

# Dawes severalty act essay sample

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Dawes act was created to regulate the land use among the Native Americans. Initially, the land in United States was owned by clans. These people that formed clans had a strong leadership system that was feared by the government. The first reason that necessitated the act was the need to divide this land so that personal ownership of land was possible. This means that people would cultivate their own land. The aim of doing this was to enable people participate in agricultural activities effectively. By this, it would be possible to increase agricultural output.

Before the act was made, many people from the European origin had arrived in large numbers. They wanted to settle in the new lands. Since Indians had already occupied the land, the government had to do something considering that the two races could not live together. The government wanted also to benefit from the Europeans after giving them land. It is due to this that the government realized that they could solve the problems that were being faced by passing the act.

- Carlson, Leonard A. 1981. Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land : the Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming. Westport Connecticut, etc: Greenwood Press.

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The administration in native lands was expensive. There was the need to reduce these expenses. The act divided individuals such that there were no clan organizations hence the costs of paying chiefs who were heads of clans was eliminated. Through the act, it was possible to get some land from the natives. This was necessary since the government wanted to settle white

settlers in these fertile farms. They would legally remove the natives from their lands after dividing them and settling them at certain reserved areas. Dawes act had several provisions. It stated that each head of family had to receive 160 acres of land. This means that each family was to live separately in its own land as opposed to the earlier situation whereby people lived as clans. Secondly, all single individuals such as orphans had to receive 80 acres of land. This encouraged people to live separately from other relatives. The act also provided that people under the age of 18 would receive 40 acres of land.

The act also provided that the government held all land in trust of the people for the next 25 years. It required the Indians who qualified to own land to choose the land of their choice within the following 2 years and after this, land would be distributed by the secretary of the interior.

According to the act, people had to obey the laws of their states or regions that they lived in. Any Indian who became civilized by living separately from other members of his/her tribe was promised more rights. Such a person would be allowed to become a citizen of the United States. These individuals would also be allowed to own property in United States.

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The act also provided that the secretary of the interior had the rights to put in place laws that would ensure equal distribution of resources such as water

among the clans. It also specified areas where the act did not apply.

This act had several impacts in United States. In the first place, the native Indians lost a great portion of their land. This is because whites took over part of the land that was owned by the Indians. The social tie among the members of the same clans was destroyed. This is because individuals started living separately. Initially, people lived together as a clan and each individual had a position in the society. The leadership system among the Indians was destroyed. Initially, there were chiefs and there were courts to judge criminals. This system was abolished.

The land that was initially owned by Indians was used in the construction of roads and railway lines. This was a benefit in that the transport system in United States improved. It is after the implementation of the act that the Indians adjusted their beliefs that land was something that should be owned communally and it should never be sold. The Indians did not see land as something that should be used in the generation of profit.

In conclusion, the United States government ensured that Dawes act was passed so that they could assimilate Native Americans who had their own government to the United States government. Controlling them would enable them take land from them considering that more whites needed this land. This act however had several negative effects such as destruction of native Indian culture. Native Indians also lost their land. However, the act brought about some benefits such as improved transport system due to good infrastructure. The agricultural output also increased which was important for the economic development of the United States.

- Foner, Eric. 2012. Give me liberty!: an American history. v. 1. New York: W. W. Norton.

## **Works cited**

- Carlson, Leonard A. 1981. Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land : the Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming. Westport Connecticut, etc: Greenwood Press.

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