

**What was the US government policy towards Indians in the west, and how did it evolve
over time?**

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What was the US government policy towards Indians in the west, and how did it evolve over time?

Indians in the West, or Indians pushed West? The policies of the government in regard to Indians changed shape over the years. One thing that has never changed is the need to control others. The Indians were no exception to this policy. Take advantage, push them around, get what we want, and call it expansion, growth, or even manifest destiny. The period of overtaking or 'developing' the west spanned from the 1850's to the 1890's, the expansion period.

This expansion period meant many things for the Indians of the west. Most of those things being poverty, ethnic cleansing, reservations, war, and death. The Indians were treated out of their land. Beginning in 1851 with the treaty of Fort Laramie. This was in the interest of the Indians and protecting their land as settlers moved west for expansion. What they didn't understand was how it would start a landslide of events of overtaking for the next 40 years and show just how the West was "won".

"The west was neither free nor open. It was the story of a fierce and violent contest for land and resources." chapter 17(JLRMPJFFSSSE, 2019, p. 486)

After treaties, the Indians endured massacres. There were the massacres of their land, their food sources, and their people. It started with their food sources being expunged. The railroads being built caused a huge drop in the buffalo population. This led to the tribes settling for agreements to move on to reservations or risk being starved to death. They were bribed in to thinking this was a good thing. Then when sources of any kind were found on the reservations, they were moved again. It was about stripping the land of any resources they could, getting to it before anyone else could. Any time the Indians fought back, such as in Sand Creek, they were massacred. The west was being taken over and the Indians were forced in to smaller and smaller

reserves of land. Along with the settlers came disease. The settlers brought in new kinds of disease that the Indians were not accustomed to. They had never dealt with them before and therefore many lives were lost.

Once on the reservations, in their controlled environments, assimilation was introduced. The young Indians were taken from their homes and put in to boarding schools to learn. They were forced to take on white names, cut their hair, dress in white men clothing and ethnically cleansed. This was another place that some of them died due to disease. The Indian ways were essentially brainwashed or beaten out of them. This went on from the late 1800's to the mid 1900's. Everything these children knew or had started to learn was wiped away and replaced with a white man agenda. If they were to be a part of the new world they were to act that way. Anyone who disagreed was beaten or killed. They wanted no part of their old culture left. It effected many generations of Indians to this day. How can you go back to being the same

References

JLRMPJFFSSSE. (2019). *the American Promise A concise History* (volume 2 ed.).

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