



# Native Americans and white settlers



## Indians?

Christopher Columbus, who arrived in 1492, called the people in Northern America "Indians" – he thought he had arrived in India.

## Native American Tribes

Many different landscapes and climates → different housing and living conditions:

- East coast: farmers, hunters; homes: huts made of wood and bark
- Central plains: buffalo hunters; homes: teepees made of buffalo hides, nomads, following the buffalo herds
- West coast: fishermen, hunters; homes: huts made of wood
- South: sheep farmers, hunters; homes: huts made of dried earth

## Native American names

- Mississippi = big river; Kentucky = in the fields;
- Texas = friends; Niagara = thundering water, etc.
- Other places are named after tribes: Cheyenne, Manhattan, Miami, etc.

## Arrival of the Europeans

- 1620: most famous British colony: Pilgrim Fathers arrived in Massachusetts on the ship Mayflower from Plymouth/England religious reasons for leaving England.
- Other reasons for emigrating: hope for more land, a better life, more freedom
- At the beginning: good relationships between Native Americans and Europeans, natives helped people to settle in the new country, taught them to hunt, fish and farm.
- In later years: more and more settlers arrived (from Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain) need for more land clashing cultures: The settlers wanted to own land. In Native Americans culture, land cannot be owned – it's there for everyone.

## The Oregon Trail

Around 1840 – settlers began to move west across the Rocky Mountains on the Oregon Trail in covered wagons → new land on the west coast (Oregon, California, etc.).

## Dangers for settlers... and for Native Americans

Illnesses (cholera, etc.), accidents, bad weather in the mountains (settlers had to arrive in Oregon or California before the winter), and in later years conflicts with Native Americans (white settlers didn't want to pay for destroyed forests, hunted deer, use of water). The settlers' illnesses (chicken pox, measles, etc.): unknown among the natives and their immune system = life-threatening danger.

## Gold Rush

1849: discovery of gold in California → more people (mostly men) travelled west to look for gold.

## Reservations

In "exchange" for land taken away by settlers, Native Americans were forced to leave their homes, move to reservations:

- land they did not know and where they didn't feel at home
- dry and barren land, often useless for farming
- no or few wild animals for hunting or lakes for fishing
- nomad tribes could not travel anymore
- loss of native culture, languages, traditions, music, arts, ...

## Today

Reservations still exist, still many problems, e.g. crime rate, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment, conflicts between Native Americans and Whites.

1 settler – Siedler; 2 bark – Baumrinde; 3 plain – Ebene; 4 hide – Tierhaut; 5 nomad – Nomade;  
6 pilgrim – Pilger, pilgrim fathers – erste englische Siedler an der Ostküste der USA; 7 to emigrate – auswandern; 8 to clash – sich widersprechen; 9 to force – zwingen