

American Indians and Westward Expansion

What factors, forces or reasons cause people to move from one geographic area to another?

The first people to live in what we now call Iowa may have arrived some 8,000-10,000 years ago. They lived along the edges of the receding glaciers and hunted large game animals. Gradually, groups began to plant and harvest gardens of corn, beans, pumpkins and squash and gather nuts, berries and fruits to supplement their meat supply. By around 1,200 C.E., corn had migrated along the Gulf Coast and up the Mississippi to tribes in the Upper Midwest who became known as the Oneota culture. They established villages to which they returned for many years after seasonal deer and buffalo hunts.

European Arrival

The arrival of Europeans on the continent had an impact on the Midwest long before permanent settlers came. French and English colonies along the Atlantic Coast displaced eastern American Indian tribes who were forced west to compete with existing tribes. The earliest French and English these tribes encountered were not settlers competing for lands fur trappers and traders. They brought with them manufactured goods — blankets, cookware, knives, guns — to exchange for beaver, deer and other skins that sold for high prices in Europe.

Internal competition among both Indian and European sides of the trading partnership led to conflicts. As the French and English battled for control the Atlantic Coast and Canada, they made allegiances with tribes. The French clashed with the Meskwaki (sometimes mistakenly called the Fox) and their Sac allies who were forced south from their homelands in Wisconsin and Michigan into eastern Iowa. These tribes became allies of the British against the French and later against the former British colonists, the Americans.

The other major tribe as American settlement began to put direct pressure Iowa lands in the 19th C. were the Sioux across the northern regions of future Iowa. The Sioux were the last to relocate out of the state in 1851.

Conflict and Consequences of “Western Expansion”

From the earliest days of European settlement on the Atlantic Coast, pioneers began moving west not just to trade but to live and raise families. This is known as Westward Expansion. Of course, American Indians were already occupying those western lands, setting up conflict situations. In 1832, when the U.S. government tried to enforce the terms of a treaty that demanded removal of the Sac from their major village Saukenuk on the Illinois side of the river. Chief Black Hawk resisted and returned in the spring with a portion of the tribe in defiance of the government order. In the Black Hawk “War” that ensued, U.S. troops and the Illinois state militia quickly routed Indian resistance and forced Sac families to flee. The treaty that followed opened eastern Iowa to American settlement and pushed the Sac and their Meskwaki allies into central Iowa. Treaties between the tribes and the U.S. government eventually provided for relocation of the tribes to western lands and the removal of Indian claim to the land.

Iowa has no Indian reservations, land owned by the U.S. government but occupied by recognized Indian tribes. In the 1850s, Meskwaki tribal members pooled their government annuity payments and, with the consent of the state government, purchased land in Tama County that became known as the Meskwaki Settlement. The tribe, not the government, owns the land. Many members of the tribe began to return to Iowa where they have lived ever since. The modern Meskwaki Settlement in Tama County maintains tribal schools, courts, and police and a public works department. Their annual powwow attracts thousands every year who watch traditional dances and learn about Meskwaki history and culture. Because they are not subject to state laws, the tribe opened a very successful casino that has brought a new prosperity to the Meskwaki. Sioux City is home to another sizable group of American Indians who sponsor a day care that promotes community activities and services to members of several tribes in the area. American Indians have a significant story in Iowa history and are a vibrant part of the Iowa of today.

Supporting Questions

What was Westward Expansion?

- ["American Progress," 1873 \(Image\)](#)
- [Typical Immigrant Outfit in Central Oregon, December 5, 1910 \(Image\)](#)
- [Lewis and Clark Expedition Map for Bicentennial Anniversary, 2003 \(Map\)](#)

Who are American Indians? Who are the Meskwaki?

- [Outline Map of Indian Localities of 1833, Date Unknown \(Map\)](#)
- [Dakota Sioux in the Great Plains, 1905 \(Image\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Weaving in Wickiup in Tama, Iowa, 1905 \(Image\)](#)
- [Eskimo Children "Under the Salmon Row," 1906 \(Image\)](#)
- [Hopi Indian Harvest Dance, between 1909 and 1919 \(Image\)](#)
- [Cree Man Calling a Moose, 1927 \(Image\)](#)
- [Seminole Men, Women and Children, 1936 \(Image\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Code Talkers, February 26, 1941 \(Image\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Powwow Celebration in Tama, Iowa, 1853 \(Image\)](#)
- [Timeline of "How the Meskwaki and Sauki Became Three Separate 'Sac & Fox' Tribes," 2004 \(Document\)](#)
- [Meskwaki Land Purchases, 2004 \(Document, Map\)](#)
- [Meskwaki New Settlement School, Date Unknown \(Image\)](#)

What happens when cultures collide?

- [Iowa Law to "Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa," July 15, 1856 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Does Not Such a Meeting Make Amends?" May 29, 1869 \(Political Cartoon\)](#)
- [Iowa Public Television's "Iowa Land for Sale," 1977 \(Video\)](#)
- [History of the Meskwaki Timeline, 2004 \(Document\)](#)

[*Printable Image and Document Guide](#)

Additional Resources

[Louisiana Purchase](#): This two-minute video explains Thomas Jefferson's work to buy - on behalf of the United States - 800,000 square miles from the French, stretching from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains that would be known as the Louisiana Purchase.

Seaman's Journal: On the Trail With Lewis and Clark by Patricia Eubank: This is a children's book of Lewis and Clark's expedition told through Lewis' dog, Seaman's, point of view.

[Trail of Tears Article](#) from the Library of Congress: "Trail of Tears Powwow; A Local Legacy" article summarizes the forced migration of the Trail of Tears. It also describes a commemorative park and highlights a powwow celebration.

[Daniel Freeman's Homestead Certificate](#): This website features a homesteading certificate of eligibility for Daniel Freeman from January 20, 1868. The Homestead Act of 1862 made 160 acres available to any head of household who filed a claim, lived five years on the land and paid a fee.

["The Long Way Home" Article from the Goldfinch](#): Iowa History for Young People: This article focuses on the life of a young Meskwaki woman. The Goldfinch was published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1975-2000.

["Removing Native Americans from their Land"](#) from the Library of Congress: This webpage focuses on the removal of American Indians from their lands at the bequest and action of the U.S. government and President Andrew Jackson.

Building the Transcontinental Railroad by Joeming Dunn: This graphic novel follows the transcontinental railroad's progress with maps, timelines and glossaries to guide classroom discussion.

The Oregon Trail by Joeming Dunn: This graphic novel follows the expedition of the Oregon trail for the pioneers that made the trip. It features maps, timelines and glossaries to guide classroom discussion.

[Sac And Fox Native American Fact Sheet](#): The website was written for young people to learn about the Fox and Sacs tribes for schoolchildren.

“American Progress,” 1873



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Croft, George A., “American Progress,” 1873

Description

This print, also entitled “Manifest Destiny,” shows an allegorical female figure representing “America” that is leading pioneers westward. The settlers are traveling on foot, in a stagecoach, by conestoga wagon and railroads. These pioneers are shown encountering American Indians and herds of bison.

Text-Dependent Questions

- The floating white woman in this painting is heading West. What do you think she represents? How is this symbolized in the painting?
- How does this image make you feel?
- What do you see in the image that would represent progress?

Citation Information

Croft, George A., “American Progress,” 1873. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Typical Immigrant Outfit in Central Oregon, December 5, 1910



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Typical Immigrant Outfit, Central Oregon," 5 December 1910

Description

The photograph from 1910 shows immigrants in a horse-drawn Conestoga wagon in Central Oregon.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What do you observe about the covered wagon on the Oregon Trail?
- What hardships might they have to overcome?

Citation Information

"Typical Immigrant Outfit, Central Oregon," 5 December 1910. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Lewis and Clark Expedition Map for Bicentennial Anniversary, 2003



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Lewis, Meriwether, Clark, William, & Frank Muhly, "Discovering the Legacy of Lewis and Clark: Bicentennial Commemoration 2003-2006," Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 2003

Description

This map commemorates the 200th anniversary of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's expedition to cross what is now the western portion of the United States of America. This map includes additional features that highlight their journey, such as a legend that features the preparation, recruitment, exploration and homecoming of their expedition, Native American reservations, the Louisiana Purchase boundary and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

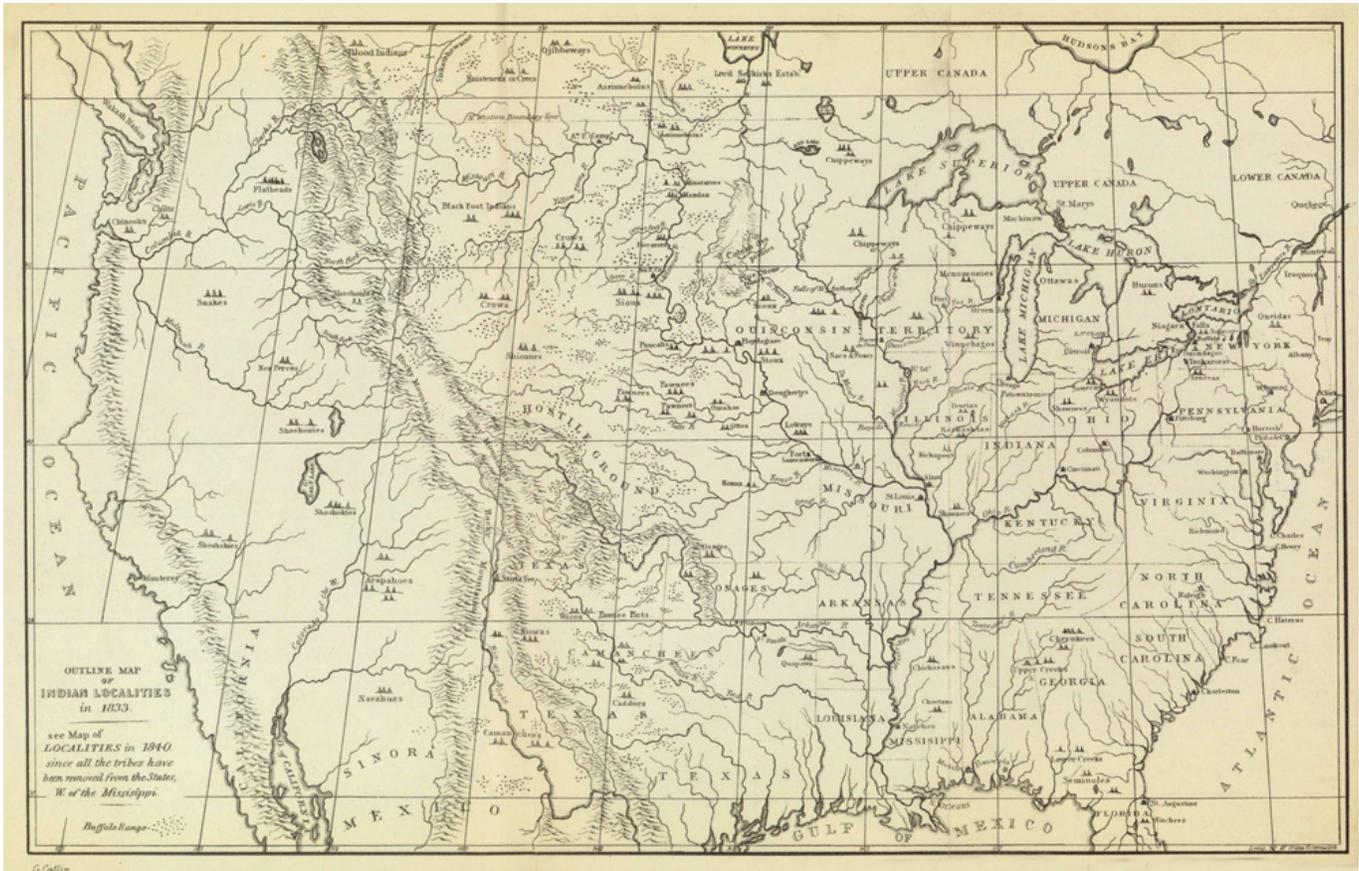
Text-Dependent Questions

- What information does the map give you about the area of land Lewis and Clark explored? What does that tell us about their journey?
- Where did Lewis and Clark travel in Iowa?

Citation Information

Lewis, Meriwether, Clark, William, & Frank Muhly, "Discovering the Legacy of Lewis and Clark: Bicentennial Commemoration 2003-2006," Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 2003. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Outline Map of Indian Localities of 1833, Date Unknown



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Catlin, George, Date Unknown

Description

The map shows American Indian tribe locations as of 1833. The map was created by George Catlin, an American painter who specialized in portraits of Native Americans in the Old West.

Text-Dependent Question

- Using the timeline from "[How the Meskwaki and Sauki Tribes became Three Separate "Sac & Fox" Tribes,](#)" what is the path the Meskwaki took on the map?

Dakota Sioux in the Great Plains, 1905



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Curtis, Edward S., "[The plains of the Dakota--Sioux]," 1905

Description

Three Sioux American Indians of horseback are photographed along the Great Plains with a rock formation in background. The image was taken by Edward Curtis in 1906.

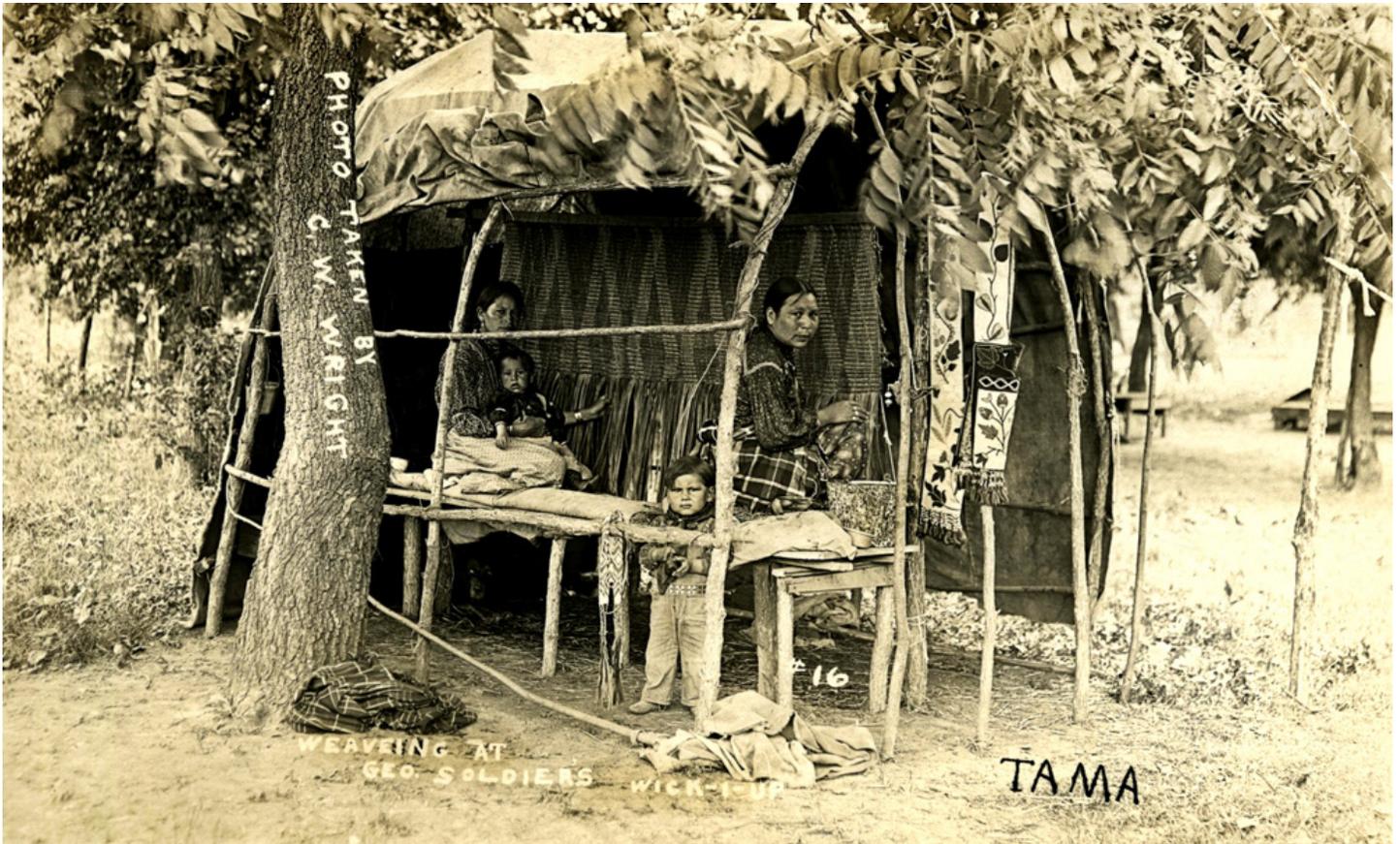
Text-Dependent Questions

- What landforms represent the Great Plains region?
- What do you notice about the people of the Great Plains region?

Citation Information

Curtis, Edward S., "[The plains of the Dakota--Sioux]," 1905. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Meskwaki Weaving in Wickiup in Tama, Iowa, 1905



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Wright, C.W., 1905

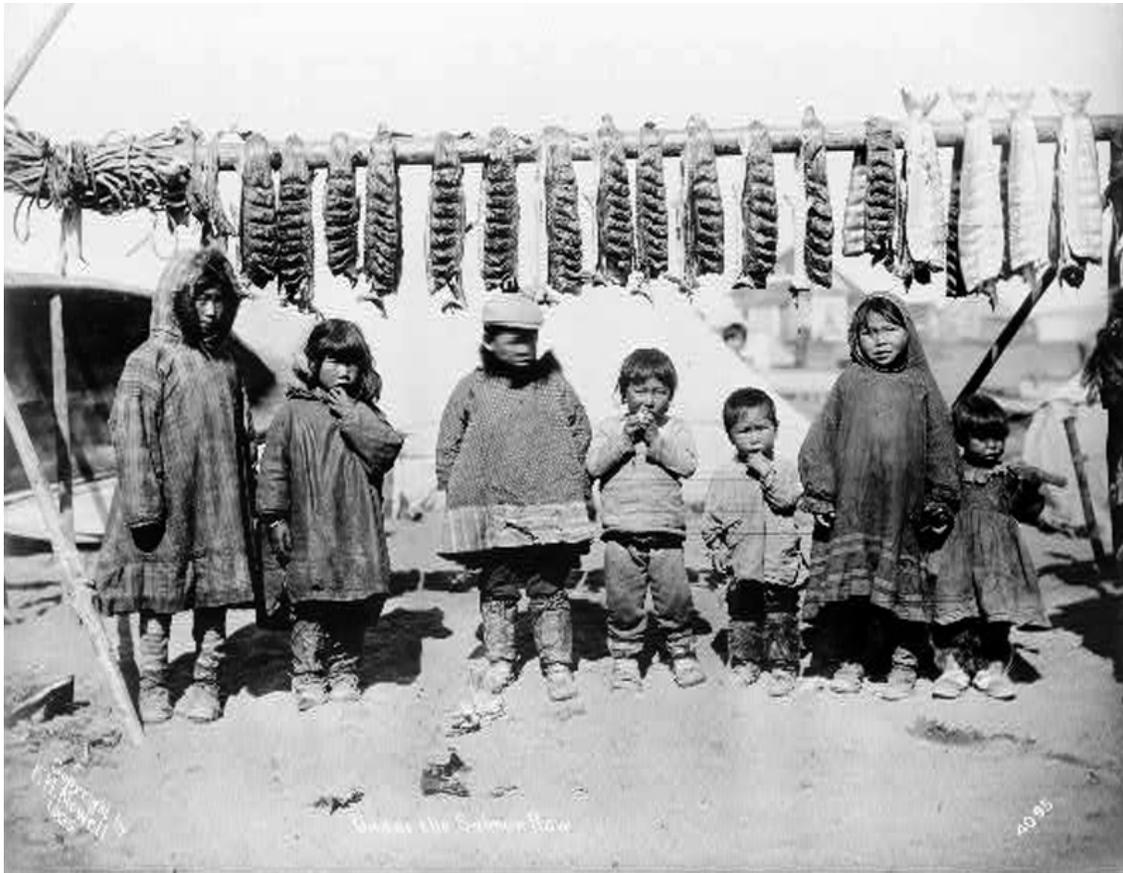
Description

Two women are shown weaving in a Wickiup, which is Native American hut covered with brushwood or grass. The 1905 photograph was taken in Tama, Iowa.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What natural resources are the Meskwaki Natives using?
- What can you conclude about the Meskwaki way of life?

Eskimo Children “Under the Salmon Row,” 1906



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Nowell, Frank H., “Under the Salmon Row, 1906

Description

The photograph features Eskimo children posing under salmon hanging from a rack. The image was taken by Frank Nowell in Alaska in 1906.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What can you conclude about the children’s clothing and weather in far north region?
- What is a food source for American Indians in the Far North?

Citation Information

Nowell, Frank H., “Under the Salmon Row, 1906. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Hopi Indian Harvest Dance, between 1909 and 1919



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Harvest Dance, Hopi Indians," between 1909 and 1919

Description

The photograph shows Hopi American Indians participating in the Harvest Dance. The image of the Hopi was taken in the southwest. Today, most members of the Hopi tribe reside in northeast Arizona.

Text-Dependent Questions

- A Harvest Festival is a time to celebrate the harvest and recognize the abundance of Mother Nature. Why do you think the Harvest Festival is important?
- What similarities are there between the Harvest dance and the [Meskwaki powwow](#)? What are the differences?
- What can you tell about the natural resources when you look at the building in the image?

Citation Information

"Harvest Dance, Hopi Indians," between 1909 and 1919. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Cree Man Calling a Moose, 1927



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Curtis, Edward S., "Calling a moose--Cree," 1927

Description

Edward Curtis' photograph shows a man in the woods blowing his horn to attract moose. The American Indian man is a member of the Cree, who were based along the northwest coast. Today, members of the Cree tribe primarily live in Montana and throughout north and west Canada.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What does the image tell you about the American Indians of the Northwest?
- How does the horn help Cree hunters?

Citation Information

Curtis, Edward S., "Calling a moose--Cree," 1927. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Seminole Men, Women and Children, 1936



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Seminole Indians," 1936

Description

A group of men, women and children, all Seminole American Indians, are posing outdoors. The image was taken in Florida in 1936.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What do you notice about what the Seminoles of Florida are wearing?
- What similarities do you notice between the Seminole American Indians and the [Eskimo children of Alaska](#)? What differences do you see?

Citation Information

"Seminole Indians," 1936. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Meskwaki Code Talkers, February 26, 1941



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Marshalltown Times Republican, 26 February 1941

Description

The news clipping shows a composite picture showing how eight Sac and Fox Native American men, all members of Company H in the 186th Infantry, used their Meskwaki language to be "code talkers" during World War II. The photo shows how the communication network of code talkers worked, where they would broadcast information by short wave radio to their fellow Meskwaki soldiers who would translate it into English for the commanding officer.

[Transcript from News Clip of Meskwaki Code Talkers](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- How did Meskwaki Indians have an impact during World War II?
- How did their native language play a part in winning the war?

Meskwaki Powwow Celebration in Tama, Iowa, 1953



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1953

Description

The annual powwow celebration is a time for renewing contacts within and outside the Meskwaki tribe. Costumed dancers, food and souvenir vendors and special programs are offered every August. The photograph shows Meskwaki men in traditional dress participating in the powwow celebrations in 1953.

Text-Dependent Questions

- Based on the photograph, what happens at a powwow?
- Why might the Meskwaki dress like this today? For what occasions or events do people wear historic clothing?
- What similarities do you see between the [Hopi Harvest dance](#) and the powwow images? What differences do you see?

Timeline of "How the Meskwaki and Sauki Became Three Separate 'Sac & Fox' Tribes," 2004



Meskwaki History

How the Meskwaki Tribe and the Sauki Tribe became Three Separate "Sac & Fox" Tribes

1812 -1824
The Meskwaki (Fox) are concentrated along the Mississippi River Valley areas. The Sauki (Sac) are also along the Mississippi River but more to the south. Leaders of both tribes sign treaties as "Sac & Fox;" both tribes controlled a large stretch of the waterway and subsequently were identified as the "**Sac & Fox of the Mississippi River.**" Then a group of mostly Sac Indians broke away from the larger Sac tribe and moved to northwest Missouri along the Missouri River Valley and in 1824 this break-away group signs a treaty independently ... receiving a separate identity as the "**Sac & Fox of the Missouri River.**"

1837
The Sacs and Foxes are forced inland as punishment for the Black Hawk War and to break the tribes' domination of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. The Fox are moved into central Iowa Territory, the Sac are moved into southern Iowa Territory and the other Sac group (the "Sac & Fox of the Missouri River") are moved to a reservation in the northeast Kansas Territory. The government refers to the Sacs and Foxes in the Iowa Territory as "**The Sac & Fox of the Mississippi**" in order to differentiate this group from the "Sac & Fox of the Missouri".

1845
Wanting more land for settlers, the government forces a treaty to remove the "Sac & Fox of the Mississippi" from Iowa Territory to a reservation in east central Kansas Territory ... south of the reservation already occupied by the "Sac & Fox of the Missouri." However, only one-fifth of the Meskwaki (Fox) actually arrive at the new reservation; the rest are still hiding in Iowa or have taken refuge with other tribes. The Fox who go to Kansas occupy the west side of the reservation and the Sac occupy the east side. Following the removals, Iowa almost immediately becomes a State in 1846.

1846 -1869
The Meskwaki gradually return to Iowa before and after purchasing 80 acres of land in the state in 1857. The United States is embroiled in Civil War, 1861-1865. The people remaining at the second reservation are mostly Sauki and move to a new reservation in the new Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). The vacated reservation in central Kansas is opened up to white settlers. The reservation in northeast Kansas remains intact. This accounts for the three Sac and Fox tribes of today:

The Sac & Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa (primarily Meskwaki),

The Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma (remaining Sauki plus a few Meskwaki), and

The Sac & Fox of the Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska (the first group of Sauki who broke away in 1824).

Text provided by the Meskwaki Nation Historical Preservation Office.



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 2004

Description

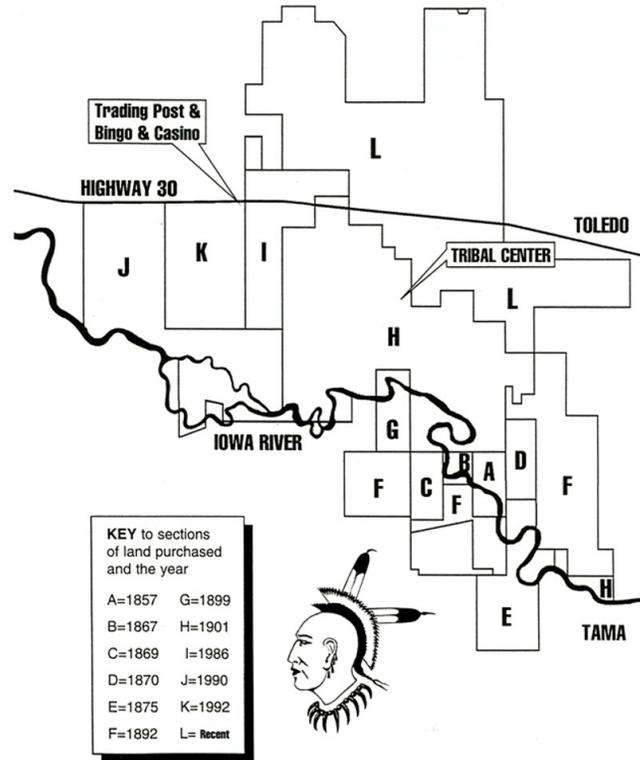
This timeline, compiled by the Meskwaki Nation Historical Preservation Office, shows how the Meskwaki and Sac tribes became three separate "Sac & Fox" tribes between 1812 and 1869.

[Transcript of "How the Meskwaki and Sauki Became Three Separate 'Sac & Fox' Tribes" Timeline](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What native tribe names are considered part of the Meskwaki?
- How does the government play a part in making three separate "Sac & Fox" tribes?

Meskwaki Land Purchases, 2004



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 2004

Description

This map and accompanying text show the history of land purchases made by the Meskwaki tribe.

[Transcript about Meskwaki Land Purchases](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- How were the Meskwaki able to buy the first area of land?
- What is the land used for? How has that changed over time?

Meskwaki New Settlement School, Date Unknown



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Date Unknown

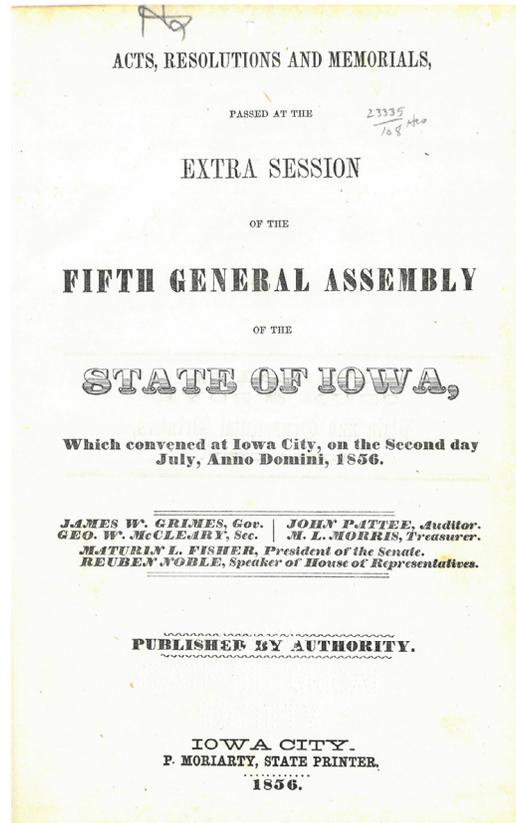
Description

The photograph shows the Meskwaki Settlement School on the Meskwaki Indian Reservation. The Sac and Fox Settlement School originally was established as a day school by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Next, it became part of the South Tama County Community School District, an Iowa public school system. In 1972, the school was closed and tribal members applied for the school to be run by the Meskwaki people. In 1980, the Sac and Fox Settlement School became a tribal school. Now the Meskwaki Settlement School, it is a tribally-controlled school with oversight by the Bureau of Indian Education. The mission of the school since the 1980s has been, and continues to be, the preservation of the Meskwaki culture and language and preparation of all students to become productive citizens.

Text-Dependent Questions

- What do you notice about the building and symbols that represent the Meskwaki culture?
- Why would the school play an important role in the settlement?

Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa,” July 15, 1856



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 15 July 1856

Description

This is an excerpt of the journal from the 5th General Assembly of Iowa in 1856. The journal page shows the law that was enacted so the Meskwaki could purchase land and live in Tama, Iowa.

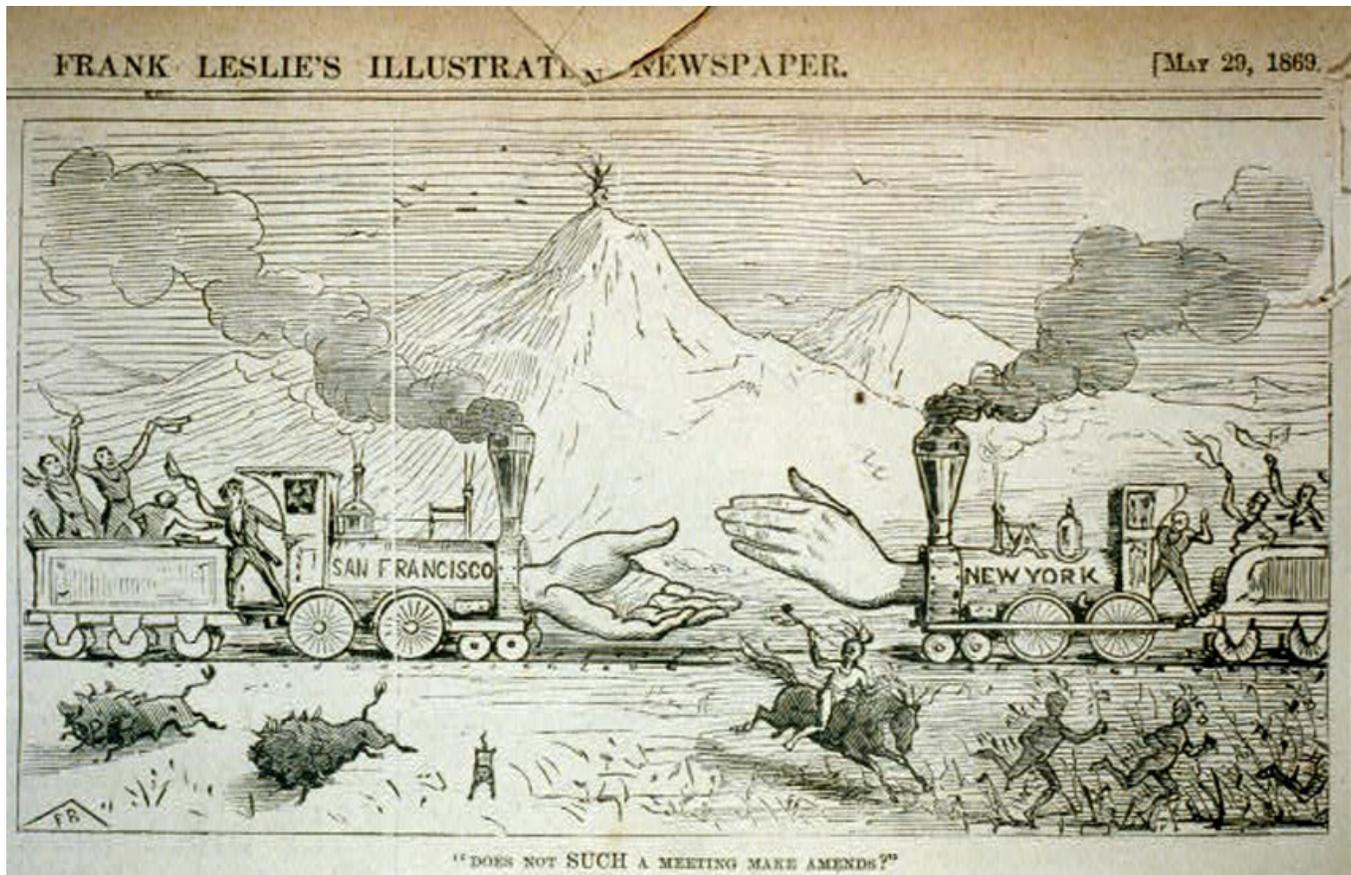
[Transcript of Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa”](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt from Iowa Law to “Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa”](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- Why were the Meskwaki allowed to stay in Tama?
- Why is the secretary of war told of this new law?

“Does Not Such a Meeting Make Amends?” May 29, 1869



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Beard, Frank, “Does not such a meeting make amends?” 29 May 1869

Description

This print shows an allegory that symbolically shows the linking of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit in Utah. American Indians and buffalo are fleeing in the foreground as two trains with large hands extending from the locomotives, labeled “San Francisco” and “New York,” approach each other to connect the transcontinental railroad.

[Transcript of “Does Not Such a Meeting Make Amends?”](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What does the “making amends” mean?
- Were American Indians included in “making amends?”
- How did building the railroad cause people to move from one geographic area to another?

Citation Information

Beard, Frank, “Does Not Such a Meeting Make Amends?” 29 May 1869. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Iowa Public Television's "Iowa Land for Sale," 1977



Courtesy of Iowa Public Television, "Iowa Land for Sale," The Prairie Pioneers - Iowa Public Television, 1977

Description

This video from Iowa Public Television describes how settlers purchased their land from the government, speculators and the railroads in the early 1800s. In brief, the government land was first sold for \$1.25 an acre to speculators. In the 1850s, over 10 percent of all land in Iowa was given to the railroads. As settlers began to enter the state, they bought land from the speculators, directly from the government or the railroads.

Text-Dependent Questions

- When coming to Iowa, who were you able to buy your land from?
- How much did it cost for an acre of land in the 1800s? In 2017, an acre of Iowa farmland cost about \$7,300. Why does land cost more now?

Citation Information

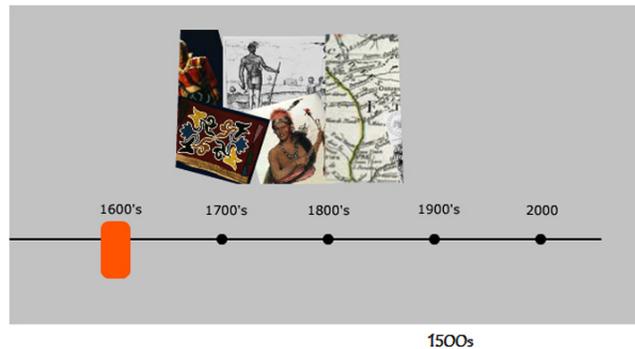
"Iowa Land for Sale," The Prairie Pioneers - Iowa Public Television, 1977. [Courtesy of Iowa Public Television](#)

History of the Meskwaki Timeline, 2004



Meskwaki History Timeline

First Contact to Present (Use scroll bar at right to view timeline and click on an image to learn more about an era.)



1524 French begin seeking Northwest Passage.

1530 Portuguese colonize Brazil.

1539-1542 Spanish adventurers explore Florida, Grand Canyon, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, eastern Kansas, and up the Mississippi River

1600s

1605 Santa Fe, New Mexico, founded.

1626 The Dutch buy the entire island of Manhattan for a reported \$24.

1642 New Zealand "discovered"

1665 First documented meeting between French and Meskwaki.

Meskwaki move their main village to Wolf River in Wisconsin during winter of 1665-1666.

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 2004

Description

This timeline records the history of the Meskwaki people from the early 1880s to present.

[Full Transcript of History of the Meskwaki Timeline](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from History of the Meskwaki Timeline](#)

Text-Dependent Questions

- What is the forced migration pattern of the Meskwaki?
- How have the Meskwaki people survived over time?