

“The Native American Experience”
Humanities 324, September 18, 2009
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Thesis: From the American Revolution through the turn of the 20th century, Native American-United States relations were characterized by a series of political negotiations. United States policy alternated between “philanthropic” efforts to “civilize” the American Indians and acts of forced migration, containment, and extermination. Despite their losses of territory and lives, Native Americans were activists. They did not always see themselves as victims, and they fought back politically, spiritually, and militarily.

Opening music: *Amazing Grace*, Choogie Kingfisher (instrumental) and the Cherokee National Children’s Choir (vocals), 2001

First, a word about language and identity. What Native Americans/American Indians/Indians/AmerIndians want to be called.

- I. The background: American Revolution and efforts at civilization
 - A. Post-war resentment toward “Loyalist” Indians
 - B. The debates over “civilization” versus extermination: Thomas Jefferson, Henry Knox, and John Sevier
 - C. Scientific notions behind the “civilization” impulse

- II. A case study of “civilization:” The Cherokee
 - A. The Cherokee strategy: Cherokee nationalism, religion, education, and law
 - B. Pressure for removal: Georgia and western lands
 - C. Removals: 1817-1840
 - D. Cherokee debates over Removal
 - E. The Trail of Tears and its aftermath

- III. Talking back to “civilization:” Native American activists confront the U.S. rhetoric of national progress and scientific ideas about the “Other”
 - A. museums and world fairs: Simon Pokegon
 - B. Boarding schools and missions: Zitkala Sa
 - C. Militant reactions to reservations and legislation: Geronimo
 - D. Spirituality and activism: Wounded Knee

- IV. Broken promises and survival
 - A. Oklahoma versus the state of Sequoyah
 - B. Survival: they are still here

Closing audio: Choogie Kingfisher, storyteller; *Orphan Child*, Cherokee Children’s Choir, 2001

Timeline
“The Native American Experience”

- 1763 Proclamation from the Crown prohibits white settlement west of the Appalachians
- 1776 American Revolution begins; colonial invasion of Cherokee towns
- 1783 Revolution ends; North Carolina grants Cherokee land to its citizens; Cherokees cede land to Georgia
- 1785 Treaty of Hopewell, first treaty between Cherokees and the United States, establishes peaceful relations
- 1790 Congress passes first Indian Trade and Intercourse Act regulating trade and land sales with Indians
- 1791 Treaty of Holston proposes the “civilization” program
- 1796 George Washington initiates “civilization” program among Cherokees
- 1800 Moravians establish mission among the Cherokees; Thomas Jefferson elected President
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase; Lewis and Clark expedition.
- 1804 Moravians open a mission school in Cherokee Nation
- 1808 Cherokees’ first recorded laws establish a police force and protect patrilineal inheritance
- 1808 James Madison elected President
- 1808-10 First major Cherokee migration west of the Mississippi
- 1817 American board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and Baptist missionaries arrive among the Cherokees. Cherokees adopt articles of government that give only the National Council the authority to cede lands. Cherokees exchange eastern land for territory in Arkansas
- 1819 Cherokees cede additional territory in the East in exchange for western lands; some Cherokees in North Carolina receive reservations outside the Nation; First U. S. Congressional appropriation (\$10,000) to civilize Indians
- 1821 Sequoyah introduces a Cherokee syllabary
- 1822 Cherokees establish a Supreme Court
- 1824 Bureau of Indian Affairs established in War Department
- 1826-27 Creeks cede their last land in Georgia. Georgia asserts state sovereignty over

the Cherokee Nation

- 1827 Cherokee Republic formed in an attempt to avoid forced removal
- 1828 Andrew Jackson elected President; the *Cherokee Phoenix* begins publication.
Arkansas Cherokees relocate to Indian Territory
- 1828-1829 Georgia extends state jurisdiction over Cherokee Nation and nullifies
Cherokee law
- 1830 Indian Removal Act passed by Congress; legalized removal of all Indians east of
Mississippi to lands west of the river
- 1832 Chief Justice John Marshall issues opinion that state law does not apply to Indians
on tribal lands; position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs established in War
Department
- 1834 Administrative structure of Bureau of Indian Affairs amplified; Trade and
Intercourse Act, including prohibition of sale of intoxicants to Indians and need for a
license to travel in Indian land
- 1849 Bureau of Indian Affairs shifted to Interior Department
- 1865-69 Building of Union Pacific Railroad.
- 1870 Grant's Peace Policy continued to 1881; First sum earmarked for federal education
of Indians. First Ghost Dance Movement, Prayer to prevent immigration; Congress
passes law putting an end to further treaties with Indians
- 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn (Custer). Abbot Martin Marty from Indiana arrived at
Standing Rock Reservation; established St. Benedict's Mission.
- 1876 Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce War; Congress appropriates first funds for Indian
police
- 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act passed by Congress
- 1890 Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge. Ghost Dance. Last major bloodshed involving
Indians and the U.S. Government
- 1892-97 More laws providing for schools and giving truant officers the right to force Indian
children to attend school; federal support of church schools withdrawn
- 1924 All Indians declared citizens of U.S.
- 1934 Wheeler-Howard Act, passed to protect Native Culture