Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume III: Immigration and American Life

Native Americans and the Clash of Cultures: Then and Now

Curriculum Unit 99.03.03
by Peter N. Herndon

> "This war did not spring up here in our land. It was brought upon us
> by the children of the Great Father (whites) who came to take our
> land from us without price, and who do many evil things. . . . It
> seems to me that there is a better way than this. When people come
> to trouble it is better for both parties to come together without arms,
> to talk it over, and find some peaceful way to settle." (Spotted Tail
> Brule, Sioux leader, 1877)

Introduction

This teaching unit, "Native Americans and The Clash of Cultures" is intended for high school students enrolled in either World Cultures or United States History courses at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School. The recent court battles that Native Americans have been fighting, some of which are included in my lesson plans, can be used in the Law course that I teach. I have several overall goals in teaching this material to my students. First, to learn about the conditions surrounding the arrival of the first Americans to this continent. Second, for students to acquire information about the spread and development of some of the early cultures of the First Americans. Third, to acquaint my students with some reasons for the misunderstandings between the earliest Americans and Euro-Americans, many of which continue to the present day. A final major goal is to find out more about recent Native American history and what modern Indians are doing to preserve and promote their culture in a country in which they have been systematically excluded from the political and social mainstream.

Five hundred years after Columbus' "discovery" of the New World, the descendants of the original native

"immigrants" he encountered continue to feel the effects of the 'second great immigration'-the European invasion. What happens when claims of older inhabitants and new immigrants conflict? This question was first addressed in U.S. history in the conflicts between the native tribes and European colonizers, and it has never been resolved. There are still major issues that concern Native Americans: citizenship, civil rights, religious practices, land use, fishing rights, resource development and self-governance. Here in Connecticut, the Mashantucket Pequots and Mohegans are making new rules in a game that includes amassing huge amounts of money by way of immensely profitable gambling casinos. Tribes in New Mexico, California, Nevada, Wisconsin and Washington State have won court cases that re-establish ancient land and fishing rights, while local citizens can only stand back and complain. Ancient Native American ancestral artifacts and bones have been removed from anthropological museums across America, due to successful Indian lawsuits. How is it that these victories have been won in courts that for centuries shut the door on so-called Indian cultural and legal claims? What are some of the implications for the future, if courts continue to reinterpret the law in favor of Native American claims? And what implications do these Indian settlements have on civil rights cases that may be brought into courtrooms on behalf of other native minorities or immigrant groups in America today?

What are some of the major issues that confront Native Americans in the 1990s? What tribal rights--political, religious and cultural--should be given protection from our government? Should Indian lands be returned to them, even if it means displacing other citizens or industry? How has government policy changed since the late 1960s when President Richard Nixon stated that federal policy would include Indians on key committees and "assured the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated from the tribal group"? (Bordewich, p. 12) What of the legendary mismanagement of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which a Congressional report in 1990 called a "national disgrace"? How realistic are notions of preserving a distinct Indian culture in an America in which statistics reveal that Indians are continuing to blend in with the dominant population through intermarriage at an ever-increasing rate?

I hope to create a teaching unit that addresses not only past issues of cultures in conflict but also will make students more aware of legal issues that continue to plague our society as many Indians are continuing to find it difficult to cope with life in present-day America. Are Native Americans just one more minority ethnic group that is finding it difficult to become "mainstreamed" into American life? Or does their status as "first peoples" make them so historically and culturally unique that they belong in a separate category where conventional laws and values don't apply? The ultimate question I want students to pursue is: "Who are the Indians in the 1990's? What are they to us and what are we to them?"

To most of us, there is something appealingly noble and free about an Indian warrior. In the 1991 film, Dances with Wolves, the main character, John Dunbar, played by Kevin Costner, found something he had always been missing when he became accepted into the Sioux community: the mystery of his own personal identity. The cavalry soldier, Dunbar, toward the end of the film, makes the amazing statement, "I had never known who John Dunbar was, but as I heard my Sioux name being called, I knew for the first time in my life who I really was." I plan to show segments of this Oscar-winning film as part of my unit, primarily because the movie is very sympathetic to American Indians, who are depicted as heroic people with real ambivalence toward whites. In my view the film poses two major conflicts that are virtually always present between older inhabitants and new immigrants: conflicting cultures and conflicting values. I would like my students to observe and write about the more obvious external conflicts portrayed in the film; and also the more subtle inner conflicts. Is the film true to history? Are there any stereotypes in the movie? Is the ending a satisfying one? Is there more to the story? I want students to divide into groups and try their hand at writing a sequel to the movie. This film is very much about the Indian identity and the ruthlessness of the policies of the United States government. This is a popular view. To what extent was it true? One of Costner's lines upon discovering

hundreds of bison carcasses left to rot on the plains was, "Who would do such a thing? It must be a people without values, without soul." He is, of course, referring to members of his own race. In referring to the Sioux, in contrast, he declares, "Every day ends with a miracle." John Dunbar has reversed himself. He now despises what his own race represents and acknowledges what he perceives to be the higher ecological and spiritual plane that his blood brothers, the Sioux have attained. Students must be careful not to stereotype Indians as people that have always lived in complete harmony with the land and have somehow passed down this attribute to their descendants. How far must the courts go in protecting sacred Indian religious rights? We will be discussing these issues later in the section on modern court cases involving Native claims to tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

The Earliest Arrivals

There are only a few remnant islands in the Bering Sea that give evidence of the original "land bridge" that once existed between the North American and Asian continents. One of these is a bleak stretch of mostly gravel and black lava called St. Lawrence Island, ninety miles long and thirty-five miles wide. During the eight months of winter, the island is surrounded by ice and during the summer it is often fogged in. The growing season is only sixty days long. The island has a year-round population of about 1,500 people and has been inhabited since 100 B.C. (Morgan, page 20), according to carbon-dating methods.

The residents of St. Lawrence Island are descendants of the first Asian migrants to the so-called "New World." They are Eskimoes who still stretch walrus hides on wooden racks to make traditional skin boats for whale hunting every spring, since the noise of modern aluminum boats causes the whales to dive out of harpoon range. There are no island roads to speak of, so the people get around by modern dune buggies. They ice-fish and hunt deer in the winter, as well as cater to the tourists who fly over from the mainland. Their lives are a curious blend of the ancient and modern worlds.

Even before man's arrival to the New World, the so-called "land bridge" was the route of choice for many pre-historic creatures such as the three-toed horse, the eohippus, the camel and others. And what about man's first steps onto North American land? When do scientists date his arrival and what were the conditions that surrounded his migration?

Semi-nomadic Asiatic people lived on Beringia, the subcontinent that connected eastern Siberia and Western Alaska, and contained a low basin where animals and people from northern China and Mongolia lived to flee the spread of the glaciers. It was fertile, but its existence was temporary. When the ice melted, the basin filled with water, sending its residents scurrying to higher ground. According to scientists, between 15,000 and 10,000 B.C., the final flood began, caused by the melting ice of the huge glaciers. First the western plain flooded, preventing a return to Siberia. The only choice was to travel east, into the less fertile plains of Eastern Beringia. The scene must have been terrifying:

> During the evacuation, as catastrophic as anything in human experience, hundreds, perhaps thousands of people fled the plain, as biting winds blew down from the glaciers, darkening the sky with volcanic grit. Imagine families separated and children lost, a scene of confused alarm and desperate flight as the tide broke through the straits, linking the Arctic Ocean with the Bering Sea for the first time in thousands of years, drowning the plant life, and disrupting the great animal herds. (Morgan, p. 23)

These frightened refugees moved from bison watering holes to marshy areas teeming with migratory waterfowl. They crossed frozen lakes and rivers, working their way south, not knowing what they would face or where they were going. This was the "Great Migration" of Early Man. These were the First Families of America. And they walked here. Some groups moved eastward into Alaska and Canada. Some moved farther south down the Rocky Mountains into Montana and Colorado where there were no more threat of glaciers. Some went as far as Mexico and beyond, across Panama into Colombia, down the coast of Chile, and even as far as the tip of South America, a distance of 12,000 miles. The trip down the Pacific Coast took approximately 1,250 years, at a rate of about 10 miles per year. (Morgan, page 24)

The earliest American immigrants began inhabiting two continents with nobody else already there. Nobody to run them off their land. Nobody telling them to "go home where they came from." They would have this land exclusively to themselves for about 15,000 years! What they would do in America and how they would advance culturally is the subject of our next segment.

Diversity of Land and Culture

The controversies over American Indians in Europe began shortly after Christopher Columbus brought back some of his captives to the Spanish court. Initially, Indians were assumed to be simple unsophisticated people. Then, in 1521 Hernando Cortes conquered Mexico and exposed the exotic and complex world of the Aztecs and their capital city, Tenochtitlan.

> The Spaniards wandered through an Indian metropolis of more than 200,000 people, and marveled at a great market that rivaled those of Seveille and Constantinople. The Aztecs, polished warriors and diplomats, people of grace and manners, were a far cry from the Bahamian Indians, even if they did engage in human sacrifice.
> (Fagan, page 16)

Amazed residents of Spain in the 1520s observed imported cultured Aztec nobles and performing acrobats. Curious citizens of Bristol, England watched some North Americans "clothid in beastys skinnys," ate meat raw and had the manners of "bruyt bestis." (Fagan, page 16) It became obvious to all that there was a world of difference among Indian tribes and civilizations, many of them in competition with one another. Scholars wondered how such lifestyle and cultural differences existed among societies that lived only a few hundred miles apart from each other?

Theories of Origin

Many theories arose to explain where the newly discovered American Indians came from. The Atlantic school argued that voyagers from ancient Carthage had sailed to America 2,000 years before Columbus. This theory was given credibility by the popularization of the legend of the Lost Continent of Atlantis in the 16th century. This mythical continent would have served as a type of "land bridge" from Europe to America and would have allowed the descendants of Noah to colonize it after the Great Flood of Genesis. Another theory, made popular by a Dutch theologian named Lumnius in 1567 was that the exiled ten tribes of Israel mentioned in II Kings 17:6 crossed Asia and eventually populated America, entering the continent from the west. This Lost Tribes theory has been closely tied to religious beliefs since the 16th century and forms an important part of the Book of Mormon, which claims that the American Indians are direct descendants of the Hebrews. (Fagan, page

25)

Theories of the Indian Nature

The early romantic view of idealized Native Americans began with Columbus. In his writings he seemed at times to believe he had found an earthly paradise and spoke of the inhabitants as "very gentle and without knowledge of what is evil; nor do they murder or steal." (Bordewich, page 33) As time went on, philosophers such as John Locke described this Noble Savage as innately good, corrupted only by his unfortunate contacts with European settlers and explorers. Rousseau's opinion was that the Indian was a superior animal species, part of the natural world, but easily corrupted by the sophisticated European ways. "In proportion as he becomes sociable and a slave to others, he becomes weak, fearful, and mean-spirited." (Bordewich, page 34)

According to one historian, most Europeans thought of all Indians as a heathen, irreligious people in need of Christian teaching. They had come from the Garden of Eden and had not been in the New World for very long. The philosopher Francis Bacon summed up this view in the following quotation:

> 'Marvel you not at the thin population of America, nor at the rudeness and ignorance of the people, for you must accept your inhabitants of America as a young people: younger a thousand years, at least, than the rest of the world.' (Quoted in Fagan, page 28)

There was a second early view of the Indian, a more ominous one. Columbus also wrote of the elusive cannibalistic Caribs, "who go to all the islands and eat the people they are able to capture." In Virginia, following the Jamestown colony's war against the Powhatans, a Virginia poet wrote in 1622, that the Indians were

> 'Rooted in Evill, and opposed in Good;
> Errors of nature, of inhumane Birth,
> The very dregs, garbage and spanne of Earth.'

In 1711, the Virginia House of Burgesses set aside 20,000 pounds as bounty money for those who would do the colony a favor and "exterpate (sic) all Indians without distinction of Friends or Enemys." (Bordewich, page 35)

Diversity of Lifestyles

It is estimated that at the time of Columbus' arrival in 1492, there were 100 million inhabitants in the New World, including the advanced civilizations of Incas in Peru, Aztecs in Mexico and Mayans in Central America, all of whom built cities, carried out trade, and made accurate astronomical observations. These sophisticated cultures had an agriculture system based on the cultivation of corn (maize), which allowed the Aztecs to feed as many as 25 million people. Corn planting spread from Mexico to the American Southwest in around 1200 B.C. and helped to shape a culture known as the Pueblo, who watered their cornfields with complicated irrigation systems and built towns containing elaborate "apartment houses" built of mud-dried brick.

Except for the Iroquois of the Northeast woodlands, who created a military state to keep away neighboring tribes and Europeans alike, most of the early inhabitants of North America lived in small settlements,

scattered throughout the continent. At the time of Columbus "discovery," there were probably fewer than 10 million citizens of North America. Native Americans "had neither the desire nor the means to manipulate nature aggressively…. Yet they did sometimes ignite massive forest fires, deliberately torching thousands of acres of trees to create better hunting habitats, especially for deer." (Bailey, page 7) The fact is that the Indian population was so thinly scattered around North America that huge areas were literally untouched by human beings prior to 1492. This would soon change upon the arrival of the "new immigrants," the Europeans.

Colonial Times and the Clash of Cultures

In Virginia, the first colony, very tense relationships existed between the English colonists and the Indian confederacy headed by Powhatan, whose daughter, Pocahontas, became an intermediary between Englishmen and Native Americans. Upon the arrival of Lord De La Warr in 1610, war was declared against the surrounding native peoples, who signed a peace treaty in 1614. It was sealed by the interracial marriage of John Rolfe and Pocahontas, who died in England three years later while preparing to return to Virginia. In 1622 the Indians, who were continually harassed by whites greedy for land and whose numbers were dwindling because of disease, had had enough and began striking back, killing over 300 settlers, including John Rolfe. In the Second Anglo-Powhatan War, the Indians made one final futile attempt at driving the Virginians out. The punitive peace terms denied any further attempt at assimilating Indians into the white culture or allowing them to exist peacefully side-by-side with the whites. The Chesapeake Indians were banished from their land and were formally separated from white settlement areas, a forerunner of the modern reservation system. By 1669, only two thousand Indians remained in Virginia and by 1685, the Powhatans were considered by the English to be extinct. (Bailey, pages 19-20)

The Powhatans, like Native Americans in other locations, had been the victims of several factors, each of them beginning with the letter D: Disease, Disorganization and Disposability.

> (DISEASE) 'they were extremely susceptible to European-imported maladies. Epidemics of smallpox and measles raced mercilessly through their villages.
>
> (DISORGANIZATION) The Powhatans also…lacked the unity with which to make effective opposition to the relatively well-organized and militarily disciplined whites.
>
> (DISPOSABILITY) Finally … they provided no reliable labor source and, after the Virginians began growing their own food crops, had no valuable commodities to offer in commerce. They therefore could be disposed of without harm to the colonial economy. Indeed the Indian presence frustrated the colonists' desire for a local commodity the Europeans desperately wanted: land.' (Quoted in Bailey, page 29)

Not all policies toward Native Americans were as systematically cruel as De La Warr's in Jamestown. During the early period of colonization, whites and Indians lived in scattered settlements that were, for the most part, peaceful. In New England missionaries offered the Indians the opportunity to settle into "praying towns" where they were encouraged to pray to the Christian God. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, and William Penn in Pennsylvania both fought the barbaric ways the Indians were often treated. Williams was an advocate of humane treatment when it was unpopular to be so. During the bloody Pequot War of 1636, he had the courage to write:

> 'Boast not proud English of thy birth and blood,
> Thy brother Indian is by birth as good.
> Of one blood God made him, and thee, and all,
> As wise, as fair, as strong, as personal.'

(Quoted in Bordewich, page 36)

Indians were often cruel to their enemies. Although it is often claimed that the whites invented scalping as evidence of having killed an Indian, words for ceremonial scalping (as well as other forms of dismemberment) existed in many Indian languages prior to the white man's arrival. Also, there were many strictly Indian wars among cultures such as the Iroquois who fought the Hurons, and the Navahos who colonized the Hopis. The Sioux on the Great Plains ruthlessly put down and subjugated smaller groups who dared oppose their empire building. It was the norm for members of each tribe to consider themselves "the People" and everyone else something less. For example, the Catawbas of South Carolina considered other natives to be "dogs" or "snakes" and white colonists "Nothings." The name "Comanche" comes from a Ute nickname which means "those who are always against us." Apache comes from the Pueblo word for "enemy." (Bordewich, pages 36-37)

Early Policies Toward Native Americans

The new republic realized the danger to the Native Americans, and tried to formulate policy that would protect the Indians. Early laws and treaties existed that attempted to safeguard Indian lands from encroachment by whites.

In 1791, the Treaty of Holston between the United States and the Cherokees warned that if any non-Indian should "settle on any of the Cherokees' lands, such person shall forfeit the protection of the United States, and the Cherokees may punish him, or not, as they please." (Bordewich, page 37) Secretary of War Henry Knox proposed criminal action against violators. But the flood of settlers was unrelenting. The central government was too distant; the hunger for land too great. So, despite treaties and government warnings, American settlers streamed into Indian lands with little regard for the law.

> Indians sometimes responded to the situation with an eye toward the future, realizing it was in their best interest to adapt to the changing times. In 1791, the Seneca chief Cornplanter wrote to Quakers in Philadelphia for financial help so that he could provide his people with the technical skills they would need in order for them to become more "Americanized" and less dependent on the "old ways." (Bordewich, page 38)

According to Thomas Jefferson and many early Christian missionaries, the way of the future was to teach the Native Americans the principles of property ownership, farming and cattle raising. In the early nineteenth century, government policy toward pacifying the Indians was to attempt to incorporate them into the American culture. Quakers, Methodists, Moravians and Baptists established "model settlements" along the frontier intended to attract Native Americans to a life-style in keeping with Protestant values. Along with

Bibles, church groups supplied the Indians with plows, looms, spinning wheels and livestock, often courtesy of federal funds. Christian missionaries trekked into the wilderness hand-in-hand with government-paid carpenters and blacksmiths. The whites gave religious instruction along with house-building and tool-forging skills. David Zeisberger, who committed his life to working among the Delawares, and believed that all people had the right to a place in God's family, welcomed the Native Americans into the Christian community as equal members. He noted that "Those who come to Christ and join the church turn to agriculture and raising stock, keeping cattle, hogs and fowls." (Bordewich, page 39) There seemed to be a definite link between church and state policies of the time, since both intended to assimilate Native Americans into the Euro-American way of life. The government's task, then, was to convince the Indians to reject their old identity as antiquated and impractical and embrace new ways and skills that would better equip them to survive in a land that was rapidly changing its identity. Among questions many Native Americans must have been asking themselves were: will it be worth it? Will the gains outweigh the losses? Is becoming a white-Indian and adopting white ways a good deal, or one that should be rejected on moral and other grounds? Will it work?

Case Study in Assimilation: The Cherokees

Today, the remains of New Echota, near Atlanta, Georgia, give testimony to one attempt to establish an Indian civilization based on white men's rules. New Echota used to be the thriving capital of the Cherokee nation, where in the early 1820's, shoppers could buy sugar from St. Croix, indigo from New Orleans, or porcelain from China. By 1826, only a decade after it was founded, the town boasted eighteen schools, over 700 looms, 2400 spinning wheels, 172 wagons, almost 3,000 plows, 31 gristmills and 10 sawmills. Cherokee farmers cultivated apple and peach orchards using Euro-American farming methods. Others owned plantations that exploited the labor of black slaves. The town boasted Cherokee-operated taverns, blacksmith shops and toll roads. It was an orderly, neat and well-run place, where the town printing press, the Cherokee Phoenix, printed a weekly newspaper and thousands of Bibles, hymnals, novels and broadsheets. (Bordewich, page 40)

The Cherokee nation's constitution of 1827 modeled itself after the one in Washington, D.C. It had an elected congress made up of a lower and upper house, who then chose three members of the executive branch: the Principal Chief, his assistant and a treasurer. The independent judicial branch was made up of eight district courts and an appeals court. There was a bill of rights, taxation laws and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures. Their representatives created a preamble that emulated the original: "We the Representatives of the people of the Cherokee Nation, in Convention assembled, in order to establish justice, ensure tranquillity, promote our common welfare, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of liberty . . ." (Bordewich, page 41)

Elias Boudinot, the Cherokee Phoenix editor, was the man most responsible for westernized leadership of New Echota. He was born as Kilikeena, a full-blooded Cherokee in 1804, and later took on the name of his white benefactor. He was formally educated in Connecticut at the school of the American Board of Foreign Missions and even corresponded with Jedidiah Morse, who taught astronomy at Yale. After graduation, he married a white woman, then returned to Georgia, as pressure steadily increased to open Cherokee lands to white settlement.

Boudinot's vision for the Cherokees was inseparably tied to a future for the United States where both would benefit. He was convinced that the survival of the Cherokee nation depended on their leaving behind the old ways in order to avoid extinction. Under Boudinot's leadership the Cherokees had adopted democratic ways

and private enterprise, and pointed the way to peaceful change, a model for other tribes in partnership with the United States government. He realized how important the Cherokee model was to the future of such experiments nationwide. If it should succeed, other tribes would certainly follow suit and there would be great expectations of an enlightened solution to the age-old Indian question. If it should fail, Boudinot said, "then all hopes are blasted, and falls the fabric of Indian civilization." (Bordewich, page 43) His vision was a remarkable one. In 1826, Boudinot went throughout the United States on a speaking tour to create support for the Cherokees. His speech, "An Address to the Whites," was later published as a pamphlet. In it, he appealed to logic and spiritual reasoning:

> '...The world should know what we have done in the past few years (in Georgia) to foresee what yet we may do with the assistance of our white brethren, and that of the Common Parent of us all. In times of peace she will plead the common liberties of America. In times of war her intrepid sons will sacrifice their lives in your defense. And because she will be useful to you in coming time, she asks you to assist her in her present struggles. She asks not for greatness; she seeks not wealth; she pleads only for assistance to become respectable as a nation, to enlighten and ennoble her sons, and to ornament her daughters with modesty and virtue.' (Quoted in Bordewich page 43)

As those who have studied our nation's history know, despite successful appeals to the United States Supreme Court, Boudinot's worst fears were realized when, in January of 1830, Georgia declared Cherokee laws null and void and prohibited Cherokees from testifying in cases involving whites. Several months later, Congress passed President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal bill, which resulted in the state of Georgia auctioning off Cherokee lands without any consultation with the Indians. Several thousand U.S. army troops arrived in New Echota and herded the native inhabitants into stockades where some two thousand died even before the forced march began. Then, in the fall of 1838, the Cherokees started their grueling "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma, which resulted in the death of another four thousand Cherokees from exposure and sickness. The fate of the Cherokee nation as a self-governing body was sealed.

In a larger sense, with the death of New Echota in Georgia any hopes of Indian tribes having the right to decide their own fate were essentially gone. Still to come were the Plains Wars of the 1870s, the closing of the frontier, and the creation of reservations. Essentially, once the Cherokee decision was made, there would be no turning back. Independent tribal life was doomed and the Indian voice was silenced.

Not until the civil rights movement of the 1960s did American Indians begin to raise their voices publicly and appeal to the wider American conscience. Under increasing pressure, in 1960 the U.S. government decided to stop their decade-old policy of termination of Indian rights on reservations. (Hazen-Hammond, p. 258) At various locations throughout the United States Native Americans held "fish-ins" to highlight the refusal of the government to honor tribal fishing rights, public school boycotts and sit-ins. In 1969, Native Americans invaded and occupied the old prison buildings on Alcatraz Island as a way of protesting government policies toward Indians. (Ibid., p. 268) Organizations such as the National Congress of American Indians, the American Indian Movement and the American Indian Historical Society were formed. Cultural museums were founded. Important books were written such as N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1969. In the same year, Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto, which challenged whites to look at Native Americans and Native American history from the Indian perspective. (Ibid., p. 270)

Congress and the courts began to pay attention in the l970s. Tribal members began to get compensation and reparations payments to make up for past wrongdoings done to them by the government. For example in

1971, Alaska Natives collected $962 million under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. (Hazen-Hammond, p. 275) Other states followed suit; in 1980, the Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act was passed. (Ibid., p. 295) Many unrecognized tribes, such as the Mohegans of Connecticut (in 1994) received federal recognition and reestablished their legal right to exist on tribal lands. (Ibid., p. 310)

Today, the future looks bright for American Indians. Since the late 1970's Indians have made many gains. In 1978, the Supreme Court declared that the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 gives tribes sovereign power to rule within their borders. (Hazen-Hammond, p. 290) In the same year, Congress authorized funding to set up tribally controlled community colleges within their borders. In the decade of the 1980's many tribes gained the right to manage hunting, fishing and natural resources within their territories. Millions of dollars in government compensation payments have been made to tribes such as the $100 million granted the Sioux Indians in payment for the illegal government seizure of the Black Hills in the 1880s. Also, $29 million in compensation for unsound federal accounting practices have been awarded to tribes such as the Blackfeet. Tribes now have a major say in the development of energy resources on their lands and have received the right to tax mining operations, as a result of a 1982 Supreme Court decision. (Ibid., p. 296) In 1985, the Supreme Court permitted tribes to levy business and property taxes on their lands, without any interference from the Department of the Interior. (Ibid., p. 300) Then in 1987, the Court opened the door for casino gambling on Indian reservations (California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians), when it allowed tribes to negotiate with states in setting up casino operations. (Ibid., p. 302) Pro-gambling and anti-gambling factions are split on the benefits and drawbacks of gambling.

In terms of Indian culture and history, in 1990 Congress declared that all museums in the U.S. are required to make an inventory of Indian human remains, sacred artifacts and cultural objects. (Hazen-Hammond, p. 305) Important items would then be turned over to tribes that claimed them. Museums such as the Peabody in New Haven have been required to return objects "permanently borrowed" from Indians. For example, the Omaha Indians of Nebraska, in 1991, reclaimed and reburied ancestral remains on their lands, and received back the Sacred White Buffalo Hide from the Museum of the American Indian. The number of cultural festivals and powwows are on the rise. Native American culture is being celebrated widely and freely. Indians in some states, supported by activists in the Native American Church, have won the right to use and transport the traditional hallucinogenic drug peyote on tribal lands. (Ibid., p. 306)

Among the San Carlos Apaches, medicine people predict the "Anasazi Indians will return from their home in the Big Dipper and create a renaissance of Native American beliefs and life." (Quoted in Hazen-Hammond, page 314) I recently visited the state-of-the-art Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Ledyard, Connecticut. I could not help wondering if this prophecy was in partial fulfillment, at least in our local area. Are more and more Americans taking more of a genuine interest in who Indians are and why their history is so unique as "first Americans?" Hopefully this teaching unit will spark interest in both teachers and their students to put away a romanticized notion of who Indians were and begin to inquire into who they are and why their history and culture is of such significance in our pursuit of who we are: Americans all.

I close with a quotation by Chief Blackfoot, the Mountain Crow leader who spoke at a peace council in Montana in 1873:

> 'We always give the Great Spirit something. I think that is good. We see the sun, we give him something; and the moon and the earth, we give them something. We beg them to take pity on us. The sun and moon look at us, and the ground gives us food. You come and see us, and that is why we give you something. We are men like each

other; our religion is different from yours.' (Quoted in Hazen-Hammond, page 168)

LESSON PLAN SECTION

LESSON: Recent Issues Facing Indians Today

Goals:

1. To make students aware of recent court cases involving Indian rights;

2. To cause students to prepare for a debate and defend their position;

3. To encourage students to learn in small groups;

4. To prepare and give a classroom presentation to other students.

Methods:

1. Students are assigned one of several topics of current interest in Indian communities;

2. They are divided into groups of four or five students and each is given a "Background Issues" sheet, describing the pros and cons of each issue.

3. The group then decides how to proceed in preparation for their presentation to the rest of the class. Options include:

· a short dramatization,
· a courtroom simulation,
· a role play where different spokesmen present their views;
· a visual presentation, where students prepare a visual display to illustrate factual information

Procedures:

1. The teacher prepares a "Recent Issues Sheet" handout for each group. (See below) Topics may include but are not limited to the following:

· "Casino Gambling"

· "Hunting and Fishing Rights"
· "Peyote Use and Religious Freedom"
· "Artifacts and Burial Remains"
· "Reservation Mismanagement"
· "Powwows" (cultural festivals)

2. Students use the teacher prepared handout to get them started. They may use the Internet and other information available to them. In their presentation the issues for debate must be clearly presented by both sides.

3. They must try to come up with a "solution" to the problem that both sides can agree to. If not, have the class vote on a solution to the problems. (How should the government respond to the Issue under discussion?)

4. Students will prepare a first draft to hand in to the teacher, along with evidence of further research, prior to each group's classroom presentation.

RECENT ISSUES SHEET #1

Topic: "Casino Gambling on Indian Lands"

Task: Students decide whether the Tribal Council should establish a gambling casino on reservation land.

Facts: In 1988 the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Gaming Act. It allows federally recognized tribes to negotiate with states regarding casino operations.

Several tribes, including the Mashantucket Pequots of Connecticut, and later the Mohegan tribe, discussed establishing casinos on their land to bring in badly needed revenue to the tribe.

Issues for debate:

Pros include:

Increased tribal revenues
Increased job opportunities, both for tribal members and Connecticut citizens

Cons include:

Deterioration of tribal values, replaced by greediness and commercialism

Dangers of organized crime involved

Obstacles:

Negotiations with the state for taxes and fees
Building and staff training costs, etc.

Questions:

- What kinds of risks are involved in building casinos?
- Who would we have to hire to manage the casino?
- How would we make it attractive and upscale?
- How would gambling affect our people?
- What about the many people whom are victims of gambling?
- What would all the commercialism do to our reservation land?
- Would there be an increase in crime?
- How would individual tribal members share in the profits?

RECENT ISSUES SHEET #2

Topic: "Fishing and Hunting Rights" (could also include Hunting for Whales)

Task: Students sitting in as voting representatives on the Connecticut Judiciary Committee listen to testimony from individuals with opinions on giving Indians back the right they once had to fund and fish on tribal lands.

Facts: Connecticut Mohegans became officially recognized as a tribe in 1994 by the federal government. Since that time they have sought to reestablish their tribal traditions to have unlimited hunting and fishing rights within their reservation boundaries. Also, they are seeking permission from the state to develop the lakes and streams for public recreation.

Issues for debate:

Indian Concerns:

Is the state willing to lend us money to develop our land into a

public recreation area for boating, fishing and camping?

Is the state willing to give us unrestricted hunting and fishing rights within reservation land according to our traditions?

Is the state willing to allow us to sell hunting and fishing permits to Connecticut residents who want to hunt or fish during the regular season?

State Concerns:

What guarantee would the Mohegans make to be able to repay the state for loans made to improve their lands?

Unlimited hunting and fishing would threaten to eliminate all wildlife and fish from the area. How would this be prevented?

There would be a loss of revenue to the state if Indians sell hunting and fishing licenses that the state would otherwise sell. How would the state share in money charged to Connecticut residents?

Obstacles:

State laws would need to be changed to make exceptions for Indian lands.

There are costs to funding these projects.

Any plan affecting land use needs to be environmentally acceptable.

Questions:

Should Connecticut tax funds be used to help the Mohegans develop their tribal lands in a way that would benefit them? Is this project something the taxpayers should support or oppose? Why?

Note: Similar "Recent Issues Sheets" could be developed for each topic. There are various ways the teachers and students may choose to present both sides of these issues. See narrative section for a fuller description of issues.

LESSON: Understanding the Indian Mind

Goals:

1. To acquaint students with some of the famous Indian leaders of the past;

2. To familiarize students with some of the enduring ideas expressed by these leaders;

3. To discuss reasons for the statements made by these individuals in an attempt to understand the context for these remarks;

4. To "get into the heads" of the individuals who spoke for others as well as themselves and create empathy

with them.

5. To remind students that difficulties in communicating across cultures still exists today among peoples of different racial and cultural backgrounds. (native Americans and immigrant Americans, for example)

Methods:

1. Introduce the lesson by reminding students that Indians often suffered and were killed for no reason other than the fact that they were in the way of "progress." What good is progress if in the process we treat innocent people as obstacles and forget that they are human beings? Were there solutions available other than the "trail of tears" or outright extermination and starvation? Why weren't they put into place? What does this tell us about the character of many of our citizens?

2. The Indian leaders we will discuss were different from one another in appearance, personality and culture. As we read these quotations, ask yourself:

· What is the attitude of this person (defiant, sad, resigned, philosophical)?
· Are there events causing this person to speak as he did?
· What values does this person express?
· Who was this person's audience?
· Be able to summarize in your own words what the speaker was really saying.

Procedures:

1. The teacher prepares students for this lesson by handing out the "Quotation Sheet: The Indian Mind" (below) for homework the night before discussion in class. Students should pick three of their favorites to summarize in their own words and be prepared to read their summaries.
2. Pick students to read one of their summaries to the rest of the class. They should tell why this quotation appealed to them. Ask other members of the class to comment until most of the quotes have been discussed.
3. After asking the questions about several quotes above (under Methods #2) the teacher can give some of the remarks context by explaining who the person making the quote was and the circumstances behind the remarks.
4. Ask the students to write a page essay, entitled "The Indian Mind in the 1900's" using several quotations as illustrations to be read in class.

QUOTATION SHEET: THE INDIAN MIND

Source of Quotations: Susan Hazen-Hammond, Timelines of Native American History, pages 92, 101, 104, 109, 113, 119, 125, 128, 135, 144, 147, 155, 167.

A. "Brother: We are of the same opinion with the people of the United States; you consider yourselves as independent people; we, as the original inhabitants of this country, and sovereigns of the soil, look upon ourselves as equally independent, and free as any other nation or nations. This country was given to us by the Great Spirit above; we wish to enjoy it, and have our passage along the lake within the line we have pointed out.... We have told you our patience is worn out; but not so far, but that we wish for peace, and whenever we hear that pleasing sound, we shall pay attention to it."

--Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant) Mohawk leader, at a council with whites, 1794.

B. "I have done the white people all the harm I could. I have fought them, and fought them bravely. If I had an army, I would yet fight, and contend to the last. But I have none. My people are all gone. I can now do no more than weep over the misfortunes of my nation."

--Red Eagle, Creek leader, surrendering to Gen. Andrew Jackson, 1814.

C. "The Great Spirit made us all-he made my skin red, and yours white; he placed us on this earth, and intended that we should live differently from each other. He made the whites to cultivate the earth, and feed on domestic animals; but he made us, red skins, to rove through the uncultivated woods and plains; to feed on wild animals; and to dress with their skins. He also intended that we should go to war...cultivate peace at home and promote the happiness of each other."

--Petalesharo, Pawnee leader, speaking to President James Monroe, 1822.

D. "They are now running their plows through our graveyards, turning up the bones and ashes of our sacred dead, whose spirits are calling to us from the land of dreams for vengeance on the despoilers. Will the descendants of Nanamakee and our other illustrious dead stand idly by and suffer this sacrilege to be continued?... The Great Spirit whispers in my ear, no!"

--Black Hawk, Sac leader, speaking to his people in April 1832.

E. "If among the whites, a man purchased a piece of land, and another came upon it, you would drive him off. Let the Sioux keep away from our lands and there will be peace."

--Keokuk, Sac leader, at a council in which Sioux and Sacs accuse one another of encroaching on each other's lands, October 5, 1837.

F. "This is our war. We have more right to complain of you for interfering in our war than you have to quarrel with us for continuing a war we had begun long before you got here. If you will act justly, you will allow us to settle our own differences."--Sarcilla Largo, Navaho leader, complaining about interference from the U.S. Army in the long-standing battles beween Hispanic and Navajo New Mexicans. November 21, 1846.

G. "Revenge by young men is considered gain, even at the cost of their own lives, but old men who stay at home in times of war, and mothers who have sons to lose, know better." --Seattle, chief of the Suquamish and Duwamish, 1853 or 1854 H. "Why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and

nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend with friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see."

--Chief Seattle, 1853

I. "Your friend is your enemy."

--Saying among the San Juan Paiutes, as a reminder that the only people you can really count on are family

J. "When I was young, I walked all over this country, east and west, and saw no other people than the Apaches. After many summers I walked again and found another race of people had come to take it.... The Apaches were once a great nation; they are now but few, and because of this they want to die."

--Cochise, Apache leader, at a peace council, September 1866

K. "I once thought that I was the only man that persevered to be the friend of the white man, but since they have come and cleaned out our lodges, horses, and everything else, it is hard for me to believe white men anymore."

--Black Kettle, Cheyenne leader, October 12, 1865.

L. "The Great Spirit made us both. He gave us land and he gave you land. You came here and we received you as brothers. When the Almighty made you, He made you all white and clothed you. When He made us, He made us with red skins and poor. You do not know who appears before you to speak. He is a representative of the original American race, the first people on this continent. We are good and not bad.... If we had more lands to give you, we would give them, but we have no more. We are driven into a very little island, and we want you, our dear friends, to help us with the Government of the United States."

--Red Cloud, Sioux leader, speaking to a white audience at Cooper Institute in New York, June 16, 1870.

M. "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; I feel sorry. I have spoken."

--Santana, Kiowa leader known as Orator of the Plains, in 1867)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Student Bibliography

Allen Paula Gunn. Voice of the Turtle: American Indian Literature, 1900-1970. New York: Ballantine, 1994. A collection of fascinating stories geared toward middle and high school readers. Deloria, Philip J., et al. The American Indians: An Illustrated History. Atlanta: Turner Publishing, 1993. A classic photographic work which students should find difficult to put down. Dockstader, Frederick. Indian Art in America: The Arts and Crafts of the North American Indian. Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1961. Beautifully done. An excellent resource for possible art projects. Eastman, Charles Alexander. Indian Boyhood. Reprint edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. Warm and personal story of Dr. Charles Eastman who

grew up Sioux, was educated at Dartmouth, and became nationally and internationally known. Flemming, Paula R. and Luskey Judith. The North American Indians in Early Photographs. New York: Dorset Press, 1988. An excellent resource to familiarize students with Indian life and culture. Fascinating pictures of Indian ceremonies, dress, dwellings, hunting, warfare and family living. Gridley, Marion E. Contemporary American Indian Leaders. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1972. Short biographies of twenty-five men and women who struggled to overcome prejudice and poverty to become spokespersons for their people in the twentieth century. Hauptman, Laurence M. and Wherry, James D., eds. The Pequots of Southern New England. Norman Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma Press, 1990. For students who want to know more about the history of a Connecticut Indian tribe known for its recent prosperity and philanthropy.

Hazen-Hammond, Susan. Timelines of Native American History. Through the Centuries with Mother Earth and Father Sky. New York: Perigee Books, 1997.

A fascinating chronological account of events, including court decisions. An excellent resource for students who need to find information about important events and quotations by famous Native Americans. Contains brief histories of over 30 tribes. Utley, Robert M., and Wilcomb E. Washburn. The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987. Many familiar paintings and photographs that bring home the ultimate consequences of "Manifest Destiny." Willis, Velma. Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. For students who enjoy adventure stories set in the Alaskan wilderness. Teacher Bibliography

Bordewich, Fergus M. Killing the White Man's Indian. Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century. New York: Doubleday, 1996. Well-researched and detailed, the author exposes stereotypes of Indians, past and present. Describes tribal issues today in the context of the virtual revolution that is occurring in Indian communities across the nation. I relied on this book extensively. Barton Lois. A Quaker Promise Kept: Philadelphia Friends' Work With the Allegany Senecas 1795-1960. Eugene Ore: Spencer Butte Press, 1990. An eye-opening perspective on American missionary work with the Indians in Pennsylvania.

Catlin, George. Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of North American Indians, Volumes I and II. New York: Dover Publications, 1973.

Classic resource for the study of Indian cultures in the United States. Couthlin, Ellen K. "Returning Indian Remains." The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 16, 1994. In light of recent court decisions, what various museums have done to comply with the law. Deloria,Vine. Custer Died for your Sins. Norman Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma Press, 1969. Classic book that challenges Americans to look at Native Americans and their history from the perspective of Indians. Fagan, Brian M. The Great Journey. The Peopling of Ancient America. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987. Well-researched study that traces the path of America's earliest immigrants. Indispensable to my teaching unit. Contains over 125 illustrations and photographs. Fedullo, Mick. Light of the Feather: A Teacher's Journey into Native American Classrooms and Culture. New York: Anchor Books, 1992. Contains ideas for student projects, based on primary sources. Hazen-Hammond, Susan. Timelines of Native American History. New York: Perigee Books, 1997. A gold mine of quotations, facts, tribal histories, biographies, Indian legends and symbols. Appropriate for student research. (See Student Bibliography) Jaimes, M. Annette, ed. The State of Native America. Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance. Boston: South End Press, 1992. Over sixteen contemporary writers and historians discuss tribal sovereignty and legal issues such as water and fishing rights, religious freedom, and education. Well-documented and footnoted. Jennings, Francis. The Founders of America. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993. Contains over 30 pages of photo-illustrations and maps. Discusses the theories of immigration, the challenges to settlement, the building of civilizations, and the history of cultures in conflict. Includes a chapter called "Immigrants in Their Own Country." Morgan, Ted. Wilderness at Dawn. The Settling of the North American Continent. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993. Follows a typical United States history textbook chronology, from before the "Land Bridge" migration to the description of how people lived on the various frontiers that have existed in North America, including "Frontiers in Collision" and the "Black Frontier." Well documented and

illustrated. Passell, Peter. "Foxwoods, a Casino Success Story." New York Times, August 8, 1994. Chronicles the story of the Mashantucket Pequot renaissance in Connecticut. Sarf, Wayne M. God Bless You Buffalo Bill: A Layman's Guide to History and the Western Film. East Brunswick, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1991. Contains helpful suggestions regarding the discussion of films that stereotype Indians. Woods, Wilton. "American Indians Discover Money Is Power." Fortune, April 19, 1993. Discussion of the sweeping changes that have affected reservation life due to casino gambling.

https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu
©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms