



Native American lands, 1819-2015

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for U.S. History

Target audience – U.S. History learners

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity

Explore the spatial patterns of Native American lands in 1819 and the decrease in size of those lands through the current Native American reservations.

Social Studies Standards

C3: D2.His.2-9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

C3: D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

C3:vD2.Geo.7.9-12. Analyze the reciprocal nature of how historical events and the spatial diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced migration patterns and the distribution of human population.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will measure Native American land areas to evaluate land area change over time.
- Students will compute the percentage of Native American lands that shifted from their original position to their current location.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/historygeoinquiry7>

Ask

What did Native American lands look like in the early 1800s?

- In 1819, Native American lands were two-thirds of the area of the United States today.
- Click the Content button.
- Use the Measure tool to measure the area of the large contiguous tribal lands.
- ? How many square miles (approximately) were measured? [*About 2 million square miles.*]
- ? Do you think the area got bigger or smaller by 1850? [*There is a reduction in Native American lands.*]

Acquire

Why were settlers moving west?

- Click Basemap, and then choose Terrain with Labels.
- Turn on the Overland Historic Trails layer.
- In 1843, John Louis O’Sullivan wrote, “Other nations have tried to check ... the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” America, the still young nation, was moving west.
- ? Why were settlers moving west? [*People wanted land, mineral wealth or natural resources which they believed the west offered and to which US citizens felt entitled.*]

Explore

What happens when different cultures collide?

- In the 1990s, Mary Brave Bird wrote of Native American lands, “The land is sacred. These words are at the core of our being. The land is our mother, the rivers our blood. Take our land away and we die. That is, the Indian in us dies.”
- Turn on the Battle Sites layer. Click each battle site, and briefly look at the causes of each battle.
- ? How close were the battle sites to the Overland Historic Trails? [*They intersected.*]
- ? Considering the Bird and O’Sullivan quotes, why did these clashes and battles occur? [*The American settlers felt an imperative to move west, traversing through Native American lands.*]

more ►

Analyze

How much Native American land is there in 2015?

- Read the Table Statistics box below.
- ? Calculate the percent decrease of Native American land from 1819 to 2015.
 - Use the Statistics function in the table for the Native American Reservations 2015 layer.
 - Select the Square Miles field. Note the sum of the square miles field. *[Answer: 103,407 square miles]*
 - Divide sum of 2015 by the area measured above (Ask section) and multiple by 100. *[Approximately 5% of the 1819 land is held today by Native Americans. This is a 95% loss.]*

Act

How would you characterize America's pursuit of Manifest Destiny?

- Turn off all layers.
- Turn on all of the Native American Tribal Homelands and reservation layers (six layers). The layered effect of the data should allow a clear pattern of reduction in lands.
- Remembering that the Native American lands in 1819 comprised 66% of the total square miles of the modern contiguous US (3 million square miles), what percentage of the total square miles of the 2015 Native American reservations (103,407 square miles) are in the contiguous US today? *[Approximately 3.3%]*
- ? What was the “cost” of America's pursuit of Manifest Destiny? *[The Native Americans lost tribal homelands, were transplanted to areas that were not conducive to their traditional means of life, suffered a tremendous loss of life, and experienced an undermining of their culture.]*

MEASURE

- Choose the Measure tool, and then click Area.
- Click the map and release the mouse button.
- Drag the pointer and click to draw the first side of the area.
- Move the pointer and click to add more sides.
- Double-click to finish drawing the area.

TABLE STATISTICS

- Hover over the layer name in the Contents pane.
- Click the Show Table icon for the layer.
- Click on the column header.
- Click Statistics.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW?

ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Log in to your ArcGIS Online Organization account.
- To analyze present-day reservations, click the Analysis button and choose Analyze Patterns > Find Hotspots.

TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material from this text.

- *The Americans* by McDougal Littell — Chapter 13