

# Native American Rights

The Native American tribes of the United States have been fighting for their rights since the arrival of the Europeans. Today they are still fighting for their civil rights and the rights of their people.

## Early History

With the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, the way of life for Native Americans was changed forever. The Europeans brought diseases that killed as many as 90% of the natives. They also brought a different way of life. They wanted to take over the land and establish their own government. As the British colonies, and later the United States, began to settle the east coast, the Native American tribes were pushed to the west. They tried to fight back, but the European's superior numbers and weapons gave them little chance.

## The Indians are Forced Out

In 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act. This law resulted in the forced removal of the Five Civilized Tribes (the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Choctaw) from the Southeastern United States to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Some Native American tribes in the southeast were forcibly marched to Oklahoma. Today this march is called the Trail of Tears. In 1838, the Cherokee tribe was forced to leave their home and march to Oklahoma. Around 4,000 Cherokee people died during the march.

## No Longer Considered Nations

Up until 1871, the United States had established treaties with different Native American tribes. The tribes were recognized as independent nations. However, the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 said that the tribes were no longer considered nations and that the previous treaties with the tribes were no longer valid.

## Getting Worse

Things didn't get better for Native Americans. They were forced to live on reservations, but at the same time they continued to lose land through new policies made by the U.S. government such as the General Allotment Act of 1887. The Native Americans on reservations often lived in poverty, had low employment, and poor education.

## Indian Citizenship Act

The fourteenth amendment to the Constitution states that all persons born in the United States are citizens. However, this didn't apply to Native Americans. They were not allowed to vote even though they were born in the country. In 1924, the Indian Citizen Act was passed. This law gave Native Americans full citizenship in the United States including the right to vote. Despite this law, some states were slow to allow Indians to vote. It wasn't until 1948 that they were allowed to vote in every state.

## Making Things Better

Things began to improve somewhat in the 1900s. The Indian Reorganization Act was signed into law in 1934. It reversed some of the issues with earlier laws and renewed the rights of the Indians to form their own governments. In 1968, the Indian Civil Rights Act was signed into law. A year later, in 1969, the National Indian Education Association was formed to help improve the education of Native Americans.

## Indian Civil Rights Act

The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 was a big step in advancing the rights of Native Americans. It is sometimes called the Indian Bill of Rights. This law guaranteed important civil rights for Native Americans. This law guarantees many of the same rights that are in the Bill of Rights such as free speech, a speedy and fair trial, the right to due process and a trial by jury, the right to an attorney, freedom of the press, and more. This was an important law and a big step forward in the fight for Native American civil rights.

## Moving Forward

There are many complex issues surrounding Native American civil rights. This is mostly because people that live on reservations are dual citizens. They are citizens of the United States, but also of a tribal nation. Other current issues include voting rights and the use of Native American images as the mascots for sports teams.

# Civil Rights Movement - Native Americans

## Test Quiz

Questions on this quiz are based on information from  
Civil Rights Movement - Native Americans.

1. What killed around 90% of Native Americans?
  - a. Earthquakes
  - b. Guns
  - c. Bear attacks
  - d. Disease
  - e. Hurricanes
  
2. True or False: The arrival of European settlers had little impact on the daily lives of Native Americans.
  - a. TRUE
  - b. FALSE
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
3. What president signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830?
  - a. Thomas Jefferson
  - b. Bill Clinton
  - c. Andrew Jackson
  - d. Abraham Lincoln
  - e. John Adams
  
4. Where were the Five Civilized Tribes forced to move by the U.S. government?
  - a. Oklahoma
  - b. Texas
  - c. California
  - d. Canada
  - e. Oregon
  
5. What name was given to the forced march of Native Americans from their homelands?
  - a. Endless Journey
  - b. Death March
  - c. Great Betrayal
  - d. March on Washington
  - e. Trail of Tears
  
6. By what nickname is the Indian Civil Right Act sometimes called?
  - a. Native American Law
  - b. Indian Bill of Rights
  - c. Native American Amendment
  - d. Indian Magna Carta
  - e. Indian Constitution
  
7. What law gave Native Americans full citizenship in the United States and the right to vote?

- a. Fourteenth Amendment
- b. Indian Removal Act
- c. General Allotment Act
- d. Indian Citizenship Act
- e. Nineteenth Amendment

8. The Indian Appropriations Act said that Native American tribes were no longer what?

- a. United States Citizens
- b. Independent Nations
- c. Certified States of the Union
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

9. True or False: There are still many complex issues surrounding Native American civil rights today?

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE
- c.
- d.
- e.

10. What did the Indian Civil Rights Act guarantee Native Americans?

- a. The right to an attorney
- b. Trial by jury
- c. Free speech
- d. A speedy and fair trial
- e. All of the above

**About this quiz:** All the questions on this quiz are based on information that can be found on the [Civil Rights Movement - Native Americans](#) page at [/history/civil\\_rights/native\\_american\\_rights.php](/history/civil_rights/native_american_rights.php).

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