

Timeline of U.S. American Indian Policy and its Impacts

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Period	U.S. Government Policies	Impacts and Outcomes
Early Indian/U.S. Relations (1776 - 1810s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northwest Ordinance (1786) ▪ Commerce Clause added to the U.S. Constitution (1789) ▪ First Indian agents assigned under the Department of War to negotiate treaties with tribes (1789) ▪ Indian Trade and Intercourse Act (1790) 	U.S. government treats some Indians as sovereign nations; makes treaties with some; makes war with others; establishes federal jurisdiction in dealings with Indian people; promises to protect them from settler encroachment; an era of incredible wholesale expropriation and physical violence.
Eastern U.S. Wars, Removal, and Relocation (1820s – 1848)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Office established in the Department of War (1824) ▪ Indian Removal Act (1830) ▪ <i>Johnson vs. McIntosh</i> (1823) ▪ <i>Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia</i> (1831) ▪ <i>Worcester vs. Georgia</i> (1832) ▪ <i>Seminole Nation vs. U.S</i> (1842) 	Forcible relocation of Indian tribes of the Eastern states to west of the Mississippi River; opening of Indian lands for colonization; Indian title to lands extinguished; Indians become wards of federal government as “domestic dependent nations;” Federal government assumes trusteeship of Indian lands, resources, and affairs.
Western U.S. Removal, Reservations, Wars and Treaty Making (1849 - 1870s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oregon Trail Opens (1847) ▪ End of Mexican American War (1848) ▪ Indian Office shifted to newly created Department of Interior (1849) ▪ Settlement of Native people on reservations became common practice (1849) ▪ Systematic military campaigns to destroy subsistence base of Plains people (1850s-70s) 	Massive Western migrations of U.S. settlers beginning in late 1840s leading to horrific violence between colonizers and Native people; U.S. uses military might and treaties to forcibly relocate Indian people to Indian Territory or onto reservations and expropriates their lands; Indian Affairs is transferred to the Dept. of the Interior which manages public lands expropriated from Native people.
Allotment and Civilization/Assimilation Projects (1870s-1934)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Military agents stationed to live on, surveillance, and oversee welfare disbursements and assimilation policies on reservations (1870s) ▪ Regular Congressional appropriations for Indian education and assimilation begin (1870s) ▪ Treaty making abolished (1871) ▪ Indian Police Force created (1878) ▪ “Civilization Regulations” outlaw Native religions, healing practices, and leaving of reservations (1880) ▪ Dawes Act (1887) 	Congress abolishes treaty making with Indian nations, turns to Congress and Executive to make unilateral decisions concerning Indians and their resources; Indian lands and resources are expropriated at unprecedented rates and redistributed to settlers; large-scale attempts are made to dismantle tribes and assimilate Indian people into the “mainstream” through land reform (Dawes Act), forced reeducation, outlaw of their cultures; results in widespread poverty, loss of lands/resources, abuse and neglect; most communities take culture and languages underground
Reform and Tribal Reorganization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Citizenship (1924) ▪ Miriam Report (1928) 	Indians are granted citizenship in most states; allotment ended; poverty is recognized;

(1920s-1945)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Reorganization Act (1934) 	<p>Western style constitutional forms of government are imposed that displace traditional tribal social and political organization and leadership; great authority given to Secretary of Interior as trustee to oversee development of Indian people.</p>
<p>Termination & Relocation (1945-1961)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Land Claims Commission Act (1946) ▪ House Concurrent Resolution 108 (1953) ▪ BIA Direct Employment Program 	<p>Post-WWII political backlash against Indian New Deal, difference, and perceived “communism;” government attempt to rapidly assimilate Indians into mainstream by terminating special status, reservations, and public services; Congress terminates federal trusteeship over 100 tribes deemed to be “civilized” and ready to be “on their own;” opens reservations for economic exploitation by private companies; relocates over 100,000 Native people to urban areas away from reservations to supposed job training and placement programs; reservation poverty deepens; pan-Indian identity and activist movement gains momentum.</p>
<p>Civil Rights and Self-Determination Era (1960s – 1970s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development and War on Poverty (1960s) of Pres. Kennedy and Johnson ▪ Indian Civil Rights Act (1968) ▪ Indian Education Act (1972) ▪ Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975) ▪ American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) ▪ Indian Child Welfare Act (1978) ▪ <i>Santa Clara v. Martinez</i> Supreme Court Decision (1978) ▪ Federal Acknowledgment Project (1978) 	<p>An end to the more coercive forms of displacement; government first under Kennedy admin. turns to economic development on Indian reservations to deal with Indian poverty; federal government under Nixon officially renounces termination policies and declares self-determination with federal assistance and protection; trust status and public assistance programs reinstated and created; many tribes assume control over programs and education previously administered by federal government intended for assimilation; courts recognize Indian tribal sovereignty; legislation recognizes religious freedom; Indian people form national civil rights organizations and activism sweeps the country; quality of life indicators on reservations improve through the 1970s; cultural revitalization programs undertaken by most tribes.</p>
<p>New Era of Economic Development and Indian Nationalism (1980s – Present)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indian Mineral Development Act (1982) ▪ <i>Seminole Tribe v. Butterworth</i> Supreme Court Decision (1982) ▪ <i>California v. Cabazon</i> Supreme Court (1987) ▪ Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (1988) ▪ Native American Languages Act (1990) ▪ Indian Arts and Crafts Act (1990) ▪ Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) ▪ Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act (1994) ▪ Executive Order on Indian Sacred Sites (1996) 	<p>Cutbacks in government programs under the Reagan administration causes increased unemployment and hardships for tribes; tribes undertook new economic development strategies in 1980s to bring in badly needed revenue including gaming enterprises; Clinton admin. in 1990s showed renewed interest in strengthening tribal sovereignty and self-determination and supported a slew of legislation that strengthened tribal control over their own affairs; 1990s – present many tribes, especially those with gaming enterprises have undertaken massive community development programs; become economically prosperous; and gained access to a political machinery that had worked to exclude and marginalize them for over two hundred years.</p>