

Lecture 9

Indian History and Plains Culture

I. Introduction

- A. Which social and economic changes provide a context for understanding the religious world of the Kiowa?
- B. General introduction to Native American history and Plains culture
 - 1. Specific examples Kiowa
- C. Great diversity of Native American cultures
 - 1. cannot be easily lumped together

II. Diversity based on geography that creates economic base

A. Eastern Woodlands: Iroquois, Delaware, Seneca

- 1. Approximately 1 million at eve of contact
- 2. Encroachment, ethnic conflict, warfare
- 3. High number of deaths by illness and war
- 4. Treaties set up to ensure non-contact
 - a) Negotiating as if sovereign nation

B. Southeastern: Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cree, Cherokee

1. Indian Removal Act of 1830

- a) Not as independent nations but as subjects, tenants
- b) Movement to area in West to be civilized
 - (1) All existing eastern tribes
- c) Nearly 100,000 crossed the Mississippi river
- d) Land and climate difficult, economic expectations
- e) Resentment from Native Americans already there, the land was not vacant
- f) Poverty, suffering, bitterness

2. Cherokee

- a) One tribe Resisting removal from South
- b) Petitions Supreme Court, 1831

- (1) Cherokee not subject to GA laws
- (2) Justice John Marshal, Cherokee were “a domestic dependent nation” and federal government had exclusive jurisdiction over the Cherokees

- c) Federal troops evicted in 1838 as refused to go voluntarily
- d) 4,000 (25% of tribe) died during removal procedures—“Trail of Tears”
- e) constant encroachment by Euro-Americans post Civil War

C. Southwestern

1. Zuni, Navaho, Hopi Apache
2. Original to the land, but only fraction of what had used
3. Movements within territory by US Army

D. Far west: California, Northwest and Alaska

1. Pomo, Kwakiutl (British Columbia), Inuit (Eskimo)
2. Fishing, hunting, rich religious traditions
3. intermarriage, reservations

III. Plains Culture

A. Kiowa as one tribe of many Plains Indians

1. Sioux, Arapahoe, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Shawnee
2. Plains Indians as quintessential “Indian”
 - a) Other Native tribes, however, more enduring
 - b) Perhaps focused because their culture was destroyed
3. Kiowa geography
 - a) Origin stories: source of Yellowstone and Missouri River in Western Montana: hunting with dogs no horses
 - b) Moving around 1700 southeasternwards
 - c) Friends and allies with the Comanche
 - d) Raids for horses into New Mexico and Texas
 - e) 1865 forced on reservation in Oklahoma (Indian Territory)
4. Kiowa population

- a) 1849 cholera brought due to Gold Rush to CA; small pox in 1899; measles at boarding school and close quarters on reservations, in 1892 alone measles killed 300 children in one year
- b) 1860s approximately 1,800; 1870s approximately 1,600; 1905 declined to 1,165; 1989 rise to 5,000; 2000 enrolled members 9,421

B. General characteristics of Plains Indians, including Kiowa

1. Hunter - Gather

- a) No basketry, pottery, or weaving
- b) Women as main economic producers, men only hunt and make war
- c) Patrilineal and patrilocal (contrast w/Navajo)
- d) Mobile—moveable teepees
- e) Use of dog and later horse
- f) artwork is geometric, not representational

2. Horse culture (horse first then buffalo)

- a) No horse before Europeans, used dogs
- b) 1680 Pueblo Indian revolt against the Spanish and capture of horses in large numbers; distribution northward through trade and theft; by 1800 large herds; Plains horse culture relatively short flourished 100 years, 1775-1875
- c) Cultural values: Speed and mobility; Ability to dominate an environment that frustrated the walker
- d) Travel longer distances and carry longer lodge poles for bigger teepees
- e) Raids to capture horses as horse is measure of wealth
 - (1) Kiowa tribe with most horses per person
 - (2) Exceedingly fine horsemen

3. Predatory culture

- a) Horses used for war and economic domination; special horses for war;
- b) Pre-Indian wars: ritualized violence; “**counting coup** coming close enough to enemy to touch with a stick; Attacks against other tribes as well as Spanish, Mexicans, Texans, Anglo-Americans, raiding as far south as

Mexico for plunder, scalps, horses; men gone more than two years at a time

c) Kiowa most predatory of Plains tribes against Euro-Americans; Not large scale killing; More important to capture horses and captives (to barter for more horses)

d) Authority defined by warrior ethic; Importance defined by number of horses, courage

e) Women maintaining society; Taking care of husband's war gear: shields, weapons, ponies

f) Kiowa killing more US soldiers than any other tribe

4. **Buffalo culture**

a) Significant as economic staples; Lack of agriculture or fishing

(1) Food, clothing, housing, symbol of sun, focus of religious rituals

b) Long ranging across whole continent above the Rio Grande; Could deal with snow and drought, from mountains to the desert; No real enemy, wolves and grizzly bears attacking, young, sick and old but a 6 month old calf could out run wolves; Individual buffalo could live to be over 30 years old

c) Men killing but not preparing; Men could kill 2 – 3 buffalo per chase; Only 10 % owned horses fast enough to catch up w/buffalo, owning horses did not increase ability of hunter to kill buffalo

(1) Horse helped travel to and from herds

(2) Helped to transport meat

d) Women following hunt; bringing meat in on own horses; Women make into food, tan into cloth, make clothing

e) Importance as ritual symbol of life

5. Destruction of buffalo by whites

a) First killed to feed Western explorers, homesteaders

(1) Buffalo trampled farm fields, wrecked fences, gobbled up hay and corn

- (2) Used as target practice
- b) Collapse of beaver fur trade from over hunting in 1830s encouraged fur traders to turn to buffalo skin
- c) Between 1830 and 1870 buffalo population dropped from an estimate of 30 million to 8 million, decreasing 1 million per year
 - (1) Increased even more when discovered a way to process hide into leather, up until 1855 too soft and stretchable; Organization of groups to slaughter buffalo and strip hide; hide become big business in 1870s; Buffalo shot at along railroad tracks, 100 miles of nothing but carcasses, thousands shot and left to decay
 - (2) More often killed for fun, safaris from East shooting out of boredom; In one year Buffalo Bill shot 4,280 during his tenure with the Kansas Pacific railroad—functioned as a challenge to other to beat his record
 - (3) By 1875 Kiowa were confined to reservation and could not hunt off reservation unless with military escort
- d) By 1883 only one or two thousand left in remote Rocky Mountain area
 - (1) By 1879 Kiowa couldn't find buffalo
- e) Bone picking—so many, farmers use for refining sugar, making buttons, combs, knife handles, glue

IV. Resistance and Reservations

A. **Indian Wars**, 1860 – 1890

1. Thin line between death of individuals and death of culture
 - a) Slow ending of autonomy, freedom, environmental harmony
2. Indian haters
 - a) native people as devils, dogs, lower order of human beings, with death being the highest goals
3. **Assimilationists**
 - a) Native people as children, weak minded but can be taught civilization
 - b) End hunting/gathering: farming, Christianity, Victorian gender roles, American culture

B. President Ulysses S. Grant's, "Peace Policy"

1. Transfer of Bureau of Indian Affairs from Dept. of War to Dept. of Interior (1869)
 - a) Series of treaties to move Plains Indians to reservations
 - b) Kiowa settled near Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1868
 - c) Efforts to put on reservations fail with Kiowa hiding in canyons in Texas, by 1875 US Army destroy horses and capture leaders
2. Policy carried out by Protestant missionaries, paid for by federal gov't
 - a) Creation of boarding schools for children, missions
3. Places all Indians on reservations to "protect" them and to speed up the process of assimilation
 - a) Supposedly to become farmers but neither land or culture supported
 - b) Agriculture women's work
 - c) "Indian Agency" supposedly to feed until then
4. End of **tribal sovereignty**, 1871
 - a) from colonial day, treated as foreign country with which had to negotiate; independent nations free to regulate their own internal affairs but
 - b) Congress thus begins merely to legislate for them
 - c) Not citizens, No voting rights until 1924; No legal standing in court, no independent judicial system (under superintendent of Indians)
5. Suppression of Native American religions, 1884
 - a) outlaw Sun Dance, sweat lodges, pueblo initiation rites, vision quests, funeral ceremonies—replace with Christian ceremonies
 - b) punishing for speaking native languages, painting bodies, drumming, chants
 - c) fined and sent to prison, more often denied food, stipends
 - d) traditions and rituals went secret

V. Off the Reservation

A. Ending of many Reservations

1. Reservations scandal: hunger, illness, children educated at distant boarding schools, cheating by non-Indian agents—not becoming losing traditions

a) Complicated to maintain, reformers look to dissolve

2. Dawes Act of 1887

a) Privatization of native lands: Allotments to individuals to farm about 160 acres each

b) Citizenship if take allotment

c) 1901 for Kiowa reservation abolished and area opened to white settlers in lottery, 165,000 “pioneers” come to settle in Kiowa County, OK

3. Ownership of private property

a) Much easier for Euro-Americans to get land than if held by the tribe

b) Restrictions for selling at first but within 20 years Native American lost 60% of their land

c) Currently 300 federal reservations

B. Indian “New Deal” 1934 **John Collier**: Commissioner of Indian Affairs

1. recognizing problems

2. ending Dawes Act and returning surplus lands to tribes

3. permitting local governing, setting up judicial system

“No interference with Indian religious life or ceremonial expression will hereafter be tolerated. The cultural liberty of Indians is in all respects to be considered equal to that of any non-Indian group. And it is desirable that Indians be bi-lingual—fluent in their vital, beautiful and efficient native languages . . . The Indian arts and crafts are to be prized, nourished and honored . . . The fullest constitutional liberty, in all matters affecting religion, conscience and culture, is insisted on for all Indians . . . In addition, an affirmative, appreciative attitude toward Indian cultural values is desired in the Indian Service.” John Collier, Circular 2970

C. Movement to cities especially near reservations

1. Between 1/3 to 1/2 of all Indians live in cities

D. Indian Civil Rights

1. 1960s/1970s Civil Rights influence-- promotion of religion, language, custom, “pride”

a) **Pan Indianism**

(1) Downplaying of tribal differences, traditional enemies forming political and cultural (powwow) alliances

b) **American Indian Movement**

(1) Activist in spirit of Civil Rights movements

(2) Outside of political world as ignore Indian Rights, poverty

(3) 1973 takeover of Wounded Knee on Lakota Sioux reservation at Pine Ridge, South Dakota

c) slow push for self-determination,

(1) reclaiming tribal lands especially those cheated out of through treaties, reimbursement for land wrong sold

2. moving beyond specific “rituals” that Christians recognize to importance of land as sacred

VI. Legacies

A. Myth of the “Vanishing” Indian

1. Continuing culture identity along with unifying political, social, and religious trends

2. Unsuccessful assimilation

3. 2000 Census results

a) 4.1 million people say either Native American or mixed

b) first time census allows multiracial distinction

c) grew by 26% from 1990

4. 43% live in West; 31% South; 17% Midwest

a) 1.5 million Native Americans and Alaskan Natives live on reservations

B. Economic and cultural dislocation caused severe social problems

a) Myth of the “rich” Indian—oil or gambling; also pay no income taxes or get checks for the government for lands

2. high rates of accidents, homicides, and suicides

3. Poorest county in the US (U.S. Census Bureau, quick facts)

a) Buffalo County, South Dakota

- b) Crow Creek Sioux reservation
- c) 80% native American (2008)
- d) Median household income \$17,488 (2007)
- e) 5% college degree
- f) 57% unemployed

4. Comparison—Salt Lake County (2008)

- a) 1.1% Native American
- b) 27% degrees (national average 24% 2007)
- c) Median household income \$56,378 (2007)