

SECOND EDITION

# “WE ARE STILL HERE”

**American Indians since 1890**

Peter Iverson and Wade Davies



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“We Are Still Here”

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# “We Are Still Here”

American Indians since 1890

Second Edition

Peter Iverson

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**WILEY** Blackwell

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*To All Our Teachers*





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# Acknowledgments for the Second Edition

When faced with a difficult assignment, Navajo leader Peterson Zah often will respond by saying, “Don’t call it a problem, call it a challenge.” In both its initial and its revised version, “*We Are Still Here*” has certainly been a challenge. The first edition included a nearly endless list of names, as I attempted to thank people for their help. I remain grateful for the hundreds of people who have taught me through the years, but this time around, we thought it more appropriate to furnish a more concise sense of the forces that shaped this book.

Until quite recently American Indian histories focused almost entirely on loss and victimization. One should not ignore these elements, but at the same times students of the Indian past needed to pay more attention to adaptation and continuation. This book is one of a growing number of volumes that place greater emphasis on these elements. When I chose “*We Are Still Here*” as the title for the book, I had no idea how many museum exhibits, anthologies, and forms of public presentations would employ these four words for this purpose. Hundreds of people as teachers, staff, or students at Navajo Community College (now Diné College), the McNickle Center of the Newberry Library, the University of Wyoming, the Labriola Center of Hayden Library at Arizona State University,

the Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections at the University of Montana, Associated Press images, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Arizona Historical Society, Heard Museum, the Department of History and the American Indian Studies program at Arizona State University, and the Western History Association helped us to write this book. We greatly appreciate the careful reading and advice of two colleagues in Native American Studies at the University of Montana, Richmond Clow and David Beck. We also thank Georgina Coleby and Andrew Davidson for their friendship, guidance, and encouragement, and also thank the rest of the staff at Wiley Blackwell.

The first edition of this book has been well received but a second edition would not have appeared without the insight and imagination of Wade Davies. As a graduate student in American Indian history at Arizona State University, Wade was among those who first read the initial version of *"We Are Still Here"* in manuscript form. Together with other peers in the graduate program at that time, he offered ideas and suggestions that I incorporated in the book. Now Professor of Native American Studies at the University of Montana, he is one of several dozen doctoral students whom I directed or co-directed over the course of about 25 years at ASU. Wade wrote a new concluding chapter for this edition, updated the text and the bibliographical essay, and located several photographs. It has been a pleasure to work together on this project.

*"We Are Still Here"* is a work of synthesis. It is based in part on the written work of countless colleagues, whose writings and stories and memories have enriched what follows. Wade and I are honored to have had the opportunity to put together this book. We are pleased to dedicate it, with respect and gratitude, to all who have taught us about the power of memory, the meaning of place, the value of silence, and the importance of stories. Our dads introduced us to the life of the university and our mothers, teachers as well, have never been hesitant to provide counsel. Our spouses, our children, and our grandchildren continue to encourage us and

*Acknowledgments for the Second Edition*

to remind us each day about what is truly important. This edition is also dedicated to Madoc, and, as always, Kaaren and Colleen.

Peter Iverson and Wade Davies  
Tempe, Arizona, and Missoula, Montana

# Introduction

This book begins with the tragedy of Wounded Knee. In another volume of the American History Series, *Farewell My Nation: The American Indian and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (2nd ed., 2001), Philip Weeks employs the same event to start his analysis. Books such as *Farewell My Nation*, Robert Utley's *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963), and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) use Wounded Knee to mark the end of a long story. Until recently, for most students of American Indian history, Wounded Knee sounded the death knell of Native life within the United States. In the deaths of Lakota men, women, and children on the Pine Ridge Reservation in December 1890, the final chapter of the so-called "Indian wars" had been written, and Indians as identifiable peoples appeared destined for disappearance.

Indian communities endured great hardships and suffered enormous losses in the nineteenth century. And yet we can now perceive more clearly that the final years of the 1800s comprised a more complicated scenario than usually has been presented. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the conclusion of

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## *Introduction*

warfare and the assignment of Indian nations to various reservations within the western portion of the lower forty-eight states. But for the Native peoples of the East, the Midwest, the South, and of Alaska, this era did not necessarily have the same meaning. Moreover, within the West the status of Indian peoples varied considerably. Some Indian communities had been removed far from their homelands. Some had been moved in order to share reservation lands with other Native groups, sometimes with those who had been their rivals. Other Indians were denied any land. Still others saw the size of their land base increase. These varied experiences and outcomes should remind us that Indian history is at once a national, regional, and local story.

At the same time, regardless of location or land status, Indians faced common questions. One was the presence and the influence of the federal government. "The Great Father" continued to cast a long shadow over Native individuals and communities. Federal court decisions, federal laws, and the actions of commissioners of Indian Affairs all had a major impact on Indian lives. Thus, although this book is an account centered on the Indians themselves, it cannot ignore the actions of the US government. Especially in the first six decades of the twentieth century, the successive commissioners of Indian Affairs played a major role in Indian country, and their actions merit detailed attention. However, historians often have ascribed too much power to the federal government and its overall effect on the daily lives of Indians. Until recent years, most standard studies of relations between Indians and other Americans or of federal policy toward the Indians portrayed Washington in particular and non-Indians in general as the actors and Indians as the acted upon. In such analyses, Indians emerged too exclusively as powerless, as victims with little or no ability to shape their day-to-day lives or chart their own futures. We fully acknowledge the failure of most federal policies and the pervasive presence of racism in American life, but believe that any historian who wishes to present a more complete picture must account for the efforts of Native men and women who have succeeded, often against great odds, in



achieving meaningful lives on their own terms and in insuring the survival of their own communities.

Indians are still here. They have contradicted past assumptions that they were vanishing Americans. There are many more American Indians today than there were at the close of the nineteenth century. Although there has been loss of land and loss of language for some groups, there also has been the acquisition and retention of territory and cultural revitalization by others. All Native peoples have allowed for some degree of change in regard to the construction of their identity. As Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. once observed, we don't consider ourselves "less American" than Abraham Lincoln because we drive automobiles and watch television and Lincoln did not. Somehow non-Indians are inclined to classify Native peoples as "less Indian" if they incorporate comparable changes in their lives, even though Indian identity has never depended upon isolation. Rather, increased contact with other Americans frequently caused Native peoples to recast and strengthen their different senses of who they are. Federal policies designed to hasten assimilation often have caused quite contrary results. In the same sense, students of Indian history should realize that periods that have been presented in almost entirely negative terms, such as the "Americanization" era from the 1880s through the 1920s or the "termination" era from the mid-1940s through the 1960s, yielded mixed, instead of entirely unhappy, consequences.

Even in the limited number of pages afforded to this synthesis, it is not enough to declare that Indians have defied the conventional wisdom of the late nineteenth century. It is necessary to try to explain how they have succeeded in doing so. Indian history is an extremely complex subject, and the tremendous range of Indian experiences makes any generalization suspect. The land itself, with its secular and sacred significance, is one element that has encouraged and inspired Native persistence. Choices about how the land would be used reflected not only economic but cultural and social priorities. Control of, and the meaning given to, territory mattered. Reservations represented an imposed form of

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land holding, but imposition did not ultimately dictate that reservation lands could never have meaning for their residents. The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries did not see the end of challenges to Indian communities to hold on to their remaining estate. The story of resistance to the erosion of that control encompassed failure and success. And success has been as striking as failure. The degree to which Indian land bases have been maintained has rested upon the largely unsung men and women who worked not only to keep acreage from being wrested away but also to nurture and to sustain socially and culturally what those acres represented. In addition, one should also note both the growth of towns on reservations and the building of new Indian communities in off-reservation towns and cities. This migration dates back to well before World War II. The urban experience, both on and off reservation, has been a more central dimension than usually is recognized.

The history of American Indians since 1890, then, should include the story of tribal governments and tribal leaders. It should also ponder how Indian communities have carried on and redefined "tradition." It should encompass large and small Native nations, and it should give attention to groups in all parts of the United States. It should address education and economics. It should present the stories of individual men and women. It should consider architecture, art, and athletics; it should say something about dance, literature, and music. It should analyze both rural and urban experiences. Migration, new forms of transportation, and urbanization have affected the lives of most Indian families in the United States, with significant consequences in terms of economic, political, social, and cultural change.

No one term can be used for all Native peoples. Although "Indians" share many common historical experiences, including being dealt with or seen as a monolithic entity, they are members of different groups. In the United States, "Indian" and "Native American" have been commonly employed during the past several decades, while, in Canada, the term "First Nations" has often been utilized. This alternative has yet to find widespread use south of the forty-ninth parallel. "Indian" and "Native

American” both have their limitations. We still prefer “American Indian” because most “Indian” people we know prefer it. For the purposes of linguistic variation and out of deference to others who do not like the term “Indian,” we also use “Native” or “Native American” in these pages. “Native” is always spelled here with a capital “N” so as to distinguish it from “native American,” an identity shared by many other residents of the United States.

There are hundreds of groups that are often termed “tribes” or “nations,” and there remain hundreds of aboriginal languages. Within an Indian tribe or nation, one generally belongs to a particular clan and has defined ties to various relatives. So any Native individual is likely to be a member of several different entities that coexist. In addition, since the turn of the twentieth century it has become increasingly likely that an individual will be linked by family to more than one “tribe.” Defining membership in a particular community and defining the nature of that community both have been important questions. There have been accompanying misconceptions about the degree of self-sufficiency or independence necessarily possessed by an Indian “nation.” As Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) noted years ago, all nations are not self-sufficient; moreover, a group does not need to be a certain size or have an army to merit use of the term. Perhaps it is still useful to recall that the Navajo Nation is larger than Switzerland, that the Jicarilla Apaches possess more land than is included in Luxembourg, and that Duck Valley is nearly twice the size of Bahrain.

Nonetheless, “tribe” is certainly a problematic construction. Jack Campisi and an increasing number of other scholars in recent years have demonstrated that the term can be subjected to endless scrutiny and debate. This matter has been an issue for over a century, starting with the landmark US Supreme Court decision of *Montoya v. United States* in 1901. The court then defined a tribe as “a body of Indians of the same or a similar race, united in a community under one leadership or government, and inhabiting a particular, though sometimes ill-defined, territory.” *Montoya*, of course, sparked additional debate about the meaning of each noun, adjective, and verb in this definition. Decades later,

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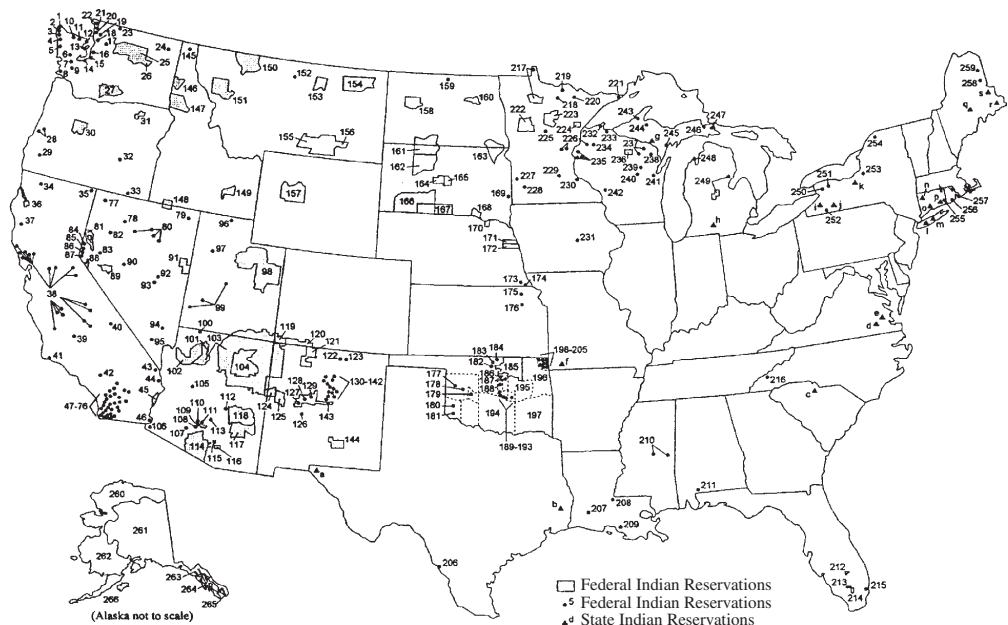
in *Mashpee Tribe v. New Seabury Corp.* (1979), Campisi was asked for his definition of tribe. He replied that it is “a group of Indian people whose membership is by ascription, who share or claim a common territory, have a ‘consciousness of kind,’ and represent a community with a recognized leadership.” During the same case, Vine Deloria, Jr. said that a tribe is a group of Indian people “living pretty much in the same place who know who their relatives are.” When you try to make the definition more elaborate, he contended, you start adding or subtracting all kinds of footnotes.

We do use “tribe” in the unfootnoted pages that follow, but will also employ “community” or “group” or “nation.” Another related matter is the names by which these communities or confederations of different communities have become or are now known. These names often have been changed, formally or informally, as the modern era has progressed. Many groups have formally discarded terms inflicted upon them by outsiders and substituted the term by which they call themselves in their own language. But there are inconsistencies and differences of opinion in this area, too. Labels such as “Sioux” or “Chippewa,” for example, have been in place for so long that they are difficult to erase, and some tribal communities still officially call themselves “Sioux” or “Chippewa.” The Navajo Nation remains that, although its institution of higher learning is now Diné College instead of Navajo Community College. We regret any unintended errors or misunderstandings in this regard. If a group has been known by more than one name, we try to introduce both names at the group’s first mention. An appendix provides a listing of these names. We also have listed individuals’ tribal affiliations, if appropriate, when they are introduced in the text and regret any errors in this regard.

This book is divided into seven chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 cover the years from the late nineteenth century to the early 1930s. During this period there were attempts to assimilate Indians into the mainstream of American society through enforced changes in land ownership and land use, schooling, and religious belief. We also observe the initiatives of Native

individuals and communities to establish places in the new day of the twentieth century. The Native American Church, the *Winters* doctrine of Indian water rights, the Society of American Indians, the creation of new Indian land bases and the attempts to develop land resources, the participation of Indians in World War I, and transitions in Indian cultural and social life are all part of this era. In the 1920s Indians and their allies mounted an increasingly influential attempt to call attention to the failure of prevailing federal policies; they also finally achieved the goal of citizenship for all Native Americans. Chapters 3 and 4 extend from the beginning of the 1930s to the start of the 1960s. Here the narrative moves from the mixed results of the “Indian New Deal” and the experiences of World War II to urban relocation, political revitalization, and the attempted termination of federal trust status. Chapters 5 and 6 consider the final decades of the twentieth century. This period witnessed new forms of activism and persistent campaigns to gain greater self-determination and sovereignty. The final chapter considers the twenty-first century to date, during which Native peoples have worked to secure gains achieved in previous decades while addressing new challenges to their sovereign rights and community well-being. To date, inevitably, many questions remain unresolved about the present and future status of American Indians. Yet one cannot question the resoluteness with which Indians have continued to work to build better futures for themselves and their communities.

The story of American Indians in modern times is an ongoing one. It remains a narrative too little known to most Americans, who too often persist in caricaturing Native peoples and in presenting their place in national history only in the distant past and as a foil to the chronicle of non-Indian advancement. But modern Native American history is far more intricate and revealing than most Americans realize. It continues to encompass great disappointment and difficulty, aspiration and achievement. It is certainly a different story than most people would have anticipated just over a century ago. It is a story that we begin at Wounded Knee.



State and Federally Recognized Reservations

Note: Federal recognition is an ongoing process; status of certain tribes is subject to change.

<b>Washington</b>	41 Santa Ynez	85 Yerington	<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>North Dakota</b>	195 Muscogee	<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>New York</b>
1 Makah	42 San Manuel	86 Carson	121 Jicarilla Apache	158 Fort Berthold	196 Cherokee	217 Red Lake	250 Tuscarora
2 Ozette	43 Fort Mohave	87 Dresslerville	122 Taos	159 Turtle Mountain	197 Choctaw	218 Deer Creek	251 Tonawanda
3 Quileute	44 Chemehuevi	88 Washoe	123 Pecos	160 Spirit Lake	198 Peoria	219 Bois Forte	252 Allegheny
4 Hoh	45 Colorado River	89 Walker River	124 Zuni		199 Shawnee	220 Vermillion Lake	253 Oneida
5 Quinalt	46 Quechan	90 Yomba	125 Ramah Navajo	<b>South Dakota</b>	200 Quapaw	221 Grand Portage	254 St. Regis
6 Skokomish	47 Palm Springs	91 Goshute	126 Alamo Navajo	161 Standing Rock	201 Ottawa	222 White Earth	i Cattaraugus
7 Squaxin Island	48 Morongo	92 Ely	127 Acoma	162 Cheyenne River	202 Wyandot	223 Leech Lake	j Oil Springs
8 Shooswater	49 Soboba	93 Duckwater	128 Laguna	163 Sisseton	203 Seneca Cayuga	224 Fond du Lac	k Onondaga
9 Chehalis	50 Santa Rosa	94 Moapa	129 Cañoncito	164 Lower Brule	204 Miami	225 Sandy Lake	l Poosepatuck
10 Lower Elwha	51 Ramona	95 Las Vegas	130 Jemez	165 Crow Creek	205 Modoc	226 Mille Lacs	m Shinnecock
11 Jamestown Kiallani	52 Cahuilla		131 San Juan	166 Pine Ridge		227 Upper Sioux	
12 Port Gamble	53 Pechanga	<b>Utah</b>	132 Zia		<b>Texas</b>	228 Lower Sioux	<b>Connecticut</b>
13 Fort Madison	54 Pala	96 NW Shoshone	133 Santa Clara	167 Rosebud	206 Kickapoo	229 Shakopee	255 Mashantucket Pequot
14 Nisqually	55 Pauma	97 Skull Valley	134 San Ildefonso	168 Yankton	a Tigua	230 Prairie Island	n Shaghticoke
15 Puyallup	56 Rincon	98 Uintah & Ouray	135 Pojoaque	169 Flandreau	b Alabama-Coushatta		o Paugussett
16 Muckleshoot	57 San Pasqual	99 Paiute	136 Nambé	<b>Nebraska</b>		<b>Iowa</b>	p Paucateck Pequot
17 Sauk Suiattle	58 Mesa Grande		137 Tesuque	170 Santee Sioux	<b>Louisiana</b>	231 Sac and Fox	
18 Tulalip	59 Viejas	<b>Arizona</b>	138 San Felipe	171 Ho-Chunk	207 Coushatta		<b>Rhode Island</b>
19 Silligumish	60 Jamul	100 Kalbub	139 Cochiti	208 Tunica-Biloxi	209 Chitimacha		256 Narragansett
20 Upper Skagit	61 Sycuan	101 Havasupai	140 Santa Ana	173 Sac and Fox			<b>Massachusetts</b>
21 Swinomish	62 La Posta	102 Hualapai	141 Santo Domingo	174 Iowa		<b>Wisconsin</b>	257 Wampanoag
22 Lummi	63 Campo	103 Navajo	142 Sandia	<b>Mississippi</b>	210 Mississippi Choctaw	232 Red Cliff	
23 Nooksack	64 Manzanita	104 Hopi	143 Isleta	175 Kickapoo	<b>Alabama</b>	233 Bad River	<b>Maine</b>
24 Kalispel	65 Cuyayaipie	105 Yavapai	144 Mescalero	176 Potawatomi	211 Poarch Creek	234 Lac Courts Oreilles	258 Houlton Malisset
25 Colville	66 Capitan Grande	106 Cocopah		<b>Kansas</b>		235 St. Croix	259 Micmac
26 Spokane	67 Inaha-Cosmit	107 Gila Bend	<b>Idaho</b>	145 Kootenai	<b>Oklahoma</b>	236 Lac du Flambeau	r Penobscot
27 Yakama	68 Santa Ysabel	108 Maricopa	146 Coeur d'Alene	177 Cheyenne	<b>Florida</b>	237 Sokaogan Chippewa	s Pleasant Point
	69 La Jolla	109 Gila River	147 Nez Perce	178 Arapaho	212 Brighton Seminole	238 Potawatomi	t Indian Township
<b>Oregon</b>	70 Los Coyotes	110 Camp Verde	148 Duck Valley	179 Wichita	239 Menominee		
28 Siletz	71 Torres-Martinez	111 Salt River	149 Fort Hall	180 Caddo	213 Big Cypress Seminole	240 Stockbridge-Munsee	<b>Alaska</b>
29 Cow Creek Band of Umpqua	72 Augustine	112 Payson		181 Kiowa	215 Dania	241 Oneida	260 Inupiat
30 Warm Springs	73 Cabazon	113 Fort McDowell	<b>Montana</b>	182 Ponca	242 Ho-Chunk		261 Athapaskan communities
31 Umatilla	74 Twenty-Nine Palms	114 Tohono O'odham	150 Blackfeet	183 Tonkawa	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>Michigan</b>	262 Yup'ik, Alutiiq
32 Burns Paiute	75 Barona	115 Pascua Yaqui	151 Flathead	184 Kaw	c Catawaba	243 Ontonagon	263 Tlingit
33 Fort McDermitt	76 rancheria	116 San Xavier	152 Rocky Boys	185 Osage		244 L'Anse	264 Haida
		117 San Carlos	153 Fort Belknap	186 Onee	<b>North Carolina</b>	245 Hannahville	265 Annette Island
<b>California</b>	<b>Nevada</b>	118 Fort Apache	154 Fort Peck	187 Pawnee	176 Cherokee	246 Bay Mills	266 Unangan
34 Karak	77 Sunumit Lake		155 Crow	188 Iowa	<b>Virginia</b>	247 Sault Ste Marie	
35 Fort Bidwell	79 Elko	<b>Colorado</b>	156 N. Cheyenne	189 Kickapoo	d Pamunkey	248 Grand Traverse	
36 Hoopa Valley	80 Te-Moak	119 Ute Mountain		190 Sac and Fox	e Mattaponi	249 Isabella	
37 Round Valley	81 Pyramid Lake	120 Southern Ute	<b>Wyoming</b>	191 Potawatomi		g Lac Vieux Desert	
38 Small rancherias	82 Lovelock		157 Wind River	192 Shawnee		h Potawatomi	
39 Tule River	83 Fallon			193 Seminole			
40 Fort Independence	84 Reno Sparks			194 Chickasaw			

# 1

## “We Indians Will Be Indians All Our Lives,” 1890–1920

On the day after the massacre the blizzard came. Two days later the weather cleared and the young Dakota physician assumed charge of the 100 people, most of them Indians, who ventured forth to seek the living and the dead. He never forgot that scene:

Fully three miles from the scene of the massacre, we found the body of a woman completely covered with a blanket of snow, and from this point on we found them scattered along as they had been relentlessly hunted down and slaughtered while fleeing for their lives. Some of our people discovered relatives or friends among the dead, and there was much wailing and mourning. When we reached the spot where the Indian camp had stood, among the fragments of burned tents and other belongings we saw the frozen bodies lying close together or piled upon one another. I counted eighty bodies of men who had been in the council and who were almost as helpless as the women and babies when the deadly fire began, for nearly all their guns had been taken from them.

The doctor was Ohiyesa, or, as he was called as a student at Dartmouth College and the Boston University medical school,

*“We Are Still Here”*: *American Indians since 1890*, Second Edition.

Peter Iverson and Wade Davies.

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Charles Eastman. Eastman had departed from New England in 1890 to serve as physician on the Pine Ridge Reservation in western South Dakota. He was Wahpeton and Mdewakanton Dakota, rather than Oglala Lakota, who comprised most of the Pine Ridge population. Proud of his Native heritage and eager to serve a Native community, he had arrived in November in a dust storm that obscured what he later described as his "bleak and desolate" surroundings. By year's end, he confronted the harrowing assignment of retrieving the few survivors as well as the dead from the frozen earth near Wounded Knee.

The massacre occurred in the waning days of warfare on the northern Plains. The Lakotas formed the western portion of the peoples who came to be known as the Sioux, while the Dakotas, to the east, included the four bands of the Santee: Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpekute, and Wahpeton. The Yankton and Yanktonai were between the Santee bands and the Lakota bands. The seven bands of western Lakotas (or Teton Sioux)—Hunkpapa, Itazipco (Sans Arc), Mnikowoju (Minniconjou), Oglala, Oohenunpa (Two Kettles), Sicangu (Brulé), and Sihasapa (Blackfeet)—had migrated westward centuries before. They had supplanted other Indian nations, claimed much of the northern Plains country as their own, and made the Black Hills into sacred ground. They thus had become Plains people, then emerged as the most powerful of them. The Lakotas vigorously defended their rights to what had become their homeland. By the mid-nineteenth century they were destined to conflict with the other expanding power in the region, the country called the United States, whose citizens had pushed into the heart of the northern Plains, demanding access to all of its resources.

In order to expedite the settlement by outsiders of Native land, and in the wake of the successful military campaign that Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota) had directed along the Bozeman Trail, the US government in 1868 had negotiated one of the last major treaties with Indian communities. Through the Treaty of Fort Laramie, the Lakotas had obtained what was called the Great Sioux Reservation, a substantial enclave that included the Black Hills. However, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills soon

thereafter caused the US government to abandon promises it had just made. Federal officials never received the signatures of three-quarters of the adult Lakota population required to alter the Fort Laramie treaty, but they still approved the "Agreement" of 1876, which robbed the Lakotas of their sacred land.

Anger over federal actions sparked renewed resistance among the Lakotas. During the summer, just before the United States observed its centennial, the Lakotas and their allies had triumphed at the Little Bighorn over George Armstrong Custer and his men. Memories of Lakota military prowess remained vivid among the members of the Seventh Cavalry, Custer's unit. The era since the triumph on the Greasy Grass had been increasingly difficult for the Lakotas. In 1889 further pressure from intruders had prompted the US government to reduce and fracture the Great Sioux Reservation into fragments: Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Lower Brule, and Crow Creek. Restricted in their movements, hungry, and embittered, many Lakotas as well as many Yanktons, Yanktonais, and Santees were receptive to the teachings of a Native prophet in distant Nevada. The Paiute prophet, Wovoka, had promised a new day, when the whites would disappear, the buffalo would reappear in great numbers, and the Indians would be reunited with their loved ones who had gone before. Lakota representatives traveled to Nevada to meet with Wovoka, and they brought home their own interpretations of the Ghost Dance. They believed that the shirts they wore in observing the ritual would make them invulnerable to bullets.

In 1890 a new federal agent, Daniel Royer, arrived at Pine Ridge. He proved to be ill-suited for this assignment. The Lakotas quickly gave him a name: Young Man Afraid of Indians. Royer panicked at the sight of the Ghost Dancers on Pine Ridge. Just days after he arrived, he began to appeal to the US Army for troops. Such military assistance was hardly necessary, but the army's own designs made a confrontation almost inevitable. The army brass, especially General Nelson Miles, was determined to put on a show of force. Miles believed that the army rather than the civilian agency, the Office (later Bureau) of Indian Affairs, should be in charge on the reservations. Taking control would

provide a role for the western army in peacetime and would guarantee order in the chaos of the early reservation years. Miles thus acceded to Royer's request, and soon the bluecoats were in the field. Some of them hailed from the Seventh Cavalry.

In December two terrible confrontations occurred. One took place on Standing Rock on December 15. There, in a violent stand-off between some of his followers and Lakotas who had joined the agency police force, the old Hunkpapa leader, Tatanka Iyotanka (Sitting Bull) was killed. The other tragedy transpired two weeks later at Pine Ridge. Mnikowoju Lakotas under the leadership of Big Foot had left their home at Cheyenne River, both terrified by the news about Tatanka Iyotanka and anxious to visit Pine Ridge at the invitation of Red Cloud. However, Big Foot's band, riddled by hunger and illness, never made it to Red Cloud. Intercepted by the Seventh Cavalry, they were taken to Wounded Knee Creek, about 20 miles from the village of Pine Ridge. On the following morning of December 29, the Lakotas were ordered to surrender all their weapons and implements. Members of the cavalry took away nearly all of the Lakotas' weapons before an argument between a Lakota who refused to surrender his rifle and some soldiers almost instantaneously escalated into a hail of fire from the soldiers' rifles and the four Hotchkiss cannons that had been placed on a hill above the encampment. There are different estimates of how many of the Lakotas were killed, but at least 153, and probably scores more of them, died in the massacre. Twenty-five whites also perished, some of them fatally wounded by cross fire from within their ranks. Many of the Lakota dead were women and children who had been killed immediately or who had been shot down as they tried to flee into the countryside. The federal government later awarded the American soldiers present at Wounded Knee twenty congressional medals of honor.

## **Disappearing Peoples?**

Wounded Knee in time became a metaphor for the struggle between whites and Indians in the West. In his poem "American

Names," Stephen Vincent Benet wrote, "bury my heart at Wounded Knee." Writer Dee Brown used the phrase in 1970 as the title for his history of the "Indian wars" in the American West. In 1973 Native protesters who took over the village of Wounded Knee briefly captured the attention of the national media. The year of the first Wounded Knee, 1890, was also used by the Superintendent of the US Census to declare the end of the frontier. The young historian Frederick Jackson Turner soon employed this census report to speak of the end of an era in American life.

Interpretations that used the 1890 massacre and census to denote the end of an era were overstated. Wounded Knee was forever carved in the Lakota memory. But the event did not have exactly the same meaning for all Indians. Many other Native nations had their own wars to remember. For those who resided east of the Mississippi River, South Dakota was distant, unknown land. So other occurrences took precedence in their memories and shaped separate tribal identities. Wounded Knee was ignored or conveniently forgotten by most non-Indians who lived in other parts of the country. If recalled, it became a "battle" rather than a "massacre." And 1890 did not signal the end of the frontier. Prospective farmers, ranchers, miners, and others continued to seek the natural resources of lands new to them, whether or not those lands already were occupied. They still found their way into the interior of the West and ventured north to Alaska.

However, it did appear in 1890 that a transition was well under way. Three years after the United States signed a series of treaties with Indian tribes in 1868, confident that the tide had turned in the wars to gain control of the West, Congress passed a law calling for an end to formal treaty-making. From now on any compact signed would be formally labeled an agreement rather than a treaty. Congressional representatives thus stated that the balance of power had shifted sufficiently that the United States no longer needed to enter into the same kinds of negotiations. Custer's defeat in 1876 suggested Congress had been premature in its declaration, but the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the growth of towns and cities, and the development of new

industries to exploit the natural resources of the West all testified to increasing US control over Indian communities. Whether they were labeled treaties or agreements, these documents were taken more seriously by the Indians who signed their names or left their marks upon them. Non-Indians thought they knew better. They saw the pacts as convenient, bloodless means through which Native lands would be opened and their occupants confined. They perceived the treaties and agreements as legal documents that provided legitimate and permanent claims to lands that would hereafter be theirs.

Non-Indian Americans, after all, tended to portray American history as beginning with the arrival of their particular ancestors or with the landing of the first English-speaking immigrants. However, because Indians were here first and had every intention of remaining on their lands, various colonial and then US representatives had to confront the aboriginal nations. In the early years of the United States, the Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Marshall was forced to consider the nature of the Indian presence and the kinds of rights the Indians possessed. Law professor Charles F. Wilkinson has concluded: "Chief Justice Marshall's opinions made it clear that Indian tribes were sovereign before contact with Europeans and that some, but not all, sovereign powers continued in existence after relations with Europeans and the United States were established." In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), Justice Marshall declared that before contact "America, separated from Europe by a wide ocean, was inhabited by a distinct people, divided into separate nations, independent of each other and of the rest of the world, having institutions of their own, and governing themselves by their own laws." He added: "The Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil, from time immemorial, with the single exception of that imposed by irresistible power."

Here were the roots of the "tribal sovereignty" that became the rallying cry of Indian peoples in the twentieth century. Marshall's court considered specifically the situation faced by the Cherokees

of the southeastern United States. The state of Georgia, with the full support of President Andrew Jackson, was trying to justify its attempts to deny the Cherokees their rights to remain within Georgia's borders. Georgia, in essence, denied that the Cherokees had any right to exist as any kind of separate entity. Marshall's decision in *Worcester* did not prevent the removal of thousands of Cherokees from their home country. It did establish the legal foundation for the movement for modern Indian sovereignty through which tribes, as Wilkinson has written, attempt to achieve or maintain a form of self-rule that sustains self-determination and self-identity. Thus, sovereignty entails a governmental structure and a way of life "premised on a unity with the natural world, a stable existence, and a deep connection to place and family." These ideals, present 100, 200, 500, and more years ago, continue to inform the Native American presence on this continent. They provided a kind of anchor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when nearly all non-Indians concluded that Indians were destined for disappearance.

Such a disappearance, non-Indians generally determined, was in everyone's best interest, including the Indians themselves. Non-Indians saw the reservations as little more than temporary enclaves. The Indians, said newcomers who wished to grow wheat and graze cattle on these lands, were not even using their remaining acreage to full advantage. The Indians, said Christian missionaries who wished to convert them to different, often competing, versions of a new faith, were not worshipping the proper God. The Indians, said federal officials who observed the onrush of immigrants past Ellis Island, were not speaking the correct language or adjusting to the ways of modern America. The Indians, they all determined, needed less land and more of everything else: more Christianity, more English, more private ownership. They needed "real" houses, "real" marriages, and "real" names.

The interested parties predicted that such a transition should not take long. Indian peoples' wills seemingly had been broken. One could see defeat and submission in the images of the day. One heard of Geronimo (Goyathlay) of the Chiricahua Apaches

and Joseph (Heinmot Tooyalakeet) of the Nez Percés living in exile. The federal official in charge of the government bureau responsible for Indian policy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan, predicted that other than the Sioux, the Navajos, and the Pueblo communities, most tribes would disappear. "The great body of Indians," Morgan forecast, "will become merged in the indistinguishable mass of our population." The census takers in 1900 offered evidence in support of Morgan's prediction. When they counted the Indians in Vermont, they came up with a grand total of five. The Mashantucket Pequot population had dwindled to less than twenty. The photographer Edward Curtis believed that a way of life was coming to an end. He thus embarked upon an extended foray to portray on film what he termed "the vanishing race." In 1911, the last survivor of the Yahi people made his way out of the foothills in northeastern California. One by one, members of his tribe had been killed or had died from diseases brought in by newcomers. Anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Thomas Waterman took this man from the town of Oroville to San Francisco. He became known as "Ishi," the word for "man" in the Yahi language. In the city, living within the confines of the University of California Museum of Anthropology, this quiet, gracious person offered Kroeber and Waterman the details of his people's history and culture. In 1916 he died from tuberculosis. During the previous year, sculptor James Earle Fraser had fashioned "The End of the Trail." This bronze of a slumped warrior on horseback was created for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Fraser's statue demonstrated altered circumstances. He paired it with another of a pioneer confidently gazing into the future.

A group of non-Indian men and women had begun to address the status of American Indians in American life. These "Friends of the Indian," as they called themselves, had started to gather in 1883 for an annual meeting at a new hotel on Lake Mohonk, New York. The hotel's owners, Albert and Alfred Smiley, had a strong interest in the subject under consideration; Albert Smiley had been appointed in 1879 to the Board of Indian Commissioners, a group of wealthy philanthropists who advised the government

on its policy toward Indians. Some of the people who came to Lake Mohonk also had joined the Indian Rights Association (IRA), organized in 1882 and already the most significant of the associations lobbying for reform of that policy. The IRA's leader, Herbert Welsh, spoke in 1886 at Lake Mohonk on "The Needs of the Time." He argued that such reform would "make the Indian a man among men, a citizen among citizens." Welsh knew that Indians could "be safely guided from the night of barbarism into the fair dawn of Christian civilization."

In Welsh's view, Indians were no different from other Americans. They should be treated just like everyone else; they should be expected to meet the same standards that society set for others. When given access to schooling, Christianity, private property, and the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, Indians would compete equally in contemporary America. The reformers thus embarked upon a crusade to reach these objectives. This drive to assimilate the Indians—to make the Indians at home in America, as one proponent phrased it—dominated the federal agenda from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century.

Nevertheless, contrary to the expectations of Edward Curtis, the Indians did not vanish. Their lands and their lives changed, to be sure. The assimilative assault of the period had severe consequences. Indians lost millions of acres of land to sale and cession; still more lands were leased to outsiders. Indian religious ceremonies were prohibited; Native children were compelled to attend school, often in institutions far from home. At the same time, the reservations did not entirely disappear and new ones were even established in the early years of the twentieth century. For those who inhabited them, these reservation lands began to take on new meaning and new significance. Indian religious observances may have been outlawed, but that did not mean they either stopped or were erased from memory. An emerging peyote religion also won thousands of Native adherents. Even in the matter of education, the results proved more complicated than one might have assumed. These additional developments are also central to an understanding of these decades.



In the late 1970s, an old man looked back upon this time. Olney Runs After remembered the occasion as though it had taken place just the other day. He had traveled to Dupree, South Dakota, a new town constructed on land that had once been part of the Cheyenne River Reservation. In 1912 the future of the reservation seemed very much in doubt. Runs After recalled the words of a speaker at the fair, Congressman Henry L. Gandy: "... he said forty years from now there won't be no Indians. He come near make it .... But we Indians will be Indians all our lives, we will never be white men. We can talk and work and go to school like the white people, but we're still Indians."

## **Education**

An examination of Native American education, religion, ties to the land, and identity helps clarify what Runs After meant. Providing schooling for American Indians represented a challenge, because public education remained out of reach for many Americans, especially those who were poor and who did not speak English as a first language. The states showed little, if any, interest in educating Native students. Indians on reservations lived far away from established schools for non-Indian children, and the reservations lacked a tax base to pay for school construction and operation. Moreover, many Indian parents distrusted the means and ends of non-Indians' kind of education.

The federal government and Christian denominations both believed that a proper education would lead Indian children to assimilate. And during this era most Native children who went to school did so at an institution operated by the government or by a Christian church. Many of these institutions boarded their students, requiring many of their charges to move far away from home. Proponents of these distant boarding schools argued that such isolation was necessary to remove children from the harmful, counterproductive influences of their homes and communities. The students, they contended, should even be encouraged never to return to their former residences. At the

time, boarding schools in England and New England offered an exemplary education to the privileged sons and daughters of the wealthy, but the kind of tutelage students received in Indian boarding schools obviously was designed to meet other goals.

The Board of Indian Commissioners in 1880 had not minced words in proclaiming the need for such schooling: "The Indian, though a simple child of nature with mental faculties dwarfed and shriveled, while groping his way for generations in the darkness of barbarism, already sees the importance of education; bewildered by the glare of the civilization above and beyond his comprehension, he is nevertheless seeking to adjust himself to the new conditions by which he is encompassed." Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins stated in 1886 that instruction must be in English, "the language of the greatest, most powerful, and enterprising nationalities beneath the sun." Use of a common language would break down tribal distinctions and encourage the common bond of citizenship. Atkins understood the importance of the task. In 1887 he emphasized that the government "must remove the stumbling block of hereditary customs and manners, and of these language is one of the most important elements." He had made up his mind: "This language, which is good enough for a white man and a black man, ought to be good enough for the red man."

At Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, Richard Henry Pratt established a model for Indian education. Pratt had been a captain in the army, fought in the Civil War, and later worked with Indian scouts in the Red River war. At Fort Marion, Alabama, he sought to instruct Indian prisoners in English and generally to prepare them for assimilation into US society. Pratt had been in the Tenth Cavalry and had developed an interest in the African-American men who had served in his unit. He knew of the new school in Virginia, Hampton Institute, that another military man, General Samuel Armstrong, had founded for black students. Pratt took twenty-two of his Indian students from Fort Marion to Hampton in 1878 and recruited more Indian pupils from the West to the school. By the following year he had decided to found his own school at an abandoned military installation in Pennsylvania. At Carlisle, for a quarter of a century thereafter,

Pratt directed what became the most prominent school for Indians in the United States. He was forced out eventually as superintendent in 1904, and Carlisle closed its doors permanently during World War I. In its time, however, the school had a significant influence on how Indians would be educated.

Part of that influence came through the efforts of the tireless Pratt. He appeared at the Lake Mohonk conferences and publicized his labors through endless correspondence and frequent speeches. Non-Indian Americans generally applauded the image of Carlisle. Captain Pratt appeared to be bringing discipline to young people who, it was assumed, previously had not known the commodity. Pratt pledged to "kill the Indian in him and save the man." He ordered that before-and-after photographs be taken of the pupils, so that even casual observers could see the effect of his program. These images vividly captured the spirit of the transformation Pratt hoped to realize. Long hair was shorn and tribal dress discarded, the after-image revealing students with neat haircuts and dressed in military school uniforms. In addition, new names were bestowed upon those enrolled. One of the first students at Carlisle recalled: "I was told to take a pointer and select a name for myself from the list written on the blackboard. I did, and as I could not distinguish any difference in them, I placed the pointer on the name Luther. I then learned to call myself by that name and got used to others calling me by it, too."

At the turn of the century, about 50 percent of Indian children were enrolled in school. Most attended schools west of the Mississippi that resembled Carlisle. After Carlisle's demise, Haskell, in Lawrence, Kansas, became the most prominent of these institutions. Other large schools, such as Chemawa (Oregon), Chilocco (Oklahoma), and Phoenix, attracted students from many different communities. Competition among the schools for students intensified to the point that Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Jones in 1902 banned all but the two most prominent, Carlisle and Haskell, from national recruitment campaigns. These schools at first bore considerable resemblance to each other in their insistence upon military uniforms and drill, their emphasis on vocational-technical training, their dedication