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MFT\*TTT  
A NATIVE AMERICAN  
CURRICULUM UNIT FOR THE  
SIXTH GRADE  
NATAM VI

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A NATIVE AMERICAN  
CURRICULUM UNIT FOR THE  
SIXTH GRADE  
NATAM VI

by  
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Training Center for Community Programs  
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Training of Teacher Trainers Program,  
College of Education

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Minnesota Federation of Teachers

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July, 1970

THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

MFT\*TTT

A NATIVE AMERICAN  
CURRICULUM UNIT FOR THE  
SIXTH GRADE  
NATAM VI

USOE

July, 1970

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The work reported here is part of a large University of Minnesota project, which has been financed from several sources.

## A Note on the NATAM Curriculum Series

This curriculum unit was prepared by a Minnesota school teacher. The teacher has recently completed a University course (H.Ed. 111) on Indian education offered through the College of Education and the General Extension Division during the Spring Quarter, 1970. The course, greatly strengthened by the active participation of the Indian Upward Bound Program at the University of Minnesota, grows out of an attempt to deal with certain problems noted in the University of Minnesota aspects of the National Study of American Indian Education.

We believe this unit to be of possible value to Minnesota school teachers. We offer it as an example of what one teacher can do, after minimal preparation, toward developing curriculum materials on a "solo" basis for personal classroom use.

Efforts of this kind are obviously not professional in the strictest sense. Yet they do offer Minnesota teachers with some immediately useable materials, written by their colleagues as the latter develop expertise within a new area of personal interest and growing competence. In this sense, the NATAM curriculum Series offers the chance to provide a needed service and to test a staff development model.

We solicit your comments on any aspect of this series.

The Coordinators

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## Introduction

The eleven or twelve year old school child cannot do much to solve any of the issues that present themselves to America's oldest minority group, perhaps the least understood of any people in a minority race. However, the elementary school can lay the groundwork for a new generation of informed persons who will better understand the American Indian who must choose between tribal values and those of the white people.

Two purposes stand out for reasons for studying the American Indian: (1) Build the child's knowledge of the American Indian. (2) Draw upon that knowledge to build attitudes of healthy curiosity and genuine interest. Throughout the study, it should be the teacher's goal to develop concepts of respect and equality.

### STUDY PLAN

A good way to begin this unit of study is to let students see the coin minted by the U.S. in 1913 -- the "buffalo nickel." On one side was a drawing of an American buffalo, on the other, the profile of a Plains Indian. The five-cent piece was designed to honor the Indian and the buffalo and their contributions to the U.S.

Have students advance ideas why the idea of the coin was a good idea. Then have some students find information about the time when the buffalo was becoming extinct. They will learn that it corresponds to about the time the coin was minted. Also their search for information on, "The Dawes Act of 1887." Questions for discussion: 1. Was the Indian short-changed? Was he sold out? (Besides information in books, encyclopedias, etc., the Scholastic Magazines carry information on Indian issues that will give students background for discussion.)

Discussion should bring out the concept that the law proposed to set up Indians as individual property-owning farmers, in keeping with the white man's ethic of private enterprise. Students should discover the disastrous effects of this act -- an illustration of the gulf which separated Indian and white concepts of property.

So far we have been talking about events which took place more than 80 years ago.

Now attention may come on the Indians of today. Here is where there may be a problem of finding materials for research on the level of an elementary child. (Let's hope that the bibliography that Mr. Antell introduced to the class will assist our schools in collecting materials.)

#### MAJOR CONCEPTS TO DEVELOP

Indians are descendants of the original population of North America. Neither Congress nor the courts have given a general definition of an Indian, and tribal requirements for membership vary.

Tribe is a loose-meaning word. It may represent a group, a community, or several communities. The people may share a common language or a common government.

The average Indian has a much lower standard of living than the average white. Land may lack fertility, water, and timber. He lacks the skills to work in the few nearby industrial or commercial jobs available, and is without capital to start new enterprises.

Indians are full-fledged citizens who can vote. They are subject to all regulations and responsibilities of citizenship including service in the Armed Forces.

Indians are proud of their legends, art, language, and tribal customs in the same way that white or black Americans are proud of their heritage. It is natural for the Indian to want to preserve them.

Indians are free to live wherever they wish but many prefer to remain on reservations where they can continue to preserve and practice certain tribal customs.

Indians have distinguished themselves in many professions, in education the arts, sports, government, and entertainment.



### MISCONCEPTIONS TO DISPEL

Indians are all alike. The same range of differences exists among Indians as among the people of Europe or any continent. The tribes vary in customs, traditions, personality, language, and appearance.

Indians are vanishing. In actuality, the Indian population has been increasing in more recent years. About the time of Christopher Columbus, it is estimated that there were 846,000 Indians. Gradually this number decreased until there were only a few more than 240,000 Indians in 1890. Now the number of American Indians has increased to about 610,000.

All Indians must live on reservations. About two-thirds of the Indians (405,000) live on reservations in twenty-five states, but another 205,000 have moved to cities and towns across the country.

All Indians are poor. It is true that at least 50,000 Indian families are considered to be very disadvantaged. The unemployment rate is ten times as high as for white people. However, a like number of families have middle or low-middle class incomes.

Indians are second-class citizens. Indians possess the same rights, obligations, and privileges as other American citizens. Unfortunately, Indians were not granted citizenship until 1924. It was 1948 before the last state removed restrictions on their right to vote.

### AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Indian reservations. This is another area where it is relatively easy to get information. Children will find that there are 277 separate reservations in this country. The government holds over 11 1/2 million acres in trust for individual Indians and almost 40 million acres of land in trust for Indian tribes.

Indian arts and crafts. Many Indians are earning their living through arts and crafts. For example, the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina supports approximately 15 percent of its population in this way. In

Alaska, 10 percent of the native population produces arts and crafts. The Indians of the Southwest sell an estimated seven million dollars' worth of their work annually. How many examples of Indian crafts can your students collect and identify?

An Indian Arts and Crafts Board within the United States Department of the Interior helps to organize and advance such efforts, which benefit the people economically.

Ceremonials and festivals. Many Indian tribes still carry on ceremonials and festivals that attract thousands of visitors each year. Among the most famous are these: The Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial in New Mexico, the Anadarko Indian Fair in Oklahoma, the Navajo Yeibechai Dances in New Mexico and Arizona, and the colorful Zunishalako festival in New Mexico.

#### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What ideas, however visionary, can the students suggest for improving the economic plight of the Indian? What kinds of industries could be started adjacent to or on the reservations?

2. Many Indian children attend boarding school. Let the children discuss why this is thought necessary. Then ask them to suggest several advantages and disadvantages in this type of education.

3. Indians, including those in Alaska, are five times more likely to have tuberculosis than other citizens of the United States. Let children find out how prevalent TB is today, and try to determine why Indians are more likely to suffer from it.

4. About 2 percent of all the land in the United States is Indian land -- equivalent to all of the New England States, plus a small amount of New York State. But large areas are inaccessible, or the land is of poor quality. What recommendations would the children make for the kinds of aid that would help Indians develop their land? For example, better roads and the availability of electricity would be a good start.

OUTSTANDING AMERICAN INDIANS

The number of Indians who have made significant contributions to various facets of our contemporary national life would fill countless pages. The following selection shows the range of their accomplishments.

CLARENCE ACOYA, a Laguna, has served as director of the Ford Foundation Fund of the National Congress of American Indians, and as executive director of the New Mexico Commission on Indian Affairs.

DOROTHY L. ANDERSON of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on the Flathead Reservation in Montana is a pilot -- one of the few Indian women in aviation. A 1962 graduate of the University of Seattle, Miss Anderson won the Business and Professional Women's Clubs' UN Fellowship Award for a year's study at the United Nations in 1968.

LEONARD BURCH, a young Southern Ute, is actively working in programs to help his people. He has been tribal council chairman.

JOHNNY CASH, a Cherokee, is familiar to many as a singer and television personality, and as a movie actor.

MARIE CHINANA, from the Jemez Pueblo, was only twelve when her art won first place in the International Children's Art Show in New York City in 1967.

LOUISE ABEITA CHIWIWI, from the Isleta Pueblo, wrote her first book as an eleven year old. I Am A Pueblo Indian Girl was published in 1939 by William Morrow. Graduating with a degree in sociology from the University of New Mexico, she has taught in several schools before initiating a Head Start program at Isleta.

BERNARD OLD COYOTE, a Crow, has been Coordinator of Job Corps Activities for the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. He received the department's Distinguished Service Award on December 11, 1968.

BEN BLACK ELK, an Oglala Sioux, has been chairman of the Manderson Planning Commission, and honorary member of Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Association. Tourists have photographed him at Mount Rushmore where he spends summers in Indian costume. He has appeared in movies and documentaries such as "How the West Was Won," and did the narration for "Legends of the Sioux," and "Tahtonka." Often on TV, Ben Black Elk was the first Indian to appear on a broadcast transmitted through Telestar. An authority on Indian history, lore, and culture, he teaches these subjects to high school students.

ROSE GONZALES, from the San Ildefonso Pueblo, originated carved pottery. She has demonstrated her skill in many states.

BEA MEDICINE GARNER, A hunkpapa Dakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, is director of the American Indian Research Project at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Financed by the Doris Duke Ten Percent Fund, the project gathers oral history from the Indian's point of view.

LADONNA HARRIS, a Comanche, is the wife of U.S. Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma. Her work as president of Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity, and as chairman of the National Women's Advisory Council on the War on Poverty, among many other activities, led to her being named Outstanding American Indian Citizen of 1965.

WILLIAM J. HENSLEY, an Eskimo leader and spokesman for Alaska native people, won the second John F. Kennedy Memorial Scholarship under the Experiment in International Living Program. He served in the Alaskan legislature and has held executive positions in many organizations serving native Alaskans.

THOMASINE RUTH HILL, Miss Indian America XV in 1969, is a Crow-Pawnee from Montana. Miss Hill has worked with Up with People, a Moral Rearment project, and is majoring in political science in college.

ROGER JOURDAIN, Red Lake Chippewa from Minnesota, has been tribal council chairman, member of the Governor's Commission on Human Rights, and member of the U.S. delegation to the Sixth Inter-American Indian Congress in Patzcuaro, Mexico in 1968.

BETTY MAE JUMPER was one of the first Florida Seminoles to graduate from high school. Mrs. Jumper grew up on what was the isolated Hollywood Reservation. Summer attendance at missionary meeting in Oklahoma convinced her that an education was the key to a better life. She has used her nurse's training to help her people overcome their suspicion of modern medicine. Active in tribal government, she won the position of council chairman in 1967.

EDMOND LADD, a staff archaeologist for the National Park Service at the city of Refuge National Park in Hawaii, was the first Zuni to graduate from college.

MARIA MARTINEZ, from San Ildefonso Pueblo, is famous for her distinctive blackware pottery.

EDNA H. MASSEY, a Cherokee artist, is an interior and textile designer who has also worked as Arts and Crafts Specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

ROSE McCABE, Miss Navajo 1969, graduated from high school in Winslow, Arizona and plans to become a nurse.

BILLY MILLS, An Oglala Sioux and outstanding athlete, won the 1964 Olympic Gold Medal for the 10,000 meter race in Tokyo. He has served as a United States Marine.

RUSSELL "BIG CHIEF" MOORE, a Pima, internationally known as a jazz trombonist, has played with Louis Armstrong.

PHIL ORTEGA, A Yaqui, has been a professional baseball pitcher with the California Angels.

MRS. JANE PENN, A Wanikiki from the Morongo Reservation in southern California, received the first SCOPE award given by the Pacific Region Sorooptimist Federation of the Americas in 1969. Mrs. Penn established Malki Museum, the first public museum on a Southern California Indian Reservation. Her interest in Indian history and culture dates from childhood when she listened to stories told by her grandmother and aunt. (SCOPE stands

for self-help, citizenship, opportunity, principle, and education.)

WINSTON POSTOAK, a fourteen-year-old Creek-Seminole at Jones Academy in Hartshorne, Oklahoma, was a 1969 first place winner in a worldwide art contest sponsored by the Christian Children's Fund.

MRS. MILDRED HOTCH SPARKS, A Tlingit, is a leader in community service work for the betterment of her people. She was president of the Alaska Native Sisterhood for 25 years, and Alaska's Mother of the Year in 1968.

ATALOA-MARY STONE, a Chickasaw singer and story teller of Indian songs and myths, is also the author of articles on Indian arts and crafts.

MARIA AND MARJORIE TALLCHIEF of the Osage tribe have had distinguished careers as ballet dancers in this country and Europe.

MATERIAL ON CONTEMPORARY INDIAN LIFE

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- Indian Crafts and Lore, book; \$4.95. Order from Children's Music Center, 5373 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, California. 90019.
- Indian and Eskimo Children, 50 pp., close-up photos of life as now lived from wickiup to ranch-style suburbia. Order from Superintendent of Documents; 35 cents. Discount on larger orders.
- Navajo Readers: 5 small booklets about Dan and His Pets and 2 about Joe and His Happy Family. Order from Mr. Wallace Cathey, P.O. Box 697, Shiprock, New Mexico, 87420.

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