17.

- Archives/Libraries
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1779: General John Sullivan and 4,000 troops were sent to neutralize the Iroquois Confederacy tribes who were aiding the British in western Pennsylvania and New York. Forty Indian towns were burned and one hundred sixty thousand bushels of corn and other crops were destroyed. The Iroquois Confederacy never recovered. 1783: The purchase of land from Indians by a private person without the permission WELCOM of the U.S. Congress was prohibited in a Congressional proclamation September 22. 1783: The Mohawk Indian Chief Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), who fought with the British during the American Revolution, led a group of people to Ontario, Canada, where they were given a tract of land to settle six miles wide on each side of the Grand River.

1787: Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, the federal government reserved the power: "to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes..."

1794: The Jay Treaty, concluded between Britain and the U.S allowed Indians the right to pass freely across the U.S - Canada border.

1796-1822: The U.S. government operated a "factory system" for trade with

the Indians. Abolished because of pressure from the fur trading companies.

**1805:** Sacajawea, a Lemhi Shoshoni Indian woman guided the Lewis and Clark expedition.

1824: The Office of Indian Affairs (later renamed Bureau of Indian Affairs) was created by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, under his department Thomas L. McKenney was appointed to head the office.

1830: Indian Removal Act (https://web.archive.org/web/20220706042328/http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fil eName=004/IIsI004.db&recNum=458) passed by Congress, authorizing the removal of Indians in the eastern United States to be removed to land west of the Mississippi River.

**1832:** The Office of U.S. **Commissioner of Indian Affairs** was created.

**1834:** the U.S. *Department of Indian Affairs* was created.

**1834:** Indian territory was defined by Congress as "all that part of the United States west of the Mississippi and not within the states of Missouri and Louisiana, or the territory of Arkansas, and also that part of the United States east of the Mississippi River, and not within any state to which the Indian title has not been extinguished."

**1840:** A Four Nation alliance among the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Arapaho, and Comanche Indians of the western plains of North America was formed at a council on the Arkansas River. The offensive-defensive agreement was never to be broken.

**1849:** the control of Indian affairs was transferred from the Department of War to the Department of Interior.

1854: a loose federation of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole Indians nations was formed in Indian Territory; they became known as the **Five Civilized Tribes.** (the federation was ended in 1907)

**1861-1865:** Many Indian tribes found themselves caught in the middle by the Civil War. Most of the Five Civilized Tribes supported the Confederacy; because of this the U.S. Congress abrogated all treaties with them in 1862, subsequently renegotiating these treaties on terms less favorable to the tribes in 1866.

**1863:** Kit Carson led a U.S. army force against the Navajo Indians of the southwestern United States to enforce a peace treaty that had been signed in 1849 at Canyon de Chelly. The Indians were removed to Fort Sumner at Bosque Redondo, New Mexico -- the trek known as "The Long Walk". The survivors were kept at Ft. Sumner until assigned to a reservation in 1868.

1870: U.S. President U.S. Grant gave control of the Indian agencies to various Christian denominations after the U.S. Congress had passed a law prohibiting army officers from holding a post of Indian agent.

**1871:** Treaty - Making between Indians Tribes and the U.S. government ended by Congress.

1875: The Indian Homestead Act extended the benefits of the General Homestead Act of 1862 to Indian heads of families over twenty-one years of age who had abandoned or would abandon their tribal relations.

**1878:** The Congress approved funds for a American Indian police force.

1879: The Carlisle Indian School at Carlile, Pennsylvania was established. It became the prototype for American Indian Schools under the U.S.

1893-1905: The Dawes Commission, appointed by President Grover Cleveland, presided over the dissolution of the government of the Five Civilized tribes in Oklahoma, as well as the allotment of 20 million acres to land to ninety thousand individual Indian owners.

**1900:** The Indian population of the U.S. had declined by more than eleven thousand in the ten years since 1890.

**1905:** The Burke Act amending the Dawes Act, was passed by Congress. The intent was to slow down the process by which Indians gained citizenship under the Dawes Act.

**1910:** The Census figures indicated the Indian population (excluding Alaska) had declined from about three hundred forty thousand in 1860 to about two hundred forty thousand in 1910. About one-third of the 1910 population lived in Oklahoma.

1919: (November 6,) By an act of Congress, Indian men who enlisted to fight for the United States in World War I could become citizens.

**1924:** (Curtis Bill, June 2,) **Citizenship** conferred on all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the U.S. The act preserved the tribal rights of the individual Indians and gave them in effect a dual citizenship.

1929: Charles Curtis, of Osage and Kaw Indian descent began his term as vice-president of the U.S., serving with President Hoover until 1933.

**1934:** The Wheeler-Howard **Indian Reorganization Act** passed by Congress.

**1934-39:** The New Deal on many reservations under the Civilian Conservation Corps. Tribal herds of deer, buffalo, elk, and antelope were developed under this program and continued into the 1970's.

1945: World War II. More than twenty-five thousand Indian men and women served in the armed forces.

**1946:** The U.S. Indian Claims Commission was established.

**1947:** (February) A **Termination** timetable listing Indian tribes that might be severed from federal supervision was submitted to the U.S. Congress by William Zimmerman, Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Flathead, Hoopa, Klamath, Menominee, Mission, Six Nations, Osage, Potawatomi, Sacramento and Turtle Mountain tribes, totaling forty thousand Indians, were listed as ready for termination in 1947.

**1948:**(May 14,) **Indian Land Sales Act** (U.S. Public Law 80-529)

1955: (July) Indian Health Services were transferred from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Public Health Service.

**1957:** (March 1,) The **Termination** of U.S. federal supervision and services to 260 Shivwits, Koosharem, Indian Peaks and Kanosh bands of the Paiute Indians of Utah became effective.

**1958:** (September 18,) **Termination** without tribal consent of U.S. federal services to Indian tribes was ended.

**1959:** (August)U.S. federal supervision of and services to nine hundred Wyandot, Peoria, and Ottawa Indians of Oklahoma ended.

# Historical Background

The first contact of European settlers with the native population created a mutual and natural curiosity. Establishing relationships required trust and understanding. The mind-set of the European settlers became one of converting the natives to Christianity and the European way of life.

Before the establishment of the federal government, Indian affairs was handled by each colony or at the local level. The administration of Indian affairs was placed under the jurisdiction of the War Department early in the history of the United States. It was later transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs as part of the Department of the Interior.

There was a general recognition that the Native Americans had "title" (pre-emption rights or rights of first occupation) to the land. Efforts were made to "extinguish" those property rights by purchase and by treaty. Treaties included stipulations for the payment of benefits in exchange for the surrender of the property rights. Provision was sometimes made to reserve areas for hunting, fishing and burial. Later treaties also provided for the removal of the Native Americans from their home lands to unsettled areas and/or reservations.

From 1795 to 1822, the official policy was to trade with the Indians through "factories" or government owned trading houses. More than 20 such factories were established and records were kept by them.

Eventually most of the American Indians, by policy of the federal government (and in a few instances state governments), were confined to reservations.

With passage in 1934 of the <u>Indian Reorganization Act</u> (also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act), American Indian Tribes set up their own tribal governments. Many of these tribal governments began recording vital records, <u>tribal enrollment records</u> and other records of value to genealogists.

#### Records

Each government policy caused records to be created. The desire to "Christianize" the Indians led to records of the efforts of the respective denominations, or church mission records. Extinguishing property rights led to Indian deeds and to treaties in which the Indians gave up their property rights. Treaties often led to annuity rolls, or record of payments to the Native Americans.

The movement of groups of American Indians from one locality to another led to removal records or emigration records.

The management of reservations by agents of the Office of Indian Affairs (now the <u>Bureau of Indian Affairs</u>) produced a variety of records – <u>Indian</u> census rolls, allotment (land) records, school records, health records, vital records and a number of other documents.

Most of the records discussed in this article are those created by the federal government. American Indians were also included in other non-agency records, such as the general population schedules of the Census Bureau, local deed books, military records, and many others.

After the <u>Indian Reorganization Act</u> was passed in 1934, and in some cases earlier, tribes established governments which administered the affairs of the tribe and created records. These records often include enrollment records, vital statistics, tribal court records, employment records, minutes of meetings, etc.

Educational institutions have also studied the history, culture, and language of Indian tribes. Oral histories have been gathered from individuals.

Personal and business records of individual Indians have been gathered by historical societies and museums. Many of these records remain in the possession of the families.

# Tribes of the United States

Many "tribes" of American Indians have existed in what is now the United States. Tribes have existed and become extinct. Some tribes are federally recognized, some are state-recognized and some exist without official recognition.

It is important to determine the tribal affiliation of supposed ancestors, since most of the records are associated with the tribal connection of an ancestor is unknown, it can sometimes be identified by determining the residence of the ancestor and studying the history of that locality to find tribes that resided there.

There are several lists of tribes available for various localities -- country, state, or local. Examples of such lists are:

- Native Tribes of the United States (includes federally and state recognized) -- dickshovel.com/trbindex.html (https://web.archive.org/web/20220 706042328/http://www.dickshovel.com/trbindex.html)
- Indian Tribes of the United States -- accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/ (https://web.archive.org/web/20220706042328/http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/)

While these lists differ in their completeness, they are important tools to help identify the names of the tribes and where they resided. However, since this Wiki site is focusing on the records of the various tribes, their location, and their use, lists are being compiled with links to the tribal histories, offices, and records. It is hoped this will make it easier for genealogists and family historians to find the records needed to trace their ancestry and prepare the histories of those ancestors. These lists are being added to daily and are arranged in several ways.

# References

- Chronology of the American Indian, by Americana Indian Publishers, Inc. c. 1985. New Beach, CA 92663 (First published in 1975 by Scholarly Press, Inc.)
- Deloria, Vine, ed. American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Smith, Jane F. and Robert M Kvasnicka, eds. *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1976.

### **Family History Library**

#### **Websites**

See the Bibliography of Native North Americans (https://web.archive.org/web/20220706042328/http://www.ebscohost.com/government/bibliography-of-native-north-americans) an online resource available at many libraries.

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