

# Tribal resistance in the southwest



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Native American reservations referred to lands that are allocated for the use or ownership of particular Native American tribes. In the 19th century, the federal government confined Native Americans to specific areas in order to avoid land disputes between the latter and white settlers. But as white migration to the west intensified, reservations were either decreased or were transferred to distant locations unsuitable to whites.

The whites found Native American lands ideal for settlement and viewed Native Americans as hindrances to progress (MSN Encarta, 2008). Native American agriculture suffered as a result - the federal government forced Native Americans into lands that were unfit for farming. In addition, interaction with whites destroyed older Native American cultures. Millions of Native Americans died from ailments such as smallpox, influenza and measles - diseases that they acquired from the whites.

These catastrophes forced some Native American tribes to conduct armed resistance against the whites. Yakamas The Yakamas of Oregon took up arms in order to maintain their homelands and to stop forced removal to reservations. The highlight of the Yakamas' armed struggle was the Yakama War of 1855-1858, which started after Yakama warriors had killed some miners who had raped Yakama women and stolen horses. However, the Yakama resistance was short-lived, as it was easily defeated by the superior firepower of federal troops (Lecture 8).

Apache The Apache tribe of California fought white miners and cattle ranchers who operated on their lands without legal standing (gold was first discovered in Apache Country in the mid-19th century). For almost 20 years

(late 1860s-late 1880s), the Apaches fought federal troops in order to protect their lands. The wars with the Apaches was said to have cost the United States Army \$40 million and 1, 000 soldiers (Lecture 8).

Conclusion Popular culture often romanticize the Western frontier by depicting white settlers as hardworking and courageous people who struggled to survive all by themselves. Consequently, the atrocities that the whites committed against the Native Americans - the original inhabitants of the United States - are often overlooked. Progress cannot be called as such when it is achieved at the expense of others. Indeed, it would be fair to say that the Native American reservations are one of the first manifestations of American imperialism.