American Indian Removal and Relocation

How does the Meskwaki (Sac and Fox) Indian experience in Iowa compare to the experience of tribes in other parts of the United States?

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.

Europeans Force American Indians West

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 people 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 American Indian and European sides of the trading partnership led to conflicts. As the French and English battled for control along the Atlantic Coast and in 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, the Sioux, applied pressure on fledgling American settlements, including the northern regions that would become Iowa, in the 19th century. In 1832, 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 American 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 American Indian claim to the land. The Sioux were the last to relocate out of the state in 1851.

Modern Meskwaki Settlement

Iowa has no American Indian reservations, land owned by the U.S. government but occupied by recognized American 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, 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 daycare 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 state today.

Supporting Questions

How did the experience of the Meskwaki (Sac and Fox) in Iowa compare to the experience of the Cherokee in Georgia?

- Tribal Newspaper Article about Cherokee Nation and White Settlers in Georgia, March 4, 1829 (Document)
- U.S. Supreme Court Majority Opinion on Cherokee Nation's Case Against Georgia, January 1831 (Document)
- "Orders No. 25" Report from Gen. Winfield Scott on Removal of the Cherokee from Georgia, May 17, 1838 (Document)
- Deed of Land Sale to Meskwaki, July 13, 1857 (Document)

What was the impact of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 on the American Indian population of the United States?

- Indian Removal Act, May 28, 1830 (Document)
- U.S. President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress "On Indian Removal," December 7, 1830 (Document)
- Marion County Resolution in Response to Indian Removal Act, February 5, 1852 (Document)
- Iowa Law to "Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa," July 15, 1856 (Document)
- American Indian Reservations in Oklahoma, 1889 (Map)

How did the relationship between the Meskwaki (Sac and Fox) and the federal government change over time?

- "Evolution of Homes on Sac and Fox Reservation," Date Unknown (Image)
- Lands Assigned to American Indians West of Arkansas and Missouri, 1836 (Map)
- "The Musquakas of Tama County" *The Annals of Iowa* Article, 1870 (Document)

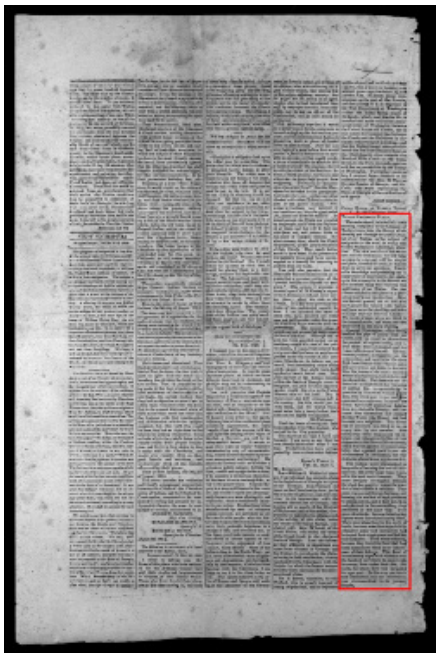
*Printable Image and Document Guide

Additional Resources

The Goldfinch: Iowa History for Young People, Volume 3, Number 4, April 1982: This Iowa history magazine for children was published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1975-2000. Each issue focuses on a theme and this particular volume highlighted American Indians in Iowa.

The Goldfinch: Iowa History for Young People, Volume 13, Number 3, February 1992: This Iowa history magazine for children was published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1975-2000. Each issue focuses on a theme and this particular volume highlighted American Indians in Iowa, specifically the history of the Meskwaki.

Tribal Newspaper Article about Cherokee Nation and White Settlers in Georgia, March 4, 1829



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "To the Cherokee Public," Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate, 4 March 1829

Description

This article appeared in the *Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate*, the first newspaper published by American Indians in the United States, on March 4, 1829. The article describes the relationship the Cherokee Nation had with neighboring white settlers in Georgia.

Full Transcript of Tribal Newspaper Article about the Cherokee and White Settlers of Georgia

Transcribed Excerpts from the Tribal Newspaper Article about the Cherokee and White Settlers of Georgia

Printable Excerpt of the Tribal Newspaper Article about the Cherokee and White Settlers of Georgia

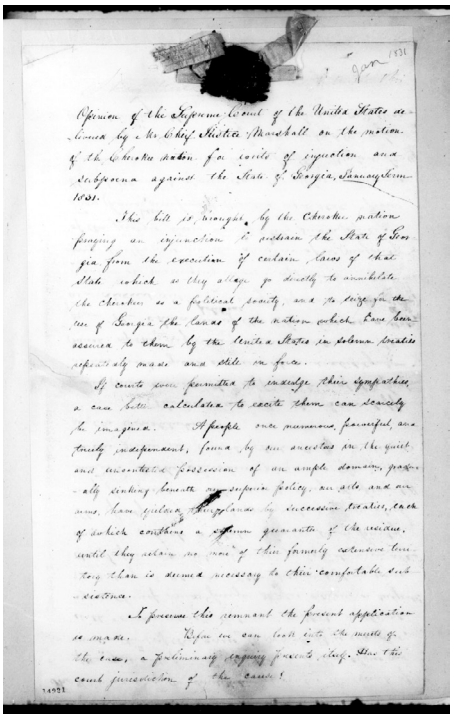
Text-Dependent Questions

- What do the Cherokee, who authored this article, believe about the land on which they are being forced to live?
- How do the Cherokee view their white neighbors? What evidence from the article can you provide to support your conclusion?
- What authority do the authors claim for the truth of their words in this article?

Citation Information

"To the Cherokee Public," *Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate*, 4 March 1829. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

U.S. Supreme Court Majority Opinion on Cherokee Nation's Case Against Georgia, January 1831



Opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States delivered by the Chief Justice Marshall on the motion of the Cherokee nation for leave of injunction and subpoena against the State of Georgia, January term 1831.

The bill is brought by the Cherokee nation praying an injunction to restrain the State of Georgia from the execution of certain laws of that State which it is alleged go directly to annihilate the existence as a political society, and to deny to the nation the benefits of the treaties which have been solemnly made and still in force.

If courts were permitted to indulge their sympathies, a case better calculated to excite them can scarcely be imagined. A people once numerous, powerful and entirely independent, found by our ancestors in the quiet and undisturbed possession of an ample domain, gradually sinking beneath superior policy, our arts and our arms, have yielded their lands by successive treaties, each of which contains a solemn guarantee of the residue, until they retain no more of those formerly extensive territories than is deemed necessary to their comfortable subsistence.

To preserve this remnant the present application is made. Before we can look into the merits of the case, a preliminary inquiry presents itself. Has this court jurisdiction of the cause?

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Marshall, John, "John Marshall," January 1831

Description

This document is the U.S. Supreme Court's majority opinion — written by Chief Justice John Marshall — of the case the Cherokee Nation brought against the State of Georgia. Marshall and the U.S. Supreme Court wrestled with whether or not the Cherokee should be considered a state, a foreign nation or something else under the U.S. Constitution. The majority opinion declared that America Indian tribes were not foreign states and could not bring action in U.S. courts.

Full Transcript of U.S. Supreme Court Majority Opinion

Transcribed Excerpts from U.S. Supreme Court Majority Opinion

Text-Dependent Questions

- According to this document, what was the main question the U.S. Supreme Court was deliberating?
- What does this document tell you about the Cherokee Nation's attempts to stop their removal from Georgia?
- How does John Marshall describe the relationship between the American Indian tribes and the United States government?

Citation Information

Marshall, John, "Opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States delivered by Chief Justice John Marshall in the case of the Cherokee Nation vs. The State of Georgia," January 1831. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

"Orders No. 25" Report from Gen. Winfield Scott on Removal of the Cherokee from Georgia, May 17, 1838

ORDERS. No. 25.

Head Quarters, Eastern Division.
Cherokee Agency, Ten. May 17, 1838.

Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Orders No. 25 Head Quarters, Eastern Division Cherokee Agency," 17 May 1838

Description

This report was made by General Winfield Scott on his orders to remove the Cherokee from the State of Georgia. In these orders from 1838, Scott makes clear that the Cherokee are to be treated respectfully, but he acknowledges that conflict might arise because of either Cherokee resistance or mistreatment by U.S. soldiers.

Full Transcript of "Order No. 25" Report from Gen. Winfield Scott

Transcribed Excerpts from "Order No. 25" Report from Gen. Winfield Scott

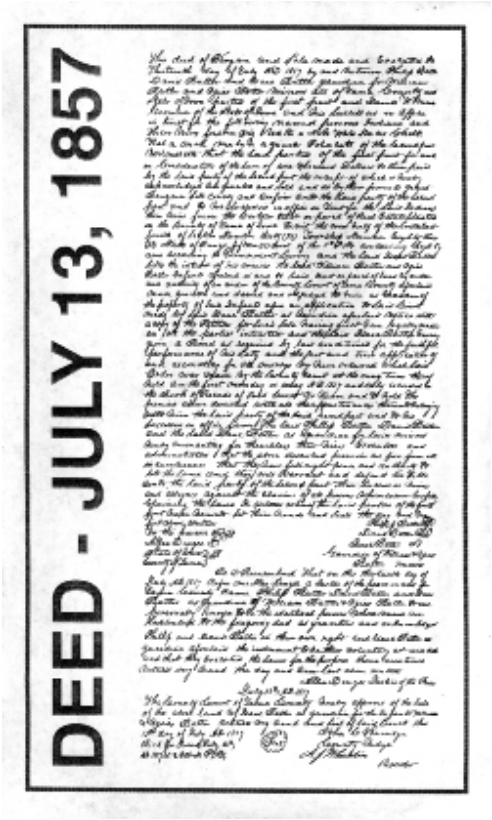
Text-Dependent Questions

- According to this text, how were the soldiers supposed to treat the Cherokee during their forced removal?
- How did Gen. Winfield Scott believe the Cherokee would react to kind treatment from soldiers? Why do you think he made that conclusion?
- Why did Scott think there might be conflict between soldiers and the Cherokee during the removal? How did he propose such conflicts be resolved?

Citation Information

"Orders No. 25 Head Quarters, Eastern Division Cherokee Agency," 17 May 1838. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

Deed of Land Sale to Meskwaki, July 13, 1857



Courtesy of Tama County Courthouse, 13 July 1857

Description

This deed is for the sale of 80 acres of land to the Meskwaki. After petitioning the Iowa legislature, the Meskwaki were granted permission to purchase land in 1857. The purchase of land by an American Indian tribe in 1857 was unusual. Unlike other tribes who were removed to Indian Territory after the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Meskwaki in Iowa did not live on a reservation because of this document.

Full Transcript of Deed of Land Sale to Meskwaki

Transcribed Excerpt from Deed of Land Sale to Meskwaki

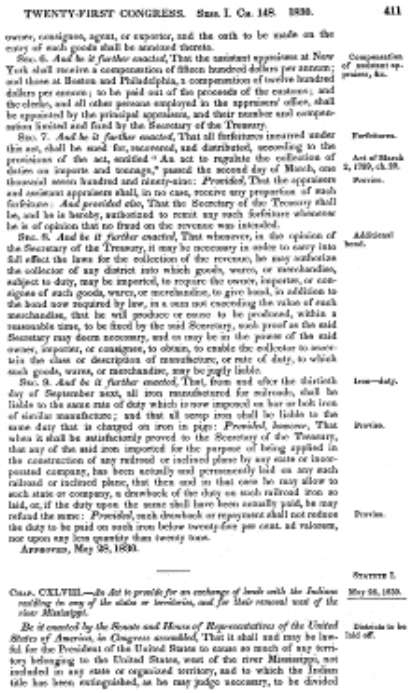
Text-Dependent Questions

- According to this deed, what role did Iowa's governor play in the sale of land to the Meskwaki?
- Who made the final approval of the sale? Why is this important?

Citation Information

"Meskwaki Deed," 13 July 1857. Courtesy of Tama County Courthouse

Indian Removal Act, May 28, 1830



TWENTY-FIRST CONGRESS. Sess. I. Ch. 148. 1830. 411

owner, consignee, agent, or exporter, and the oath to be made on the entry of such goods shall be annexed thereto.

Sec. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That the assistant appraisers at New York shall receive a compensation of fifteen hundred dollars per annum; and those at Boston and Philadelphia, a compensation of twelve hundred dollars per annum; to be paid out of the proceeds of the customs; and the clerks, and all other persons employed in the appraisers' office, shall be appointed by the principal appraisers, and their number and compensations limited and fixed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Compensation of assistant appraisers, &c.

Sec. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That all forfeitures incurred under this act, shall be sued for, recovered, and distributed, according to the provisions of the act, entitled "An act to regulate the collection of duties on imports and tonnage," passed the second day of March, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine: *Provided*, That the appraisers and assistant appraisers shall, in no case, receive any proportion of such forfeitures: *And provided* also, That the Secretary of the Treasury shall be, and he is hereby, authorized to remit any such forfeiture whenever he is of opinion that no fraud on the revenue was intended. Forfeitures. Act of March 2, 1799, ch. 22. Proviso.

Sec. 8. *And be it further enacted*, That whenever, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury, it may be necessary in order to carry into full effect the laws for the collection of the revenue, he may authorize the collector of any district into which goods, wares, or merchandise, subject to duty, may be imported, to require the owner, importer, or consignee of such goods, wares, or merchandise, to give bond, in addition to the bond now required by law, in a sum not exceeding the value of such merchandise, that he will produce or cause to be produced, within a reasonable time, to be fixed by the said Secretary, such proof as the said Secretary may deem necessary, and as may be in the power of the said owner, importer, or consignee, to obtain, to enable the collector to ascertain the class or description of manufacture, or rate of duty, to which such goods, wares, or merchandise, may be justly liable. Additional bond.

Sec. 9. *And be it further enacted*, That, from and after the thirtieth day of September next, all iron manufactured for railroads, shall be liable to the same rate of duty which is now imposed on bar or bolt iron of similar manufacture; and that all scrap iron shall be liable to the same duty that is charged on iron in pigs: *Provided, however*, That when it shall be satisfactorily proved to the Secretary of the Treasury, that any of the said iron imported for the purpose of being applied in the construction of any railroad or inclined plane by any state or incorporated company, has been actually and permanently laid on any such railroad or inclined plane, that then and in that case he may allow to such state or company, a drawback of the duty on such railroad iron so laid, or, if the duty upon the same shall have been actually paid, he may refund the same: *Provided*, such drawback or repayment shall not reduce the duty to be paid on such iron below twenty-five per cent. ad valorem, nor upon any less quantity than twenty tons. Iron—duty. Proviso. Proviso.

Approved, May 28, 1830.

STATUTE I.

May 28, 1830.

CHAP. CXLVIII.—*An Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi.*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That it shall and may be lawful for the President of the United States to cause so much of any territory belonging to the United States, west of the river Mississippi, not included in any state or organized territory, and to which the Indian title has been extinguished, as he may judge necessary, to be divided Districts to be laid off.

Courtesy of Library of Congress, "An act to provide for an exchange of land with the Indians residing in any of the state or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi, May 28, 1830." U.S. Congress, 28 May 1830

Description

This document, more informally known as the Indian Removal Act, fulfilled President Andrew Jackson's belief that removing all American Indians west of the Mississippi River would make the country safer. Congressional approval opened the way for the next step: moving tribes, either willingly or by force, to what was known as "Indian Territory."

Full Transcript of the Indian Removal Act

Transcribed Excerpts from the Indian Removal Act

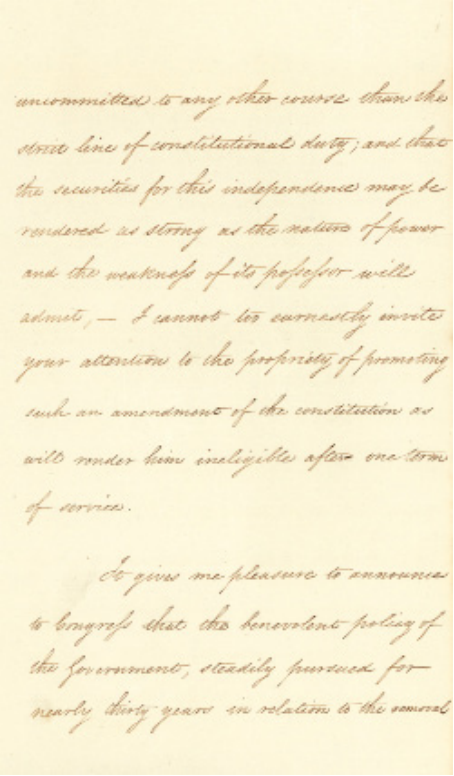
Text-Dependent Questions

- How does this Act of Congress illustrate the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- What powers does this law give to the president?
- What promises are made to the American Indian tribes and nations in this document? Cite textual evidence.

Citation Information

"An act to provide for an exchange of land with the Indians residing in any of the state or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi, May 28, 1830." U.S. Congress, 28 May 1830. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

U.S. President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress "On Indian Removal," December 6, 1830



uncommitted to any other course than the
direct line of constitutional duty; and that
the securities for this independence may be
rendered as strong as the nature of power
and the weakness of its possessor will
admit, — I cannot too earnestly invite
your attention to the propriety of promoting
such an amendment of the constitution as
will render him ineligible after one term
of service.

It gives me pleasure to announce
to Congress that the benevolent policy of
the government, steadily pursued for
nearly thirty years in relation to the removal

Courtesy of National Archives, Jackson, Andrew, "One Indian Removal," 6 December 1830

Description

This source is an excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's annual message to the U.S. Congress in 1830. This message was sent to Congress in December of 1830, several months after Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The document details Jackson's feeling about removal of American Indians and how he thought it should be accomplished.

Full Transcript of President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress "On Indian Removal"

Transcribed Excerpts from President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress "On Indian Removal"

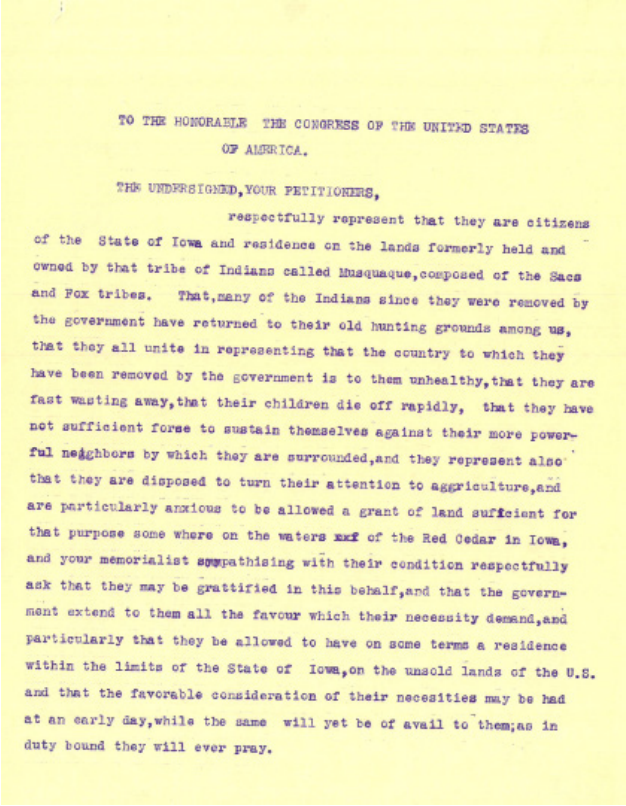
Text-Dependent Questions

- According to President Andrew Jackson, why is removal good for the American Indian?
- Does Jackson view the American Indians as equals? How do his words either support or contradict this idea?
- How does Jackson compare the experience of American Indians with the experience of American settlers who were moving west?

Citation Information

Jackson, Andrew, "One Indian Removal," 6 December 1830. **Courtesy of National Archives**

Marion County Resolution in Response to Indian Removal Act, February 5, 1852



TO THE HONORABLE THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.

THE UNDERSIGNED, YOUR PETITIONERS,
respectfully represent that they are citizens of the State of Iowa and residence on the lands formerly held and owned by that tribe of Indians called Musquaque, composed of the Sacs and Fox tribes. That, many of the Indians since they were removed by the government have returned to their old hunting grounds among us, that they all unite in representing that the country to which they have been removed by the government is to them unhealthy, that they are fast wasting away, that their children die off rapidly, that they have not sufficient force to sustain themselves against their more powerful neighbors by which they are surrounded, and they represent also that they are disposed to turn their attention to aggriculture, and are particularly anxious to be allowed a grant of land sufficient for that purpose some where on the waters of the Red Cedar in Iowa, and your memorialist sympathising with their condition respectfully ask that they may be grattified in this behalf, and that the government extend to them all the favour which their necessity demand, and particularly that they be allowed to have on some terms a residence within the limits of the State of Iowa, on the unsold lands of the U.S. and that the favorable consideration of their necessities may be had at an early day, while the same will yet be of avail to them; as in duty bound they will ever pray.

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1852 February 5

Description

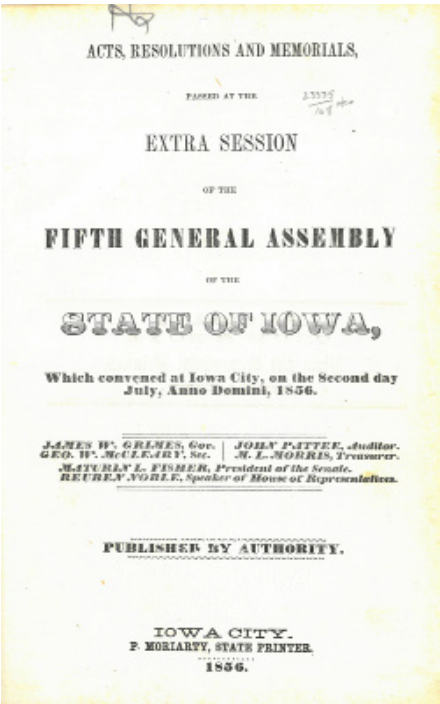
This petition was addressed to the U.S. Congress, and it was created by the residents of Marion County, Iowa, after the Indian Removal Act was enacted.

Transcript of Marion County Resolution in Response to Indian Removal Act

Text-Dependent Questions

- Why did the people of Marion County, Iowa, sign this petition?
- What did the petition ask on behalf of the American Indians?

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



ACTS, RESOLUTIONS AND MEMORIALS,

PASSED AT THE

EXTRA SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF IOWA,

Which convened at Iowa City, on the Second day July, Anno Domini, 1856.

JAMES W. GRIMES, Gov. | JOHN PATTEE, Auditor.
GEO. W. McCLEARY, Sec. | M. L. MORRIS, Treasurer.
MATURIN L. FISHER, President of the Senate.
REUBEN NOBLE, Speaker of House of Representatives.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

IOWA CITY.
P. MORIARTY, STATE PRINTER.
1856.

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 15 July 1856

Description

This document is a law enacted by the Iowa General Assembly permitting American Indians to buy land in Iowa. The Act was passed in 1856. The following year, the Meskwaki purchased land in Tama County, Iowa. The Meskwaki were the first American Indian tribe to purchase land after the federal Indian Removal Act of 1830 was passed.

Transcript of Iowa Law to "Allow Meskwaki to Purchase Land and Live in Tama, Iowa"

Text-Dependent Question

- In 1830, the federal government passed a law requiring all **American Indians to be removed to areas west of Missouri and Arkansas**. What does this law allow the Meskwaki to do? Who is giving the Meskwaki permission to stay in Iowa? Why is that significant?

American Indian Reservations in Oklahoma, 1889

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Maxwell, Charles A., "Indian territory: compiled under the direction of the Hon. John H. Oberly, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, by C.A. Maxwell," 1889

Description

This map was created by the Office of Indian Affairs in 1889. It shows the location of American Indian reservations in the modern state of Oklahoma. The Cherokee occupy the large northeast section of the map. The Sac and Fox tribes, who did not move back to Iowa, are in the center.

Transcript of American Indian Reservations in Oklahoma Map

Text-Dependent Questions

- Spend a few minutes studying this map, list three to five things about that stand out to you and why you noted those.
- From this map, what can you conclude about how borders between tribes were created?
- Looking at the references part of the map, what conflict(s) might arise based on how the land was divided?

Citation Information

Maxwell, Charles A., "Indian territory: compiled under the direction of the Hon. John H. Oberly, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, by C.A. Maxwell," 1889. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

"Evolution of Homes on Sac and Fox Reservation," Date Unknown

Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Breid, Jacob

Description

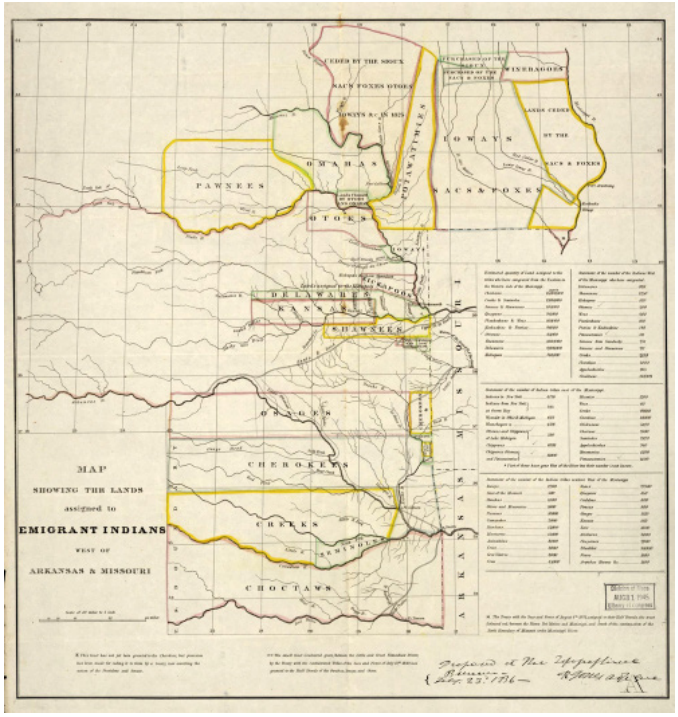
These images are featured on a page of a scrapbook showing photographs of the Meskwaki in the early 20th century. The photographs shows traditional Meskwaki housing alongside typical 20th century American houses.

Transcript of "Evolution of Homes on Sac and Fox Reservation"

Text-Dependent Questions

- What does the title at the top of this scrapbook page imply? What do the photos show about the changes to Meskwaki homes?
- Describe the difference you see in the houses in these photographs.

Lands Assigned to American Indians West of Arkansas and Missouri, 1836



Courtesy of Library of Congress, "Map showing the lands assigned to emigrant Indians west of Arkansas and Missouri," 1836

Description

This map was created by the Topographical Bureau to show the assigned territory of tribes west of the Mississippi. The assignments were made as a result of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, which gave the president the authority to create and assign tribes to certain areas of land west of the Mississippi.

Transcript of Lands Assigned to American Indians Map

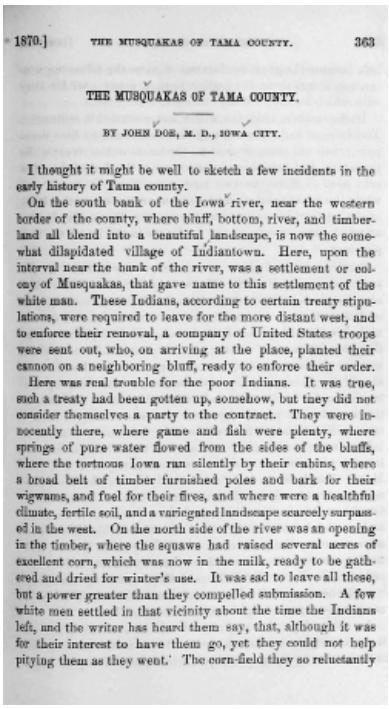
Text-Dependent Questions

- From this map, can you tell what method was used to determine the boundary lines between tribes? Take the population statistics into account in your answer.
- According to the map, by what two methods did the Sac and Fox lose their land?

Citation Information

"Map showing the lands assigned to emigrant Indians west of Arkansas and Missouri," 1836. **Courtesy of Library of Congress**

"The Musquakas of Tama County" The Annals of Iowa Article, 1870



1870.] THE MUSQUAKAS OF TAMA COUNTY. 363

THE MUSQUAKAS OF TAMA COUNTY.

BY JOHN DOE, M. D., IOWA CITY.

I thought it might be well to sketch a few incidents in the early history of Tama county.

On the south bank of the Iowa river, near the western border of the county, where bluff, bottom, river, and timberland all blend into a beautiful landscape, is now the somewhat dilapidated village of Indiantown. Here, upon the interval near the bank of the river, was a settlement or colony of Musquakas, that gave name to this settlement of the white man. These Indians, according to certain treaty stipulations, were required to leave for the more distant west, and to enforce their removal, a company of United States troops were sent out, who, on arriving at the place, planted their cannon on a neighboring bluff, ready to enforce their order.

Here was real trouble for the poor Indians. It was true, such a treaty had been gotten up, somehow, but they did not consider themselves a party to the contract. They were innocently there, where game and fish were plenty, where springs of pure water flowed from the sides of the bluffs, where the tortuous Iowa ran silently by their cabins, where a broad belt of timber furnished poles and bark for their wigwams, and fuel for their fires, and where were a healthful climate, fertile soil, and a variegated landscape scarcely surpassed in the west. On the north side of the river was an opening in the timber, where the squaws had raised several acres of excellent corn, which was now in the milk, ready to be gathered and dried for winter's use. It was sad to leave all these, but a power greater than they compelled submission. A few white men settled in that vicinity about the time the Indians left, and the writer has heard them say, that, although it was for their interest to have them go, yet they could not help pitying them as they went. The corn-field they so reluctantly

Courtesy of University of Iowa Libraries and Archives, Doe, John, "The Musquakas of Tama County," The Annals of Iowa, 1870

Description

This article appeared in *The Annals of Iowa* in 1870. The removal of American Indians west of the Mississippi had begun 40 years earlier. Not all of the Meskwaki left Iowa to settle in Tama County. The author, John Doe, visited the Meskwaki in Tama County in 1855. Two years later, the Meskwaki purchased the land described in the article.

Full Transcript of "The Musquakas of Tama County"

Transcribed Excerpts from "The Musquakas of Tama County"

Text-Dependent Questions

- What picture do the writer's words paint of the land the Meskwaki were removed from? Justify your answer with textual evidence.
- What did the Meskwaki do after they purchased land on the Iowa River?
- Using evidence from the text, describe the relationship the Meskwaki had with white settlers.
- Why does the author say soldiers were present near the Meskwaki settlement? What does that imply about the relations between the American Indians and the U.S. government?

Citation Information

Doe, John, "The Musquakas of Tama County," *The Annals of Iowa*, 1870. **Courtesy of University of Iowa Libraries and Archives**