First of several acts calling for termination of federal trust status over Indian lands.

Congress passed an act transferring Indian Health from BIA to the Public Health Service. Transfer made in 1955.

Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act providing Indians opportunity to participate in and control their own programs.

Appointment of Robert L. Bennett, an Oneida Indian, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

President Johnson's special message dealing exclusively with American Indians and Alaskan Natives, a historic first.

President Nixon's special message (Indian policy statement) dealing exclusively with American Indians and Alaskan Natives set forth a legislative program and expresses the idea of self-determination without the threat of termination.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act — the largest cession of land to a group of Native Americans in the history of the United States.

Congress passed an act "Repealing the Act Terminating Federal Supervision over Property and Members of the Menominee Indian Tribe."

U.S. Supreme Court decision on Morton v. Mancari affirmed Indian preference in hiring.

Congress passed P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act mandating the Federal Government enter into contracts and/or cooperative agreements with Tribal governments.

Forrest Gerard, member of the Blackfeet Nation, was appointed the first Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act, recognized decisions of tribal courts in Indian child custody matters.

U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez case reversed the Tenth Circuit decision which invalidated Santa Clara Pueblo membership ordinance.

U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Oliphant v. Suquamish case held that tribal courts did not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians.

Felix Cohen's "Handbook of Federal Indian Law" was published.

Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Secretarial Order No. 3137, established the Office of Trust Funds Management within the Bureau of Indian Affairs.


Secretary of the Interior signed Secretarial Order 3197 authorizing the transfer of IIM trust funds program and staff to the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians.

Cobell et al. v. Babbitt was filed in U.S. District Court on behalf of 300,000 Individual Indian Money (IIM) account holders.


Secretary of the Interior signed Secretarial Order 3208 on January 5, 1999, reorganized the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians and established the Office of Trust Litigation Support and Records.

Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act, recognized decisions of tribal courts in Indian child custody matters.

U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez case reversed the Tenth Circuit decision which invalidated Santa Clara Pueblo membership ordinance.

U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Oliphant v. Suquamish case held that tribal courts did not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians.
The Congress, passed legislation to address the governmental authority. Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the Congress appointed the first Commissioner of Indian and vast Indian lands). within the War Department. allotments among Indians.

First land allotment policy established — by General Court of Massachusetts Colony, to provide land allotments among Indians.

English colonies met at Albany Congress to discuss unified colonial Indian policy.

King George III proclamation setting aside “reserved lands” for Indians.

Plan to set up Imperial Department of Indian Affairs.

Continental Congress agrees to Articles of Confederation Indian Tribes and people confining them to specific locations in the west.

First Indian treaty signed with United States Continental Congress.

United States Constitution adopted by Convention of States; ratification completed June 1788. (Note: The Constitution contained the most democratic principles of any written constitution up to that time. This was not new to tribal governments as they embodied and practiced the principle that government is controlled by all the people and is based on their consent to it.)

Congress gives Indian authority to the War Department; passes first appropriations for Indian Affairs.

Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act placing certain restrictions on trade with Indians, sale of tribal property and limited jurisdiction over non-Indians.

Louisiana Purchase from France (affected Indian people and vast Indian lands).

Federal Government authorized to hold funds in trust for Indian tribes and American Indians.

The Secretary of War creates Bureau of Indian Affairs within the War Department.

United States began its policy of isolation and removal of Indian Tribes and people confining them to specific locations in the west.

Congress appointed the first Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Decision on Worcester v. George case by John Marshall, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court addressed the status of Indian Tribes and is the cornerstone of tribal governmental authority.

The Congress, passed legislation to address the management of Indian trust funds. The responsibility, or trusteeship, for the holding of funds by the United States for the benefit of individual Indians and Indian Tribes was first and most importantly established by treaties.

Congress passed the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834 restricting tribal rights to enforce laws not just by territory, but by citizenship or race. Indian Tribes had written constitutions.

The Office of Indian Affairs was transferred to the new Department of the Interior.

Tribal lands were in demand by white settlers. There was nowhere to ‘remove’ tribes to that would keep them truly isolated. Tribes were moved and located permanently and confined to reservations.

Indian Peace Commission negotiates final treaties with Indians. The last of 370 Indian treaties was signed on August 13, 1868 with the Nez Perce.

Treaty making with Indian Tribes ceased. Congress passed an act abolishing all Indian treaty making, however, the Congress, acting within the scope of its constitutional powers continues to control and manage Tribal and individual Indian funds through legislation.

U.S. Supreme Court affirmed tribal rights to self-government.

Congress enacted the Major Crimes Act which weakened tribal authority over members.

The Congress passed the General Allotment Act a.k.a. Dawes Act; ended in 1934.

The Supreme Court decision on Talton v. Mayes held that tribal powers of self-government are inherent. This is the leading case interpreting Indian tribes relationship with the Constitution. The Court held that because tribal powers of self-government are inherent, and did not arise from the Constitution, the restrictions placed on the Federal Government under the Fifth amendment to the Constitution do not apply to tribes.

Congress passed the “Burke Act,” amending the Dawes Act on allotment, describing Indian “competency.”

The practice of issuing “certifications of competency” was established and a network of "competency commissions" was created. (This policy worked toward termination and the discontinuance of federal guardianship).

Congress passed the Snyder Act: allowed the expenditure of appropriated funds for Indians without regard to degree of Indian blood, to membership in a federally recognized tribe, or to residence as along as it is in the United States.

Congress passed the Indian Citizen Act giving Indians citizenship and right to vote.

Congress passed the Act establishing the Indian Health Division within the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Meriam Report was issued. This was a special governmental study of the conditions of Indians on reservations.

Congress authorized the payment of interest on certain funds held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes.

John Collier became Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Congress passed several acts including the Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act) which brought a halt to the allotment system, prohibited unrestricted sales of Indian land, and provided for acquisition of additional lands by tribes and individuals, and provided for self-government, and launched the Indian credit program.

Congress passed the Johnson-O'Malley Act, spreading out Federal Indian administration to many agencies.

Congress passed the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act extending the Indian Reorganization Act to Indian tribes and Indian people of Oklahoma.

Congress passed the Alaska Native Welfare Act extending the Indian Reorganization Act to Native Villages of Alaska.

Congress authorized the deposit and investment of Indian monies.

The Indian Claims Commission was created and permitted Indians to file suits against the Government. The Commission received 852 claims in 370 petitions during the five-year period allowed for filing. (By 1969, about one-half of the claims had been adjudicated, and settlements exceeding $305 million made. Although in some instances the judgments resulted in per capita distribution of funds, many tribal awards have remained intact with the funds programmed for community and economic development. Congress directed the Commission to complete hearings and determine claims by April 10, 1972.)

Bureau of Indian Affairs was officially established.

Congress passed P.L. 83-230 which gave certain states civil and criminal jurisdiction over Indian communities (Alaska, California, Minnesota, Nebraska Oregon and Wisconsin).

House Concurrent Resolution 108 called for termination of Federal trusteeship over the affairs and property of Indian tribes and groups.