

IV-A. Federal Policies and the American Indian in the Nineteenth Century: **An Eighth Grade Lesson Plan**

Design: This interdisciplinary lesson plan is designed to fit within a *historical, social, geographical, political, and economic* discussion about building the new nation and westward expansion during the Nineteenth Century. Its optimal length is approximately 16 hours. The lesson is divided into four parts, each of which can be shortened or lengthened according to teacher preference.

- **Part I: The Lives of American Indians in the Nineteenth Century**, is a one-to-two day unit which creates a reference point for the students by introducing them to the eighteenth and nineteenth century lives of American Indians, with a particular focus on the Cherokee nation. (Per page 70 of the Framework: “Students...should examine the daily life of ordinary people in the new nation, including farmers, merchants, and traders; women; blacks, both slave and free; *and American Indians.*”)
- **Part II: Federal Indian Policy during the Nineteenth Century**, is a five-to-eight day unit which examines federal Indian policies created during the era of manifest destiny. At least two of these days will focus on a case study of President Jackson’s removal policy and its consequences for several Indian tribes. (Per page 71 of the Framework: “In studying Jackson’s Presidency, students should debate his...*policy of Indian removal...*” and “To deepen their understanding of the changing geography and settlement of this immense land, students might...*discuss the searing accounts of the removal of Indians and the Cherokees’ ‘Trail of Tears’...*”)
- **Part III: Indian Boarding Schools**, is a two-to-three day unit which discusses life on the reservation by focusing on the boarding school experience of many American Indians. (Per page 74 of the Framework: “... *the destruction of the buffalo, the Indian wars, and the removal of the American Indians to reservations* are events to be studied and analyzed.”)
- **Part IV: The Consequences of Federal and State Policies upon the Indian Tribes of Northern California**, is a two-to-three-day unit which provides a case study of the federal and state treatment of Indian tribes in Northern California.

Lesson Goals

1. To acquaint students with the technological, political, and economic sophistication of American Indians before the Constitution was signed and with Indian lifestyles in the Nineteenth Century.
2. To introduce students to Federal Indian policies passed and administered by the US. government during the Nineteenth Century.
3. To help students understand that the “Westward Movement” had different meaning for European Americans who were colonizing new lands, and for American Indians whose lands were being occupied.
4. To emphasize several important concepts related to the history of American Indian

nations, especially tribal sovereignty, the trust relationship, and government-to-government relations.

5. To examine the consequences of federal and State Indian policy upon the Indian tribes of Northern California.

Lesson Themes: While many issues and themes are discussed in the course of this lesson plan, the following seven themes are the ones that are most heavily emphasized.

1. At the time of European contact in the early 1600s, the North American continent was populated by hundreds of Indian tribes that were culturally, spiritually, and politically diverse. Additionally, the Indian people had achieved a great deal of technological, agricultural, and political sophistication.
2. Despite Indian diversity and tribal sovereignty, most European settlers had little understanding of the cultural, spiritual, and political beliefs of Indians. Thus, they believed the Indians were “uncivilized heathens” and “savages” who needed to become civilized and Christianized.
3. Each of the tribes were inherently sovereign at the time of European contact. Such sovereignty was reinforced when colonial governments signed government-to-government treaties with various Indian nations. Indian sovereignty was further reinforced when the US government was established, especially through the Commerce Clause of the US Constitution which created two sovereign entities: the federal governments and tribal governments.
4. Treaties were legal, government-to-government agreements between the United States and an Indian nation. When an Indian tribe signed a treaty, it agreed to give the federal government some or all of its land as well as some or all of its sovereign powers. In return, the Indian nation entered into a trust relationship with the federal government in which it promised to provide benefits to the Indians in exchange for their land.
5. After the US government was created, hundreds of treaties were signed and many laws were passed by Congress - all of which gradually eroded Indian sovereignty. By the end of the Nineteenth Century, the remaining Indian Nations had been reduced to a semi-sovereign status.
6. To white settlers, the era of Manifest Destiny and of Westward Expansion represented progress and the extension of their cultural and spiritual values to the American West. But to the American Indians, westward expansion was little more than an invasion that destroyed their ancestral homelands.
7. An example of such destructive policies during Manifest Destiny is the removal period, carried out under the leadership of President Andrew Jackson. Removal, as well as the reservation system and allotment era decimated the vast majority of American Indian tribes. By the turn of the Nineteenth Century, Indians lived on only a fraction of the land that had once been under their stewardship. Furthermore, while an estimated 5-10 million American Indians had lived in North America at the time of European con-

tact, by the turn of the Nineteenth Century, only about 250,000 Indians still remained within the continental borders of the United States.

8. The allotment era brought about a formalized, institutionalized method of Indian education - the Indian boarding school. With the opening of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879, federal authorities forced Indian parents to either sent their children to an off-reservation boarding school such as Carlisle, or to boarding schools established in remote areas of Indian reservations. Since the primary purpose of the schools was Americanization, Indian children were forbidden to speak their native language, wear traditional clothing, and practice any religious or cultural rituals - often under threat of punishment. For many Indian children, the results were tragic. In shedding their "Indianness," they were neither accepted into American society, nor were they able to comfortably resettle into traditional Indian society.
9. The mid-nineteenth experience of American Indians in California was shaped largely by the anti-Indian beliefs and policies of Federal Indian Agents, the California legislature, and Congress. Both the legal policies of elected federal and state representatives and the extralegal actions of vigilantes helped bring about the destruction of Indian cultural and spiritual values, as well as the extermination of many peoples. The population of 1850, which ranged between 70,000 and 150,000, had dropped to about 30,000 just twenty years later. Those who survived suffered great indignities, as well as the loss of their tribal culture and much tribal sovereignty.
10. Despite the many attempts to destroy the culture, spirituality, and politics of the American Indian people, many tribes have replenished their populations and many have also been able to maintain and celebrate their traditional lifestyles.

Accessing the Lesson: If you would like a hard copy of this lesson plan, take the following steps:

Vocabulary Words. Various vocabulary words have been identified throughout all four parts of the lesson plan. Words found **in bold** - other than subject headings in the outline structure, as well as designated maps and overheads - can be found in the "Vocabulary Section" at the end of the lesson plan. Each of the words is placed alphabetically in the list and is both defined and put into a sentence. For example:

abrogate (verb). To abolish by formal or official means; repeal. Put aside.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the federal government had **abrogated** every treaty it signed with Indian tribes.

Before You Begin. Because students will be working with two types of resources that may be new to them - Internet resources and primary documentation - you may want to provide a brief introduction to each.

Internet Resources. Everyone is excited about the amount of interesting information

available on the Internet. But, we all need to understand that all materials found on the Internet are not necessarily accurate or endorsed by educators and other experts. As a general rule, an Internet site that is authentic usually provides the author's name, his or her professional affiliation, and the educational or informational institution with which he or she is affiliated. If students have any question about the accuracy or authenticity of the information on a site, they should ask the teacher for assistance.

Primary Resources. Most students usually read from secondary resources - a human-made account such as a document, object, or oral record that was produced by people who were not present at or did not participate in an event. This means that someone studied about the event by reading a great deal of information, talking with people, and maybe even studying various objects, photographs, etc. Primary resources are also human-made accounts, but they are produced by people who were actually present at or actually participated in an event.

Discussion: Do you think that primary resources are more truthful or accurate than secondary resources? Why or why not? It is important to note that primary sources are not always truthful. Think about the things that you write - to yourself, to friends, to family. Are they always accurate and truthful? What would happen if one of your ancestors were to read your letters 100 years from now? Would that give them a really truthful and accurate understanding of who you were?

An Assignment to Consider. The California Heritage Collection at the Bancroft Library has created a really useful lesson designed for K-12 teachers on using primary resources. This three part lesson introduces the idea of primary sources with a group discussion and activity; offers suggestions on where primary resources can be found and provides a plan for creating a personal archive; and discusses how primary sources can be assessed. The entire lesson plan is accessible through the Internet at: http://sunsite.Berkeley.EDU/CalHeritage/k12/primary_lesson.htm#what.

Teaching Tools for this lesson include the following:

- A series of maps can be reproduced for the overhead projector are located in **Appendix A**.
- A series of contextual overheads that can be reproduced are located in **Appendix B**.
- A list of vocabulary words and related terminology that teachers can use throughout the lesson are located in **Appendix C**.
- The recommended assessment tool for the entire lesson plan - the Student Research Project - is located in **Appendix D**.