

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ISSUES

(Lesson Plans to be attached)

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Readings**: The Reader's Digest. America's Fascinating Indian Heritage, Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1978; *The Bureau of Caucasian Affairs*; excerpts from, The New York Public Library. American History Desk Reference, New York: Macmillan, 1996. Pp.9-22; Clyde Warrior, "We Are Not Free": From Testimony Before The President's National Advisory Commission On Rural Poverty (1967)

The class consisted of 19 students at an all girls private parochial preparatory school.

- Reading distributed: *The Bureau Of Caucasian Affairs**—students read aloud the 1 page document in their small groups (3-4 students per group.)
- Students take out note paper to write a quick response to the reading (attached). What does it make you think of? How do you react?
- Students switch papers and respond/react to previous writers and repeat .
- Small groups talk about main ideas and issues—student discussions include perception of the use of satire in the "Bureau of Caucasian Affairs" article—reversal of roles—use of humor to make what happened more understandable—"a taste of their own medicine"—how difficult it would be if 'we' had to sign treaties in languages we couldn't understand—how funny it is to see "real white people" used in non-starring roles in a movie. (SGQ)I recall what a big deal it was when they used 'real native Americans' in movies some years ago (*Dances with Wolves*—etc.).
- Students receive an additional hand-out on events of the 20th century
- What do you think are the 5 most important events/legislation of the 20th century re: Indian affairs? Groups are instructed to come to a consensus in discussion—write info down on newsprint—be ready to explain choices.
- A selection of ideas presented on news print:
1887—Dawes Severalty Act; 1934—Indian Reorganization Act; 1953—tribal terminations
1934—because rights were restored; 1964 because tribal sovereignty was restored; 1988—allowed gambling on reservations which allowed for more wealth to come into the reservations;

1994—Clinton meets with 500 Indian representatives—shows that the President takes seriously concerns about health, poverty...

1887—Dawes Severalty—eroded cultural basis of Indian life-first government act with the intention of eradicating Indian culture; 1934---reversal of Dawes Act; 1953 Res 108—federal government attempts to get out of running Indian affairs (welfare, health, education); 1964—extension of civil rights to Indians; 1988—gaming rights allow Indians to revive themselves, grow wealthier; 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act-gave whites more land in west at expense of native Americans; took away lands on which 2/3 of the Indians lived; 1934—movement to restore rights, reversed again in 1953—termination acts; 1964—civil rights recognized and restoration of tribal law on reservations; 1988—gambling rights establish tribal control, but regulated; 1924—all Indians declared citizens without loss of tribal identity; 1934—regain of cultural rights; 1954-62 loss of land, etc.; 1968—AIM founded in Minneapolis as self determination organization; 1988—helps establish Indian means to acquire significant wealth; 1913 Indian Head nickel –in tribute of ‘vanishing red man’; 1917-1918= significant number of Indians volunteer to fight in World War 1

- Generalizations about the significance of the choices....
- Responses: Native Americans were given more opportunities during 20th cent; government policy changed frequently during the 20th century; early 20th century—focus on what benefits government/majority population—changes over time to be more concerned with Indian rights/needs

Clyde Warrior reading distributed

- Lesson Conclusion: come up with a 10 year plan on the part of the next president (‘if you were president’) (see attached handout “Part C”) *“To conclude this lesson, assume that the incoming President has asked you to be his “idea person”. To him the statement in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal” should, of all people, apply to Native Americans.....as he prepares his first state of the union message, the new president wants you to write a compelling introduction to dramatize the urgency of reform, an outline of a ten year program to address the problem, your rationale for the proposal, and an appropriate two word ‘sound bite’ that television reporters will be likely to pick up to label his administration....”*
- Students took ten minutes to produce a plan and shared them in class. Most plans included the creation of a Native American Council representing the 500 tribes to work with the federal

government in order to redress problems of poverty, dispossession, and identity. Ideas for reaching out to the larger American community to draw attention to the living presence of Native Americans in contemporary society were expressed. Financial aid programs on the reservations, improved health and education, and cultural endowments were also suggested.