

Joseph and the Nez Perce surrendered in October 1877 with the promise that they would be taken home, but instead, they were forced into Kansas and from there, to what is now Oklahoma. Many of his people died of disease. It was not until 1885 that Joseph and his remaining people were allowed to return to the Northwest, and even then, they were made to live on a non-Nez Perce reservation apart from the rest of their tribe. Joseph died in 1904, still in exile from his homeland.

A bloody end

The Plains Indian Wars ended with the **Wounded Knee massacre** on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. On December 29, 1890, the U.S. Army slaughtered around three hundred Native Americans, two-thirds of them unarmed elderly, women, and children. Twenty-five U.S. soldiers were killed, the majority of them from friendly fire. Although fighting between Native Americans and whites continued into January, Wounded Knee officially marked the end of the Plains Wars.

Plessy v. Ferguson

In 1890, **Louisiana** passed a law requiring African Americans to ride in railroad cars separate from whites. To protest the law, a light-skinned African American named Homer Plessy (1862–1925) boarded a whites-only train car. He was immediately arrested, tried, and convicted by a local judge of violating the state’s racial **segregation** laws.

Plessy appealed the ruling, and his case eventually went to the U.S. **Supreme Court** in 1896. The Court determined that Plessy had not been denied his rights because the separate railroad car provided for blacks was equal to the cars provided whites. It held that separation of the races was not illegal, and that “separate but equal” accommodations did not indicate that blacks were inferior to whites.

Only one judge on the Supreme Court dissented (disagreed) with the verdict. Justice John Marshall Harlan (1833–1911) was a former slave owner who had changed his opinion after the American **Civil War** (1861–65). Harlan insisted that the U.S. **Constitution** was color-blind, that all citizens were equal under the law, and that the forced separation of the races degraded African Americans.

The separate-but-equal doctrine allowed states to restrict African Americans from public areas and services. Soon, signs reading “Whites Only” and “Colored” appeared everywhere. Curfews were established for African Americans, and they were forced to use separate entrances and exits at places such as libraries and theaters.

The *Plessy* ruling stood for over sixty years until the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling of 1954. It said that separate schools for blacks and whites denied blacks the same kinds of educational opportunities afforded to whites.

Plymouth Colony

In 1620, a group of nearly one hundred English colonists arrived along the coast of New England aboard the *Mayflower*. Although they intended to settle farther south, they established a settlement off the rocky coast of what became **Massachusetts**. The colony of Plymouth was the first European settlement in New England.

Many of the passengers aboard the *Mayflower* were inspired to come to the New World in search of religious freedom. They were part of a group of **Puritans** known as **Separatists**. As Puritans, they sought to simplify the traditions and organization of the Church of England. However, unlike many of the Puritans, they decided to leave the Church of England entirely to establish an independent church. As Separatists, they were inspired to lead a fully Christian life purely according to the Bible’s rules, rather than those of a church. Coming to the New World, they sought to build a community built on their Puritan values.

The Puritans aboard the *Mayflower* were part of a group that had first moved from their homes in England to Leiden, Amsterdam, to establish the English Separatist Church. Although their church was thriving, limited economic opportunities and fears of losing their English heritage prompted many of them to seek their own community in the New World. The Virginia Company of Plymouth (known as the Plymouth Company) provided the charter for lands in the New World as well as funding for passage. In return, the Puritans would work for the company by establishing trade and harvesting natural resources of the New World.