
An Indigenous Person's History of the United States

Part of the Humanity-in-Action *Rights and
Resistance* Webinar Series

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Rights & Resistance

Webinar Series from Humanity in Action

→ **Today:**

“An Indigenous Person’s History of the US”

→ **April 1**

“Unsettling Human Rights: UNDRIP and the Responsibilities of States to Indigenous Communities

→ **April 8**

“Environmental Justice and Food Sovereignty: Indigenous Leadership in Healing the Land”



Rights & Resistance

Webinar Series from Humanity in Action

→ **April 15:**

“Case Study: Wet’suwet’en Protectors”

What we're talking about

Today:

1. Settler-Colonialism & its methods
2. A Catawba history

CAVEAT

Perhaps the World Ends Here

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.



Joy Harjo

Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Current US Poet
Laureate

Perhaps the World Ends Here

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.



Joy Harjo

Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Current US Poet
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Perhaps the World Ends Here

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared
our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray
of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while
we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet
bite.



Joy Harjo

Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Current US Poet
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Definitions: Colonialism





Types of Colonialism

(Shoemaker)

→ **Rogue Colonialism**



Types of Colonialism

(Shoemaker)

→ **Rogue Colonialism**

→ **Not-in-my-backyard Colonialism**

→ **Planter Colonialism**

“Institution of Mass Production; Colonists remain numerical minority”

→ **Settler Colonialism**

“Large Numbers of Settlers Claim land and become the majority”

A portrait of Bobbi Sikes, an Aboriginal activist. She is a woman with short dark hair, wearing glasses, a pearl necklace, and a dark top. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some greenery.

Bobbi Sikes

Aboriginal Activist

Post-Colonial vs Decolonial

“What? Post-Colonialism? Have they left?”

Methods of US Settler-Colonialism

(Ex)termination

The physical (or socio-political) destruction of a people

Removal

The removal of indigenous peoples from their lands

Assimilation

The violent incorporation of indigenous peoples into the settler project

Quotes for illustration purposes only

George Washington in 1779: “The immediate objectives are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops in the ground and prevent their planting more.”

—

Jefferson, 1813 to Bailie Warden on tribes that had allied with the British: “This unfortunate race, whom we had been taking so much pains to save and to civilize, have by their unexpected desertion and ferocious barbarities justified extermination and now await our decision on their fate.”

Massacre of Tallushatchee (nov 3, 1813)

Massacre at Sand Creek (Nov 29, 1863)

**Massacre at Wounded Knee (Dec. 29th,
1890)**

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—
Jefferson: “Nothing will reduce those wretches so soon as pushing the war into the heart of their country,” he wrote. “But I would not stop there. I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi.”

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Jefferson to Benjamin Hawkins (Feb 18, 1803): “Incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the U.S., this is what the natural progress of things will of course bring on, and it will be better to promote...”

Jefferson continued: “This will enable them to live on much smaller portions of land, and indeed will render their vast forests useless but for the range of cattle; for which purpose, also, as they become better farmers, they will be found useless, and even disadvantageous. While they are learning to do better on less land, our increasing numbers will be calling for more land, and thus a coincidence of interests will be produced between those who have lands to spare, and want other necessities, and those who have such necessities to spare, and want lands.”



(A)CATAWBA HISTORY



Jefferson to William Henry Harrison (1803): “We shall push our trading houses, and be glad to see the good & influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop th[em off] by a cession of lands. At our trading houses too we mean to sell so low as merely to repay us cost and charges so as neither to lessen or enlarge our capital. This is what private traders cannot do, for they must gain; they will consequently retire from the competition, and we shall thus get clear of this pest without giving offence or umbrage to the Indians. In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians, and they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the U.S. or remove beyond the Mississippi. The former is certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves. But in the whole course of this, it is essential to cultivate their love. As to their fear, we presume that our strength and their weakness is now so visible that they must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, and that all our liberalities to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only.”

Q&A

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