

Native American Assimilation Packet

Dawes Act (1887)

An Act to provide for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes.

1. Simplify the purpose of the Dawes Act into one sentence.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in all cases where any tribe or band of Indians has been, or shall hereafter be, located upon any reservation created for their use, either by treaty stipulation or by virtue of an act of Congress or executive order setting apart the same for their use, the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, authorized, whenever in his opinion any reservation or any part thereof of such Indians is advantageous for agricultural and grazing purposes, to cause said reservation, or any part thereof, to be surveyed, or resurveyed if necessary, and to allot the lands in said reservation in severalty to any Indian located thereon in quantities as follows:

- To each head of a family, one-quarter of a section;
 - To each single person over eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section;
 - To each orphan child under eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section; and
 - To each other single person under eighteen years now living, or who may be born prior to the date of the order of the President directing an allotment of the lands embraced in any reservation, one-sixteenth of a section:
2. Give me one word to describe the section above.

Provided, That in case there is not sufficient land in any of said reservations to allot lands to each individual of the classes above named in quantities as above provided, the lands embraced in such reservation or reservations shall be allotted to each individual of each of said classes pro rata in accordance with the provisions of this act: And provided further, That where the treaty or act of Congress setting apart such reservation provides the allotment of lands in severalty in quantities in excess of those herein provided, the President, in making allotments upon such reservation, shall allot the lands to each individual Indian belonging thereon in quantity as specified in such treaty or act: And provided further, That when the lands allotted are only valuable for grazing purposes, an additional allotment of such grazing lands, in quantities as above provided, shall be made to each individual.

3. What are grazing land referring to in the last sentence of this paragraph? How would this help the Native Americans?

Sec. 2. That all allotments set apart under the provisions of this act shall be selected by the Indians, heads of families selecting for their minor children, and the agents shall select for each orphan child, and in such manner as to embrace the improvements of the Indians making the selection. where the improvements of two or more Indians have been made on the same legal subdivision of land, unless they shall otherwise agree, a provisional line may be run dividing said lands between them, and the amount to which each is entitled shall be equalized in the assignment of the remainder of the land to which they are entitled under his act: Provided, That if any one entitled to an allotment shall fail to make a selection within four years after the President shall direct that allotments may be made on a particular reservation, the Secretary of the Interior may direct the agent of such tribe or band, if such there be, and if there be no agent, then a special agent appointed for that purpose, to make a selection for such Indian, which selection shall be allotted as in cases where selections are made by the Indians, and patents shall issue in like manner.

4. The section above is stating that the head of the household (Father/Mother) gets to decide how their land is divided up amongst the family. How would this impact a Native American child as they started their own family? Would they have enough land to start their own farm?

Sec. 3. That the allotments provided for in this act shall be made by special agents appointed by the President for such purpose, and the agents in charge of the respective reservations on which the allotments are directed to be made, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may from time to time prescribe, and shall be certified by such agents to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in duplicate, one copy to be retained in the Indian Office and the other to be transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior for his action, and to be deposited in the General Land Office.

5. Why would the US government keep copies at the Indian Office?

Sec. 8. That the provisions of this act shall not extend to the territory occupied by the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Osage, Miamies and Peorias, and Sacs and Foxes, in the Indian Territory, nor to any of the reservations of the Seneca Nation of New York Indians in the State of New York, nor to that strip of territory in the State of Nebraska adjoining the Sioux Nation on the south added by executive order.

6. What is happening to the reservations that the tribes listed in Section 8 live on?

Sec. 10. That nothing in this act contained shall be so construed to affect the right and power of Congress to grant the right of way through any lands granted to an Indian, or a tribe of Indians, for railroads or other highways, or telegraph lines, for the public use, or condemn such lands to public uses, upon making just compensation.

7. Can the lands given to the natives for their use, be confiscated for public use?

Add the following to your notes:

The Carlisle School Assignment

Document A: Newspaper (Excerpt)

A NEW SCHOOL FOR INDIANS: CARLISLE BARRACKS CONVERTED INTO AN INDIAN SCHOOL

The Secretary of War today ordered that Carlisle Barracks, Pa., be turned over to the Interior Department to be used as a school for the education of Indian youth, to be modeled after the Hampton (Va.) Normal Institute, and has detailed Captain R. H. Pratt, of the army, to have charge of it. Captain Pratt has had much experience in the work of Indian education at St. Augustine and at Hampton, and is confident of good results at Carlisle. Secretaries McCrary [Secretary of War] and Schurz [Secretary of the Interior] are both much interested in the subject and very hopeful that the successful effort at Hampton will be followed by success at Carlisle, and lead eventually to such action by Congress as will enable the government to establish many such schools. About one hundred Indian youth of both sexes will be sent to Carlisle this fall. . . .

The Secretary of War thinks this is the only way to saving a remnant of the Indian tribes, for so long as the tribal relation is continued they must gradually become extinct. He says the efforts of the government are in the direction of bringing up a class of young men who will be leaders of their people in taking them away from the chase and war as the sole worthy occupation for the hands of men. The rapid extinction of the buffalo and small game and the filling up of the waste places by settlements render this step absolutely necessary to the future interests of the aboriginal population of the country, and it is confidently expected that in time the Indians will be brought from the precarious living of the chase into better ways. . . . Secretary McCrary said he thought it was an interesting fact that Carlisle Barracks, which had been the great school of instruction for so many years for our cavalry employed in fighting the Indians, should have been in this centennial transformed into an asylum for Indian youth, where in future years they may learn the arts of progress.

Source: New York Herald, August 22, 1879.

1. Who seems to be providing the information included in this article? How might the sources for the article influence the content of the article?
2. Based on this document, what was the purpose of the Carlisle School?

Document B: Richard H. Pratt (Excerpt)

The following excerpt is from a paper written by Captain Richard H. Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Pratt delivered this paper as a speech at the Conference of Charities and Correction.

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one. . . . In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man. . . .

The Indians under our care remained savage, because [they were] forced back upon themselves and away from association with English-speaking and civilized people, and because of our savage treatment

of them. We have never made any attempt to civilize them with the idea of taking them into the nation, and all of our policies have been against citizenizing . . . them.

It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit. . . .

The school at Carlisle is an attempt on the part of the government to do this. Carlisle has always planted treason to the tribe and loyalty to the nation at large. It has preached against colonizing Indians [on reservations], and in favor of individualizing them. . . . Carlisle fills young Indians with the spirit of loyalty to the stars and stripes, and then moves them out into our communities to show by their conduct and ability that the Indian is no different from the white or the colored, that he has the inalienable right to liberty and opportunity that the white and the negro have.

Source: Richard Pratt, "Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction," 1892.

1. Who was Richard H. Pratt?
2. What was Pratt's attitude toward Native Americans? Provide evidence from the document to support your claim.
3. What do you think Pratt meant when he said, "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"? Find two examples from the document showing how the Carlisle Indian Industrial School tried to accomplish this.
4. How were Pratt's goals for the Carlisle School similar to previous federal policies of removing Native American tribes from their lands and waging war against them? How were they different?
5. Based on this document, what was the purpose of the Carlisle School?

Document C: Ellis B. Childers (Excerpt)

Ellis B. Childers was a Muscogee (Creek) teenager at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. This is an excerpt from an article Childers wrote for the Carlisle School News about the visit of a large delegation of Native Americans to the school.

Inspector Haworth [the government inspector of the Native American schools], with a large delegation of Indians, visited us on Easter week on their way back home from Washington. . . . Inspector Haworth asked some of the delegates to say something to the school. Kihega, the father of Charles Kihega [the Editor of the School News], made the first speech. He made a very nice speech.

Among other things he said to the children: "Here are people trying to teach you. You must try to learn, and when you come back home, your people will be glad to see you, and what you learn will be a benefit to them." When he said, "Here are people," he meant our kind teachers who are trying their best to teach us to live a civilized life. . . .

There were four others [who] made little speeches to us. They all spoke so good that Capt. Pratt said at the close, "I could sit and listen all night to such good speeches as these."

Henry Jones the interpreter said something before it was closed. He is an Indian but he has learned enough English so as to interpret for his people. Among other things he said, "If we Indians are willing to learn, we can learn. We can learn as well as our friends, the whites. We can do just as well as the white people. If we try. We have muscles, brains and eyes just the same as the whites. If we cultivate our brains and muscles and eyes we can do just the same as they."

And then closed his speech by saying, "Don't look back at all that is passed away. This country through here is all improved. You saw when you were coming: cities, railroads, houses, manufactories . . ."

Source: Article by Ellis B. Childers, Carlisle School News, April 1882.

1. Who was Ellis B. Childers? What kind of document is this?
2. What was Childers's tone regarding the teachers at Carlisle? Provide evidence from the document to support your claim.
3. This article was written in the official school newspaper. How might that have influenced what Childers wrote?
4. How does the description of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in this document compare with the description in Document B? Provide two or three similarities or differences.
5. Based on this document, what was the purpose of the Carlisle School?

Document D: Luther Standing Bear (Excerpt)

Luther Standing Bear was a member of the Lakota tribe and attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School beginning in 1879. After graduating, he became a Lakota chief and advocated for Native American rights and sovereignty. The following are excerpts from a book he wrote in 1933 about his experiences at the school.

At the age of eleven years, ancestral life for me and my people was most abruptly ended without regard for our wishes, comforts, or rights in the matter. At once I was thrust into an alien world, into an environment as different from the one into which I had been born as it is possible to imagine, to remake myself, if I could, into the likeness of the invader. . . .

At Carlisle . . . the "civilizing" process began. It began with clothes. Never, no matter what our philosophy or spiritual quality, could we be civilized while wearing the moccasin and blanket. The task before us was not only that of accepting new ideas and adopting new manners, but actual physical changes and discomfort had to be borne uncomplainingly until the body adjusted itself to new tastes and habits. . . . Of course, our hair was cut, and then there was much disapproval. But that was part of the transformation process, and in some mysterious way long hair stood in the path of our development. . . .

Almost immediately our names were changed to those in common use in the English language. . . . I was told to take a pointer and select a name for myself from the list written on the blackboard. . . . By that time we had been forbidden to speak our mother tongue, which is the rule in all boarding schools. . . .

Of all the changes we were forced to make, that of diet was doubtless the most injurious, for it was immediate and drastic. . . . Had we been allowed our own simple diet . . . we should have thrived. But the change in clothing, housing, food, and confinement combined with lonesomeness was too much, and in three years nearly one half of the children from the Plains were dead and through with all earthly schools. In the graveyard at Carlisle most of the graves are those of the little ones. . . .

Source: Luther Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, 1933.

1. Who was Luther Standing Bear?
2. What were some of the changes the Carlisle teachers forced Luther Standing Bear and his fellow students to make? According to Luther Standing Bear, what happened as a result of these changes?
3. How does Luther Standing Bear's description of the Carlisle School compare to Ellis Childers's description?
4. Based on this document, what was the purpose of the Carlisle School?

**What was the purpose of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School?
Your response must have a topic sentence and cite specific
evidence from at least three of the documents.
(10-12 Sentences)**