Enduring Understanding

Citizens faced with challenges brought about by government actions use the petition process in order to draw attention to policies they either favor or wish to see changed without fear of retribution. Embedded in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, the right to petition is seen as part of the foundation of any democratic system of government.

Essential Questions:

- What were some of the conversations surrounding Native American relations and influence in the 19th century?
- What were the various perspectives on Native Americans in the 19th century?

Language Note

Primary source materials such as petitions, letters, and diaries capture history as it happened, and many customs, terms, social mores, and attitudes that are considered offensive now were commonplace at the time. Please read through the primary source material before assigning it to your class.

Content Objectives

- Students will understand some of the struggles and prejudices Native Americans faced in 19th century Wisconsin.
- Students will be able to articulate the various concerns expressed in 19th century petitions as they relate to the Native American relationship with white Colonizers.

Wisconsin Common Core Standards Addressed

- Grades 3-5
  - SS.Inq4.a.i Communicate conclusions from a variety of teacher provided presentation options.
  - SS.Inq4.b.i Evaluate the strength of a claim, evidence, and communication using criteria established by both teacher and student.
- Grades 6-8
  - SS.Inq3.c.m Analyze the extent to which evidence supports or does not support a claim, and if it does not, adjust claim appropriately
  - SS.Inq4.b.m Analyze and evaluate the logic, relevance, and accuracy of others’ claims, taking into consideration potential bias.

This lesson plan was created with the support of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission
**Vocabulary Building**

Explicit vocabulary building will be conducted through instruction and a vocabulary list which will be distributed to each student.

**Comprehensible Input**

The language of the petitions has all been scaffolded to a more digestible vernacular. Students will be able to interact with copies of the original petitions as well as the adapted transcriptions. Working in groups will allow students to support each other in the learning process and come to collaborative conclusions. There are both audio (lecture, discussion) and visual (petitions, map) elements to this lesson.

**Materials**

- Indicated petitions
- Adapted petition transcriptions
- Handout: Vocabulary
- Handout/Slide: Wisconsin Cities with Native American Names
- Group worksheet
- Writing utensils
- Map of Wisconsin with indicated petition locations
- Answer Key

**Lesson Summary**

Students will be asked to analyze five different petitions from the 19th century that relate to the relationship between Native Americans and white colonizers in Wisconsin. They will work in small groups to come to their own conclusions and then they will have a full class discussion to synthesize their thoughts.

Recommended time: 50 minutes
Procedure

- Warm-up: As a class, read the warm-up petitions about changing the name of Lake Mills back to Tyranena and naming the town of Wauwatosa. Discuss why the petitioner might want the name restored and why it is important.
  - Discuss the fact that the Tyranena petition was written by women. This was long before the 19th amendment so the only way that women had agency in America at this time was through petitions.
- Show students the document titled “Wisconsin Cities with Native American Names” as either a handout or a slide. Go through the document with the students and ask them why they think so many Wisconsin cities have Native American names and ask them if they have been to any of the cities on the list.
- Introduce the topic of the lesson and explain the concept of a petition.
- Vocabulary: Distribute vocabulary lists to students and discuss the words as a class. Discuss the use of “Indian” in the petitions versus the currently accepted language.
- Stations: Divide the students into five groups. Distribute the remaining five petitions and their accompanying adapted transcriptions to various points throughout the room. Direct each group to a different station.
  - Distribute one question worksheet to each group
  - Students will have 5-7 minutes at each station, rotating clockwise as the time expires. They will read the adapted transcription of each petition and answer the questions that correspond to it.
- After every group has gotten to every station, come back together as a class.
- As a class, go through their answers, asking what they came up with and leading critical discussion about their answers.
  - As you discuss, show the map of Wisconsin on the projector and indicate where each petition takes place. Have students indicate where they live in relation to the petition locations.
- This lesson should take approximately 50 minutes and is designed for grades 4-8, but it can be adapted to be longer and for other grade levels.
Petition of A.H. Caverno and 44 other women of Tyranena in relation to changing the name of said village

In 1866, the town of Tyranena was separated from the town of Lake Mills by the government. We, the women who live in Tyranena, ask that the towns be combined again into one town. We also believe that the name Lake Mills is not accurate because there is only one mill in the town, so we believe that the combined town should be named Tyranena because that is what the Native Americans called it. We ask that you please combine the two towns and keep the name Tyranena.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/8196/rec/6

Petition regarding the name of Wauwatosa

We, the people of Milwaukee County, ask to give this land the name Wauwatosa, as it was the name of a Sauk chief.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/10728/rec/3

Brown County

On October 18th, 1838, the people of Diansburgh voted unanimously to ask that the Brothertown Indians be given citizenship and permanent ownership of the land. We have made a lot of progress in our society. We have built school houses and mills that benefit not only us but also people in nearby towns. We have the wisdom of our customs combined with the civilized ways and we keep making improvements on our lands. In conclusion, we ask that you please make the town of Diansburgh officially ours and grant us citizenship.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/8639/rec/1
STATION 2: Box 2, Folder 10

Petition from the half-breeds\(^1\) of the Sioux Nation of Indians in relation to the division of their lands on the upper Mississippi

In 1830, a treaty was made in Prairie du Chien to grant land to the Sioux Indians. As descendants of the Sioux and white settlers, we ask that a survey of these lands be made. Without a survey, many of us have spent a lot of money on improving the land and getting resources, while others are waiting for a survey to do so. Please consider our request to survey these lands.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/8866/rec/2

STATION 3. Box 18, Folder 12

Petition of Isaac Nobles, Wm. H. Hile and others for a state road commencing at or near the ¼ line of Sec. 8 Town of Bloomingdale, Winnebago Co. thence through the Indian Reserve Lands to Winneconne

We, the people of Bloomingdale and Winneconne, would like to ask for a road to be built across the Indian lands in the County of Winnebago. This road would improve transportation and communication so please consider our request for a public road.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/6093/rec/20

\(^1\) The titles of all petitions in this lesson were transcribed verbatim from the original primary source. This term is absolutely unacceptable today and should not be used in any content.
Petition of Corser and 114 other Citizens of La Point County

In 1837 and 1842, two treaties were made between the United States and the Chippewa Indians. These treaties said that the Chippewa Tribe would give up their territories in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota if they were still allowed to hunt and fish on these lands. However, in 1849 the president ordered the removal of the Chippewa from these lands. As white settlers, we believe that this is wrong and that the Indians are essential to these lands. They are quiet and peaceful and they rely on this land to live. If they are removed, business and industry will suffer greatly. They are quickly adapting to our culture and many of the young Indians are even learning English. If they are removed, they will have nowhere to go. And they are now connected to white settlers through friendship and intermarriage. We strongly ask that these Indians be allowed and encouraged to stay on these lands.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/6649/rec/7

Petition of E.J. Taylor and other citizens of Polk County for the removal of Indians from said County

We, the people of Polk County, request the removal of the Indians from our land. We are worried that they scare away white settlers from moving here.

Link to petition: https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions/id/7967/rec/15
VOCABULARY

1. ADAPTING - To adjust, modify or change based on conditions or circumstances.
   a. Students are adapting to an earlier school starting time by setting their alarm clocks earlier.

2. CITIZENSHIP - To be a citizen (legally recognized resident) of a country.
   a. The Chippewa people requested that they be given full citizenship.

3. CIVILIZED - At an advanced stage of development.
   a. White colonizers considered themselves more civilized than Native Americans.

4. CULTURE – The customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, or people.
   a. Her favorite social studies class was a lesson on Greek culture.

5. DESCENDANTS - People that came from a certain ancestor.
   a. His family claimed to be descendants of George Washington.

6. ESSENTIAL - Absolutely necessary, extremely important.
   a. Hunting and fishing were essential to the survival of the Ho Chunk people.

7. GRANT - Agree to give or allow.
   a. A treaty was made in Prairie du Chien to grant land to the Sioux Indians.

8. INTERMARRIAGE - A marriage between people from two different races or cultures.
   a. Children of the intermarriage between French fur traders and Native Americans were historically called Métis.

9. REMOVAL - The action of taking something away.
   a. President Andrew Jackson ordered the removal of the Cherokee people from their own land.

10. SURVEY - An examination and report of a piece of land.
    a. A survey of the Native American land was never conducted.

11. UNANIMOUSLY - Everyone agrees on something.
    a. The people of Diansburgh voted unanimously to give the Brothertown Indians permanent ownership of the land.
19th Century Petitions Questions

STATION 1

1. Who wrote the petition?

2. What are they asking for? Why?

3. What improvements have they made in their society?

STATION 2

1. Who wrote the petition?

2. What are they asking for? Why?

3. Where was the treaty made?

STATION 3

1. Who wrote the petition?

2. What are they asking for? Why?

3. Who do you think would disagree with what they are asking? Why?
STATION 4
1. Who wrote the petition?

2. What are they asking for? Why?

3. What are some of the arguments for why the government shouldn’t remove the Indians? Why does the government want to remove them?

STATION 5
1. Who wrote the petition?

2. What are they asking for? Why?

3. What are the reasons that these citizens want the Indians removed from their land? Do you think that these reasons are justified?

CONCLUSION
1. Which petition was the most interesting to you? Why?

2. What is one thing you learned from these petitions?

3. How did white settlers view the Natives in Wisconsin? What differences in opinion do you see between Station 4 and Station 5?

4. If you had to write a petition today, what would you write about?
19th Century Petitions Questions

ANSWER KEY

STATION 1

1. Who wrote the petition?
The people of Diansburgh/the Brothertown Indians

2. What are they asking for?
That the Brothertown Indians be given citizenship and permanent ownership of the land.
Why? Because they have made a lot of progress in their society.

3. What improvements have they made in their society?
They have built school houses and mills that benefit not only them but also people in nearby towns. They have the wisdom of their customs combined with the “civilized” ways and we keep making improvements on their lands.

*Discuss the word “civilized” here. Why is white culture called “civilized”? Is this word dismissive of or offensive to Native culture?

STATION 2

1. Who wrote the petition?
Descendants of the Sioux and white settlers

2. What are they asking for?
That a survey of the lands be made.
Why? Without a survey, many of them had spent a lot of money on improving the land and getting resources, while others were waiting for a survey to do so.

*Discuss what a survey is and why it is important

3. Where was the treaty made?
Prairie du Chien
STATION 3

1. Who wrote the petition?
The people of Bloomingdale and Winneconne

2. What are they asking for?
A road to be built across the Indian lands in the County of Winnebago.
Why? It would improve transportation and communication.

3. Who do you think would disagree with what they are asking?
Who do you think would disagree with what they are asking?
Why? The Native people who live on the land

*This could be related to contemporary debates about building pipelines across Native land.

STATION 4

1. Who wrote the petition?
Citizens of La Point County/White Settlers

2. What are they asking for?
They are asking that the Chippewa not be removed from their native land because they are essential to the lands.
Why? They are quiet and peaceful and they rely on this land to live.

3. What are some of the arguments for why the government shouldn’t remove the Indians? Why does the government want to remove them?
   ● They were quiet and peaceful and they relied on this land to live.
   ● If they were removed, business and industry would suffer greatly.
   ● They were quickly adapting to white culture and many of the young Indians were even learning English.
   ● If they were removed, they would have nowhere to go.
   ● They are connected to white settlers through friendship and intermarriage.

STATION 5

1. Who wrote the petition?
The people of Polk County

2. What are they asking for?
The removal of the Indians from the land.
Why? They were worried that they scared away white settlers from moving there.

3. What are the reasons that these citizens want the Indians removed from their land? Do you think that these reasons are justified?
They were worried that they would steal their property, animals, and food. Be sure to discuss the prejudice inherent in this belief.

*This can be related to contemporary debates surrounding prejudice and profiling

CONCLUSION

1. Which petition was the most interesting to you? Why?

2. What is one thing you learned from these petitions?

3. How did white settlers view the Natives in Wisconsin? What differences in opinion do you see between Station 4 and Station 5?

In Station 4, the white settlers thought the natives were essential to the land and they strongly encouraged the government not to remove them. In Station 5, the white settlers strongly encouraged the government to remove the natives because they were afraid of them. *Discuss how fear can cause prejudice.

4. If you had to write a petition today, what would you write about?
Important Information for Teachers to Address in this Lesson

● What is a petition? A petition is a formal request made to an authority related to a specific cause. Usually petitions are signed by many people to show support for the cause. The petitions examined in this lesson were created by citizens or residents of particular territories in Wisconsin and presented to their respective municipal governments.

● What is the appropriate nomenclature for indigenous Americans? These petitions primarily use the term “Indian” to refer to indigenous Americans. Some tribes still accept the term “American Indian”, but many reject this term since it was a misnomer bestowed upon them through a severe navigation error. The term “First Nation” was introduced in Canada and is widely received as an inoffensive alternative. “Native American” or “Native People” seem to be the preferred all-encompassing terms, but because these tribes were each so unique and generally self-governing, the ultimate preference is to simply refer to each tribe by its individual name.
  ○ The title of the Station 2 petition includes the term half-breed. This term was used to refer to descendants of Native Americans and white settlers. Due to its animalistic association, this term is absolutely unacceptable today. The titles of all petitions in this lesson were transcribed verbatim from the original document which is the only reason it appears here.
  ○ Many of the tribal names used in these petitions are no longer the names that these tribes still use today.
  ○ The Brothertown Nation remains unrecognized by the United States government as of March 21, 2021. [https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4358](https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4358)

● In the document titled “Wisconsin Cities with Native American Names”, it is important to note that many of these translations are debated among scholars. The names were primarily translated by white settlers and many of the city names have multiple different translations or interpretations.
  ○ For example, the name of Wauwatosa is translated as “Firefly” which is contradicted by the warm-up petition which states that the name comes from a Sauk chief.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisconsin Cities With Native American Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashwaubenon  Chief Ashwaubemie (Menominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaukauna   &quot;Place of the pike&quot; (Menominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenosha     &quot;Place of the pike&quot; (Menominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kewaunee    &quot;Greater prairie chicken&quot; (Ho-Chunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitowoc   &quot;Spirit woods&quot; (Ojibwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menasha     &quot;Thorn/island&quot; (Ho-Chunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mequon      &quot;Ladle&quot; (Ojibwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee   &quot;Rich and beautiful land&quot; (Potawatomi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minocqua    &quot;Noon-day rest&quot; (Ojibwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskego     &quot;Sunfish&quot; (Potawatomi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neenah      &quot;Water&quot; (Ho-Chunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oconomowoc  &quot;Waterfall&quot; (Ho-Chunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oshkosh     Chief Oshkosh (Menominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheboygan   &quot;The passage&quot; (Ojibwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suamico     &quot;Place of yellow beaver&quot; (Menominee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waukesha    Wau-tsha (Potawatomi leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waunakee    &quot;Fair and pleasant valley&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waupun      &quot;The early light of the day&quot; (Ojibwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wauwatosa   &quot;Firefly&quot; (Potawatomi)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WARM-UP 1
WARM-UP 2
petition from the half breed of this tribe to the division of their lands on the
river Mississippi.

Jas. McKenzie

B. Cormack

STATION 2
To the Hon. the Senate and House of Representatives, in Session assembled,

The undersigned, Your petitioners, inhabitants of the towns of Bloomington and Monticello in the county of Monroe, do most respectfully state your Honorable bodies, that they are labouring under great inconvenience for the want of a public road leading from thepopoles to Bloomington through the Undeveloped Forrest lands in said county South of the road over as soon as said road can be opened, being the highest settlement of a large body of rich and fertile Country, and afford a ready and direct Communication with the Globus Line of Country, bordering before the Wolf River and its tributaries, which is being steadily growing to some resolution, having now settled upon those forest lands, and desiring having such road for the want of the road now asked for,

They therefore most respectfully pray your Honorable bodies that you may Consider an Accepting, Samuels, and Affrants & William A. Goldings, John Aloe and Isaac Howard, to view, Layout and Establish a Public Highway commencing at a near the Grant Line or Section 19th in the town of Bloomington and running on the straight line and gradual direct South in the County of Monroe, and to the Union Line in that town 18 acres. 50 rods East.

Signed, William Hall, County Judge, Town of Bloomington

January 19th 1837.
To conclusion your Committee would lay emphasizing this
amount that by the call of the Corps in 1834. The initial
complaints of the landless descensions of the Indians & duties
from the treaty of Hartford, 1834. Chippewa and
Washington counties. But these complaints are wholly a fraud or
true, as this county is concerned, and the prominent statement
they contain has been to be false — instead of pleading that the
have reason to complain of losses. DESCRIPTIONS examined by the Indians
You believe that a true statement of the hardships & sufferings
they have endured since 1849, and the ghastly scenes of which
See, who have attended the payrolls at choice on the Sandy Lake.
A select body have done their duty under the Indians, and present
a picture shriveling to humanity, and disgraceful to legislation.
We do not know that any such representation has been made to the Legislature,
while we saw them in the paper and memorial.

Norton, Conser
Widger Batavia
J. D. Whittier
S. R. Whelan attaining
James Sohy
John Conner

Rawhill, Court Commissioner
Nicolas De Moteems
James De Lawe
Louis Goudria
Edward Ferringer
J. W. Chaffee
To the Honorable the Legislature of Wisconsin:

The undersigned, residents of the Counties of Burnett and Polk, respectfully represent to you that a material obstacle to the settlement of the Counties of the North-West part of the State, is the unrestrained, roving, idle Indians, who infest the houses, localities and premises of white settlers.

The presence of these Indians is not so much a subject of fear to those who know them, as to the strangers whom we are trying to induce to come and live among us, and our persons and lives are not so much in danger, from these natural outlaws, as our property, our live stock and our crops.

We, therefore, respectfully petition you to pass such Memorial to Congress, or enact such State Law as will restrain or remove this Evil.

Dated January 1847.

[Signatures]

Joseph Johnson

James Tyler

C. L. Le Roy

W. M. De Groot

Joel Stephenson

J. D. Coft

Samuel Burnett