

Foundations of Sovereignty & History



Series Purpose & Vision

Build Understanding



Understanding fosters connections and promotes respectful dialogue among diverse communities and individuals.

Build Relationships



Relationships are built on trust, empathy, and shared experiences that honor our collective histories.

Build Readiness



Readiness prepares us to engage with the complexities of sovereignty and Indigenous perspectives effectively.

Today's Focus

Understanding key themes and reflections

Historical Grounding

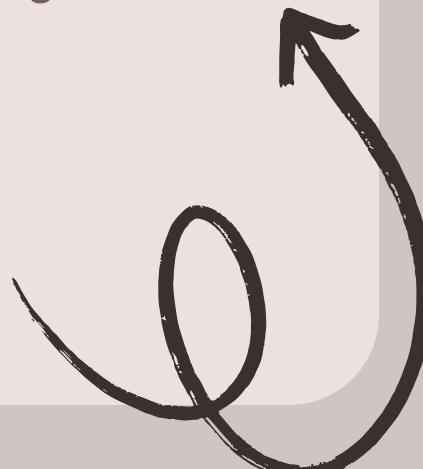
Understanding the **history of Native Nations** is essential. It provides context for current sovereignty discussions and helps respect the legacy of Indigenous governance systems and community resilience.

Sovereignty Basics

Sovereignty is **inherent and pre-existing**. Recognizing this fact is crucial for understanding Indigenous rights and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of self-determination and tribal governance frameworks.

Early Childhood Context

Early childhood experiences are deeply **rooted in cultural practices**. This perspective highlights the significance of collective identity, fostering relationships, and nurturing future generations within Native communities.



Meet Our Presenters

Introducing Tara and Stephanie

Tara and Stephanie bring extensive experience in Indigenous advocacy, education, and community engagement, dedicated to fostering meaningful relationships and understanding around sovereignty and early childhood development.



Introductions as Cultural Practice



01

Relational vs. Positional

In many Tribal Nations, introductions are relational, not positional.

02

Importance of Family

Who you come from matters more than what you do.

03

Interconnectedness

Introductions establish responsibility, belonging, and connection.

Brave Space Agreements

01

Humility

Approach discussions with an open heart.

02

Listening

Prioritize understanding over responding in conversations.

03

Respect

Acknowledge diverse perspectives and experiences shared.

04

Reflection

Consider personal biases and growth opportunities.

Registration Survey Highlights

- **Total Registrants:** 469
- **Primary Audience:** Early childhood professionals, policymakers, and advocates
- **Most participants have baseline knowledge** (71%), but nearly 30% need foundational learning
- **The confidence gap is significant** - More than half feel only "somewhat" or "not at all" confident engaging with Native Nations, even among those with knowledge
- **Application skills are biggest growth area** - Only 9.6% strongly agree they know how to apply learning, compared to 13.9% who strongly agree they understand sovereignty
- **Strong Native representation** - 10% of participants identify as Native American/ Alaska Native, providing important lived experience perspectives

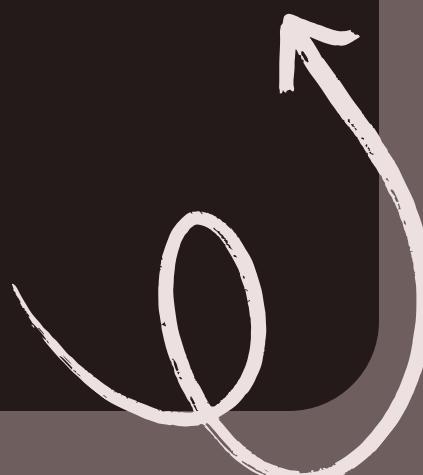
Content Warning

This session includes discussion of historical trauma, boarding schools, forced relocation, and violence against Native peoples.

We honor that these topics may bring up strong emotions or memories.

Please care for yourself in whatever ways you need — step away, pause, breathe, or listen with your camera off.

Your well-being matters in this space.





Have you ever taken Native 101 from a Native instructor?

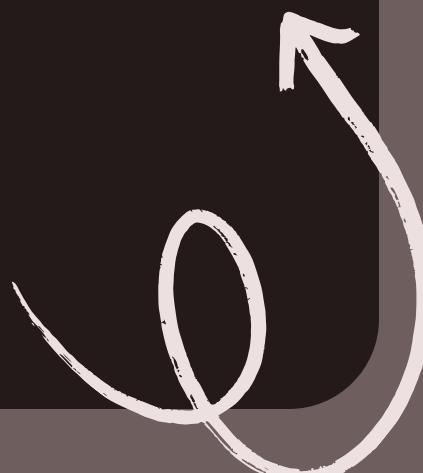
Yes

No

Maybe

Indigenous Strengths: Our History Doesn't Begin with Trauma

- Sophisticated governance systems
- Kinship-based child development
- Land stewardship & ecological science
- Spirituality + relational worldviews
- Community-led care
- Inter-generational resilience
- Economies built on reciprocity



Shared Language: Understanding Key Terms



Indigenous/Native

Original peoples of a land with distinct cultures, languages, and histories. Native Nations define themselves.

Tribal Government

A sovereign government with inherent self-governing authority. Range between Federal- and state-recognized, unrecognized (or peer recognized).

Sovereignty

Inherent authority of Tribal Nations to govern their lands, people, and affairs.

Indian Country

Legal definition is specific areas like federal reservations, dependent Indian communities, and allotments where the Indian title has not been extinguished. Informally, refers to the lands and places where Native American tribes live, have historically lived, and continue to exist and thrive.

Pre-Contact



Indigenous Cultural Diversity Before Contact



Indigenous Ecological Stewardship

Controlled Burns



Controlled burns are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and preventing larger wildfires.

Ecological Knowledge



Indigenous ecological knowledge helps sustain biodiversity and ensures the health of natural resources.

Relationship with Environment



Building a respectful relationship with the environment promotes sustainability and cultural heritage.

Land as a Developmental Resource



- Land teaches identity, belonging, and responsibility
- Children learn through subsistence and seasonal cycles
- Language, story, and culture emerge from place
- Displacement disrupts child development

Pre-Colonial Trade Networks of Indigenous Peoples



Interconnected Governance

Community



Communities foster strong ties, nurturing relationships that enhance governance and decision-making processes.

Leadership



Leadership is rooted in community values, emphasizing collective well-being and inclusive decision-making. Women held political power in many Nations.

Spirituality



Spiritual beliefs guide governance, intertwining cultural practices with the community's overall health and harmony.

Relationality: The Foundation of Indigenous Childhood

- Identity is collective, not individual
- “Who I am + who you are = a ‘we’”
- Children are raised by many, not one
- Relationships shape learning, belonging, and wellness



Indigenous Communication & Oratory



01

Silence

Silence is a sign of respect and reflection.

02

Story

Storytelling conveys law, values, and knowledge.

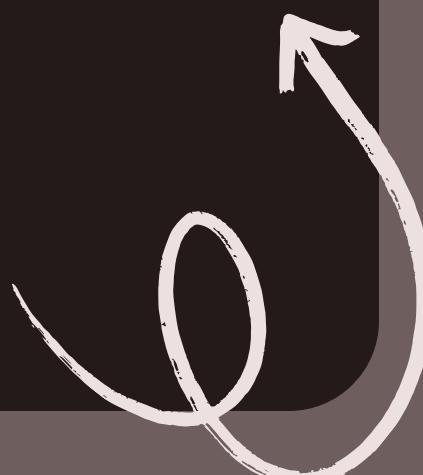
03

Oratory

Oratory builds connection, trust, and understanding.

Complex. Sophisticated. Sovereign.

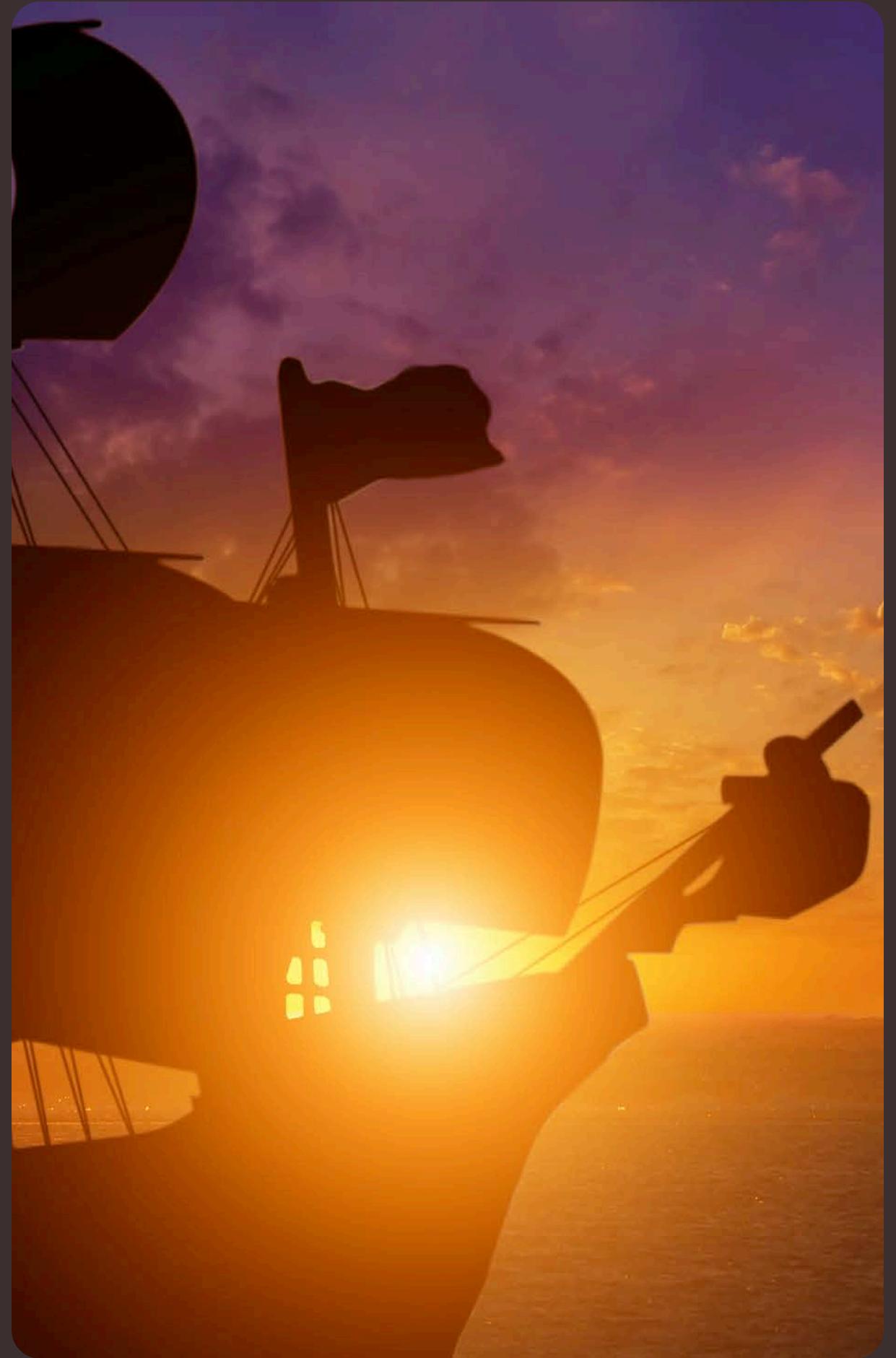
Emphasizing the richness of Indigenous governance



Chat Discussion:

What surprised you most about pre-contact culture?

Post-Contact



First Contact Timeline

1492

1607

1621

1763

1776

In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, marking the beginning of European exploration and colonization, which would drastically alter the lives of Indigenous peoples across the Americas.

The founding of Jamestown in 1607 established the first permanent English settlement in North America, near the Patawomeck, Chickahominy, and Nansemond.

The 1621 alliance between the Wampanoag tribe and early Pilgrims and Separatists that would ensure their survival, although this relationship would soon deteriorate under colonial pressures.

In 1763, the Proclamation Line was established by the British Crown, limiting colonial expansion westward, a response to tensions with Indigenous nations, which were largely ignored by settlers and colonial interests.

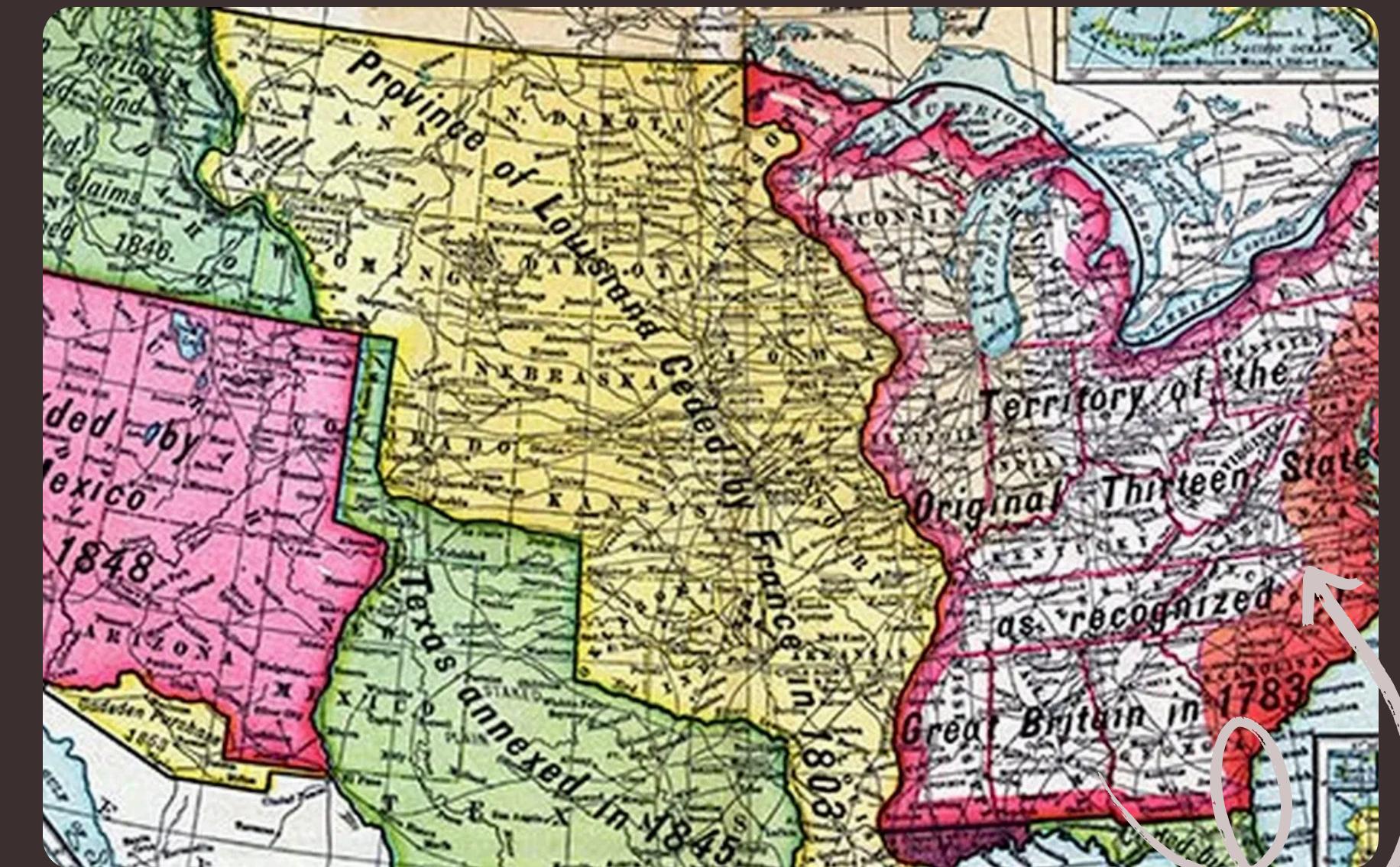
The Declaration of Independence in 1776 formally asserted the colonies' separation from Britain, leading to further encroachment on Indigenous lands and escalating conflicts over sovereignty and territory.

Impact of Disease on Populations



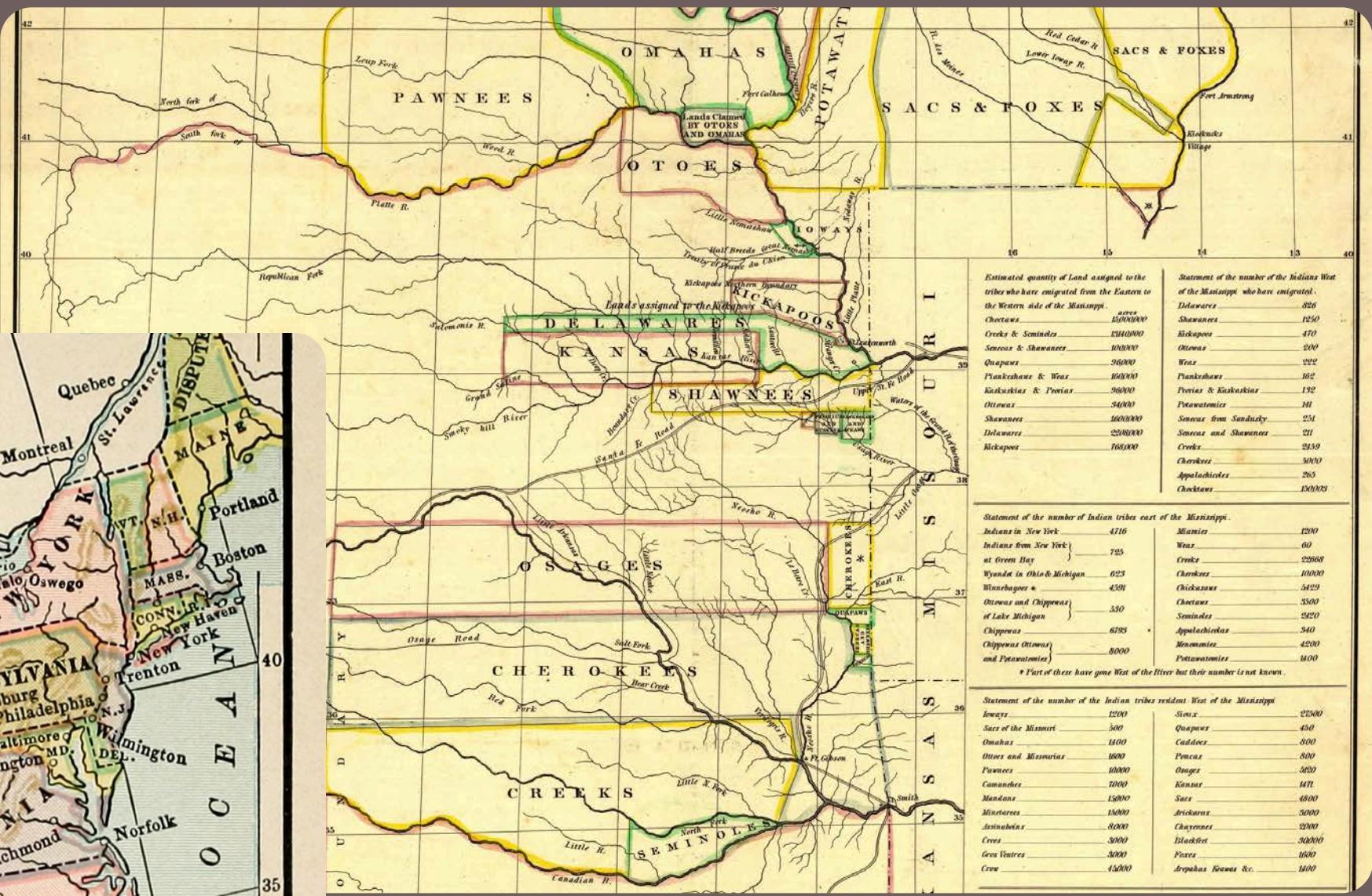
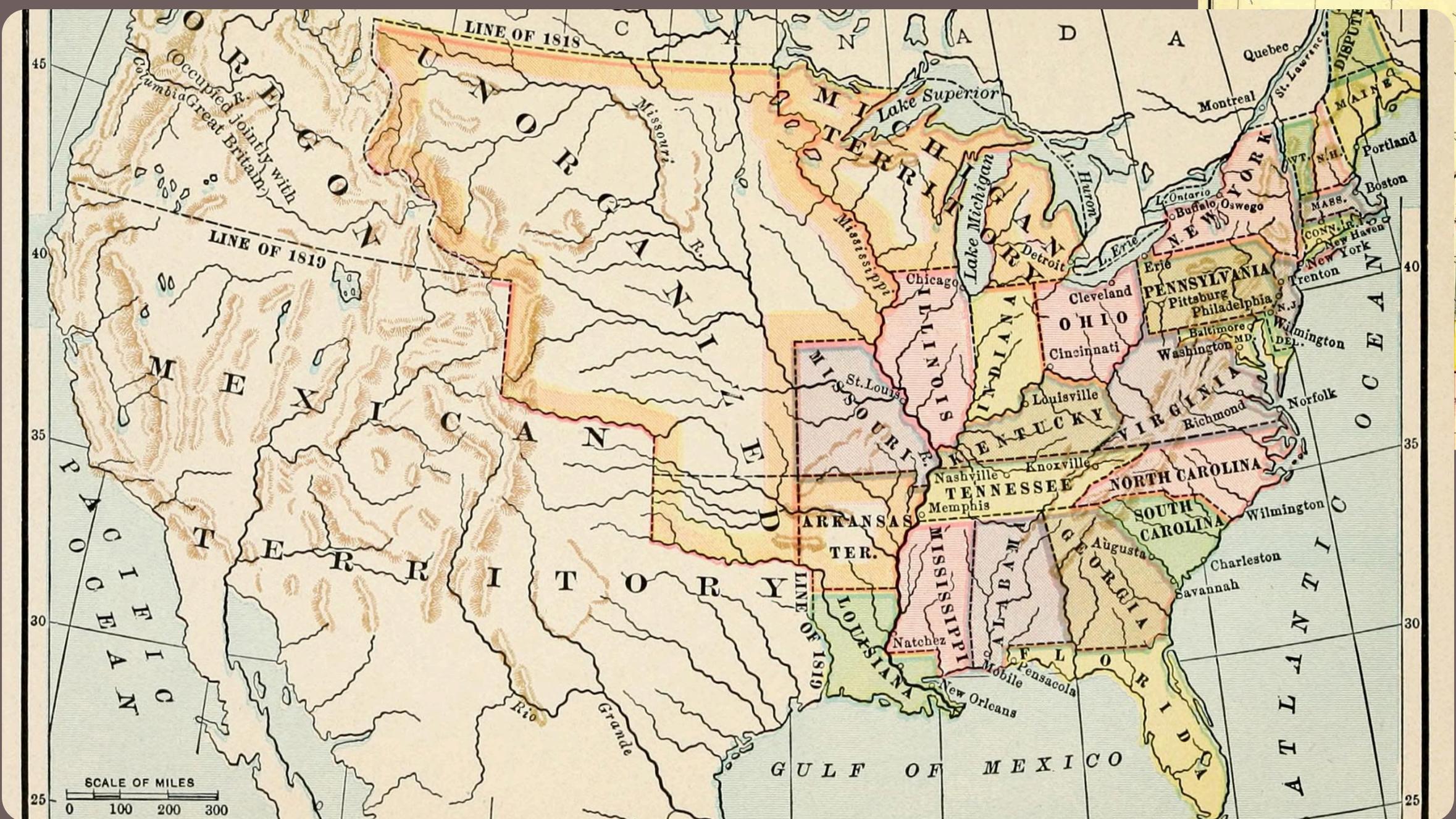
Treaties & Promises

Nation-to-nation agreements explained



Indian Removal & Reservation Era

Tragic journeys of Native communities



19th Century Timeline

1830



1834



The Indian Removal Act, signed by President Andrew Jackson, authorized the president to negotiate treaties to exchange Native American land east of the Mississippi River for lands west of it.

1862



Indian Trade and Intercourse Act established boundaries for "Indian Country" west of the Mississippi River; regulated trade and travel in Native territories; attempted to formalize separation between Native lands and U.S. territories

Homestead Act opened millions of acres of "public lands" (often unceded Native territory) to white settlers for farming. Accelerated westward expansion and encroachment on Native lands; created enormous wealth transfer to white families while dispossessing Native peoples.

1883



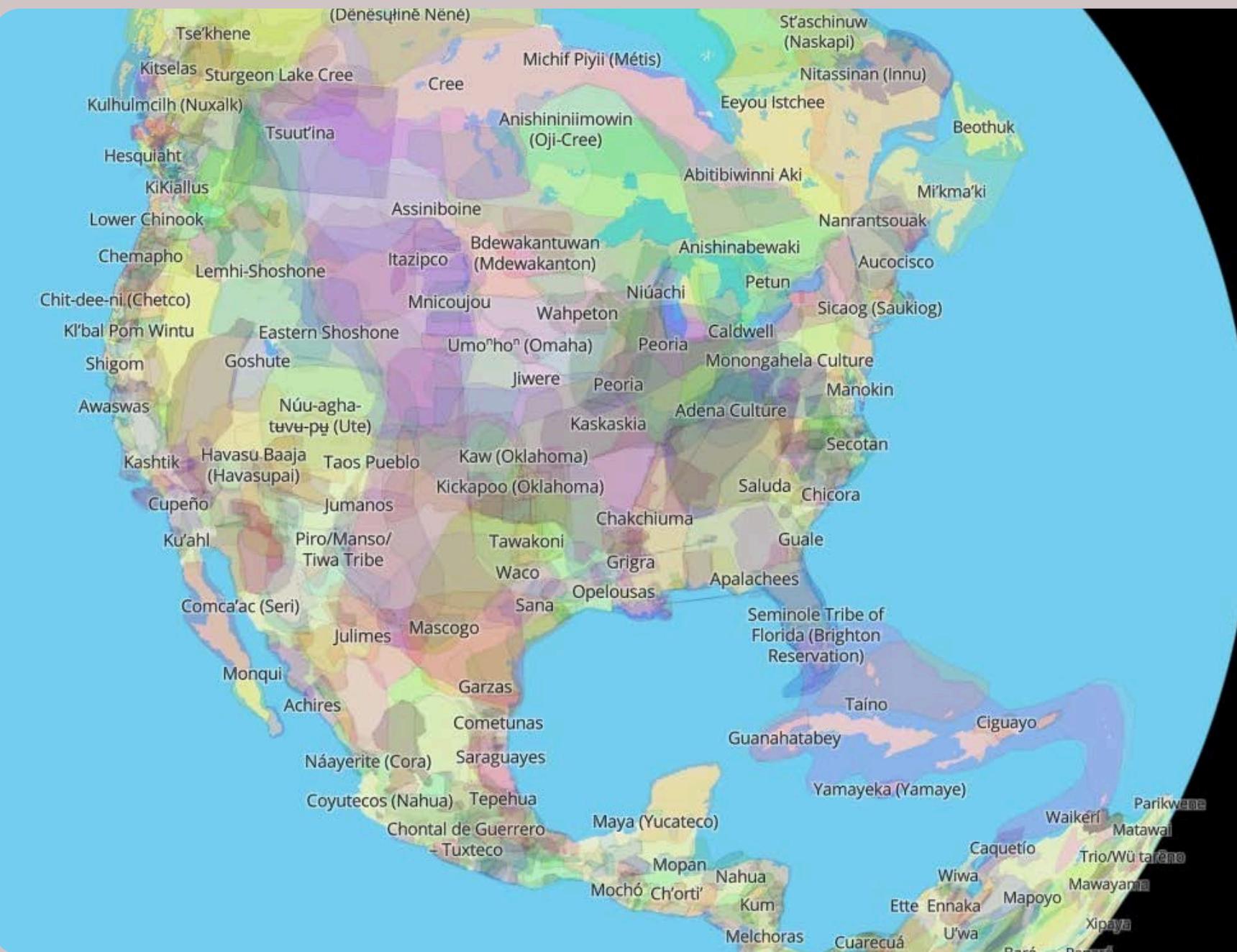
Federal Courts of Indian Offenses created reservation courts to ban and punish traditional religious practices, ceremonies, and cultural customs. Criminalized Native spiritual practices, dances, giveaways, and other cultural traditions. Enforced by Indian agents and Native police.

1887



General Allotment Act (Dawes Act) divided communally-held tribal lands into individual allotments (typically 160 acres); "surplus" lands sold to non-Native settlers. Imposed European concepts of private property ownership.

Land Loss and Dispossession



Chat Discussion:

Look up your current city or town at
native-land.ca

- Type in the chat: Whose land is it?
- Note to yourself: What treaties govern that place?
- Homework for later: Read the treaty

The Legacy of Boarding Schools

Understanding Trauma and Resilience

The history of boarding schools reflects **deep suffering** for Indigenous children, severing cultural ties and contributing to ongoing trauma. Recognizing this legacy is crucial for healing and reconciliation.



Intergenerational Trauma

Language Loss



Language loss impacts identity and connection to **cultural heritage** across generations.

Cultural Suppression



Cultural suppression leads to a disconnection from **traditions**, affecting family and community cohesion.

Long-Term Trauma



Long-term trauma creates **lasting effects**, influencing mental health and community well-being today.

20th Century Timeline

1930s-40s

Indian New Deal Era
included 1934 Indian Reorganization Act to end allotment, restore limited self-governance. Native advocacy orgs formed, Education and social services funding increased. Indian Claims Commission Act created commission to hear tribal claims for treaty violations and land takings;

1950s

“Termination Era”
following WWII, federal policy to terminate trust relationship to “free” Native Nations, led to termination of recognition of 109+ tribes (some later restored). Public Law 280 also transferred criminal and some civil jurisdiction to state governments in some states. Relocation Act pushed families to urban centers.

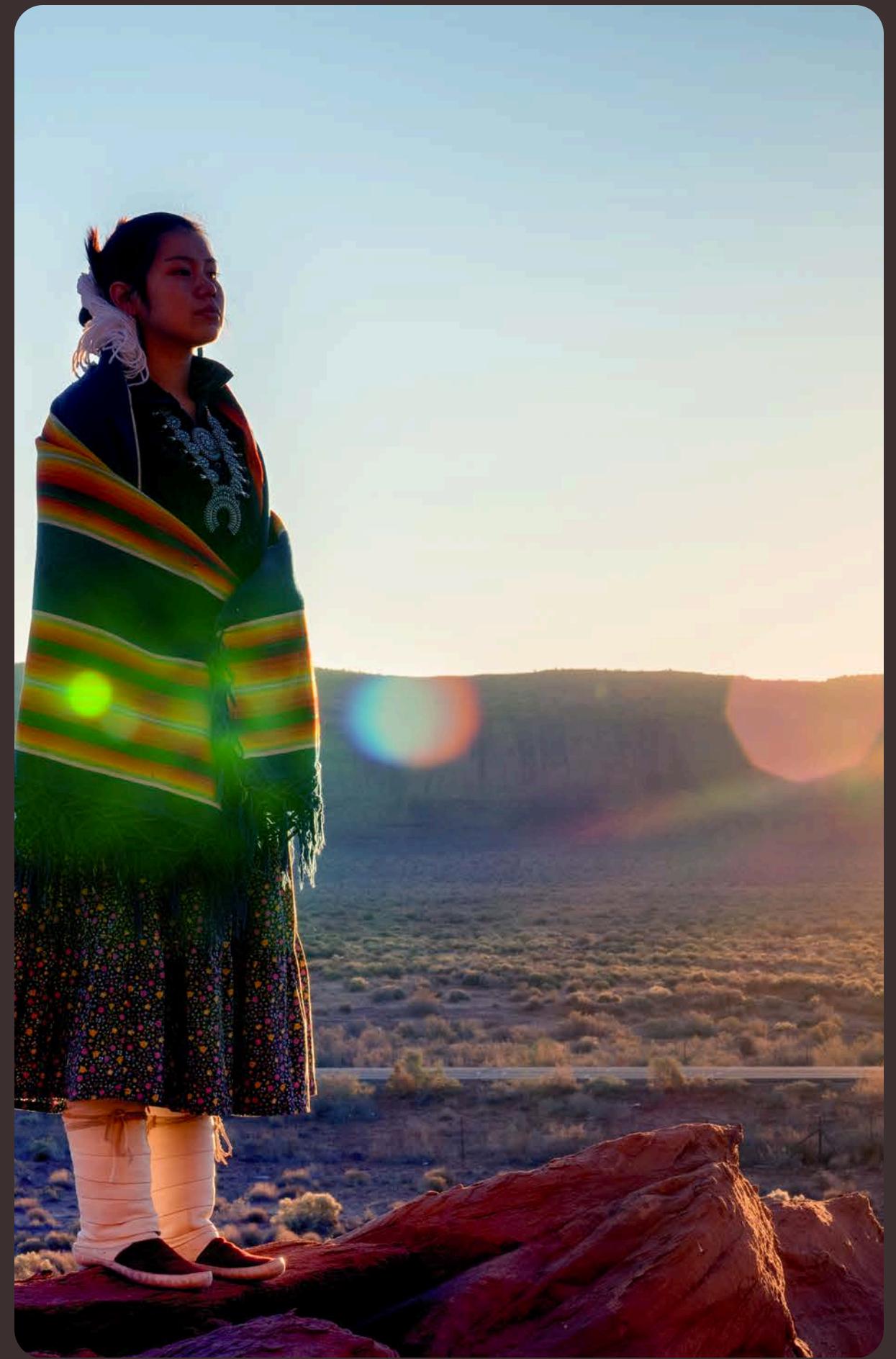
1960s-1990s

“Self-Determination Era” included several acts and movements to support Native Sovereignty, including 1975 Self-Determination Act, 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978 Religious Freedom Act, 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 1990 Languages and NAGPRA, etc

Policy Connections to Early Childhood

- Tribal early childhood programs → Likely operating under Self-Determination Act (1975) or Self-Governance (1994)
- Child welfare cases → ICWA applies (1978)
- Domestic violence → VAWA jurisdiction (2013, 2022)
- Background checks → Children's Safety Act (2016)
- Language immersion → Esther Martinez Act funding (2000, 2019)
- Jurisdictional confusion → Public Law 280 (1953) legacy
- Tribal health services → IHCA (1976, 2010) foundation

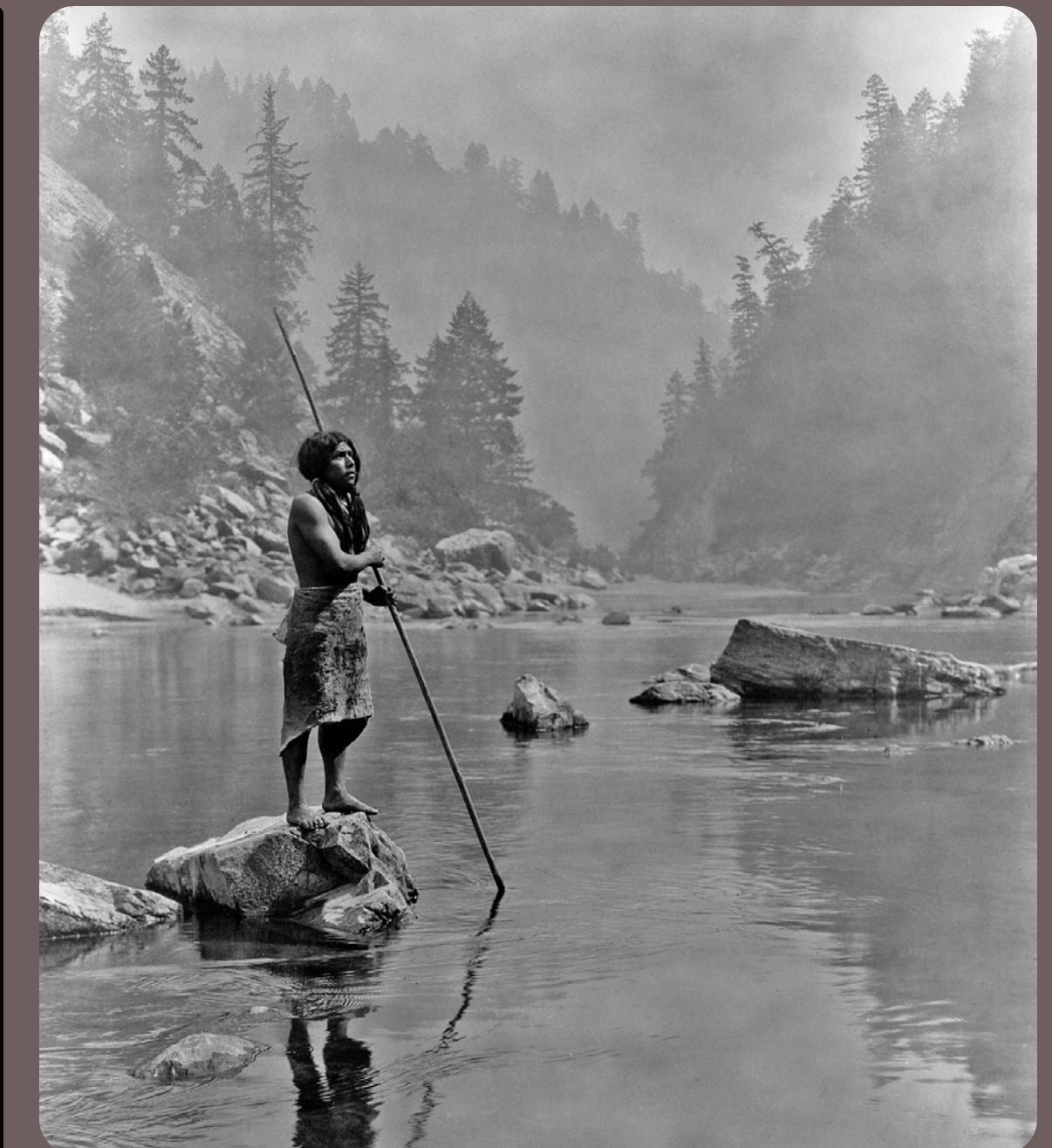
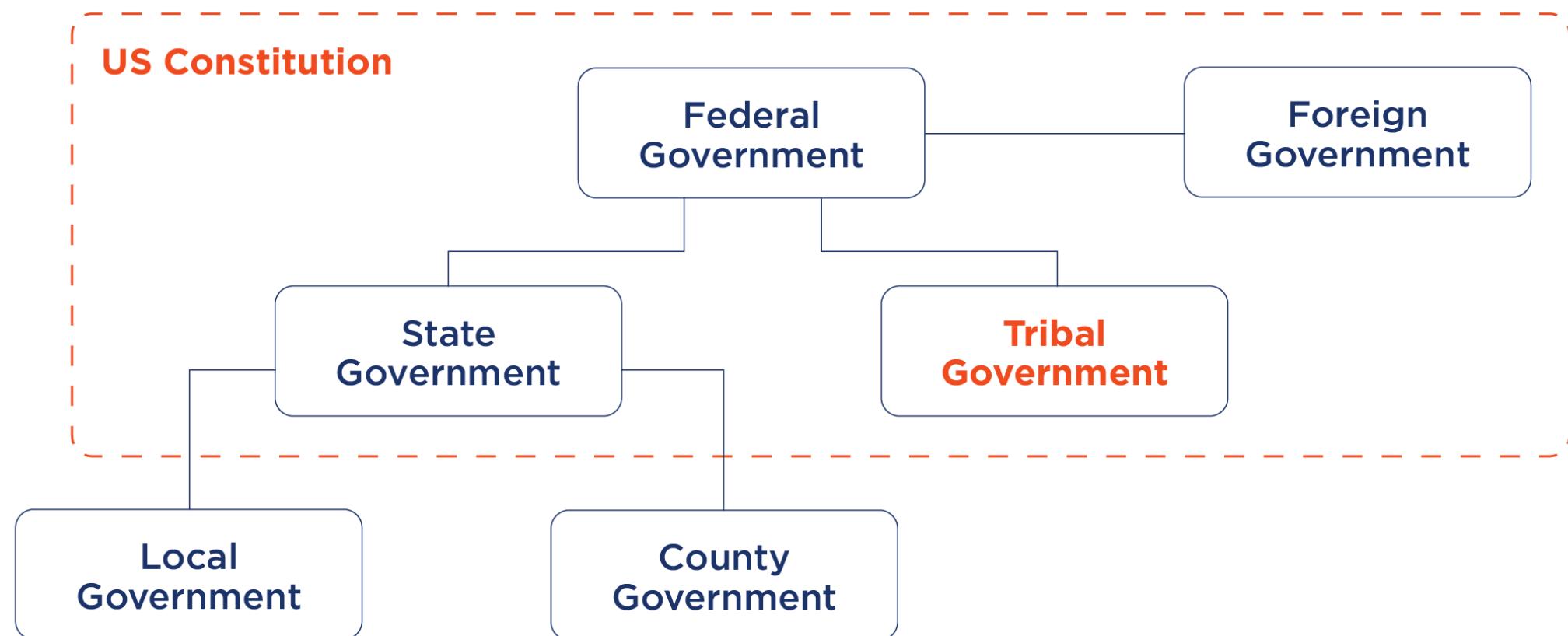
Sovereignty Deep Dive



Affirming Sovereignty Through Treaties

Tribal Nations are Recognized Sovereigns

The US Constitution explicitly recognizes four sovereigns:



Inherent Sovereignty

Pre-Existing



Sovereignty existed long before the U.S. government, rooted in Indigenous traditions and governance.

Self-Determination



Indigenous nations have the right to determine their own political, social, and cultural pathways.

Cultural Heritage



Cultural heritage plays a crucial role in reinforcing identity and supporting sovereignty among Indigenous peoples.

Importance of Tribal Sovereignty

Building Strong Government Relationships

Understanding **government-to-government protocols** is crucial for supporting Tribal authority. Engaging with Native-led priorities fosters meaningful partnerships and ensures the community's needs are truly addressed.



Review: Sovereignty vs. Rights vs. Equity



Sovereignty

- Inherent government-to-government authority
- Exists because Tribal Nations predate the U.S.
- Includes jurisdiction, lawmaking, and self-determination

Rights

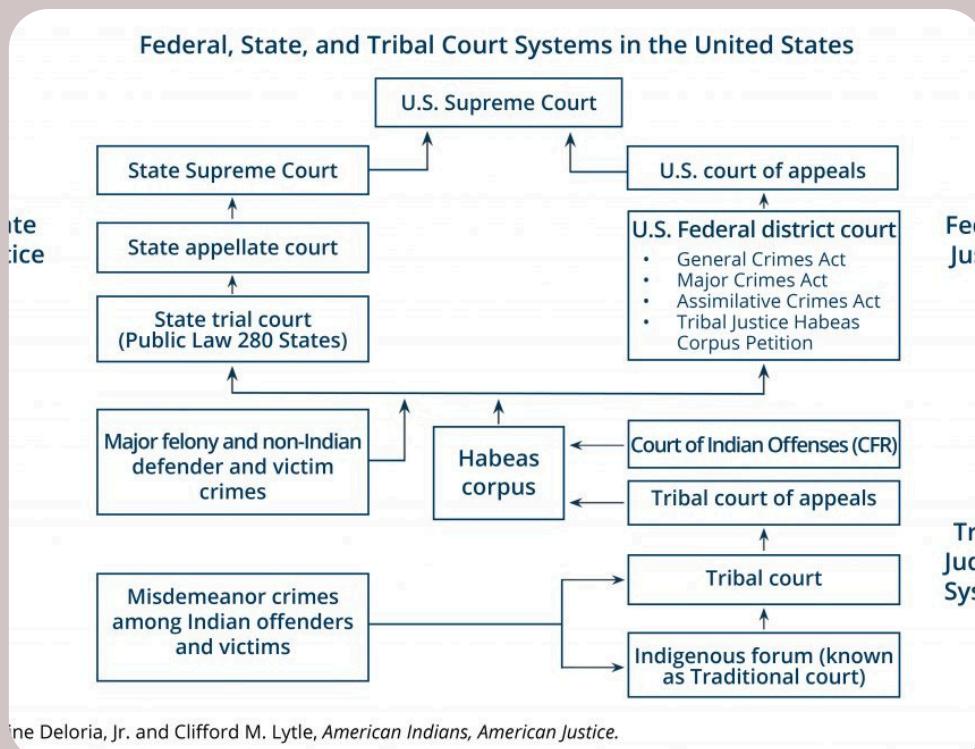
- Individual protections held by people
- Examples: civil rights, voting rights, human rights

Equity

- Fairness in systems, access, and outcomes
- Addresses disparities but does not confer sovereignty

Sovereignty Today

Jurisdiction



Jurisdiction in Indigenous communities ensures **self-determination** and respects Tribal governance structures.

ICWA



The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) safeguards the **rights** of Native children and families.

Tribal Education



Tribal education programs promote **cultural identity**, language preservation, and community involvement in learning.

Federal Trust Responsibility

Healthcare



Healthcare services are vital for **promoting well-being** within Native communities, ensuring access and equity.

Education



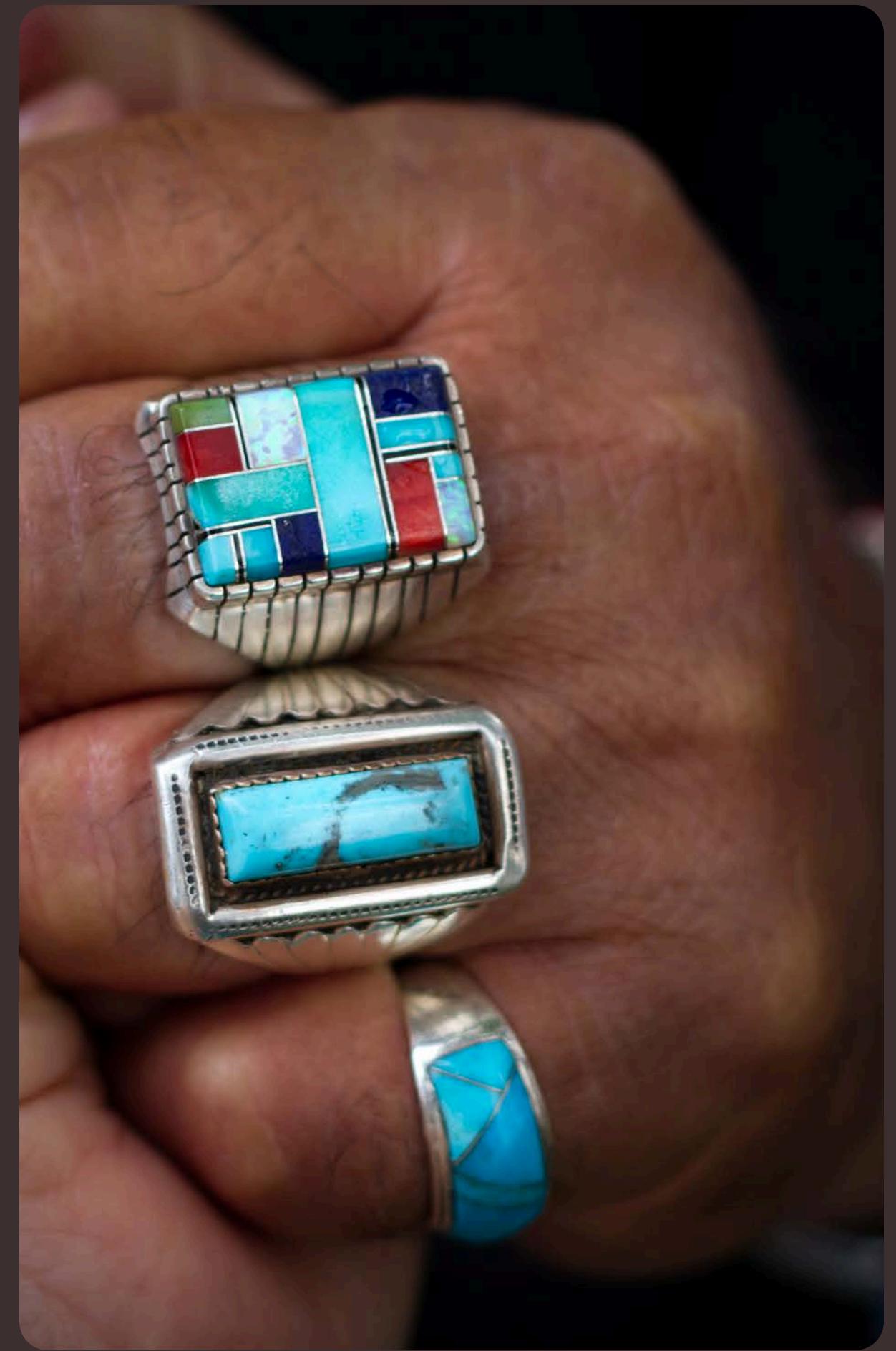
Education programs focus on **culturally relevant** teachings, empowering the next generation in their communities.

Land Protection



Protecting land is essential for **maintaining cultural heritage** and sustaining resources for future generations.

Closing



What Advocates Need

Kinship Care



Kinship care emphasizes the importance of family connections and community support in nurturing children.

Tribal Differences



Tribal child welfare laws vary significantly, reflecting unique cultural values and community structures.

Historical Context



Understanding historical context is crucial for advocates to address contemporary challenges effectively.

Key Message:

History shapes families. Culture heals them.





Reflection:

How does understanding sovereignty shift your approach to partnership?

What responsibilities does this create for you?

Additional Resources:

Native American History

1492 1900

one that begins in 1492, and ends in the late 1800s.

Native American History

CrashCourse - 1 / 24

- 1 Native American History Preview 2:28
- 2 Introduction to American History 12:48
- 3 Does the U.S. Government Decide? 11:22
- 4 DEBUNKED! 12:35
- 5 What Makes Someone Native American? Ep 1 12:13
- 6 Why Land Matters to Americans: Ep 2 10:52
- 7 Laughter is Medicine 11:11
- 8 What is Ethical Archaeology? Ep 3 11:37
- Indigenous Knowledge

Nature Conservancy's Indian Country 101

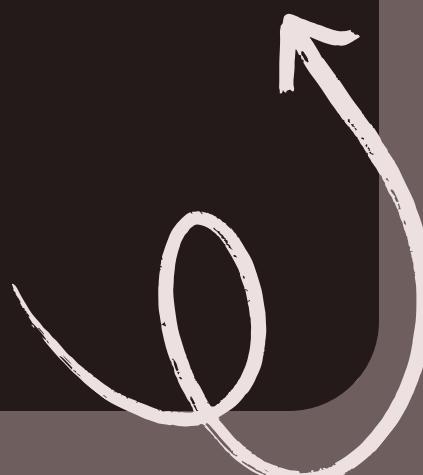
Land Trust Alliance's Additional Resources

Indian Health 101

CrashCourse's Native American History with Che Jim

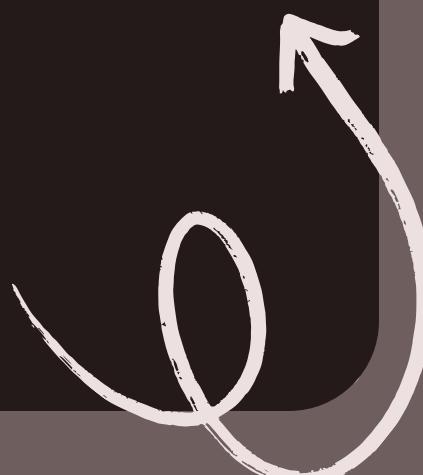
Up Next:

- The Deliberate Breakdown of Indigenous Families: Policies, Impacts & Pathways to Repair
- Native Early Childhood Frameworks: Traditional Child-Rearing Practices, Kinship Systems, and Community Care
- Contemporary Native Realities: Urban Native Experiences, Tribal Program Gaps and Strengths
- Cultural Humility & Power Dynamics: Reflection on Bias, Humility Practices, and Shared Leadership
- Communication and Collaboration: Cross-Cultural Communication, Protocol, and Consensus-Building
- Moving from Ally to Accomplice: Supporting Native-led Priorities and Decolonizing Advocacy
- Applying Learning to Practice: Reflection, Case Studies, and Action Planning

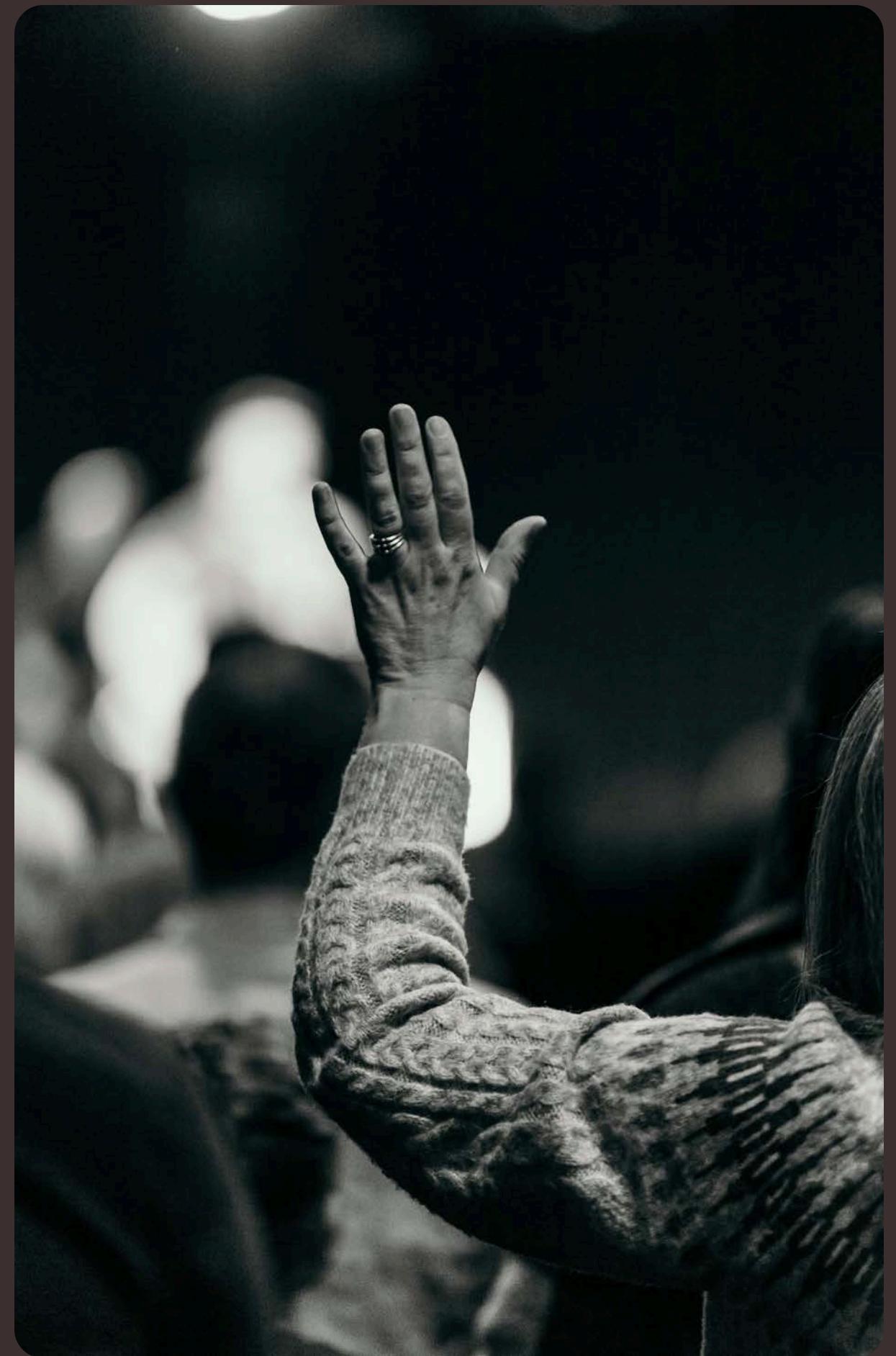


Post Webinar Evaluation

Please take a moment to share your thoughts.



Questions & Answers



Thank you

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