Chapter 18: Conquest and Survival, 1860–1900

Chapter Review

1. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES The Oklahoma Land Rush

In the 1830s, the federal government designated what was to become the state of Oklahoma as Indian Territory, reserved for the Five Civilized Tribes who had been forcibly removed from their eastern lands. All five tribes reestablished themselves as sovereign republics in Indian Territory. The Civil War took a heavy toll on their success, though. New treaties required the Five Civilized Tribes to cede the entire western half of the territory for the resettlement of tribes from other regions. Western Oklahoma thereby became home to thousands of newly-displaced peoples. Eventually, more than 80,000 tribespeople were living on twenty-one separate reservations in Western Oklahoma, all governed by agent appointed by the federal government. The unassigned far western district of Oklahoma, known as No Man’s Land, was opened to homesteaders on April 22, 1889. In a little more than two months, 6,000 homestead claims had been filed. The land rush of 1889 was only one in a series of events that soon dispossessed Oklahoma’s Indians of their remaining land. First, the federal government broke up the estates held collectively by various tribes and divided them into individual claims of 160 acres. In 1898, Congress passed the Curtis Act, which abolished tribal jurisdiction over all Indian Territory. Members of the former Indian nations were directed to dismantle their governments, abandon their estates and join the ranks of the other homesteaders.

1. INDIAN PEOPLES UNDER SIEGE

The Indians living west of the Mississippi River felt the pressure of the gradual incorporation of the West into the American nation. California became a state in 1850 and Oregon in 1859. Congress further consolidated the national domain by granting territorial status to Utah, New Mexico, Washington, Dakota, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. A series of events brought large numbers of white settlers into these new states and territories: the discovery of gold in California in 1848, the opening of western lands to homesteaders in 1862, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. These advances made federal officials more determined than ever to end tribal rule and to bring Indians into the American mainstream.

a. On the Eve of Conquest

Before the European colonists reached the New World, various Indian tribes had occupied Western lands for more than 20,000 years. Invasion by the English, Spanish, and other Europeans brought disease, religious conversion, and new patterns of commerce. Geographic isolation gave many tribes a margin of survival unknown to tribes in the East. At the close of the Civil War, approximately 360,000 Indian people still lived in the trans-Mississippi West. Legally, the federal government had long regarded Indian tribes as autonomous nations residing within American boundaries and had negotiated numerous treaties with them as such. Several states violated these treaties so often that the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The Cherokees challenged this legislation and the Supreme Court ruled in their favor in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*. President Jackson ignored the Court’s ruling and forced many tribes to cede their land and move west to Indian Territory. In 1854, the federal government abolished the northern half of Indian Territory in order to open Kansas and Nebraska territories for white settlement.

b. Reservations and the Slaughter of the Buffalo

As early as the 1840s, American officials had outlined plans to subdue the Indians. Individual tribes would agree to live within clearly defined zones—reservations—and, in exchange, the Bureau of Indian Affairs would provide guidance, while U.S. military forces ensured protection. This reservation policy reflected the vision of many “Friends of the Indian,” educators and Protestant missionaries who aspired to “civilize the savages.” Several tribes signed treaties regarding the reservation policy, although they often did so under duress. Those tribes that did move to reservations often found federal policies inadequate to their needs. Corrupt officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs routinely diverted funds for their own use and reduced food supplies, a policy promoting malnutrition, demoralization, and desperation. The mass slaughter of the buffalo, brought about by traders avidly seeking fur for coats, hides for leather, and bones for fertilizer, meant a crisis situation for the Indian tribes that depended on the buffalo for their very existence. Army commanders encouraged the slaughter of the buffalo, accurately predicting that starvation would break tribal resistance to the reservation system.

c. The Indian Wars

In 1864, large-scale war erupted. Having decided to terminate all treaties with tribes in eastern Colorado, territorial governor John Evans encouraged a group of white civilians, the Colorado Volunteers, to stage raids through Cheyenne campgrounds. The Sioux played the most dramatic roles in the Indian Wars. During the Great Sioux War of 1865–67, the Oglala Sioux warrior Red Cloud fought the U.S. Army to a stalemate and forced the government to abandon its forts, which the Sioux then burned to the ground. White prospectors hurriedly invaded the territory. This foolhardy move offered the allied Cheyenne and Sioux warriors a perfect opportunity to cut off Custer’s logistical and military support. “Custer’s Last Stand” gave Indian-haters the emotional ammunition to whip up public excitement. In February, 1877, Sioux leadership in the Indian Wars ended. Pursued by the U.S. Army, the Apaches earned a reputation as intrepid warriors.

d. The Nez Percé

For generations, the Nez Percé had regarded themselves as good friends to white traders and settlers. The Nez Percé had occasionally assisted American armies against hostile tribes, and many of them were converts to Christianity.

But the discovery of gold on Nez Percé territory in 1860 changed their relations with whites for the worse. Pressed by prospectors and mining companies, government officials demanded, in the treaty of 1863, that the Nez Percé cede 6 million acres, nine-tenths of their land, at less than ten cents per acre. At first, federal officials listened to Nez Percé complaints against the treaty and decided to allow them to remain on their land. Hoping to explain the situation, a Nez Percé truce team approached U.S. troops. U.S. troops finally trapped the Nez Percé in the Bear Paw Mountains of northern Montana, just 30 miles from the Canadian border. The last remnant of Joseph’s band were deported under guard to a non-Nez Percé reservation in Washington, where Chief Joseph died in 1904 “of a broken heart,” and where his descendants continue to live in exile to this day.

1. THE INTERNAL EMPIRE

Since the time of Christopher Columbus, the Americas had inspired in Europeans visions of a land of incredible wealth, free for the taking. In the nineteenth century, the North American continent, stretching across sparsely populated territories toward the Pacific Ocean, revived this fantasy, especially as early reports conjured dreams of mountains of gold and silver. Determined to make their fortunes, be it from copper in Arizona, wheat in Montana, or oranges in California, numerous adventurers traveled west. As a group, they carried out the largest migration and greatest commercial expansion in American history.

But the settlers themselves also became the subjects of a huge “internal empire” whose financial, political, and industrial centers of power remained in the East. Only a small number of settlers actually struck it rich in the great extractive industries—mining, lumbering, ranching, and farming—that ruled the Western economy. Meanwhile, older populations—Indian peoples, Hispanic peoples, and more recently settled communities like the Mormons—struggled to create places for themselves in this new expansionist order.

a. Mining Towns

Mining camps and boomtowns soon dotted what had once been thinly settled regions and speeded the urban development of the West. Mining soon brought the West into a vast global market for capital, commodities, and labor (see Map 18.3).

The mining industry quickly grew from its treasure-hunt origins into a grand corporate enterprise. Occasionally, ore veins lasted long enough—as in Butte, Montana, center of the copper-mining district—to create permanent cities.

Labor unions eventually admitted these new immigrants, but refused Chinese, Mexican, Indian, and African American workers. When prices and ore production fell sharply, not even unions could stop the owners from shutting down the mines and leaving ghost towns in their wake. Hydraulic mining, which used water cannons to blast hillsides and expose gold deposits, drove tons of rock and earth into the rivers and canyons. Underground mining continued unregulated, using up whole forests for timbers and filling the air with dangerous, sulfurous smoke.

b. Mormon Settlements

Led by their new prophet, Brigham Young, the Mormons migrated in 1846–47 from the Midwest to the Great Salt Lake Basin to form an independent theocratic state called Deseret and to affirm the sanctity of plural marriage, or polygamy. By 1870, more than 87,000 Mormons lived in Utah Territory, creating relatively sizable communities complemented by satellite villages joined to communal farmlands and a common pasture. Relying on agricultural techniques learned from local Indian tribes, the Mormons built dams for irrigation and harvested a variety of crops from desert soil. Eventually, nearly 500 Mormon communities spread from Oregon to Idaho to northern Mexico (see Map 18.4).

As territorial rule tightened, the Mormons saw their unique way of life once again threatened. The newspapers and the courts repeatedly assailed the Mormons for the supposed sexual excesses of their system of plural marriage, condemning them as heathens and savages. Preceded by prohibitory federal laws enacted in 1862 and 1874, the Supreme Court finally ruled against polygamy in the 1879 case of *United States v. Reynolds*, which granted the freedom of belief but not the freedom of practice. By the early 1890s, Mormon leaders officially renounced the practice of plural marriage.

Although Brigham Young wed twenty-seven women and fathered fifty-six children, no more than 15 to 20 percent of Mormon families practiced polygamy and even then, two wives was the norm.

c. Mexican Borderland Communities

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War, allowed the Hispanic people north of the Rio Grande to choose between immigrating to Mexico or staying in what was now the United States.

What gradually emerged was an economically and socially interdependent zone, the Anglo-Hispanic borderlands linking the United States and Mexico.

For a time, Arizona and New Mexico seemed to hold out hope for a mutually beneficial interaction between Mexicanos and Anglos. With the Anglos came land closures as well as commercial expansion, prompted by railroad, mining, and timber industries. Many poor families found themselves crowded onto plots too small for subsistence farming. In the 1880s, Las Gorras Blancas, a band of agrarian rebels in New Mexico, destroyed railroad ties and farm machinery and posted demands for justice on the fences of the new Anglo farms and ranches. In 1890, Las Gorras turned from social banditry to political organization, forming El Partido del Pueblo Unido (The People’s Party). Mutualistes (mutual aid societies) provided sickness and death benefits to Mexican families.

1. THE OPEN RANGE

Texas longhorns, introduced by the Spanish, numbered over 5 million at the close of the Civil War and represented a potentially plentiful supply of beef for Eastern consumers. In the spring of 1866, entrepreneurs such as Joseph G. McCoy began to build a spectacular cattle market in the eastern part of Kansas, where the Kansas Pacific Railroad provided crucial transportation links to slaughtering and packing houses and commercial distributors in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago.

Drovers pushed herd after herd north from Texas. Great profits were made on Texas steers bought for $7–$9 a head and sold in Kansas for upward of $30. In 1880, nearly 2 million cattle were slaughtered in Chicago alone. For two decades, cattle represented the West’s bonanza industry.

a. The Long Drives

The great cattle drives depended on the cowboy, a seasonal or migrant worker. The workday lasted from sunup to sundown, with short night shifts for guarding the cattle. In 1883, many Texas cowboys struck for higher wages; nearly all Wyoming cowboys struck in 1886. Indian cowboys worked mainly on the northern plains and in Indian Territory; the vaqueros, who had previously worked on the Mexican cattle haciendas, or huge estates, predominated in South Texas and California. African American cowboys worked primarily in Texas, where the range cattle industry was founded.

Like the vaqueros, African American cowboys were highly skilled managers of cattle. Very few women participated in the long drives. Occasionally, a husband and wife worked as partners, sharing even the labor of wrangling cattle, and following her husband’s death, a woman might take over altogether. Elizabeth Collins, for example, turned her husband’s large ranch into an extraordinarily prosperous business, earning for herself the title “Cattle Queen of Montana.”

b. The Sporting Life

In cattle towns as well as mining camps, saloons, gambling establishments, and dance halls were regular features on the horizon. The hurdy-gurdy, a form of hand organ, supplied raucous music for cowboys eager to spend their money and blow off steam after the long drive. Here they found dancing partners, often called hurdy-girls or hurdies. Although some women worked in trailside “hoghouses,” the best-paid prostitutes congregated in the brothel districts. Most cattle towns boasted at least one bawdy house. Dodge City had two: one with white prostitutes for white patrons; another with black prostitutes for both white and black men. Until then, prostitution supplied these women with the largest source of employment outside the home.

Like the cowboys who bought their services, most prostitutes were unmarried and in their teens or twenties. Often fed up with underpaid jobs in dressmaking or domestic service, they found few alternatives to prostitution in the cattle towns, where the cost of food and lodging was notoriously high.

c. Community and Conflict

Personal violence was notoriously commonplace on the streets and in the barrooms of cattle towns and mining camps populated mainly by young, single men. Local specialty shops and mail-order catalogues continued to sell weapons with little regulation. After the Civil War, violent crime, assault, and robbery rose sharply throughout the United States. The “range wars” of the 1870s produced violent conflicts. Sheep chew grass down to its roots, making it practically impossible to raise cattle on land they have grazed. Great cattle barons fought back against farmers by ordering cowboys to cut the new barbed-wire fences.

Finally, during 1885–87, a combination of summer drought and winter blizzards killed 90 percent of the cattle in the northern Plains. Many ranchers fell into bankruptcy.

V. FARMING COMMUNITIES ON THE PLAINS

The vision of a huge fertile garden extending from the Appalachians to the Pacific Ocean had inspired Americans since the early days of the republic. “The Great Desert” was the name they gave to the region stretching west from Kansas and Nebraska, north to Montana and the Dakotas, and south again to Oklahoma and Texas. Few trees fended off the blazing sun of summer or promised a supply of lumber for homes and fences. The occasional river or stream flowed with “muddy gruel” rather than pure, sweet water. It took massive improvements in both transportation and farm technology—as well as unrelenting advertising and promotional campaigns—to open the Great Plains to widescale agriculture.

a. The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act of 1862 offered the first incentive to prospective white farmers. This act granted a quarter section (160 acres) of the public domain free to any settler who lived on the land for at least five years and improved it; or a settler could buy the land for $1.25 per acre after only six months’ residence. Restricting its provisions to household heads, the Homestead Act encouraged adventurous and hard-working unmarried women to file between 5 and 15 percent of the claims.

Homesteaders achieved their greatest success in the central and upper Midwest, where the soil was rich and weather relatively moderate. But those settlers lured to the Great Plains by descriptions of land “carpeted with soft grass—a sylvan paradise” found themselves locked in a fierce struggle with the harsh climate and arid soil.

The dream of a homestead nevertheless died hard. Rather than filing a homestead claim with the federal government, most settlers acquired their land outright. State governments and land companies usually held the most valuable land near transportation and markets, and the majority of farmers were willing to pay a hefty price for those benefits. The big-time land speculators did even better, plucking choice locations at bargain prices and selling high.

b. Populating the Plains

The railroads wielded tremendous economic and political power throughout the West.

Unlike the railroads built before the Civil War, which followed the path of villages and towns, the Western lines preceded settlement. Bringing people west became their top priority, and the railroad companies conducted aggressive promotional and marketing campaigns. Many immigrants found life on the Great Plains difficult but endurable. Having traveled the huge distance with kin or members of their Old World villages, immigrants tended to form tight-knit communities on the Great Plains. Settling as individual families rather than as whole communities, they faced an exceptionally solitary life on the Great Plains. Communities eventually flourished in prosperous towns like Grand Island, Nebraska; Coffeyville, Kansas; and Fargo, North Dakota, that served the larger agricultural region. Built alongside the railroad, they grew into commercial centers, home to banking, medical, legal, and retail services.

c. Work, Dawn to Dusk

“Wheat never looked better and it is nothing but wheat, wheat, wheat.”

Most farm families survived, and prospered if they could, through hard work, often from dawn to dusk. Women tended to the young children, and they might occasionally take in boarders, usually young men working temporarily in railroad construction. Many women complained about the ceaseless drudgery, especially when they watched their husbands invest in farm equipment rather than in domestic appliances. Neighbors might agree to work together haying, harvesting, and threshing grain. A well-to-do farmer might “rent” his threshing machine in exchange for a small cash fee and, for instance, three days’ labor. When annual harvests were bountiful, even the farm woman’s practice of bartering goods with neighbors and local merchants—butter and eggs in return for yard goods or seed—diminished sharply, replaced by cash transactions. Some lost their land altogether. The Garden of Eden was not to be found on the prairies or on the plains, no matter how hard the average farm family worked.

1. THE WORLD’S BREADBASKET

Hard-working farmers brought huge numbers of acres under cultivation, while new technologies allowed them to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency in the planting and harvesting of crops. As a result, farming became increasingly tied to international trade, and modern capitalism soon ruled Western agriculture, as it did the mining and cattle industries.

a. New Production Technologies

Only after the trees had been cleared and grasslands cut free of roots could the soil be prepared for planting. But as farmers on the Great Plains knew so well, the sod west of the Mississippi did not yield readily to cultivation and often broke the cast-iron plows typically used by Eastern farmers. Farther west, some farmers resorted to drills to plant seeds for crops such as wheat and oats. One man would guide a team of five or six oxen pulling a plow through the soil, while another regulated the depth of the cut, or furrow. Agricultural productivity depended as much on new technology as on the farmers’ hard labor. In 1837, John Deere had designed his famous “singing plow” that easily turned prairie grasses under and turned up even highly compacted soils. Around the same time, Cyrus McCormick’s reaper began to be used for cutting grain; by the 1850s, his factories were turning out reapers in mass quantities. Drastically reducing the number of people traditionally required for this work, the harvester increased the pace many times over. The introduction of mechanized corn planters and mowing or raking machines for hay all but completed the technological arsenal (see Table 18.1).

b. Producing for the Global Market

Although the family remained the primary source of labor, farmers tended to put more emphasis on production for exchange rather than for home use. Wheat farmers in particular prospered. With the world population increasing at a rapid rate, the international demand for wheat was enormous, and American farmers made huge profits from the sale of this crop. Wheat production ultimately served as a barometer of the agricultural economy in the West. The new machines and expanding market did not necessarily guarantee success. Weather conditions, international markets, and railroad and steamship shipping prices all proved equally unpredictable and heartless.

The new technology and scientific expertise favored the large, well-capitalized farmer over the small one. The majority of farmers with fewer resources expanded at more modest rates. Between 1880 and 1900, average farm size in the seven leading grain-growing states increased from 64.4 acres to more than 100 acres.

c. California Agribusiness

The trend toward bonanza farming reached an apex in California, where farming as a business surpassed farming as a way of life. Farms of nearly 500 acres dominated the California landscape in 1870; by the turn of the century, two-thirds of the state’s arable land was in 1,000-acre farms. As land reformer and social commentator Henry George noted, California was “not a country of farms but a country of plantations and estates.”

By 1890, cherries, apricots, and oranges, packed with mountains of ice, made their way into homes across the United States.

California growers learned quickly that they could satisfy consumer appetites and even create new ones. Meanwhile, California’s grape growing grew into a big business. Long considered inferior to French wines, California wines found a ready market at lower prices. By the turn of the century, amid intense legislative battles over land and irrigation rights, it was clear that the rich and powerful dominated California agribusiness.

d. The Toll on the Environment

Banishing many existing species, farmers “improved” the land by introducing exotic plants and animals—that is, biological colonies indigenous to other regions and continents. Large-scale commercial agriculture also took a heavy toll on inland waters. Before white settlement, rainfall had drained naturally into lakes and underground aquifers, and watering spots were abundant throughout the Great Plains. Farmers mechanically rerouted and dammed water to irrigate their crops, causing many bodies of water to disappear and the water table to drop significantly. The Newlands or National Reclamation Act of 1902 added 1 million acres of irrigated land, and state irrigation districts added more than 10 million acres. Although Western state politicians and federal officials debated water rights for decades, they rarely considered the impact of water policies on the environment. Lake Tulare in California’s Central Valley, for example, had occupied up to 760 square miles. The need to maintain the water supply indirectly led to the creation of national forests and the Forest Service. Western farmers supported the General Land Revision Act of 1891, which gave the president the power to establish forest reserves to protect watersheds against the threats posed by lumbering, overgrazing, and forest fires. The federal government would now play an even larger role in economic development of the West, dealing mainly with corporate farmers and ranchers eager for improvements.

VII. THE WESTERN LANDSCAPE

Throughout the nineteenth century, many Americans viewed western expansion as the nation’s “manifest destiny,” and just as many marveled at the region’s natural and cultural wonders. The public east of the Mississippi craved stories about the West and visual images of its sweeping vistas. Artists and photographers built their reputations on what they saw and imagined. Scholars, from geologists and botanists to historians and anthropologists, toured the trans-Mississippi West in pursuit of new data.

a. Nature’s Majesty

By the end of the century, scores of writers had described spectacular, breathtaking natural sites like the Grand Tetons and High Sierras, vast meadows of waving grasses and beautiful flowers, expansive canyons and rushing white rivers, and exquisite deserts covered with sagebrush or dotted with flowering cactus, stark yet enticing.

Moved by such evidence, the federal government began to set aside huge tracts of land as nature reserves. Meanwhile, explorers returned to the East awestruck by the varied terrain of the Rocky Mountains, the largest mountain chain in North America, and described huge sky-high lakes, boiling mud, and spectacular waterfalls. In 1872, Congress named Yellowstone the first national park. Yosemite and Sequoia in California, Crater Lake in Oregon, Mount Rainier in Washington, and Glacier in Montana all became national parks between 1890 and 1910.

Landscape painters, particularly the group that became known as the Rocky Mountain School, also piqued the public’s interest in Western scenery. In the 1860s, German-born Albert Bierstadt, equipped with a camera, traveled the Oregon Trail. Using his photographs as inspiration, Bierstadt painted mountains so wondrous that they seemed nearly surreal, projecting a divine aura behind the majesty of nature. His “earthscapes”—huge canvases with exacting details of animals and plants—thrilled viewers and sold for tens of thousands of dollars.

b. The Legendary Wild West

The West, Roosevelt insisted, meant “vigorous manhood.”

Competing against stories about pirates, wars, crime, and sea adventures, westerns outsold the others. Cowman Joseph McCoy staged Wild West shows in St. Louis and Chicago, where Texas cowboys entertained prospective buyers by roping calves and breaking horses. “Buffalo Bill” Cody made sharpshooter Annie Oakley a star performer. Cody also hired Sioux Indians and hundreds of cowboys to perform in mock stagecoach robberies and battles.

Cody’s Wild West Show attracted masses of fair-goers at the World’s Columbian Exposition, the spectacular celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s landing in the New World held in Chicago in 1893. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” made a compelling argument that the continuous westward movement of settlement allowed Americans to develop new standards for democracy. The “frontier thesis” lived on, however, although most historians no longer consider the frontier as the key to all American history.

c. The “American Primitive”

A young German American artist, Charles Schreyvogel, saw Buffalo Bill’s tent show in Buffalo and decided to make the West his life’s work. Indian artists recorded Custer’s defeat in far less noble fashion.

Photographers often produced highly nuanced portraits of Indian peoples. President Theodore Roosevelt praised Edward Sheriff Curtis for vividly conveying tribal virtue. Painters and photographers led the way for scholarly research on the various Indian societies.

In 1885, Fletcher produced for the U.S. Senate a report titled Indian Education and Civilization, one of the first general statements on the status of Indian peoples. As a founder of the American Anthropological Society and president of the American Folklore Society, she encouraged further study of Indian societies.

Fraternal organizations such as the Elks and Eagles borrowed tribal terminology. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the nation’s premier youth organizations, used tribal lore to instill strength of character.

1. THE TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN SOCIETIES

In 1871, the U.S. government formally ended the treaty system, eclipsing without completely abolishing the sovereignty of Indian nations. Still, the tribes persisted. Using a mixture of survival strategies from farming and trade to the leasing of reservation lands, they both adapted to changing conditions and maintained old traditions.

a. Reform Policy and Politics

By 1880, many Indian tribes had been forcibly resettled on reservations, but very few had adapted to white ways. Jackson threw herself into the Indian Rights Association, an offshoot of the Women’s National Indian Association (WNIA), which had been formed in 1874 to rally public support for a program of assimilation. The two organizations helped to place Protestant missionaries in the West to work to eradicate tribal customs as well as to convert Indian peoples to Christianity. By 1882, the WNIA had gathered 100,000 signatures on petitions urging Congress to phase out the reservation system, to establish universal education for Indian children, and to award title to 160 acres to any Indian individual willing to work the land.

The Dawes Act successfully undermined tribal sovereignty but offered little compensation. “Indian schools” forbade Indian languages, clothing styles, and even hair fashions in order to “kill the Indian … and save the man,” as one schoolmaster put it.

Treated as savages, Indian children fled most white schools. Within the next forty years, the Indian peoples lost 60 percent of the reservation land remaining in 1887 and 66 percent of the land allotted to them as homesteaders. In that year, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act, which affirmed the integrity of Indian cultural institutions and returned some land to tribal ownership (see Chapter 24).

b. Endurance and Rejuvenation

The most tenacious tribes were those occupying land rejected by white settlers or those distant from their new communities. One Yana tribe, the Yahi, chose simply to disappear. Many tribes found it difficult to survive in the proximity of white settlers. Intermarriage, although widely condemned by the white community, drew many young people outside their Indian communities. Some tribal leaders also deliberately chose a path toward assimilation. For those tribes who remained on reservations, the aggressively assimilationist policies of the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) challenged their traditional ways. The nearby Hopis, like the Navajos, survived by stubbornly clinging to lands unwanted by white settlers, and by adapting to drastically changing conditions. A famous tribe of “desert people,” the Hopis had lived for centuries in their cliff cities. Fortunate Northwestern tribes remained relatively isolated from white settlers until the early twentieth century, although they had begun trading with white visitors centuries earlier. Northwestern peoples maintained their cultural integrity in part through connections with kin in Canada, as did Southern tribes with kin in Mexico.