

GATHER

THE FIGHT TO REVITALIZE OUR NATIVE FOODWAYS

VIEWING GUIDE

for Grades 6-12 and AP United States History



CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

Gather Viewing Guide

Developed by the Center for Ecoliteracy



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For more information about this publication and the film, kindly email gatherdocfilm@gmail.com or visit <https://gather.film>

Gather, a film by Sanjay Rawal
2020, Illumine Running, LLC



“This documentary wonderfully weaves personal stories with archival footage that contextualizes the continued violence against Native Americans.”

New York Times Critics Pick



James Beard Foundation Broadcast Media
Award Winner

Documentary/Docuseries Visual Media



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DEAR FRIENDS,

I'm in a very privileged position as a non-Indigenous director to make a film on Native American food sovereignty under the guidance of one of the most vaunted NGOs in Indian Country—First Nations Development Institute (FNDI). The access their relationships in Indian Country have afforded us allowed us to make a film on these vital issues with depth and nuance we never could have reached otherwise.

As it happens, I have a track-record of working with and for various Indigenous groups around the world, which informed my ability on *Gather* to simply listen and be present in an observational manner—allowing our Native American characters to drive their own narratives. I worked in human rights for 20 years, some of which was spent running a foundation that funneled millions of dollars of support to water infrastructure projects of the Dogon (Mali) and the Samburu (Kenya). My first film, *Food Chains*, chronicled the rise of a group of tomato pickers in Florida who were displaced Oaxacan, Chiapan, and Guatemalan Indigenous. My last film, *3100: Run and Become*, delved deeply into Navajo and Kalahari San bushmen running traditions, with rare access granted by elders themselves.

At the same time, I come from a family and tradition from India that vehemently and sometimes violently opposed the British colonization. While my experience of historical trauma is not analogous to that of Native Americans, I feel alignment in my approach to decolonization of economics and my belief in human and civil rights.

It is with this perspective that I approached my role in *Gather*. My job was to listen and serve. I understood that my abilities are limited as a non-Native but, as in all my films, I relied on the subjects to drive the narrative. I took their lead and their guidance, and just trained the cameras on them in a way that would expose and honor their traditions.

Thank you so much for watching.

Gratefully,

Sanjay Rawal

Director, *Gather*

DEAR EDUCATOR,

Since 1995, the Center for Ecoliteracy has had the privilege of working with thousands of dedicated educators who share our commitment to smart, vital, and hopeful ecological education. We are profoundly grateful to the Indigenous wisdom keepers who informed our founding principles and who continue to guide and inform our work today.

We believe that nature is our teacher, that sustainability is a community practice, that the real world is the optimal learning environment, and that sustainable living is rooted in a deep knowledge of place. *Gather* beautifully demonstrates these principles through places and people who bring food, community, health, and healing to life.

Through the voices of Indigenous Peoples today, this guide supports teaching and learning about communities who are reclaiming their traditional foodways, cultural identities, and physical and spiritual well-being. This resource aims to provide you with a sufficiently broad understanding of the subject matter to enable you to guide your students through viewing the films and subsequent discussions.

We hope you find the *Gather Viewing Guide* to be a tool that inspires your students to become the informed and engaged citizens we need to build and contribute to the sustainable communities of tomorrow.

With gratitude,

Alexa Norstad

Executive Director
Center for Ecoliteracy

GATHER

VIEWING GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

This viewing guide supports four short films that provide an intimate portrait of the growing movement among Native Americans to reclaim their spiritual, political, and cultural identities through food sovereignty, while battling the trauma of centuries of genocide. These films address issues from the last four centuries that disrupted Indigenous food systems. These issues are relevant today: land, Tribal sovereignty, treaties, assimilation, and an economy based on extracting resources (value) from the land.

The Salmon People, *Café Gozhóó*, *The Hunt*, and *Bison vs. Beef* are films drawn from the full-length documentary *Gather*. They focus on the approaches taken by individuals from four different Native American nations: the Yurok, the Cheyenne River Sioux, the White Mountain Apache, and the San Carlos Apache.

From the time of contact, first the European settlers and then the newly formed US government worked to separate Indigenous Peoples from their traditional lands and their cultures. As a result, Native Americans became disconnected from thousands of years of cultural and spiritual relationships with that land. A significant aspect of these relationships was deep ecological knowledge of the place where they lived and the local foods that sustained them.

Once deprived of their traditional foods through land grabs and forced assimilation into Western society, Native Americans came to rely on foods provided by the federal government—commodity foods—foods that were higher in fat and calories and lower in fiber than Native American traditional foods. This shift from traditional foods resulted in diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease that continue to plague Native Americans. These poor health outcomes are not merely a result of poverty, but also of centuries of economic and government policy that targets the right of Native Americans to live in a traditional, environmentally balanced manner.

Through the voices of Native Americans today, these films spotlight ways in which Native people are reclaiming their traditional foods through foraging, gardening, and cooking, and using scientific research to validate traditional knowledge. The aim is to show that Native American traditional food practices are beneficial for individuals, communities, the environment, and humanity as a whole.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Each of the four short films supported by this guide features a different Native American nation and its efforts to reclaim its ancestral food system. These films help students understand the ways that US federal policies have systematically distanced Native people from their traditional lands; agricultural, hunting, and gathering practices; and foods; as well as their ways of interacting with the environment.

The films open the door for educators to challenge common assumptions about Native people by bringing contemporary Native American voices and issues into the classroom. This guide links the films to key issues related to Indigenous food sovereignty. By viewing these films, students experience the Native American point of view through real-life people. Through discussion, students gain a deeper understanding of Native American values, as well as their own. They move beyond basic facts to a deeper and necessary understanding of “why.”

The version of US History taught in most classrooms is from the perspective of Euro-Americans, the dominant and colonial culture. What happens when you look at the past from the perspective of the Indigenous Peoples who were living on the land when the Europeans arrived? By using these films, you can present the Native American narrative that otherwise is absent from the curriculum. You and your students can examine the short-term and long-term effects of events and historical processes that have taken place in the United States since the first European explorers set foot here.

Most often, information about Native Americans is woven into social studies/history, especially when the focus of the material is on the past. These films present present-day issues that have roots in the past—the outcome of conquest, broken treaties, cultural genocide, assimilation, and Tribal sovereignty. Investigating the reclamation of ancestral food systems opens the door for collaboration across subject areas such as environmental education, English language arts, health, and science.

It's beyond the scope of this guide to address all the issues in depth. We highlight the journeys of the individuals in the films, but there is much more that can be addressed. Throughout this guide, we provide references to supplemental resources that will make it possible for you to extend classroom learning. With this guide it is not our intent to deliver a specific lesson plan, but rather to provide a resource to help you gain a sufficiently broad understanding of subject material that will enable you to guide your classroom through viewing the films and subsequent discussions.

The films are well-suited for use in grades 6–12 and AP US History.

NATIVE AMERICANS IN K–12 CURRICULUM

In 2015, researchers at Pennsylvania State University conducted a pivotal study (*Manifesting Destiny: Re/presentation of Indigenous Peoples in K–12 U.S. History*) that examined how Native Americans are represented in K–12 social studies curricula across all 50 states. While content varied somewhat from state to state, the researchers found that Native Americans are not represented in K–12 social studies texts post 1900. There is little, if any, discussion of Native Americans living today and the political, social, and economic challenges that they face. They simply don't exist in educational materials.ⁱ

In 2018 the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) issued a position statement supporting “the creation and implementation of social studies curricula that explicitly present and emphasize accurate narratives of the lives, experiences, and histories of Indigenous Peoples, their sovereign Nations, and their interactions—past, present, and future—with Euro-American settlers and the government of the United States of America. NCSS further supports communities, teachers, teacher educators, curriculum writers, district administrators, departments of education, and Tribal Education Departments/Agencies (TEDs/TEAs) working to provide more accurate learning opportunities for students at all grade levels that emphasize the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and Nations, past, present, and future.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to social studies, there are opportunities to include Native American studies in the science classroom, particularly when considering connections to the nature of science. For example, there are generations of Native knowledge about interrelationships between people, place, and environment. In the September/October 2021 issue of *The Science Teacher*, Sara Krauskopf, a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, points out: “Indigenous Peoples often hold considerable knowledge of a particular place in their oral histories and traditional practices. That knowledge should be treated as valid evidence.” She goes on to say: “While we need to maintain standards for critiquing evidence, we must be open to considering other well-established means of investigating and conveying knowledge.”ⁱⁱⁱ In *The Conversation*, George Nicholas draws attention to the double standard that exists concerning the acceptance of Traditional Knowledge (TK) by practitioners of Western science. The TK is valued when it supplements or supports Western science, but when TK challenges science, it is questioned or dismissed as myth.^{iv} Sara Krauskopf suggests that science educators use TK as an opportunity to open discussions with students about bias in science.

At the state level, change is slowly taking place. In an August 2021 article, Kalyn Belsha reports there are efforts under way to improve how US schools teach American history, including recognizing the contributions of Native Americans.^v But there are challenges: Many states spend very little, if anything, to help develop Tribally specific curriculum or for professional development. Furthermore, a recent survey states that “less than half of

the states surveyed (12 out of 28, or 43 percent) reported that Native American education curriculum is required to be taught at some or all grade levels in the K–12 public school system. Several states currently provide curricula to meet this requirement: Colorado, Oregon, Hawaii, Montana, Idaho, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and North Dakota. Other states such as California and New Mexico are in the process of developing curricula for statewide use.”^{vi}

There is more activity at the national level. The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) recently released supplemental materials as part of Native Knowledge 360° (NK360°), an education initiative to provide educators and students new perspectives on Native American history and cultures.^{vii} The NK360° are aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS); the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Education; and relevant STEM and arts-related standards. These materials present an alternative view to the traditional Euro-American perspective. NMAI also offers online professional development, including archived webinars that address Indigenous food sovereignty and traditional foods, and virtual field trips. Their aim is to build a nationwide network of teachers, trainers, and advocates for improved education about Native Americans.

ENDNOTES

- i Sarah B. Shear, Ryan T. Knowles, Gregory J. Soden & Antonio J. Castro, "Manifesting Destiny: Re/presentations of Indigenous Peoples in K–12 U.S. History Standards," *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 43:1 (February 2015): 68-101, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2014.999849>.
- ii National Council for the Social Studies Position Statement, "Toward Responsibility: Social Studies Education That Respects and Affirms Indigenous Peoples and Nations," *Social Education* 82(3) (2018): 167–173, https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se_8203167_0.pdf.
- iii Sara Krauskopf, "Considering the Value of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices," *The Science Teacher*, September/October 2021, <https://www.nsta.org/science-teacher/science-teacher-septemberoctober-2021/considering-value-indigenous-knowledge-and>.
- iv George Nicholas, "It's taken thousands of years, but Western science is finally catching up to Traditional Knowledge," *The Conversation*, February 14, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/its-taken-thousands-of-years-but-western-science-is-finally-catching-up-to-traditional-knowledge-90291>.
- v Kalyn Belsha, "They'll know more than I ever knew: More states move to require lessons on Native American history and culture," *Chalkbeat*, August 4, 2021, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/8/4/22607758/states-require-native-american-history-culture-curriculum>.
- vi National Congress of American Indians, *Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All* (Washington, DC: NCAI, September 2019), https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/NCAI-Becoming_Visible_Report-Digital_FINAL_10_2019.pdf.
- vii "Native Knowledge 360° Education Initiative," <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide is designed for high school classrooms and can be used in many subject areas, including environmental studies, geography, science, history, social studies, and health. We encourage you to preview the films to determine which of them are most relevant to your classroom. You may find some of the material is also appropriate for middle school.

If remote learning is part of your routine, consider streaming these films for your students. For the most success, set a purpose for students by sharing your expectations. The films and discussion questions will generate robust discussions and debates. Consider having students create podcasts based on these interactions. This is a great way for students to develop their voices.

All urls were active on 7/15/22.

ACCESSING THE FILMS

The four short films on which this guide is based are available for viewing at no cost here:

Café Gozhóó: <https://vimeo.com/718087165>

The Hunt: <https://vimeo.com/717569540>

The Salmon People: <https://vimeo.com/717570287>

Bison vs. Beef: <https://vimeo.com/717570364>

The full-length film *Gather* is viewable on Netflix and Kanopy. Usual fees apply.

GATHER VISUAL GLOSSARY

The films introduce a number of terms that may be unfamiliar to your students. These terms are essential for understanding these portraits of Native Americans who are reclaiming their spiritual, political, and cultural identities through food sovereignty. Each definition includes the origin of the term and the history of the development of its meaning. These terms will help students gain an understanding of Indigenous food sovereignty and the issues that surround it. As students become fluent in this language, they can more fully analyze problems and discuss and debate issues with others. You may wish to display the terms to help with student understanding.

FOCUS CHAPTERS

The Focus Chapters, one for each of the films, include background information about the Tribe in the film. The chapters include historical information, geography, and environmental information, barriers to Indigenous food sovereignty, and hope for the future, a synopsis of the film, and an Opener to motivate students to think about the topics presented in the film. Each chapter also includes suggested discussion questions to challenge student thinking. Many of the discussion questions encourage students to reflect on complex issues where there are no definitive answers.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

This section features activities and projects for students to take action in their own lives. It offers ideas for activities and service learning projects to extend student learning beyond the classroom.

EXTENDED LEARNING

Extended Learning features an annotated list of additional resources to extend student learning. It includes select resources available online, including lesson plans, which expand on issues and topics raised by the films.

OBJECTIVES

These films present a number of complex issues surrounding Indigenous food sovereignty and the events and policies that led up to the disruption of traditional Native food systems. The films, discussion questions, and activities suggested in this guide will help students:

- Recognize the cultural, economic, and biological consequences of the early interactions between Native American groups and Euro-American settlers.
- Understand that history most often reflects the subjective view of the teller. History told from a Native American perspective may conflict with history told from a Eurocentric perspective.
- Recognize that Euro-American settlers' ideas about land ownership conflicted with Native Americans' belief that land was shared by everyone.
- Develop an understanding that throughout American history federal policies have affected Native Americans and still shape how they live their lives today.
- Take action to address food justice-related issues in their own community.

GETTING STARTED

If teaching about Native Americans is new for you, you may wish to review the National Museum of the American Indian's helpful guide to terminology, "Am I using the right word?" [<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/impact-words-tips>]. It offers tips such as "avoid generalizations" and "use present tense and contemporary examples," as well as suggestions on ways to prevent stereotypes and encourage cultural understanding and sensitivity among your students.

IDENTIFY NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

Before beginning a study of these films, we suggest identifying any students in your classroom who are Native American or of Native American ancestry. As a result of challenges in the ways Native American students are identified, you may have a Native American student in your classroom and not know it. In a 2017 publication from Education Northwest, Phyllis Ault and Laura John note that there are multiple ways Native American students are defined and identified. These differences between federal definitions of who qualifies as a Native American coupled with changes in data collection processes do not allow multiple races and ethnicities to be recorded. For example, if a Native American student identifies as Hispanic/Latino and Native American, the student is only identified as Hispanic/Latino. The result is a significant under identification of K–12 Native students, which is especially true for students with complex ancestries.ⁱ

You may have students whose families are Tribal members or closely affiliated with a Tribal group. You may have students with Native American ancestry but no connection to a Tribal group or Native American traditions. And, you may have students whose families, by virtue of years of prejudice, have declined to identify as Native Americans outside the home. An understandable survival strategy in hostile social environments.

If you do have a Native American student, or students, their perspectives can add immeasurably to the classroom experience and all students will take away an important personal connection to the issues surrounding food (and cultural) sovereignty discussed in the films. It is important to honor what each of these students may bring to the discussion. In doing so you are supporting positive self-identity, a strong component of wellness and achievement, relating directly to the themes of pride and revitalization expressed through food sovereignty.

PREPARE A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of the land. It's often given at the beginning of a meeting or public event. While it is important to understand the history of the land beneath one's feet and the

Indigenous Peoples who serve, or served, as stewards, it's far more important to find ways to support those Indigenous Peoples from allyship, policy support, and friendship. Land acknowledgments shouldn't simply be a recognition of what may have happened in the past, but an opportunity to be of selfless service in the present and in the future.

Before you start to develop one, consider the following:

- Think about why you are creating this land acknowledgment. It should come from respect for Native peoples.
- Look into the Indigenous past, present, and future of the land you occupy. Are there Indigenous People living in your community? Are there any Indigenous place names for locations or landmarks in your area? Get the correct pronunciation for the names of the Tribes, places, and individuals you are including.
- Think about what the purpose is. What's your goal? What do you want your students to think and do when they hear this acknowledgment? Consider including a call-to-action plan and next steps.

Two sources of information about preparing a land acknowledgment are:

- Native Governance Center: *A Guide to Land Acknowledgment*: nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/.
- Teaching for Change's resources from the 2021 Indigenous Peoples' Day Curriculum Teach-In: "Indigenous Land: Stewardship, Relationships, and Responsibility": <https://www.teachingforchange.org/resources-2021-indigenous-peoples-day-teach-in>

To research the Native people who lived on the land where your school is located, visit the Native Land website: <https://native-land.ca/>.

PREPARE YOURSELF BEFORE SHOWING THE FILMS

We suggest previewing the films before showing them to students. Be sure to take note of any new terms that students may not understand. Review the *Gather* Visual Glossary. Use this as a time to identify any gaps in your own understanding of the issues. Know the basics. You don't need to be an expert, but you need to be able to keep a discussion going and gently correct any misunderstandings that students might have. A good place to start is with each of the Focus Chapters. In addition to the background information, each chapter features extensive endnotes, including where to go for more information. The Extended Learning section at the end of this guide also includes additional resources that expand on topics brought up in the films.

The films are short, but they deal with complex issues that may be new to your students. Previewing the films will help you decide which issues and themes you want to raise in your classroom.

Before you preview the films, review the Focus Chapter for each film you are viewing. As you watch the film, take note of the timings of interesting moments and potential questions. Think about why you want to show the film. For example, do you want to stimulate discussion or support themes you are teaching in class? Is it a stimulus for writing assignments? Is it to supplement information for history class?

The discussion questions are designed to encourage viewers to reflect on complex issues. Ideally, you will use the four films throughout the school year, or during a semester. This allows you to return to themes and carry over the reflection and discussion in relation to other lessons, history, readings, activities, and field trips. We encourage you to conclude the semester or school year with a culminating project or service-learning experience that draws on the films' central themes. The Ideas for Action section of this guide includes a selection of activities and projects for your consideration.

CHECK FOR STUDENT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Find out what your students already know. Preexisting knowledge is a foundation upon which to build new knowledge. Finding out what they know helps students connect what they are learning to what they know already.

WHAT IF STUDENTS DON'T HAVE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE?

Plan to use the content in the Focus Chapters to help students develop the relevant background knowledge they will need for viewing the film. Several days before viewing the films, have students work in small groups to present information or lead a discussion. Create activities that build relevant background knowledge prior to exposure to the new film content. Then, just before viewing the film, you can use activating strategies to remind students of what they just learned and how it will relate to what they are about to see.

BEFORE STARTING THE FILM

Today's students are very familiar with watching all sorts of media. To set this experience apart, offer background into the film they are about to watch. Ask students to think about what they already know about the subject. Make it clear to students why they are watching the film. This should help focus their attention on what you want them to learn. Review the *Gather* Visual Glossary and discuss any new terms or concepts that will help their understanding.

WATCHING FILMS

These edited films are less than 15 minutes each. This is to allow you time for discussion and exploring students' responses to the films. To help students get the most from these films, you may wish to have them watch each film more than once. During the second viewing, provide students with a specific content focus to frame their viewing. You may find it helpful to pause a film to allow students to process what they are seeing, to ask questions, and to facilitate discussions prompted by the film. Consider waiting until a second viewing to have students take notes. This way, students can focus on the film in the first viewing, knowing they will see it again.

AFTER VIEWING

One strategy is to have students work in small groups to discuss key points in the film. Then have each small group lead a class discussion highlighting the group's content focus. You may wish to draw from the discussion questions at the end of each Focus Chapter to guide this work.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Phyllis Ault and Laura John, *Obscured Identities: Improving the Accuracy of Identification of American Indian and Alaska Native Students*, (Portland, OR: Education Northwest, May 2017), <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/obscured-identities.pdf>.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

The four films supported by this guide share the common thread of reclaiming ancestral food systems. They offer portraits of present-day Native Americans in the process of reclaiming their traditional foods as a way to bring health and vitality back to their people. Exploring the ways in which Native Americans today are recovering their traditional foods allows us to look at factors that caused the traditional food systems to change. It allows us to link food to history/social studies, science, social justice, and the environment. In this way, students can deepen their understanding of how the biological need to eat is influenced by culture, environment, economics, and politics. In turn, students may see how decisions made and actions taken about what to eat in the past can have an effect on the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples today.

The following are key topics essential to understanding factors that pertain to Native American food sovereignty:

ASSIMILATION

What is assimilation and what was its impact on Native American traditional diets? How is this impact felt today? In what ways did the US government try to suppress Native American cultures?ⁱ

Before European explorers landed in the Americas, the Indigenous Peoples had complex societies; built cities, empires, and roads; domesticated plants and animals; and organized forms of government in which women played significant roles. From time immemorial, these Indigenous Peoples have used experiential educational systems to pass on their culture to their offspring. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native children were educated through what we would call today “hands-on, place-based learning.” It included transmitting knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes to the next generation. Knowledge and culture were passed down orally through social practices, arts, music, ceremonies, and customs. The purpose was to prepare children for adulthood and to be members of their society. Boys were taught by their male family members and other male elders. Girls were instructed by their female family members and other female elders.ⁱⁱ

The idea of reforming the Native American educational system, using the European model of formal education, began with the Spanish and French priests of the colonial era. Their interest was in Christianizing the Native Americans, whom they viewed as primitive and barbaric. For the settlers, their interest in educating Native Americans was tied to their lust for land and their desire not to share the land with these “savages.” The colonists’ goal was to “civilize” the Native Americans so they could be assimilated into the lower rungs of mainstream Euro-American society. Their aim was to teach them the importance of private

property, material wealth, and monogamous nuclear families so that they would accept the white man's beliefs and value systems. To accomplish this, the colonists would use education as a tool.

For those advocating assimilation, boarding schools were the answer. Boarding schools for Native American children were seen as a quick and direct way to assimilate the youth. The students would be taught the English language, arithmetic, history, and science. They would be forbidden to speak their native language or associate with members of their own Tribes or communities. They would be given religious training. All vestiges of their traditional culture would be erased through assimilation. In 1879 at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Richard Pratt opened the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first government-run Native American boarding school. The goal was to destroy the "Indian" aspects of the children and turn them into members of US society; in other words the goal was forced assimilation. Pratt's motto was: "Kill the Indian, save the man."

"The different wrongs that have been done to Native peoples are just so sickening, and that hasn't gone away. I don't know what I can do about it, but I'm going to try to do something."

– Elsie DuBray, *Bison vs. Beef* – Cheyenne River Sioux

Many students were kidnapped and sent to school without their families' permission. For some, it included long train rides across the country to ensure that they didn't try to escape and return home. Once they arrived at school, all outward signs of their cultural identity were taken. Students who arrived with long hair, which is spiritually symbolic for many Native cultures, had their hair cut upon arrival. Generally associated with certain Native American ceremonies, hair cutting was one of the many devastating experiences of boarding school life for Native children. They were given uniforms to wear so they did not look "Indian," and they were given Anglo names that they were forced to use while at school. Traditional foods were forbidden. Their new diet included meat, flour, dairy, lard, and sugar. They were not allowed to sing or dance or practice any of their cultural traditions.

The trauma suffered at the boarding schools had an impact on Tribes and resulted in a significant loss of language, culture, and traditions. As A-dae Romero Briones (Kiowa/Cochiti) stated in a 2019 article, "The system of American Indian boarding schools did much damage in every one of the basic institutions that made up Indigenous society. . . . Extracting children from their Indigenous food system essentially creates individuals devoid of an understanding of their land, environments, political systems, education systems, and spiritual systems, and no understanding of collective resource management. . . . As a result, the taste preferences of Indigenous children transformed from one based on traditional food systems with live connections to community and place to one that is transformed by military science and diet that was dependent on fat, sugar, and carbohydrates."ⁱⁱⁱ

COLONIZATION OF A FOOD SYSTEM

What does it mean to colonize a food system? How is a food system colonized? What is the relationship between colonization and food-related diseases? By engaging students in a discussion of the diversity of traditional foods in pre-contact diets, they will develop their understanding of how colonization has resulted in food-related diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, as well as the loss of cultural traditions.

Colonization involves an invading culture taking political control over an Indigenous population. It has had devastating effects on Indigenous societies, cultures, and health. For the most part, research has focused on the social, political, and economic changes forced upon Indigenous communities: “The matter of food—the very source of survival—is rarely considered. Yet, food was a principal tool of colonization. Arguably, one cannot properly understand colonization without taking into account the issue of food and eating.”^{iv}

From the time the colonists first set foot in the Americas, they were concerned about survival, and that included food. They believed that survival in this country would depend on having access to European foods. They believed that the Indigenous diet, which they considered unacceptable, would be harmful to them. It wasn't the “right” food. They also believed that food helped create the bodily differences between them and Native Americans. For example, Spanish colonists believed that the reason Native Americans had straight hair and sparse beards was due to what they ate. The bearded Spaniards feared that eating the Native American diet would turn them into beardless Native Americans. Food was one of the essential elements that distinguished the Spanish from the Native Americans.

The solution for European colonists was to grow their own food, using their own agricultural methods. They brought about dramatic changes to ecosystems with the introduction of nonnative plant species and livestock, including cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats. They needed land to graze their herds and water to irrigate the fields. They killed the buffalo on the Great Plains to make way for cattle ranching. They altered the course of waterways and dammed rivers, affecting traditional fishing grounds. They restricted access to land where Native Americans foraged for nuts, berries, and seeds. They confined the Native Americans to reservations and, by restricting their access to traditional foods, made them dependent on government commodity foods. They placed Native American children in residential boarding schools and deprived them of their traditional foods, forcing them to forget their Tribal connections and to eat a diet that embodied Euro-American ideals of food and nutrition.

What is decolonizing a food system? It means taking it back to what it was before colonization. It means eliminating beef, sugar, flour, pork, wheat, dairy products, and other foods that the settler colonists brought with them and returning to traditional foods. It

means taking control over local food systems. Decolonization is about shifting the way Indigenous Peoples view themselves and the way non-Indigenous Peoples view Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization restores culture and traditional ways; it restores the Indigenous worldview. It replaces Western interpretations of history with Indigenous perspectives.

“Our food system has been colonized. That’s the reason we don’t have the relationship with some of those traditional foods anymore. And colonial violence has never gone away. So when you see statistics like alcoholism, diabetes, homicide, suicide rates on reservations, those are the physical manifestations of colonialism.”

– Chef Nephi Craig, *The Hunt* – White Mountain Apache

The negative impacts of colonization on Native American diets are still being felt today. The colonists intentionally dismantled Indigenous food systems. The goal was to separate Native Americans from their food and land.

Why do Native Americans want to reclaim their ancestral food systems? As the First Nations Development Institute points out, “Prior to colonization, Native peoples had self-sufficient and sustainable food systems. Over time, removal from traditional homelands, limited access to traditional food sources, and transitions to cash economies, among other things, weakened tribal food systems. Today, many Native communities and households are food insecure, dependent on outside food sources, and maintain a diet of Western foodstuffs that are often linked to negative and deteriorating health, community and economicsLocal food-system control is foundational to reversing years of colonization aimed at the disintegration of cultural and traditional belief systems and dismantling of Native social and economic systems. If Native communities can control local food systems, food can become a driver for cultural revitalization, improving community health, and economic development.”^v

LAND TENURE

How were Native Americans removed from their land? What impact did land loss have on what Native peoples ate and their access to traditional food resources? How could early colonizers and the US government justify the seizure of lands already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples? European colonizers believed that it was their destiny to take control of the land. How did they do it? With discussions of land laws and policies, students can examine why the idea of Manifest Destiny and the land laws of the early 1860s led to conflict. They can examine how differing perspectives regarding resource and land use can lead to conflicts. They can discuss what they see as the primary difference between Native American and European American concepts of land ownership. Looking at Native American land tenure from the perspective of Native Americans offers opportunities to analyze the impact of these attitudes and laws.

Papal decrees, including the Doctrine of Discovery (1493), provided the justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians. From the earliest days of colonial contact, land ownership in the United States has been a story of land moving from Native American control to white control.^{vi}

When the European settlers arrived, they invoked the Doctrine of Discovery and claimed all vacant land in the name of the sovereign. By definition, vacant land was any land not occupied by Christians. Then, in 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, authorizing the relocation of Native Americans to the lands west of the Mississippi. Forced migrations, like the Trail of Tears, were devastating to Native Americans and their way of life. Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, Manifest Destiny justified westward expansion by claiming Divine providence and superiority. This was the idea that God intended for white Americans to occupy the entire continent of North America—from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The supporters of Manifest Destiny saw Native Americans as impediments to progress.^{vii}

**“If you could clear the land of Indians, you could have that chunk of land.
So literally, if you were seen, you were shot on sight.”**

– Sam Gensaw, *The Salmon People* – Yurok Nation

As the settlers pushed farther west, they tried an increasing number of ways to wrest the land away from Native Americans. They used treaties to force Native Americans to cede territory in order to avoid war and maintain peace. Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act of 1851, which forced Native peoples to move to and live on reservations, where they found themselves severely restricted in their ability to hunt, fish, and gather their traditional foods.

A series of land laws passed in 1862 had a long-term impact on the lives of Native Americans and their struggle to maintain connections to the land that still resonates today. For example, with the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864, the US Congress granted millions of acres of land to railroad companies. According to treaties ratified by Congress, these lands belonged to different Indigenous nations. The land was not Congress’s to give.^{viii} The Land-Grant College Act of 1862, also called the Morrill Act, granted each state 30,000 acres of federal land (land taken from the Native Americans) for each member in their Congressional delegation. The states could then sell or profit from the land and use the proceeds to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and the mechanical arts. Today, many of these colleges are still reaping the benefits from the Native American land that was taken.^{ix} The Homestead Act of 1862 granted each settler 160 acres of public land. It led to the distribution of 80 million acres of public land by 1900. This land was once treaty land or traditional land of Native American Tribes, who believed the land belonged

to the community, not individuals, in direct contrast with the settlers' views. To settlers, immigrants, and homesteaders, the West was empty land. To Native Americans, it was home.

In 1871, Congress officially ended treaty making. The 1887 General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, divided reservation lands into individual parcels, and sold "surplus" land to non-Native Americans, although the land remained within reservation boundaries. As a result, lands owned by Tribes, individual Native Americans, and non-Native Americans are mixed together on reservations, creating a checkerboard pattern. Checkerboarding makes it challenging for Tribal nations or individual Native Americans to use land for farming, ranching, or other economic activities that require large, contiguous sections of land. It also limits access to lands that the Tribe owns and uses in traditional ways.

The Allotment Era ended with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA), also known as the "Wheeler-Howard Act" or the "Indian New Deal." The IRA ended ". . .the allotment of tribal land, extended the trust period for existing allotments, prohibited lands to be taken away from Tribes without their consent, and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept additional tribal lands in trust and to proclaim new reservations on those lands."^x

THE RESERVATION SYSTEM

What was the purpose of the reservation system? How did the imposition of reservations on Native lands change the relationship between Native Americans and the environment? Did it affect the way they lived? What was the impact on Native American traditional food systems once reservations restricted movement? What type of political, legal, and social policies did Europeans and Americans use to remove and relocate Native Americans and attempt to destroy their cultures? In 1851, the US Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act, creating the reservation system. In order to subdue Native Americans, the government forced them to move to reservations. Although they had once been successful hunters and gatherers, on the reservations they found themselves severely restricted in their ability to hunt, fish, and gather their traditional foods. In the same year, the US government began to survey land for roads and railroads across the West, providing easier access for settlers and increasing the threat to Native American lands.

The federal government saw the reservations as a means of keeping Native Americans off of lands that Euro-Americans wished to settle. Many Native Americans resisted the reservations, which resulted in the Indian Wars (1865–1890). After a series of bloody massacres and battles, the US military succeeded in relocating most Native Americans onto reservations. The land surrounding the reservations and the natural resources were then available to the settlers.

For most Native Americans, daily life on the reservation was difficult at best. They had lost their traditional lands and it became difficult to maintain their cultures and traditions. Prior to the reservation system, women sometimes farmed, gathered, and took care of the land while men hunted. Now, men were forced to farm, and women took on more domestic roles. Native Americans were encouraged or forced to wear Euro-American clothing, to learn to read and write English, and to raise domesticated livestock. Missionaries attempted to make them give up their spiritual beliefs and convert them to Christianity. Although they were sometimes allowed to retain their traditional governing structures, Native Americans on the reservations suffered from poverty, malnutrition, and low standards of living and rates of economic development. For some Tribes, the US government gave out food rations, thus introducing wheat flour, beef, coffee, salt, lard, and sugar into Native American diets. The results were catastrophic and, for many, the effects are still being felt today.

“Because of the Westernization of our diets, Native peoples often suffer the most from a lot of different diseases here on my reservation and reservations elsewhere. And so, if my research can do anything, I don’t want it to prove what’s already known, I just want it to help people get back to the way it’s meant to be.”

– Elsie DuBray, *Bison vs. Beef* – Cheyenne River Sioux

“By the 1880s, the citizens of most Indian nations were living on reservations either within their traditional homelands or on land that was set aside for them in exchange for the sale or taking of original homelands. . . . Tribal ownership of Indian land was the norm on most reservations, but was regarded by many non-Indians as an unproductive use of resources and a hindrance to civilizing Indian people.”^{xi} In an effort to open up the lands to settlers, railroads, forestry, and mining, the US government pushed through the Allotment Act of 1887 (also called the Dawes Act). In addition to dividing up reservation lands, the Dawes Act encouraged Native Americans to leave the Tribally owned reservations and take ownership of “allotments” of non-reservation land for farming. If they did, they were granted full US citizenship. In the end, the Dawes Act resulted in the sale of over 90 million acres of formerly Indigenous-owned Tribal land to non-Indigenous people. Much of the reservation land was subsequently sold to the public. The result was greatly reduced reservations, and less Tribal control over reservations. It was devastating for Native Americans.

According to the National Park Service website, “The US government employed a variety of methods in the attempt to assimilate Native Americans, including the Dawes Act. The desired effect of the Dawes Act was to get Native Americans to farm and ranch like white homesteaders. An explicit goal of the Dawes Act was to create divisions among Native Americans and eliminate the social cohesion of Tribes.”^{xii}

SOVEREIGNTY

What is sovereignty and why is it important? What does Tribal sovereignty refer to? What is the connection between sovereignty and traditional food systems?

The rights of Tribes to self-govern and to maintain relationships with other nations predate the formation of the US government. Long before the European explorers arrived, millions of Indigenous Peoples lived in a space five times larger than Europe. There were hundreds of cultures with many different forms of government. From the time the Europeans arrived, they generally recognized the Tribes as independent sovereign nations and their relationship with the Tribes was “nation-to-nation.” After its founding, the US government continued to recognize the Tribes as sovereign nations.

“Sovereignty is a legal word for an ordinary concept—the authority to self-govern.”^{xiii} Hundreds of treaties, along with the Supreme Court, the President, and Congress, have repeatedly affirmed that Tribal nations retain their inherent powers of self-government. These treaties, executive orders, and laws have created a fundamental contract between Tribal nations and the United States.^{xiv} Tribal sovereignty includes the right to govern one’s community, the ability to preserve one’s culture, and the right to control one’s own economy.

The US is made up of three sovereign entities: the federal government, state governments, and Tribal governments. While Native Americans are US citizens, their Tribal heritage, culture, and identity are distinct and federally recognized. Sovereignty recognizes a Tribe’s claim to independent identity and citizenship. Without sovereignty, a Tribe would be a cultural group and have no claim to traditional sites and cultural practices. Its Tribal identity would vanish.^{xv}

Tribal rights to hunt and fish are grounded in Tribal sovereignty and affirmed in many treaties and agreements. When the US government negotiated treaties that created reservations, Tribes reserved the right to hunt, fish, and gather on reservation lands. Often, treaties guarantee the right to hunt and fish in their traditional locations, even if they are outside the reservations. This means that Native Americans are not subject to the same state regulations and limits that non-Native American hunters and fishers are. These rights are important for access to natural resources for food. Historically, most Tribes depended to some degree on hunting and fishing for subsistence and for economic and cultural purposes. Hunting, fishing, and gathering remain vital to many Tribes today; however, these rights are often contested today.^{xvi}

“By the time they got here, it wasn’t just fishing rights, they were taking our hunting rights, they were taking our whole way of life. . .We fight for the freedom of all Natives to have our native foods.”

– Chucky Carpenter, *The Salmon People* – Hoopa Nation

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

What were ancestral food systems based on? How did Native Americans know what plants and animals were safe to eat? How did they develop knowledge about managing the land? As ethnobotanist Linda Black Elk (Catawba) points out, this knowledge is developed through observation, experimentation, and participation with the natural world.^{xvii} Knowledge, acquired over thousands of years is called Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Through discussions of TEK and Native American food systems, middle school students gain an understanding of ways in which the environment is perceived differently and similarly by diverse cultural groups, and how these perspectives may influence an individual's perceptions of the environment. They learn the interconnection between cultural perspectives and the environment.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge is handed down from generation to generation. TEK comprises local observational knowledge of species or environmental processes; the practices, tools, and techniques that people use to carry out their resource use activities; the rules and taboos concerning acceptable behavior; and beliefs about how people fit into or relate to ecosystems. It is gathered by observers—whose lives depended on it over centuries—passed down orally, from generation to generation.^{xviii} It is preserved through oral traditions, such as narratives, storytelling, and song. It's preserved through the preparation of traditional foods. Ethnographer Eugene Anderson refers to the emotions and meanings that guide traditional cultures in their relations with the places, natural processes, and organisms around them as “ecologies of the heart.”^{xix}

“What we’re doing is reintroducing our young people to the land, the food, and our traditional ways of healing.”

– Twila Cassadore, *The Hunt* – San Carlos Apache

This knowledge is at risk. It depends on language, and one of the ways to “civilize” Indigenous Peoples is to take away their language. The Native American boarding schools of the 1800s and early 1900s did just that. They forced Native American students to speak English and forbid them to speak their native languages. The loss of language can mean the loss of generations of TEK.^{xx}

TREATIES

What is a treaty?^{xxi} How did the US government use treaties? Did treaties have an impact on Indigenous food systems? What do eighteenth-century treaties have to do with reclaiming ancestral food systems?

A treaty is an agreement that sets forth a relationship between two sovereign nations. Initially, the treaties between Tribes and the European colonists were made to secure alliances and for peace. Prior to encountering the Europeans, Native American treaties between Tribes or communities were oral agreements. When the Europeans arrived, they brought with them the custom of recording treaties on paper. The customs merged—oral agreements would be reached, and written treaties and wampum belts would finalize the agreements.

From 1778 to 1871, the US dealt with Native Americans through treaty negotiations. By making treaties with Native American Tribes, the US government was affirming the sovereignty of the Native nations. After 1871, the US replaced the treaties with executive orders and other formal agreements. The US government used treaties as a means to get land from Native Americans, and Tribes ceding land provided certain rights that were retained in exchange. These treaties are not a grant of rights to Tribes, but rather a grant of rights *from* Tribes to the United States. US treaties with Tribal Nations are made under the US Constitution and are “the supreme law of the land” and take precedent over any conflicting state law. These rights are granted in perpetuity. The federal government entered into more than 370 treaties.

With treaties legally recognizing that the Tribes possessed rights to the land, such as the right to hunt, fish, and gather, there is no apparent barrier to access to traditional food. However, in the US there are the federal government, state governments, and Tribal governments. State and federal governments share authority over the regulation and control of fish and game management, with the states playing the primary role over daily management. Disagreements with Tribes may arise, for example, over fishing rights.

From the beginning of time, fish have been of great importance to many Native American Tribes and part of their subsistence. When disagreements arise between states and Native Americans over fishing or hunting regulations, the federal government steps in. Treaty rights often varied from Tribe to Tribe, and when the treaties were negotiated in the mid-nineteenth century, most people thought that fish were an inexhaustible resource. Since that time, the demand for fish has outgrown the supply, leading to disagreements between the US government and the Tribes over how the resource should be managed and how to interpret the language of the treaty.^{xxii}

National Park lands, as with all lands of the United States, once were traditional Native lands where foragers would gather plants and plant parts. Until recently, such gathering was prohibited in National Park Service (NPS) areas unless specifically authorized by federal statute. Now the NPS allows enrolled members of federally recognized Native American Tribes to gather and remove plants or plant parts for traditional purposes. This practice will be allowed where it traditionally occurred, as long as it doesn't cause a “significant adverse impact to park resources or values. This rule respects those tribal cultural practices, furthers the government-to-government relationship between the United States and the tribes, and provides system-wide consistency for this aspect of National Park Service tribal relations.”^{xxiii}

ENDNOTES

- i The Library of Congress offers a set of primary source materials to further students' understanding of cultural assimilation and Native Americans. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/native-american-boarding-schools/>.
- ii Dr. Alberta Yeboah, *Education among Native Americans in the periods before and after contact with Europeans: An overview*. Paper presented at the Annual National Association of Native American Studies Conference, Houston, Texas. February 2005. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.461.5028&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.
- iii Romero-Briones, A-dae. 2019. "Fighting for the Taste Buds of Our Children". *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 9 (B). Ithaca, NY, USA:35-43. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2019.09B.020>.
- iv Food Empowerment Project. <https://foodispower.org>. Dr. Linda Alvarez. "Colonization, Food, and the Practice of Eating". 2021. <https://foodispower.org/our-food-choices/colonization-food-and-the-practice-of-eating/>.
- v Indian Giver (website), <http://indiangiver.firstnations.org/tag/food-preservation/>.
- vi CMU Clark Historical Library, "A Brief History of Land Transfers Between American Indians and the United States Government," <https://www.cmich.edu/research/clarke-historical-library/explore-collection/explore-online/native-american-material/native-american-treaty-rights/land-transfers>. The information in this essay comes from: Stuart Banner, *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, published in 2005 by the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- vii See *NK 360* "American Indian Removal: What Does It Mean to Remove a People?" This online lesson explores the vast scope of removal and its effects on Native Nations. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/removal>.
- viii The Transcontinental Railroad is often considered a symbol of progress and modernity. For a view from the perspective of Native Americans, see: "The Impact of the Transcontinental Railroad on Native Americans." <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/TRR>.
- ix For a comprehensive investigation into the US's land-grant university system, created from the expropriation of Indigenous land, see Robert Lee's and Tristan Ahtone's article, "Land-grab universities" in *High Country News*, April 1, 2020. <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>. Explore the data on the High Country News website: <https://www.hcn.org/articles/indigenous-affairs-education-explore-the-land-grab-universities-data>.
- x For comprehensive discussions of Native American land tenure issues, see Indian Land Tenure Foundation, "Indian Land in Indian Hands," <https://iltf.org/>; especially *The Message Runner*, Vol. 4 "From Removal to Recovery: Land Ownership in Indian Country."
- xi Indian Land Tenure Foundation, <https://iltf.org/>; *The Message Runner*, Vol. 4 "From Removal to Recovery: Land Ownership in Indian Country." https://iltf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/message_runner_vol.4_fall_2009_rev.pdf, pp. 5-7.
- xii National Park Service: "The Dawes Act;" <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/dawes-act.htm>.
- xiii In "Affirming Indigenous Sovereignty: A Civics Inquiry," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 31(1) pp. 12–18, National Council for Social Studies © 2018, Sarah B. Shear, Leilani Sabzalian, and Lisa Brown Buchanan make the case for teaching Indigenous sovereignty to upper elementary social studies students, noting that "Elementary social studies curriculum is notoriously silent about Indigenous sovereignty." The article includes an outline for a four-part unit that "incorporates academic keywords, provides a foundation for understanding Indigenous sovereignty, and deliberates current events related to sovereignty." https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/yl_3101012.pdf.

- xiv "National Congress of American Indians," <https://www.ncai.org/>, *Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction*. <https://www.ncai.org/about-tribes>.
- xv Southeastern Oklahoma State University, <https://online.se.edu/>; "Importance of Sovereignty to Tribal Nations," <https://online.se.edu/articles/nal/importance-sovereignty-tribal-nations.aspx>.
- xvi Guy Charlton, "The Law of Native American Hunting, Fishing and Gathering Outside of Reservation Boundaries in the United States and Canada," 39 *Can.-U.S. L.J.* 69 (2015), <https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cuslj/vol39/iss/5>.
- xvii Linda Black Elk, "Native Science: Understanding and Respecting Other Ways of Thinking," *Rangelands* 38(1): 3–4, doi: 10.1016/j.rala.2015.11.003.
- xix Environmental Justice, <http://www.envjustice.org/>, "Environmental Justice Resources: Traditional Ecological Knowledge," <http://www.envjustice.org/2013/02/traditional-ecological-knowledge/>.
- xx Gary Paul Nabhan, *Enduring Seeds*. (SF: North Point Press, 1989), 84.
- xxii See the National Park Service website for a list of resources on the topic of language and TEK. "Indigenous Language and TEK," <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tek/indigenous-language-and-tek.htm>.
- xxi See NK 360°—"Northern Plains Treaties—Is a Treaty Intended to Be Forever?" With this online lesson students and teachers gain an understanding of the difficult choices and consequences Northern Plains Native Nations faced when entering into treaty negotiations with the United States. Explore the intentions, motivations, and outcomes of two treaties: the 1851 Horse Creek Treaty and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Resources include images, video, lesson plan, and other materials. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties/index.chtml#title>.
- xxii "Native American Fishing Rights," *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, edition 2. 2008, The Gale Group, <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Native+American+Fishing+Rights>.
- xxiii Federal Register 81 FR 45024—"Gathering of Certain Plants or Plant Parts by Federally Recognized Indian Tribes for Traditional Purposes," Federal Register Volume 81, Issue 133 (July 12, 2016) <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/FR-2016-07-12/2016-16434>.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND STANDARDS

For educators looking for ways to rethink how they teach about Native Americans, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) *Native Knowledge 360° Essential Understandings about American Indians* is a framework that offers new possibilities for creating student learning experiences.¹ The NMAI *Essential Understandings* build on the 10 themes of the National Council for the Social Studies' national curriculum standards: American Indian Cultures; Time, Continuity, and Change; People, Places, and Environments; Individual Development and Identity; Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Power, Authority, and Governance; Production, Distribution, and Consumption; Science, Technology, and Society; Global Connections; and Civic Ideals and Practices. The four films supported by this guide emphasize different key concepts of six of these themes and provide stories of present-day Native Americans that can expand your teaching of history, science, environment, and other subject areas.

The films are particularly relevant to the six themes listed below.

1 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

American Indian Cultures

"Culture is a result of human socialization. People acquire knowledge and values by interacting with other people through common language, place, and community. In the Americas, there is vast cultural diversity among more than 2,000 tribal groups. Tribes have unique cultures and ways of life that span history from time immemorial to the present day."

2 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

Time, Continuity, and Change

"Indigenous people of the Americas shaped life in the Western Hemisphere for millennia. After contact, American Indians and the events involving them greatly influenced the histories of the European colonies and the modern nations of North, Central, and South America. Today, this influence continues to play significant roles in many aspects of political, legal, cultural, environmental, and economic issues. To understand the history and cultures of the Americas requires understanding American Indian history from Indian perspectives."

3 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

People, Places, and Environments

“For thousands of years, Indigenous people have studied, managed, honored, and thrived in their homelands. These foundations continue to influence American Indian relationships and interactions with the land today.”

5 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

“American Indians have always operated and interacted within self-defined social structures that include institutions, societies, and organizations, each with specific functions. These social structures have shaped the lives and histories of American Indians through the present day.”

7 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

Production, Distribution, and Consumption

“American Indians developed a variety of economic systems that reflected their cultures and managed their relationships with others. Prior to European arrival in the Americas, American Indians produced and traded goods and technologies using well-developed systems of trails and widespread transcontinental, intertribal trade routes. Today, American Indian tribes and individuals are active in economic enterprises that involve production and distribution.”

8 NMAI ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

Science, Technology, and Society

“American Indian knowledge resides in languages, cultural practices, and teaching that spans many generations. This knowledge is based on long-term observation, experimentation, and experience with the living Earth. Indigenous knowledge has sustained American Indian cultures for thousands of years. When applied to contemporary global challenges, Native knowledge contributes to dynamic and innovative solutions.”

RELEVANT STANDARDS

These films and this discussion guide provide information that is particularly relevant to social studies/history, civics, environmental studies, and social and environmental justice. The standards that we highlight here are by no means exhaustive. Our aim is to highlight some of the most obvious ones that are relevant from the North American Association

for Environmental Education’s Guidelines for Excellence, the Next Generation Science Standards, the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects, the Learning for Justice Standards, and the CDC Health Education Standards. We encourage you to consider these as a starting point and to look for other potential connections.

NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Guidelines for Excellence—K–12 Environmental Educationⁱⁱ

Examining Indigenous food sovereignty offers a wealth of opportunities to integrate environmental studies across the curriculum. For example, students can explore the interactions of human and natural systems and how different Native American cultures view their place in the environment. Did land play a role in colonialism and westward expansion? How do people influence natural systems? What is the relationship between Native Americans and the natural world in terms of food systems?

The films surface issues related to sustainability. For example, in discussions of human sustainability, high school science students can provide examples from Native American food systems as evidence for how the availability of natural resources has influenced human activity. Drawing from the film *The Salmon People*, high school students can engage in debates regarding water, a natural resource, and human needs. Should freshwater be stored in reservoirs and diverted for irrigation? What about the people who depend on the free-flowing water for food? What are the benefits and losses taking into consideration social, cultural, and environmental impacts?

Native food systems require a deep understanding of ecology and crop science. How did Native Americans develop this understanding? How do we develop our understandings of the world around us? What role does culture play? Investigating ways of knowing, students gain an understanding of the ways in which Western science and Traditional Ecological Science (TEK) or Native Science overlap. They can extend their learning to discover ways in which Western scientists and Native Americans are collaborating on projects related to climate change, monitoring of biodiversity loss, fire suppression, making resource management decisions, and other sustainability issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION STANDARDS—GRADES 5–8

Strand 2

Environmental Processes and Systems

2.1 Earth’s physical and living systems

2.2 Human systems

2.3 Environment and society

Strand 4

Personal and Civic Responsibility

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION STANDARDS—GRADES 9–12

Strand 2

Environmental Processes and Systems

2.2 Human systems

2.3 Environment and society

Strand 3

Skills for Understanding and Addressing Environmental Issues

3.1 Skills for analyzing and investigating environmental issues

3.2 Decision-making and action skills

LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

Learning for Justice describes the Social Justice Standards as being “comprised of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes divided into four domains—Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action (IDJA). The Standards provide a common language and organizational structure: Teachers can use them to guide curriculum development, and administrators can use them to make schools more just, equitable, and safe.”ⁱⁱⁱ

TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE^{iv}

Social Justice Domain: Diversity

Social Justice Domain: Justice

THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, & TECHNICAL SUBJECTS^v

The Common Core Standards for English Language Arts support teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective subject area. The standards call for students to grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversation, direct instruction, and reading. They ask students to determine word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their range of words and phrases. These standards are designed to prepare students for life outside the classroom.

Common Core State Standards Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CDC HEALTHY SCHOOLS—NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS^{vi}

The National Health Education Standards are written expectations for what students should know and be able to do by grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 to promote personal, family, and community health.

Standard 2

Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS)^{vii}

The NGSS website states that there are three dimensions to learning science. The three dimensions—crosscutting concepts, science and engineering practices, and disciplinary core ideas—are combined to form each standard. Each dimension works with the other two to help students construct a cohesive understanding of science over time. While these films are not aligned with the three dimensional standards described here, they do offer content

that can enhance discussions of disciplinary core ideas and crosscutting concepts. They are most relevant to the following:

MIDDLE SCHOOL

MS: Human Impacts

Disciplinary Core Idea

ESS3 EARTH AND HUMAN ACTIVITY
ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems

HIGH SCHOOL

HS: Human Sustainability

Disciplinary Core Idea

ESS3 EARTH AND HUMAN ACTIVITY
ESS3.A: Natural Resources
ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems

Crosscutting Concepts

Connections to Nature of Science
Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World

ENDNOTES

- i “Native Knowledge 360° Essential Understandings about American Indians,” National Museum of the American Indian, <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/about/understandings>.
- ii “K-12 Environmental Education: Guidelines for Excellence,” NAAEE, <https://naaee.org/eeepro/publication/excellence-environmental-education-guidelines-learning-k-12>.
- iii “Learning for Justice: Social Justice Standards,” (webpage), <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/social-justice-standards>.
- iv “Social Justice Standards,” Learning for Justice, 2018, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-Anti-bias-framework-2020.pdf>.
- v National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, *Common Core State Standards Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects*, <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>.
- vi “CDC Healthy Schools: National Health Education Standards,” <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm>.
- vii “Next Generation Science Standards,” <https://www.nextgenscience.org/>.

VISUAL GLOSSARY



GATHER VISUAL GLOSSARY

To be active and responsible participants in the world around them, students need to be able to analyze and identify public problems, debate and discuss issues with other people, take constructive action, and prepare for the responsibilities of citizens. As citizens, they will vote, serve on juries, follow news and current events, and make informed and reasoned decisions of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. These decisions will affect future generations.ⁱ To accomplish this, students need to develop the strong general knowledge and vocabulary they need to build their content knowledge.

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Number of times a student may need to be exposed to a new word in order to become familiar with it

Research has shown it can take up to seventeen exposures to a word for students to be able to retrieve the word quickly. Memorizing a definition is not enough. Students need to be able to process a definition and take ownership of the new words. To support student learning, consider using a vocabulary notebook. Students can use the notebook to record the new term and its definition and have room to describe the term in their own words or give examples. Have students integrate the terms into their discussion of these films. You may wish to pre-teach the meaning of these terms before students encounter them in the films. Consider providing students a definition and then model how the word might be used in a sentence. Ask students to define the term in their own words. After viewing the film, review the definition and construct new sentences using the terms that relate to the film's content.

The terms included in this glossary are essential for students to understand the films' portrayal of Native Americans who are reclaiming their spiritual, political, and cultural identities through food sovereignty, while battling the trauma of centuries of genocide. These terms include both vocabulary words that describe the effects of being colonized as well as words that are part of a larger vocabulary of sustainability.ⁱⁱ For students to be able to develop a deep level of understanding of the challenges and struggles surrounding food sovereignty, it's important for them to be able to understand these basic terms. The ability of students to understand the concepts in these films is directly tied to understanding the vocabulary used to represent these concepts. For students to be able to engage in meaningful discussions about Indigenous food sovereignty, they need to be able to use these words. Students may already be familiar with some terms, like *food system*, but is the meaning the same in the context of Native American lives? These films educate and engage students to understand different cultural perspectives on food and issues of sustainability and to think deeply and ask questions about their own lives.

ENDNOTES

- i National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History*, <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3>.
- ii These terms were coined to deal with Western economic and agricultural systems, and in that context, they are valid. However, they may not apply uniformly in cross-cultural situations. Therefore, the definitions must be adjusted to account for differences in cultural and historical context.

FOOD DESERT

DEFINITION: an area where little fresh produce is available for saleⁱ

First Known Use: The term “food desert” reportedly originated in Scotland in the early 1990s and was used to describe poor access to an affordable and healthy diet.ⁱⁱ

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food deserts as areas in the United States where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food needed to lead healthy lives, especially fruits and vegetables, and foods that are culturally relevant.ⁱⁱⁱ These regions often feature large proportions of households with low incomes, inadequate access to transportation, and a limited number of food retailers providing fresh produce and healthy groceries for affordable prices. These food deserts offer more convenience stores and fast-food restaurants than supermarkets and grocery stores.

Without access to healthful foods, people who live in food deserts may be at risk of diet-related conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity. According to the First Nations Development Institute, almost all Native American reservations are classified as food deserts.

However, the First Nations Development Institute also points out that “. . .the term ‘desert’ is used by the USDA, and many Native tribes, especially those in the desert Southwest, do not necessarily like its use in this regard.”^{iv} Geographically, deserts are defined as arid regions that receive less than 10 inches of rain per year. “Empty” is an adjective that’s often used to describe deserts, however, they are far from empty. They are home to many plants, animals, and people that have adapted to scarce rainfall and thrived.^v

There are four American deserts in the Southwest and California: the Great Basin, the Mojave, the Chihuahuan, and the Sonoran. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, “. . .in the 1850s the Chihuahuan Desert’s lush grass was described by Spanish explorers as ‘belly high to a horse.’ Today, thanks to livestock overgrazing, agriculture, and oil and gas drilling, the desert’s native plants are disappearing—along with rare habitat many species depend on for survival. . . .The Sonoran Desert is the most biologically diverse of the four US deserts. . . .More than 100 reptiles, 2,000 native plants, 60 mammals, and 350 birds call this desert home, not only surviving here, but thriving—as long as their habitats remain intact.”^{vi} As Chef Craig points out in *The Hunt*, the Southwest landscape is calorie rich, but for other reasons it’s considered a food desert.

In addition, in the Southwest, while there are not traditional grocery stores, there are flea markets, and informal trade systems. For example, the elder down the road may have squash and you have corn, so you trade with each other. In the context of Native Americans, “retail food desert” may be a more appropriate term since the USDA definition focuses on retail stores and restaurants.

More recently, community gardener and food justice activist Karen Washington has proposed the use of “food apartheid” rather than food desert for the following reason: “food deserts. . .are areas that lack access to fresh nutritious food, but food apartheid sheds light on the fact that our food ecosystem is plagued by racism and classism, with deep, widespread effects of hunger, poverty, and racial and environmental injustice.”^{vii}

FOOD DESERT EXAMPLES

Samuel Gensaw III *The Salmon People*: “We live in a food desert. There’s no grocery store here.”

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: “The White Mountain Apache Tribe is considered a food desert, so all of the foods that were in here previously as a convenience store—a lot of candy, sugars, chips—they were promoting bad health. Now we’ll be able to order foods that were grown at the farm or brought in and purchased from local growers or harvester or foragers and you can see people in the process of changing their lives.”

Chef Craig *The Hunt*: “Our landscape is very calorie rich, but for a number of reasons, it’s considered a food desert.”

Visual Examples: Food Desert

Nearly all Native American reservations are considered food deserts due to the lack of access to healthy, affordable food. People who live in food deserts may be more reliant on convenience stores or fast-food restaurants that tend to offer highly processed foods, high in sugar, fat, sodium, and preservatives. The lack of access to fresh, nutritious foods fosters unhealthy eating habits that can increase the risk of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and other diet-related diseases.



In food deserts there are often more fast-food restaurants than supermarkets. Fast-food restaurants are a source of inexpensive, quick meals. Fresh fruits and vegetables may be used as garnishes only or are absent altogether.



Convenience stores and corner stores are often found in food deserts. They sell a range of products, from groceries to tobacco products, sugary drinks, and health and beauty aids. The food items they offer are often non-perishable and unhealthy.



Across the United States, people's access to healthy food varies greatly. In food deserts, where gas station markets and convenience stores serve as the grocery stores, fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods are difficult to find or afford.

ENDNOTES

- i Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “food desert,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/food%20desert>.
- ii J. Beaulac, E. Kristjansson, S. Cummins, “A Systematic Review of Food Deserts, 1966–2007,” *Preventing Chronic Disease*, Vol. 6, no. 3 (July 2009): A105, http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2009/jul/08_0163.htm.
- iii For Native Americans, culturally relevant foods would be foods that were part of their traditional diets, and were both biologically and spiritually nourishing. Diet-related conditions, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity, were not part of their lives until a Western diet was introduced and replaced traditional foods. Imagine that the Klamath River salmon runs returned to previous highs, but the Yurok were prohibited from accessing this “culturally relevant” resource by government regulation. For many Tribes, food deserts may be as much a product of historical discrimination, racism, or deliberate restrictions imposed along cultural lines, as Karen Washington has emphasized.
- iv First Nations Development Institute, *Fact Sheet #8, Food Deserts, Food Insecurity and Poverty in Native Communities*, 2014, <https://www.firstnations.org/publications/fact-sheet-8-food-deserts-food-insecurity-and-poverty-in-native-communities/>.
- v “Science of the American Southwest: Deserts,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/swscience/deserts.htm>.
- vi “Deserts,” Center for Biological Diversity, https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/deserts/index.html.
- vii Siena Baker, “Lessons from Karen Washington on Food Apartheid,” Penn State Presidential Leadership Academy (website), November 8, 2020, <https://sites.psu.edu/academy/2020/11/08/lessons-from-karen-washington-on-food-apartheid/>. In this Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) blog, Nina Sevilla discusses reconceptualizing “food deserts” as ‘food apartheid’ by focusing on creating food sovereignty through community-driven solutions and systemic change.” Nina Sevilla, “Food Apartheid: Racialized Access to Healthy Affordable Food,” *NRDC Expert* blog, posted April 2, 2021, <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/nina-sevilla/food-apartheid-racialized-access-healthy-affordable-food>.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

DEFINITION: “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”ⁱ

First Known Use: 1996

About 70 percent of the world’s population is fed by small-scale farmers. These farmers and food systems are increasingly threatened by the rise of industrialized agriculture that maximizes profit. Small farmers and communities have been losing control over their food, seeds, livelihoods, land, environment, and health. In 1996, La Via Campesina, the international peasant movement, defined the concept of “food sovereignty” in response to these crises facing the world’s farmers and food systems.

In 2007, 500 people from 80 countries gathered for the International Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali. One of the outcomes of this event was the articulation of the six principles of food sovereignty: it focuses on food for people; values food providers; localizes food systems; puts control locally; builds knowledge and skills; and works with nature.ⁱⁱ

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “Food Sovereignty is rooted in the complex realities of producing, buying, selling and eating food. It is not a new idea, but rather it recognizes all the dimensions of a healthy, ethical, and just food system. . . . It recognizes that control over the food system needs to remain in the hands of farmers, for whom farming is both a way of life and a means of producing food. It also recognizes the contribution of Indigenous peoples, pastoralists, forest dwellers, workers, and fishers to the food system. It ensures that food is produced in a culturally acceptable manner and in harmony with the ecosystem in which it is produced. This is how traditional food production systems have regenerated their soils, water, biodiversity and climatic conditions, for generations.”ⁱⁱⁱ

For Native Americans, food sovereignty is more than rights based. It emphasizes the “cultural responsibilities and relationships Indigenous Peoples have with their environment and the efforts being made by Indigenous communities to restore these relationships through the revitalization of Indigenous foods and ecological knowledge systems as they assert control over their own foods and practices.”^{iv}

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY EXAMPLES

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: “When you have food sovereignty, you are free to be self-reliant; to grow your own food, to choose the foods you want to eat, to choose the foods you want to put into school systems; and really be self-sustaining or sustainable and reservations across the US are far away from being actually food sovereign.”

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: “We’re celebrating Apache foodways in a kitchen built by Apaches for Apaches, so the Café is a living example of food sovereignty in action.”

Clayton Harvey *Gather*: “It’s funny, but I didn’t know what food sovereignty was ‘cause you don’t hear about things like that here. And then this kid, he was going to Brown University, he wanted to do his thesis on the farm, so he came down and hung out with us all summer, then he asked me about food sovereignty and what I think about it, and I said I don’t think anything about it, I don’t know, and he said, come on, you’re doing it, it’s all about feeding your people, and now I live and breathe food sovereignty.”

Visual Examples: Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is an expression of the rights and responsibilities of people who are connected to a place. Their food is procured in a culturally resonant manner, in harmony with local ecosystems and the traditions of the people who live there. The ways that food sovereignty is expressed are as unique as the people and places where it is practiced.



At Ndée Bikíyaa (The People's Farm), farm manager Clayton Harvey grows heritage corn, squash, and other traditional crops valued by the community. This endeavor fosters local control of food sources and improved nutrition while sustaining traditional food production and farming knowledge.



Twila Cassadore is a traditional San Carlos Apache forager. She gathers abundant food in the desert and shares its nutritional and healing benefits with others. Her knowledge flows from its sovereign connections to place and the people who have lived there for generations.



Samuel Gensaw III roasts salmon that he and others caught on the Klamath River. Sammy uses local redwood to stake and roast his catch, an expression of Yurok food sovereignty as it has been practiced for centuries.

ENDNOTES

- i “Food Sovereignty,” The United States Food Sovereignty Alliance, <http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>.
- ii “Nyéléni Forum 2007,” <https://nyeleni.org/en/synthesis-report/>. The Nyéléni website includes the proceedings of the 2007 International Forum for Food Sovereignty that took place in Mali. It includes articulation of the six pillars of food sovereignty.
- iii This 2014 policy brief describes the origins of the food sovereignty movement: “Family Farming Knowledge Platform: Food Sovereignty Systems,” Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/877809/>.
- iv “Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool, 2nd ed.,” (Longmont, CO: First Nations Development Institute, 2015), 4-5, www.firstnations.org/publications/food-sovereignty-assessment-tool-2nd-edition/; As Elizabeth Hoover has explained: “The concept of Indigenous food sovereignty is not just focused on rights to land and food and the ability to control a production system, but also responsibilities to them, which encompasses culturally, ecologically, and spiritually appropriate relationships with elements of those systems.” Elizabeth Hoover, “You Can’t Say You’re Sovereign If You Can’t Feed Yourself: Defining and Enacting Food Sovereignty in American Indian Community Gardening.” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 41(3), (2017): 31–70, <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicrj.41.3.hoover>

FOOD SYSTEM

DEFINITION: In simple terms, a food system is how we get our food. It encompasses all the stages of keeping people fed: growing, harvesting, packing, processing, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food. It is an interconnected web of resources, activities, and people and decisions that they make that gets food to the table. A food system is more than one system. It is systems within systems. It is ecosystems, agricultural systems, processing systems, transportation systems, marketing systems, and much more.ⁱ

First Known Use: According to historian Rachel Laudan, in the 1970s, the term “food system” was used “to identify the ways in which a society or institution procures, distributes, and consumes food” such as a hospital food system. From the 1980s, the term began to be used in a more global and political sense. By the late 1980s and 90s, “food systems” was being used to analyze contemporary food production and consumption.ⁱⁱ

There are many different types of food systems in the world. For example, a food system can be a simple one, a complex one, a community food system (also called local), or a global food system. In a global system, food can come from anywhere in the world. Community food systems emphasize relationships among people. They are place-based, community-centered, include local people, and support the local economy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Indigenous food systems are based on centuries of ancestral knowledge and patterns of living in local ecosystems. They not only support health and well-being, but they are also crucial for cultural identity and spiritual well-being.^{iv} The Indigenous Food Systems Network defines an Indigenous food system as: “The vast myriad of rivers, watersheds, landforms, vegetation and climatic zones [that] have worked together for thousands of years to shape and form Indigenous land and food systems. Consisting of a multitude of natural communities, Indigenous food systems include all of the land, air, water, soil, and culturally important plant, animal, and fungus species that have sustained Indigenous Peoples over thousands of years.”^v Disrupting these traditional food systems was one way the federal government sought to “civilize” Native Americans. They were removed from their Tribal lands, forced to eat government commodity foods, and their children were taken to residential boarding schools where they were denied their traditional foods and forced to eat white man’s food. The purpose was to separate the Native Americans from their culture, and integrate them into the dominant non-Native society.

FOOD SYSTEM EXAMPLES

Chef Craig Gather: “Our food system has been colonized. That’s the reason we don’t have that relationship with some of those traditional foods anymore.”

Clayton Harvey Gather: “Before this whole trend of eating organic came along, our ancestors built this complex food system of wild food that the Western Apache people ate. We didn’t call it organic, it was just food.”

Visual Examples: Food System

We get our food through food systems. Industrial food systems can include agricultural systems, processing systems, transportation systems, marketing systems, and more. By contrast, Indigenous food systems are based on centuries of ancestral knowledge and patterns of living in local ecosystems.



In a modern industrial food system, consumers choose from a multitude of products without knowing where in the world these foods came from or who produced them. There are no explicit connections to nature, community, or physical or spiritual health. People who do not have enough money cannot buy the food and may go hungry.



As Twila and her niece, Mae, forage in *The Hunt*, they consciously interact with their entire food system—land, air, water, soil, and culturally important plants and animals that have sustained Indigenous Peoples over thousands of years. This ancestral food system supports health and is also crucial for cultural identity and spiritual well-being.

ENDNOTES

- i “Center for Ecoliteracy,” *Understanding Food and Climate Change*, https://foodandclimate.ecoliteracy.org/interactive-guide/page_0002.xhtml.
- ii Rachel Laudan: *A Historian’s Take on Food and Food Politics* (blog); “Looking for the Origin of the Term ‘Food System,’” by Rachel Lauden, posted May 6, 2020, <https://www.rachellaudan.com/2020/05/looking-for-the-origin-of-the-term-food-system.html>.
- iii For a detailed discussion of community food systems, see: Mary Hendrickson, Sarah Hultine Massengale, Crystal Weber, “University of Missouri Extension,” *Introduction to Local Food Systems*, (April 2015), <https://extension.missouri.edu/dm271>.
- iv Alder Keleman Saxena, Ximena Cadima Fuentes, Rhimer Gonzales Herbas, Debbie L. Humphries, “Indigenous Food Systems and Climate Change: Impacts of Climatic Shifts on the Production and Processing of Native and Traditional Crops in the Bolivian Andes,” *Frontiers in Public Health* 4:20, (2016), doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2016.00020.
- v “Indigenous Food Systems Network,” www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/.

FOODWAYS

DEFINITION: the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical periodⁱ

First Known Use: 1941, in the meaning defined above.

The term “eating habits” refers to why and how people eat, which foods they eat, and with whom they eat, as well as the ways people obtain, store, use, and discard food. Individual, social, cultural, religious, economic, environmental, and political factors all influence people’s eating habits.

Foodways connect people to a geographic region, a climate, a period of time, an ethnic or religious group, and a family.ⁱⁱ Through the study of foodways, we can learn about tradition and change. We can learn about geography, history, natural resources, the built environment, economics, sustainability, herbal lore, spiritual beliefs, and much more. Through food we express our “most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Native foodways refers to the interrelated nature of cultural food systems.^{iv} Within an Indigenous landscape, there’s no separation between you and your food, and you and your foodways.^v

FOODWAYS EXAMPLES

Chef Craig *The Hunt*: “Through foodways we engage in recovery from historic trauma and promote Indigenous healing and self-determination.”

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: “We’re celebrating Apache foodways in a kitchen built by Apaches for Apaches, so the Café is a living example of food sovereignty in action.”

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: “Our people need to see what’s possible with Apache foodways.”

Visual Examples: Foodways

Foodways connect a region, its ecosystems, geography, history, and the knowledge and spiritual beliefs of the people who live and eat there. Within an Indigenous landscape, there is no separation between people, place, and food.



How are traditional foodways expressed? In *The Salmon People*, Samuel Gensaw III travels through the Klamath River area in search of fish. As he paddles his canoe, he experiences the forests, waterways, people, and history of the area.



Foodways are the traditions associated with acquiring food, its preparation, serving, and consumption. Here Sammy and a colleague in the Ancestral Guard use nets to catch fish from shore. Salmon fishing traditions have been passed down for generations.



Following Yurok tradition, Sammy slow-roasts salmon next to an open fire on the beach. He skewers the salmon on redwood stakes and places them around the fire pit. The salmon, the river, the people, the forest, and the smoke from the fire are all part of the Yurok foodways.

ENDNOTES

- i “Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “foodways,” accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foodways>.
- ii According to the 4-H Folkpatterns series developed by the Michigan State University Museum and Michigan State University Extension 4-H Programs, foodways are “all of the traditional activities, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with the food in your daily life. Foodways include customs of food production, preservation, preparation, presentation, gathering, marketing (both buying and selling), uses of food products other than for eating and food folklore.” Julia Darnton, “Foodways: When food meets culture and history,” Michigan State University Extension, last modified December 12, 2012, www.canr.msu.edu/news/foodways_when_food_meets_culture_and_history.
- iii According to Harris, Lyon, and McLaughlin: “. . .everything about eating including what we consume, how we acquire it, who prepares it, and who’s at the table—is a form of communication rich with meaning. Our attitudes, practices, and rituals around food are a window onto our most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves.” Patricia Harris, David Lyon, Sue McLaughlin, *The Meaning of Food*, (CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2005) VIII–IX.
- iv Kaylena Bray and Melissa K. Nelson, Phd., “Revitalizing Native Foodways,” *Earth Island Journal*, Autumn 2015, https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/magazine/entry/revitalizing_native_foodways/.
- v Western Apache Chef Nephi Craig: “‘Going Green’ Is Really ‘Going Native,’” interview by Hanna Choi, NPR, CODE SW!TCH, April 4, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/04/04/470071043/going-green-is-really-going-native-western-apache-chef-nephi-craig>.

FORAGE

DEFINITION: the act of foraging: search for provisionsⁱ

First Known Use: “a roving in search of provisions” in English is from late fifteenth century.ⁱⁱ

The word “foraging” is often used interchangeably with “hunting and gathering.” It is commonly used to describe the actions of people who depend largely on food collection of wild resources. It means relying on food from nature, such as plants, small animals, insects, and birds. “Foraged wild resources are obtained by a variety of methods including gathering plants, collecting shellfish or other small fauna, hunting, scavenging, and fishing.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Prior to the arrival of European colonizers, Native Americans had sustained themselves for thousands of years by hunting, fishing, and foraging. The settlers did not “discover” an untouched wilderness; Native people have always managed the land. It has been shaped by thousands of years of Indigenous burning, pruning, sowing, selective foraging, and tilling. Native Americans were also effective hunters, influencing the abundance, diversity, and distribution of wildlife within their Tribal territories. From time immemorial, Native Americans have practiced sustainable foraging economies.^{iv}

Many of the first European settlers who followed Columbus to North America came with the idea of creating an agricultural society that was modeled on English customs. Harvard’s online story map, *A Fine and Fertile Country: How America Mapped Its Meals*, demonstrates “how food production has been a matter of national concern ever since the first settlers arrived. People migrated to and within North America looking for a ‘fine and fertile country,’ a phrase etched into land surveys (and popular culture) well into the nineteenth century.”^v

With the arrival of the settlers, restrictions on Native American foraging began to take hold and continue to today. The settlers pushed Native Americans off their traditional food foraging grounds, claiming the newly occupied land for agriculture. “As more and more white settlers arrived in America over generations, the foraging practices of many Native Americans—or, more specifically, their status as hunter-gatherers, as opposed to agricultural practitioners—was used to justify driving them from lands.”^{vi}

As Isaak Kantor points out in his article “Ethnic Cleansing and America’s Creation of National Parks,” “Glacier and many other national parks are built upon an illusion. They seem to offer us a rare chance to experience the continent as it was, to set eyes on a vista unspoiled by human activity. This uninhabited nature is a recent construction. The untold story behind our unspoiled views and virgin forests is this: these landscapes were inhabited, their features named, their forests utilized, their plants harvested and animals hunted. Native Americans have a history in our national parks measured in millennia.

They were forcibly removed, and later treaty rights to traditional use such as hunting and fishing were erased, often without acknowledgment or compensation. Immediately after these removals, the parks were advertised as a showcase of uninhabited America, nature's handiwork unspoiled."^{vii}

From the time Congress established the National Park Service in 1916 until 1960, it became illegal to remove any plants from within park borders, even though in 1960 some park superintendents began letting visitors gather certain nuts, berries, and fruits for personal consumption. But that 1960 policy and a 1983 update to it did not allow Native Americans to forage for traditional cultural purposes (outside of rare exceptions made in historic treaties). That changed in 2016 when the Park Service invited federally recognized Tribes to apply for permission to gather plants for traditional purposes. However, before any plants can be gathered, the Park Service conducts an environmental assessment to ensure that the plants' future growth remains unharmed."^{viii}

FORAGE EXAMPLES

Twila Cassadore *Gather*: "I am a traditional harvester. I like to forage food."

Chef Craig *Café Gozhóó*: "Now we'll be able to order foods that were grown at the farm, that were brought in or purchased from local growers or harvesters or foragers."

Visual Examples: Forage

Foraging refers to the actions of people who rely on food from nature, such as plants, small animals, insects, fungi, and birds. Foraging requires deep knowledge of a place, what grows there, and the benefits humans can enjoy from it.



Twila Cassadore forages with her niece, Mae. Twila is a traditional Apache forager whose knowledge includes where to find foods, when and how to harvest them, their health benefits, and their spiritual and cultural significance. She has a deep understanding of how plants, animals, and humans benefit each other. For example, Twila hunts the gloscho (desert wood rat) that eats medicinal plants that are too strong for people to consume safely. The plants' healing qualities become available, however, when people eat the rat.



When Twila forages with her niece, Mae, she continues the tradition of elders passing on knowledge from one generation to the next.



Chef Craig prepares elegant dishes with foraged ingredients. The food he serves tells a story about Apache lands, people, and traditions.

ENDNOTES

- i *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “forage,” www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/forage.
- ii *Online Etymology Dictionary*, www.etymonline.com/search?q=forage.
- iii Carol R. Ember, “Hunter-Gatherers” in C. R. Ember, ed. *Explaining Human Culture*, Human Relations Area Files, June 1, 2020, <http://hraf.yale.edu/ehc/summaries/hunter-gatherers>.
- iv For many Tribes, acorns were a staple crop. Other traditional foods that were foraged were plants that come from numerous plant families, including Amaryllidaceae (Onion Family), Apiaceae (Carrot Family), Asteraceae (Sunflower Family), Boraginaceae (Borage Family), Brassicaceae (Mustard Family), Fabaceae (Legume Family), Lamiaceae (Mint Family), Nymphaeaceae (Water-lily Family), Poaceae (Grass Family), Polygonaceae (Buckwheat Family), and Ranunculaceae (Buttercup Family). For an extensive discussion of edible seeds and grains in California and the Klamath Tribe of Oregon, see National Plant Data Team, *Edible Seeds and Grains of California Tribes and the Klamath Tribe of Oregon in the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology Collections*, (Washington, DC: Natural Resources Conservation Service), <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/ethnobotany/documents/EdibleSeedsGrainsCaliforniaTribes.pdf>.
- v Harvard Library, *A Fine and Fertile Country: How America Mapped Its Meals*, <https://arcg.is/1LnH4C>.
- vi For an extensive discussion of the US anti-foraging laws, see Baylen J. Linnekin, “Food Law Gone Wild: The Law of Foraging,” *Fordham Urban Law Journal* Vol. 45, No. 3, 995 (2018), <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol45/iss4/3/>.
- vii Isaak Kantor, “Ethnic Cleansing and America’s Creation of National Parks” in *Public Land and Resources Law Review*, Vol. 28, (2007), <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1267&context=plrlr>.
- viii This article describes foraging after the updated federal policy when a group of Cherokee Indians gathered sochan—a traditional Cherokee food—in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Leigh Ann Henion, “Cherokee Indians Can Now Harvest Sochan Within a National Park,” *Smithsonian* magazine, October 2019, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/cherokee-indians-harvest-sochan-national-park-180973089/>.

GENOCIDE

DEFINITION: the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural groupⁱ

First Known Use: 1944

In 1944, the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkinⁱⁱ coined the term “genocide.” While a university student in the 1920s, he had learned about the massacres of Armenians during World War I. Horrified to discover that there were no international laws to prosecute the Ottoman leaders who had committed these crimes, he asked, “Why was killing a million people a less serious crime than killing a single individual?”ⁱⁱⁱ By the time of World War II, Lemkin had already been working for decades to make the world recognize mass murder as an international crime. The atrocities in World War II gave Lemkin’s efforts a new sense of urgency.

Lemkin explained that by ‘genocide’ [he] meant “. . . the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group.”^{iv} An “. . . important element of the definition of genocide: people were killed or excluded not because of anything they did or said or thought but simply because they were members of a particular group.”^v

The concept of cultural genocide is considered a component of genocide. It’s defined by the Armenian Genocide Museum as “acts and measures undertaken to destroy nations’ or ethnic groups’ culture through spiritual, national, and cultural destruction.” Cultural genocide involves the “. . . eradication and destruction of cultural artifacts, such as books, artworks, and structures, as well as the suppression of cultural activities that do not conform to the destroyer’s notion of what is appropriate. Among many other potential reasons, cultural genocide may be committed. . . [as part of] the suppression of an Indigenous culture by invaders and colonisers, etc.”^{vi}

In the United States, Native American boarding schools had the effect of cultural genocide. “Native American children were forcibly abducted from their homes and put into Christian and government run boarding schools beginning in the mid 1800’s and continuing into the 1950’s. This was done pursuant to a federal policy designed to ‘civilize’ Indians and to stamp out Native cultures; a deliberate policy of ethnocide and cultural genocide. Cut off from their families and culture, the children were punished for speaking their Native languages, banned from conducting traditional or cultural practices, shorn of traditional clothing and identity of their Native cultures, taught that their cultures and traditions were evil and sinful, and that they should be ashamed of being Native American.”^{vii} An important component of the government policy for “civilizing” the Native Americans was to teach them farming, so part of each school day was spent on farming skills. Girls learned trades

such as nursing and housekeeping skills. Traditional Native foods were banished, and children were fed a diet that included domesticated meats, cheese, wheat flour, and sugar, forcing students to acquire the food and dining traditions of white society, including the use of knives, forks, spoons, napkins, and tablecloths.^{viii}

GENOCIDE EXAMPLES

Samuel Gensaw III *The Salmon People*: “Ten percent of our population survived genocide. And out of that 10 percent, we are direct descendants.”

Samuel Gensaw III *The Salmon People*: “Our ancestors fought through genocide. They fought through that trauma and not only did they survive that trauma, they passed down knowledge that built the societies that we’re built on today.”

Twila Cassadore *Gather*: “Before genocide, Apaches had a whole different way of life.”

Fred DuBray *Gather*: “They had slogans like ‘kill the Indian, save the man.’ That’s genocide.”

Visual Examples: Genocide

Genocide is the intentional destruction of people who belong to a certain group. Genocide can take two forms: *physical genocide* and *cultural genocide*. Physical genocide is the actual killing of people. Cultural genocide involves separating people from their land, families, possessions, religion, food, and language in order to destroy their cultural identity.



Physical genocide: In *Gather*, Chef Craig describes Indigenous Peoples who were “systematically wiped out” during colonization.



Cultural genocide: Indigenous children were separated from their families and detained in Christian and government-run boarding schools beginning in the mid 1800s. Children were not allowed to speak their native language, eat traditional foods, wear traditional clothes, or engage in any familiar cultural practices.

These photos show Apache children at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The photo on the left shows the children as they arrived in November 1886; on the right is how they appeared four months later, around March 1887.

ENDNOTES

- i *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “genocide”, accessed April 8, 2021, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/genocide.
- ii To learn more about the life of Raphael Lemkin, see “Life of Raphael Lemkin,” <http://lemkinhouse.org/about-us/life-of-raphael-lemkin/>.
- iii To learn more about Raphael Lemkin and his efforts to include genocide in international law, see the website Facing History & Ourselves, “Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention,” <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-11/raphael-lemkin-and-genocide-convention>.
- iv To learn more about Raphael Lemkin and how he coined the term, see the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Holocaust Encyclopedia website, “Coining a Word and Championing a Cause,” encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/coining-a-word-and-championing-a-cause-the-story-of-raphael-lemkin.
- v Facing History & Ourselves, “Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention.”
- vi Retrieved from, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_genocide, last edited on 10 March 2022.
- vii Brett Lee Shelton, “Boarding School Healing,” Native American Rights Fund (website), www.narf.org/cases/boarding-school-healing/.
- viii For an extensive discussion of Indian boarding school policy of the United States, see “Let All That is Indian Within You Die!,” *Native American Rights Fund Legal Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 2013), <https://narf.org/nill/documents/nlr/nlr38-2.pdf>.

STEWARDSHIP

DEFINITION: the conducting, supervising, or managing of something, *especially*: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care, such as the stewardship of natural resourcesⁱ

First Known Use: fifteenth century

The first use of the term “stewardship” in English was during the Middle Ages. It was used to describe jobs such as the office of a steward, or manager of a large household. From 1899, stewardship also had a specific ecclesiastical sense of “responsible use of resources in the service of God.”ⁱⁱ More recently, stewardship has taken on the following definition: “Stewardship is the responsible use (including conservation) of natural resources in a way that takes full and balanced account of the interests of society, future generations, and other species. . . .”ⁱⁱⁱ The concept of stewardship has its roots in cultural traditions and religions around the world.^{iv}

In North America, the first European colonists viewed the natural world as something to be tamed, used, and controlled. By the mid- to late-nineteenth century, natural resources were heavily exploited, especially in the American West. Assuming a seemingly inexhaustible supply of natural resources, Americans developed a “tradition of waste.”^v

The public's attitude toward and their exploitation of natural resources alarmed conservationists, who called for federal supervision of the nation's resources and the preservation of those resources for future generations. The conservationists found President Theodore Roosevelt sympathetic and eager to take action, which led to the development of national parks; flood control; reforestation; and the preservation of minerals, soil, water, and wildlife resources.^{vi}

However, as Christopher Wells points out: “Officially protecting public lands also had harsh effects on Native Americans, particularly when the boundaries of new national forests, parks, and monuments placed their traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering territories off-limits. In some cases. . .officials used conservation laws to restrict Indian mobility, to alter traditional subsistence practices like hunting, fishing, gathering, and burning forest undergrowth, and even to evict Indians entirely from their homes. Dam and irrigation projects in the American West also came with a price.”^{vii}

In the nineteenth century, differences in philosophy created tensions between preservationists like John Muir, who favored the preservation of scenic wilderness areas, and conservationists like Gifford Pinchot, one of Roosevelt's trusted advisors and the first Chief of the United States Forest Service, who advocated managing natural resources to

conserve them for future generations. Roosevelt chose Pinchot's hands-on "conservation" over Muir's hands-off "preservation," and vigorously built the government's capacity to manage timber, wildlife, and water resources more sustainably.^{viii}

Aldo Leopold (1887–1948), author of *A Sand County Almanac*, championed environmental stewardship based on a land ethic. At its core, a land ethic is simply caring: about people, about land (soil, water, land, plants, and animals), and about strengthening the relationships between them. In Leopold's words, "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."^{ix}

Today, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration defines environmental stewardship as "The responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices to enhance ecosystem resilience and human well-being." It includes actions such as replanting trees, planting community gardens, restoring watersheds, and purchasing sustainable products.^x

Visual Examples: Stewardship

From time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have used cultural burning to steward the landscape. Small intentional burns renewed food, medicinal and culturally important resources, created habitat for animals, and reduced the risk of dangerous wildfires.



Margo Robbins, of the Cultural Fire Management Council, leads firefighters in a ceremony on Yurok Reservation and ancestral lands as they light an Indigenous prescribed burn with bundles of wormwood.



Dr. Frank Lake, a US Forest Service research ecologist, examines recently burned beargrass, an important basketry material. Of Karuk descent, Lake incorporates traditional ecological knowledge into his work.



Evergreen huckleberry rests on a Yurok winnowing tray next to a basket woven of conifer roots, maiden hair ferns, and beargrass. For Indigenous Peoples, controlled burns are vital for maintaining their cultures. (All photos this page by Kili Yüyan; see Credits and Acknowledgments.)

ENDNOTES

- i *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “stewardship,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stewardship>.
- ii *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/stewardship>.
- iii Richard Worrell and Michael C. Appleby, “Stewardship of Natural Resources: Definition, Ethical and Practical Aspects,” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 12 (2000): 263–277, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009534214698>.
- iv Raphaël Mathevet, François Bousquet, Christopher M. Raymond, “The Concept of Stewardship in Sustainability Science and Conservation Biology,” *Biological Conservation*, Vol. 217 (Jan. 2018), 363–370, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2017.10.015>.
- v For an extensive collection of primary resources and classroom materials about the Conservation Movement, see “Conservation in the Progressive Era,” Library of Congress Classroom Materials, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/progressive-era-to-new-era-1900-1929/conservation-in-progressive-era>.
- vi Ann E. Chapman, “Nineteenth Century Trends in American Conservation,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/nineteenth-century-trends-in-american-conservation.htm>.
- vii Christopher Wells, “The Early Conservation Movement,” Teaching History.org, <https://teachinghistory.org/history-content/beyond-the-textbook/25578>.
- viii This Library of Congress website documents the historical formation and cultural foundations of the movement to conserve and protect America’s natural heritage through primary resources such as prints, photographs, film, government documents, and more. “American Memory: The Evolution of the Conservation Movement, 1850–1920,” <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>.
- ix “The Land Ethic,” Aldo Leopold Foundation, <https://www.aldoleopold.org/about/the-land-ethic/>.
- x This page on the NOAA website provides definitions and examples of different kinds of stewardship activities that educators can use with their students. NOAA, Common Measure Definitions: Stewardship definitions, <https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/noaa-education-council/monitoring-resources/common-measure-definitions/stewardship-definitions>.

FOCUS CHAPTERS



CAFÉ GOZHÓÓ



CAFÉ GOZHÓÓ

White Mountain Apache Nation

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

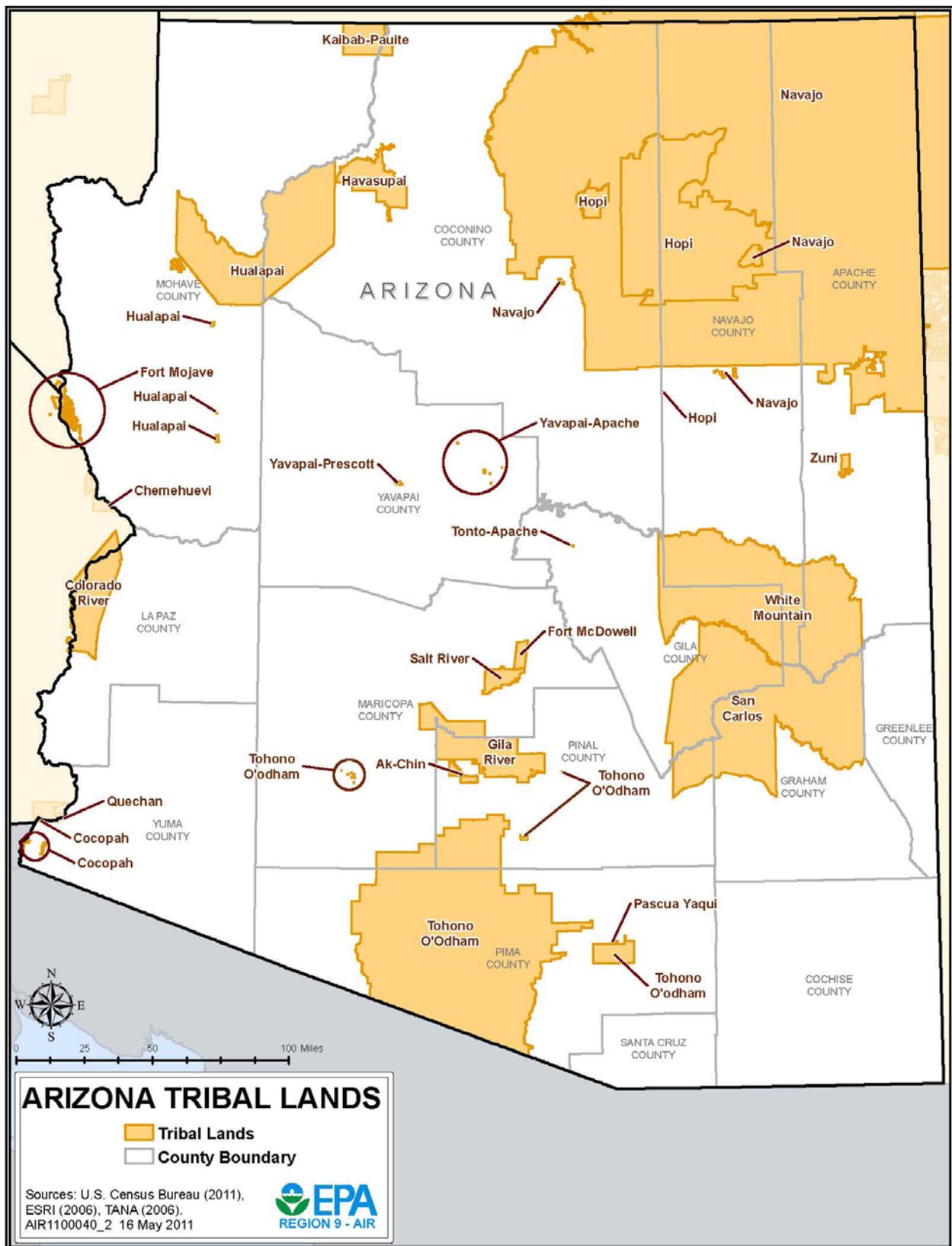
Film Synopsis: In Arizona, on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, Chef Nephi Craig is using his culinary skills and knowledge to help Tribal members. The reservation is a food desert. Tribal members eat commodity foods from the US Department of Agriculture’s food program. He’s concerned about serious health and social problems among members of his Tribe who are suffering emotional distress due to the historic trauma of colonialism and food-related health issues. Chef Craig believes a return to traditional foods and Apache foodways—becoming reacquainted with their cultural values and traditions—is the answer.

Running time: 13:52 minutes

Key issues: food sovereignty, colonization, colonial mindset, decolonization, cultural identity, place



In *Café Gozhóó*, Chef Nephi Craig applies his culinary skills and knowledge to help Tribal members. He believes a return to traditional foods and Apache foodways can heal emotional trauma and improve physical health.



In 1871, President Ulysses S. Grant established the Fort Apache Reservation, now known as the White Mountain Apache Reservation. It encompasses 1.67 million acres and ranges in elevation from less than 3,000 feet at the Salt River Canyon to over 11,400 feet at the top of Mount Baldy, one of four sacred peaks anchoring the Apache cultural landscape.

BACKGROUND

“Apachería,” the territory the Apache inhabited, was a region that extended from north of the Arkansas River into the northern states of Mexico and from Central Texas to Central Arizona. It encompassed more than 250,000 square miles and included a variety of ecosystems, from desert to grasslands, wetlands, and ponderosa pine forests. “The Western Apache had access to a wider variety of wild plant foods than any other group in western North America.”ⁱ

Anthropologists divided the Apache into linguistic groups: the Chiricahua, Jicarilla, Kiowa-Apache, Lipan, Mescalero, Navajo, and Western Apache. The Western Apache are divided into territorial groups, which include The White Mountain Apache, who live primarily in east-central Arizona on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.ⁱⁱ

Since time immemorial, the White Mountain Apache have lived in the White Mountains. It is here that their ancestors learned to be N’dee (The People). The reservation is about 1.67 million acres (more than 2,600 square miles). It ranges in elevation from 2,600 feet in the Salt River Canyon on the southwest corner of the reservation to 11,409 feet at the top of Mount Baldy, one of the White Mountain Apache sacred peaks.ⁱⁱⁱ

The White Mountain Apache believe that they come from the earth, and that they belong to the earth. “The Apache is closely attached to the locality where he is reared or has lived for a long time. A valley, the surrounding hills, the local trees, plants, animals, climate, and seasons all go to form the familiar environment which he calls home.”^{iv}

Traditionally, the White Mountain Apache were seminomadic hunters and gatherers who also practiced a limited amount of agriculture, growing corn, sunflowers, beans, squash, and other foods. The men hunted large game such as deer and elk, and the women gathered wild plants for food and medicine. “They followed seasonal migration patterns that depended upon the availability of food resources in specific regions at a particular time. They moved from the low areas of the northern Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona to the higher altitudes with grassland and forest toward the north. The variety of ecological zones in their territory offered subsistence at various times of the year. They camped in small clusters and moved from place to place as opportunity presented itself.”^v

From April to September, the Apache hunted, foraged, planted, and harvested over a wide territory. Late fall and winter were the most important times for hunting. In April, the gathering began with the harvesting of mescal. With the spring rains in May, families headed toward garden plots in river valleys, staying until the corn reached about six or eight inches in July. Generally, several elders would stay behind to tend the crops. In the following weeks, groups would head off to low desert regions to harvest saguaro cactus fruit. At midsummer, groups would gather to harvest acorns in the stands of the Emory oak (*Quercus*

emoryi), where the harvest would last about four weeks. In August, the mesquite beans were ready to harvest and by September families had returned to harvest at the farm sites associated with their family or clan.^{vi} Acorns were an important staple crop, along with piñon nuts, mesquite beans, cactus, and other fruits. Traditionally the Apache grew blue corn for flour and white and yellow corn for a ceremonial fermented corn drink, tulapai.^{vii}

Some foods were stored where they were gathered but most were packed home, often over miles of rugged country, to be stored in caves, a cache, or a wickiup, where they would be available throughout the winter. The most permanent and largest wickiups were always constructed at farm sites and were called by the special term nesdanko-wa (ripe fruits wickiup).^{viii}

Large public ceremonies were held throughout the year. June brought ceremonies for protection against snakes and lightning. In June, July, and August, special lightning dances were held for rain and crops. These seasonal rites were the nearest practice to annual ceremonies that the White Mountain Apache had. These ceremonies brought together large crowds from all over White Mountain Apache country, irrespective of band and local group. The main attractions were feasts, dancing, and socializing.^{ix}

Apache Wars

The Apaches acquired horses from the Pueblo Indians, who had been introduced to horses by Spanish settlers in the early seventeenth century. By 1692, the Apache were a powerful nation of mounted Native Americans. From 1861 until 1886, Americans fought the Apache Tribes of the Southwest in battles that stretched from southern Arizona to New Mexico, and often across the border into Mexico. In May 1871, Major General George Crook took command of the Department of Arizona. He determined that he needed to subdue the hostile Apache bands in southern Arizona that roamed freely across the border between the United States and Mexico. He decided to test the idea of using Apache Scouts to find the enemy and enlisted the White Mountain Apache. With leaders such as Cochise and Geronimo, the Apache resisted domination by the Americans for more than two decades. Refusing to be confined to reservations, they attempted to maintain their traditional nomadic lifestyles, practicing their religious rituals and maintaining their freedom. The Apache Scouts played a decisive role in the Army's success in the Apache Wars, ending with the final surrender of the Chiricahua leader Geronimo in 1886.^x

Fort Apache

Early in the 1870s, the US government established reservations for the Apache. Camp Apache was designated for the Western Apache. The reservations created dramatically different circumstances for the Apache. For the first time, their movements were restricted. Their ability to travel widely to hunt, gather, and farm was curtailed and the subsistence strategy that had carried them through the millennia was no longer available to them.^{xi}

Soldiers began constructing what was initially named Camp Ord in 1870. After a series of name changes, the site became Camp Apache in February 1871, but it was not named Fort Apache until 1879. A US government official representing Ulysses S. Grant's administration visited the camp and designated the area around the post a reservation for the White Mountain Apache.^{xii} The Fort Apache Indian Reservation was established by executive order on November 9, 1871. It is now known as the White Mountain Apache Reservation. It originally included the San Carlos Apache Reservation, but the two were separated by an act of Congress in 1897. The White Mountain Apache had lost most of their traditional territory, although their reservation is in or near ancestral homelands.

A People and Landscape in Recovery

The traditional way of life for Native Americans changed dramatically once they were restricted to reservations. Indigenous Peoples' identity is tied to their land, their traditions, their cultural practices, and their spirituality. They have a deep psychological attachment to the land. In Apache, the word for mind and land, *ni'*, is the same. Break this relationship and the health of the individual is damaged. Traumatic historical events are increasingly linked to Indigenous health—events such as forced relocation, residential schools, loss of resources, suppression of cultural identity, and loss of traditional ways of knowing, language, and ancestral land.

Chef Nephi Craig, in reflecting on the Western Apache as a people and landscape in recovery, said, "As Indigenous people, we are a cross-cultural community in recovery from colonialism and historical trauma. The physical manifestations of historical trauma and intergenerational complex grief include violence, diabetes, obesity, addiction, heart disease, suicide, and preventable food-related diseases. We exist in a reality muddled with mixed messages of identity, settler colonialism, indigeneity, governance, society, popular culture, misconceptions, and assumptions of who we are as Indigenous people." He continues, ". . .we understand that foodways are the gentle and intelligent pathway into a realm of dignity and healing. Cooking, foraging, and agriculture require determination, honest hard work, and dedication, while activating the protection of cultural protocols surrounding identity, therefore reflecting our Indigenous values."^{xiii}

Growing Food Sovereignty

Food is a way to understand identity. Food defines who you are culturally and spiritually and is one way to revitalize Indigenous cultures. On the White Mountain Apache Reservation, Ndée Bikiyaa (The People's Farm) has a goal of bringing back traditional foods that the Apache ate before the introduction of US Department of Agriculture's commodity foods. Ndée Bikiyaa's mission is to restore personal and cultural health among the White Mountain Apache through agriculture and to show members of the Tribe how to prepare nontraditional foods in healthy ways.^{xiv} Farmer Clayton Harvey explains, "By going back to

our culture, back to our old way of life, by reclaiming that, we're not only helping our bodies, we're helping our way of thinking, we're becoming more sustainable."^{xv}

Ndée Bikíyaa began in 1980 as a for-profit farming venture that has since been redeveloped into a community food initiative. The farm planted 800 acres of alfalfa and rye. Due to funding and management issues, the farm lay fallow through the 1990s. Then, in 2005, in an attempt to assert the Tribe's water rights, the Tribal government reevaluated the farm as a means of developing its water use. The Tribe hired a consulting firm that recommended going organic to become profitable. It was not feasible to certify all the fields, so the project was scaled back to 120 acres of hay and a 2-acre garden with raised beds, a shade structure, and several cold-frame hoop houses. Currently, Ndée Bikíyaa sells produce at cost to community members through farmers markets, provides fresh produce to Café Gozhóó, organizes harvest festivals and workshops, and hosts volunteers, interns, and seasonal employees in the summer.^{xvi}

CLASSROOM OPENER

Food sovereignty is about having choices. It's about being able to choose where your food comes from, how it's grown or produced. It's about what food you eat. For Indigenous Peoples, food sovereignty is about culture, health, and justice. Before viewing this film, have students write a paragraph about the food choices they make.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the definition of "food sovereignty." With colonization, Native Americans lost control over their traditional foods and food system. Chef Craig gives reasons to pursue food sovereignty. What are they?
2. Review the definition of "food system." What if you lost control over your food system? What would you do if you could not choose the foods that you want to eat?
3. Review the definition of "food desert." Why does Chef Craig call the convenience store a food desert? Why is Café Gozhóo not a food desert?
4. Where can you get food in your community? Who decides what foods are available (at the grocery store, farmers market, CSA, etc.)?
5. Are there local food producers in your community? What do they produce?
6. Chef Craig talks about the selfishness and violence in his past that came from the "colonial mindset," the idea that whoever has the technology, economic means, and will to do so has the right to claim property, territory, and resources, regardless of the past, present, and future claims of other people and the claims of environment. How would you feel if a dominant culture took claim to your property and tried to "civilize" you?
7. Traditional food systems and cultural practices associated with them are in jeopardy of being lost. How will Café Gozhóo help preserve the White Mountain Apache food system and culture?
8. Chef Craig introduces people to the dishes they are serving at the café and he talks about expanding food vocabulary so people can make new choices. What do you think he means by that statement?
9. What do you think Chef Craig means when he says the café is an example of food sovereignty in action?
10. Think about your favorite food. Now imagine that you know where that food is available and how you can get it, but you are not allowed to, so you can no longer eat it. How would that make you feel?

11. Chef Craig talks about taking part in the Apache Sunrise Dance as a child. Sharing food is part of this female coming-of-age ceremony in which a girl temporarily becomes Changing Woman, the first lady and mother of her people. It is a significant and highly spiritual event for both the girl and the entire Apache community. Do you participate in ceremonies or celebrations? Is sharing food part of the celebration?
12. What impact did the loss of ancestral homelands and the creation of reservations have on what the Apache ate and their access to traditional food resources?
13. Think of a place that is important to you. What people, stories, or celebrations do you associate with this place? Why are those connections important?

FURTHER LEARNING

Middle School

Native American Education for All

Lesson Title: What Exactly Is Food Sovereignty?

“In this online activity, students explore the definition of food sovereignty and learn what some Tribes across the US are doing to return to food sovereignty. This activity encourages young people to involve their families and community in creating awareness of food sovereignty.”

https://vyvffsfd9t8kvhg7cidtcma-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Activity14.6-8.NIEA-Illuminative_What-Exactly-is-Food-Sovereignty.Final_.pdf

Grade 10

Oregon Department of Education: Food Sovereignty and Environmental Sustainability

In this online lesson students learn about the concept of food sovereignty and explore features of the traditional food systems of Native Americans in Oregon. Students compare the traditional food system to present-day food cultivation and consumption practices.

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Documents/SB13%20Curriculum/Science%20-%20Food%20Sovereignty%20Lesson%20Plan.pdf>

General Audience

Grounded Grub. Written by Hannah Fuller.

Resource Guide for Supporting Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

“This guide is a living document of resources aimed toward dismantling white supremacy in the food system and promoting food justice and food sovereignty. . . . Indigenous communities are leading the way to Tribal sovereignty, food sovereignty, and the cultivation of traditional foodways—the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food.”

<https://groundedgrub.com/articles/resource-guide-supporting-indigenous-food-sovereignty>

ENDNOTES

- i Joseph G. Jorgensen, *Western Indians: Comparative Environments, Languages, and Cultures of 172 Western American Indian Tribes*, (San Francisco, CA: Freeman, 1980), 127.
- ii Grenville Goodwin, *The Social Organization of the Western Apache*. (Tucson, AZ: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2019) 37, <https://uapress.arizona.edu/book/the-social-organization-of-the-western-apache>.
- iii "White Mountain Apache Tribe: Our Culture," <http://whitemountainapache.org/culture/>.
- iv Goodwin, *The Social Organization of the Western Apache*.
- v Richard J. Perry, *People of the Mountain Corridor: Western Apache Heritage*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), 155.
- vi Perry, *People of the Mountain Corridor: Western Apache Heritage*, 159.
- vii *From Garden Warriors to Good Seeds: Indigenizing the Local Food Movement* (blog); "Ndée Bikíyaa, 'The People's Farm,'" by Elizabeth Hoover, posted 19 September 2014, <https://gardenwarriorsgoodseeds.com/2014/09/19/ndee-bikiyaa-the-peoples-farm-white-mountain-apache-tribe-az/>.
- viii A traditional Apache dwelling is called a "wickiup." These dome-shaped structures are built out of oak or willow poles that are driven into the ground, tied together with strands of yucca, and covered with brush, which is tied in place with strands of yucca. Apache women built the wickiups and were responsible for their maintenance. The White Mountain Apache also had dwellings that were shaped like tents with two sloping sides, but were also constructed of poles and brush. Grenville Goodwin, *The Social Organization of the Western Apache*, 367.
- ix Goodwin, *The Social Organization of the Western Apache*, 366.
- x White Mountain Apache Tribe: Our Culture.
- xi Richard J. Perry. *People of the Mountain Corridor: Western Apache Heritage*, 173.
- xii Lieutenant Colonel Clayton R. Newell, USA-Ret., "Fort Apache, Arizona," National Museum of the United States Army (website), <https://armyhistory.org/fort-apache-arizona/>.
- xiii Nephi Craig, "Western Apachería: A People and Landscape in Recovery," *El Palacio*, <https://www.elpalacio.org/2018/12/western-apacheria/>.
- xiv "Ndée Bikíyaa, The People's Farm," <https://www.facebook.com/ndeebikiyaathepeoplesfarm/>.
- xv "Ndée Bikíyaa – The People's Farm," (Longmont, CO: First Nations Development Institute), <https://www.firstnations.org/videos/ndee-bikiyaa-the-peoples-farm/>.
- xvi *From Garden Warriors to Good Seeds* (blog), "Ndée Bikíyaa, 'The People's Farm.'"

THE HUNT



THE HUNT

San Carlos Apache Nation

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

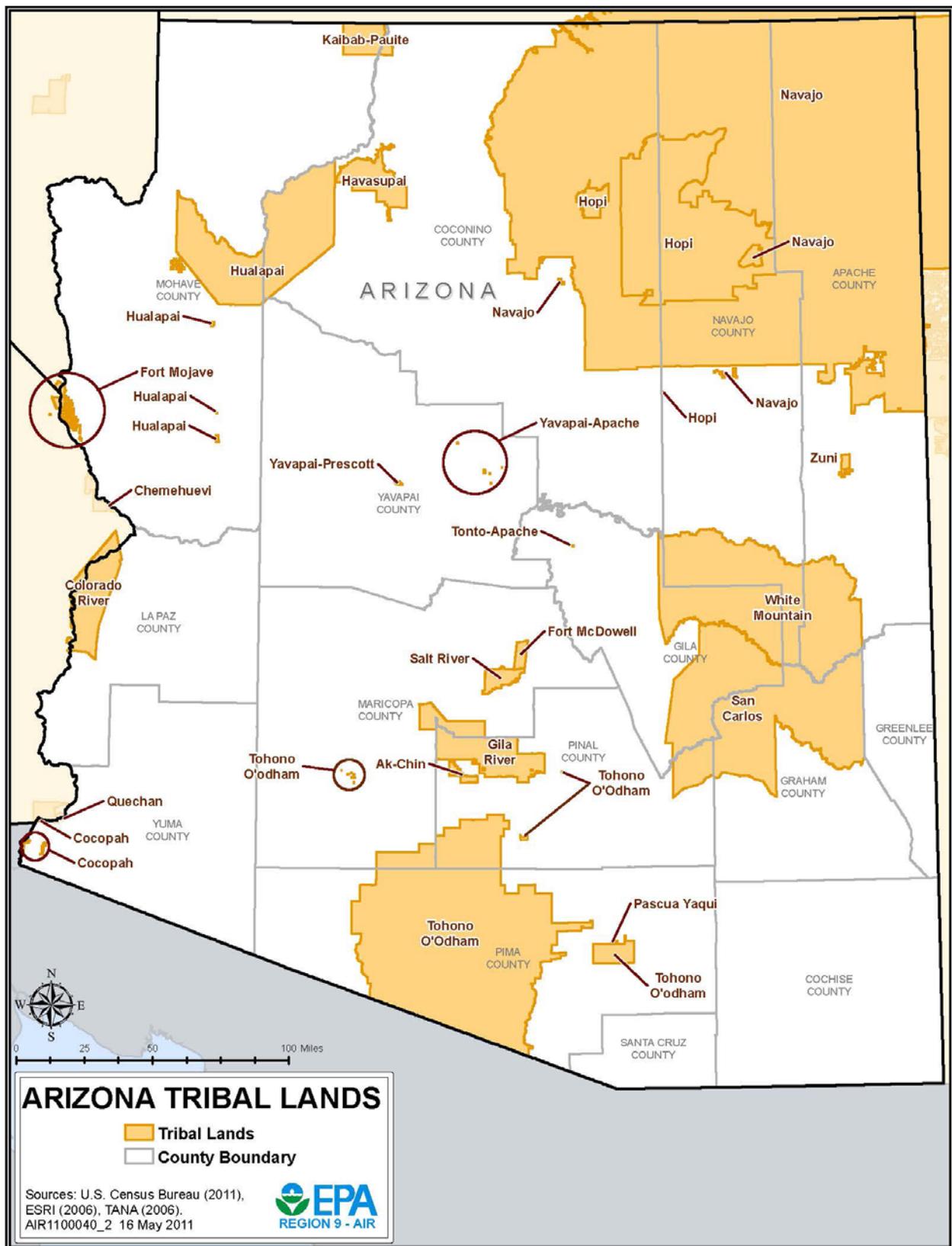
Film Synopsis: Chef Nephi Craig of the White Mountain Apache Nation and experienced forager Twila Cassadore of the San Carlos Apache Nation believe a return to traditional foods and Apache foodways—becoming reacquainted with their cultural values and traditions—is the answer to the serious health and social problems among members of their Tribes. Nephi Craig sets the scene with a brief discussion of the historic trauma of colonialism and food-related health issues. Twila Cassadore takes her niece on a hunting trip for gloscho (*Neotoma* spp./desert wood rat), a traditional source of protein for the Apache. She prepares her catch for Chef Craig and they discuss Twila’s work introducing members of their Tribes to traditional Western Apache foods.

Running time: 09:06 minutes

Key issues: food sovereignty, colonization, cultural identity, place, traditional knowledge, diabetes, health, traditional diet



Experienced forager Twila Cassadore takes her niece, Mae, on a hunting trip for a traditional Apache protein source: gloscho, the desert wood rat.



Today, the San Carlos Apache Reservation spans northern Graham, southeastern Gila, and eastern Pinal Counties in southeastern Arizona, encompassing 1,834,781 acres. The reservation is the tenth-largest Native American reservation in land area, with desert, alpine meadows, and ponderosa pine forest. The White Mountain Apache Reservation, which has a smaller land area, is directly north.

BACKGROUND

The Apaches are Athabascan-speaking people who migrated to the Southwest in the tenth century.ⁱ Traditionally, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, one of four Tribes that represent the Western Apache cultural tradition, roamed a large area of what is now eastern and central Arizona. Prior to sustained contacts with Americans, Western Apaches controlled over 11,000,000 acres of rugged mountains, deep canyons, desert basins, and stream valleys.ⁱⁱ

The Western Apache cultural landscape encompasses a diverse set of environmental life zones ranging from the high peaks to the low deserts of east-central Arizona. Trade, warfare, and ceremonial practices required occasional trips to the Rio Grande and east, Mexico, the Gulf of California, the coast of Southern California, and the Grand Canyon to the north.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Apache recognize four sacred mountains that anchor the Western Apache cultural landscape: Mount Baldy, Mount Graham, (a peak near Fort McDowell, or the northern portion of the Sierra Madre), Red Mountain (within the Four Peaks region at the southern end of the Mazatzal Mountains), and White Mountain (San Francisco Peaks). The area surrounded by these peaks is often referred to as the place where the Western Apache and their culture emerged. The story of the four sacred mountains is told to each young woman at her Sunrise Ceremony, a coming-of-age ceremony.^{iv}

Before being confined to the White Mountain Apache Reservation, the San Carlos Apache Tribe was seminomadic and practiced seasonal migration in search of food. They relied on hunting, foraging, and some small-scale agriculture to sustain themselves. Once the San Carlos Apache were forcibly settled onto the reservation, they were unable to maintain their traditional hunting and foraging and became dependent on US government rations, which included flour, sugar, lard, beans, and canned meats. These foods were incorporated into their diet and obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases became widespread.

History

Beginning with Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's 1540–42 expedition, Spanish explorers of what is now the American Southwest encountered both Pueblo settlements and deserted ruins. The Spanish, in making the region an outpost of New Spain, brought change as soldiers and colonizers built religious missions, presidios, and pueblos. They also brought with them horses, mules, cattle, sheep, tools, and weapons. The Spanish introduced the horse to the Pueblo, who traded it with the Apache. Trade, much more than theft, characterized Apache interactions with the Pueblo people until 1630, but the horse changed the Apache raiding strategy. Eventually the Western Apache developed a raiding complex emphasizing livestock in Mexico as a major component of their food quest.^v In 1786, in response to increased raiding, the Spanish military forces attempted to force Apaches to stop their raiding in exchange for rations and domestic goods. The policy was eventually abandoned in 1810 as an insurrection against Spanish rule began in Mexico.

In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain. Relations with the Apache began to deteriorate as Mexican soldiers withdrew from forts and rations were no longer handed out. The Mexican government tried to assimilate the Apache into mainstream Mexican society as farmers or laborers, although they were not successful and eventually bounties were offered for the scalps of Apache men, women, and children.

After the Mexican-American War ended in 1848, the Southwest officially became a part of the United States. This brought US settlers to the Southwest along with the US military. The US government met with the Apache, hoping to secure a permanent peace. “One source of tension between the Apache and the United States at the outset was disagreement about relations with Mexico. Neither the Mexicans nor the previous Spanish government ever had succeeded in occupying Apache territory. When Americans told the Apache that Mexico had given their lands to the United States as part of a war settlement, the position seemed absurd.”^{vi}

For 300 years, the Western Apache had resisted first the Spanish, and later the Mexican efforts to assimilate them into their cultures. Then, the US military and colonizers entered the scene. “In 1863 the Arizona territorial government openly advocated genocide for the Apache populations. Atrocities reached an extreme with the Camp Green massacre of 1871, when citizens of Tucson stole upon a nearby camp of sleeping Apache of the Aravaipa group who had established peaceful relationships with the surrounding population. The attackers clubbed women and children to death and kidnapped some forty children to be sold as slaves in Mexico.”^{vii}

In 1868, the White Mountain Apache allowed the US government to build Camp Ord, later known as Fort Apache, on their land. President Ulysses S. Grant established the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, now known as the White Mountain Apache Reservation, by executive order in 1871. Then, in 1897, an act of Congress established the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation by separating it from Fort Apache Reservation. In 1873, 1874, and 1876, 1877, 1893, and 1902, the US government diminished the size of the reservation by executive order due to the discovery of silver, copper, coal, water, and other minerals and natural resources. The reductions in the size of the reservation strictly served the interests of non-Apaches.

Today, the San Carlos Apache Reservation spans northern Graham, southeastern Gila, and eastern Pinal Counties in southeastern Arizona, encompassing 1,834,781 acres. The reservation is the tenth-largest Native American reservation in land area, with desert, alpine meadows, and ponderosa pine forest. The White Mountain Apache Reservation, which has a smaller land area, is directly north.

Barriers to Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Access to their traditional hunting, foraging, and farming lands changed dramatically once the United States took control of the Southwest. Apaches are legally restricted from accessing traditional off-reservation places and the traditional resources found there. Additionally, “the ecosystems of the Western Apache homeland have suffered profound changes since Inah (Europeans or Euro-Americans) arrived in the 1820s to trap beaver, and especially after 1870 as Inah agricultural and mining practices altered the natural world. . . .Apache elders describe this change as a series of speedy and violent transformations: commons changing into restricted lands, wetlands changing to drylands, water sources diminishing or disappearing altogether, the loss of topsoil in general, transformation of grasslands into woodlands or shrublands, transformation of open forests to choked forests, nonnative plants and humans displacing natives, and natural places transformed into industrial or urban sites.”^{viii}

These changes to the natural world have brought changes to the Western Apache people. Today they suffer from obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. In addition, separation from their traditional ways has fostered a sense of powerlessness. In an effort to reconnect their people to their traditional ways, the San Carlos Apache Tribe established an Elders Cultural Advisory Council (ECAC). “Traditional Apache culture is based on an intimate spiritual connection with and knowledge of the natural world. The elders believe that such connection and knowledge are necessary to respect one’s self, other humans, and all living things.”^{ix}

Of particular concern to the elders is the fact that the youth no longer eat the traditional foods that once kept Apache fit and strong. “Traditional knowledge about plants and animals is being lost as the young spend much of their time indoors watching television or playing video games. Dependence on federal government goods and services has become an acceptable way to live. Interest in the ancient traditions and ceremonies is slowly being replaced by interest in activities and values associated with the dominant non-Native American culture.”^x

Restoring a Healthy Relationship with Food

The Traditional Western Apache Diet Project was started to reestablish the Tribe’s healthy relationship with food and, in the process, help to address some of their current health concerns.^{xi}

According to data collected by Twila Cassadore of the Traditional Western Apache Diet Project, Western Apaches consumed more than 200 wild edible plants such as: mesal, mesquite pods, cactus fruit, yucca fruit, wild potatoes, juniper berries, acorn, walnuts, piñon nuts, wild onions, and seeds. They also cultivated more than a dozen varieties of corn and squash, and ate nearly 50 species of mammals and birds, including: deer, antelope, elk, and small game such as cottontail rabbits, desert wood rats, field mice, ground squirrels, and

tree squirrels. The most important individual foods by volume in the traditional diet were roasted agave hearts (*Agave parryi*), Emory oak acorns (*Quercus emoryi*), wild seeds, corn, and meat.^{xii}

In a case study of the project, Ian Record notes that the “Western Apaches adeptly supported themselves through their adaptive management of a versatile seasonal subsistence system rooted in an intimate understanding of and respect for the natural world. At precise points during the seasonal calendar, they strategically engaged in wild plant food gathering, hunting, small-scale agriculture, and to a lesser degree livestock raiding in optimal combinations, doing so with the people’s physical well-being and the natural world’s ecological well-being equally in mind.”^{xiii}

“Infused throughout all of the Traditional Western Apache Diet Project’s activities is the principle of food sovereignty not as the end goal, but an essential means to a much greater end goal—enabling Tribal members to live once again as vibrant, Apache human beings. Resurrecting the traditional Apache diet requires that the Apache people reclaim their traditional lifeways, which will reconnect them to the cultural, spiritual, and social power rooted in healthy relationships with the natural world and, in turn, empower them to address and overcome the many grave community challenges they face.”^{xiv}

Restoring a Traditional Food—Emory Oak Acorns

In traditional times, Western Apache families would spend up to a month gathering *chi ch’il* (acorns). Exact locations where the picking was good were kept in the family. Families collected as many acorns as possible, and extra acorns would be shared with elders who could no longer get out to gather. Acorn was also traded or sold for cash.

Recently Apache elders have noticed that the Emory oak stands are yielding fewer acorns, producing fewer seedlings, and declining in overall health. Unlike many oaks endemic to the eastern United States, Emory oak acorns are low in tannins and do not require leaching before eating. Emory oak acorns are rich in nutrients, fats, and protein, and are a critically important traditional food for Western Apache Tribes. They are a staple food and are used in ceremonies and other traditional cultural practices. In the past, acorn gathering excursions were intergenerational social events that brought families together.

“The reason for the observed decline of Emory oaks is not fully understood, but is likely linked to overgrazing by cattle, fire suppression, and increasing aridity. To address the question and problem of oak decline, the Forest Service, Northern Arizona University, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Tonto Apache Tribe, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the Dilzhe’e Apache of the Yavapai-Apache Nation formed an initiative, the Emory Oak Collaborative Tribal Restoration Initiative (EOCTRI, pronounced ‘E oak tree’). The ultimate goal of this coalition is to unite Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), Western science, and land management to ensure the long-term availability of acorns on public land for Western Apache Tribes.”^{xv}

CLASSROOM OPENER

This film segment takes you on the hunt for and preparation of a traditional Western Apache food that is foreign to non-Apaches—the desert wood rat. This segment opens the door to exploring the edibility of plants and animals. How did plants and animals become food items? The introduction of new foods involves observation, research (has anyone eaten this before), and experimentation (does a small taste cause an adverse reaction). This process of introducing a new food can take years, but once it's accepted, it's shared throughout extensive trade routes that once existed between Tribes.^{xvi} Before viewing this film, engage students in a discussion of how new foods are introduced today. Then challenge them to think about how they would find edible food if they were dropped into an ecosystem where all the plants and animals were foreign to them.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the definition of “food desert.” Nephi Craig (White Mountain Apache) says the White Mountain Apache landscape is considered a “food desert”? What does he mean by that?
2. In the film, Nephi Craig says that 70 percent of foods today originated with Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. The Columbian Exchange was the exchange of plants, animals, diseases, and technologies between the Americas and the rest of the world following Columbus’s voyages. How did the Columbian Exchange shape food culture in the modern world? Can you name five foods from the Americas that shaped food culture in Europe, Africa, or Asia?
3. Nephi Craig says, “If you want to attack a people and wipe them out, attack their food.” What do you think he means by that?
4. Think about this statement: “Our food system has been colonized.” Think about what you know about colonization. What does it mean to colonize a food system? Is colonizing a food system an act of aggression? Explain. How did Euro-Americans impose their diet on the Apache?
5. In the film, Nephi Craig gives a presentation that outlines some of the impacts of European contact on Native Americans. What have you learned from hearing a Native American’s perspective on Native history? Do you think it’s important to hear more than one perspective? Why or why not?
6. Gloscho is the Apache word for desert wood rat, a small rodent that Apache boys would hunt for food. In the film, Twila Cassadore (San Carlos Apache) takes her niece on a hunting trip to teach her how to find and kill one. What are some traditions that you see being taught to the next generation? Is it important to pass on these traditions? Explain.

7. Have you ever gardened, hunted, fished, or gathered wild plants with a knowledge keeper in your community? What did you learn? How will you pass it on to future generations?
8. Twila Cassadore's knowledge of the desert wood rat's habitat reflects a relationship that members of her Tribe developed over hundreds of years—based on keen observation, experimentation, and practice. How does Twila share this knowledge to show her niece how to distinguish between the wood rat's nest and where a rattlesnake is living?
9. When Twila is cooking the wood rat, what other traditional knowledge is she sharing with the men? Think of a traditional food or a celebratory food that you prepare, such as a birthday cake or holiday foods. How do you prepare and serve the food? Where do you buy the food?
10. Twila says she is very selective about where she gets her wood rats. She wants them to be living near medicinal plants, especially ones that humans can't eat. She says if the plants are there, you know the wood rats are eating them and humans can get the benefits of the medicinal plants by eating the wood rats. Pick a food that you eat. Do you know what environment your food comes from?
11. Twila says this food source will not be accepted "out there." Why? What does she mean?
12. Have you ever learned to eat a new food that was unfamiliar to you? How did you learn about it? Did a friend or family member introduce you to it? How do you think the Apache learned about all the edible foods in their environment?

FURTHER LEARNING

Grades 3–5, 6–8

PBS LearningMedia: The Columbian Exchange

“Students develop their literacy skills through a social studies focus on how the Columbian Exchange impacted life on both sides of the Atlantic. During this process, they read informational text, learn and practice vocabulary words, and explore content through videos and interactive activities.”

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/midlit11.soc.splcol/the-columbian-exchange/>

Grades 9 and 10

America in Class from the National Humanities Center: The Columbian Exchange

“In this lesson students will explore a description of the Columbian Exchange written by Charles C. Mann as part of the introduction to his book, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. In three excerpts students will examine elements of the Exchange—an overview, a specific biological example of unintended consequences, and finally an example of unintended human costs of the Columbian Exchange. Each excerpt is accompanied by close reading questions for students to complete.”

<https://americainclass.org/the-columbian-exchange/>

K–12

Native Knowledge 360° Native Life and Food: Food Is More Than Just What We Eat

“NK360° *Helpful Handouts: Guidance on Common Questions* provides a brief introduction to teachers about important topics regarding Native American life, cultures, and communities. *Native Life and Food: Food Is More Than Just What We Eat* explores Indigenous relationships with food. Use this guide to discuss the continuing legacies of sustainable Native food practices. Culturally sensitive activities and resources related to Indigenous foods are provided.”

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/native-life-food>

ENDNOTES

- i “*San Carlos Apache Tribe*,” Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, <https://itcaonline.com/member-tribes/san-carlos-apache-tribe/>.
- ii “San Carlos is one of four tribes that represent the Western Apache (N’dee) cultural tradition. The other three are the Payson Tonto Apache Tribe, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the Yavapai-Apache Nation.” John R. Welch, “Earth, Wind, and Fire: Pinal Apaches, Miners, and Genocide in Central Arizona, 1859–1874,” *SAGE Open* (December 22, 2017): 2-3, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017747016>.
- iii Seth Pilsk and Jeanette C. Cassa, “The Western Apache Home: Landscape Management and Failing Ecosystems,” in *Connecting Mountain Islands and Desert Seas: Biodiversity and Management of the Madrean Archipelago II*, Gerald J. Gottfried, et al, Proceedings, RMRS-P-36. Fort Collins, CO: USDA, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, (2005): 282, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/treearch/pubs/23215>.
- iv Angie Krall and Vincent E. Randall, “Shí Kéyaa: The Western Apache Homeland and Archaeology of the Mogollon Rim,” Technical Report No. 2007-03, (Tucson, AZ: Desert Archaeology, Inc.) July 2009, https://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/tr2007-03_final.pdf.
- v Richard J. Perry. *Western Apache Heritage*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), 164.
- vi Perry, 171.
- vii Perry, 173.
- viii Pilsk and Cassa, “The Western Apache Home: Landscape Management and Failing Ecosystems,” 282.
- ix Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED), “Honoring Nations: 2000 Honoree: Elders Cultural Advisory Council (Forest Resources, San Carlos Apache Tribe),” (Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2001), https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/hpaied/files/elders_cultural_advisory_council.pdf?m=1639579072.
- x HPAIED, “Elders Cultural Advisory Council (Forest Resources, San Carlos Apache Tribe).”
- xi The Traditional Western Apache Project stems from a 28-year effort by San Carlos Apache Tribal staff, working directly with elders from the four Apache tribes in Arizona, to document and study traditional N’dee/N’nee (Western Apache) knowledge of the natural world, with a particular focus on pre-reservation N’dee nutrition, and ancestral healthcare and support systems. For more information, see: “Lessons from the Traditional Western Apache Diet Project,” https://www.ncai.org/ptg/Lessons_from_the_Traditional_Western_Apache_Diet_Project.pdf.
- xii Traditional Western Apache Diet Project, “Overview of Ancestral Western Apache Diet,” https://www.ncai.org/ptg/Overview_of_Ancestral_Western_Apache_Diet_-_Nutritional_Overview_-_RR.pdf.
- xiii National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Ian Record, “Tribal Governance Innovation Spotlight: Food Sovereignty: San Carlos Apache Tribe,” www.ncai.org/ptg/scapache. For a webinar of the Traditional Western Apache Project, see *Tribal Food Sovereignty Webinar: Launch of NCAI’s San Carlos Apache Case Study*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d9sOpgnWfw>.
- xiv National Congress of American Indians, “Food Sovereignty: San Carlos Apache Tribe.”
- xv Nanabah Lyndon, Vincent Randall, and Sara Souther, “Emory Oak Collaborative Tribal Restoration Initiative,” International Oak Society, February 12, 2021, <https://www.internationaloaksociety.org/content/emory-oak-collaborative-tribal-restoration-initiative>.
- xvi Linda Black Elk, “Native Science: Understanding and Respecting Other Ways of Thinking,” *Rangelands* 38(1) (2016): 3-4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rala.2015.11.003>.

THE SALMON PEOPLE



THE SALMON PEOPLE

Yurok Nation

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Film Synopsis: In Northern California, on the Klamath River, the Yurok Tribe is in crisis. Samuel Gensaw III sums it up: “We’re salmon people and our whole life revolves around the relationship we have with these salmon because we believe that once these salmon disappear, our people will follow. . . .As Indigenous People, we’re part of this environment and salmon are a huge part of our life; we’re fishermen and once the salmon are gone, it’s the end of the world for us and there’s no going back.” This film segment follows an Indigenous organizing network of young men, “The Ancestral Guard,” as they learn to find, harvest, and cook traditional foods. They advocate for the health of the Klamath River as part of the larger cultural and environmental issues around world renewal.

Running time: 13:47 minutes

Key issues: identity, stewardship, food desert, fishing wars, social and environmental injustice, treaties



The Salmon People follows Samuel Gensaw III and a network of young men—“The Ancestral Guard”—as they learn to find, harvest, and cook traditional foods and advocate for the health of the Klamath River.



The ancestral lands of the Yurok Tribe include coastal lagoons, ocean waters, tidal areas, redwood and other forests, prairies, and the Klamath River. Before 1850, the Yurok lived in permanent villages along the Pacific Coast from today's cities of Trinidad and Crescent City and along the lower 45 miles of the Klamath River.

“Our people have always lived on this sacred and wondrous land along the Pacific Coast and inland on the Klamath River, since the Spirit People, Wo’ge’ made things ready for us and the Creator, Ko-won-no ekc-on Ne ka-nup-ceo, placed us here. From the beginning, we have followed all the laws of the Creator, which became the whole fabric of our Tribal sovereignty. In times past and now Yurok people bless the deep river, the tall redwood trees, the rocks, the mounds, and the trails. We pray for the health of all the animals, and prudently harvest and manage the great salmon runs and herds of deer and elk. We never waste and use every bit of the salmon, deer, elk, sturgeon, eels, seaweed, mussels, candlefish, otters, sea lions, seals, whales, and other ocean and River animals. We also have practiced our stewardship of the land in the prairies and forests through controlled burns that improve wildlife habitat and enhance the health and growth of the tan oak acorns, hazelnuts, pepperwood nuts, berries, grasses, and bushes, all of which are used and provide materials for baskets, fabrics, and utensils.”

The Preamble of the Yurok Tribe Constitution 1993ⁱ

BACKGROUND

Since time immemorial, for many thousands of years, the Yurok people have lived along the Klamath River in Northwest California. Before they were given the name “Yurok,” they called themselves Oohl, which means Indian people. There are natural resources associated with the River that are fundamental to their culture. The Yurok rely on the fish, other aquatic and terrestrial animals, and plants for their subsistence, economy, ceremonies, and recreation. Tribal religious and ceremonial practices focus on the health of the world; the Klamath River and its fisheries are a priority. For example, the White Deerskin Ceremony is held to thank the Earth and Creator for continued sustenance. Other ceremonies like the mey-lee (Brush Dance) and the woo-neek-we-ley-goo (Jump Dance) are linked to the River. The purpose of these ceremonial dances is to renew or maintain the health of the world.ⁱⁱ

The ancestral territory of the Yurok Tribe includes coastal lagoons, marshes, ocean waters, tidal areas, redwood and other forests, prairies, and the Klamath River. Before 1850, the Yurok lived in permanent villages along the Pacific coast from today’s cities of Trinidad and Crescent City and along the lower 45 miles of the Klamath River. They made their traditional family homes and sweathouses from fallen redwood trees. Their traditional stories teach them that the redwood trees are sacred living beings that stand as guardians over their sacred places.ⁱⁱⁱ

Traditional subsistence animal species include ney-puy (salmon), ocean fish, Kaa-ka (sturgeon), eels, steelhead, mey-weehl (elk), puuek (deer) and ducks. Along rocky seacoasts, Yurok hunted seals and sea lions, occasionally harvesting whales. They also net surf fish and smelt and gather shellfish in tidal flats. Abalone, an edible rock-clinging marine snail, is both a food source and its shell is used for ceremonial regalia.

Woo-mehl (acorns), ley-chehl (berries), bulbs, and grass seeds are staple plant foods. Chey-gel' (seaweed) is also an important food source for Yurok people. Acorns are gathered in the hills that surround the villages. The ground and leached acorns are cooked in large baskets with hot stones until they become a soupy mush.

Traditional gatherers' access to desired species is increasingly restricted. Access to private and federal properties, increased timber production, and increased use of herbicides and pesticides have all limited access and impeded efforts to revitalize, for example, traditional basket weaving.^{iv}

The Yurok were one of the last Tribal groups in California and the United States to have contact with Europeans. While there is no written documentation, it is assumed that sixteenth-century Spanish ships sailed or had been driven by storms along the Yurok coast. The first trade relationship between inland Yuroks and Europeans took place in 1827 with fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1828, Jedediah Smith guided a group of trappers through the Yurok area. Reports from this expedition resulted in more European and American trappers exploring the area and settling there. In 1850, the search for gold changed everything. By the end of the Gold Rush era at least 75 percent of the Yurok people had died due to massacres and disease.^v The United States government worked toward finding a solution to the increasing number of conflicts. The government negotiated treaties, which were sent to Congress. However, Congress rejected the treaties but did not notify the Tribes of this decision.

In 1855 the federal government established the Yurok Reservation, which was considerably smaller than the Yurok original ancestral territory.^{vi} Between 1860 and 1872 there was a series of Indian wars in Northwest California. During this time, the Yurok fought the white settlers who had murdered them, stolen their land, and burned their villages. The settlers' intent was to destroy California Indigenous cultures that had persisted for time immemorial.

The Dawes Act of 1887 established assimilation as a resolution to the conflict. This allowed the federal government to further break up Tribal lands. The aim was to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream US society by encouraging them to pursue conventional farming and agriculture. The devastating effect divided Tribal and government lands into individual plots. To become American citizens, the Native Americans had to accept the division of Tribal lands. Essentially, the government stripped 90 million acres of Tribal land from the Native Americans and sold that land to non-Native US citizens.

In spite of these efforts, today the Yurok Tribe is the largest Tribe in California, with close to 6,000 enrolled Tribal members. They currently live on less than 10 percent of the original reservation land set aside for the Yurok people.

Klamath River

The Klamath River is about 263 miles long. It originates in south-central Oregon, east of the Cascade Range, and flows through southern Oregon to the Pacific Ocean near Crescent City, California. It originates in the arid deserts of eastern Oregon, home to a considerable amount of agriculture. The lower reaches of the River run through California's temperate rainforest and are mainly owned by the federal government and Tribal groups.^{vii} Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and coastal cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii clarkii*), green (*Acipenser medirostris*) and white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*), and Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*) all live in and rely on the Klamath.^{viii}

Klamath River salmon runs were once the third-largest on the West Coast, but have fallen to just 8 percent of their historical numbers. For example, over the past 100 years, coho salmon along the west coast of North America have experienced a significant decline in abundance. They are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Coho salmon spawn in coastal streams, which has made them vulnerable to the effects of poor water quality conditions and barriers to fish passage from coastal development and land use, including dams. Since the 1960s, the coho salmon run has declined at least 70 percent in California.^{ix}

For many thousands of years, another salmon species, spring-run Chinook, has been a crucial food source and an integral part of culture for Tribes up and down the West Coast. "A spring fish, for a Tribal member, is worth five times a fall fish," says Keith Parker, a Yurok Tribal member and its fisheries biologist, who grew up fishing on rivers in the Klamath Basin. "They taste better, they're fatter, they're this wild, vibrant color. They're amazing." The Klamath River Tribes managed the fish that swam up the rivers. They lit fires that laid thick clouds of smoke overhead when it got too hot in the summers, cooling the waters below; they built weirs to help some fish leap up waterfalls. They took fish from the glistening runs, but not more than they needed, leaving plenty to reproduce. "The river is still our grocery store," says Parker. "We go to the river for these keystone cultural species that we've lived with for thousands of years and let us maintain our way of life. It's only been in the last 100 years that we've wiped out the salmon runs."^x

Barriers to Indigenous Food Sovereignty

The Klamath River Basin and its forests and fisheries changed dramatically under settler colonialism. The changes included hydraulic gold mining, clear-cut logging and fire suppression, construction of seven hydroelectric dams, commercial fishing, and extensive irrigated farming in the Upper Klamath. These changes pushed salmon numbers to near extinction and deprived Tribal members' access to culturally important traditional foods.^{xi}

A recent study by researchers from the University of California at Berkeley and members of the Yurok Tribe found that more than half of the people who responded to a food-system

assessment survey rarely or never had access to Native foods that they wanted throughout the year. They prioritized salmon, deer, and berries as the Native foods they wanted more of. Barriers to their desired Native foods include limitations set by laws and regulations governing access to Native foods and materials, and habitat degradation. Many were not familiar with Native foods and did not know how to prepare them.

The researchers recognized that simply gaining access to Native foods was not enough. They realized that a broader definition of Native food security was needed: one that includes both access to all desired Native foods and the continuity of cultural, knowledge, and stewardship practices that sustain them. They define Native food security as “. . .having physical, economic, social, and legal access to all desired Native foods in the appropriate quality and quantity throughout the year, and the continuity of the cultural institutions that sustain them including traditional ecological knowledge, social support networks, and cultural resource stewardship.”^{xii}

Healing the Klamath

Since the 1850s, the Yurok and the neighboring Hoopa Tribe have tried to protect their traditional ways of life from a series of threats: gold prospectors, settlers, and then dams on the Klamath and Trinity Rivers that blocked the path of migrating salmon.^{xiii} According to the American Rivers organization, “For nearly 100 years, dams on the Klamath have blocked salmon and steelhead from reaching hundreds of miles of habitat, and have harmed water quality for people and wildlife. Four dams—J.C. Boyle, Copco No. 1, Copco No. 2 and Iron Gate—built between 1908 and 1962, will soon be coming down. This river restoration project will have lasting benefits for the river, salmon and communities throughout the Klamath Basin.”^{xiv}

In addition to the agreement to remove four dams, after a ten-year effort, the Yurok Tribe is reacquiring about 50,000 acres of forest that is part of their ancestral territory. Blue Creek, an important cold-water tributary to the Klamath, is now protected, from the Siskiyou Wilderness to its confluence with the Klamath River. Protecting Blue Creek is part of the Yurok Tribe’s partnership with Western Rivers Conservancy. The Tribe will conserve over 47,000 acres of temperate rainforest along the Klamath River, home to the Humboldt marten (*Martes americana humboldtensis*), Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), and coho salmon, and improve the fish and wildlife of the Klamath River and Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion.^{xv} As Western Rivers Conservancy describes it, “Blue Creek can now be safeguarded by a community whose greatest cultural, spiritual, and economic interests are healthy forests, healthy habitat, and healthy returns of wild salmon and steelhead.”^{xvi}

CLASSROOM OPENER

Who am I? We learn to make sense of the world through experiences and relationships. Our relatives and community teach us through language, customs, and daily activities. Our human identity is informed by place. Before viewing this film, have students write a paragraph describing the place or places where they grew up, their given or chosen family and connections, and their daily or seasonal practices related to food. These questions may help guide their work: What's one thing you love or value about where you are from? Where do you consider home? What are some traditional foods your family makes (comfort foods, special dishes, or recipes passed down)?

Before sharing the film, share this quote:

“Our creation story talks about how the Creator made the river, the land, the animals, the plants, and then made the people and said to the people, ‘This will all be here for you and you won’t want for anything as long as you live in a sustainable way with the natural environment, and as long as you don’t take more than you need to support your family.’ That initial religious principle informs how we interact with the river, how we interact with all of its resources and the natural world.” Amy Cordalis (Yurok)^{xvii}

Discussion Questions

1. In the film, Samuel Gensaw calls the Yurok “The Salmon People.” What does he mean? Is it more than a name? Discuss.
2. Salmon are a critical part of the traditional Yurok food system. What happens to the food system if salmon are no longer available? Think of a food that is central to your food system. What would happen if it were no longer available? How would you feel?
3. Samuel Gensaw says, “As Indigenous People, we’re part of this environment and salmon are a huge part of our life; we’re fishermen and once the salmon are gone, it’s the end of the world for us and there’s no going back.” Why does he say “it’s the end of the world” for the Yurok?
4. What are the health and social impacts on the Yurok as a result of environmental change, such as building dams and clear-cutting forests, in the Klamath River region?
5. In the film, Chucky Carpenter (Hoopa Nation) states: “Our fight to keep our water, to keep our salmon, to keep our way of life; we fight for the freedom of all Natives to have our native food.” Do you have the freedom to fish, hunt, gather, or harvest your traditional foods? What would you do if that freedom were taken away?
6. Explain what Sam Gensaw means when he says, “. . .we live in a food desert; there’s no grocery store here. . .we’re living out long-term genocide.”
7. Building dams on rivers is one way that humans seek to control their environment.

Some of the benefits for people in building a dam include providing electrical power, flood control, and more water for agriculture. Are there alternative ways to provide these human benefits? What are other major costs to consider? Might the ecology of the river change? Will the lives of people whose culture is connected to the river change? What about the landscape? While some groups in society may benefit, there are costs for others.

8. In the film, Chucky Carpenter (Hoopa Nation) states “to these 1978 Indians it’s as much about civil rights as it is about fishing and hunting rights—the government was taking their way of life.” Explain. **Note:** You may find it helpful to review the discussions of treaties and sovereignty before students begin writing.
9. Think about your cultural identity and where you live. Is there a feature in the natural world that has special significance for you? How would you feel if it disappeared? What changes might result from its disappearance? What would you do if that natural feature were threatened?
10. In the film, Samuel Gensaw says, “You’re born with the burden of being Indigenous; you have to learn how to pass down these traditions, these things that we do to the next generation. And if you don’t do this, your culture will be gone.” Are there traditions in your life that have been passed down to you? What are some traditions you see being taught to future generations? Discuss.
11. The dams on the Klamath River have been described as “monuments to colonialism.” Explain.
12. What is the Ancestral Guard ^{xvii}? Why was it started? Do you belong to any youth groups that protect the environment?
13. When the Ancestral Guard is unsuccessful in their fishing efforts, another Native fisherman gives them a fish for their group to eat. What kind of relationship or community does this gesture create?
14. The film describes the impact that the US government and European colonizers had on the Yurok. Discuss the impact that war, the Gold Rush, broken treaties, enslavement, and loss of access to traditional foods had on the Yurok. Where do you see the effects of colonization today? Are there ways the US government and European colonizers can impact the past, present, and future of the Yurok and their homeland?
15. Ancestral Guard youth visit Yurok Elder Frank Lara, who shares traditional teachings with the group. Elders often play a significant role in many communities. Who are the knowledge keepers in your community? What kind of things do they share with you?
16. What lessons do you take away from seeing this film?

FURTHER LEARNING

High School

Native Knowledge 360° The Fish Wars: What Kinds of Actions Can Lead to Justice?

“This online lesson provides perspectives from Native American community members and their supporters, images, news footage, an interactive timeline, and other sources about an important campaign to secure the treaty rights and sovereignty of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest.”

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pnw-fish-wars/#title>

High School

Native Knowledge 360° Pacific Northwest History and Cultures: Why Do the Foods We Eat Matter?

“This online lesson provides perspectives from Native American community members, images, objects, and other sources to help students and teachers understand the important connections between foods and cultures for Native people of the Pacific Northwest. Discover how Native nations of the Pacific Northwest take action to protect and sustain salmon, water, and homelands.”

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources/Pacific-Northwest-History-and-Cultures-Why-Do-the-Foods-We-Eat-Matter>

All Grades

National Geographic Resource Library Collection: Concept of Place

“One of the oldest tenets of geography is the concept of place. As a result, place has numerous definitions, from the simple “a space or location with meaning” to the more complex “an area having unique physical and human characteristics interconnected with other places.” There are three key components of place: location, locale, and a sense of place. Location is the position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth. Locale is the physical setting for relationships between people, such as the South of France or the Smoky Mountains. Finally, a sense of place is the emotions someone attaches to an area based on their experiences. Place can be applied at any scale and does not necessarily have to be fixed in either time or space. Additionally, due to globalization, place can change over time as its physical setting and cultures are influenced by new ideas or technologies.”

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-concept-place/?q=&page=1&per_page=25

ENDNOTES

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- x Alejandra Borunda, “Huge dam demolition could save salmon on the edge of extinction,” *National Geographic*, November 18, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/dam-removal-project-genetic-discovery-could-be-good-news-for-key-salmon-species>.
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- xii This article includes 1) an extensive discussion of a multiyear research project to enhance Tribal health and food security and food sovereignty in the Klamath River Basin by building a healthy, sustainable, and culturally relevant food system, and 2) a discussion of the project’s Karuk Tribe K–12 Native American Food Security Curriculum: Sowerwine, J., Sarna-Wojcicki, D., Mucioki, M., Hillman, L., Lake, F. K, & Friedman, E. (2019). “Enhancing food sovereignty: A five-year collaborative Tribal-university research and extension project in California and Oregon.” *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. Advance online publication, <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2019.09B.013>.
- xiii For an online exhibition of Yurok fishing artifacts and historical photographs, see *On the Water—Fishing for a Living, 1840–1920: The Salmon Coast*, Smithsonian Institution, https://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/3_2.html.
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- xv Jessica Cejnar, “We’re Asserting Our Self-Determination; Yuroks Celebrate Reacquiring 50,000 Acres of Ancestral Land,” Wild Rivers Lost Coast Outpost, Aug. 19, 2019, <https://wildrivers.lostcoastoutpost.com/2019/aug/19/were-asserting-our-self-determination-yuroks-celeb/>.
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BISON VS. BEEF



BISON VS. BEEF

Cheyenne River Lakota Nation

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Film Synopsis: In central South Dakota, on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, a young Lakota woman, Elsie DuBray, is driven to help her people, and people on other reservations, overcome the effects of a Westernized diet. She strives to merge traditional knowledge with Western science, believing that a return to traditional foods will help combat the health disparities Native American communities face, particularly the high rate of diabetes in Native youth. Fred DuBray, her father, started the Intertribal Buffalo Coalition with the aim of revitalizing buffalo as a source of spiritual and physical nourishment. This film segment follows Elsie and Fred as he reintroduces buffalo to the reservation and she uses science to support her theory.

Running time: 12:46 minutes

Key issues: cultural identity, Fort Laramie treaties, buffalo, traditional knowledge, diabetes, health, traditional diet



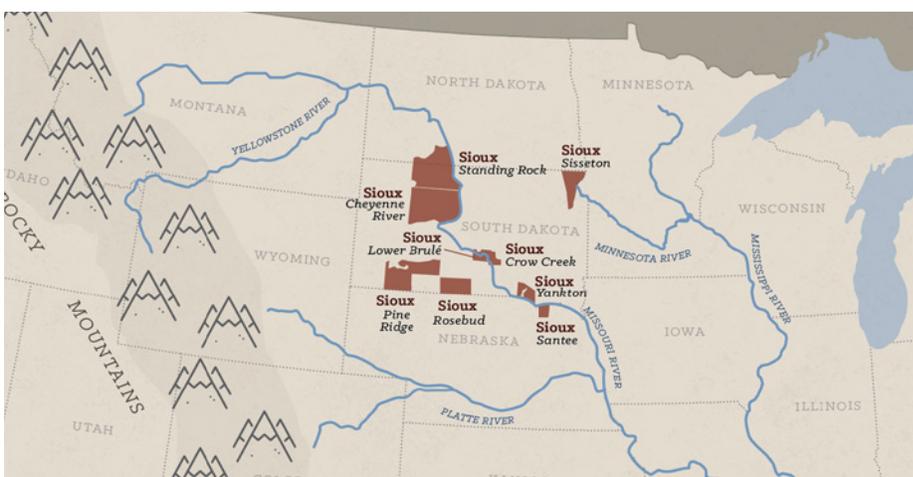
In *Bison vs. Beef*, Elsie DuBray, a Lakota high school student, explores how traditional foods could improve health outcomes for Native American communities.



These three maps illustrate Sioux territory as it has diminished over time. In 1851, at the time of the first Fort Laramie Treaty, Sioux territory spanned the present-day states of North and South Dakota, and parts of Nebraska, Montana, and Wyoming. The treaty began the process of defining where the Sioux could live and hunt.



The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty designated lands west of the Missouri for the Great Sioux Nation Reservation and included the Black Hills as territory that was reserved for exclusive use by Native peoples. In 1874, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills changed all that. In 1877, the US government took back the Black Hills.



In 1889, Dakota Territory was divided into North and South Dakota and the remaining land of the Great Sioux Reservation was divided into smaller, separate reservations for various Sioux Tribes, including the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The Tribe's Reservation covered over 5,000 square miles. Today it has diminished in size to 4,267 square miles.

BACKGROUND

The Sioux Nation or the Oceti Sakowin (People of the Seven Council Fires) is composed of three groups, each speaking a different dialect of the same language: the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota. The Lakota are the largest of the three groups, comprising seven bands living primarily in South and North Dakota. French Canadian fur trappers first encountered the Sioux in the seventeenth century in the mixed hardwood forests of the Upper Great Lakes region. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Oceti Sakowin had been pushed toward the Great Plains by the Ojibwas. By the 1850s, the Sioux Nation was closely associated with the Central and Northern Plains. Eventually, the Lakota controlled a vast hunting territory stretching from the Platte River north to the Heart River and from the Missouri River west to the Big Horn Mountains.ⁱ

The Lakota believe that animals are relatives that share the Earth as partners with humans. The American bison (*Bison bison*), or buffalo, is the most important of these relatives. According to origin legends, the Lakota and the buffalo were once the same people living in Wind Cave, a sacred site on the edge of the Black Hills in what is now South Dakota. The Pte Oyate (Buffalo Nation/People) emerged from Wind Cave and became Ikce Wicasa (Common People). The Lakota revere the buffalo and believe there is a sacred trust between the buffalo and humans.ⁱⁱ

The Lakota relied on the buffalo for their subsistence, economy, clothing and shelter, and ceremonies. For example, a buffalo skull is present in sacred Lakota rituals, like the Sun Dance, a time of renewal for the Tribe and the Earth. A buffalo skull stands as a reminder of this great animal that gives completely of itself for others. The buffalo is a symbol of self-sacrifice; it gives until there is nothing left.ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to buffalo, the Lakota diet “. . . consisted mostly of large game, and wild plants used for food, medicine, and teas, including the wild turnip, wild potato, onion, mushrooms, other roots, nuts, and seeds and a variety of berries. Corn, beans, and squash were available through trade with neighboring Tribes.”^{iv}

The Buffalo

At the population's highest point, it's estimated that between 50–60 million buffalo grazed North America's Great Plains. They were a staple food source for more than a dozen Native American nations living there, including the Lakota. However, by the late 1880s, they numbered fewer than 1,000. In about 100 years, North America's largest land animal and a traditional lifestyle had practically vanished.

In the sixteenth century, the Spanish reintroduced horses to vast regions of the Americas where they had long been extinct. When they abandoned New Mexico, they left behind

large numbers of them that the Pueblo Natives traded with the Plains Natives. Horses revolutionized the way of life of the Plains nomads. The Lakota people could easily move from camp to camp in search of food supplies; they could hunt buffalo more efficiently; and they could better fight their enemies—both other Native Americans and the encroaching Europeans.

Prior to the arrival of the horse, the Lakota hunted buffalo herds on foot, often aided by domesticated dogs. One hunting method was the “buffalo jump.” Hunters would set fire to grasses to stampede the buffalo over steep cliffs, where the buffalo would perish. A single “buffalo jump” could feed, clothe, and shelter the people for a whole year.^v

The buffalo were usually processed on-site. Women tanned and softened hides for clothing, blankets, and lodging, using the brains as grease. Bones were used to make tools, while the marrow was consumed for its nutritional content, and stomachs were converted into bags or vessels. Bison meat was often preserved by drying, or it was mixed with processed berries and bison fat to produce a mixture called pemmican. Enclosed in a bag made from the bison’s stomach, pemmican could be stored for years and, as a result, during times of game shortages or crop failures, bison-dependent nations could sustain their peoples. More than 100 different uses, in addition to food, have been recorded for the various buffalo parts, including the horns, hide, hair, bones, hooves, stomach, and even dung.

The Great Plains

The first half of the nineteenth century brought dramatic changes to the Lakota. The grasslands where they had once roamed freely were being invaded by Euro-American settlers. By the 1860s, the US government had begun an aggressive military policy that included building more posts and pursuing Native American groups characterized as “hostile.” The Great Sioux Nation proved to be formidable opponents and brought the US government to the negotiating table at Fort Laramie in 1851 and again in 1868 to sign treaties.^{vi} The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty designated lands west of the Missouri for the Great Sioux Nation Reservation and included the Black Hills as “unceded Indian Territory” that was reserved for exclusive use by Native peoples. In 1874, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills changed all that. The United States redrew the boundaries. They confined the Sioux to the reservation, with the intention of changing a nomadic people into farmers.

With the Dawes Act of 1887, the US government divided up the Great Sioux Reservation into smaller reservations and opened up the remaining land to homesteaders. In 1889, Congress established the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

In the nineteenth century, the promise of cheap land for farming and ranching and the discovery of precious metals and minerals lured Euro-American settlers westward. However, it was the railroad that was the greatest contributor to the development of the West. Conflicts arose. “Lakotas, for example, had developed a way of life organized around the

expansiveness of the Plains and of the life on it, especially the massive buffalo herds. When the Union Pacific Railroad was being built, Lakota expansiveness confronted the expansionist drive of the United States. This represented two distinct and competing ways of living in relationship to the land and the living beings on it.”^{vii}

Decline of the Buffalo Population

“The disappearance of North America’s largest land animal forever changed the makeup of the Plains societies and the landscape itself. Farms and fenced-off ranches subsumed what had seemed to be a limitless prairie. Game disappeared, and with it the nomadic way of life of the Lakota”^{viii}

Multiple factors led to the decline of the buffalo population. Chief among them was the US Army campaign to remove Native Americans from the Great Plains by taking away their main food source. General Philip Henry Sheridan undertook the task. Hunters began killing buffalo by the hundreds of thousands. Huge hunting parties were brought by train once the Transcontinental Railroad was completed. Between 1877 and 1878, there were said to be 1,500 hunting groups working out of Fort Griffin, Texas, alone. The railroads advertised “excursions for ‘hunting by rail,’ where trains encountered massive herds alongside or crossing the tracks. Hundreds of men aboard the trains climbed to the roofs and took aim, or fired from their windows, leaving countless 1,500-pound animals where they died.”^{ix} These hunters from the East were killing for sport and left the prairies littered with rotting buffalo carcasses. Realizing the buffalo were close to being wiped out, the Texas Legislature proposed a bill to protect the buffalo. General Sheridan opposed it, pointing out that with the buffalo gone, the Native Americans would be starved into submission.^x

Buffalo robes became an item in the global market economy as early as the 1820s. By 1871, tanners in England and Germany had developed a method for tanning buffalo hides, making them commercially viable. After this innovation, hide exports spiked. It’s estimated that in 1875, “1 million bison hides were shipped from the United States to France and England aloneA country once black and brown with bison was left white by bones bleaching in the sun.”^{xi}

Traditional Foods and Health

Land holds deep meaning for Native Americans and the loss of land, traditional food systems, culture, language, traditional ceremonies, and self-sufficiency during the past several centuries has led to a collective sense of loss and social injustice. Many have suggested that the loss of land, language, culture, and spiritual beliefs is at the root of health disparities.^{xii} In a recent study, “Women elders from several Plains Tribes also attributed diabetes and related conditions, in part, to external forces beyond their control, such as being relocated to reservations, the loss of land and culture caused by flooding when dams were built, oppressionThey described internal factors that contribute

to health problems such as diabetes, including personal choices, less regard for values including gratitude and respect, and mothers not maintaining healthy ways of feeding children.”^{xiii}

The Cheyenne River Lakota Nation has experienced major changes to their diet over roughly the past 200 years. Before these dietary changes took place, the Lakota “. . .were consuming a diverse variety of wild plants and animals that were rich in protein, moderate in carbohydrates, low in fat, and rich in antioxidants. . . .The wild foods were slowly digested and absorbed, allowing blood sugar levels to keep in balance with insulin production. Plains Indians may have coevolved with these foods over millennia.”^{xiv}

Forced relocation to the reservation restricted access to traditional foods. Without access to their traditional foods, the Lakota became dependent on US government commodity foods. One such program is the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), which is funded by the US Department of Agriculture. “The dramatic dietary shift from traditional to commodity foods has contributed to high rates of obesity and chronic diet-related diseases among Native populations; rates that are two to three times higher than the national average.”^{xv} Researchers are quick to point out that while “the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been working to improve the quality of foods available to communities through this program, including making more fresh foods available, these programs do little to reinforce the relational, cultural, and nutritional aspects that traditional food systems relied on.”^{xvi} Today, US government officials are including some traditional foods in the FDPIR program—bison, catfish, blue cornmeal, salmon, and wild rice.^{xvii}

Boarding school experiences also contributed to the loss of traditional diets. During the boarding school era of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, generations of children were kidnapped or taken away from their homes and placed in residential schools, often thousands of miles away from their homes. According to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, by 1926 nearly 83 percent of Native American school-age children were attending boarding schools.^{xviii} There they were denied their traditional foods and exposed to institutional nutrition programs that included simple sugars, refined carbohydrates, and less access to natural foods. Families and communities play a significant role in transmission of knowledge about their traditional food systems. Separated from their families and denied their cultures, generations of children lost knowledge of Native American traditional food systems.

Barriers to Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Historically, prairies covered more than 150 million acres of North America. They stretched from the Rocky Mountains to east of the Mississippi River and from Saskatchewan south to Texas. The continent’s largest continuous ecosystem supported an enormous quantity of plants and animals. Bison, grizzly bears, prairie dogs, and pronghorns outnumbered the humans. Over the past 200 years, the biological landscape has changed dramatically.

Today, extensive farming has changed the grasslands and fire occurs less frequently than historically. The result is dramatic ecosystem changes that degrade wildlife habitat and favor invasion of exotic plants, like Kentucky bluegrass. The changes to wildlife and native plants have deprived Tribes of culturally important traditional foods.

Intentional reshaping of the landscape has also had an impact on access to traditional foods. For example, in 1908 the US government opened up a large portion of the unallotted land on the reservation to white homesteaders for a price of two to six dollars an acre. The result was a checkerboard pattern of land ownership within the reservation.

Building the Oahe Dam on the Missouri River in 1949 resulted in the flooding of over 104,000 acres on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation and required relocating 200 Native American families. Some of the best land on the reservation was lost—land that provided water, feed, and natural shelter for livestock operations.

Restoring the Prairie

The Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation stretches across 1,450,644 acres. Since the late 1990s, the Tribe has been working to restore prairie habitat, which includes restoring the buffalo to the reservation. One argument for restoring the buffalo was to provide the reservation with low-fat, low-cholesterol protein, which would help curb the epidemic of Type 2 diabetes. The plan included establishing the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Park, a prairie park of native plants and animals.^{xix}

By conserving and restoring their prairie homeland, the Lakota are ensuring that their culture and traditions are preserved. “Lakota people need native species of plants and wildlife, especially the buffalo, for their culture to endure. They must be able to harvest traditional foods like chokecherries, plums, and wild turnips, and to gather native plants and herbs for medicines and ceremony. Lakota people live by the principle of Mitakuye Oasin, the belief all are related—humans, plants, and animals. They are the relations of the Lakota and are respected as such. The Tribe believes everything has its place, and they are committed to returning what belongs.”^{xx}

Restoring the prairie comes with its own set of challenges. The Tribe’s main source of income is leasing rangeland for cattle grazing. The prairie is home to black-tailed prairie dogs, burrowing rodents that eat grass that the cattle ranchers say should feed cattle. For years, poison was used to control prairie dog populations. For the Tribe, however, poison is not an option. “‘The Lakota philosophy is that all creatures are important,’ says Mike Claymore, a Tribe member and endangered species coordinator for its Prairie Management Program (PMP). On the other hand, he says, ‘There were just getting to be too many prairie dogs living on the Tribe’s reservation.’^{xxi} The Tribe has opted for a less destructive method:

bringing back the endangered black-footed ferret. This member of the weasel family eats prairie dogs and lives in their burrows.

With the Prairie Management Plan, “the Tribe has taken a holistic approach to conserving the prairie ecosystem by emphasizing Lakota cultural traditions, biodiversity, ferret reintroduction, prairie dog management, and integrated land management. The PMP is an example of integrating Native American values with scientific techniques to promote restoration of the prairie ecosystem.”^{xii}

CLASSROOM OPENER

Introduce the film by asking students what they know about buffalo. Ask students if they knew that buffalo were brought to the brink of extinction by Euro-American hunters and that without the help of Native Americans, the American buffalo would probably have disappeared.

Discussion Questions

1. In the film, Fred DuBray says they had a self-sufficient economy and it was all centered on the buffalo. What does he mean by that?
2. The US government said: If we destroy the buffalo, we can bring these people to their knees. What did the government mean by that? Why did the government want to do that?
3. Why were the Lakota given US government surplus food? Why did Fred DuBray say it was “terrible food?” Think about the food that you eat every day. What if that food were no longer available and you had to eat surplus food from another culture? How would you feel?
4. Buffalo are a critical part of the traditional Lakota food system. What happened to the food system when the buffalo was gone? Think of a food that is a critical part of your food system. What would happen to your food system if it were no longer available?
5. The buffalo is sacred to the Lakota. What’s one thing that you love or you value about where you are from? Explain what Fred DuBray means when he says: “If we want to maintain our culture, we must have buffalo as a vital part of our communities.”
6. Explain what is meant by: “People overlook traditional knowledge because it hasn’t been substantiated by science.” What is traditional knowledge?
7. What observation does Elsie make that leads her to believe there is a connection between diabetes and what youth are eating? How does she test her hypothesis?
8. When the white hunters killed the buffalo was it simply to eat or for trade purposes, or was there a desire to have an impact on the Native American population?
9. Why is it important for the Lakota to restore the buffalo to their homeland? Think about how family, peers, culture, and media influence health.
10. What influences your beliefs on your eating habits and food choices?
11. The buffalo is part of the prairie ecosystem. What happens when a species like the buffalo is removed from an ecosystem?

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- xvi G. Isaac, S. Finn, et al, "Native American Perspectives on Health and Traditional Ecological Knowledge," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 126(12), 125002–125010 (2018), <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/full/10.1289/EHP1944>.
- xvii For a complete list of the foods that are available for FDPIR, see: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/usda-foods-available-list-fdpir>.
- xviii "US Indian Boarding School History," National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (website), <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/>.
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- xxi Torbit and McNaught
- xxii Torbit and McNaught

IDEAS FOR ACTION

These ideas include project-based learning (PBL) and service learning projects, as well as a chance for students to demonstrate their creativity and make their voices heard. Both PBL and service learning enable students to connect what they are learning in the classroom to their own lives. They both focus on real-world problems and authentic work. With service learning, students gain practical experience working with their community, which often challenges their perspectives of the world around them and how they fit in. Projects can also be research based and include advocacy that focuses on educating others about an issue, such as food justice, and their ideas for potential solutions.

SCHOOL GARDENS

The Center for Ecoliteracy has published two resources—*Getting Started with School Gardens* (published in collaboration with Life Lab) and *Creating Gardens of Goodness* (written by the Center for Ecoliteracy for Annie’s Homegrown)—to help you get started with a school garden. Some schools grow produce and donate it to their local food pantry or homeless shelter.

- *Getting Started with School Gardens*: <https://www.ecoliteracy.org/download/getting-started-school-gardens>
- *Creating Gardens of Goodness*: <https://www.ecoliteracy.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Creating-Gardens-of-Goodness-Annies-Homegrown.pdf>

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Often people who want to grow their own food do not have access to land to start their own gardens. Community gardens make it possible. There are lots of different food projects your community garden can support, such as making produce boxes for people in need or holding heritage cooking classes to teach people how to make traditional foods. They are also a way to engage historically excluded community members. Here are some guides to get you started.

- This *University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources* publication helps you to get started and to sustain a community garden.
Community Gardens: <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8499.pdf>
- The Conservation Fund’s *Want to Start a Community Garden?*:
https://www.conservationfund.org/images/RC_CommunityGarden_Brochure-Final_webview.pdf.

- American Community Gardening Association. This nonprofit gardening association links 2,100 gardens across the United States and Canada. Their website includes a wealth of information about community gardens. <https://www.communitygarden.org/>

KIDSGARDENING.ORG

- Middle and high school students
Project Seeds of Wonder (S.O.W.): Food Gardening with Justice in Mind
<https://kidsgardening.org/the-latest-project-sow/>

This food gardening curriculum consists of four units: Cultivating Community, Gardening with Gratitude, Sowing Seeds of Curiosity, and Rooting Resilience.

FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCH TO ACTION PROJECT

- <https://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/lessons/curricula/discovering-our-food-system/>
Cornell University Cooperative Extension developed a curriculum, *Discovering Our Food System*, for ages 12–18 that is described as “very much about place—where we live and eat, where our food is grown, processed, and marketed—and the many people involved in getting food from farm to table. Section 2 of the curriculum, “The Food System Research to Action Project,” provides tools for conducting a community-based food systems research project.

FOOD! HOW DO WE ENSURE GOOD NUTRITION FOR ALL?

- <https://ssec.si.edu/food>
This community research guide was developed by the Smithsonian Science Education Center (SSEC) in partnership with the InterAcademy Partnership as part of the Smithsonian Science for Global Goals project. *Food!* is a seven-part module. Each part contains a task for students to complete. For example, one task is to collect food culture oral histories. Another is to locate and map food access points. A third is to develop a local community action plan. The guide is structured to allow you to customize your learning experience.

KQED YOUTH MEDIA CHALLENGES

- Middle and high school students
<https://learn.kqed.org/challenges/teachers>

With these media challenges from KQED in San Francisco, students share their voices beyond the classroom.

FORAGING

- Falling Fruit

<https://fallingfruit.org/?c=forager%2Cfreegan&locale=en>

This project's purpose is "a celebration of the overlooked culinary bounty of our city streets." It features an interactive map of the world and where you can find free food. Zoom in and click on one dot and up pops a box with a description of what tree or bush you can find there. The description often includes information on the best season to harvest the produce and a link to the species profile on the US Department of Agriculture's website, and advice, if available, on accessing the spot. In an effort to cut down on waste, there's also an interactive map of dumpsters and the bounty they hold. Also included: a list of organizations that grow food in public spaces or distribute food. If you try your hand at foraging, check to make sure you're not breaking any laws.

FOOD DESERTS: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND SOLUTIONS

- Learning for Justice

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/food-deserts-causes-consequences-and-solutions>

Learning for Justice's lesson plan for grades 6–12 guides students through an examination of the characteristics and consequences of food deserts. It includes a task where students determine whether or not their community is a food desert and where the closest food desert is to their school.

TEEN FOOD LITERACY PROGRAM

- The Urban Institute

Teen Food Literacy Curriculum

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98006/teen_food_literacy_curriculum_0.pdf

This guide was developed as part of a program to improve youths' (ages 12–18) access to food in Portland, Oregon. Its goal is to help develop teen mentors and leaders who are equipped to support their peers around issues related to food equity and security. The guide includes community asset mapping, explorations of food justice, food insecurity, and food deserts, and how to organize an action campaign project.

FOOD JUSTICE: PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE

- Pulitzer Center
High School

Unit with five lesson plans

<https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/food-justice-planting-seeds-change>

Students create visual poetry using art and different forms of media to raise awareness about food insecurity issues around the world and in their own community. Unit created by Pulitzer Center Teacher Fellow Rosa Clara Salazar, a World History and AP Human Geography teacher in Laredo, Texas.

EXTENDED LEARNING

ALLOTMENT/DAWES ACT

Montana Office of Public Instruction/Indian Education for All

The Allotment Period—American Indian Perspectives

Lesson plan for high school students. Students research and discuss the Dawes Act and its ongoing impacts. Includes a comprehensive list of other resources for teaching about the Dawes Act.

<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources#852719247-grades-9-12>

National Archives Digital Classroom

Maps of Indian Territory, the Dawes Act, and Will Rogers' Enrollment Case File

Teaching with Documents Lesson Plan

Lesson resources include: primary source documents, standards correlations, teaching activities, document analysis worksheet, and OurDocuments.Gov. Students explore how the Dawes Act had a dramatic effect on “home” for thousands of Native Americans.

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fed-indian-policy>

AMERICAN BISON

The American Yawp Reader 17: Conquering the West

William T. Hornady *on the Extermination of the American Bison* (1889)

William T. Hornady, Superintendent of the National Zoological Park, wrote a detailed account of the near-extinction of the American bison in the late-nineteenth century.

<http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/17-conquering-the-west/>

BackStory

Darkness over the Plain: The Bison in American History

Grades 9–12

BackStory was a weekly podcast (ended in 2020) hosted by noted US historians who provided listeners with different perspectives on a theme or subject. This podcast contains three segments: Millions of Bison Once Roamed the Great Plains, So What Happened?; The Two Sides of Madison Grant; and Bringing Buffalo Home. Note: the segment on Madison Grant discusses both his work as a conservationist striving to save the bison and his work as a eugenicist. The first and third segments relate most specifically to this project's focus. This lesson and corresponding *BackStory* episode explore the reasons for the decimation

of the bison population during the nineteenth century. It also outlines historical and contemporary efforts to conserve and protect this species.

<https://www.backstoryradio.org/shows/darkness-over-the-plain/>

TEDEd

Why the US Army Tried to Exterminate the Bison

A TED-Ed best of the Web selection. A Vox-created video discusses the relationship between Manifest Destiny and the demise of the buffalo, which is attributed to the US Army's scorched-earth tactics against the Indigenous Peoples of the Great Plains. Accompanying lesson plan created by Lauren McAlpine.

https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/dAD5ZywR

APACHE DANCE PERFORMANCES

PBS Learning Media

Native American Culture

Grades 6–12

White Mountain Apache Crown Dances that honor the four directions and the deer, which is both food and medicine. Video, teaching tips, and background essay.

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/natam.arts.dance.apacheda/native-american-culture-apache-dance-performance/>

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Native Diabetes Wellness Program/CDC

Coyote and the Turtle's Dream

Written by Terry Lofton; illustrated by Patrick Polo and Lisa A. Fifield; based on the original Eagle Books characters by Georgia Perez.

Created by The Native Diabetes Wellness Program/CDC

Middle School (grades 5–8)

This graphic novel is an adaptation of the original youth novel that combines mystery with positive health messages about preventing Type 2 diabetes. It builds on the Native American and Alaska Native storytelling traditions made familiar by the original Eagle Books series. This novel features animal and human characters from the original books, but also expands the characters to include family members, teachers, store owners, other residents of a small reservation town—and an elderly box turtle.

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndwp/eagle-books/youth.html>

IDENTITY AND ASSIMILATION

Learning for Justice

Examining Identity and Assimilation

Middle School

This lesson asks: Was there ever a part of your identity you had to hide?

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/examining-identity-and-assimilation>

IMMIGRATION AND RELOCATION IN US HISTORY

Library of Congress: Classroom Materials

Native American

Primary sources to introduce teachers and students to Native American experiences of relocation—from the first reservation to today.

<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/native-american/>

THE LAKOTA EMERGENCE STORY

Wind Cave National Park

Grades 6–12

Oral recitation of the Lakota Emergence Story. This version comes from the Cheyenne Creek community on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of the Oglala Lakota Tribe. The story was told by Wilmer Mesteth—a Tribal historian and spiritual leader—to Sina Bear Eagle, who retells it online.

<https://www.nps.gov/wica/learn/historyculture/the-lakota-emergence-story.htm>

LAND

eHistory.org

Invasion of America

This time-lapse map shows the growth of the United States between 1776 and 1887, when the US seized more than 1.5 billion acres from America's Indigenous People. It also shows present-day Native American reservations. Data based on maps produced by the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1889.

invasionofamerica.ehistory.org.

Indian Land Tenure Foundation

Lessons of Our Land: Telling stories that come to life

Middle School and High School

Curriculum to provide both Native and non-Native students with an understanding of land, cultures, inherent rights, and Tribal sovereignty.

High school topics include: origin stories, land use, the Dawes Act, sovereignty, treaties and land, and much more. Free; registration required.

Middle school topics include: allotment, Native American land tenure history, Native American governance, cultural views of land, defining stewardship, Yurok creation stories, bison, and much more. Free; registration required.

<https://www.lessonsofourland.org/>

PBS Learning Media: Inspiring Middle School Literacy

Conflict over Western Lands

Grades 6–8

Student-directed, online lesson. Students learn about the different ways that white settlers and Native Americans thought about land and land ownership. Includes teacher's guide, video.

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/midlit10.soc.splland/conflict-over-western-lands/>

PBS Learning Media: American Experience

Living With the Lands

Grades 6–12

Students explore North American lands from the viewpoint of Native Americans. Materials include: video, background essay, and discussion questions.

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/adlit08.usp.exp.land/living-with-the-land/>

NATIVE AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

Carlisle Indian School

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

Teaching modules and lesson plans for secondary- and post-secondary-school teachers

<https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/teaching>

Library of Congress: Classroom Materials

Primary Source Set: Native American Boarding Schools, with Teacher's Guide

Tips to help you guide your students as they analyze primary sources, including photographs and written accounts. Also a lesson plan: *Exploring the Stories Behind Native American Boarding Schools*.

<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/native-american-boarding-schools/?loclr=blogtea#teachers-guide>

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

Truth and Healing Curriculum

Lessons for middle and high school students that explore the history, impact, stories, and healing journeys of the US Native American Boarding Schools.

<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/curriculum/>

Office of Public Instruction

Helena, Montana

Indian Education for All (website)

The aim of this website is to “provide schools and staff with knowledge, skills, and content to ensure Indian Education for All means cultural enrichment, academic engagement, and equitable pedagogy for students.” Includes classroom resources.

<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All>

Additional Resources from the Office of Public Instruction

American Indian Perspectives (lessons)

Includes *The Allotment Period; The Boarding School Period; Self-Determination; Termination; The Treaty Period; Tribal Reorganization Period*

<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education-for-All/Indian-Education-Classroom-Resources#852719247-grades-9-12>

Finding Our Roots: Indigenous Foods and the Food Sovereignty Movement in the United States

Grades 10–12

This unit addresses the issues of food security and food sovereignty among Indigenous Peoples in North America. It uses a wide variety of materials (a short film, online video clips, news articles, historical images, food studies, governmental reports, and Tribally produced resources) for students to explore the topics of Indigenous food diversity, food security, and food sovereignty as they prepare to create and present a feast of Indigenous North American foods.

https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Health%20Enhancement/Finding_Our_Roots_Indigenous_Foods_Sovereignty.pdf?ver=2019-11-19-084538-687

Bison Restoration: Resources for Learning about Contemporary American Indian Issues

Grades 6–12

<https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Indian%20Education/Social%20Studies/K-12%20Resources/BisonRestorartionLesson-G6-12.pdf?ver=2020-03-30-163425-697>

NATIVE AMERICAN SLAVERY IN CALIFORNIA

American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California

Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California

This website brings to light chapters of California history that are unknown to many people. Through narratives, public records, archival materials, and images, *Gold Chains* explores African American and Native American slavery in the Golden State.

<https://www.aclunc.org/sites/goldchains/index.html>

PRIMARY RESOURCES

National Archives and Records Administration

Docs Teach: American Indians

The National Archives and Records Administration offers billions of historical documents and other materials relating to American Indians from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. Includes both primary sources and teaching activities.

<https://www.docsteach.org/topics/american-indians>

TREATIES AND SOVEREIGNTY

PBS Learning Media: Indian Pride | Treaties and Sovereignty

Treaties and Sovereignty

Grades 9–12

Students learn about treaties and the significance of Tribal sovereignty. Materials include video, lesson plan, and handouts.

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/0a35b09d-06f1-4ec7-8194-87831eab20e9/indian-pride-treaties-and-sovereignty-lesson-plan/>

NPR

Why Treaties Matter (video)

NPR's Story Lab supported a multiplatform series, "Inter(Nation)al," that traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to the National Congress of American Indians to talk with Tribal leaders, scholars, and people in the legal field about treaties—foundational, living documents.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bexvE4lZRGo&t=11s>

National Congress of American Indians

Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction

This guide provides an overview of the history and principles of Tribal governance. It also provides introductory information about Tribal governments and Native Americans and Alaska Native people today.

<https://www.ncai.org/about-tribes>

WESTWARD EXPANSION

National Geographic Education Blog

What is Westward Expansion?

This blog discusses the widespread migration west that took place in the United States during the nineteenth century. Includes links to National Geographic's Westward Expansion resources.

<https://blog.education.nationalgeographic.org/2018/09/16/what-is-westward-expansion/>

YUROK

Public Radio: Living on Earth

Yurok Tribe Losing Salmon and Way of Life

In 2017, host Steve Curwood interviewed Thomas O'Rourke, Chairman of the Yurok Tribal Council. Includes transcript.

<https://www.loe.org/shows/segments.html?programID=17-P13-00014&segmentID=3s>

ArcGIS® Story Map

It Takes Our Purpose: How the decline of the Chinook salmon threatens the Yurok Tribe

Anthropologic Analysis

Eva Cordtz, January 25, 2020

This story map uses interactive maps, images, and narrative to tell the story of the Yurok Tribe, salmon, and the Klamath River and how the decline of Chinook salmon threatens the Tribe.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/08d3b5dc6bbf4326bc87466efd55b8fc>

American Rivers and Swiftwaters Films

Guardians of the River

In this film, Indigenous leaders, including Sammy Gensaw, director of the Ancestral Guard, discuss why a dam-free Klamath River is critical for clean water, food sovereignty, and justice.

https://youtu.be/e5lcP_9ateE

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US Environmental Protection Agency. Air Quality Analysis Maps, "Arizona Tribal Lands," 16 May 2011. Sources: US Census Bureau (2011), Environmental Systems Research Institute (2006), Technical Assistance Needs Assessment (2006), https://www3.epa.gov/region9/air/maps/az_tribe.html.

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Courtesy Eva Cordtz. Map from “It Takes Our Purpose: How the decline of Chinook salmon threatens the Yurok tribe.” Map title: Land Ownership. Map was created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com. GIS Data Sources: NOAA, ESRI hillshade, BIA, CPAD, USSFS, NACIS.org roadways and ocean, manual digitization of pre-contact boundary, USGS NHD.

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Maps courtesy the NMAI/Smithsonian. Native Knowledge 360° Northern Plains Treaties: Is a Treaty Intended to Be Forever? “Fort Laramie Treaty Case Study,” Teacher Resource: Lands of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty Nations. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties-fort-laramie/#maps>.

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ABOUT SANJAY RAWAL

Sanjay Rawal has been making documentary films for over a decade most notably *Food Chains* (2014) and *3100: Run and Become* (2018). Prior to that, he worked as a human rights expert in over 40 countries. His work has won numerous awards including recognition from the United States Conference of Mayors, the James Beard Award, the White House, and the US Congress.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

The Center for Ecoliteracy advances the teaching and modeling of sustainable practices in K–12 schools. We build partnerships and the capacity of K–12 schools to support healthy, sustainable school communities and food systems change in schools. The Center for Ecoliteracy leads systems change initiatives, publishes original books and resources, facilitates conferences and professional development, and provides strategic consulting. We work at multiple levels of scale, with local, regional, state, and national programs.



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