

NATIVE NATIONS DURING THE EARLY YEARS

Northeast

1560-1600 Iroquois Confederacy of five Native Nations was formed.

c. 1670 “When the first European colonists crossed the Allegheny Mountains, they found a land filled with ancient constructions: thousands of mounds and hundreds of earthen enclosures of considerable size and, in some cases, complexity, most of which were built... over a thousand years ago.” Hero, Hawk and Open Hand, p.65

1722 Tuscorora joined the Iroquois Confederacy, then known as Six Nations. The great law of peace (the first democracy) influenced formation of the US Constitution.

1645 First treaty conference between the Iroquois and the French at Three Rivers, Canada.

Tecumseh: Born in **1768** not far from where Dayton, Ohio, is now located, this Shawnee warrior urged Tribes to form a pan-tribal confederacy to more effectively oppose the European immigrants. He was a gifted orator who traveled with his brother, Tenskwatawa, a medicine man, who advocated a return to ancestral ways.

1810 “Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the great sea as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them for all the use of his children?”

1811 “Brothers, we all belong to one family.... we walk in the same path.... we are friends; we must assist each other to bear our burdens. The blood of many of our fathers and brothers has run like water on the ground to satisfy the avarice of the white men.... Nothing will pacify them but the destruction of all red men.... Brothers, if you do not unite with us they will first destroy us and then you will fall an easy prey to them....”

1879 U.S. Training and Industrial School opened in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with 82 Sioux + 47 Pawnee, Kiowa and Cheyenne students.

Southeast

1607 Powhatan Confederacy of 30 Algonquin-speaking Tribes formed shortly before the establishment of Jamestown Colony in 1607. Pocahontas was Powhatan’s daughter.

1608 First reported formal treaty between English colonists and a Tribal Confederacy.

Five “Civilized” Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole Nations had aboriginal homelands located in southeastern areas until after removal west of the Mississippi under the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

- The Cherokee Nation adopted many Euro-American ways (including an alphabet and writing system in the Cherokee language) in an unsuccessful attempt to convince the colonists to let them remain in their homelands. In many ways, the Cherokee people were more “civilized” than the colonists. President Andrew Jackson (“Sharp Knife”) was instrumental in their forced removal during the winter of 1838, often referred to as the “Trail of Tears” because so many died.
- Although the US Army attempted to round up all tribal citizens for the move to Indian Territory, some successfully hid and escaped removal. Many years later, smaller reservations were reestablished for all five Tribes within their original homelands.

Southwest

- 1540** Spaniards began expanding into what is now New Mexico and Arizona. Spanish soldiers and priests imposed a forced labor system on the pueblos and banned traditional religious practices.
- 1598** Juan de Onate with 500 Spanish soldiers, clergy, women and children + over 7,000 horses, sheep and cattle established first Spanish settlement in the upper Rio Grande. Initially, the spread of the horse in Indian Country was through friendly trade.
- 1680** Successful Pueblo revolt against Spanish settlers led by Pope, a San Juan medicine man.
- 1750-1850** Comanche empire was dominant in the southwest.
- 1781** Smallpox spread via inter-tribal trade networks from Mexico through the southwest.
- 1848** Discovery of gold in California territory
- 1859** Loose confederation formed in Indian Territory by Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole Nations.
- 1875** Quanah Parker led his Comanche band to Indian Territory.
- 1871** Hundreds of bison hunters began mass killings on the Great Plains.
- 1886** Geronimo (Chiricahua Apache) surrendered after ten years of rebellion against the US.

Midwest

- 1859** Discovery of gold in Colorado territory
- 1864** Sand Creek massacre (700 US troops led by Col. John Chivington killed friendly Cheyenne and Arapaho)
- 1868** Treaty of Fort Laramie established the Great Sioux Reservation
- 1874** Gold rush in the Black Hills
- 1876** Battle of the Little Bighorn (Custer attacked Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho)
- 1877** "Sell or Starve" Agreement of 1876-77 taking the Black Hills and authorizing payment by US (the Sioux overwhelmingly refused to sign the agreement)
- 1890** Wounded Knee massacre ended the Ghost Dance

Northwest

- 1730** Northwest tribes acquired horses from the Shoshone Nation
- 1778** James Cook landed on Vancouver Island and "claimed" the west coast of North America for Great Britain.
- 1782** Smallpox epidemic killed approximately two thirds of native population in less than two months.
- 1839** First Catholic priests at Fort Colville
- 1848** Measles and dysentery swept through native villages.
- 1855** Treaties signed by US and a number of Native Nations in the Pacific Northwest
- 1877** Chief Joseph (Nez Perce) led his people (1,170 miles) in an unsuccessful attempt to reach asylum with Sitting Bull in Canada. "Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever." (Chief Joseph's surrender speech October 5, 1877)