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**Indigenous
Nations:
Diversity &
Struggle for
Equity**



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Indigenous Nations: Diversity & Struggle for Equity

The most casual investigation of the Indigenous Peoples of North America reveals a diverse set of familiar and unfamiliar names– Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Chickasaw, Creek, Fenton, Kiowa, Leni-Lenape, Minnecoujou, Navajo, Sauk, Sioux, Shoshone and others. In the collection of American County Histories hosted by Accessible Archives, the reader finds illuminating accounts – positive as well as negative – that provide a sense of the prejudices felt, the experiences, the perceptions of these nations and the ways in which Indigenous Peoples were impacted by westward expansion into their territories. With Accessible Archives' newspaper collections providing additional context, the complex history emerges.



*Frank Leslie's Weekly,
October 13, 1877*

In October of 1877, the cover story in **Frank Leslie's Weekly** was a September meeting between the White House and representatives of Indigenous nations. An assemblage of Sioux leaders and their allies, including leaders MAH-PI-AH-LU-TAH (Red Cloud) and ZIN-TAH-GAH-LAT-WAH (Spotted Tail) met with U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes, seeking the appropriate implementation of treaty provisions previously agreed to in 1868 and in 1869. As in so many other instances in the history of the United States, the obligation to live up to those clauses had never formally been met. [1]

On Indigenous Names and Languages

In the course of researching material for this white paper, we have encountered a variety of approaches to the accurate rendition of names of Indigenous tribes and/or historical figures. In drawing on materials in Accessible Archives' American County Histories collections, the reader encounters authors speaking across a period of fifty years or more, each facing the same challenge. What is the responsible handling of names in what is essentially a foreign language? Should one stick to the vocabulary that readers of the time find most familiar or try to render (perhaps inaccurately) names in the Indigenous language? Different authors included in this white paper chose different approaches. For example, in an account of the tribes encountered by European settlers arriving in what is now the state of Alabama, Peter Hamilton notes in *Colonial Mobile* the following:

"Scholars...find it necessary to re-spell and re-coin names according to their true sounds; but suffice it for us to reproduce their results in more familiar terms. For Cha'hta let us still have Choctaw, for Maskoki, Muscogee."

Where the author of this paper has been able to be sure of an accurate rendering of a name in the native language of a tribe or person, it has been included; when unable to corroborate a name, we have adhered to that which may be most immediately familiar. Full quotes taken from primary documents in the Accessible Archives collection have been left unmodified.

A Variety of Indigenous Peoples

In the book entitled *Colonial Mobile*, author Peter Hamilton began his account of the oldest city in Alabama with a roster of tribes indigenous to the area.

“It seems that the Muscogee race, extending from the Mississippi to the Atlantic, from the Appalachian range to the Gulf, living in what we may call the Alabama Basin, broke anciently into an eastern and western branch, and each of these then separated into tribes. Of the eastern branch the Creeks were the most prominent, of the western the Choctaws, from whom in their turn the warlike Chickasaws seceded, and intermediate between the two branches came the Alibamons on their river. In the eastern group we find the Creeks and Seminoles, the Creeks being on the upper sources of the Alabama River and on the Chattahoochee, and in the western, close akin to the Choctaws, were the Biloxi, Ouma or Huma, Pascagoula, and other familiar tribes.¹ Despite the kinship, the Choctaws, themselves in Upper and Lower divisions, were almost always at war with the Creeks. Their disputed boundary was between our Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, near the Choctaw Corner of later days.” [2]

Similarly, in an account of the explorer René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle in **A History of Grundy County, Illinois**, the author touches on the different set of tribes found there:

“Beyond the river, a mile and a half on the left, the banks were studded once more with the lodges of the Illinois, who, to the number of six thousand, had returned, since their defeat, to this their favorite dwelling-place. Scattered along the valley, among the adjacent hills, or over the neighboring prairie, were the cantonments of a half score of other tribes, and fragments of tribes, gathered under the protecting aegis of the French,—Shawanoes, from the Ohio, Abenakis from Maine, and Miamis from the sources of the Kankakee.” [3]

Looking primarily at those populations that colonial settlers would have encountered initially, it is worth noting particularly the Iroquois Confederacy, one of the first empires organized by Indigenous Peoples of North America:

“The Iroquois consisted primarily of five distinct tribes, namely: Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas which were bound together in the strongest military and political union ever known outside of the civilized nations.” [Author Note: Eventually, the Six Nations, known as the Iroquois Confederacy, would include the Tuscarora.]

“They waged persistent, unceasing warfare upon smaller, weaker tribes, and as they maintained the principle that the subdued nation always became a part of the conquering one, not only was their territory constantly enlarged, but the ranks of warrior and brave were frequently recruited, and their numbers, instead of being diminished by war were, on the contrary greatly augmented.

As to the actual number of the Six Nations, records differ greatly and it is almost impossible to form anything like a correct estimate...It has often been stated, and with truth, that the territory possessed by the Iroquois Nation was greater in extent than that of the boasted empire of Rome. As to the exact limits, historians differ. It is generally conceded, however, that the northern boundary was the Great Lakes, while to the south it extended to the Gulf, reached to the Hudson on the east and the Mississippi on the west.

The Iroquois control extended far beyond the lands in their actual possession, and over other tribes than those already in complete subjection. From the everglades of Florida to the Great Lakes their rule was supreme, but they compelled tribute from the Long Island Indians, were a source of terror to the tribes of Maine, and even received embassies from Nova Scotia. They made frequent excursions and contracted powerful alliances among the Nanticokes, Twightees and Plankashaws of the far west. Many a barbarous tribe dared not declare war or make peace without the approval of the Iroquois. Nor could they refuse to pay tribute or legally convey lands without the same permission.

The account closes with the following assessment:

“Commerce to-day runs in no path over the eastern part of this continent where the footsteps of Iroquois bands had not previously marked out the courses of power and control. In the whole Atlantic basin, no tie of trade or politics exists, except along the lines of Iroquois conquest.” [4]

As the various major European powers competed for control in the region, conflicts became more noticeable. In the early 1800s, in central Georgia, with the arrival of the British,

“Tecumseh, the Shawnee Chief, who with the eloquence and power of his brother, the prophet, exhorted all the Indian tribes throughout the

United States, from Canada to Florida, to unite in one grand confederacy and seize the opportunity, while the Americans were at war with Great Britain, to reclaim the original lands.

Tecumseh's appearance among the Southern Indians was the precursor of the terrible war which was to follow. He harangued the Indians through the West, down to the Seminoles in Florida, and succeeded in uniting them with the Creeks to join his standard. He succeeded in obtaining the services of Josiah Francis, a half breed, whom he ordained as prophet of the whole Creek Nation and whose word was to be regarded as infallible.

Tecumseh brought thirty chosen warriors with him, whom he sent throughout Georgia, Alabama and Florida, to disseminate his doctrines and to consolidate all tribes of Indians. Returning from Florida he

entered the Creek country in October, 1812. Hearing that Col. Hawkins had assembled five thousand Indian warriors at Tookabatchka, Alabama, and was about to hold a grand council, Tecumseh, with his thirty select warriors, hideously painted and adorned, boldly marched into the square. Col. Hawkins had made favorable terms with the council. Tecumseh kept quiet while Hawkins was present, but no sooner had Hawkins departed...than Tecumseh addressed the Indians in a most passionate and soul-stirring appeal. He was followed by his brother, the prophet, who poured forth a strain of eloquence that was received with the highest veneration. The animosity of the Indians was aroused against the Americans. They were induced to abandon agriculture, throw aside the implements and clothing obtained from the whites and return to their primitive condition as warriors and hunters." [5]



1901 portrait of Tecumseh. published in Charles Mair's Tecumseh: A Drama, and Canadian Poems (Toronto, 1901), Public Domain.

That same history covering Macon and Central Georgia continues:

There was peace between the whites and Indians after the treaty of 1814, until 1817, when the Seminoles and a few Creeks, at the instigation of Ambrister and Arbuthnot, who claimed to hold Florida in the name of Spain, commenced depredations on the frontiers of Georgia and

Alabama. General Gaines was sent to suppress the Indians, but his force being insufficient General Jackson again took the field, leading one thousand patriots from Tennessee. The Governor of Georgia reinforced him with nine hundred militia and a number of friendly Creeks . On the 10th of February, General Jackson arrived at Fort Hawkins with his Tennessee army, and received the Georgia troops here and at Fort Early, where he made the plan for his Seminole campaign...Jackson arrested two Indian chiefs whom he found engaged in insurrectionary acts among the Seminoles and Creeks . He ordered them hung without trial. The conduct of Jackson in constituting himself a high court was extensively discussed in the Congress of 1818 and 1819. The Military Committee of the House presented a report censuring his conduct, which, however, was voted down; a similar result followed a report of like nature in the Senate.

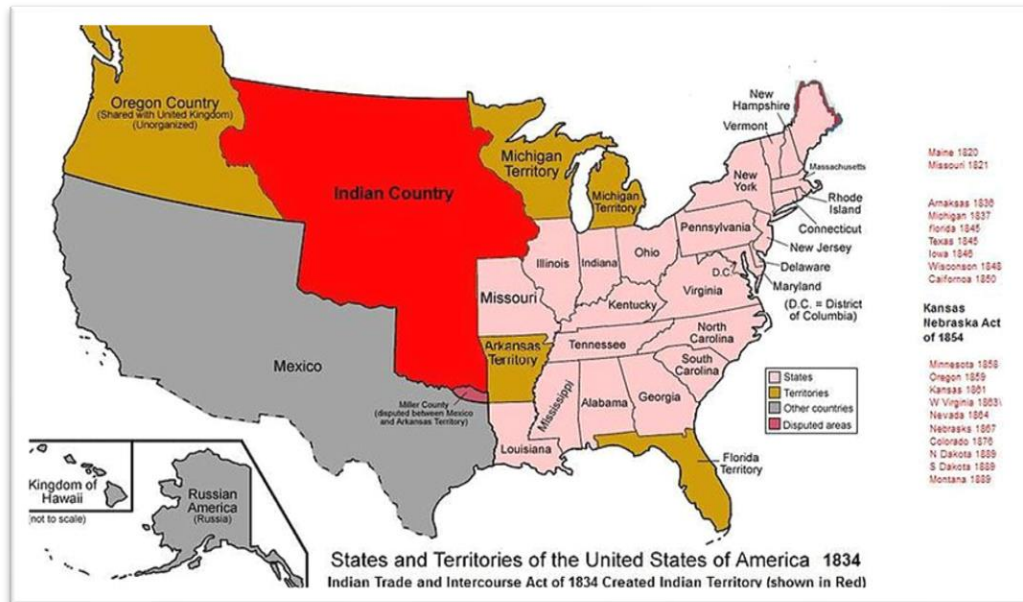
The Ocmulgee Indians dissipated among the Creeks and amalgamated with other tribes until their history became extinct. During the Seminole wars of 1836 and 1837, according to the statistics of Indian tribes in the United States, the Ocmulgees numbered but two hundred souls.” [6]

There had never been full consensus reached by those in governing positions in the United States as to applicable accommodations for appropriating land that had already been held by Native Americans. The mindset of President Andrew Jackson as a pivotal voice in driving the adopted approach of “Indian Removal,” can be heard in an address before Congress in December of 1830,

“Can it be cruel in this Government...to purchase [Indian] lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy...Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.”

[7]

The opposing view even at that time recognized that removal of the tribes from their established environments would simply deepen resentments as tribes were moved to lands immediately west of the Mississippi and ultimately further beyond.



States, Territories and Indian Country, as defined by Indian Intercourse act of 1834.

Resistance

A history of the city of St. Augustine in Florida included an explanation of the friction between the Seminoles and the fledgling United States and an account of the rising resistance:

“So long as the Spaniards ruled Florida, the Seminoles enjoyed undisputed possession of its fairest lands...But when the United States took possession of the territory, the Indian’s peaceful life was rudely interrupted. The newcomers looked with a longing eye upon the rich lands occupied by the Seminole and coveted the negroes—his slaves and friends. Land speculators and man kidnappers rushed in. The Florida frontier was infested with outcasts, fugitives from justice and unprincipled knaves, who were eager to dupe the Indian, defraud him of his lands, steal his cattle and make merchandise of his negro slaves and his free allies. Bitter conflicts ensued. The settlers demanded the removal of the Indians to the West; but the Seminoles refused to exchange their sunny native land for a

strange country of which they could learn no good report. The border outrages increased, and became more aggravated...

Among the Indian leaders, who had been most influential in resisting the encroachments of the whites and the most determined in opposition to all schemes of emigration, were Osceola and Coacoochee. In a council of the chiefs with the agent, when Osceola was asked to sign his mark to a treaty of removal, springing up in anger he cried, "The only mark I will make is with this." and drove his knife through the parchment into the table. Later, when the old Chief Nea-Mathla consented to leave Florida and having sold his cattle to the whites was gathering his people to emigrate to Arkansas, Osceola at the head of a war party killed him and flung away the gold that had been received for the cattle, declaring that it was the price of the Seminole's blood. Osceola and Coacoochee were the first to take up arms against the whites; and under their inspiration early examples were given of the terrible savage expedients, by which the Seminole campaigns were to be made memorable in the annals of Indian warfare." [8]*

Reprinted in an 1839 issue of **The Liberator**, an item from the Oberlin Evangelist updated readers of the news regarding the Indian Wars in Florida:

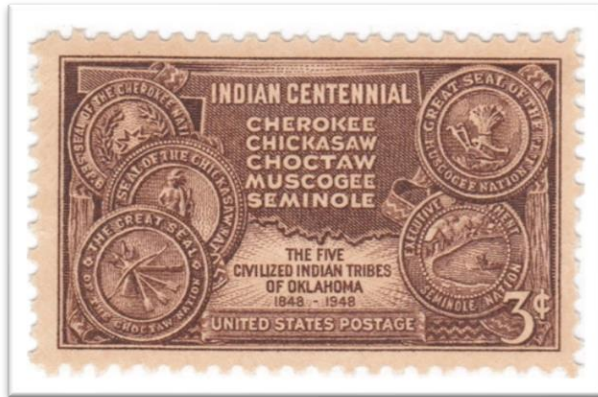
"Surely a three year's war is enough to satisfy the blood-thirsty, and land-coveting whites. They have been beaten, and if they now protect those they have so long attempted to destroy, it may be some remuneration for their past cruelties. We hope this will be more than a paper treaty. The people of Florida, it seems, manifest a disposition to resist the ratification of the treaty. They have resolved 'that Florida is the last place within the limits of the U.S., wherein the Indians should be permitted to remain,' mainly because all runaway slaves will find protection among them, and because they would be so near the emancipated slaves of the W I. as to learn something of their condition. It is well to have the reasons distinctly avowed. And these are doubtless the reasons why the war has already been pushed so long, costing the nation thirty millions of dollars, and many hundred lives. We hope the Executive of this nation will not incur the great disgrace in the view of the civilized world, and the displeasure of God that he must incur by yielding to the people of Florida for such reasons. The persecuted Indians need help. May the Lord dispose his heart to grant it to them now." [9]

Twenty years later, a letter to the editor included in **The National Era** newspaper in 1860 would reiterate the point:

"It has been said, and I believe with truth, that our nation has never been engaged in a war at all comparable with the war with Osceola, the Seminole chief, generally known as the Florida war. In Osceola, our greatest warriors met a foeman worthy of their steel, a man of great talents, courage, bravery, and generalship. Against him were "pitted" Generals Scott, Jessup, Clinch, Jackson, Taylor, Gaines, Worth, and many other officers whose names are now written in the book of fame. But for a long time, Osceola outgeneraled all who came against him. Our history does not record an instance of such a series of heroic military services, where both sides so bravely met dangers and difficulties, privations and suffering, or evinced so much Spartan courage and self-devotion. None of our Indian wars, probably all of them together, ever drained the public Treasury of so much money as did the Florida war....A final treaty was made, and but a little more than a year ago the Seminoles of Florida looked at the graves of their fathers for the last time, sprinkled them with parting tears, and then turned their streaming eyes to the "land of promise." They arrived at their new homes in the early part of last winter. Shortly after their arrival, they lost their chief, Billy Bowlegs, who died suddenly, as it is supposed, from the effects of poison, administered by some of his enemies.

...all the nations now inhabiting this fair and beautiful country were considerably advanced in civilization, even before they were compelled to remove from their Southern homes. They had been led to believe, by treaties made with the United States, that the lands then and there set apart for them were their own to hold and occupy forever. And Government agents had solemnly assured them that they should never be interfered with or molested in their rights. Hence, the wise men of the respective nations set about adopting plans for the amelioration of the condition of their people and fitting them for the enjoyment of such a future as circumstances then seemed to be pressing upon them. In grave council assembled, they had deliberated on subjects concerning their future welfare, and had resolved to give up the chase as a means of subsistence, quit their savage mode of life, and adopt the civil and industrial pursuits of their white brothers, with whom they were surrounded." [10]

Ultimately, the Seminole along with four other tribal nations known as the Five Civilized Nations would be removed from their lands of origin to resettle in the



Indian centennial (Oklahoma) 1948 U.S. Stamp, National Postal Museum, Public Domain.

territory of Oklahoma, a fact commemorated by the issuance of a postage stamp in 1948. That characterization of the five nations was based on their seeming acceptance of and assimilation with white settlers' cultural practices including literacy, forms of housing, intermarriage between the races and on-going economic engagement with businesses.**[11]**

Indigenous Culture

Although always rendered through the words of an outsider, 19th and 20th century explorers, priests and settlers tried to describe the quite different tribal practices encountered – glimpses expressed with varying degrees of accuracy and acceptance.

A history of Nevada County in California captures this account of the Indigenous practices:

“At the time of conquest by Americans, the wild Indians had no division of lands, and no general laws, written or traditional. The power of the chiefs, or caziques, was limited, their duties consisting mainly in directing the gathering of the natural fruits, attending to the fisheries, and heading the military expeditions. “The leader, or “cazique,” says Father Venegas, “conducted them to the “forest and sea coast in quest of food; sent and received “messages to and from adjacent tribes; informed them of “impending danger; inspired them to revenge of injuries; “and headed them in their wars, ravages, and depredations. “In all other particulars everyone was entire master of his “liberty.” [12]

An historical account of Ashtabula County (Ohio) provides a description of the Massasauga tribe's Dance of the Moon:

“One of their modes of worshipping the Great Spirit was described to Mr. Joel Blakeslec by a lady, one of the first settlers in Williamsfield, who often visited the Indian camp, and in the night season witnessed the solemn ceremony. She describes it as follows: “When the hour arrived the worshipers arranged themselves in two lines, one of males, the other of females. Three or four Indians, drummers, sitting on the ground with their single-headed drums and single drumstick, struck up the solemn tones, accompanied with the voice. At that, all parties in both lines commenced an active and regular motion to and fro towards one another and back again, all keeping exact time with their feet to the drum, while their voices, united in solemn tones, chanted aloud the following notes:

“This tune, expressed in a plaintive voice and accompanied by the melancholy sounds of the drums and the measured tread of the dancers, gave an air of solemnity to the whole. To witness one of these exhibitions of a savage worship at midnight, by moonlight or torchlight, in the otherwise silent hours of night when all nature was hushed in soft and deep repose, was indeed impressive.” [13]

Perhaps more authoritative, a history of Arizona attributes the following documentation of Apache beliefs to statements by the leader and shaman, Geronimo:

“Usen is the Apache word for God. It is used here because it implies the attributes of deity that are held in their primitive religion. (“Apache” means “Enemy.”)

The Apaches believed that when God, or Usen, created the Apaches, he also created their homes in the west, and gave to them such game, fruits and grain as they needed for their sustenance. He gave them different herbs to restore their health when disease attacked them. He taught them where to find these herbs and how to prepare them for medicine, and gave them, above all, a climate, with all needed clothing and shelter at hand. This was in the beginning, and accounts, perhaps, for the intense love the Apache held for his home in the west, for he believed that these ranges were provided for him and his posterity by Usen himself.” [14]

In a 1923 history of **McCurtain County And Southeast Oklahoma**, we find the following under a subhead, “Indian Ball:”

“PRIOR to statehood, the territory embraced by McCurtain County consisted of five counties under the Choctaw government. Ball playing was the principal sport, and the games were attended by Indians and white people alike from all these counties.

Usually, one county challenged another, and they would meet on common ground for the game. The goals—posts about 12 feet high and 8 inches at the base—were set up 200 feet apart. Any number of players to the side—rarely ever less than twelve. The one and a half inch rubber ball was never touched by the hand, except when the umpire, or judge, tossed it up midway between the goals, as in basketball. The players used hickory sticks well-seasoned, about three feet long, tapering from the hand to a flat end below the hand-hold and twisted into a cup-shape, securely fastened with deer skin thongs. The player is supposed to scoop up the ball in this cup-shaped stick, and if the field is clear, or if he is a very swift runner, he may run toward his goal and approach it as nearly as his opponents will allow him, and then throw the ball at the goal. If he strikes the post, his side has scored, but if he misses, the struggle for the ball is renewed.” [15]

A footnote appearing in **An Illustrated History Of The Counties Of Rock And Pipestone Minnesota** documents different stories associated with the regional landscape:

“In the time of a great freshet, which took place many centuries ago and destroyed all the nations of the earth, all the tribes of the red men assembled on the Coteau des Prairies to get out of the way of the waters. After they had all gathered here from all parts, the waters continued to rise until at length it covered them all in a mass, and their flesh was converted into red pipestone. Therefore, it has always been considered neutral ground—it belonged to all tribes alike, and all were allowed to get it and smoke it together. While they were all drowning in a mass, a young woman, K-wap-tah-w (a virgin), caught hold of the foot of a very large bird that was flying over and was carried to the top of a high cliff, not far off, that was above the water. Here she had twins, and their father was the war eagle, and her children have since peopled the earth. The pipestone, which is the flesh of their ancestors, is smoked by them as the symbol of peace, and the eagle’s quill decorates the head of the brave.

The “Three Maidens” the great granite boulders which lie close to the quarry, and which are to this day worshipped by the Indians, have been made the scene of an interesting story by the Indians. According to them, many centuries ago all the Indian tribes of the earth assembled in the valley of the pipestone and engaged in deadly conflict to avenge the supposed wrongs in their respective tribes. The battle lasted many days, and the blood flowing over the valley gave its color to the rocks. Finally, there were only two survivors, each a leading Chieftain, of all who composed the Indian race. These brained each other with their tomahawks, and the race would have been extinct had not three Indian maidens hid beneath three huge rocks of the valley and lived to perpetuate their race.” [16]

Railroads, Westward Expansion and Gold

At least initially, populations were removed from their original holdings for the sake of agriculture. However, by the close of the Civil War, additional lands belonging to tribal nations became desirable. More urgent as a need (at least from the perspective of white settlers) was the construction of an expanded network of railroads; those in power wanted to see a more rapid movement of goods across the continent and the discovery of gold drew the eager attention of those seeking to rapidly improve their economic status.

In January of 1865, **The Weekly Vincennes Western Sun** had reported, “It is now well ascertained that the Black Hills of Dakota Territory, situated on the 44th parallel of latitude and between the 103d and 105th meridians of longitude are rich in gold and silver, as well as coal, iron, copper, and pine forests. With the pacification of the Sioux nation and the establishment of emigrant roads, Dakota will be the scene of great mining excitement, as the gold field of the Black Hills is within two hundred miles of the steamboat navigation of the Missouri river, at the intersection of its channel with the 45th parallel of latitude.”

Amid excitement over the possibility of the building of the Pacific Railway, the newspaper emphasized the importance of access to this particular region:

“Those who have been wondering why so much attention has been paid to the suppression of the Indian disturbances in that region may recognize the reason in the fact that, but for these troubles, gold hunters would now be digging away at the foot of the Black Hills and laying the foundations

of new colonies. The mountain men have all along said that there was gold in these hills, and much of the emigration this season would have stopped there but for the Indian war. As General Pope has now officially announced to the War Department the close of the Sioux war, we may probably look for a rush to these new mines next spring. In that case the present session of Congress will probably create a new territory out of the district bounded north by Montana, south by Colorado, east by Dakota and Nebraska, and west by Idaho. Abundance of Indian names can be found for it, such as Arapahoe, Riccaree, Cheyenne, Ogallala, Mandan, &c. There are already some permanent settlements in this region along the United States mail route, such as Camp Walbach, near the Cheyenne Pass. The most important place is Fort Laramie. The gold region near Bannock City, Montana Territory, is on the verge of this new territory. The gold hunters, however, will soon find out the localities for the precious metal, and mushroom cities will spring up.” [17]

A Brief History of South Dakota, authored by Doane Robinson, Secretary of the State Historical Society of South Dakota and published in 1905, provides information about the escalating conflict:

“In 1865, about the time that the War of the Outbreak ended, the government undertook to build a highway from the California trail, in the vicinity of Fort Laramie, across by way of the Powder River valley to the gold mines in Montana and Idaho. This road was necessarily run through the richest buffalo range left to the Sioux Indians. Red Cloud was then fast coming into prominence as the principal chief of the Oglala Sioux. The construction of the road was entrusted to Colonel Sawyer, and he began work with a party of surveyors and an escort of only twenty-five men, from Company B of the Dakota Cavalry. Red Cloud met them near the Black Hills and protested against their entering the buffalo country. They paid no attention to his protest and went forward. Red Cloud then gathered a large body of the Oglalas and Cheyennes and, overtaking Sawyer’s party at the Powder River, surrounded them and held them in siege for a period of fifteen days.

Red Cloud used no force, his intention being, by a show of strength, to bluff the roadmakers out of his country. At the end of two weeks the young Indians were becoming so unruly and threatening that Red Cloud did not longer dare continue the siege, fearing that his young men would

get beyond his control and massacre the white men. He therefore withdrew his Indians, and the expedition moved on to the Tongue River. By this time Red Cloud had his young men again well in hand, and he again surrounded Sawyer and held him for three days, and then withdrew. He had failed in his attempt to stop the road building. Sawyer



Red Cloud. Taken by Charles Milton Bell while Red Cloud was on a delegation in 1880. Public Domain.

went on to the Yellowstone and then returned without molestation, but Red Cloud had resolved that the road should not be built.

That fall (1865) commissioners undertook to treat with the Oglalas for the opening of the road, but Red Cloud would not permit a treaty to be made,—in fact did not attend the council. A new attempt was made to secure the consent of the Indians to the opening of the road, and at Fort Laramie on June 30, 1866, Red Cloud addressed the commissioners in a council held under an improvised arbor near the fort. Mildly but firmly, he told them that the Oglalas' last hope of subsistence lay in preserving the buffalo pastures of the Powder River country, and that they could not under any consideration consent

to the opening of a highway through that region. While he was speaking, General Carrington, with a strong force of soldiers, arrived at the fort.

"Why do these soldiers come?" asked Red Cloud.

"They have come to build forts and open the Montana road," was the reply.

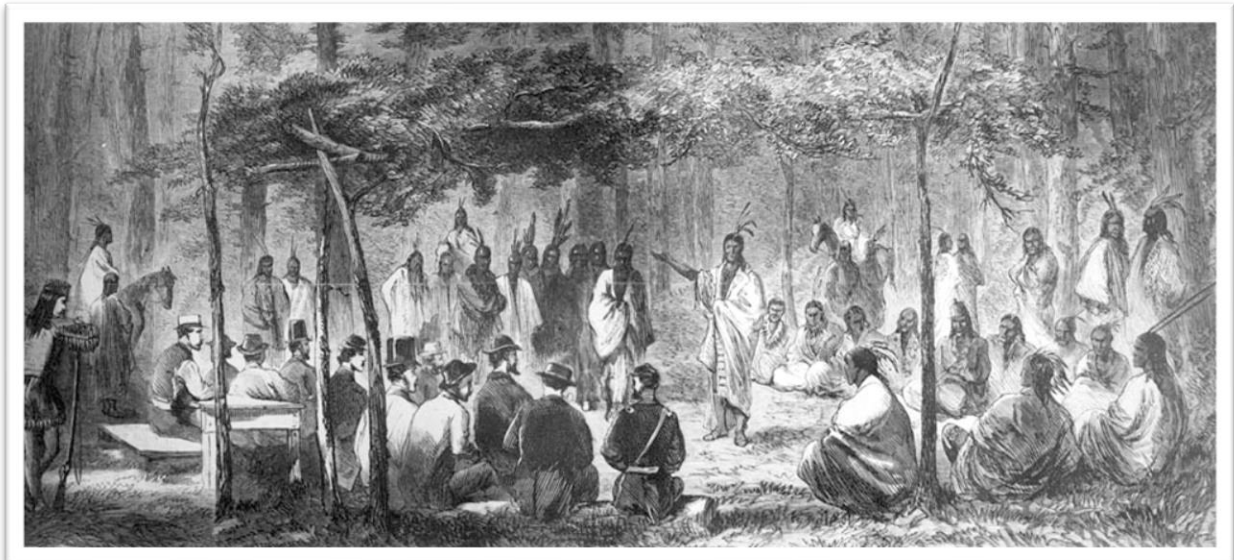
Red Cloud sprang from the platform, caught up his rifle and brandished it before the commission, and cried, "In this and the Great Spirit, I trust for the right." Calling his people to follow him, he left the commission sitting without an audience."

Red Cloud's campaign continued for another eighteen months. Again, from the **Brief History of South Dakota:**

"Finally, on the twenty-first day of December, 1866, Red Cloud appeared in force between Fort Phil Kearney and the wood camp seven miles

distant. Captain Fetterman, with a force of eighty-one men, was sent out to drive him away. The Indians craftily led Fetterman into an ambush and his entire force was destroyed. Not one man lived to come back and tell the story. Throughout the following year the Indians kept up this mode of warfare and were perfectly successful in preventing the opening of the Montana road. Not a single wagon was ever able to pass over it. On the 1st of August, 1867, another severe battle was fought between the whites and Indians at the wood camp; both parties lost heavily, but the Indians' loss was much the greater.

By this time, the people of the country had begun to think that perhaps Red Cloud was fighting for a principle, and the President was prevailed upon to send out a commission whose duty it was to ascertain the real occasion of the war, and to negotiate a treaty of peace if it was thought wise to do so."



Council of the Arapahoe and Comanche Indians on Medicine Lodge Creek, October 19, 1867. Frank Leslie's Weekly, November 16, 1867.

Another eighteen months passed during which Red Cloud did not appear personally at any negotiations, a cause of enormous concern to the military forces tasked with building and defending physical fortifications along the Bozeman Trail:

"The commission sent Swift Bear, a friendly Brule Indian, to Red Cloud's army on the Powder River, and invited Red Cloud to meet the

commissioners at Fort Laramie. Red Cloud declined to come down but sent word to the commissioners by the well known chief Man Afraid of His Horses, that his war against the whites was to save the valley of the Powder River, the only hunting ground left to his nation, from white intrusion. He told the commissioners that whenever the military garrisons at Fort Phil Kearney, Fort C. F. Smith, and Fort Reno were withdrawn, the war on his part would cease. The commissioners sent word to him, asking for a truce until a council could be held. Red Cloud replied that he would meet them the next spring or summer.

Early in the spring of 1868 the commissioners returned to Fort Laramie and met there some leading Indians whom Red Cloud had sent to them, but he did not himself come down. On the 29th of April, a treaty was signed, which provided that the troops should be withdrawn from Forts Phil Kearney, C. F. Smith, and Reno, and that all attempts to open the Montana road should be abandoned. A great reservation was made for the use of the Indians, extending from the mouth of the Niobrara River west to the Big Horn Mountains, thence north to the Yellowstone River, then east by the Cannonball to the Missouri and down the Missouri to the Niobrara. All of the Sioux tribes joined in giving up to the government all of the lands they possessed outside of this great reservation. The government agreed that no white men or soldiers should at any time enter this reservation without the consent of the Indians.

It was particularly important that Red Cloud should sign this treaty, but he failed to come in for the purpose. Messengers were sent to him, but he sent back word that he thought he should wait until the forts were abandoned, and the roads closed up, before he signed; and so, matters dragged along month after month. Finally, at the end of August, upon the advice of the peace commissioners, the government determined to take the chief at his word, and on the 27th of that month all of the troops were withdrawn."

Refusing to be present until all of the physical fortifications had been removed, Red Cloud waited until November of 1868 before signing the Fort Laramie Treaty. The treaty was subsequently ratified in February of the following year and signed by President Andrew Johnson.



Lakota leaders with U. S. peace commissioners during the negotiation of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Public Domain.

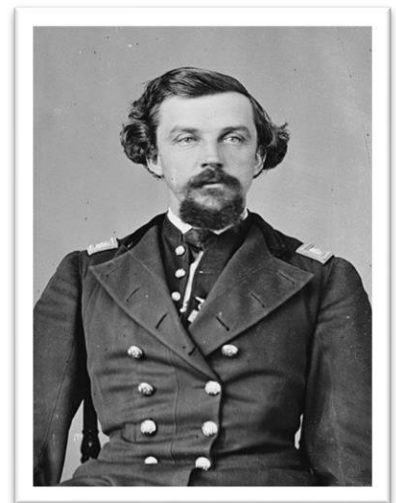
Robinson's account positions Red Cloud's place in the history of the Sioux battling against U.S. encroachment this way:

“Red Cloud had been entirely successful and obtained everything he was fighting for. It is the only instance in the history of the United States in which the government has gone to war and afterward made a peace conceding everything demanded by the enemy and exacting nothing in return.” [18]

An Address to the American People

There was recognition by those in positions of power that the situation was volatile, even allowing for Red Cloud's activity. In mid-1869, Colonel Samuel F. Tappan of the Indian Peace Commission on Indian Affairs presented to the Executive Committee of the U.S. Indian Commission and to the public at large his on-going concerns in what was entitled “An Address to the American People”. What appears below is an abridged version of his commentary as reported on June 26, 1869, in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.

The devastating and relentless wars that have been waged against these people from the very beginning, under a mistaken policy, by the Government and now threatens the entire



Colonel Samuel F. Tappan, 1st Colorado Regiment of Volunteers. Library of Congress. Public Domain.

annihilation of the race, if not speedily arrested, will entail upon the nation a fearful crime and an enormous expenditure of life and treasure. The cause of all difficulties in the past between the national forces and the Indians is unquestionably the ban of outlawry which rests upon them. The official reports of every Commission appointed by the government prove this. And to this is added the testimony of the Christian missionaries and philanthropists that have been among them. In order to remove this and place the Indians in a position where they may try fairly the plan of civilization, it is necessary that a correct public sentiment, proper legislation, and faithful execution of laws should exist. The first duty is with Congress. This association would insist upon a fair, impartial and just code of laws for the government of those tribes now at peace, and the fulfillment of all former treaties and the adoption of a wise system of settlement with the tribes now at war. Official reports prove that heretofore our own people have been the aggressors, and the Indians have not been at fault in every war which has existed between the nation and the different tribes. Upon this point the Indian Peace Commission, say in their report of the 7th of January 1868: "But, it is said our wars with them have been almost constant. Have we been uniformly unjust? We answer, unhesitatingly, Yes..."

The Indians have never desired to leave the homes of their fathers, and had the policy of Penn and Washington been adopted by their successors, the arms of the government might have enclosed this people, and they would have been useful, law-abiding and productive citizens: instead of that the nation has expended hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of valuable lives, and has never gained an essential victory; but has driven this race step by step beyond the pale of law—government and Christianity, and even now must retain possession of territory acquired by fraud through a continued series of wrongs, outrages and assassinations.

That this was not intentional; a wrong willfully perpetrated by the Government is believed; but that it is the result of a mistaken policy once commenced and persevered in through a long series of years, until there seems no way of retracing the steps already taken: while persons in high official, military, and other positions, regard this course of unjust extermination, as the only method of dealing with a subject that simply requires humanity and justice in its treatment...

The Seminole war lasted seven years, in which the regular army, several thousand volunteers and the navy were engaged against a few hundred warriors on the pent up Peninsula of Florida, attended with a cost on our part of fifteen hundred lives and nearly a hundred millions of dollars,—was finally terminated by a gross and cowardly violation of a flag of truce, and the promise of a permanent home elsewhere. It is believed the Indians would have more readily accepted the latter proposal before, than after, the first gun had been discharged, had an opportunity been given them. Even now in the everglades of Florida the remnants of that tribe remain, asserting that they have never been vanquished, and they never have.

The more recent wars, with the Sioux, Navajos, Cheyennes, and other tribes, costing hundreds of lives of our own people and nearly two hundred millions of dollars; conflicts in which our flag was disgraced and our country dishonored,—official reports made to the government, exonerate the Indians from all criminality for the part they took in them, it being proven that the fault was not theirs, and that they only acted in self defense...They have the advantage of being in the right, and we of being the criminals. It is to arrest this crime and to prevent the government from adding another to the series of chapters that have blotted its history, marring the beautiful fabric, which was designed in its foundation, that this protest is made.

It is evident that in the mode of warfare between the Indians and our own people, we have taught them to make war upon women and children, as it is known that in their wars with one another, the women and children are taken captives, and often treated with the greatest consideration by their captors. The Indian Peace Commission, created by an unanimous vote of Congress in July, 1867, were confronted on the plains, by an Indian chief, in behalf of those who were then at war with our government, with a proposition to exchange prisoners, he presenting six white women and children, and the Commission were compelled to acknowledge in behalf of a nation of forty millions of people, that in wars with Indians no prisoners were taken. The chief then released the captives and asked that they might be sent to their kindred. The contrast is so striking that comment is unnecessary. [19]



Sioux Chief and Warriors, as photographed by Matthew Brady, appearing in Frank Leslie's Weekly, July 9, 1870

The depth and significance of Tappan's testimony was not absorbed by the public or by the U.S. Government, although token observance was made.

In 1875, **The Christian Recorder** indicated that their reporter had spoken with both Red Cloud and Spotted Tail. Their commentary is indicative of the unhappy state of affairs:

"Said Spotted Tail in a council with the Special Commissioner sent to open negotiations for the

transfer of the Black Hill country: "You and the ones that come here to bring news from the Great Father, want to gather money for yourselves. There is so much lying and stealing, I can't tell where it begins; I know where it ends. They keep telling me the appropriations are too small. It's a lie; they are large enough if it came to us without going through so many hands. All have pockets. It wouldn't be so bad if some of our people were the Commissioners and Agents. We would make them have pockets just like white men."

Red Cloud said: "The Great Father sends Commissioners out here to tell the truth...but they all lie and steal. I don't understand it. When I go to see my Great Father, I see land fenced in. I don't pass through it to take anything from it. I want to go to Washington to settle this matter for myself." [20]

Again, **Frank Leslie's Weekly**, dated October 13, 1877, presented the meeting between the American president and the Sioux leaders as the cover story of the periodical, emphasizing the reasons for the meeting's importance,

"...the whites are crowding in upon the Indian reservations, and General Crook fears an outbreak unless the present chiefs can be satisfied. Arrangements were made in the East Room for the conference, a circle of chairs being formed on the south side, the President occupying a place on the outer range in full view of the Indian visitors. The Indians arrived a

few minutes before noon. They were in full costume, with a plentiful application of paint and ornamentations of feather. Four interpreters - half-breeds - accompanied them. The President and nearly all the Cabinet soon after appeared. The Indians were severally presented to him by name, the ceremony being conducted by Lieutenant Clark, Spotted Tail being the first introduced." [21]

Throughout the 1870's, there was fury over any concessions granted to the tribal nations. As in any war, atrocities were committed by both sides during the Plains Indian Wars, and there was strong feeling in support of the so-called Sheridan Principle, named after General Philip Sheridan, a military officer who frequently called for brutal responses to uprisings and other brutal reprisals. The **National Anti-Slavery Standard** printed comments in its March 19, 1870 publication that included harsh details of what the settlers faced:

"...there was not a tribe south of the Platte which did not have representatives in the war, as well as large numbers of the Sioux, who came from the Upper Mississippi.

We found in Black photographs and of the persons massacred on the Solomon and Saline; the mail which I had sent by the expressmen, Nat Marshall, and Bill Davis, from Bluff Creek to Fort Dodge, who were murdered and mutilated, was likewise found; also, a large blank-book, with Indian illustrations of the different fights which Black Kettle's band had been engaged in, especially about Fort Wallace and on the line of the Denver stages—showing when the fight had been with the colored troops—when with white; also, when trains had been captured, and women killed in wagons. Still, a hue and cry was raised, through the influence of the Indian ring, in which some good and pious ecclesiastics took part, and became the aiders and abettors of savages who murdered, without mercy, men, women, and children..." [22]

The vengeful policies implemented by those who continued to believe in the Sheridan Principle of eradication would have a long-lasting impact on the Western states, even as others with well-meaning intent protested against the inequities imposed:

"Millions of dollars were set down to their credit in account with the United States, and many millions were due them at the moment for land sold or for property taken or destroyed, and they had rich mines also, and

lumber, though forbidden to develop the one or sell the other even when starving. Their women were bought, sold, and given away, with little if any voice in the transaction, though changing masters sometimes eight or ten times in their first score of years; and these Indian women are wrinkled and haggard at thirty and old at thirty-five. They were seen to be tender mothers, and wives truer and more chaste than those of any other savage people; yet; in the frequent wars and enforced removals, usually two-thirds of those slaughtered or sacrificed were (and must be with no refuge) women and children. And in these crises of helplessness, they were scarcely less able to protect soul and body than when on their own reservations at home under tyrant officials and in close proximity to military camps and rough frontiersmen. And yet at that date there was no society in existence for the political betterment of the Indian!" [23]

Awareness

Constant expansion across the North American continent resulted in varied and costly harm to the cultural norms and livelihoods of Native Americans and to those settlers who arrived in occupied territories. It is only to be expected that human beings – formed by different cultures and expectations – would suffer the consequences of botched communication, misjudgments, and devastating conflicts. Reading primary accounts of colonists' initial contact and subsequent misguided attempts at assimilation makes clear the harsh treatment of previous centuries. At the same time, those same primary accounts display the spectrum of past attitudes – positive and negative – that have shaped a need for greater sensitivity to building awareness of the value of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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Accessible Archives Collections Used in Preparing This White Paper

Accessible Archives provides diverse primary source materials reflecting broad views across American history and culture have been assembled into comprehensive databases. The following collections were utilized in composing this white paper.

African American Newspapers Collection

This collection of African American newspapers contains a wealth of information about cultural life and history during the 19th and early 20th century and is rich with first-hand reports of the major events and issues of the day. The collection also provides a great number of early biographies, vital statistics, essays and editorials, poetry and prose, and advertisements all of which embody the African-American experience. These newspapers are included: ***The Canadian Observer, The Christian Recorder, Weekly Advocate, The Colored American, Frederick Douglass' Paper, Freedom's Journal, The National Era, The North Star, Provincial Freeman, The Freedmen's Record, and The Negro Business League Herald.***

American County Histories

Over a million pages of content encompassing all fifty states and the District of Columbia. Research possibilities in local history, women and African American experiences, government, the medical and legal professions, churches, industry, commerce, education, geology, geography, weather, transportation, wars, noted celebrations, health, vital statistics, and more.

The Civil War Collection, 1855-1869

Coverage in relation to the Civil War is both informative and eclectic. Slavery is an important topic, and countless editorials discuss pre- and post-war attitudes from both sides, as well as troop movements during the war. Newspaper and e-book content is subdivided into these parts: A Newspaper Perspective, The Soldiers' Perspective, The Generals' Perspective, A Midwestern Perspective, Iowa's Perspective, Northeast Regimental Histories, and Abraham Lincoln Library Abolitionist Books.

Frank Leslie's Weekly, 1855-1922

Full run of issues and includes articles on: slavery and abolition; politics, elections, and political parties; the Civil War; industrialization and technology development; business, commerce, and commodities; society and culture; women's rights and suffrage; African American society and economics; immigration; the world in conflict; labor and radicalism; religion; and featured columns on music, the stage, fashion, fine arts, sports, and literature.

The Liberator, 1831-1865

A weekly abolitionist newspaper, printed and published in Boston by William Lloyd Garrison, it was more religious than political. The newspaper appealed to the moral conscience of its readers, urging them to demand immediate freeing of slaves. It also promoted women's rights, an issue that split the American abolitionist movement. It had prominent and influential readers and authors, including Frederick Douglass and Beriah Green. The Liberator reprinted letters, reports, sermons, and news stories relating to slavery which helped it to become a sort of community bulletin board for the

abolitionist movement and the most influential newspaper in the antebellum antislavery crusade.

National Anti-Slavery Standard, 1840-1870

Comprises the full run of issues that were published and featured writings from influential abolitionists fighting for suffrage, equality and most of all, emancipation. It contained essays, debates, personal accounts, speeches, events, reports, and anything else deemed newsworthy in relation to the question of slavery in the United States and other parts of the world.

The Woman's Tribune, 1883-1909

Consists of articles and news on women's suffrage and political rights, suffrage leaders, rural women of the Midwest and West, political and international issues, local, regional, & national politics, labor laws, Women's Leagues, Woman's Political Party, national political parties, anti-suffrage, marriage and divorce, property laws, reproductive rights, African Americans, tradeswomen, international suffrage movement, crime, national women's suffrage organizations, law enforcement, Spanish-American War, Native American women, health and medical practice, education, National Federation of Women's Clubs, women's patriotic organizations, and others.

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