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# Indigenous Nationalism on the Wind River Indian Reservation, 1851-1938

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## Abstract

This dissertation seeks to alter the ways in which scholars address indigenous group formation. Instead of adhering to the rather pervasive, and anthropologically based, band/tribe/nation approach, this work argues that historians should address indigenous peoples as "tribal nations," a phrase that reflects both their unique place within the United States as "nations within" and their sovereign status. To do so, I have created a loose set of six characteristics that all tribal nations exhibit including territory, citizens/members, political authority, language, cultural representations and a shared history. Each chapter in this dissertation addresses one of these traits. Additionally, this work argues that to study indigenous peoples in isolation, or give primacy to indigenous reactions to non-Native actions, tends to give the impression that Native peoples are static, unwilling or unable to adapt and change. Therefore, the second part of the tribal nation model includes four forces of influence (internal demand, other tribal nations, the federal government and non-Native outsiders) who certainly promoted change, both good and bad, throughout the history of the tribal nation, but I give primacy, when possible to Native-Native interactions.

Together, the six characteristics and four forces of change provide a model that can be applied to almost any tribal nation. This process of analysis allows scholars to better study indigenous people and create meaningful "tribal histories" that place Native people at the center of the narrative and underscore their resilience. To demonstrate the utility of this model, I have chosen to study the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone because of their unique position as two distinct tribal nations who live on the same reservation, yet are so very different. In the end, this dissertation demonstrates the efficacy of the tribal nation model and encourages scholars to reassess the ways in which they discuss indigenous peoples and their histories.

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THE WIND RIVER Indian Reservation is not an easy place to get to – but one reporter had to see it for himself. Thirty-five-hundred square miles of prairie and mountains in western Wyoming, the reservation is home to bitter ancestral enemies: the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes. Even among reservations, it's renowned for brutal crime, widespread drug use, and legal dumping of toxic waste. This traditional classroom once taught generations of Native Americans. The likelihood a student on the Reservation today will go on to complete college is slim. Anyone showing too much desire to leave is called an 'apple' by classmates: red on the outside but white within. The most prominent European presence on the reservation is still the Catholic Church. The Wind River Indian Reservation was established by the United States for the Eastern Shoshone Indians in 1868, restricting them from their formerly vast territory. Camp Augur, a military post with troops, was established at the present site of Lander on June 28, 1869. In 1870 the name was changed to Camp Brown and in 1871, the post was moved to the current site of Fort Washakie. Major Crime on the Reservation. A study conducted titled, Delinquency Among Wind River Indian Reservation Youth, showed that large amounts of the Reservation's youth were charged with a variety of crimes. This study shows that from the years 1967-1971, 1,047 juvenile cases were examined by the Court of Indian Offenses on the Reservation.