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MA THESIS

Az amerikai Indián tapasztalatok és az Egyesült Államok
kialakulása:
A népességcsökkenés okai

Native American Experience and the Development of the United
States:
The Causes of Population Decline

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NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES: THE CAUSES OF POPULATION DECLINE

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Abstract

The following thesis intends to investigate the causes contributing to the initial decline of the Native American population in the territory of the United States. The deterioration in Native American population is popularly attributed to the prevailing view of a tenacious campaign against them, intended to wipe out their entire population. However, other causes played a much larger role in contributing to their decline. This proposition will be determined by discussing the three main causes of Native American population decline; epidemic disease, genocide, and warfare. The objective will be to determine which causes were responsible for what percentage of the Native population decline. The time frame of the thesis spans from the colonial period to the end of the nineteenth century. The pre-contact population of Native Americans will be established in order to determine population losses. Regarding epidemic diseases, the reasons for higher Native American susceptibility and mortality rates will be discussed, and also a list of the virgin soil epidemics will be provided. Smallpox, cholera, and tuberculosis are those diseases which will be mentioned in more detail. The term genocide will be defined and examples of Native American genocidal crimes will be given. The Indian removal of the Trail of Tears will serve as a main example of genocide committed unto the Native Peoples. Warfare will be the last cause of Native population decline discussed. The reasons for warfare, the different war strategies and war cultures of the two groups and the weapon uses of both Indians and Americans will be elaborated on. The Battle of Wabash and the Battle of Wounded Knee will be brought as examples.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Old and New Americans.....	4
1.1 Native American Contact and Initial Relations.....	6
2. Epidemic Diseases.....	13
2.1 Virgin-soil Epidemics and Spread of the Diseases.....	13
2.2 Cholera.....	19
2.3 Tuberculosis.....	25
2.4 The Odd One Out: Alcohol	27
3. Genocide.....	30
3.1 Factors and Reasons for Genocide.....	32
3.2 The Trail of Tears.....	40
4. Warfare.....	50
4.1 The Battle of Wabash.....	56
4.2 The Battle of Wounded Knee.....	58
5. Native Americans Today.....	61
6. Conclusion.....	65

Introduction

Every year in the United States of America, on July 4th the air is filled with festivities. This day represents the anniversary of the birth of a new nation, the birth of a nation free of tyranny, the land of the free and the home of the brave. This is a time when narratives are recounted of the resolute and defiant immigrants who conquered the wilderness with hard work and perseverance, as well as the courageous trappers and fur traders, and the men of law who by establishing permanent colonies planted the seed for the future. This day for the present day American commemorates memories of expansion, rebirth, hope, and prosperity. However, this celebration is overshadowed by the many injustices brought unto the native inhabitants of the land. For the Native Peoples of the North American continent the story of the birth of America is not a tale of expansion and rebirth, but rather a story of land theft, forcible relocation, and the destruction of the very world and culture they lived in (Hendrix 774). In 1906 Chitto Harjo, a Creek full-blood gave his own interpretation of Indian-American history, “Away back in that time — in 1492 — there was a man by the name of Columbus [who] came from across the great ocean, and he discovered this country for the white man...What did he find when he first arrived here? Did he find a white man standing on this continent then...I stood here first, and Columbus first discovered me...I want to know what did he say to the red man at that time? ...He told him, ‘The land is all yours; the law is all yours.’” (Debo 19)

In this paper, I will focus on some of the factors contributing to the deterioration of the Native American population. It is widely accepted that the arrival of Europeans to America initiated the decline of the Native Indians. However, it is popularly believed that this decrease of population was brought about by the

prevailing view of a tenacious campaign against them, intended to wipe out their entire population. However, this direct participation on behalf of the European immigrants, and later the American citizens, is not the primary cause for their decline. Other causes played a much larger role in contributing to the dire decrease in their numbers. Although there are numerous reasons that can be listed for their decline, I will be concentrating on three main causes listed by Snipp; epidemic disease, genocide, and warfare (355). I will examine this statement and provide evidence leading to the conclusion as to how and why the Native American Peoples were decimated by these main causes. My objective will be to determine the percentage of decline each cause was responsible for regarding the Native Indian population. The reason this paper will concentrate on the three causes enlisted by Snipp, is because together these causes provide the larger overview of the overall elements and events leading to the decline of these Native Peoples. Epidemic diseases, genocide, and warfare encompass other reasons such as the Indians' forced relocations, a change in their dietary habits (the buffalo were killed off), their forced assimilation and disappearance of their culture, and the abrupt and forced change of their lifestyle.

The paper supports this claim by discussing each of the three causes in detail. Naturally, all the aspects of these three causes will not be present in this paper, since the research done on these subjects is ubiquitous. It will focus on the most prominent features of each cause, which are frequently interrelated and overlap. Regarding the epidemic diseases affecting the Native Americans, the focus will be on those diseases which have been precisely documented and have sufficient research to back up all findings. How these diseases heightened mortality rates among the Native American population will be analyzed, just as the arrival and the spread of the epidemics in

America. The impact of the second cause, genocide, is more difficult to assess. Firstly, we have to be clear on the exact definition of genocide; “the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, political, or cultural group.” (Dictionary.com) Snipp states that the difficulty is definitional (355), therefore the question arises, what do we include into this category of genocide? Do we occupy ourselves solely with the effects of primary harm, or do we include lives lost due to secondary or tertiary ripple effects originating from the first incident? These questions will be discussed in the section attributed to genocide. I will also concentrate on the forced relocations of Native American tribes, which contributed substantially to the victims of genocide. Moreover, I would like to engage in the long term effects of these removals as well. Further examples of genocide will be mentioned. The last cause, warfare, will be analyzed in a separate section, where an overview of the overall destruction will be provided, as well as an emphasis on one or two major events.

One of the reasons I chose to research this topic is summed up very nicely by Hendrix, who writes, “I believe that the dominant national narrative in the United States gives far too little acknowledgement to historical injustice... Most Americans continue to see the United States as a long term exemplar of liberty, a ‘shining city on a hill’ that can guide other, more flawed nations toward a better world, while unfortunate historic events like slavery, segregation, and the massive expropriation of Native lands seem to largely fade from view.” (Hendrix 773) Therefore, what I would like to accomplish in this paper is to offer a different perspective on the birth and history of the United States, by foregrounding the Native American experience.

The time period presented takes us from the colonial era to the end of the 19th century. The deterioration of Native culture is proportional to the decrease in their

physical numbers, which is connected to the arrival of the Europeans (Ross and Moore 35). However, it is important to understand and know some of the history leading up to these events. Certain aspects of pre-contact Native American life will be discussed briefly, and an account of first contacts and the relations which evolved between the Natives and the Europeans will also be explored. These issues are significant since they lead up to the European and the present-day American perception of the Indian, which is essential to understand because it reveals how it influenced relations towards the Native Americans (Ross and Moore 37).

1. Old and New Americans

The discussion of pre-contact Native Americans cannot be fully realized, since one cannot simply introduce and discuss the Native Americans, for they are not one single people, but rather the Indians encompass a very diverse spectrum of cultures (Spencer et al. xvi). Further, this discussion of the Native Americans will mostly be limited to their numbers, since in this way we will have numerical comparisons available when looking at the consequences of epidemic disease, genocide, and warfare. In order to be able to account for the Natives in numbers, there has to be some sort of system available which allows us to enumerate them with greater ease. There are, of course, ways of cataloging and classifying Native Americans into major geographic, ecologic, and cultural areas (Spencer et al xvii). Regarding this field of study, three important names must be mentioned: Clark Wissler, Professor Harold E. Driver, and Professor A.L. Kroeber. These three anthropologists were the ones who worked on culturally subdividing the North American continent. From the joint efforts of these scholars, today we are able to subdivide the North American continent into seven larger regions, facilitating the task of distinguishing and cataloguing certain

Native American tribes from others (Spencer et al xvii). Of course, there are other ways of classifying the separate tribes, for example, by linguistic stock (Debo 9), but cultural subdivision will suffice in providing an introduction to the many different regions and tribal nations which existed. The divisions are as follows: “Arctic and Sub-Arctic; Northwest Coast; the West consisting of Plateau, Basin, and California; Southwest; Plains; Ultra-Mississippi, or East consisting of Plains-Prairie, Eastern Woodlands, Southeast; and Mexico or Mesoamerica.” (Spencer et al xx) Within these areas there lived an abundance of different tribes, each able to boast of a different set of languages, religions, ceremonies, rituals, and hunting strategies. These tribes were each independent from the other with their own cultures. Spencer et al. list a little less than 300 major North American Indian tribes (538-541). These numbers coincide with the figures Edward H. Spicer cites, writing that although it is not precisely known how many different nations there were at the time of first contact, a widely accepted estimate is that there were more than 200 tribes in the late 1600s (2). He goes on to write that “[f]ifty or more groups are known to have become extinct as a result of disease, massacre by whites, absorption into other groups, or harsh conditions during the early phase of contact with Europeans. It is safe to say that one fourth suffered extinction.” (2)

In regards to total numbers of pre-contact Native Americans there are at least 18 different estimates ranging from 900,000 to 18 million (Snipp 354), which is quite a substantial difference. The first estimates of the pre-contact North American Native Indian population were made by James Mooney in 1910 (Snipp 355). Mooney’s figures were then reevaluated by the anthropologist A.L. Kroeber who estimated a total Native American population between 900,000 to 1.15 million around the 1600s.

These numbers became authoritative in the field of Native American research, and were not questioned until 1966. Dobyns, however, claimed that the Mooney-Kroeber numbers were majorly flawed since for research material they only depended upon diaries and mission records to estimate population numbers. Dobyns incorporated other pieces of evidence which completed the former estimations of Mooney and Kroeber, and came up with a total Native American population of 10 to 12 million (Snipp 354).

As it has been previously mentioned in this paper, there are at least 18 different estimates regarding the pre-contact population of the Native Indians on the North American continent. Although there is much variance regarding the numbers, Snipp mentions that there is consensus on three points: “The first is that the Mooney-Kroeber estimates are too low- but how low is unclear. Second, larger populations imply that American Indian societies were more complex than once believed. Third, the arrival of Europeans nearly eradicated the American-Indian population.” (Snipp 354) Although, scholars are not able to agree on a fixed population number regarding pre-contact Native Americans, we can conclude that there has been a drastic drop in their population. This fact is supported by the quotes of both Spicer and Snipp who mention the words ‘extinction’ and ‘eradicated population’ in context with the Native Indians of North America.

1.1 Native American Contact and Initial Relations

Having briefly discussed Native American pre-contact population numbers, and contended on the phenomenon of the declining Native American population after the appearance of the Europeans, first contact between the two ethnicities will be discussed on the following pages. The main events and further important occurrences

which led to the conceptions that European settlers formed towards the Native Americans will be dissected. These conceptions or rather misconceptions later led to Europeans' actions towards them. According to Holmes and Antell, "[t]hroughout American history, whites' interpretations of American Indians have embraced (1) overgeneralizations from single tribal societies to all Indians, (2) conceptions of Indian deficiencies by reference to white ideals, and (3) descriptions of Indians guided by moral evaluation." (154)

The year 1492 and the name Christopher Columbus are two entities in the history of modern man which immediately evoke the narrative of the discovery of America. Elements about the voyage or the discovery of the American continent itself will not be mentioned in this paper. Rather the aftermath of this discovery will be discussed which initiated a new era in the history of humankind, although a very different history for the Europeans and the Native Americans. According to Debo, when Columbus returned to Spain with the news of having found the Indies, the result was like a modern day gold rush (19). The race was on, and no country wanted to be left behind. The Spaniards choosing the West Indies as their base fanned out in three directions, although they remained mostly in southern North America and South America; John Cabot under the commission of England in 1497 discovered America and sailed from Newfoundland to Delaware; a Portuguese explorer Gaspar Corte-Real reached Newfoundland in 1500; while Giovanni Verrazano entered what is today New York Harbor in 1524 (Debo 19-20).

The first colony on the North American continent, Hispaniola, was established in 1494 by Columbus who had by then returned a second time. By the year 1515 there were already 17 Spanish towns occupying the enslaved native population with mining

and agricultural duties, such as growing crops of grain or harvesting cotton and sugar cane. Debo further remarks that in these 21 years, the population of the native tribes shrunk from a quarter of a million to a mere fourteen thousand, and within a few more years the entire population was extinct (Debo 19-20). By the year 1525 the Spanish had mapped the entire eastern and southern coast of the United States. However, during the later half of the sixteenth century the English and the French made attempts at breaking the monopoly the Spanish had attained. One of these attempts by the English began with Francis Drake's voyage around the world, which he commenced in 1577. In 1579 Drake landed in San Francisco in what is today still called Drake's Bay (Debo 20). He recounts his meeting with the Native Peoples, who brought him baskets of food and worshiped them. Drake took possession of the country in the name of the Queen, and according to the brass plate he set up in the very spot, he also spoke in the name of the Native Peoples, "whose king and people freely resign[e] their right and title in the whole land unto her majesties keeping." (Debo 21). Debo writes that it was not the first time, neither the last when Indians gave away their land without knowing it (21). The year 1607 marked the date of the first permanent English settlement on the American continent, Jamestown. In 1620 Plymouth was established, and in 1630 Boston, Roxbury, and Cambridge rose from the ground. These early settlers found the Native Americans hospitable, and a "romanticized view of the Indian prevailed." (Ross and Moore 36) However, these first encounters of the Native Americans and the colonizers soon fell into a pattern: at first a friendly curiosity was the typical attitude on both sides, then as time passed and specific events occurred, deepening distrust and open hostilities replaced the initial peace (Debo 22). This distinct pattern developed mainly because of the immigrants initial disabilities towards making permanent settlements as opposed to simply laying claim to the land.

In her book, *A History of the Indians of the United States*, Debo describes the reason for this pattern, “First the Indians would share their food with the newcomers. Then the supply ships would be delayed and the settlers, having made no attempt to grow a crop, would become demanding. The Indians with their stores depleted, would refuse further aid. Then would come bad feeling, even open hostility.” (34). Moreover, as European territorial claims clashed with each other on the North American continent the Indians became pawns and allies in this game of power struggles.

Apart from conquering the land, concern was also expressed for the conversion of the Natives to Christianity and an aim to civilize them (Debo 40). In 1537 the solution, and at the same time the blessing to this dilemma was answered by Pope Paul III who in his bull *Sublimis Deus* declared that the Indians were “truly men” and that they were “capable of receiving the doctrines of the faith.” (Ross and Moore 36) The first charter given to James I for colonizing Virginia expressed similar sentiments. It wrote of “the hope not only of bringing them to the true knowledge and Worship of God but the human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government.” (Debo 40) Moreover, the citizens of Jamestown were also eager to educate the Native Americans in the lessons of civility. In 1619 when elected burgesses met at Jamestown for the first representative assembly in America, these burgesses provided that “eache towne, citty, Borrough, and particular Plantation do obtaine unto themselves by just means a certaine number of the native’s children to be educated by them in the true religion and civile course of life...” (Debo 42) Except for the account of Pocahontas (daughter of chief Powhatan who was abducted and held in pleasant captivity, converted to Christianity, and married with her father’s consent to John Rolfe), there were no other

documented examples of Native American children who were educated and civilized (Debo 43). Axtell claims that from the perspective of the Europeans, Native Americans had three distinct deficiencies: they lacked any sort of order, they were not an industrial people, and they were devoid of manners. They were non-Europeans, “the polar opposite of what they should be and should want to be.” (46) An excerpt of the speech of Sagoyewatha, also known as Chief Red Jacket, chief of the Senecas, provides a wonderful insight into the minds of the Native Peoples during these times:

There was a time when our forefathers owned this great island. ... If we had any disputes about hunting grounds, they were generally settled without the shedding of much blood. But an evil day came upon us; your forefathers crossed the great waters, and landed on this island. Their numbers were small; they found friends, and not enemies; they told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat; we took pity on them, granted their request, and they sat down amongst us; we gave them corn and meat; they gave us poison in return. Brother, the Great Spirit has made us all; but he has made a great difference between his white and red children... The Great Spirit does right; we are satisfied. (History Matters)

This speech was recited by Chief Red Jacket in front of a group of missionaries who had come to the chief of the Senecas in order to request permission to preach Christianity and the Bible among Iroquois settlements. This was Red Jacket’s response. He eloquently yet very compellingly relates all the wrongs done unto his People and grasps the greedy nature of the white people as well as their constant determination to consume and refine the American Indian culture. He tells the story of the white and Indian relation, how in the beginning the Natives welcomed the whites with open arms, fed them, and showed them the ways of the land. The Europeans became greedy, however, and conquered everything in their path. Chief Red Jacket understood the differences between the red man and the white man, however his words had little effect, for the white people were unable to value and

comprehend the Native Americans way of life. This project of civilizing and educating the savages, did not last for too long. A series of wars and smaller skirmishes such as the attack of the Powhatan Confederation against Virginia in 1622, the Pequot War of 1637, and King Philips war in 1675 all had a negative impact on the image of the Indian in the English mind (Ross and Moore 38). As Ross & Moore further remark, “[t]hey confirmed that the Indians could not be trusted, they were savage beasts and they came to believe they could do anything with them.” (39). The Indians were many times exploited, and used, tricked and abused. Further, they were given liquor and branded with the image of the drunken savage. However, the real reason for the inconsistencies between the Native Americans and the Europeans was never racism, but rather the conflict of civilization and savagery (Ross and Moore 40). The Indian stood against everything the English, or civilized culture wished to avoid. The Native Americans resided outside of the structured framework of European society and norms, therefore, by European standards they were wild men, immoral, and irrational, uneducated, and animalistic. They were receiving their divine punishment by God, and presumably they could still be saved. So the white people endeavored to remake the American Indian into a mirror image of himself using the church and education as his tools (Ross and Moore 43). Jaimes remarks, “[t]hey created the concept of the Indian to give what they did see some kind of unification, to make it a single entity they could deal with, because they could not cope with the reality of 400 different cultures. And, from that time to this, the white man has in fact created Indians in the image he wanted to see.” (440) What the colonials were not aware of was that they were practicing the psychological technique of projection: “they were seeing in others what they wished to deny in themselves. By creating a negative stereotype of the Indian, they could take action against the natives without

sully their own consciences.” (Ross and Moore 40) After the European man’s initial, hypocritical goodwill towards the Native Americans, they decided that the souls of these savages could not be saved, whereas perhaps it was their own souls that needed the saving. Ross and Moore conclude that paradoxically each nationality, the English, the French, and the Spanish, viewed the Indians as allies against the other, which beautifully illustrates the exploitative nature of white-Indian relationships (42).

It can be concluded that, even though some of the first contacts between the Europeans and the Native Americans would have given hope towards establishing a more positive future, in the end the gap between the two cultures proved too wide to breach and “the whites turned the Indian into a negative symbol of their American experience” (Ross and Moore 45), in this way sealing the fate of the Native American population, and planting the seed of a negative image of these Natives in the minds of generations to come.

2. Epidemic diseases

When discussing the effects of epidemic diseases on the North American continent, scholars and researchers are under much debate. One of the reasons for this debate is that there is no exact population size of the Native Americans, especially for the area north of present day Mexico, since the estimates were taken from reports of travelers or traders which were not always accurate and did not encompass the whole territory as opposed to the Spanish in South America, who built villages and attempted to round-up the existing Native population (Barnes 19). Therefore, it is difficult to specifically determine the magnitude of depopulation in the territory of the United States. A second problem area regarding epidemic diseases is the fact that there is a lag between the first contact with disease in North America and the arrival of the first epidemic disease to the American continent (Snow and Lanphear 16). Thirdly, the question arises why Native American mortality rates were so high. Also, there is some speculation over which diseases were actually carried over to the New World, and which diseases were perhaps already known to the Native American population. What critics can agree on is a statement by Crosby who says that “[t]he thesis that epidemics have been chiefly responsible for the awesome diminution in the number of Native Americans is based on more than theory.” (290) Thornton et al. agree with this as well claiming that “there is general scholarly consensus that American Indian populations were reduced substantially by a variety of Old World diseases, particularly smallpox, following 1492.” (28)

2.1 Virgin-soil Epidemics

It is important at this stage to note that the epidemics brought over from the European continent became virgin soil epidemics as soon as they reached the shores

of America. “Virgin soil epidemics are those in which the populations at risk have had no previous contact with the diseases that strike them and are therefore immunologically almost defenseless.” (Crosby 289) This meant that the Native American People, who had not yet been exposed to those diseases carried over by the Europeans, were at a disadvantage since their immune systems had not had the chance to develop antibodies against the unknown viruses and bacteria. Virgin-soil epidemics also have a tendency to kill a high proportion of healthy adults, those adults who were responsible for the provision of the community (Young 55). There is also debate regarding which infections were introduced to the continent, and which were plausibly already present. There is considerable agreement that many acute viruses such as smallpox, measles, yellow fever, chickenpox, influenza, and cold; some bacteria such as anthrax, whooping cough, and typhus; and some parasites such as malaria and schistosomes were introduced through European contact (Ramenofsky et al. 242).

It is generally agreed upon, and many sources indicate that Old World diseases were introduced to the New World in 1518, when smallpox first appeared in Santa Domingo. This disease was allegedly carried to Mexico by someone in the company of Cortes, where it quickly turned into an epidemic and devastated the Indian population (Snow and Lanphear 16). By 1518, European populations were already adapted to diseases, such as measles and smallpox since their immune systems had already come across these infections in Europe. The same cannot be said for the American Indians. Once they were introduced, the diseases spread rapidly, infecting nearly everyone, and producing universal susceptibility. These early diseases are chronicled by reports by recent quantitative analyses of Spanish records as well as other sources, such as Grob (2002), Macleod (2008), and Lovell and Lutz (1995).

However, documentary evidence of epidemics north of Mexico is quite rare (Snow and Lanphear 26). North American population densities were lower than those in Spanish America, and there was the difference between policies. The Spanish mandated the *congregación* policy¹, whereas, in the territory of the United States the Native population was isolated from the white population, thus disabling the possibility of documentation of the effects the epidemics had (Snow and Lanphear 17).

It has been documented that the year 1616 was the first time an epidemic appeared in the Northeast, although the infection did not spread far into the interior. The first epidemic that did reach the interior of the continent was probably the 1633 smallpox epidemic. This epidemic was so destructive and consistent that there are many documents existing from that time from contemporary writers as well as Northeastern Indian groups who had suffered from it (Snow and Lanphear 23). Therefore it seems that the 1633 epidemic was the first time that the Indians of Northeast had encountered smallpox. Snow and Lanphear claim that “if we accept the evidence that indicates that there were no major epidemics in the Northeast prior to 1616 and no smallpox until 1633, a question remains as to why there was a delay between the first contact with Europeans in the area and the advent of epidemic diseases.” (24)

One of the reasons for the delayed infections is population density.

Ramenofsky et al. write that in the Caribbean and Mexico, Native settlements were “nucleated”. (247) In places, such as Spanish Florida, California, and Ecuador the

¹ A policy where the Native inhabitants were forced to “resettle in compact communities” led by Jesuit missionaries many times to facilitate religious conversions on the indigenous population (Grob 35).

native populations were put to work in Spanish controlled mission centers where these infections could disperse freely and rapidly. However, in the Northeast, the Plains, Southwest and far northwest (modern day United States) the Native American population was dispersed over large areas therefore, the chances of infection were less and the chances of survival were greater (Ramenofsky et al. 247). Also, unlike the Spanish in the south, the British and the French did not establish permanent settlements before the seventeenth century in America. Furthermore, Crosby claims that “the British tended to drive the Indians away, rather than ensnaring them as slaves and peons, as the Spaniards did” (29), and in this way the Spanish created a hot-spot for the epidemic to thrive and multiply.

Apart from the sparse living conditions of the Natives in the north and interior of the continent, there were other reasons for the delay of the epidemics. One of these reasons was connected to the long voyages that the immigrants had to endure from Europe to the American continent. At the time of the discovery of America, at the turn of the 16th century, the small boats which were crossing the Atlantic Ocean spent a minimum of six weeks crossing, which did not allow the smallpox virus to survive. However, after 1600 ocean passage was shortened to one month. This resulted in the smallpox virus winning an additional two weeks time. In this way, the colonizers still carried the virus in their systems when they disembarked and so the infection could be transmitted to the Indian population (Snow and Lanphear 25).

Another plausible reason for the gap between the first contact in the Northeast and the first epidemics on the continent was the fact that the small groups of first explorers who arrived on the shores of North America were all adult men, who had already developed immunity towards the smallpox or measles therefore, they were not

carriers of the virus. In the South, in New Spain, for example, larger crews, early settlements, and African slaves served as a catalyst to these infectious diseases (Snow and Lanphear 26-27). The catalyst for the North, continue Snow and Lanphear, was the introduction of children to the colonies, who were possible carriers for the epidemic viruses. It was probably more than coincidence that the smallpox epidemic appears after 1630 when mass migrations into New England were led by John Winthrop. By the 1630s the Massachusetts Bay Colony had already established several successful towns, including Jamestown and Plymouth which were ready for the arrival of women and children. Between 1630 and 1640 over twenty thousand Europeans entered New England alone (Snow and Lanphear 27-28). Possibly infected children as well as the shortened ocean crossing contributed to the first epidemic smallpox outbreak in Northeastern America in 1633.

William Bradford described the circumstances and conditions of the smallpox epidemic on a group of Indians who lived near a Plymouth colony trading post; "they fell down so generally of this disease as they were in the end not able to help one another, nor to make a fire nor to fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead. But would strive as long as they could, and when they could procure no other means to make fire, they would burn the wooden trays and dishes they ate their meat in, and their very bows and arrows. And some would crawl out on all fours to get a little water, and sometimes die by the way and not to be able to get in again." (Crosby 296) Smallpox was much more dangerous than the measles epidemic, since the virus was present in the bearer for a week or more before symptoms were seen, whereas with measles, the time between infection and appearance of symptoms was relatively short (Watts 93).

It is not only from European accounts that we are able to put together a picture of the waves of epidemic diseases going through North America. Sundstrom, in her essay entitled "Smallpox Used Them up: References to Epidemic Disease in Northern Plains Winter Counts, 1714-1920" writes that most studies of epidemic disease patterns have originated almost exclusively from European documents and accounts. She continues by stating that the reason for this is because of the overwhelming view of illiteracy amongst the Native Americans, and therefore the entirely acceptable explanation that these Peoples were not able to document their own history (305). Although the Native Indians did not have written knowledge in the strict sense, they did have a system of 'symbolic pictographic notation' which allowed events to be put to paper and preserved for the future generation (Sundstrom 306-307). Sundstrom refers to these pictographic representations as winter counts. These winter counts provide records of the cycle of epidemic diseases among certain Native American tribes. "The northern plains Indian chronologies commonly termed winter counts provide a detailed listing of epidemics for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Winter counts comprise lists of year-names representing the most significant events in the life of the individual or band for each of the years included in the count." (306) The majority of winter counts available are from the Lakotas, Yanktonai Dakota, Mandan, Kiowa, and Blackfoot tribes. According to these winter counts Sundstrom was able to identify that the northern plains groups endured approximately thirty-six major epidemics between 1714 and 1919 (308). Further, she was able to conclude that these Natives were experiencing serious epidemic outbreaks at least once every five to ten years. She remarks that it is highly unlikely that birthrates within the tribe could compensate the huge and frequent deaths. She concludes that "The winter count data thus supports studies that assert significant decreases in post-Columbian Native

American populations.” (324) Sundstrom mentions that there is enough documentation to indicate that the mortality rates from epidemics lasting from 1616-1619 and 1633-1639 account for numbers no less than 86 percent of the Native Indian population (327). Snow and Lanphear’s essay mentions Dobyns’ research, who in 1966 estimated that American Indian populations typically declined by 95 percent overall (28), moreover, Sundstrom quotes recent studies estimating post-contact population losses in total as high as 85-90 percent (306).

2.2 Cholera

Why was it that these Native American populations were so drastically affected by these epidemics? Apart from the most obvious reason of being universally susceptible to these diseases since they had never come into contact with them before, there were other reasons affecting their mortality rates. Thornton et al. mention the cyclic nature of epidemics the Native Americans experienced (40). He compares it to the European plagues during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which recurred cyclically along with other epidemics such as typhus or the measles, whereby the European population did not have enough time to recuperate until the end of the 1400s. Thornton et al. specify those epidemics which the Native Americans encountered over and over: “American Indians encountered such new diseases as smallpox, measles, the bubonic plague, cholera, typhoid, pleurisy, scarlet fever, malaria, yellow fever, diphtheria, mumps, and whooping cough.”(41) Thus the American Indian population was continually exposed to ‘virgin soil’ epidemics to which they were not able to confer immunity, and so the population did not have enough time to recover from one epidemic disease before they were struck by another. Jaimes quotes Dobyns’ research, who had chronicled forty-one separate smallpox

epidemics in North America between 1520 and 1899 (31). In order to present some of the other factors that contributed to higher mortality rates amongst Native Indians regarding epidemic diseases, Powers and Leiker discuss the effects of cholera on a Native American group and enlist the elements which aided the disease in spreading from one Indian community to the next. Powers and Leiker begin by establishing the fact that one contracts cholera through either contaminated food or water (319). Grob affirms this fact, and adds that cholera was also spread by infected bedding and clothing, it did not, however, spread directly from human to human (105). The victims of cholera experience severe vomiting and diarrhea which then lead to severe dehydration. Death occurs from either this dehydration or internal poisoning when the kidneys can no longer function (Powers and Leiker 319). The authors mention that Indian pictograph calendars portray twisted figures of cholera victims, some tribes even referring to the disease as "big cramps". "Substantial evidence exists that Indian epidemics not only coincided with nationwide outbreaks, but that Indians' proportionate losses also far surpassed those of white communities and were major factors in tribal depopulation." (Powers and Leiker 320)

Cholera first appeared in New York in the spring of 1832 and quickly spread through the rest of the United States. There were three cholera epidemics between 1833 and 1866 which accounted for 200,000 to 300,000 deaths in North America (Grob 106). Cholera claimed the lives of thousands of people living in white urban areas, but the disease proved more disastrous for Native Americans. Approximate death tolls of the Osages and Pawnees were as high as one-fourth. The Kiowas lost one-half of their population while two-thirds of the Southern Cheyenne Indians were lost (Powers and Leiker 325). The important question is why there were larger

numbers of deaths within the Native Indian population. Unlike smallpox, cholera does not confer long-term immunity; therefore the Europeans were not protected against the disease. Also both the Indian and non-Indian population were equally virgin towards this epidemic, and still mortality rates for Native Indians were higher than those for white people (Powers and Leiker 326). The proportionally higher Indian deaths from the cholera epidemic attracted the attention of white travelers who most likely associated the spread of the disease with unhygienic conditions in Indian communities. According to contemporary accounts, tribal members seldom washed, and they littered the entrance of their teepees and longhouses with bones and scraps of food. There was also the assumption that Indians became infected with cholera when they opened and robbed graves of previous cholera victims. However, the accounts of a prejudiced and biased white population cannot be taken into serious account, not to mention that white settlements were also reputedly filthy (Powers and Leiker 327).

The reaction towards cholera of the white man and the Native were very different, therefore their treatment of the disease would differ as well. While the modern American man saw cholera as a “moral and environmental problem, and as a proof of physical and social corruption” the Native American view “rested entirely on experience with other European imported ailments.” (Powers and Leiker 328) The authors recount a story of a certain Rudolph Kurz, who had visited the Mandan tribe just before the cholera epidemic in 1851. When the cholera surfaced the Indians forced Kurz to stop his sketches and return to his room, because they thought that he was the cause of so much sickness and death in the village. The reason behind this thought was that 20 years earlier an artist had visited them just before the outbreak of a cholera epidemic, and since they (Kurz and the previous artist) had both sketched

portraits of people who had died very soon after, many of the Indians believed that this is what had caused their death (Powers and Leiker 328-329). Native American healers had tried various treatments in order to cure cholera. One of these was observed at a Shawnee mission: “The Indian's treatment for cholera was not much more ridiculous than are some of the treatments of some of the so-called scientific doctors of medicine. They dug two holes in the ground, about twenty inches apart. The patient lay stretched over the two, vomit in one hole and purge in the other, and die[d] stretched over the two, thus prepared, with a blanket thrown over him.” (Powers and Leiker 329-330) Most Native medical practices were inefficient, just as their white counterparts. The commonly prescribed sweat baths, which were treatments for numerous illnesses, actually hastened dehydration and induced hypothermia. Modern historians claim that this was the worst thing they could do (Watts 96).

The reasons that contributed to the spread of the disease in Native American tribes were “integration into larger networks, inadequate community hygiene, habitational density, and unawareness of quarantine's effectiveness.” (Powers and Leiker 332) However, these same circumstances were present in white communities, apart from the lamentable mortality rates. An Indian cholera victim's chance of succumbing to the illness was still much higher than that of a white man's chances. Powers and Leiker explain this by the fact that cholera was not the only catastrophe which Indians encountered. The weakened condition of the Plains tribes, caused by the massive slaughter of the buffalo by the white man, caused food shortages and malnutrition which left them susceptible to any diseases whites carried westward. Physical stress and traumas added to the higher susceptibility. Also cholera led to a

ripple effect in the disintegration of tribal cultures. Because of the many deaths the lack of available marriage partners caused Indians to marry outside of their tribe, resulting in a break in the homogenous tribal customs and rituals. Also, Native Americans had no conception of contagion, and therefore did not practice quarantine of the sick (Powers and Leiker 333-337). Crosby writes, “[i]n most epidemics, contagious disease operating in crowded wigwams and long houses would spread so fast before terror took hold that panicky flight would serve more to spread the infection than to rob it of fresh victims, and any decline in the number of new cases, and consequently of deaths that might result from flight, would at the very least be cancelled by the rise in the number of sick who died of neglect.” (297) Watts confirms this statement by remarking that the Native American custom dictated that whenever a member of the tribe fell sick, it would be the duty of the whole community to visit and take care of the ailing tribe member. This, however, put the whole community at risk and increased their chances of contracting the disease (Watts 96).

Cholera caused a ripple effect which influenced members of the tribe long after the outbreak was over. One Indian recounts, “[w]e were sorry later that we permitted the [white] travelers to go through the plains. They brought us two terrible diseases, smallpox and cholera, which killed half our people. Some of us thought that they gave us these sicknesses on purpose to wipe us out.” (Powers and Leiker 337) The research done on the cholera outbreak by Powers and Leiker was possible because of the later time of the outbreak of the epidemic. Research done on epidemic diseases from the earlier years was scarcer, since they were less documented. However, we can assume that many of the same factors mentioned in connection with cholera were responsible for the higher death rates during the smallpox or measles

epidemics. Below is a chart from the Snow and Lanphear essay (24), showing pre-epidemic population estimates applying to the year 1610, whereas post-epidemic levels are those reached by the middle of the seventeenth century.

Native populations in the Northeast

Group	Pre-epidemic Population	Post-epidemic Population	Mortality
Maliseet-Passamaquoddy	7,600	2,500	67%
Eastern Abenaki	13,800	3,000	78%
Western Abenaki	12,000	250	98%
Massachusetts	44,000	2,400	86%
Mohegan-Pequot	16,000	3,000	81%
Pocumtuck	18,400	920	95%
Quiripi-Unquachog	29,900	1,500	95%
Mahican	6,400	500	92%
Mohawk	8,100	2,000	75%

Through this chart we are able to see numerical comparisons of pre- and post-epidemic outbreaks of a small portion of the Native American population. As we can see, there is a substantial drop in the population of each tribe. Anywhere from 67 to 98 percent of these Native Indian nations were lost to epidemics sweeping through the continent. As it has been mentioned, it is very difficult to make estimates regarding the overall death toll connected to epidemic diseases, since the population numbers of pre-contact Native Americans vary, and are not exact. However, this chart provides us with perhaps a small percentage of the larger picture and from this small collection we

are able to project it onto the whole. This chart is able to give us an overall picture of the history of epidemic diseases on the North American continent affecting the Native American tribes.

2.3 Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis was also a mass killer of the Native American population (Watts 28). However, as opposed to measles, smallpox, or many other infectious diseases, tuberculosis was not a virgin-soil epidemic; it was present in America in the pre-contact period (Young 46). This claim is confirmed by Watts who mentions scientific evidence based on tissue samples, which prove that some form of TB was present before the arrival of the white settlers (28). Pre-Columbine TB, however, had only a mild impact on the inhabitants of the American continent (Young 59). By the late 1800s, however, of all the infectious diseases, TB was among the most important causes of adult death in America (Grob 210).

The tubercle bacillus was identified in 1882 (Grob 210), however it had been present as early as the seventeenth century in Europe. TB peaked in England in 1650 and surged to even higher numbers in the 18th and 19th centuries, at which time it became known as the “Great White Plague” (Grob 110). Tuberculosis affected both white and Indian people. In the United States TB reached its peak by the nineteenth century and became one of the leading causes of death (Grob 110). Similarly, as with other epidemic diseases, the Native American population was more susceptible. Young claims that there has been research done regarding racial differences in susceptibility (62). Research was based on answering the question whether the Native Indian population was more prone to contracting tuberculosis than the white population. However, Young states that data on Native Americans is lacking and

therefore this hypothesis cannot be grounded (62). One explanation to answer higher Native American susceptibility is the severity of the disease which in post-contact times could have been due to the more virulent strain. The changes in social conditions, such as crowding or poor nutrition, or the loss of natural vaccination due to drastic changes in natural habitat could have also contributed to the higher mortality rates of Native Americans (Young 59).

In the previous pages it has been discussed how the epidemic diseases originated from Europe and appeared at the start of the sixteenth century on the continent. I also included a list of those epidemics which have been generally accepted as the ones which were indeed introduced to America through contact with Europe. Regarding the effects produced on the Native Americans, it can be concluded that the Indians lost large percentages of their populations which they were not able to replenish since the epidemics were cyclical and the diseases varied, so immunity could not be sufficiently built up. A number of reasons were responsible for the heightened mortality rates in Indian camps, such as population density, no knowledge of the importance of quarantine, malnutrition and starvation preceding the epidemics, and further cyclical diseases following each pandemic wave, as well as changes in social conditions, and the possible loss of natural vaccination due to drastic habitat changes. All these factors combined resulted in epidemic diseases contributing a large part to the Native American population decline. Further, in her article, Johnston claims that Native Peoples still continued to experience very high rates of these epidemic diseases long after they were under control in the rest of the population (201). Snow and Lanphear, and Dobyns have been cited in the previous pages as

researchers who claimed that overall American Indian population decline resulting from epidemics was between 80 and 95 percent.

2.4 The Odd One Out: Alcohol

In addition to diseases, the devastating effects of alcohol on the American Indian population, also needs to be addressed, since it seems very popular in the field of Native American studies researched by Jellinek (1957), French (1999), Taylor (1991), and many more. Alcohol does not constitute an epidemic, however, it has dire health consequences on Native American communities which have persisted to the present-day. The presence of alcohol in Native American societies also led to further negative stereotypes towards Indians which have been proven to be persistent and all-encompassing. Today the “drunk town phenomenon” (legal drinking sites for reservation Indians), and the image of the “drunk Indian” are well known entities in America (French 45). French goes on to remark that by today, “[u]nfortunately, every American Indian and Alaska Native family has a tale of death and destruction associated with a drunk-town tragedy.” (French 45)

Prior to the Europeans arrival to the continent of North America, the Native Americans had no exposure to any type of alcohol. Legend has it that in the year 1609 Henry Hudson reached the tip of the Manhattan Island where he met with the chiefs of the surrounding Native villages and invited them to some brandy. They became ecstatic over this new experience, and they say the name *Mannahattanik* meant ‘the place where we all dr[a]nk’ (Debo 43). Whether or not this is a genuine tale, the significance of Native American first contact with alcohol is quite heavy. It was around the 1800s when the Hudson Bay Company arrived that Natives were offered alcohol for furs and by the 1850s alcoholism was present among the tribes (Debo

103). In the colonial times alcohol was seen as the substance that unleashed the savage nature of the Indians. However, contrary to this stereotype, Indian drinking traditions varied considerably, and on the whole they did not drink more than the colonists did. Still, over time, the stereotype of the 'drunken Indian' prevailed, and was used as a logical explanation towards the downfall and decline of the American Indian people (Holmes and Antell 154). In contrast to the view that the Europeans have of Indian immorality leading to their degeneration and their abuse of alcohol, the American Indians find the invasion and intrusion of the European culture at fault (Holmes and Antell 155). Holmes and Antell cite Mancall (1995) and Duran (1996), who claim that the "introduction of alcohol is said to have disrupted tribal life and traditions," and that "[a]n indigenous theory of alcohol use indicates that rather than simply disinhibiting Indians, alcohol ruptured the communal and spiritual fabric of Indian life."(155) Why Indians drank alcohol to excess, and why this is still a problem today, is still unclear. In his book, Carson quotes Mancall, who concluded that "Indians...drank as they did because they, like most colonists, enjoyed the sensations created by alcohol. Perhaps Indians drank ... because the world they knew was crashing down around them." (Carson 63) One other contested factor which may explain Natives' higher rates of alcoholism is genetic differences. French mentions two findings which make the genetic factor seem plausible (60). Both researches conducted in 1998 released findings indicating that Native Americans may have genetic differences that put them at greater risk for diabetes. The study found CYP (cytochrome) differences among Canadian Natives. CYP 450 is essential for being able to metabolize certain compounds such as drugs, medications, and steroids, in the liver and gut (French 60). The researchers predict that diet, alcohol, and medication use would all be affected by this dysregulation (French 60). Naturally there

are those critics who refute the factor of genetics as the reason for higher susceptibility of Native Americans. In his article, May (1994) questioned the existence of genetic differences between white and Native American People, and stated that “no basis at all for this myth is found in the scientific literature, and it should not be a consideration in current prevention and intervention programs.” (French 52)

From these accounts we can arrive at the implication that alcohol consumption and alcoholism in Native American societies was over exaggerated as a result of the negative stereotypes they were subjected to. Alcoholism had affected Native Indian mortality rates, and had produced ripple effect problems which did lead to the deterioration of their culture and decline in their numbers (Holmes and Antell 156). Alcoholism among the Indians constitutes social problems, just as we have the same social problems in our societies. The question of whether proportionally American Indians have higher alcohol abuse rates than non-Indians is the endeavor of many scholars. Also, the reasons for higher Native American alcoholism is still being debated, whether they are genetically more prone to alcoholism, is still being researched. In conclusion, although alcoholism has affected Native American population numbers, and therefore their decline, it cannot be viewed as an epidemic, neither as one of the main causes leading to their decline. Yet it is a social problem still present today which is a potential threat to their population and culture.

3. Genocide

Genocide was the second main cause for the decline of the Native American population. As we have seen, genocide can be defined as: “the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, political, or cultural group.” (Dictionary.com) However, this is a very simplified version of the term. In order to discuss how genocide had affected the North American Indian population, it needs to be agreed on what actions can actually be considered as genocide. An article written by Campbell in 2009 entitled “Genocide as Social Control” explores this topic thoroughly. Of course, it is not possible to enlist all genocidal crimes committed against the Native Americans, so having covered the subject and definition of genocide, examples of the genocidal events which have caused decay in the Native Indian population will be described and discussed in more detail. As Jaimes elaborates:

Kirkpatrick Sales’s working number of 15 million produces a reduction figure in the 98th percentile. Thornton’s minimum of 7 million yields a result of about 95 percent population loss between 1500 and 1900. Even the Mooney/Kroeber 1 million figure indicates a population loss of some two-thirds during the same 400 years. Surley, there can be no more monumental example of sustained genocide—certainly none involving a ‘race’ of people as broad and complex as this—anywhere in the annals of human history (37).

The earliest writings of genocide first developed during World War II and can be connected to Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer, who formulated this definition in order to describe the crimes that were committed by the Germans which were aimed at exterminating nations (Lindsay 11). Campbell defines the terminology of genocide by using Lemkin’s definition, “Genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming

at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” (152) The crime of genocide became a crime under international law in 1948 when the United Nations passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Preez 7). However, the definition of the United Nations was fairly narrower than Lemkin’s initial definition. Genocide is defined by the United Nations as: “Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” (Preez 8)

Rather unfortunate events of genocide included the deliberate intent of infecting the Native Americans with diseases. We have evidence of this from a letter written by Colonel Henry Bouquet to General Jeffrey Amherst about his attempt to infect the Natives:

P.S. I will try to inoculate the Indians by means of [smallpox-contaminated] Blankets that may fall in their hands, taking care however not to get the disease myself. As it is pity to oppose good men against them, I wish we could make use of the Spaniard's Method, and hunt them with English Dogs. Supported by Rangers, and some Light Horse, who would I think effectively extirpate or remove that Vermin[e].

H.B.

13 July 1763 (quoted in Axelrod 97)

Another genocidal crime was committed through General Phil Sheridan's orders applied during the 1870s, when he exterminated over 60 million buffalo in order to starve the Cheyenne, Lakota, and other tribes of the Great Plains (Jaimes 33).

3.1 Factors and Reasons for Genocide

It is a debated issue as to what other actions constitute genocide. In his book, Kinloch et al. mentions the major external factors and major internal traits that are delineated from one another (19). Major external factors are as follows, "colonialism; colonial control, manipulation, and exploitation; colonial terror; post-colonial conflict, attempted secessions; societal upheavals; external threats; external control, domination, manipulation, and expansion; high geographical isolation; and, low external reaction to internal genocide, including support and official denial on occasion." (Kinloch et al. 20) The internal traits involve non-democratic governments, genocidal history and tradition, negative life conditions, and minority issues (Kinloch et al. 20).

Below is a chart included in Kinloch et al. (27) which provides an overview of the genocidal crimes in the United States of America. The chart consists of the external and internal factors, as well as the consequences. The last row groups the factors into general trends:

Country	External Factors	Internal Factors	Consequences
US	High external colonial migration, negative impact on indigenous population, forced importation of some minorities for slavery purposes, importation of a variety of other minorities for labor purposes.	Early genocidal treatment of Native Americans, colonial land and mineral desire, white manifest destiny, black slavery, negative life conditions for many minorities, negative ideologies, including eugenics, racist social movements.	Early forced migration and starvation of Native Americans, high racism, eugenics, K.K.K. movement, demographic control, minority discrimination, laws against miscegenation.
GENERAL TRENDS	EXTERNAL COLONIALISM	COLONIZED AND IMMIGRANT MINORITIES	RACIAL HIERARCHY WITH GENOCIDAL CONTINUUM APPLIED TO MINORITIES

Campbell continues by writing that genocide also seems to be a form of social control, and a “response to behavior defined as deviant.”(155) It is also suggested that racism was foundational for genocide (Gellately 124). Many cases of genocide occurred in California during the mass migration west. There were many general grievances towards the Native Americans that the white people in California bestowed upon them. Many of these grievances however had no real basis. As Lindsay writes, “[b]efore Euro-American emigrants went west to California to settle, mine, or otherwise make their fortunes, they had clear notions of what Indians were and what should be done with them.” (35) Indians were said to be “ugly, filthy, stupid, indolent, disgusting, effeminate, indiscriminating in what they ate, one of the lowest races of mankind (or perhaps the lowest), and more like beasts than men. One settler said that every time he touched Indian women it caused a "feeling of repulsion just as if I had put my hand on a toad, tortoise, or huge lizard.”” (Campbell 156-157) These types of genocides were not inflicted upon the minority group because of a divergence from

the unmarked group, but rather it is typically a means of handling grievances against different ethnic groups.

There are also cases of genocide in which the crimes committed are to acquire economic wealth. One of these examples is the annihilation of the Pequot Indians of New England in the year 1637 by the New English settlers (Campbell 157). The Pequot Wars was an armed conflict between the Pequot tribe and the English colonists from 1634-1638. The colonists blamed the Pequot Indians for the murder of a particular Captain John Stone and John Oldam in the years 1634 and 1636. However, New England's Puritans described Stone as “a drunkard, lecher, braggart, bully, and blasphemer.” (Cave 72) Additionally there was no proof that the murder was committed by the Pequot tribe. As Cave writes, however, one year later the Bay Colony authorities wanted to avenge the death of Stone. When the Pequot were not willing to surrender Stone’s murderers, the Puritans saw it as evidence of conspiracy against all English men (Cave 74). However, trouble only began in 1636 when an English trader named John Oldam was killed on Block Island (Birchfield 1065). As revenge for these murders, the colonists initiated raids against the Indians of Block Island and the Pequot nation. When the Indians retaliated and countered the raids of the white man, which resulted in the death of approximately 30 colonists, the settlers decided to wage war against them (Campbell 157). During the Mystic (Misistuck) massacre where the population was mostly comprised of women, children, and older men, the area was ordered to be burnt. The order was given that anyone attempting to escape the flames should be killed. Of the estimated 600 to 700 Pequot residents at Mystic that day, only seven survived to be taken prisoner, while another seven escaped to the woods (Cave 133-140). This war resulted in the deaths of one-quarter to two-thirds of the Pequot Indian population, and led to their dissolution as a nation

(Campbell 158). The Pequot wars proved to be a massive homicide led under the false pretense of revenging two unconfirmed murders.

Genocide most frequently arises between members or ethnicities with highly polarized differences, thus the degree of genocidal crimes vary according to immobility, cultural distance, relational distance, functional independence, and inequality (Campbell 160). If we look at the history of conflicts between white settlers and Native Americans in the territory of the United States, we can see that genocide as well as warfare occurred rather intermittently. In his book, Jaimes lists some of the most devastating accounts of genocidal crime inflicted on Native Americans, such as the 1863 Bear River massacre where 500 Western Shoshones were killed, the 1868 massacre of 300 Cheyennes at the Washita River, or the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 where more than 300 Lakotas were killed (34).

As long as there were still options on the part of the Native Americans to escape outright confrontation, these options were taken advantage of. As long as there was still unsettled land available where the Native Americans might be able to escape to, or be deported to, there was a greater possibility that genocide could be avoided (Campbell 161). It is in this way that the factor of immobility or mobility affected the Native American genocide crimes. As an example, Campbell mentions a case involving the Creek and Yamasee Native American tribes. In 1715 in South Carolina, these two Indian nations initially fought a successful guerilla-type war against the colonizers in the area. However, a turn of events occurred when the Carolinians allied themselves with the Cherokees and began to wrack damage upon the Creek and Yamasee populations. Both the Creeks and the Yamasee fled from the area, therefore successfully avoiding the possibility of genocide (Campbell 161). There were other

similar examples of Native American tribes having to migrate, flee, or be deported from the area in question. As the westward movement continued in the United States, the Indians were being relocated more frequently. At the beginning of the 1800s the Indian Removal Act was used to deport and relocate Indians to lands west of the Mississippi, but as settlers advanced more and more towards the west, they were beginning to run out of available land to relocate the Indians to. Genocides in California were more widespread and numerous than anywhere else (Campbell 161). The logical explanation for this is that both the colonizers and the Native Americans ran out of room. While the settlers were occupying mostly eastern United States, the Native Peoples were pushed westward, however, when the settlers decided to move westward as well there was a clash of interests, to say the least. The settlers no longer had any vacant lands that they could use to contain Indian populations, and likewise the Native Americans could no longer relocate themselves considering the immense numbers of immigrants by that time occupying the lands that had once belonged to them. Additionally, Manifest Destiny and the California Gold Rush of 1848 contributed immensely to the continuous flow of Americans westward (Lindsay 66-69). Campbell cites Thornton (1987) who claims that due to these genocidal massacres the Indian population of the area was reduced from 100,000 in 1849 to 35,000 in 1860 (Campbell 162). This difference of the severe damages to Native American population between the western and eastern states was noticed by contemporary people as well. In 1851 three federal treaty commissioners published an article in one of the daily papers expressing their fears of an inevitable Indian War, since there was “no further west” to go, the only alternatives were “extermination or domestication.” (Campbell 162-163) Lindsay writes that the development of conflict over land was the central issue between the Native and the white population (176).

One specific example of Californian Indian genocide can be related through the killing of the Yuki tribe. Settlers and ranchers began to graze their stock in the same valleys the Yuki inhabited. The white settlers slowly but surely began to push the Yuki out of their homes (Lindsay 180-181). The Yuki were forced to kill the white man's cattle as a last resort to defend their territory. In response to this the settlers initiated a rampage, killing as many Yuki Indians as possible, whether they were men, women, or children (Campbell 156).

Cultural distance, which is the second factor that affects the occurrence of genocide, refers to "cultural diversity, or differences in the content of culture." (Campbell 163) In order for genocide to occur, there must be some measure of cultural distance between the two ethnicities. Obviously wherever the cultural distance between two groups is more visible and tangible, violence and genocide will be greater. If we reflect upon the visible cultural differences between the Native American People and the white settlers, many come to mind. The difference in their physical appearance is quite apparent, as well as the two groups' views and attitude towards life and nature. While the white man sought to conquer, colonize, civilize, and tame everything in his way, the Native American subordinated himself and accepted the natural course of life. They had a respect for everything around them, while the white man took much for granted (Debo 3). Apart from the differences in their basic moral values, many other cultural differences were visible such as living conditions, religious beliefs, attire, and the list could endlessly go on. Also, many Americans only knew Indians through stories and memories of the older generation, therefore many Americans going West feared and despised Native Americans without ever having interacted with them (Lindsay 11). Therefore, another reason which

contributed to higher rates of genocide towards the Native Americans can be attributed to the cultural distance between them and the white settlers.

Relational distance also has to be taken into consideration when discussing factors influencing genocide. Relational distance “refers to the extent to which people participate in each others’ lives.” (Campbell 163) This factor seems relatively understandable and straight forward. Those ethnic groups that have less contact with each other and that have lived together for a shorter period of time are more likely to be involved with genocidal crimes, perhaps because of the general fear of the unknown. More contact, higher rates of intermarriages, and longer periods of coexisting increase chances of peace (Campbell 163). The Native Americans and white colonizers and settlers do not have a long history of coexistence. The Native Americans were put into the predicament of having no choice of accepting an alien civilization into their living environment. If we mark the Native American initial contact with the Europeans at 1492 (although only a small amount of the population came into contact with the Spanish at this time), then counting to this day, the Native Americans and present day Americans have been living together for a little over 500 years which is minute compared to the thousands of years that ethnicities in Europe have coexisted for. Also, it would be rash to say that the Natives have coexisted with the white man for 500 years, since even today Native Indians live on the periphery of non-Indian societies, distanced from mainstream culture. The relatively short amount of time that Natives and Americans had existed side by side was too short to guarantee the absence of genocide.

We have to mention functional interdependence as well if we want to cover all the factors that contribute to genocide. “Functional interdependence refers to the

extent to which individuals and groups cooperate with one another economically, politically, militarily, or otherwise. Genocide is greater under conditions of functional independence, where groups do not depend on one another for their livelihood.”

(Campbell 164) Campbell takes the example of the seventeenth century French populations who established their settlements in order to trade fur with the Indians. These French ‘coureur de bois’ had much more peaceful relations with the Native Americans than did the English, since the French and the Indians depended upon each other economically and therefore were perhaps more tolerant and lenient towards the other party. In fact, first contact for most Indians with whites was with traders. Indians typically traded animal furs, corn, and meat for tobacco, alcohol, and tools (Barnes 31). However, this interdependency changed in the early eighteenth century when the French, much like the English earlier, began to establish permanent settlements. Trade was reduced to a low level (Campbell 164). In England there was a large decline in the demand for furs, such as beaver pelts, therefore the white-Indian relationship became more and more strained (Starkey 61). Campbell recounts the occurrence of a genocidal crime after interdependence between the French and the Natchez tribe decreased. The French colonies along the lower Mississippi practiced very minimal trade with the nearby Natchez Indian tribe, and so conflicts were frequent and violent. So violent that the French killed at least 1,000 native Natchez Indians and sold 400 of them as slaves. The Natchez were not able to survive this degree of destruction, and they ceased to exist as a sovereign nation (164-165). Naturally, as interdependency between the two groups waned, policies towards Native Americans became more and more genocidal, as attitudes and feelings became more strained.

The last factor which needs to be mentioned is equality. “Genocide is less likely to occur where ethnic groups are equal.” (Campbell 166) Unfortunately, equality never materialized between the two groups. From the moment the European colonizers set foot on American soil and beheld the Native population, an unimpeachable hierarchy was established. The white man was superior in all possible ways to the Native Indian. The degradation of the Native American population allowed for the Europeans to distance themselves making it easier to look upon them as inferior beings who must be gotten rid of. After all, the Indian was simply “non-European.” (Jaimes 440)

We can conclude that genocide had been inflicted on the Native Americans due to the lack of their mobility, their cultural distance from the white man, relational distance, the lack of functional interdependence, and the existence of inequality between the two races. Through Campbell’s article and through the multiple examples included in the previous pages, the definition of genocide was interpreted, and the different causes leading to the genocidal crime experienced by the North American Indians were also provided.

3.2 The Trail of Tears

Let us describe in further detail one particular example, one of the most infamous events during the Indian removals in the 1830s, the Trail of Tears. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 can be considered as an act of genocide, since the policy itself, as well as the events which occurred afterwards coincides with several of the points used to describe the definition of genocide. Although the Indian removals did not involve the direct “killing of members of the group”, the results were the death of thousands of Natives due to negligence, nonchalance, and ignorance of the American

people. “Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, as well as deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part” (Preez 8), were also realized. The removals also corresponded with the definition Campbell provides, that is, the removals “signif[ied] a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” (Campbell 153) In the following paragraphs, these allegations will be justified by demonstrating that the Indian removals of the 1830s can be viewed as being an act of genocide.

First, let us provide some historical background to the Removals. The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830. Every President prior to Andrew Jackson was adamant about the fact that Indian and white communities should be separated since it would benefit both parties, however no President thought of passing an Indian Removal Act in Congress (Axelrod 193). It was controversial at the time and the passing Senate vote of 28 to 19 and the House 102 to 97, are reflective of the polarities regarding the issue (US Department of State). With the proposal of this Bill, Jackson wished to put a larger emphasis on the sovereignty of states over the sovereignty of Indian nations. In fact, Ross and Moore claim that the precedent of absolute sovereignty over the Native Americans had already been collectively established in the minds of white colonizers (35). The Indian Removal Act recommended the removal of the Indian nations living in the east, to lands west of the Mississippi river. Axelrod claims, that “[it] was nothing more than a program of land exchange, by which federal subsidy, protection, and new western land would be given in exchange for Indian lands east of the Mississippi River (193).

Further, as motivation, the law provided money for the tribes that were willing to relocate as well as a guarantee that they would be able to live in peace forever on the new lands under the protection of the United States Government (US Department of State). However, the removals could not take place without the negotiation of treaties with the Indians. The Choctaws, a nation that had inhabited the lower Mississippi Valley were the first tribe to sign a removal treaty (Davis 53). In total, as many as 100,000 American Indians were removed from their homes and relocated to the west of the Mississippi river. Most of them were the members of five tribes: the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole nations, although there were members of other tribes who were deported as well (Thornton 289). According to statistics, the Choctaws are said to have lost over fifteen percent of their population, 6,000 out of 40,000. The Chickasaws lost the least number of people over the removals, but by contrast the Creeks and the Seminole Indians are said to have suffered a mortality rate of fifty percent (Thornton 293). However, it was the Cherokees losses and story that have become the most renowned out of the five tribes. Their removal was so painful and harsh, that they named it “*Nunna daul Tsuny*” (Trail Where We Cried), known in English as the "Trail of Tears." (Thornton 289) The following pages will discuss the removal in more detail.

At the time, in the 1800s, land was one of the most valuable resources in America, and the Native Americans as well as the white colonizers seemed to be well aware of this fact. As Jaimes states in his book, “[l]and has always been the issue central to North American politics and economics. Those who control the land are those who control the resources within and upon it.” (241) From the very beginning,

the various colonizing powers bickered over the land and raised the question whether visual discovery alone was enough to claim a piece of land, or occupation and settlement were also required (Ross and Moore 34). The several different charters and grants issued by the colonizing powers decreed that those pieces of land could be taken into possession, which were vacant and uninhabited. However, the lands that seemed empty and vacant by the colonizers were in fact being used as hunting grounds or cultivated by the Natives. In order to get around this dilemma colonizers changed their policies to “Right of Discovery”. (Ross and Moore 35) From this account we are able to fathom the dire importance and central issue that owning land posed.

One of the reasons for the drafting of the Indian Removal Act was a response to the demands of whites in Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida in need for more land from the Government (Davis 49). A factor that further irritated the Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida population was a compact signed in 1802 by the United States, which promised to break the Cherokee titles over the present day Georgia territory and in exchange the state would give up their claims for certain western territories (Magliocca 884). This promise on the part of the State did not happen, and the citizens reacted with open hostilities towards the Natives occupying the land in question, as well as applying a severe amount of pressure on the State (Magliocca 885).

The land of the Cherokees at the time of and preceding the Indian Removals had been huge. “It extended from the Ohio River south almost to present-day Atlanta, Georgia, and from Virginia and the Carolinas west across Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama to the Illinois River.” (Thornton 289) The Cherokee leaders had repeatedly and consistently refused the pressures of signing any type of removal treaty. In 1827

the Cherokee Constitution was drafted in which the tribe declared its independence and claimed absolute sovereignty within its own lands (Magliocca 886). The white people interpreted this as provocation and so in 1828 Georgia formally extended state law over the Natives, which declared Cherokee laws void (Thornton 290).

When the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was signed, the Cherokee nation refused to accept Jackson's decision. The Cherokees had the promise of the Federal government in the treaties of 1790 and 1802. These treaties guaranteed the Cherokees sovereignty over the territory (Newmyer 85). The Cherokees and their allies wanted to bring cases to the Supreme Court which would necessitate federal action in their favor. Two such cases were heard, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* in 1831 and the *Worcester v. Georgia* in 1832 (Denson 25). In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) the Court was asked to grant "an injunction halting the enforcement of the state laws on the grounds that they violated international treaties." (Denson 26) However, the outcome of this case ruled "that the Cherokees were neither a foreign state nor a state of the Union, and therefore could not sue under original jurisdiction." (Newmyer 85) Denson writes that Chief Justice John Marshall referred to the Cherokees as a 'domestic dependant nation' and under this reasoning refused to discuss the question of whether the state (Georgia) had violated either its treaties or the Constitution itself (26). The case of *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) had a more favorable outcome. This case made it to the court because of an Act passed in 1830 requiring those white people who lived in Cherokee territory to swear allegiance to the state of Georgia and apply for a permit. When a group of missionaries failed to do so they were arrested and convicted, though they were later offered pardon. However, Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler refused, in hopes of taking their case to the Supreme Court and by

extension, questioning Georgia's claim to the Cherokee territory (Denson 27).

Marshall ruled that "the Cherokees, as a self-governing political community, could negotiate treaties with the federal government; and second, that the treaties they had negotiated guaranteed their rights against Georgia." (Newmayer 85) Therefore, Georgia's act of 1828 was deemed unconstitutional. Marshall still did not describe the Cherokees as a separate nation, but he recognized their right to self government and obligated federal authorities to protect Cherokee land and sovereignty (Denson 26). A Supreme Court decision, however, did not prove as sufficient incentive, since neither did the state of Georgia, nor did President Jackson enforce the decisions of the Supreme Court (Denson 26).

By this time, a group of tribal members had emerged who were willing to sign the removal treaty. President Jackson decided to deal only with this "Treaty Party," and the Treaty of New Echota was signed on December 29, 1835 (Davis 73). This treaty spelled out more fully the details of removal which was not included in the Indian Removal Act of 1830, but it still left many questions unanswered. Article 8 of the treaty reads as follows:

The United States also agree and stipulate to remove the Cherokees to their new homes and to subsist them one year after their arrival there and that a sufficient number of steamboats and baggage-wagons shall be furnished to remove them comfortably and so as not to endanger their health, and that a physician well supplied with medicines shall accompany each detachment of emigrants removed by the Government. Such persons and families as in the opinion of the emigrating agent are capable of subsisting and removing themselves shall be permitted to do so; and they shall be allowed in full for all claims for the same twenty dollars for each member of their family; and in lieu of their one year's rations they shall be paid the sum of thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents if they prefer it (Davis 73).

This treaty was not signed by some of the principal officers of the Nation, but rather by individuals in the Cherokee tribe, therefore the treaty was not seen as legitimate by most tribe members (Birchfield 276). A desperate protest came from the Cherokee National council, urging the Government to invalidate the New Echota Treaty. The Senate, however, on May 18, 1836 approved the treaty which specified that the removals would have to take place two years later (Prucha 237). During these events, many Cherokee members had voluntarily moved west. The majority, however remained in the east, not believing that they would be forced to leave. Voluntary relocation of the Cherokees began as early as 1810, when over 1,000 Cherokees migrated. In 1819 another 2,000 Cherokees left as a result of forced land cessions and white population encroachment (McLoughlin 4). When the deadline of the removal arrived, and the Cherokee were still on their old lands, the Government ordered General Winfield Scott to the scene, who issued an address to the Cherokee chiefs, stating: "The President of the United States, has sent me, with a powerful army, to cause you, in obedience to the Treaty of 1835, to join that part of your people who are already established in prosperity on the other side of the Mississippi." (Prucha 240) Therefore, in 1838 the Cherokees were left with no choice, and General Winfield Scott initiated the Removal (McLoughlin 5).

The initial plan was to put the Cherokees on steamboats and ship them down the Tennessee and Ohio rivers to the Mississippi river, and then make the remaining distance on foot. However, this removal was compromised by summer heat and the wave of epidemic disease which caused great sickness and mortality. The Cherokees were given the courtesy of postponement and so it was agreed that the Cherokees would begin their own removal in October of 1838 (Prucha 240). The Cherokees

traveled primarily over land, in a total of thirteen groups each averaging 1,000 people (Thornton 293). A soldier named John G. Burnett, who participated in the removal, describes some of the incidents he witnessed at the time:

Men working in the fields were arrested and driven to the stockades. Women were dragged from their homes by soldiers whose language they could not understand. Children were often separated from their parents and driven into the stockades with the sky for a blanket and the earth for a pillow... In another home was a frail Mother, apparently a widow and three small children, one just a baby. When told that she must go the Mother gathered the children at her feet, prayed an humble prayer in her native tongue, patted the old family dog on the head, told the faithful creature good-bye, with a baby strapped on her back and leading a child with each hand started on her exile. But the task was too great for that frail Mother. A stroke of heart failure relieved her sufferings. She sunk and died with her baby on her back, and her other two children clinging to her hands (Thornton 291).

As we can see from this account, the removal did not follow the humane manner that the Treaty of New Echota had provided for. Instead of the peaceful and gracious removal promised by the Government, the affair rather resembled a forcible and cruel deportation. It is commonly noted that 16,000 Cherokee were removed from their homes, and a minimum of 4,000 died on this sad event called the Trail of Tears (Thornton 293), during which the Cherokees were forced to walk over 1,500 miles (Jaimes 33). They did not all die from the taxing journey itself, but also during the round-up and several months spent in the stockades waiting for removal, and during the first year in Indian territory. In the stockades during the round-up many died from starvation and disease affecting them because of malnutrition. These diseases then grew to epidemics since the circumstances in the stockades were often times crowded and unhygienic. Colds, influenza, sore throat, pleurisy, measles, diarrhea, fevers, toothache, whooping cough, and cholera were just some of the diseases that infected

them. Many times the food rations given were too small, since the money promised by the Government arrived too late or not at all. It frequently happened that the Native Americans were given raw cooking material that they did not know how to process, and therefore starved (Thornton 294-296).

Upon arrival to the new Indian territory, the Cherokee were still plagued by epidemics and the birth rates were low due to the stress and physical hardships of the removal, therefore the Cherokee population was unable to recuperate. Thornton mentions in his article, that although the mortality rate of 4,000 is generally agreed upon, from another perspective the total Cherokee population loss has not been accounted for. If we take all of this into consideration, claims Thornton, then it is plausible that the total mortality figure escalates to 8,000 instead of the previous estimate of 4,000 (298).

The Indian removals of the 1830s were typical cases of genocide inflicted for economic gain, for the possession of very valuable pieces of land. The “Trail of Tears” and other similar examples of Indian removals were perhaps not initially intended to wipe out very large percentages of Indian populations, however, this is exactly what they resulted in. The Navajo tribe experienced a similar removal to the Cherokees in the early 1860s. Soldiers herded the Navajo people from their homeland to a distant fort in Bosque Redondo (Oswalt 345). Oswalt continues by stating that nine thousand Navajos were forcibly removed of which as many as two thousand died (334). Those who could not keep up, were shot and killed including women giving birth. This removal had been named the “Long Walk” by the Navajo survivors (Oswalt 346).

Thus, the “Trail of Tears” as well as the Indian removals in general, exhibit those characteristics which are associated with the definition of genocide. The Indian removals involved creating circumstances leading to “killing members of the group”. This was realized in several phases of the removals: during round-up in the stockade from starvation and epidemics, during the journey from exhaustion, cold, or other injuries, and after arrival at the Indian territory where they were further plagued by those epidemics congested during time spent in the stockades. The “Trail of Tears” caused “serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.” The bodily harm inflicted has been enumerated and explained; the mental harm consisted of the mental shock and stress of having to leave their homeland, which may have produced ripple effects in the population causing secondary and tertiary problems all with roots leading back to the removals. Further, the Indian removal of 1838 “deliberately inflicted on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.” (Campbell 152) By forcing the Cherokees and other Native American tribes to leave their homelands and endure stockade captivity, poor sanitary conditions, and physical hardships, the American citizens who were put in charge of the removal deliberately inflicted such conditions onto the Cherokee tribe which brought about the physical destruction of a large part of the tribe. The removals also corresponded with a second definition of genocide whereby the “Trail of Tears” was “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” (Campbell 153) The removals were events that were planned and carried out, resulting in the devastation of the Cherokee population.

4. Warfare

Warfare is the third main cause which led to the population decline of Native Americans. This section will concentrate on warfare between the Natives and the white population, therefore it will not discuss inter-tribal warfare, nor the American independence or civil wars. Jaimes claims, that “[o]nce the United States had established and consolidated itself to the point where it could tip the balance of military power to its own advantage, it began a 100 year series of armed conflicts popularly known as the Indian Wars.” (91) In light of this, the last section will discuss those instances of war which were important and pivotal in the Native and white relations. The reasons for warfare, as well as Native American war strategies will also be examined.

As it has already been mentioned, the population number of pre-contact Native Americans is still under debate. Hence, the loss of Native American lives during warfare is difficult to establish. We do, however, have an estimate of the Native American population living within the territory of the continental United States at the time the Founding Fathers took over. Research puts the population numbers between 1.5 and 1.8 million (Jaimes 37). It has been estimated that since 1775, more than 8,500 Indians have been killed in individual affairs with whites (Jaimes 35). Jaimes further states that under the government of the United States, there had been more than 40 Indian wars which had resulted in the death of about 30,000 Indians (35). If we take into consideration the fact that of the total Native American population (which is estimated at anywhere between 900,000 and 18 million) only 30,000 plus an additional 8,500 died, it seems quite low compared to the victims of epidemic diseases and genocide. Let us establish pre-contact Native population at 10 million for the

purpose of estimating the percentage of population loss from warfare. The answer comes to 0,0003 percent, if we were to estimate pre-contact population at the lowest level; at 900,000 then we would still only end up with 0,033 percent of the population. Compared to the damage done by epidemic diseases and genocide, warfare as the cause of population decline seems miniscule. However, it is important to note that there is most probably a large difference between the actual number of Indians killed and the number of deaths documented. The reason for this is that Native Americans concealed wherever possible their actual losses (Jaimes 35), and it is safe to presume that only rough estimates of battle victims were precisely drawn up. Therefore, warfare as a cause of population decline should not be discredited.

According to Axelrod, history records 'Indian Warfare' as conflict between white settlers and Native Americans (16). However, the terms 'Indian Warfare' or 'Indian Wars' are challenged by the Creek/Cherokee scholar Ward Churchill who writes that "[t]he term is revealing in itself. There is no historical record of any war between [Indian nations] and the United States which was initiated by the Indians. Each known outbreak of open warfare was predicated upon documentable invasion of defined (or definable) Indian lands by U.S. citizenry. The defensive nature of Indian participation in these wars is thus clear. Logically, they should thus be termed 'settler's wars' or, more accurately, 'wars of conquest.'"(Jaimes 9) There is much truth in Churchill's statement. Already by the seventeenth century, the immigrants arriving in America had the expressed intention of colonizing the land. Brady states that the war with Indians came down to the question of owning the territory (4). Hence, the Native Americans soon became caught up in the middle of imperial wars waged between several European kingdoms on the American continent. The unsatisfiable

appetite for Indian land made war between the two peoples difficult to avoid (Starkey 14). Also, Indians had no conception of the term *nation*, therefore cultural conflicts also contributed to the inevitability of war (Barnes 19). Indians had no idea of a common ‘continent-wide ethnicity’ until the Europeans came and grouped them under a common name, as Indians (Birchfield 1047).

As early as the colonial period, the Europeans began to regard Indians as obstacles that must be dealt with in whatever means possible, in order for them to satisfy their unending yearning for land and the natural resources within it (Smith 34). In the colonial period, before the birth of the United States, Indians had played important and influential roles in the European competition for hegemony. As the United States became a sovereign nation, the Native Peoples still continued to demonstrate this power (Barnes 19). When George Washington became the first President of the US, he initiated an Indian assimilation policy, expecting complete assimilation to take place fifty years later. When it became obvious that this could not be achieved, the American policy changed and became a policy “to push Indians aside, either peacefully or by force, to facilitate westward expansion.” (Oswalt 35) As Americans expanded more westward and the territory of the United States grew with each additional state, the problem of Native Americans heightened. The Americans signed treaty after treaty with the Natives, promising them lands where they could re-establish themselves and exist as a sovereign nation. However, it is a common truth that the United States had violated every single one of its treaties with the Indians (Jennings 374). Some of these treaties included the Treaty of Greenville in 1795² and

² The Greenville Treaty of 1795 was a treaty which acquired excellent farmlands in Ohio from the Native inhabitants. By 1796 already 5,000 white settlers had occupied the lands (Mann 135).

the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868³. These broken treaties and the continued seizure of Indian lands necessitated a reaction from the Natives, if they wished to defy the Americans and preserve their lands and ways of life. We may conclude that the Native American participation in warfare was indeed of defensive nature.

War tactics, strategies, and customs of the Native Americans and their white counterparts differed immensely. Just as their cultures, religions, and values differed from each others', the way in which they went to war and the weapons they used was very different as well. When the colonists first arrived, the Indians fought with bows and arrows, tomahawks, knives and war clubs. The European settlers, of course brought with them firearms, which the Indian warriors had quickly adopted. By the end of the seventeenth century, Indians had switched to firearms as their principle weapons (Starkey 21). This did not mean that they neglected the bow, however. The bow kept its value as a 'stealth weapon' but firearms were used in combat. With the conversion from bow and arrow to firepower the Indians established a dependency upon white traders for arms and ammunition (Starkey 22). Even though Indians became very good gunsmiths and marksmen, gunpowder was a product that the Indians could not manufacture. Chet claims that "the failure to provide arms and ammunition could very well mean the loss of an Indian ally, thus creating a more serious threat." (143) Chet continues, however, that the benefit of having Native Indian allies was not so that they could fight alongside them, but they played the role of the peaceful neighbours and indispensable scouts (144). Starkey also confirms that

³ The Treaty of Fort Laramie granted the Sioux land in northern present-day Nebraska that had long been occupied by the Poncas (Johansen xix).

“the role of the Indians became marginal to the outcome of the major conflicts.”

(Starkey 11)

The matchlock musket with a bayonet was one of the principle weapons being used in Europe in the 16th century; however, the matchlock musket was useless in damp, rainy, windy weather and the size and weight of the musket were not suited to American terrain and marching troops. The flintlock was adapted over the matchlock musket because of its automatic ignition and its shorter and simpler loading procedure. It was also quicker, lighter, and more accurate (Chet 151). During King Philip’s War, also called the First Indian War, which lasted from 1675 to 1678, the Native Americans were already fully equipped with modern flintlock firearms (Starkey 71). By the end of the nineteenth century, rifles had superseded muskets. Rifles were shoulder firearms which had greater accuracy and range. By the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, both the Americans and the Native Indians were equipped with Winchester rifles which allowed the rifleman to fire a number of shots before having to reload. To the white immigrants the use of muskets and rifles came naturally. To the Natives however, firearms were unknown objects of destruction. The Natives, called firearms ‘fire sticks’ which probably derived from the fact that the flint made a spark when it ignited the charge. The Indians were drawn to these powerful weapons and adapted to them rather quickly (Warpaths to Peace Pipes).

Both white and Indian groups had used more or less the same weapons by the mid seventeenth century, however, their battle tactics remained distinctively different. Native Americans were “masters of the secret skulking war: the raid, the ambush, and the retreat. Indian skulking tactics [included] concealment and surprise, moving fire, envelopment and, when the enemy’s ranks were broken, hand-to-hand combat.”

(Starkey 167) A heroic death during battle was not something valued in the Native American culture, as it was held in high esteem in European cultures. Natives saw fighting to death as a waste of life. The moment a warrior was defeated, he ceased fighting and surrendered his weapon, if the whole group was defeated, they put down their arms and awaited capture (Mann 6). Perhaps the most infamous Indian practice was the scalping of their opponents. Scalps were seen as the physical rewards of a warrior's bravery. Starkey claims that even though scalping was seen as something very savage and brutal, it was not as barbaric a practice as beheading and other atrocities committed by both Indians and Europeans. Also, the tradition of taking scalps was over exaggerated, since not all tribes practiced this phenomenon (30).

Native Americans avoided direct assault and prolonged siege warfare; this was the European and American tactic. Indians were at a disadvantage when they were sometimes forced to adapt these white war strategies. (Starkey 23) On the other hand, "Indians were able to frustrate and overwhelm European forces, demonstrating to them that warfare in America dictated a reliance on Indian tactics." (Chet 143) Indeed European success occurred many times when Native American war tactics were administered, instead of the 'machine-like' linear tactics of their troops (Chet 144). Starkey remarks that the "adaptation may have been the most 'revolutionary' military development in North America." (24) In the period between 1675 and 1815 there was minimal change in weapons, technology, or tactics during Indian and white warfare (Starkey 167).

So why was it that although Native American warfare tactics and strategies were successful, and their weapons were of the same effectiveness as the white immigrants that they still came out as the losing party? Starkey claims that in general

Indian societies did not have the material resources for prolonged war. Moreover, the Native Americans were divided, not just politically but physically as well. This crippled their resistance to European conquest as well as American expansion (15). The sheer number of immigrants arriving in America, and the continuously growing, unified American armies were too overwhelming for the Native Americans who were dwindling in population as well as already weakened by forced relocations and diseases.

4.1 The Battle of Wabash

Having discussed some of the technical details of Native American and white warfare, the following section will be dedicated to two instances of warfare between the two peoples. The first will be the Battle of Wabash, also known as St. Claire's defeat in 1791, detailing a Native American war victory, while the second instance will be the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890.

The precedent of the Battle of Wabash may be traced back to the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which ended the American Revolutionary War. United States sovereignty was recognized of all the land east of the Mississippi River and south of the Great Lakes. The Treaty of Paris was signed which established United States boundaries, without giving much regard to the land claims of the Native Americans living in the said regions. The Indian tribes of the Northwest, however, refused to recognize American claims to the area northwest of the Ohio River (Jones 3-5). In the Revolutionary War American Indian tribes were mostly allied with the British, in order to cease American territorial expansion, therefore after the defeat of the British, these Native tribes were treated as a defeated power (Birchfield 94-96). The United States regarded the Indians of the Northwest "as a conquered people who had forfeited

their civil rights.”(Axelrod 164) However, already large pieces of land were being sold to private companies for settlement or exploitation, right from under the feet of the Native Americans (Tucker 55). Axelrod claims that the federal government did try to attempt coordinating white settlement , but that the prices offered for the Indian lands were relatively low (164). Tucker writes that the first serious attempt of the American government to establish jurisdiction in the territory north of the Ohio river was General Josiah Harmar’s campaign in October 1790 (55). This campaign included a series of battles over three days that were all overwhelming victories for the Native Americans. The defeat established Little Turtle, chief of the Miami, a war hero. President George Washington, unsatisfied with the defeat ordered General Arthur St. Clair to assemble a new expedition. The army numbered some 2,000 soldiers of whom only 350 were militia, and the rest were regulars (Tucker 58). On November 4 at dawn, St .Clair’s forces were camped near the Wabash river, at present-day Fort Recovery, Ohio. Surrounding the unaware soldiers was an Indian force consisting of 1,000 Indians led by Little Turtle and Blue Jacket. The warriors attacked from three directions taking St. Clair’s forces by surprise. The battle lasted three hours, during this time over 500 men fled, 623 officers died, and 271 soldiers were wounded. As opposed to this the Indians lost 21 warriors and 40 of them were wounded (Axelrod 166). Starkey claims that the Battle of Wabash was one of the most severe defeats at the hand of Indians in the history of the United States (146). Tucker affirms this view stating that “St. Claire’s defeat remains one of the most ignominious routs in American military history.” (59) Likewise Axelrod comments that “[i]n proportion to the number of men fielded that day, St. Clair's defeat stands as the worst loss the U.S. Army has ever suffered (166).

4.2 The Battle of Wounded Knee

The second incident that will be discussed in the following pages is the Battle of Wounded Knee which took place in 1890. The event of Wounded Knee is an important landmark in the history of Native American and American relations, since it marks the end of an era called the 'Indian Wars.' The Battle of Wounded Knee seems to imply the culmination of a hundred years of war, strife, despair, and hardship, of the Native American population. As Jennings remarks, "[b]y coincidence, the year of Wounded Knee was also the year when the Superintendent of the U.S. Census celebrated the end of the Frontier, defined as a line between Indians and homesteaders — a line that Frederick Jackson Turner converted into "the meeting point between savagery and civilization." (380) The example of the Battle of Wounded Knee is also on the borderline of two factors leading to the decimation of Native American population; genocide and warfare, however, it is discussed in detail in this section since, as stated before, it represents an important landmark in Native and white relations, and brings an end to the era of the 'Indian Wars'.

The battle occurred on December 29, 1890, but the events leading up to Wounded Knee began much earlier with the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 (Reilly 251). The treaty created a reservation for the Sioux which encompassed the present day state of South Dakota west of the Missouri river (Reilly 252). It soon became apparent, however, that the treaty would not be kept. In 1874 General George A. Custer invaded the Black Hills (the territory of the Sioux) where gold was discovered (Gray 123). The ensuing years were distressing for the Sioux since they had to surrender large portions of the land promised to them in the Laramie Treaty (Reilly 253). The Sioux were in need of hope, and this hope came in the form of a Paiute

Indian, Wovoka, who had a vision, “[h]e was told the old world would be destroyed and replaced by a fresh one. The dead would live again and everyone would be young and happy. The buffalo would return and the white man would disappear. All the Indians had to do was to perform the dance of the souls departed — the ghost dance.” (Reilly 254) It was not only the appearance of this new religion, the Ghost Dance, which was a prelude to Wounded Knee, but the arrest and murder of Sitting Bull, Chief of the Sioux was another such event. During the arrest of Sitting Bull a skirmish erupted, and when it was all over, Sitting Bull, and several other tribesmen lay dead (Reilly 261). The remainder of Sitting Bull’s followers, including 120 men and 230 women and children fled, but were intercepted by the 7th Cavalry who escorted them to a Sioux camp near the Wounded Knee River (Reilly 262). On the morning of December 29, preparations were being made to disarm the Sioux. The Indians produced only an assortment of broken and outdated weapons so the command was given to search the camp and to gather up all the remaining weapons (Mooney 868). By this time the 7th Cavalry Regiment had already surrounded the encampment with 470 soldiers and four Hotchkiss artillery pieces on a nearby hill (Reilly 263). During the collection of the weapons a shot was fired, which triggered further gunfire from the 470 soldiers as well as the Hotchkiss guns. While, only 31 American soldiers were killed (Mooney 881), a total of 300 Indians, twice the number the military acknowledges, were killed (Reilly 266). The vast majority of those killed were women and children, and it has been admitted “that women and children were slaughtered for hours after the initial gunfire exchange and many miles away from the action.” (Reilly 266) Troops were sent out to the battlefield only three days after the massacre because of a blizzard. The sight was distressing, “[t]he bodies of the slaughtered men, women,

and children were found lying about under the snow, frozen stiff and covered with blood.” (Mooney 876)

In this section the effects of warfare on the Native Americans has been discussed. Warfare had not affected the population numbers of the Native Americans as drastically as the causes of epidemic disease and genocide, however, it is predicted by researchers that there are probably more victims of warfare than we are led to believe on account of present documentation. Native American war tactics and strategies have been found to be very different from those of the white immigrants. Whereas the white settlers and later the American armies favored a ‘machine-like’ linear battle plan, and favored prolonged wars and sieges, the Indians on the other hand were the masters of the skulking wars and favored ambushes, raids, and quick retreats. The Native Americans also adapted to the use of firearms, but by doing so became dependant on trading ammunition, gunpowder and firearms. Although the Native American tactics proved to be efficient, in the end the Americans could not be held up.

5. Native Americans Today

From the preceding pages, it has been established that the Native American People's past has been filled with hardships. They have had to witness the destruction of their homes, the confiscation of rightfully owned lands, the decimation of their populations through epidemic diseases, genocide, and warfare, and they have been forced to submissively watch the familiar world around them disappear. In the following few paragraphs the present-day status of the Native Americans will be briefly discussed.

By the end of the nineteenth century the practice of allotment⁴ towards Indian lands was the standard. In 1890, when the federal government declared the period of 'Indian Wars' to be officially over, it estimated that approximately 248,253 Native Indians remained in the territory of the United States (Jaimes 36). By 1900, although the Native American population levels did rise, the situation was still critical in certain states; "In 1900, New Hampshire, for example, possessed a total Indian population of 22. Delaware could show only nine. Alabama had 177; Arkansas, 66; Connecticut, 153; Georgia, 19; Illinois, 16; Kentucky, 102; Massachusetts, 587; Ohio, 42; Rhode Island, 35; South Carolina, 121; Tennessee, 108; Texas, 470; and West Virginia, 12. There were five living Indians in New Jersey, and only three in Maryland." (Jaimes 37) However, by the 1930's the policy of allotment and the policy towards Native Americans in general had undergone a change. The Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934 became the Act which initiated the current reservation system (French 25).

⁴ "Allotment was the general application of deeded homesteads to all Indians at the expense of their collectively held reservations in Indian Territory." (French 24)

The chart below taken from the Canadian and US Census Bureau, shows the population rise of Native Americans living in Canadian and United States territory (compiled by Young 30):

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>United States</i>
1900/ 1901	127,941	267,000
1910/ 1911	106,000	291,000
1920/ 1921	114,000	271,000
1930/ 1931	129,000	362,000
1940/ 1941	161,000	366,000
1950/ 1951	166,000	379,000
1960/ 1961	220,000	552,000
1970/ 1971	313,000	827,000
1980/ 1981	492,000	1,423,000

According to the 1980 Census, there were about 1.4 million Native Americans in the United States. This equaled to only 0.6 percent of the total population of the country. Compared to the 2010 US Census the total population of American Indians and Alaska Natives is 5.2 million which accounts for 1.7 percent of the total US population. Of the 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives, 2.3 million identified themselves as Indian as well as another race. There was a 1.1 million increase of Indian population between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census. In 2010 the states which had the largest populations of Native Americans were California (723,225), Oklahoma (482,760) and Arizona (353,386). There are 334 federally recognized reservations, and 565 recognized Native Tribes. 22 percent of American

Indians lived in American Indian territories including reservations, trust lands, or tribal statistical areas (US Census Bureau).

According to Kalt and Cornell, many Indian reservations are beginning to resemble 'enterprise zones.' Most reservations function as independent state governments; they are free of economic, environmental, and taxation regulations (124). They are termed 'nations within a nation.' (121) Kalt and Cornell also claim that throughout the history of the United States, American Indian reservations have served as an instrument facilitating the practice of separating Indians from non-Indian society (127). According to French (2009), even by the end of the 20th century, American Indians are trapped in poverty. French claims that 16 percent of reservation homes lack electricity, 21 percent lack an indoor toilet and 56 percent do not have a telephone. Unemployment rates on reservations are many times higher than fifty percent, and the jobs that are available are government funded offices (French 31). "Along with the lack of economic opportunity for individuals come accentuated socioeconomic problems of crime, familial instability, alcoholism, mental illness, and so forth." (Kalt and Cornell 126)

The present-day American Indians can be classified into three categories: traditional Indians, middle class Indians, and marginal Indians (French 39). Traditional Indians are otherwise known as full-bloods or real Indians and they make up twenty percent of the total Native American population. They can be described as conservative Indians who can speak their native language and are familiar with and practice surviving tribal customs. The middle class Indian category, according to French is "smaller than the traditional Indians." (39) This group contributes to the U.S. norms and is therefore most favored by the American dominant society.

Although, the middle class members are the ones who will most likely hold positions which were introduced in order to serve as mediators between Natives and non-Natives, these Indians are regarded with the least amount of respect by their Indian compatriots. Marginal Indians account for the majority of Native Americans. These Indians are of Indian descent but they do not speak their native language, nor do they practice their traditional customs. “Many marginal Indians suffer the dilemma of looking Indian and wanting to be Indian but do not know their traditional cultural ways or how to learn their heritage--a phenomenon that attests to the success of relocation and other forms of cultural genocide.” (French 39-40)

As mentioned above the American Indian and Native Alaskan current population numbers today are 5.2 million (including full-bloods and mixed races), which is an improvement, compared to the very low figures of 1890 which accounted for a little over 248,000. There has been a continual recovery in their numbers from 1890, however Native Americans today are still faced with problems of diseases, alcohol consumption, and poverty, and most Natives are still unable to live financially independently from the United States government. Also, many Native Indians still face a problem regarding their identity and face a dilemma when confronted with the question of assimilation. In conclusion, the ‘Native American problem’ is far from resolved.

6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the three main causes of Native American population decline throughout the development of the United States ranging from the colonial era to the end of the nineteenth century. In order to determine the degree of population decline, the population of pre-contact Native Americans was needed. However, at the present there is still much controversy and disagreement regarding the numbers of Native Americans living north of the Rio Grande in Pre-Columbine times. The estimates range from 900,000 up to 18 million. In the preceding pages, first contact with Native Americans was briefly discussed, as well as Indian and white relations. These two topics were important to understand since they later influenced the American attitude towards the perception of the Indians. Although, some instances of first contact may have given hope towards establishing a more positive future, the relations between the Indians and the Americans have been strained to the present day. Spencer in his book declares that “[t]he North American Indian, from the days of Columbus to the present, has been the butt of speculation, he has been misunderstood and misrepresented, he has been simultaneously ill-treated and exploited...He has been the object of charity while being robbed of his own heritage.” (xv)

The main body of the paper is pre-occupied with discussing the three main causes for the decline of the Native American population, which are epidemic disease, genocide, and warfare. Epidemic disease accounted for the decline of anywhere from 85 to 90 percent of the total Native American population north of the Rio Grande. At first, it is explained that the reason for the lag between Spanish America and North America was the population density as well as a shorter voyage over the Atlantic and the introduction of infected children to the American colonies. The list of diseases that

have been agreed upon as those brought from Europe, was included in the paper. It has been found that Native Americans were more susceptible to the diseases brought over from Europe. The main reason for this is that these diseases were virgin soil diseases which meant that the Native American population had never encountered them earlier, and therefore did not acquire immunity. Smallpox, the cholera outbreak and the tuberculosis epidemic are mentioned in more detail. Tuberculosis as opposed to cholera, was not a virgin-soil epidemic disease since it had been present in pre-contact North America. The higher TB death rates among Indians can be associated with a more severe viral strain and possible genetic differences, although there is not enough evidence to prove it. Alcohol is also mentioned and it is claimed that even though it does not constitute an epidemic, it has had devastating effects on the health of Native Americans. In this section two pieces of research are mentioned which seem to suggest that genetic differences make Native Americans more prone to alcoholism, although it is still much debated.

Genocide is also discussed in detail as the second cause of Native American population decline. The origins of the term genocide and the definition is included as well. It was coined by Raphael Lemkin and genocide is defined as the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, political, or cultural group. It is questioned as to what acts are considered genocidal. The paper mentions a few examples including forced relocations, deliberately infecting the Native peoples with diseases, or killing their source of food. External factors and internal traits of genocide are also mentioned to provide an overall picture. Genocide may be a source of formal control, it may be committed in order to acquire economic gain, or in order to punish deviant behavior. Lack of mobility, cultural differences, relational distance, lack of functional

interdependency, and inequality are factors that all contribute to the presence of genocidal crimes. Many examples are mentioned. The Trail of Tears which was the removal of the Cherokee nation in 1838 following the Indian Removal Act is examined in more detail. It is concluded that the Trail of Tears was indeed an act of genocide because during the different stages of the removals, due to neglect and ignorance the population of the Cherokee tribe had been devastated.

The third and final cause contributing to the decline of Native Americans is warfare. Although the documented evidence regarding the number of Indians victims as a cause of warfare, is low, we have reason to believe that there were many more Indians killed. The paper discusses the main differences between the Native American style of war and the white American style of war. The Americans favored prolonged, siege-like wars while the Indians were masters of so-called skulking wars which included ambush, raid, and retreat. Native Americans quickly adapted to the use of muskets and rifles, however, this produced a dependency on white traders for weapons and ammunition. The Native Americans were not able to defeat the Americans because they were never unified on their fight against the colonizing forces, and the sheer number of white immigrants became overpowering. The Battle of Wabash in 1791 and the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 are discussed in more detail. Although Wounded Knee victims can be classified as being victims of both genocide and warfare, Wounded Knee is an important landmark in the history of Native American and American relations, since it marks the end of an era called the 'Indian Wars.'

In the introduction of this paper, I had stated that contrary to popular belief, the main cause of population decline among the Natives was not any campaign directed

against them, but rather it was other causes that were more destructive. From the research included in this paper it can be concluded that warfare against the Natives was the cause which contributed the least to the decline of the Native Americans. In order to determine which cause gave what percent of Native American population loss, I will depend on the research presented in this paper to form my own conclusion. Although there is controversy over pre-contact population numbers of the Natives on the North American continent, it may be concluded that 90 out of 100 Indians died on a whole because of various causes throughout the history of colonial America and the United States. Of the 90 percent that died, epidemic disease accounts for the most deceased equaling around 85 percent. Genocide would account for another 4.5 percent, while warfare resulted in perhaps 0.5 percent of Native American population loss. Starkey claims that “[t]he prevailing view is that waves of European epidemic diseases devastated Indian communities to the extent that European soldiers engaged in something of a mopping-up action.” (7) It was not by sheer force and skill that the Americans ultimately conquered the Natives of America, but rather the debilitating diseases depleted their numbers.

In conclusion, the main cause of Native American decline in population was epidemic diseases, brought about by the arrival of the European colonizers. The weakened Native Americans soon fell victim to other tragedies. As the new nation was growing in size, the Native American population was dropping. While the United States as a country flourished, the Native Americans as a race declined and they have been struggling to replenish their numbers as well as their culture ever since.

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