

TWO NATIONS
one reservation

Kids Guide



*Strengthening Wyoming's
Democracy Through
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Two tribes, one reservation

The Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone were enemy tribes, often fighting over territory. Events outside tribal control forced them to share the same reservation and learn to live together. Marriage between tribes is common. There are many families with a Shoshone and an Arapaho parent. Because most American Indians must self-identify as members of a single tribe to receive benefits, children of Shoshone and Arapaho marriages must pick either their mother's or father's tribe.

Shoshone

The Shoshone originated in the Great Basin of the interior West. As the first Native Americans in the region to obtain the horse, they advanced north and east into present-day Idaho and Wyoming and then onto the northwestern Plains as far east as Devils Tower. The Blackfoot prevented farther northward expansion. The Shoshone were eventually pushed south and west by the Crow, Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho. They subsequently established themselves in the Warm Valley (Wind River Basin) area of Wyoming. There is a growing body of information supporting the idea that Shoshonean-speaking people—possibly the Sheepstealer Indians—may have lived in northwestern Wyoming for millennia.



Arapaho

Compared to other tribes in the region, the migrations of the Arapaho are complicated and not well understood. The Arapaho probably originated in northwestern Minnesota. Pressure from neighboring tribes—particularly the Cree who had obtained guns from French fur traders—pushed them west out of the eastern woodlands onto the Northern Plains. Moving south, they crossed the Missouri River, eventually occupying a broad and ecologically diverse region from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming to the Arkansas River in central Colorado. In the late 1870s, the northern bands eventually moved to the lower Little Wind River west of present-day Riverton, Wyoming.



Ongoing themes



Written vs. oral

Tribes traditionally pass down history through oral traditions while Euro-Americans place more trust in the written word.



Climate of fear & violence

In 1824 the Bureau of Indian Affairs is added to the War Department, now the Department of Defense. Hostile attitudes toward dealings with Indians increase tensions as Euro-Americans move west.



Horses & guns

Nomadic pedestrian native culture is changed by innovations that transform travel, hunting, war, and relationships with others.



Assigned lands

In 1848, a U.S. government official first mentions "colonies" for Indian tribes—separate places where natives would be taught farming and, and be protected from the perceived vices of white people.



Chasing gold & building railroads

The government steadily favors prospectors, railroad builders, and homesteaders over tribal interests.



Broken treaties

Treaties with other nations, including Indian nations, must be ratified once negotiated. Between 1778 and 1871, the government signs more than 600 treaties with Indian nations. Most were poorly enforced, broken, or remained unratified.



Prior to the 1800s *Cultural change*

After arriving on the East Coast of North America Europeans push inward. They bring guns, which transform Indian culture by changing hunting, war, and diplomacy. Spanish horses arrive in 1540 - further transforming tribes by mid-1700s. American Indians previously traveling on foot now have tools to move more quickly and make war in new ways.



1851

The Fort Laramie Treaty

Plains Indians accept the idea of assigned lands. Arapaho and Cheyenne agree to share land and the U.S. government promises 50 years of annual payments of supplies and money to compensate the tribes for damage to hunting grounds by travelers. Without tribal consent damage payments are reduced to 10 years.

1850s



1860s

Increasing tensions

Travel along trails in pursuit of gold and land destroys tribal resources. Tensions and hostile contact increase as homesteading and railroad construction bring more intruders to American Indian lands.

1862

The Homestead Act

For a small fee any citizen with a family can claim 160 free acres and must live on it for five years to become owners. More than 1.6 million approved claims guarantee more intruders on American Indian hunting grounds as 120,000 square miles are settled.



1863

The Fort Bridger Treaty of 1863

On July 2, Eastern Shoshone band sign a treaty to create peace between Indians and whites. The Shoshone accept specific lands and 20 years of supplies and money payments of annuities. The treaty fails to protect the Shoshone from conflict.



1867

Senate Indian Committee report

The Senate Indian Committee issues a report that land loss, scarce game, whiskey, and disease are causing tribal population decline. They propose sending Indians to reservation to farm, and if this fails, sending the Army to handle Native American resistance.

1870s

1868



Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868

Lands promised tribes in Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851 are drastically reduced. Under threat of losing annuities the Northern Arapaho reluctantly agree to three temporary options: settle with the Crow, the Lakota, or the Southern Cheyenne and receive a reservation later. All three options, however, proved untenable.

1928

Eastern Shoshone sue the government

The Shoshone sue the U.S. for breaking the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 by placing the Northern Arapaho on the Shoshone reservation. The Shoshone argue that half of their reservation was taken and the government treated the Arapaho as rightful residents and owners by letting them share in Shoshone land sales and payments.



1868

Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868

On July 2, Shoshone bands sign the Fort Bridger Treaty—defining Shoshone lands reflecting the bands' now-traditional territories in Warm Valley or Wind River Basin. Bannocks will have a reservation in Idaho later.



1880s

Northern Arapaho sent to Shoshone Reservation

The Northern Arapaho are escorted to the Shoshone Reservation by the military. They are promised land of their own, and told this arrangement is temporary. Now both tribes—enemies only a few years before—struggle to subsist on short rations and resist government pressure against their traditions.



1885

Buffalo herds decimated

60 million bison are indiscriminately slaughtered as a government policy to subdue the Indians—signaling the end of Indian hunting-based culture.



1900s - 2000s

1937

Shoshone reservation renamed the Wind River Indian Reservation

Supreme Court ruling allows compensation of \$4.2 million to Eastern Shoshone for 61 years of Northern Arapaho presence on Shoshone Reservation. The order formalizes the rights of Arapaho to share the Wind River Indian Reservation as equals. Reservation name is changed. In 1963, the Northern Arapaho receive \$2.9 million in compensation for government violations of Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.



2017

Cultural heritage education

On May 8, the Wyoming State Legislature passes a bill requiring state schools social studies standards to include the cultural heritage, history, issues, and contributions of Indians. It also requires the Wyoming Department of Education to work with the tribes to develop curriculum.



1921 & 1978

Citizenship & religious freedom

In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to American Indians born in the U.S. Some states continue to deny them the right to vote. In 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act provides constitutionally guaranteed freedoms not previously granted to American Indians.

