

Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1907–1939
Series A: Indian Delegations to Washington

Access to riches of untapped information on federal-Indian interaction.

Created on March 11, 1824, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has presided over the ebb and flow of federal policy towards Native Americans. The mission of the Bureau was to conduct the business of the federal government relating to Native Americans. The nature and scope of this business have changed with policies and circumstances. Areas of administration included treaty negotiations, land disputes on the ever-changing frontier, regulation and licensing of trade with Native Americans, and control and eventual prohibition of liquor in Indian areas. In addition, the Bureau was responsible for the implementation of the allotment system, dissemination of rations and "blankets" and eventually the promulgation and implementation of the Indian Reorganization Act.

Central Classified Files, 1907-1939

The collection includes letters received, copies of letters sent, reports, memoranda, minutes, petitions, leases, contracts, affidavits, applications, certificates, licenses, permits, bonds, wills, other legal documents, tables, circulars, accounting records, clippings, photographs, diagrams and blueprints. These documents are grouped into records relating to the individual field units of the bureau—by tribe, reservation or agency.

Series A: Indian Delegations to Washington

Series A: Indian Delegations to Washington documents the person-to-person relations between the federal government and Native American tribes, agencies, and/or reservations. These materials provide insight into the problems and concerns of various tribes. This collection consists of official and personal correspondence, tribal name lists, memoranda, petitions, agenda, and reports. In addition, there are news clippings, pamphlets, and minutes of meetings, press releases, and congressional documents.

The documents in this collection highlight the efforts by Native Americans to express their concerns regarding conditions on the various reservations and agencies, corruption and misconduct by BIA officials, land allotment and tenancy, and the growing desire to provide for their own economic sufficiency. The primary issue discussed by the various delegations pertains to land, tenancy and allotment. Additional topics include fishing rights, mineral rights, use of public lands for grazing, poverty and health, tribal monies, and education.

Documents in this collection have been arranged according to the decimal-subject classification system used in the Central Classified Files relating to Tribal Relations—Delegations. This collection includes the documentation exchanged between various tribes, agencies, jurisdictions, and the Bureau.

This collection is a window into the myriad world of Federal–Indian relations. This documentation was used in the promulgation and implementation of Indian policies throughout the 1907–1939 period—a period of entrenched acculturation and assimilation of Native Americans, acknowledgment of the failure of this "Americanization" policy, and the prospect for a new future in the revitalization of Native American culture and social organization, embodied in the Indian Reorganization Act.

Series A: Education, Part 1: General Organization, Regulations, and Schools

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Microfilm and guide available.

Source: National Archives, Washington, D.C., RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Entry 121, Central Classified Files, 1907-1939, decimal numbers 056 (Tribal Relations--Delegations).