WHERE DOES THE TERM “LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY” COME FROM?

- The Morrill Act of 1862 funded agricultural colleges, the mechanical arts, and military tactics departments at one university in each state. These schools are known as “Land Grant Universities” (LGU).
- Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill, for whom the bill was named, aimed to support farmers, artisans, and workingmen in pursuit of a college education. The University of Delaware (UD) continues to celebrate this Act’s efforts to democratize education.
- The basis of the Act’s funding, however, was the land. The federal government claimed Indigenous lands, and redistributed rights to these parcels to states, who in turn redistributed them to colleges. Trustees at these colleges then sold the land to fund educational programs.
- The federal government redistributed 30,000 acres to each state for each representative in Congress. In total, the Morrill Act transferred 11 million acres to 52 land grant universities.

HOW DID THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE BENEFIT FROM INDIGENOUS LANDS?

- In 1859, UD – then known as Delaware College, closed its doors due to financial instability and low enrollment.
- In 1867, the College was designated as Delaware’s LGU. Morrill Act funds allowed Delaware College to reopen in 1870. **Without this revenue, Delaware College likely would have remained shuttered.**
- The federal government granted 90,000 acres to Delaware College, which was distributed to the Delaware Assembly through paper certificates, known as agricultural scrip. Delaware College received $83,000 through the sale of this scrip, with buyers then picking and owning specific tracts from the lands the federal government had appropriated.
- This sum was invested in state bonds that accrued 6% annually, covering the entire cost of administration and faculty salaries. UD’s Land Grant status also led to millions more dollars in later acts supporting LGUs.
- 67 present-day Indigenous tribes, bands, and nations were dispossessed of the 90,000 acres that were sold by Delaware College. From 1816 to 1868, the federal government unjustly claimed these peoples’ lands through 46 separate land cessions, which include ratified treaties, unratified treaties, and seizures without a treaty.

***This Map displays (in red) the lands that were ceded through these 46 cessions. Dots represent the current location of the 67 Indigenous Nations, along with the Lenape and Nanticoke Nations, who once resided on the lands currently held by UD.***
### Transfer of Land

1. The federal government claims Indigenous lands and deems these lands “public.”

2. The federal government makes 11 million acres of this “public land” available to 52 LGUs.

3. The University of Delaware receives 90,000 acres in agricultural scrip.

4. From 1869 to 1872, all of UD’s scrip is sold to one individual: Gleason F. Lewis. UD receives $83,000 plus interest through these sales.

5. Lewis sells scrip to speculators, who select and own parcels of “public land.”

---

### Representative Land Cessions

- Over 20% of Delaware scrip was used to secure lands in California.
  - The Miwok, Yokut, and Paiute were forced to surrender their lands in California, following a series of attacks organized by white settlers. Forced into a state of starvation, they signed 18 treaties with the federal government, which ceded approximately 92% of land in California. As these treaties were not ratified, the California Indians did not receive one cent for their lands.
  - University of Delaware Scrip was used to secure lands that were seized without a treaty from the Quinault, Queets, Lower Chehalis, Upper Chehalis, Shoalwater Bay, Chinook, and Cowlitz Tribes. In 1855, leaders of these Tribes refused to sign a treaty ceding their ancestral homelands near the Columbia River. Nevertheless, white settlers began to lay claims to their territories. In 1864, through an Executive Order, a 4,300-acre reservation was created for these tribes and the U.S. Government seized nearly 5 million acres of those lands.

---

### A Call for Action: How Are Land Grant Universities Understood Today?

In 2020, Cambridge University history professor Robert Lee and journalist Tristan Ahtone published an article in *High Country News*, which demonstrated that universities, including UD, held lands that were forcibly claimed by the federal government. Lee and Ahtone introduced the term “Land Grab University” to describe this system of dispossession that supported the Morrill Act. As UD is devoted to strengthening “its social justice foundation and approaching diversity, equity, and inclusion as mission critical work, with an increased focus on institutional equity,” this research – and programs that emerge from this research – directly serve UD’s institutional goals. While the Morrill Act expanded access to scientific and agricultural education, land grant universities must also recognize that these educational programs were funded through the appropriation of Indigenous lands, at great cost to Indigenous lives and livelihoods.

### How Are Peer Institutions Responding?

- The Wokini Initiative at South Dakota State University dedicates the $600,000 that SDSU receives annually from the Morrill Act parcels, which includes the interest accumulated from these land sales, to scholarships and public outreach programs for Indigenous students.
- The University of Arizona and the University of California School System announced that they will offer free tuition to enrolled members of Indigenous Nations within the state beginning Fall of 2022.
- The University of Minnesota expanded their Native American Promise Tuition Program, which now offers reduced and free tuition to Indigenous students.
- Through the Stepping Out and Stepping Up Initiative at Ohio State University, faculty invited Indigenous activists to their “Land-Grab Universities: Owning the Truth” Symposium, where they discussed the harmful legacies of LGUs.
- The University of California School System organized a Land Grab History Conference in 2020, which invited Indigenous scholars to discuss the dispossession of their lands, along with recommendations for reparative action at UC campuses.
UD BENEFITS FROM THE HISTORIC DISPOSSESSION OF THE FOLLOWING 67 PRESENT-DAY INDIGENOUS TRIBES, BANDS, AND NATIONS. THIS PRELIMINARY AND INCOMPLETE LIST IDENTIFIES THESE TRIBES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER. MUCH MORE RESEARCH MUST BE DONE TO FULLY ACCOUNT FOR UD's ROLE IN THE LAND GRANT SYSTEM.

- Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- Bay Mills Indian Community
- Berry Creek Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California
- Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Blackfeet Nation
- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians
- The California Valley Miwok Tribe
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
- The Chicken Ranch Tribe of Me-Wuk Indians
- Chinook Indian Nation
- Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw
- Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians
- Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
- Duwamish Tribe
- Enterprise Rancheria Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe
- Ione Band of Miwok Indians
- Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- Ioway Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska
- The Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians
- The Kaw Nation
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
- Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Meskwaki Nation, Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa
- Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Mooretown Rancheria of the Maidu Indians of California
- Nisenan Tribe of California
- Northern Arapaho Tribe
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
- The Osage Nation
- The Otoe Missouria Tribe
- Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma
- Picayune Rancheria of the Chuckchansi Indians
- Prairie Island Indian Community
- Quapaw Nation
- Quinault Indian Nation
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Chippewa
- Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California
- The Sac and Fox Nation
- Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska
- Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- Shoalwater Bay Tribe
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation
- Table Mountain Rancheria of California
- Tachi Yokut Tribe
- Tule River Tribe of California
- Ute Indian Tribe
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- White Earth Nation of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
- Yankton Sioux Tribe

Living Land Acknowledgement: The University of Delaware occupies lands vital to the web of life for Lenni Lenape and Nanticoke, who share their ancestry, history, and future in this region. European colonizers and later the United States forced members of these groups westward and northward, where they formed nations in present-day Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada. Others never left or returned from exile when they could. Their continuing tribal communities steward the ecologies and traditions of this region today.