

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

Among the major developments in Native American history in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were laws and court decisions that facilitated improved outcomes when it came to settling land claims with the government. One such, for example, was the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, but there were a variety of others that came after. Through these measures, millions of acres of once-disputed land or land rights have been returned to Indian nations.

Not completely unrelated to this trend is the philosophy behind 1990's Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Under this law, federal agencies and institutions that receive federal funding are directed to return items of cultural significance to the descen-

dants of those from which they were taken. Thus, museums and other such organizations must accede to proven Native claims in the case of human skeletal remains, sacred objects, funerary objects, and similar items of "cultural patrimony."

Presented in this section as well is a 2016 statement of protest made by members of the Standing Rock Sioux in the context of a natural gas pipeline that was authorized by the federal government to run beneath a waterway adjacent to their land and serving the community's water needs. The protestors at first succeeded in stopping the pipeline, but developments later, under a new administration, reversed their success.