

# Lesson 8 Lecture: The Dawes Act to Lonewolf: Understanding the Consequences

## 1. The Indian Problem

- By the 1880's, many of the tribes involved in the so-called "Indian wars" had given up the fight and reported to reservations in order to avoid starvation. Only in the Southwest did Native groups still violently resist American colonization, a resistance whose story would ultimately end in defeat like so many others.
- With so many Indian people now living on small tracts of reservation land, it was the

idea of Congress that these people would be best served to begin using the soil to their advantage. Congress reasoned that the best way to solve the “Indian Problem” or the problem involved with caring and providing for so many people they were legally bounded to care for, would be to have them acquire ownership of their own property.

- This would further assimilate Native peoples into the dominant American culture, working in league with the boarding school system that had been established in the 1870's.

## II. The General Allotment Act (1887)

- Passed in 1887, the General Allotment Act, or the Dawes Act, allotted, or parceled, portions of Native American reservation.
- Individuals received either 80 to 160 acre plots, and in some instances families received higher acreages.
- Each allotment was to be held in trust by the federal government for a period of 25 years, which meant during that time period Indian peoples would not be subjected to federal tax on their property.
- Native Americans were not allowed to immediately sell