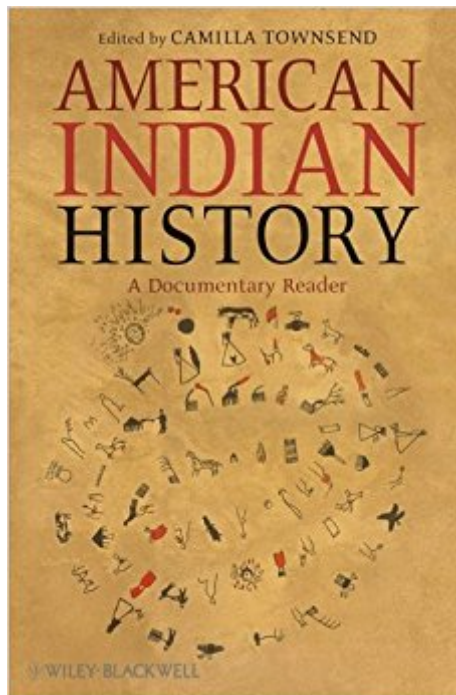




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# **American Indian History: A Documentary Reader**



## Synopsis

This Reader from the "Uncovering the Past" series provides a comprehensive introduction to American Indian history. Over 60 primary documents allow the voices of natives to illuminate the American past. Includes samples of native languages just above the full translations of particular texts. Provides comprehensive introductions and headnotes, as well as images, an extensive bibliography, and suggestions for further research. Includes such texts as a decoded Maya inscription, letters written during the French and Indian War on the distribution of small pox blankets, and a diatribe by General George Armstrong Custer shortly before he was killed at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Unlike any other text, Townsend's accessible collection offers a much-needed gathering of documents in Native history from the pre-Columbian era to the present. It will be an invaluable resource for the undergraduate classroom." Gwenn Miller, College of the Holy Cross

"Camilla Townsend's book is an ideal supplement for any course in Native American history. The documents here will introduce students to crucial aspects of the indigenous experience. More important, the texts testify to the richness of Native American cultures." Peter C. Mancall, University of Southern California

"Filled with a wide range of primary sources, Camilla Townsend's American Indian History: A Documentary Reader offers a comprehensive, yet manageable, resource for instructors wanting to inject more American Indian history in their American history survey courses."

Troy Bickham, Texas A&M University

This latest volume in Wiley-Blackwell's 'Uncovering the Past' series conveys the premise that indigenous intellects were the equal of European intellects at the moment of conquest, that the people suffered a long period of decline for varied reasons, and that in the recent past they have made great strides in asserting themselves once again. With nearly a third of the volume dedicated to the ancient world through the eighteenth centuries, Townsend allows the documents to illuminate the richness of American Indian historical traditions and the strength of the efforts they made when the crisis came. The volume then moves on to extensive coverage of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, completing an integral study of the American Indian experience.

Wonderful historical book. Hopefully soon we will see history rewritten with truths that have never been swept under the carpet.

The historian's preferred tool for discovering history is the primary source. Nothing is as effective as reading what the people who experienced the area in question had to say. Care must be taken to sort out bias and distortion of the record, but by and large the primary source is the most dependable tool in the historian's toolkit. This book is a collection of primary sources that involve Native American history in the region the United States now exists. They form a valuable resource in that the primary sources often conflict with what has been the public view of Native American History. Popular fiction and deliberate distortion of the historic record has created a very incorrect public perception of Native American history. Fortunately, historians are revising that perception through some very in depth analysis of the facts. This book is one such endeavor. Through the firsthand accounts written by the people who lived in the eras under study, we can see a world that does not fit in with the popular perception. Spanish priests describe the carnage and incredible death toll among Native Americans in the 16th century. They explain vividly why those deaths occur. Later, we find documents where Native Americans speaking through interpreters explain their social and cultural world. There we begin to understand the clash of cultures and societies that took place over four centuries and realize the depth of the conflict involved. At the same time, we see these peoples in a new light as in their own words they describe their world. The different viewpoint is refreshing and helps us to understand why that group of people acted the way they did. We also encounter documents written by Anglo-Europeans and later Americans explaining their viewpoints and actions. The documents begin with pre-Columbian contact sources and continue right up to the present day. Looking through the documents shows why the relationship

between Native Americans and other Americans is so complex. I used the book in a college course at Columbia College along with a few other texts to help explain the historical context. I found it quite useful and decided to keep it in my personal library. Were I to teach a college course on Native American History I would definitely consider using this book. I am using more and more primary sources in my courses and students respond to them quite well. In fact, they're fascinated by them. So this is definitely a very good book for that purpose.

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