



Native Americans faced continued discrimination throughout the 1920's to follow on from what they had been enduring for decades.

MANIFEST DESTINY

The great expansion into the American West which began in the 1840s transformed America. This expansion across the Great Plains of North America was to come at a high cost to the Native Americans who lived there.

There were many Native American tribes or 'Indians' as they were known living on this land, and they were seen to be standing in the way of white people who wanted to take these lands as their own.

White settlers saw the Indians as backward and standing in the way of progress and this resulted in battles and wars with the Indians during the nineteenth century.

The white settlers wanted this land for railways, building roads, mining and the route to the 'sunshine' states on the West coast such as California.

They believed it was the MANIFEST DESTINY of white people to rule. That God had destined them for this task.

ASSIMILATION

There is no doubt that the government's aim was to 'Americanise' or assimilate the Native American and to make them part of American society.

By the late nineteenth century, it was clear to most Americans, apart from the American Indians, of course, that all Indian tribes would be extinct in the twentieth century.

The plan was that all individual American Indians, like other immigrants, would be fully brought into mainstream American culture where they would be English-speaking, Christian farmers.

1911 Society of Native Americans formed

- Set up by leading Native Americans
- Campaigns for Native American issues
- Sets up it's own magazine
- Campaigns for American Indian day
- Raises awareness of their culture and plight

1923 Indian Defence Association

- Set up by Collier after a visit to a Pueblo settlement convinced him that Native American culture was superior in many ways to white American culture

1924 SNYDER ACT

- This grants Native Americans full citizenship.

1928 MERIAM REPORT

This report was the first study of Native American living conditions since 1850.

It was a **shocking** report outlining to Americans just how horrifying their position had become and providing much **sympathy**

It found that

- Native Americans earned only 1/6th the amount of an average American.
- They suffered from poor health, malnutrition, infant mortality (which was three times that of whites)

It criticised government healthcare schemes

It criticised the land arrangement pointing out that the land was nearly always unsustainable for family farming.

- It declared the boarding schools grossly inadequate
- it said that their religion should be left alone
- That they should be taught about their own culture and history.
- that their Language should be encouraged.
- they should be trained for a rural lifestyle
- there should be less boarding schools and more day schools

ROOSEVELTS REFORMS

- COLLIER appointed Commissioner of Indian affairs
- Offers an Indian New Deal
- This includes an Indian Civilian Conservation Corps
- An Indian Emergency Conservation Work Progra...



BACKGROUND

PROGRESS

CHALLENGES FACED BY NATIVE AMERICANS IN 1920s

Impact on Native Americans

CULTURE AND BELIEFS

The 1883 CODE OF INDIAN OFFENCES banned the so called 'evil practices' of

- Native American spiritual life
- The sun dance
- Native lands and beliefs were ruled to be under the control of the American government and native Americans were 'wards of the nation'
- the responsibility of the US government in 1903

RESERVATIONS

After 1867, all Native Americans had to live on 'reservations' which were small areas of tribal land promised to the Indians by the US government.

In 1887, the government passed the 'Dawes Act' which went a step further by dividing these reservations into 'allotments' or smaller areas of land owned by individual Native Americans. The act stated that the head of each family would receive 160 acres of tribal land and each single person would receive 80 acres. Title to the land would be held by the government for 25 years. After 25 years, each individual would receive United States citizenship and be allowed to keep their land.

The aim of this act was to create responsible farmers in the white man's image. However, under the Dawes Act, Indian life deteriorated, for example:

- The structure of the tribe was weakened;
- Many Indians who had previously roamed the Great Plains freely were prevented from doing so and were unable to adjust to an agricultural existence
- Life on the reservation came to be characterised by disease, filth and poverty;
- Unfortunately, the act also provided that any "surplus" land would be made available to whites.
- A report in 1921 showed most Native American land was being farmed by non-tribe members. So, although Native Americans continued to live on reservations, the allotments they owned were too small for profitable farming. 2/3rds of land was sold to white settlers
- Life on the reservations was deliberately designed to destroy the Indian way of life. For example, Indians did not have the same rights as other Americans and the reservations were run for them by the US government.

The most serious exploitation of the Native Americans was when white businessmen and the American Government's Indian Office worked together to develop the reservations' natural resources, such as coal, for the benefit of non-Native Americans.

There was no compensation given to the Native Americans for the taking of these resources. Indeed, in Montana, Native Americans had to pay for the coal mined on their land while white people were given it free.

EDUCATION

This was seen as the best way to assimilate Native Americans
The BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS realised they could:

- teach them in boarding schools
- Teach them English (native language was forbidden)
- Teach them 'American' customs
- Teach them Christianity.
- There were strict rules and harsh regimes
- this was voluntary but parents were often bullied into acceptance and 11,000 were educated this way.

It was called Education for Extinction by one critic.

