



History Timeline: Selected Dates in Indian History and Indian Education*

**This information was adapted from *The Quest for Quality Education* (Washington, DC: NEA, 1982); *Report of the American Indian/Alaska Native Concerns Study Committee* (Washington, DC: NEA 1987); *American History: A Survey. Volume II: Since 1865* by Alan Brinkley et al. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991); "Comprehensive Reform and American Indian Education" by David L. Beaulieu (*Journal of American Indian Education*, June 2, 2000); and "Reflecting on the Past: Some Important Aspects of Indian Education to Consider as We Look Toward the future" by John W. Tippeconnic III (*Journal of American Indian Education*, June 2, 2000).*

A more detailed version of this timeline can be found in National Education Association. 2002 "Summary Report of a Panel Discussion on American Indian Education." Compiled by Ron Houston & Tarajeen Yazee, amended by Octaviana Trujillo.

The Beginning to 1492 (Period of Self-determination)

Before the introduction of the European system, tribal education was the norm in the Americas. Parents and other adult members of the tribe transmitted the people's values, customs, stories, religion, and history to the next generation. They taught children to use that knowledge wisely and responsibly, and they taught them in the language of the tribe.

1492 to 1776 (Colonial Period)

In the early days of Indian-European contact, education consisted of efforts to "civilize and convert" the Natives. Jesuits taught them French customs and language, Protestants Anglicized them and Franciscans tried to mainstream them by making them missionaries. During the colonial period, colonists signed treaties with Indians to acquire land and regulate transactions, with some treaties stipulating the employment of people to teach Indians.

1776 to 1830 (Period of Early U.S. – Indian Relations)

Between 1778 and 1871 – when it needed Indians as allies against European powers, land for settlers spreading west, and an end to wars with the Indians themselves, the U.S. government signed hundreds of treaties with tribes offering health services, schools, teachers, and money in exchange for Indian land, trade concessions, fishing and hunting rights, and the tribes’ jurisdiction over their remaining land.

But the schools the treaties authorized did little more than spread Christianity and Western culture and provide agrarian training to compensate for the loss of the Indians’ livelihood. They were ill equipped to provide mainstream education, and they failed utterly to recognize Indian languages, culture, and history.

Out of the treaty arrangement, however, the U.S. government assumed a protective role that developed into the “trust relationship,” albeit a shifting trust relationship, that governs U.S.–Indian relationships to this day.

1830 – 1850 (Removal Era)

Indians wanted to remain on their ancestral land, which Whites wanted to occupy. The solution reached by the states and the U.S. government under President Andrew Jackson was to remove the Indians from the path of white settlement. Some tribes, such as the Sac and Fox in Illinois and the Seminoles in Florida, were subdued, but they resisted removal. The Creek, Winnebago, Cherokee, and other tribes were forcibly resettled in “Indian Territory,” separated from whites. The Cherokees tried to hold onto their land by becoming “American” in customs, language, and constitution and by educating all their people through Osceola’s syllabary of the Cherokee language. However, the state of Georgia refused to recognize the Cherokee Nation and declared its laws null and void.

1850 – 1880 (Period of Reservations and Wars)

The “Indian Territory” to which tribes were removed faced more demands by Whites who continued to move westward, taking land, killing buffalo, and further weakening the economic viability of the tribes. Constant fighting ensued as Indians valiantly but unsuccessfully resisted white threats to their civilization. The period ended in 1890 with the Battle of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, in which more than 200 Indians were slaughtered.

1880 to 1920 (Period of Allotment and Assimilation)

This period sees a reversal of the U.S. policy of creating reservations to isolate Indians from whites. Through the Dawes Severalty Act, Congress forces Indians to become landowners and farmers by refusing to allow tribes to own reservation lands communally. Under this law, the U.S. gives tracts of land to individual Indians and U.S. citizenship to adult owners—however, unlike other citizens, Indians do not get full title for 25 years.

During this time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) forced Indian assimilation to White ways: it removed families from their land, sent Indian children to White-run boarding schools, stopped the practice of Indian rituals, and encouraged the spread of Christian churches to reservations. The boarding school movement grew, with the number of federal Indian schools reaching 106. Abandoned military posts were used for educating Indians.

The period ended with the publication of the *Merriam Report*, which ushered in a period known as the Indian New Deal. The report brought the deprivation and abused of Indian children attending public

and BIA schools to the attention of the federal government. It resulted in the authorization of programs for improving the education of Indians and the provision of federal financial aid to local school districts, reservation day schools and public schools that had been established on Indian trust lands.

1930 to 1945 (Indian Reorganization Act)

During this period, Congress passed two landmark laws—the Indian Reorganization Act and the Johnson-O-Malley Act—and alternately strengthened and weakened the Indian tribes. Under the New Deal, for example, pressures on Indians to assimilate abated and U.S. policies toward Indians began to improve. This was seen in the Indian Reorganization Act, which returned significant political authority to the tribes; provided government funds for education, health care, and cultural activities; and reversed the allotment policy. As a result of this redistribution of land, Indian income increased and the tribes became more viable. However, the national unity pressures that built up during World War II undermined this newly-found tribal strength, and many Indians who served as soldiers elected to live in the non-Indian world rather than return to the reservation.

1945 to 1965 (Termination Period)

Through the termination policy that was begun in 1953, Congress stopped recognizing the tribes as legal entities separate from the states where they were located. Instead, it made the tribes subject to the same local jurisdictions as other people and required that Indian property be managed, not by tribal councils, but by private organizations, such as banks, which served as trustees for tribal assets. Congress also reinvigorated the assimilation policy, encouraging Indians to move to cities. As a result, the tribes were weakened and corruption became widespread. Bowing to pressure from Indians, including the National Congress of American Indians, President Dwight Eisenhower barred further terminations without the tribes' consent.

The period ended with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act and the channeling of federal community action funds to the tribes, which became more autonomous and began to mobilize for self-determination.

1965 to 2005 (Period of Self-Determination)

During this period, the U.S. rejected the termination policy and began to be more responsive to Indian issues. Much of the credit for this responsiveness goes to the groundbreaking report, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy, A National Challenge*.

The U.S. enacted and started to implement Great Society programs under the Economic Opportunity Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Indian Civil Rights Act, the Indian Education Act, and the Tribally Controlled Community Colleges Act.

At the same time, Indians started to win court victories to rectify broken treaties and started to organize more militant advocacy organizations, such as the American Indian Movement (AIM). These events, as well as clashes with Washington State officials over fishing rights and AIM's occupation of Alcatraz Island and Wounded Knee brought the Indians' plight to national attention.

Two presidents' executive orders resulted in the collection and report of educational data that help to identify successful education strategies and the status of AI/AN early and K-16 education.





NEA Online Resources

Native American Reading List <http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/nabooklist.html>.

"Focus On American Indians/Alaska Natives," 2004–05

An annual newsletter that highlights educational issues of interest in AI/AN education. This issue focuses on strategies to close the student achievement gaps.

<http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/images/indiansfocus.pdf>.

The 2005-06 issue provides a brief summary of NEA/NIEA Moving from Research to Practice: A Summit on Indian Students.

Available by contacting hcrinfo@nea.org.

American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

November is American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. Explore Education World's resources on the history and cultures of America's original inhabitants.

<http://www.nea.org/lessons/tt031109.html>.

Safe Zone: Taking a Stand So All Students Can Learn and Succeed

A downloadable poster that shows students that their schools are taking a stand against racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, religious bias, and other forms of bias and discrimination. <http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/safezone.html>

Selected Journals, Web Sites and Online Reports on AIAN Education

"A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country," US Commission on Civil Rights <http://www.tedna.org/usccr/quietcrisis.pdf>.

AEL, Inc., Resources for American Indian Alaskan Native Education.
<http://www.ael.org/page2.htm?&index=751&pd=1&scope=ai&pub=x&pv=x>.

Alaska Federation of Natives Research Guidelines. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/afnguide.html>.

American Indian Language Policy and School Success. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/BOISE.html>.

Arizona State University Labriola Center. <http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/labriola.htm>.

Broken Promises: Evaluating the Native American Health System.
<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/nahealth/nabroken.pdf>.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs. <http://www.oiep.bia.edu/>.

Census 2000 Brief, "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2000."
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-15.pdf> .

Cultural Survival. <http://209.200.101.189/>.

Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. http://www.kued.org/productions/2worlds/at_risk/.

"*The Inevitable Corruption of Indicators and Educators through High-Stakes Testing.*" PDF
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/documents/EP5L-0503-101-EPRU.pdf>.

Journal of American Indian Education. <http://jaie.asu.edu/>.

Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation. <http://evaluation.wmich.edu/jmde/>.

Language Learning and Technology. <http://llt.msu.edu/vol6num2/default.html>.

Maintaining and Renewing Indigenous Languages. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Main.html>.

National Indian Education Association. *No Child Left Behind in Indian Country*
http://www.niea.org/sa/uploads/policyissues/29.23.NIEANCLBreport_final2.pdf.

Native American Studies Information and Resources.
<http://cobalt.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/~krkvl/nas.html>

Native Research Network. <http://www.aaip.com/nrnet/nrn.html>.

Plans for Dropout Prevention and Special School Support Services.
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/INAR.html>.

Revitalizing Indigenous Languages. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/RIL_Intro.html.

“Strengthening Partnerships for Native American Student Education,” Council of Chief State School Officers’ Research Bibliography. <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/NASResearchBibliography.doc>

Teaching and Learning with Native Americans. <http://literacynet.org/lp/namericans/>.

Tribal College Journal. <http://www.tribalcollegejournal.org/>.

US Executive Order #13336 - NCLB Order re: American Indian /Alaska Native Education. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040430-10.html>.

Selected Online Curriculum Resources

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/>.

A Specialized Knowledge Base for Teaching American Indian and Alaska Native Students. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TCarticle.html>.

Cradleboard Teaching Project. <http://www.cradleboard.org/>.

Curriculum Development for Native Americans. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Curr.html>.

Finding out What Works for Native Students. <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-04/finding.php>.

Hawaii Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments (CHARLE). <http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/dual/nhmo/>.

Index of Indigenous Education and Indigenous Language Web Sites. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL_Index.html.

Improving Mathematics and Science Instruction for LEP Middle and High School Students through Language Activities. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/symposia/third/reyhner.htm>.

Indian Land Tenure. <http://www.indianlandtenure.org/curriculum/curricindex.htm>.

Minnesota Indian Education K-12 Curriculum http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Academic_Excellence/Indian_Education/K12_Curriculum/index.html

National Museum of the American Indian, Education. <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>.

Northwest Native American Reading Curriculum. <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/09-03/cloak/curriculum.php>.

PBS Teacher Source. <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/>.

Teaching and Learning with Native Americans. <http://literacynet.org/lp/namericans/>.

AI/AN Advocacy Organizations

American Indian College Fund. <http://www.collegefund.org/>.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium. <http://www.aihec.org/>.

American Indian Graduate Center. <http://www.aigc.com/>.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society. <http://www.aises.org/>.

Americans for Indian Opportunity. <http://www.aio.org/>.

Boys and Girls Clubs in Native Country. <http://www.naclubs.org/>.

Center for Indian Education. <http://www.ed.asu.edu/cie/>.

Indian Law Resource Center. <http://www.indianlaw.org/>.

Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Special Interest Group-American Educational Research Association. <http://www.coe.missouri.edu/~ipa/>.

Indigenous Women's Network. <http://www.ratical.org/co-globalize/WinonaLaDuke/Beijing95.html>.

National Congress of American Indians. <http://www.ncai.org/index.asp>.

Native American Rights Fund. <http://narf.org/>.

National Indian Education Association. <http://www.niea.org>.

National Indian Youth Council. <http://www.niyc-alb.org/>.

Society for the Achievement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. <http://www.sacnas.org/>

Acknowledgement

The primary author would like to acknowledge the writing assistance of Douglas Martin.



*Great Public Schools
for Every Child*

Human and Civil Rights
1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-3290
202-822-7700

