

Notes from the Underground

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The Historical Underground

Texas and the American Indian Reservation Problem

By: Steve McCarley, Student

What we know as the state of Texas today was once called home by several hundred groups of American Indians whose lifeway's have been variously described as alliances, bands, clans, confederations, families and tribes. The Anadarko, Apache, Arapaho, Bidai, Caddo, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Chickasaw, Comanche, Kawakawa, Kiowa, Shawnee, Tawakoni, and Wichita all lived in Texas prior to its admission as a state. Most of these groups were forcefully relocated or subject to violent extermination. Death by infectious diseases such as smallpox was also responsible for as much as a 50 percent reduction in the size of some tribal communities. Despite the enormous size of Texas, however, only three tribes are officially recognized by the federal government today: the Alabama-Coushatta, the Tigua and the Kickapoo. In 1854, the first Indian reservation in Texas was established

for the Alabama-Coushatta by none other than Sam Houston. The present day reservation, totaling 1280 acres, is located in Southeast Texas near Livingston. The Alabama-Coushatta became an officially recognized tribe in 1987. The Tigua Indian Reservation of Texas is located on 26 acres in El Paso County, Texas. The Tigua also known as the (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Indians) became an officially recognized tribe in 1987. The Kickapoo Indian Reservation of Texas (118.6 acres) is located on the U.S.-Mexico border just south of Eagle Pass. The Kickapoo became an officially recognized tribe in 1977.

What is a federally-recognized tribe?

A federally-recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations and obligations attached to that designation. Recognized tribes are eligible for services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which helps fund schools and health-care facilities. Furthermore, federally-recognized tribes are recognized as possessing certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and are entitled to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States. At present, there are 566 federally-recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, reservations and villages.

How is federal recognition status conferred?

Historically, most of today's federally-recognized tribes received federal recognition status through treaties, acts of Congress, presidential executive orders or other federal administrative actions, or federal court decisions. In 1978, the Interior Department issued regulations governing the Federal Acknowledgment Process (FAP) to handle requests for federal recognition from Indian

groups whose character and history varied widely in a uniform manner. These regulations, 25 C.F.R. Part 83, were revised in 1994 and are still in effect. Also in 1994, Congress enacted Public Law 103-454, the Federally-Recognized Indian Tribe List Act (108 Stat. 4791, 4792), which formally established three ways in which an Indian group may become federally recognized:

1. By Act of Congress; 2. by the administrative procedures under 25 C.F.R. Part 83; or 3. by decision of a United States court. However, a tribe whose relationship with the United States has been expressly terminated by Congress may not use the Federal Acknowledgment Process. Only Congress can restore federal recognition to a "terminated" tribe. The Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act also requires the Secretary of the Interior to publish annually a list of the federally recognized tribes in the Federal Register.

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Comanche Braves, circa 1867-1874.
Courtesy of the Center for American
History (#01355), The University of Texas

Historical Book Review: *The New Jim Crow*

By: Khenda Mustafa, Student

With one in every 100 Americans behind bars today – and with people of color disproportionately represented in this figure – it is a wonder why the issue of mass incarceration as a system of racial control has been so understated in our nation's public discourse. That is, until the publication of Michelle Alexander's timely book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

In *The New Jim Crow*, Alexander eloquently argues that the American criminal justice system today is a system of institutionalized racism comparable to slavery and the Jim Crow South. She offers pages of compelling statistics and legal citations that illustrate how the "get tough" attitude towards crime, introduced by Richard Nixon and intensified with Ronald Reagan's declaration of the "War on Drugs," has devastated black communities all over America.

According to the NAACP, one in three black males in America can expect to spend time in prison at some point. Alexander points out

that the prison label is in reality more damaging than the time spent in detention. Once branded a felon, a person is relegated to a permanent status of second-class citizenship. Stripped of the right to vote and the ability to serve on a jury, a convicted felon's life is forever marked by legal discrimination and systematic marginalization.

While drug-use rates have remained largely the same in white and black communities, African-Americans are ten times more likely than whites to be sent to prison for drug offenses. Subsequently, there is an extraordinary fraction of black people in the United States who are legally barred from voting today, just as they have been all through most of this country's history. Alexander explains that "we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it."

Mass unemployment, economic abandonment, social and political neglect, as well as intense police surveillance in black communities: these are all products of "the new Jim Crow

System," which both Democratic and Republican administrations have perpetuated over the years. Indeed, despite declining crime rates, prison budgets have continued to skyrocket under Obama's tenure as well.

In the end, Alexander concludes that nothing short of a major grassroots movement can end this new system of racialized social control. Her powerful and thought-provoking book is a long overdue call to action for anyone concerned with civil rights and racial justice, for the urgent dismantling of centuries old systematic oppression.



Historical Bios: *The Grimke Sisters*

By: Megan Heck, Student

Sarah Moore and Angelina Emily Grimke, born in Charleston, South Carolina, were early advocates of abolitionism and women's rights. These two sisters learned at an early age how to stand up for what they believed in. Their father, John Faucheraud Grimke, was a strong advocate of slavery and the subordination of women; he also served as chief judge of the Supreme Court of South Carolina. Growing up in a slave state, there were many slaves on the plantation that they lived on, so both of them had first-hand knowledge on how these slaves were being treated.

Sarah Grimke wanted to be a lawyer, just like her father. However, when he realized that she wanted to attend college, he forbade her from studying or learning any further; all because she was a woman! In 1835, she became an abolitionist and wrote the first developed public argument for women's equality. She then dedicated her life to eradicating the institution of slavery in the United States. Angelina Grimke acquired her fame when she wrote a letter that was published in William Garrison's anti-slavery

newspaper, *The Liberator*. The Quaker community immediately opposed the sisters, so they had to choose between having a good standing in the Quaker community, or work to oppose slavery.

Sarah stirred up more trouble after publishing her book, *Epistle to the Clergy of Southern States*; and Angelina too with, *Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States*. In 1837, the sisters were being denounced from Congregationalist pulpits. Sarah then responded to the ministers' by writing letters to the head of the abolitionists. These letters were known as, "Letters on the Equality of Sexes." By 1838, the sisters' speeches became so popular that people all over came to hear their lectures.

Through their adolescent years, the sisters never planned on becoming feminists. Feminism was forced upon them. Despite the Quaker community exiling the sisters, they were both very passionate about their religion, using biblical arguments in their lectures. Since a group of ministers in Massachusetts condemned

their speeches, they eventually stopped their public speaking.

Angelina went on to marry abolitionist and reformer, Theodore Weld, and together they founded a progressive school, where Sarah taught. The sisters continued publishing articles and books that focused on the termination of slavery. Sarah died on December 23, 1873, and Angelina on October 26, 1879. Although these women are now gone, their knowledge, spirit, and hope would ultimately change the way people viewed the world.



The Reservation Problem, Continued...

Despite the federal recognition of these three Texas tribes, only the Kickapoo are permitted to operate a casino under the (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988). To this day, Texas politicians such as Governor Rick Perry and Attorney General Greg Abbott do all that they can to discourage support for the two other tribes to operate casinos legally within the state of Texas. Current U.S. Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz both officially remain neutral when it comes to casino Indian affairs in Texas. In 2012, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) tried to pass a bill allowing tribes to open casinos in Texas, but neither Texas senators at the time, Cornyn and fellow Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison, backed the effort.

Opponents in Texas say gambling preys on those who can least afford it and encourages a host of other problems, including addiction. Religious groups have also objected to gaming for moral reasons.

Yet, thousands of Texans travel every weekend to Oklahoma and Louisiana to casinos strategically built near highways and the border to get those Texas dollars. Texas tribes could be benefitting, leading to increased income and employment on reservations, which would mean lifting a large number of Texas Indians out of poverty. As an aside, as I understand it, the state has little to benefit from since the state of Texas would not be able to collect taxes on gaming revenue, and the federal government cannot charge Natives income taxes if they live and work on the reservation. Basically, the state is upset because they probably won't get a share of the pie, which is hilarious because Rick Perry constantly lures new businesses to Texas by slashing their taxes to nearly zero anyhow. How would this be different?

About 240 other tribes nationwide run casinos; yet, pure good ol' boy politics continue to persecute the Native American Indians every chance they get. It all comes down to this. In

1987, then Texas Attorney General James Alton "Jim" Mattox (1983–1991) tried his very best to stall federal recognition of both the Alabama-Coushatta and Tigua Tribes. Then an underhanded deal was offered: both tribes would gain federal recognition, but only after promising they wouldn't pursue gambling. At that time in 1987 the (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988) did not exist, and Texas voters did not authorize a lottery until 1991. There was no way either Texas tribe could have known this turn of events would ever take place, but it appears many politicians did see the writing on the wall. Both tribes agreed to the terms, receiving federal recognition in 1987 and a year later the (Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988) became law and four years later Texas was in the lottery business.

Spokesman for both tribes say they're not asking for something no one else has, they just want what is fair: to be allowed to operate casinos as other federally recognized tribes are.

Random Rants

By: Caleb Hinojos, Student

It seems that the older and more global we get as a country in this strange world, the less our people remember about the pursuit of love and passion. Instead, we lust after "things," and oftentimes find ourselves searching to obtain enough money to acquire a vast array of superficial objects or commodities so that we can complete the cycle of consumerism that has been indoctrinated into our minds increasingly more over the course of the last few decades.

To be sure, I am not entirely opposed to these pursuits. After all, how can one be in this media-crazed society we live in? We are bombarded with imagery and consumerism from every direction! Indeed, I have personally completed the cycle of consumerism many times over, even

impulsively consuming at times without even thinking about the consequences of my actions. In fact I bet we are all guilty of this in some form or another. However, there does seem to be a certain portion of people still around that have feelings and or the dedication that sets them apart from others. Their drive allows them to rise above this superficial type of living and pursue their deepest passions in life, often times at great costs to their personal well-being.

If you're like me, you often wonder how these people do it, or even why they are so much different than the status quo? In fact, what does it even mean to transcend our society's superficiality and seek a more authentic, meaningful experience in life, and why are some of us so inspired by the feats and contributions of great people while others do not even pay these people any mind at all?

For me, these "exceptional" people are inspiring because they represent what the pursuit of love, idealism (in their mind), and true passion can amount to. Their stories and pursuits of passion teach us that, if we put our minds to it, we can actually change the world. We only have a small fraction of time on this earth, and when we leave the only thing that remains is the impact of our words and actions. This fact inspires me to emulate their actions, and it is this struggle that makes life meaningful.





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Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Well it has been a rather eventful semester to say the least. Indeed, so eventful that we were unable to come up with an October issue. To be sure, this was not due to a lack of articles or support, for we already have enough material for the December issue lined up! No, this mishap is due to the busy schedule of the editors, but we can assure you that we are back on track and ready to start pumping out issues again. In fact, be on the look out across campus, for the next edition will be hot off the press just in time for finals week!

Besides the classrooms of our esteemed historians here at TCC Southeast, students and interested faculty have had a number of options this semester to tickle their fancy of history. Our very own Jennifer Lawrence gave a lecture on the Constitution this semester in the library, and the energetic Kallie Kosc spoke on identity and sexuality for LGBT Month in the same room. We try to have at least two of these events each semester, so check with the library staff if you are interested. Some of us are also working with Tracy and James from the library to create a Center for Cultural Studies there as well, and we have already order more than 100 books for the project. Soon we will have little yellow stickers on the spines of all the books that demonstrate the power or importance of culture, so be on the look for them.

As some of you may very well know, November is Native American Awareness Month. Check out the common area for traditional dance performances and Native artifacts that will be on display on the 14th, and try to hang out and have a conversation or two with someone about Native culture. We often develop stereotypical assumptions about the tribal people who first inhabited this land, which oftentimes cloud our understanding of who they are and how they live. Instead of seeing the cultural groups as a monolithic entity of feather-wearing “Redskins,” you should open your mind and try to understand the complexities of culture, and the best way to do that is through firsthand conversation. It might also be a good time to debate, discuss, and philosophize about the name “Redskins.” How would our society react if we had a team called the Seattle Sambos? These are important questions that force us to face the history of our racist past instead of sweeping it under the rug.

~ Brad Borougerdi, Eric Salas and Greg Kosc