


American Indian Cultures



Introductory Concepts

- Pre-Columbian North America was characterized by extensive linguistic and cultural diversity
 - More than 350 languages and an unknown number (1,000?) dialects
- “Tribe” may refer to
 - Linguistic group
 - Sioux
 - Three dialects
 - Dakota, Lakota, Nakota
 - Seven independent bands
 - Political group
 - Hopi Tribe
- Terminology
 - Native American (United States)
 - First Nations (Canada)
 - American Indian
 - Eskimo
 - Inuit

Languages

- Of the original languages of North America only 127 are still spoken
 - Navajo: 130,000 speakers
 - Ojibwa/Chippewa: 51,000
 - Cree: 47,000
 - More than 60 of these languages have fewer than 100 speakers
 - No written form prior to European contact
 - Today most languages use the Latin alphabet
 - Cherokee uses a syllabic system developed by Sequoyah (c. 1770-1843) in the early 19th century (1809-1821)
 - Most Inuit, Cree and Ojibwa groups in Canada use a syllabic system developed by British missionaries in the mid and late 19th century
 - Languages are divided into a least seven major language families
- 



Linguistic Stocks
of
AMERICAN INDIANS
NORTH OF MEXICO
J. W. POWELL

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



Sequoyah's Cherokee Alphabet

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13

D_a
S_{ga}
ʋ_{ha}
W_{la}
ʋ_{ma}
θ_{na}
T_{qua}
H_{sa}
L_{da}
ʋ_{dla}
C_{tsa}
G_{wa}
ʋ_{ya}

ʋ_{ka}

ʋ_{hna} G_{nah}

ʋ_s

W_{ta}

C_{tla}

R_e
F_{ge}
P_{he}
C_{le}
O_{me}
Λ_{ne}
ʋ_{que}
4_{se}
S_{de} ʋ_{te}
L_{tle}
V_{tse}
ʋ_{we}
B_{ye}

T_i
Y_{gi}
ʋ_{hi}
P_{li}
H_{mi}
h_{ni}
ʋ_{qui}
b_{si} ʋ_{ti}
J_{di}
C_{tli}
h_{tsi}
θ_{wi}
ʋ_{yi}

ʋ_o
A_{go}
F_{ho}
G_{lo}
ʋ_{mo}
Z_{no}
V_{quo}
F_{so}
V_{do}
ʋ_{tlo}
K_{tso}
θ_{wo}
h_{yo}

ʋ_u
J_{gu}
Γ_{hu}
M_{lu}
Y_{mu}
ʋ_{nu}
ʋ_{quu}
S_{su}
S_{du}
ʋ_{tlu}
J_{tsu}
J_{wu}
G_{yu}

i_v
E_{gv}
ʋ_{hv}
ʋ_{lv}
ʋ_{nv}
C_{quv}
C_{sv}
ʋ_{dv}
P_{tlv}
C_{tsv}
G_{wv}
B_{yv}

Cree (l) and Inuit (r) syllabics

	vowels				finals
	E	I	O	A	WEST
	▽	△	▷	◁	
W	▽*	△*	▷*	◁*	°
P	∨	∧	>	<	'
T	U	∩	∪	∩	'
K	q	p	d	b	'
CH	q	p	d	b	-
M	∟	∟	∟	∟	°
N	∩	∩	∩	∩	°
L	∪	∪	∪	∪	°
S	∩	∩	∩	∩	°
SH	∩	∩	∩	∩	°
Y	∩	∩	∩	∩	+°
R	∩	∩	∩	∩	z
TH	∩	∩	∩	∩	°
	U° H'' W* Diacritic*				

	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩
	G	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	NG	+
◁	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩
A	GA	JA	KA	LA	MA	NA	PA	QA	RA	SA	TA	VA	NGA	+A
△	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩
I	GI	JI	KI	LI	MI	NI	PI	QI	RI	SI	TI	VI	NGI	+I
▷	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩	∩
U	GU	JU	KU	LU	MU	NU	PU	QU	RU	SU	TU	VU	NGU	+U

Cultural Regions

- North America is normally divided into eight cultural regions
 - Each region has its own characteristic cultural adaptation or “lifeway”
- The regions are:

Arctic	Southwest
Sub-arctic	Great Basin
Northwest Coast	Great Plains/Prairies
Plateau	Southeastern Woodlands
California	Northeastern Woodlands



Cultural Adaptations

- The adaptations in these eight regions can be divided into two groups:
 - Hunters and Gatherers
 - People who hunt animals and collect plants found in nature
 - Arctic, Sub-arctic, Northwest Coast, Plateau, California, Great Basin, Great Plains (post-1700)
 - Horticulturalists (Agriculturalists)
 - Planted crops and harvested them
 - Corn (maize), beans and squash
 - “The Three Sisters”
 - Southwest, Great Plains (pre-1700), Northeastern Woodlands, Southeastern Woodlands
- On the Great Plains the introduction of the horse and the movement of peoples from the east allowed the creation of the well known bison hunting culture

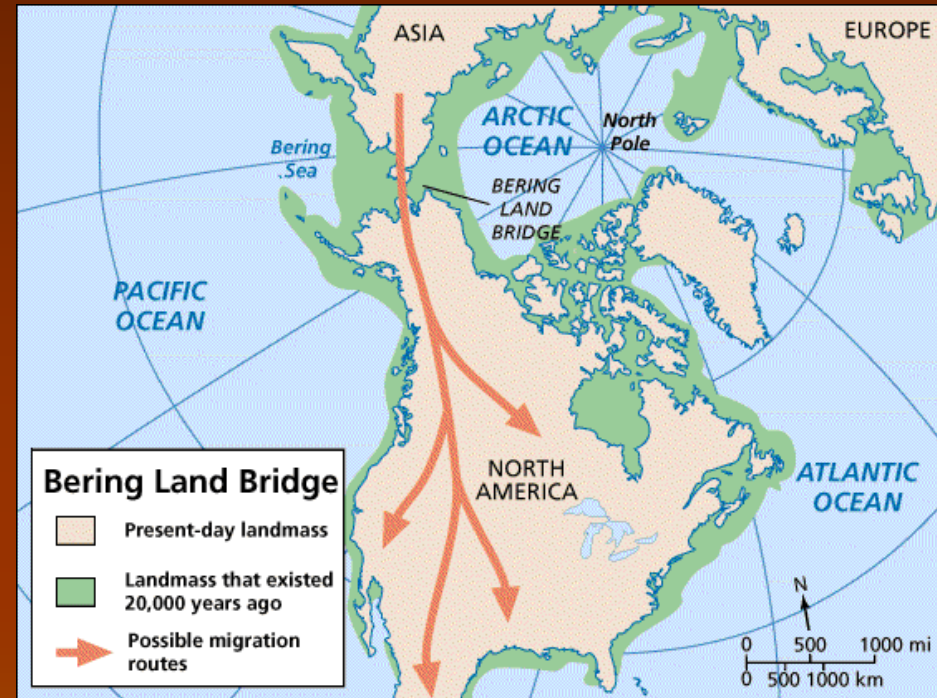


The Three Sisters



Settling of the New World

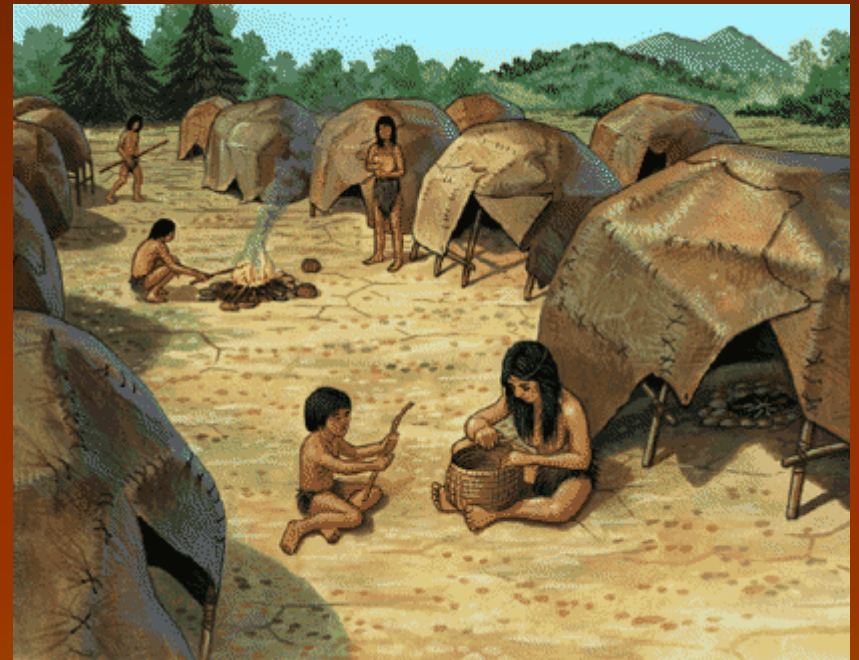
- Traditional paradigm
- Paleoindians
 - Arrived towards the end of the last Ice Age
 - c. 12000 years ago
- Existed by hunting big game (megafauna) such as mammoth, mastodon and bison



Recent Research

- First inhabitants arrived earlier
- Probably marine-focused moving along the coasts of N. & S. America
- Certainly arrived prior to 12,000 years ago
 - Monte Verde in southern Chile dates to that period
- Now clear that there was more than one movement into the Americas





Hunters and Gatherers

- Artic

- Inuit/Eskimo

- Hunted primarily seals, walruses, whales and caribou
 - Nomadic people living in small groups (up to 50)
 - During the winter they lived in sod or snow houses (igloo) and in summer in skin tents
 - During summer they used kayaks and boats to move about and in winter they used dog sleds
 - Known for their skills as carvers of ivory, bone and stone



Inuit houses



Inuit Boats: kayak



Inuit boats: umiak



C131. Eskimo in Skin Omiak, Hunting Walrus, Alaska

Dog Sled



Ivory carving



Stone Carving





Sub-arctic

- Many different groups:
 - Cree, Ojibwa, Dene groups
- Hunted caribou, moose, birds, fish
- Gathered berries, plant roots
- Lived in lodges made from wood and animal skins
- In winter used snowshoes
- In summer canoes



Birchbark Canoes



Moose-skin canoe



Preparing animal skins



Northwest Coast

- Many different groups who shared a number of common features:
 - Salmon fishing is the focus of their lives
 - Lived in permanent settled villages
 - Best known for their wood carving
 - Dugout canoes
 - Masks
 - Storage boxes
 - Totem poles
- Important groups include the Kwakiutl, the Haida and Tlingit



Kwakiutl Village on Hope Island, British Columbia





Haida Masks



California

- Hunted a wide range of different animals
- Staple item of diet was acorn mush
- Lived in medium-sized to large (75-500) villages that were often permanently occupied
- Best known for their basketry making skills
- Used money in the form of shell beads
- Major groups include the Pomo, Chumash and Yokut

Coiled Baskets



Twined baskets



Shell beads



Southwest

- Horticulturalists
- Best known groups are known collectively as the Pueblo Indians
- Live in permanent towns or “pueblos”
- Best known for their pottery
- Very complex system of spirits known as kachinas
- Other important groups include the Navajo and Apache and the Pima/Papago Indians



Contemporary Zuñi (L) and Hopi (R) pottery vessel



Orabi Pueblo (Hopi)





HOPI INDIAN PUEBLO, ORAIBI, ARIZONA.

Northeastern Woodlands

- Horticulturalists
- Lived in settled villages made up of a number of longhouses
- Each longhouse was occupied by members of a matrilineage:
 - Female relatives, their husbands, daughters, daughters' husbands, unmarried sons
- The status of women was quite high
- Well-known tribes include the Iroquois, Huron, Mohicans and, Delaware



Iroquois Village



Longhouses.



Southeastern Woodlands

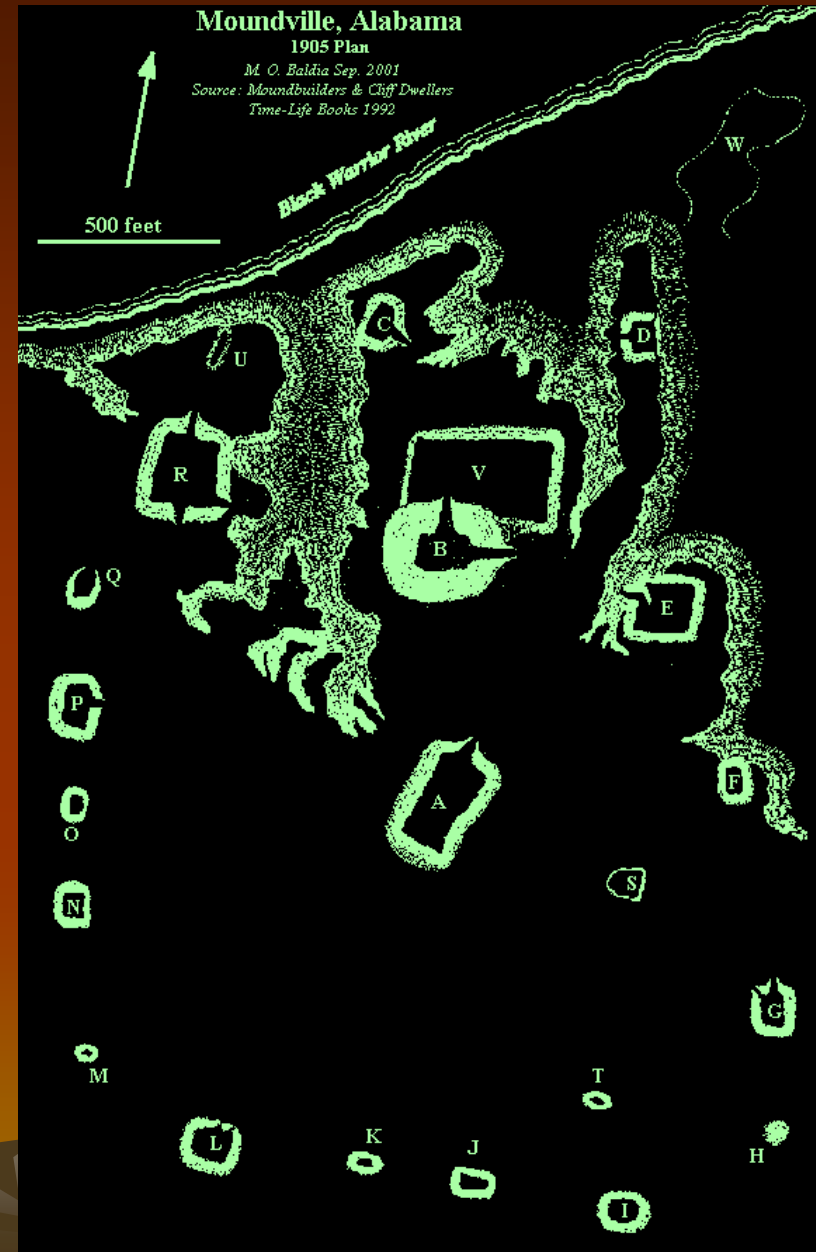
- Horticulturalists
- Lived in political units made up of a central large town (Cahokia-40,000 people) surrounded by a network of smaller towns and villages
- Central towns are marked by large, flat-topped mounds
 - On top of these mounds were the homes of chiefs and religious leaders
- These peoples are the direct ancestors of the modern “Five Civilized Tribes”: Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Seminole



Cahokia (IL)



Southeastern Mounds



Great Plains

- Prior to the 18th century, these groups practised a lifeway broadly similar to that of the Northeastern Woodland Indians.
- Climax Bison-hunting Culture
 - Lasted from c. 1730 to 1880
 - Made possible by three factors
 - Introduction of the horse from the south
 - Introduction of firearms from the east
 - Decimation of original inhabitants (Arikara, Hidatsa, and others) from disease and the movement of groups from the east
- Many of the best known groups practiced this lifeway including
 - Sioux, Cheyenne, Osage, Crow, and Kiowa
- Very nomadic, followed the bison herds
- Important rituals include the Sun Dance
- This culture came to an end with the near extinction of the bison and the placing of Indians on reservations
- Paintings by George Catlin (1796-1872)

Band of Sioux Moving Camp 1837-1839



Sun Dance



Buffalo chase with bows and lances (1832-1833)



Crow Lodge of Twenty-Five Buffalo Skins (1832-1833)



Téh-tóot-sah (better known as Tohausen, Little Bluff), First Chief (1834)



- "The head chief of the Kioways . . . we found to be a very gentlemanly and high minded man, who treated the dragoons and officers with great kindness while in his country. His long hair, which was put up in several large clubs, and ornamented with a great many silver broaches, extended quite down to his knees."
 - SOURCE: George Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 74, pl. 178
- When negotiating with the Whites, "he was both shrewd and blunt. He signed the Fort Atkinson Treaty in 1853 and the Little Arkansas Treaties in 1865, agreeing to settle his people on a reservation in the Indian Territory."
 - SOURCE: Carl Waldman, *Biographical Dictionary of American Indian History to 1900*, rev. ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), p. 219.

Kotz-a-tó-ah, Smoked Shield, a Distinguished Warrior (1834)



- Catlin describes Smoked Shield as "another of the extraordinary men of this tribe, near seven feet in stature, and distinguished, not only as one of the greatest warriors, but the swiftest on foot, in the nation. This man, it is said, runs down a buffalo on foot and slays it with his knife or his lance, as he runs by its side."
 - SOURCE: George Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 75, pl. 182.

Key Dates/Events

- Decisions of the Marshall court
 - *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831)
 - Establishes “trust relationship”
 - Guardian/ward
 - *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)
 - “Dependent, sovereign nations”
- “Trail of Tears”
 - Relocation of “Five Civilized Tribes” from the SE to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in the 1830s



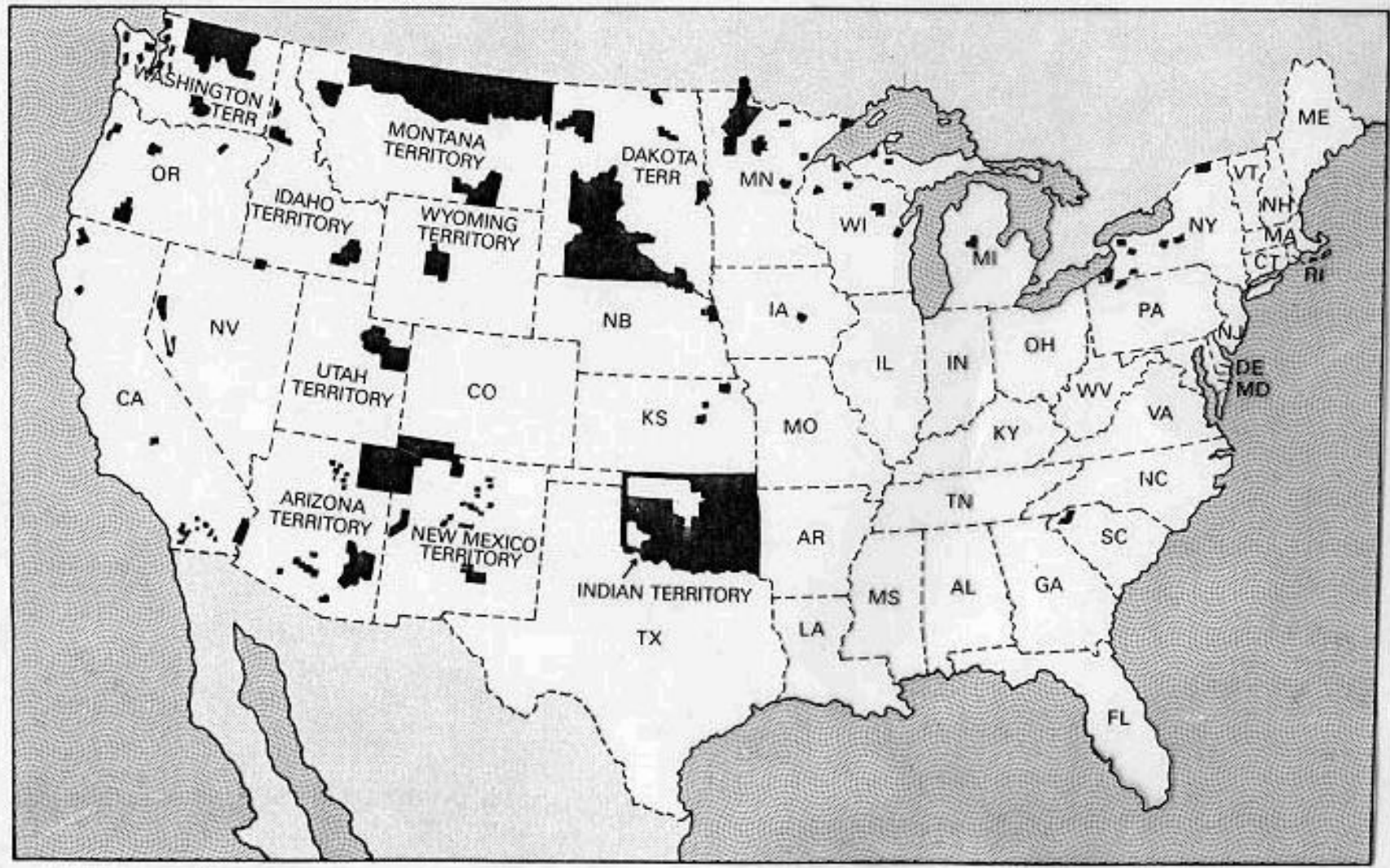
- Indian Wars
 - 1860s-1890s
 - Battle of the Little Big Horn (1876)
 - Massacre at Wounded Knee (1890)
- Establishment of reservations on the Great Plains
- Suppression of Indian cultures, languages and religions
 - Residential schools
 - Ghost Dance movement
 - Wovuka (Paiute)



- Dawes Act of 1887
 - Elimination of tribal ownerships and reservations
 - Each adult head of household was allocated 160 acres, singles and orphans 80, children 40
 - Any surplus land not allotted would be open to settlement
- Indian New Deal
 - 1930s
- American Indian Movement
 - Occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969-71)
 - Wounded Knee (1972-73)



Indian Reservations, 1883



■ Indian reservation

American Indians Today

- Current population:

American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination	4, 453,660	1.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2,863,001	0.97%

- States with the highest percentage of American in their populations are Alaska (15.6%), New Mexico (9.5%), South Dakota (8.3%) Oklahoma (7.9%), Montana (6.2%) and Arizona (5%)
- Currently 562 federally-recognized tribes and more than 200 unrecognized tribes (some of these are state-recognized)

Contemporary Issues

- Gaming
 - Federally-recognized tribes have the right to open gaming facilities (casinos, etc.)
 - Must sign a compact with the state
 - Currently 224 tribal governments in 28 states
 - 354 operations
 - Total revenue (2002) \$14.5 billion
 - 21% of all gaming revenues in the US
 - Employs 400,000 people (75% non-Indian)



- Enforcement of rights granted in treaties
 - Hunting and fishing
 - Whaling
 - Makah, Inuit
 - Salmon fishing
 - Resource harvesting
 - Wild rice
- Cultural identity
 - Appropriation
 - Use of mascots and nicknames
- Economic development
 - 25% live in poverty (twice national average)
 - 60% in labor force (7.6% unemployed, 31.8% outside)
 - Average in US is 71.5%
 - Unemployment rates on reservations as high as 70%

