



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Native American-Culture in Crisis

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by Joan Rapczynski

Introduction

The curriculum unit presented will be incorporated into the United States History survey course that is required of all tenth and eleventh graders at Wilbur Cross High School. The history of Native Americans and their relationship with the federal government is a very complex subject. It has been dictated largely by the growing desire of the United States government for land. As settlers began to push west in the 1800's they faced confrontation with established Native American cultures. At the time of Columbus's first voyage it has been estimated that there were between one and three million natives in North America. By 1800 the native population was outnumbered by at least four to one. By 1850, most Indian nations had been exterminated or defeated and given the land that nobody else wanted. The last holdouts were the nomadic tribes of the Great Plains- the Pawnees, the Cheyennes, the Sioux, the Kiowas, and the Comanches. The land they called their own was the last frontier, and these Indians were the last to lose their freedom (Danzier and Wilson, 385). The majority of this unit will examine the relationship of the Plains Indians with the United States government.

Objectives and Strategies

The first objective of this unit is to set the historical context. By doing so students will be able to better understand some of the attitudes and beliefs held by the Native Americans today. As the American population grew in size, much from immigration, white settlers were now coveting lands once held by Indians. More than 125,000 Native Americans lived in the forests and prairies east of the Mississippi in the 1820's. Although many tribes violently resisted white encroachment, others followed the path of accommodation. The Cherokees of Georgia made remarkable efforts to learn the ways of their white neighbors. They gradually abandoned their semi-nomadic way of life and adopted a system of agriculture and adopted the principle of private property. Missionary schools opened among the Cherokees and the Indian Sequoyah created a Cherokee alphabet. In 1808 the Cherokee National Council passed a written legal code and in 1827 they adopted a written constitution that provided for three branches of government. However, in 1828 the Georgia legislature declared the Cherokee tribal council illegal and asserted its own rule over Indian lands and Indian affairs. The Cherokee appealed this move to the Supreme Court, which upheld the rights of the Cherokee in three separate instances. President Jackson refused to recognize the Court's decision because he clearly wanted to open these lands to white settlement. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was significant because it provided a

dramatic illustration of how democracy did not apply to policies related to Native Americans. Passed by Congress at the request of President Andrew Jackson, this act gave the executive branch vast powers to order native peoples living east of the Mississippi River to relocate to a designated Indian territory that would be set up in the West. This forced relocation caused great personal suffering, anguish, starvation, disease and even death for Native Americans. It seemed that Jackson's democratic intentions did not apply to American Indians. He believed that assimilation would not work and allowing Native Americans to live in their own areas would require too many troops to keep the area free for white settlers who wanted tribal lands. Jackson had never hidden his scorn for Native American rights, and refused to honor federal treaty obligations to protect the southern tribes from harassment. Once this law was passed Jackson, whom the Indians nicknamed "Sharp Knife" had the power and the money to select the tribes that were to be removed (Nabokov, 41). Jackson believed his policy was a noble one, for Indians would be relocated to areas of wide-open spaces where they could preserve their native cultures. Jackson's policy of emigration was supposed to be voluntary because he believed it would be "...cruel and unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers"(Nabokov, 43).

Teachers may want to assign students to research the actual law that was approved on May 28, 1830. Remind students that this law not only dissolved tribal government, but guaranteed that Native Americans would "hold new territories in perpetuity" a promise soon forgotten. Students might work individually or in a group to break down the language of this act by paraphrasing and listing its provisions. Students should also be encouraged to research the background of Andrew Jackson and to examine primary sources that might shed light on his true beliefs and reasons for supporting the Indian Removal Act. There are conflicting stories about the real feelings of Andrew Jackson concerning Native Americans. On the one hand he refers to the Indians, as "a much injured race" yet on the other, he did not believe the Cherokee nation should have the power to regulate their own affairs (Nabokov, 44). This would offer students the opportunity to engage in a lively debate once the research is completed.

An interesting case that relates to this dilemma is *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832. Strongly against removal, the Cherokee quarrel with the state of Georgia went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1831 the tribe won an unequivocal acknowledgement of their status as an independent sovereign nation. The court recognized the Cherokee nation as a "...distinct political community whose people Georgia was not allowed to regulate by laws and whose lands Georgia was not allowed to invade." In the historical opinion of Chief Justice John Marshall, the "...acts of Georgia are repugnant to the Constitution... They are in direct hostility with treaties, which...solemnly pledge the faith of the United States to restrain their citizens from trespassing in Cherokee territory " (Nabokov, 72). A famous quotation from this ruling is the reaction of President Jackson to Chief Justice Marshall's opinion. When Jackson read the decision of Marshall he replied,..."John Marshall has made his decision, now let him try to enforce it" (Nabokov, 73). Students can be engaged in a lively discussion on whether or not the Indian Removal Act was a terrible injustice or an unfortunate, but necessary action. Teachers might wish to assign students the task of writing a persuasive essay in which they are required to take a position on the issue and support it with fact.

Further investigation might be done by students into the eventual forced relocation eight years later by the Cherokee. Known as the Trail of Tears, this relocation began in October and November of 1838. It refers to the route followed by 15,000 Cherokee who were forced to march from their homes in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, 800 miles westward along the Tennessee, Ohio, Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers to Little Rock and then to Indian Territory west of the Red River. Escorted with their horses and oxen under the command of the U.S. military, the journey took around 139 days. They traveled by steamship, by railway, but mostly on foot. It is estimated that around 4000 people, mostly children, women, and the elderly died along the route of

measles, whooping cough, pneumonia, pleurisy, and pellagra. Their money and livestock were often taken from them along the way either by government officials or outlaws. When they finally reached their destination they found the land to be inferior to that which they had been forced to leave (Brown 8).

Class discussion on this event might begin with the teacher asking students how they might feel if their family was forced to move to another neighborhood. Would they protest a law that took property away from them that they believed rightfully belonged to them? At this point a discussion of the government's constitutional right to eminent domain might be helpful. Direct students to read Amendment five of the Constitution. Point out the clause that reads "...nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." Ask students if they feel this clause would apply to the Indian Removal Act. Was the need for settlement for whites a justification? Would this be considered for public use? Ask students if they can think of any instances today where a person would be forced to move from their home? Tell students to consider the possibility of a highway being built through their neighborhood or redevelopment forcing people from their homes. Inform students that many families were relocated in New Haven in the 1960's when the interstate highway was being constructed, as well as redevelopment. Have students consider how the government might justly compensate a property owner or renter. You might want to have the class consider how they would determine fair market value for their home or property. Ask students if they can define the term fair market value. What factors must be taken into consideration when a family is forced to relocate today?

As American settlers moved further west in growing numbers the impact on Native Americans was enormous. Most Native Americans tried to maintain their cultural traditions even if forced to move from their land. Some tried to assimilate, but others fought to keep whites away from their homes. By 1850, the government could no longer ignore the conflict between the nation's westward expansion and a policy of peaceful, if distant relations with the still unconquered tribes that roamed the Great Plains. Most of these tribes had lived in the area for hundreds of years. In the 1850's and 1860's, about 250,000 Native Americans in dozens of different tribes roamed the Great Plains. Migration from the East disrupted the Native American way of life. Pioneer trails stretched across Indian land. Gold seekers and pioneers trampled the buffalo range, killing thousands of buffalo for no reason. Gradually the government built forts along the trails to protect the settlers from Indian attacks. In 1851 government agents met with thousands of Indians from ten different tribes in a great council at Fort Laramie Wyoming. This agreement gave the U.S. the right to build more roads and forts on the plains. In return the U.S. would make annual payments to the tribes for fifty years. Conflicts escalated as settlement continued and Native Americans resisted restriction to reservations. Furthermore, the government did not realize that individual Indians were not bound by the decisions of their chiefs. In order to survive, many Indians followed the wandering buffalo, as they always had, ignoring boundaries set for their hunting grounds.

Following the Civil War, railroads began to push west. Cattle ranching was spreading over the grasslands of the Great Plains. Mining communities were springing up in the Rockies. The Indians became alarmed as the government sent out surveyors and road builders. A treaty commission was sent by the government to obtain permission of the Indians to build the road. They failed to do so and a meeting was called in 1866 to be held at Fort Laramie. As negotiations began Chief Red Cloud learned that 700 soldiers were being sent to Powder River Country under the command of the military. To Red Cloud it appeared that the government was planning to build a road through the Indian hunting grounds and build forts along the road. Red Cloud vowed to fight as long as he lived and "...will fight for the last hunting grounds of my people." Red Cloud walked out of the meeting and began what was to be referred to over the next two years as "Red Cloud's War" (Danzier & Wilson, 143). Red Cloud conducted guerilla warfare but finally the U.S. government came to terms with the Sioux chief. The Treaty of Fort Laramie, signed in 1868 was considered sacred by many Lakota Sioux. It officially granted the Sioux unrestricted control over sixty million acres of the Black Hills, provided government

supplies and forbade whites from entering the area. It wasn't long before the white man and the government broke the terms of this treaty. Once gold and silver was found in the Black Hills, problems again arose. This treaty has come to symbolize the manner in which the government has treated the Lakota; unkept promises and broken dreams became common. The treaty has presently become a rallying cry for many Native Americans.

The treaty that ended Red Cloud's War promised the Indians exclusive rights to the land around the Black Hills of Dakota. However, this changed in 1874 when gold was discovered in the Black Hills. Miners flocked to this area in search of riches. Black Elk has provided an interesting and harsh perspective on the gold rush into the Black Hills. "...When I was older, I learned what the fighting was about ... Up on the Madison Fork the Wasichus had found much of the yellow metal that they worship and that makes them crazy, and they wanted to have a road up through our country to the place where the yellow metal was, but my people did not want the road ..." Students might be interested in reading more on his views in his book, *Black Elk Speaks*. Having been guaranteed the Black Hills as a permanent reservation in 1868, the Sioux were angered by White invasions of their lands. Bands of Sioux led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse left the reservation and roamed the northern plains living off the land as they always had. In 1875, the government ordered the Sioux to leave the Powder River Hunting ground and warned all who did not withdraw to the reservations along the Platte that they would be "deemed hostile and treated accordingly by the military force...." (Guinn, 5). At this time students might be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned the task of researching the life of one of the following: Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph, Red Cloud, or George Custer. They then should report their findings back to the class.

In the summer of 1876, three armies went after the Sioux to drive them back to the Black Hills Reservation. One wing of the Seventh Cavalry regiment under George Custer had tracked the tribes to Little Bighorn River in Montana territory. Under the leaderships of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, the Sioux had gathered for a religious ritual. Two hundred and twenty five-soldiers led by Custer attacked over 2000 Sioux warriors. The assault proved a disaster for Custer and his army. His troops were isolated by the forces of Crazy Horse and totally wiped out. Only about 50 Indians were killed in battle. For the Indians, the Battle of Little Big Horn stood as a triumph, but it was to be their last victory in the struggle to save their lands, to preserve their traditional way of life against annexation and assimilation by the whites. It also immortalized General George Custer as a hero to the nation, even though his death and defeat in the battle represent one of the greatest military disasters in history. For the military the event became known as Custer's Last Stand. Students usually can be drawn into a spirited discussion over the Battle of Little Big Horn. Controversy still continues over who was to blame for the massacre on the Little Bighorn. Two other military men were officially exonerated of blame for the death of Custer and his troops. However, many historians argue that they could and should have tried harder to move north from the bluff and come to Custer's rescue. Students might enjoy reading the account by Mari Sandoz in *The Battle of Little Bighorn*. She offers the theory that not only had Custer been warned by scouts, Indian and white that a large council would be held at Bear Butte, bringing together several lodges of the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho, but he gravely underestimated the odds assuming he would be victorious. Furthermore, Custer's column was sent out to scout not attack; he had no reinforcements of infantryman, cavalry, or Gatling guns. To make matters worse he divided his force into three parts, perhaps to reserve more glory for himself.

This controversy also provides the opportunity for students to write a persuasive essay about the Battle of Little Bighorn. Have students take a position concerning the behavior of George Custer. Was he a hero or a fool? Ask them why they think this event is often referred to as Custer's Last Stand. What do they think General Custer was thinking when he led a band of 264 men in an attack against 2000 Sioux? Do they think

the sides were unevenly balanced? Ask those students who reported about Custer to recall his personality traits. Did they find any information in their research concerning his courage, bravery, and foolishness or maybe even mental instability or insanity?

Another significant event in Native American history was the attempted flight of Chief Joseph to Canada in 1877. The Nez Perce Indians were a seminomadic tribe, long held in esteem for their intelligence and independence. Led by Chief Joseph, this tribe rejected the government's gifts and promises year after year. Tension increased between this tribe and the miners who were coming into their area. In 1877, the younger members of the tribe attacked white settlement without the permission of Chief Joseph. When the army arrived to punish the attackers, Joseph was forced to fight. He tried to make his way to Canada. Taking women and children with him, Joseph slipped through mountain passes and evaded the army. He was finally cornered in Montana. In a dramatic moment of surrender he informed his pursuers that his people were cold, hungry and wounded and could go no farther. He called the roll of warriors that had fallen and then said simply, "my heart is sick and sad, from where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever." In 75 days of fighting on the run, he had led the United States cavalry across 1,321 miles of the most rugged terrain on the continent, Chief Joseph's flight was the last Indian war, but not the end of bloodshed.

The final episode was in many ways the saddest of all-the army's massacre of Sioux Ghost Dancers at Wounded Knee in 1890. The outbreak at Wounded Knee was in part the result of the growing support of the Ghost Dance religion. Founded by Wovoka, a Paiute Indian religious leader, the religion rapidly gained many followers from the Plains Indians. The belief of the Ghost Dance religion was a hope to return to the old ways. It was taught that God would restore the Indian world to the way it was before whites arrived. Through the dance, the Indians felt they could bring back ancestors and the buffalo killed by white men. Army leaders feared the religion would lead to an uprising and called for troops to be sent to keep things under control. When the army arrived, thousands of Sioux fled the reservations and hid in the neighboring Bad Lands, an area of South Dakota. Ghost dancing had died down in the fall of 1890. Only Sitting Bull's camp continued the ritual. The army sent Indian police to arrest Sitting Bull. When his followers objected, the police shot the aging chief in the head. Students might wish to investigate further the death of Sitting Bull.

In December of 1890, four troops of the Seventh cavalry-about 200 soldiers encountered a band of Sioux who had fled the army and were camped out on the edge of the Bad Lands. The group numbered around 340 of which about one third were warriors. The rest were women, children, and old men. What happened at Wounded Knee has always been shrouded in confusion. Accounts differ, but when the smoke cleared, some 130 Sioux were dead. Perhaps another hundred had crawled off into the brush to die. Twenty-four soldiers were dead and 33 were wounded. Students should be encouraged to research the various accounts of the events surrounding the massacre at Wounded Knee. Teachers should inform students that there are many accounts available and they vary greatly. They might want to read the account by Black Elk, a holy man of the Oglala Sioux, who arrived on the scene shortly after the fighting ended. Another account was a report of the editor of the Chadron, Nebraska, *Democrat*. The third is an excerpt from a telegram that was sent to the war department by General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the army units operating in the Sioux reservations (Danzier and Wilson, 52). Teachers should remind students that in any historiographic exercise, they should consider a number of points about each witness. Who is he? What is his exact position or title? What is his part in the episode? When did he write the account? Was the event fresh in his memory or was it a distant recollection? Where exactly was he when the event took place? Was he an actual eyewitness? Could he have seen everything he describes? Why is he writing or testifying about the event? Does he have any reason for telling or not telling the whole truth? What type of account is it- an entry in a personal diary, a letter to a friend, a sworn statement, a magazine article, a report to a higher authority, or a sworn statement in a court

of law? Essentially the students are asking each witness two types of questions: (1) Is he knowledgeable? Is he in a position to know what actually occurred? (2) Is he truthful? Has he any motive for distorting the truth or omitting certain details?

The second objective of this unit is to give students an understanding of the policy of assimilation. Assimilation of Native Americans into the mainstream Anglo culture was the goal of the United States government from earliest colonial times. Whether government policy called for abrupt, forced acculturation or advocated gradual change, it was understood that ultimately American Indians must adopt the life styles of whites or perish. Even when the wars between Native Americans and the U.S. government were over, the problem was far from solved. In 1868, the Sioux signed the Fort Laramie Treaty in which they agreed to live on reservations along the Missouri River in return for protection and supplies from the U.S. government. Conflicts continued however, because promised supplies often arrived late and were of poor quality and insufficient quantity. The reservation system never worked well and many Native Americans detested it. Most of the later Indian wars began when tribes left the barren and dreary reservations and tried to return to their hunting grounds. Federal agents who supervised the reservations were often incompetent and sometimes corrupt. Many had little respect for the culture of the American Indian and made deliberate efforts to nationalize the tribes. They prohibited traditional dances and dress. Some even forced the men to cut their hair so they would look white. Tribal governments were dissolved and replaced with federally appointed administrators whose task it was to "civilize" the Indians. Laws were passed to prevent Native Americans from practicing tribal customs and religion. Children were often taken from their parents and sent to foster parents or boarding schools in the hopes of Americanizing them.

At this time teachers should ask students how they would feel if they were prohibited from practicing their religion or partaking in their own cultural activities. How would they feel attending school that required English to be spoken at all times? Then direct students look at a map to determine the quality of the land set aside for the Native Americans on reservations. They should consider if the land was agricultural, if it contained mining resources, or if it was barren and nonproductive. Ask students what conclusions they can draw from their research. They should probably be able to tell you that most of the land set aside was barren and nonproductive. The land that was fertile or contained mineral deposits was sold to white settlers or to mining companies. Then have students examine a map that exhibits the land annexed to the federal government from 1850-1890. Students should be able to determine that the American Indians power and influence over their homeland all but ceased to exist. The amount of land lost by the Indians amounted to almost half the total size of the continental United States.

An excellent primary source for students on the topic of reservation life is the Native American classic *Black Elk Speaks*, the autobiography of an Oglala Sioux holy man who had seen his tribe transformed from a buffalo hunting tribe of the Great Plains to the hungry, impoverished prisoners put on thirteen different reservations. Read the following quotation from his book to the class: "...Once we were happy in our own country and we were seldom hungry, for then the two-legged and the four leggeds lived together like relatives and there was plenty for them and for us. But the white man came and they made little islands for us and other islands for the four leggeds and always these islands are becoming smaller." Ask students what did Black Elk mean when he said the two legged and the four legged lived together like relatives. What does he imply happened when the white man came? What do you think he meant by islands? Why are they growing smaller? Next read the following quotation from President Theodore Roosevelt. "During the past century a good deal of sentimental nonsense has been talked about over taking the Indian's land. Now I do not mean to say that ...gross wrong has not been done the Indians by both the government and the individuals...but as regards to the taking of land...the simple truth is that the Indians never had any real ownership of the land at all..." (Danzier and

Wilson, 27). Ask students on what principle does Roosevelt disagree with Black Elk. Whom does Roosevelt blame for the conflicts between the Indians and white Americans? Ask students how they think the relationship between Indians and white Americans might have been different if the Indians had not been force on reservations. Let the students speculate for a few minutes and then ask them to summarize the points made. Teachers might assign an essay on one of the following speculations: How might the course of history have been different if Indians had greater access to guns when white settlers first came to the Great Plains? How might the course of history been different if the federal government had honored its original treaties with the Indians? How might the course of history been different if the Indians had accepted the land and left the reservations?

Because the reservation system seemed a failure, many reformers supported the idea first suggested by Thomas Jefferson- that of giving American Indians individual parcels of land and absorbing them into white society as if they were immigrants. Pressure for a reform in Indian policy was triggered by Helen Hunt Jackson's book *A Century of Dishonor* , which chronicled the unjust treatment American Indians, had received at the hands of the federal government. Support started to gather across the U.S. that insisted that Indians must be helped to become full members of American society. Ask students what they think the phrase -full members of American society actually means. Remind students that the year is 1881. What other groups were being denied membership into American society? Tell students that women and African-Americans were still treated as second-class citizens. Ask students to give other examples of this inequity. Teachers might assign students to research the life of Helen Hunt Jackson. What inspired her to write this book? Tell students that Ms. Jackson was among the first authors to draw attention to the condition of the American Indian. Although much of her book is dry reading, she offers every detail concerning the deplorable way the U.S. government cheated the Indians.

A final discussion about reservation life might occur when teachers point out that between 1880-1916, William Cody, otherwise known as Buffalo Bill toured in a Wild West show. He hired Indians to chase covered wagons and sign autographs. Ask students if they find it ironic that while Indians were exploited in popular Wild West shows they were being lectured about abandoning old customs and intertribal warfare. White reformers and educated Indians alike decried these circuses as barbaric throwbacks to a primitive past that was best forgotten. (Nabokov, 55)

In 1887, in an effort to make assimilation the official policy, Congress passed the Dawes Act. The goal of this law was to destroy tribal structure and the communal life style of Native Americans by encouraging tribal Indians to become individual farmers. Indian tribes lost legal standing, and tribal lands were divided among individual members. In exchange for renouncing their tribal holdings, Indians would become American citizens and would receive individual land grants-160 acres to family heads, 80 acres to single adults. Even these grants were qualified; however, full ownership would come only after the expiration of a 25-year federal trust. Although well intentioned, the allotment scheme played into the hands of miners and cattle ranchers who looked greedily at the remaining American Indian lands. Breaking up the reservations was precisely what they wanted. As had happened so often before, the American Indians were the losers. The government committed to the principle of individual ownership, was less able to resist the demands of land hungry whites. It steadily sliced away at the reservations. By 1900 American Indian holdings in the west were half what they had been in 1887.

Ask students to decide whether or not the Dawes Act was a failure. Have them consider the following characteristics of Indians and their society. First, Indians believed that the land should be owned collectively. Second, Indians were proud, self-reliant and independent people. Third, Indians were loyal to their tribes and

proud of their tribal customs. Ask students why would an Indian refuse 160 acres of free land. How would you expect Indians to react to the 25-year limitation on selling or mortgaging their own property? Why would Indians be unwilling to accept citizenship under the terms required? You might want to divide the class into groups. Each group will pretend to be an Indian council or chief who must make recommendations to the tribe to accept or reject the provisions of the Dawes Act. Are any of the provisions unacceptable because of Indian cultural values? If so, the students must specify the value or characteristic that would make the provision unacceptable. Tell students the Dawes Act was reversed in 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act asserted the importance of perpetuating Indian culture and tribal self-government. The Dawes Act had been considered a catastrophe that not only reduced the size of their land holdings to two-thirds of what it had been, but cut at their dignity and self-worth (Nabokov, 32).

Another way the government encouraged assimilation was through the Indian boarding schools. In the 1870's and 1880's the federal government passed legislation and instituted policies designed to assimilate Native Americans into white society. By 1881 there were 106 day and boarding schools for Native Americans that were operated by the federal government. Educators believed that assimilation would be more successful and happen more quickly if students attended non-reservation boarding schools. The idea of these schools was simple. Take Indian children away from their families, put them in boarding schools and teach them to be American. It started in 1878 and this method became a popular way of dealing with the "Indian problem," that is, how to assimilate Native American children into mainstream America. According to Kenneth Lincoln in *The Native American Renaissance* children were "kidnapped" into government boarding schools. They were ridiculed for their Indian names, stripped of their tribal dress, denied their customs and punished for speaking native tongues.

Students will enjoy reading about the experiences of Zitkala-Sa a full blood Yankton Sioux, who attended a Quaker missionary school for Indians. Born in 1876 on a Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, she was raised in a tipi on the Missouri River until she was 12 at which time she went off to school in the east. She returned after three years to a heightened tension with her mother and ambivalence regarding her heritage. In her autobiographical work *American Indian Stories*, Zitkala-Sa describes her earliest struggle with the conflict between tradition and change that would plague her for the rest of her life. She describes in detail the trauma she went through on the day her thick braided hair was cut. "...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..." Students from other countries might especially relate to some of the experiences of Zitkala-Sa as she talks about losing her language, culture, and environment while she attended boarding school.

Probably one of the most famous Indian boarding schools was the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Founded by Richard Henry Pratt in 1879, it was to be located on a deserted military base in central Pennsylvania. Pratt hired a staff to instruct the students in academics and industrial skills. School life was modeled after the military. Uniforms were issued for the boys, the girls dressed in Victorian-style dresses. Shoes were required and no moccasins were allowed. The boys and girls were organized into companies with officers who took charge of the drills. The students marched to and from their classes, and to the dining hall for their meals. No one was allowed to speak in his or her own language. Pratt was driven by his desire to see the Indian become an imitation of the white man. He was often quoted as saying "Kill the Indian, save the man." Of the 12,000 Indian children who attended the Carlisle School over its 39 year life span, most returned to the reservation. Students usually are fascinated by this subject matter as they find it very close to their own experiences. Ask them to interpret the quotation of Pratt. Why do they think the students weren't allowed to wear moccasins?

Another good source that provided insight into the boarding school experience is *Boarding School Seasons* by Brenda J. Child. Ms Child is a Red Lake Ojibe and a descendant of boarding school students. She offers unpublished letters written by parents, students, and administrators from the Flandreau School in South Dakota and the Haskell Institute in Kansas. Her collection offers the emotional and cultural impact that boarding schools had on the individual families and the community. Letters from parents reveal the agony of separation as well as reports of homesickness, and concerns about the health of their children. She reports that coercion was often used to gather Indian children to the far away schools. Rations, annuities and goods were often withheld from parent back on the reservation if they refused to send their children to school after Congress passed the compulsory attendance law for American Indians. She offers examples of the trauma that the transition placed on Indian children and that parents were discouraged from visiting. The idea was that civilizing Native children would be easier and lapses into tribal ways less likely if students stayed away from their homes and relatives until their education was complete (Child, p14). A good activity for students would be for them to create a journal as if they were a Native American student attending either Flandreau or Haskell Boarding Schools. Ask them to recreate a typical day in the life of an Indian child

The third objective of this unit is to examine Native American culture through film, literature, poetry, and short stories. Literature is a powerful vehicle for the transmission and interpretation of a culture. It combines knowledge and feelings and relate them to the reader. The importance of American Indian literature is revealed when Natives tell their own stories unvarnished by non-Indian interpretation. Native writing is an expression of Native cultures. The first piece to be examined is one entitled "*Lullaby*" by Leslie Marmin Silko. Ms. Silko is a poet, novelist, and short story writer. Born in 1948 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, of mixed ancestry-Laguna, Pueblo, Mexican and white, Ms. Silko grew up on the Laguna Pueblo Reservation, where members of her family had lived for generations. After earning a bachelors degree from the University of New Mexico and attending law school she devoted herself to writing, focusing primarily on Native American themes. "*Lullaby*" is one of the stories from her collection called *The Storyteller* . She describes a Native American woman as she confronts government authorities, whose language she cannot understand and comes to terms with the decisions they forced upon her. The main character Ayah ends up signing a paper giving up her children because she is illiterate. Students react very strongly to this story. Many have parents who do not read or speak English and they can empathize with Ayah. Teachers should suggest that students keep a journal and describe their reactions to the tragic events in the story, or tell about a time when someone they knew was in a difficult situation because they were not familiar with the language or customs. Silko makes a powerful case demonstrating how language and power can be interconnected. Ask students if they know what Silko means by this statement. Can they give examples of how language and power might be related?

The next selection recommended is one by Paula Gunn Allen. Ms. Allen was born in 1939 in Cubero, New Mexico, of Laguna-Sioux and Lebanese-Jewish ancestry. She holds a doctorate from the University of New Mexico. The excerpt "*Where I Come From is Like This*" comes from her novel *The Sacred Hoop*. In this selection she explores connections between ethnic identity and feminist ideology. She traces the stories that were told to her orally as a child. Allen talks about the power of oral tradition-the family stories passed down to her from her mother. Students especially enjoy relating some of their own family histories as we discuss those that Allen shares with her readers. She talks about how the roles of men and women are defined in her culture. Ask students if they feel there are any definitive roles in their families for men and women. Do they feel that they are defined as a person because of what is expected of them? Allen relates that " who I was and who I was supposed to be" was clearly defined in her roots. Finally, ask students to consider the message portrayed by Allen that " no Indian can grow to any age without being informed that her people were savages who interfered with the march of progress pursued by respectable, loving, civilized white people." What

effects might such a message have on a Native American's identity and self-esteem? What effects would such a message have on any ethnic group's self-esteem?

Students might also enjoy reading some of the poetry of James Welch. They usually find his work a powerful read as well as an accessible one. Born in Browning, Montana in 1940, Welch is a member of the Blackfeet Tribe. He attended schools on the Blackfeet and Ft. Belknap Reservations, graduating from high school in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1958. He received a B.A. from the University of Montana and spent two years in the MFA program at the University of Montana. The following poems come from his collection entitled *Riding the Earth Boy 40*. "In a Plea to Those Who Matter" and "Riding the Earth Boy 40" he explores the issues of tradition and identity and the social pressures that threaten them from both the outside and inside their culture. He captures the sense of separation his people feel from mainstream society and examines the emptiness of reservation life. After reading "A Plea to Those Who Matter" students should identify the "ones who matter." Ask students how is the speaker willing to change to please them.

A film that will be examined is *Dances With Wolves*. This film is a sentimental movie about what might have occurred if whites were truly interested in learning about Native American culture. As the main character, John Dunbar discovers and explores the culture of the Lakota Sioux, so does the audience. The buffalo hunt is magnificently recreated. Students should be told that the buffalo provided a total way of life for the Indians. The buffalo meant a lot of different things to most of Native Americans. It provided food and clothing, tools and utensils and most of all a Spirit Being; blessing the peoples with everything they needed to survive. A major part of Indian life was centered around buffalo herds. One of the ways the U.S. government gained control was by destroying the buffalo. Once the buffalo became almost extinct on the Great Plains then the entire way of life for the Native Americans was destroyed. Students should be encouraged to further explore the significance of the buffalo and research how the government as well as private citizens managed to destroy these magnificent creatures. Further information on this topic will be provided in a lesson plan at the end of this unit.

The final objective of this unit is to have students examine the emergence of the American Indian Reform Movement. It is not surprising that the 1960's marked the emergence of the Indian Reform movement. During this time many joined together to demand improvements in their conditions. As a group, Native Americans have been the poorest and have suffered the highest unemployment rate in the U.S. They have been the victims of serious health problems such as alcoholism and tuberculosis and the death rate among infants was nearly twice the national average. Furthermore, their life expectancy was several years lower than the average American for both men and women (Deloria, 45).

In 1953 a termination policy was passed by Congress to relocate Native Americans from their reservations and place them in the cities. The plan failed miserably. The Native people became victims of poverty and were often forced to live in ghettos. The Lakota found themselves without a unified community, language, or culture as well as victims of racism and discrimination. They often found themselves living in conditions even worse than reservation life (DeLoria, 45). According to Deloria many young Native American nationalists viewed mainstream America as nothing more than "...ice cream bars and heart trouble and neurosis and deodorants and getting up at 6:00 in the morning to mow your lawns in the suburbs." Ask students what Deloria means by this quotation. Does this have a positive or a negative connotation?

Native Americans wanted greater opportunity to govern and control their own lives. In 1961, representatives from 61 Native American groups met in Chicago and drafted the Declaration of Indian Purpose, which stressed the determination of Native Americans to choose their own way of life. The program requested an end to the

termination program and called for policies to create economic opportunities for Native Americans on the reservations. In 1965 President Johnson established the National Council of Indian Opportunity to ensure that the needs of Native Americans were met. Young Native Americans were not satisfied with the new program. They felt that reforms were too slow in coming. Their discontent led to the formation of the American Indian Movement or AIM. Founded by Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt and George Miller, this aggressive organization grew rapidly demanding the restoration of Native American lands, burial grounds and fishing rights. Students might enjoy reading excerpts from *Lakota Women*. concerning the formation of this group. According to Mary Crow Dog, *The American Indian Movement* "...hit our reservation like tornado...Some people loved it, some hated it, but nobody ignored it..." Teachers might also assign students the task of researching information about all three of the founders of the AIM and then report it back to the class.

In November 1969, one hundred Native Americans calling themselves Indians of All Tribes seized the empty federal prison at Alcatraz Island. They claimed possession of the island in the name of all American Indians and offered to purchase it from the federal government for a "fair" price: glass beads and red cloth valued at \$24-the amount Dutch settlers paid natives for Manhattan Island in 1626. The major purpose of the occupation was media exposure. With a crowd of news reporters in attendance they issued a proclamation to the Great White Father and all his people. They compared the island of Alcatraz with conditions on the present day reservations. The occupation of Alcatraz lasted from November, 1969- June 1971 when federal marshals escorted away the 15 remaining Indians. Students should be assigned to read the account entitled *Invading Alcatraz* from Peter Nabokov's book entitled *Native American Testimony* . Ask students who was the Great White Father. Students also might enjoy researching the Proclamation as well as some present day reservations such as Standing Rock Reservation or Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Both of these reservations are examples of extremely depressed areas with a high unemployment rate, high teenage suicide rate and a high rate of alcoholism.

At this time teachers might show the film *Thunderheart* . Students will get a strong visual presentation of reservation life, not only a view of the poverty and the substandard of living, but the beauty of the rolling prairies and deep gorges. One of the reasons this movie is so powerful is because of the contrast between the natural beauty of the land and the extreme poverty and sense of hopelessness of the people on the reservations. It also brings together the past and the present through the two main characters, one an FBI agent who happens to be part Native American and has become "white" and a Native American police officer on the reservation who maintains his cultural identity. Their style of investigating clashes, as well as the denial of the FBI agent to take seriously the suggestions of the Native American police officer.

Nationwide exposure was again achieved in 1972 as militant Native Americans seized the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as a culminating result of a march known as The Trail of Broken Treaties. The march was organized to protest the U.S. government's numerous treaty violations with Native Americans throughout history. Native Americans from across the country joined the marchers. They were calling for the restoration of 110 million acres of land to Native American tribes. They also pushed for the abolition of the Bureau of Indian affairs, an agency they considered inefficient and corrupt. When the natives who took part in the Trail of Broken Treaties arrived in Washington, they did not plan to occupy the BIA building. They first approached the building for help in finding a place to stay while they tried to make appointments with government officials. According to Mary Crow Dog, who was one of the demonstrators, "Somebody suggested, Let's all go to the BIA" It seemed a natural thing to do...They would have to put us up. It was our building after all" (Mary Crow Dog, 25). The police viewed the presence of a thousand Native Americans in the BIA office as an occupation and surrounded the building. In response the unarmed demonstrators blocked doors and passageways with overturned desks and file cabinets. They also broke off a few table legs to defend themselves in case of attack. They occupied

the building for seven days after which President Nixon promised to study their demands and not file any charges for damages done. " Morally, it had been a great victory. We had faced white Americans collectively, not as individual tribes. We had stood up to the government and gone through our baptism of fire. We had not run" (Mary Crow Dog, 29). The takeover soon degenerated into vandalism as the BIA suffered 1.4 million dollars in vandalism. Ask students to define civil disobedience. Would that classify this act as civil disobedience? Can they think of any other examples in history when civil disobedience was successful in changing unjust laws?

In the late winter and spring of 1973, Native Americans again chose to occupy land. They were protesting the deplorable living conditions on the reservation. The site was historic Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Three hundred Sioux seized eleven residents of the tiny town. They holed up in a hilltop church and insisted they would stay there until their demands were met. After ten weeks of negotiations with the FBI, a shootout occurred that left one Native American dead and another one wounded. The confrontation ended with a government promise to reexamine the Native American treaty rights. The 1973 siege accomplished several positive goals. Native Americans did receive a promise of an investigation of the Pine Ridge Reservation and a task force to investigate the treaty of 1868 between the government and the Sioux. Teachers should assign students the task of researching this demonstration. Ask students to find out exactly why the Sioux were protesting conditions on their reservation. Students should also research the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890 and some of the treaties made with the Sioux during that period. Have students make a list that includes conditions on the Sioux reservations and detail changes that need to be made, as well as any withheld treaty rights that should be restored. Then have students write their lists on posters and decorate them with Native American symbols and artwork.

Finally, in 1978 a march was organized. The Longest Walk was a peaceable expression of Native American sentiment during the Indian Reform Movement. Representing eight tribes from all parts of the U.S. Native Americans dressed in tribal garb, marched 3000 miles in five months to protest legislation aimed at stripping treaty rights and possibly abolishing reservations. A weeklong protest was planned to focus attention on the plight of the Native American. It was to be a peaceable protest. Students might enjoy reading excerpts from N.Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Vine Deloria, Jr.'s *Custer Died For Your Sins*. Both these works express the same frustration, alienation, and turmoil that were expressed in The Longest March.

Although some of their actions led to violence and some to a stalemate, Native Americans did secure a number of reforms from both Congress and the federal courts. Congress passed the Indian Education Act in 1972 and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975. The laws gave tribe's greater control over their own affairs and especially over the education of their children. They also regained rights to their land as they won victories for land in New Mexico, Alaska, Maine, South Carolina, and Massachusetts, as well as financial compensation for land lost in South Dakota and Washington.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plan One "The Legend of the Buffalo"

Objective: Students will examine and understand the significance of the buffalo in the life and spirit of the American Indian. Procedure: Begin this lesson by reading an excerpt from the folktale *The Buffalo Go* . This folktale can be found in the book entitled *Native American Testimony* by Peter Nabokov. "...Everything the

Kiowas had come from the buffalo.... There was war between the buffalo and the white man.... The white men hired hunters to do nothing but kill the buffalo. Up and down the plains those men ranged, shooting as many as a hundred buffalo a day. Behind them came the skinner with their wagons. They piled their hides and bones into their wagons until they were full... The buffalo saw that their day was over..." Tell students that perhaps the most significant blow to tribal life on the plains was the destruction of the buffalo. In 1800, approximately 15 million buffalo roamed the Great Plains; by 1886 fewer than 600 remained. Owners of the railroad hired buffalo hunters to accompany the workers and supply them with meat as they laid the tracks westward. William Cody killed nearly 4300 bison in eight months earning the nickname "Buffalo Bill." Tourists and fur traders shot the buffalo for sport from speeding railroad trains. Ask students if they can think of reasons that the destruction of one animal could severely affect the life of the Indian. Then offer the class the following information. The buffalo provided the Plains Indians with their main source of food, clothing and shelter. In addition the skull of the buffalo was considered sacred and was used in many Indian rituals. The hide was used for clothing, teepees and arrow shields; the bones were made into hide scrapers, tool handles, sled runners, and hoe blades. The horns were carved into bowls and spoons. Teachers should assign students the task of creating posters that demonstrate the various uses of the buffalo in Indian life.

Once students have finished their posters, teachers might have the students view the buffalo hunt that was filmed in the movie *Dances With Wolves* . The hunt is wonderfully recreated showing the importance of the buffalo for the Lakota Sioux as well as the acceptance of the white man, John Dunbar by the Lakota Sioux.

Materials Used: Large poster paper, colored markers, book *Native American Testimony* ,
the film *Dances With Wolves*

Lesson Plan Two "Reservation Profiles"

Objective: Students will become familiar with and understand the problems that exist on present day Indian Reservations. Procedure: Teachers should first present the following information to their class concerning modern day reservations. By moving reservations away from the major routes of white commerce in the 20th century, the U.S. government inadvertently provided many tribes with energy resources. Controversy has erupted in some western states as to ownership of this energy rich land. Who should control the land that is rich in oil and natural gas? Although many Native Americans regard their reservation land as sacred, most reservations are still underdeveloped, and their inhabitants among the poorest in the nation. They lack adequate health care, educational opportunities, employment opportunities, etc. Students should be taken to the library to assess information on the modern day reservation:life. Possible reservations include Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, and Crow Creek. Students should gather information on the following topics: tribe(s) living on this reservation, location of the reservation, population, and ancestry, how the reservation came to be, and current living conditions. Once students have acquired all of their information they should chart it on a very large poster board and be able to present it back to the class for discussion. Information on each reservation should be presented on the poster board with a different color marker. After the presentations students might enjoy viewing the film *Thunderheart* . What is most absorbing about this film is its sense of time and place. In *Thunderheart* the audience gets a real visual sense of the reservation, not only the poverty and the substandard of living, but also the beauty and sacredness of the land.

Materials Used: the library, large poster board, the film *Thunderheart* .

Lesson Plan Three "Outstanding Dates and Events as they Relate to the History of the Native Americans"

Objective: Students will examine and understand the significance of the key events and outstanding dates as they relate to the history of Native Americans. Procedure: Before class begins the teacher should write each of the events listed below on a separate large index card. The events are listed in chronological order. Begin the activity by explaining to students that their assignment is in two parts; first, they are about to create a human time line on the events listed below. Randomly distribute the cards. Direct students to read the information on their card. They are responsible for placing themselves in line in correct chronological order. Second, they must place the event in historical context. Students will have to do some research from their textbook *The Americans* in order to write a description of each event. Teachers should designate the starting and ending points for the human time line, Direct the rest of the class to decide among themselves where along the line they should stand to create an accurate chronology.

Materials Used: large index cards, textbook *The Americans*

The following time line presents a brief glimpse into the key events and dates and the history of Native Americans between 1851-1934

1851 The Fort Laramie Treaty is signed

1858 Gold and silver is discovered in Colorado

1862 The Homestead Act is passed

1862 Congress passes the Pacific Railroad Act

1863 Chief Red Clouds War begins

1868 Sioux are guaranteed the Black Hills of South Dakota as a permanent reservation

1870 Plains and mountain Indians are forced to accept reservations; buffalo skins are sought by eastern businesses

1874 Buffalo herds are all but wiped out

1876 Battle of Little Bighorn, Sitting Bull flees to Canada

1877 Nez Pierces attack mining settlements; Chief Joseph and his tribe flee to Canada

1881 A Century of Dishonor is published

1887 The Dawes Act is passed

1889 The Oklahoma land rush

1890 The Battle of Wounded Knee

1924 American Indians are granted full citizenship and voting rights by Congress

1934 Congress restores tribal organization and local control of reservations to the American Indian

Lesson Plan Four "Plains Pictographs"

Objective: Students will become familiar with the Plains Indian tradition of drawing pictographs on buffalo hides to chronicle significant events in their history. Procedure: Teachers will begin this activity by explaining to students that Indians of the Great Plains did not have a written language. Instead significant events in their lives were chronicled through art. They drew pictures on the hides of the buffalo, which they carried from place to place as they wandered the Great Plains. Many of their pictures were in the forms of symbols. The chief of the tribe who would use the pictographs from the past to explain their history told stories. Nature has always played a dominant role in Native American art. Mighty buffaloes, eagles, coyotes, as well as basic elements, like earth, water, and sky appear again and again in native art works. The symbolism of such gifts of nature generally linked the sacredness of land in Native tradition and culture. The land is the center of religion and spirituality and it is the lifeblood of all things living. Usual events on the pictographs represented events that had an impact on the entire tribe rather than one person. Images were drawn without perspective and most humans were drawn in profile. They usually drew animals, humans, objects and geographical surroundings. Teachers should divide the class into groups of three or four and have them recreate an event from the time line in Lesson Plan Three. They are to tell the story of the event through the eyes of a Native American. When the posters are completed each group should present it to the class, but first have the students from each group ask their classmates if they can recognize the scene that is being recreated.

Materials Used: Large poster paper, colored markers, textbook The Americans

Lesson Plan Five "Vocabulary List for the Unit"

Objective: Students will become familiar with and understand vocabulary that is associated with the history of the Plains Indians.

Procedure: Teachers will distribute the meanings of the vocabulary list associated with the Plains Indians. Students are to take the list home and study them for homework. The next day teachers should divide the class into four or five teams. A review of the terms will then take place by playing the game of jeopardy. The team, which has the highest score by the end of class, should be given a reward to be decided upon by the classroom teacher.

Materials Used: Vocabulary list on the Plains Indians

1. assimilation- a minority groups adoption of the beliefs and ways of a dominant culture
2. Americanize- to make Native Americans accept Christianity, American education, and individual land ownership
3. Bureau of Indian Affairs- responsible for carrying out the government's Indian policies
4. allotment- amount of land set aside for each Native American family
5. Black Hills- located in South Dakota; site of the 1874 confrontation between frontier settlers and Native Americans
6. concentration-early policy of confining Native Americans to certain areas in the west
7. A Century of Dishonor- written by Helen Hunt Jackson, portrayed white settlers injustice towards Native

Americans

- 8.. The Dawes Act- 1887, a law enacted that intended to "Americanize" the Indian by distributing reservation land to individual owners
9. exodusters -African Americans who migrated west from the south after the Civil War
10. The Five Civilized Tribes- Native Americans who were eventually pushed west into Oklahoma territory; consisted of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and Creek
11. The Forty-niners- people who fled to Colorado in 1859 in search of gold and silver
12. Great Plains- land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains
13. Great American Desert- name given to the Great Plains when explorers pronounced the area too dry for habitation
14. Ghost Dance- a Native American ritual intended to bring about the restoration of tribal life
- 15 Ghost Shirts-worn by the Native Americans while performing the Ghost Dance; thought to be bullet proof and keep them from harm
16. gold rush- brought people to the west in search of gold; clash occurred over Indian lands
17. Homestead Act- a law enacted in 1862 that provided 160 acres of free land in the west if settlers would live on it and farm it for five years
18. homesteader- a person who took advantage of the Homestead Act
19. Indian Removal Act- a law enacted in 1830 that forced Native Americans east of the Mississippi to move to lands in the West
20. iron horse- the name given to the train by the Indians
21. Indian Boarding Schools- schools for Native American children; taught the ways of the white man
19. Little Big Horn- famous battle in which General George Custer and the entire 7th cavalry were annihilated by the Sioux
20. The Measuring Woman- name given to Alice Fletcher who would measure land for Native Americans under the Dawes Act
21. pemmican- buffalo meat mixed with berries
22. Trail of Tears- refers to the movement of the Cherokee from Georgia to Indian Territory; thousands died along the route
23. Termination Policy. 1953- the U.S. government's plan to give up responsibility for Native American tribes by eliminating federal economic support, discontinuing the reservation system and redistributing tribal lands
24. ward of the government-status of the Native Americans on the reservation which made them dependent

on the federal government for the necessities of life

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