The image features a central white scroll with a dark green outline, set against a light blue background with a faint floral pattern. The scroll is decorated with intricate floral and scrollwork designs at its top and bottom edges. In each of the four corners of the page, there is a decorative floral ornament. The text 'THE INDIAN CONGRESS' is written in a dark green, serif font across the center of the scroll.

THE INDIAN CONGRESS

ATTENDANCE QUESTION

Look at the picture.

Write down:
one thing you SEE,
one thing you PREDICT,
and one thing you
WONDER about what's
happening this picture.

Look closely at the
details. How can they
help you make a
prediction?





WHAT WAS THE INDIAN CONGRESS?



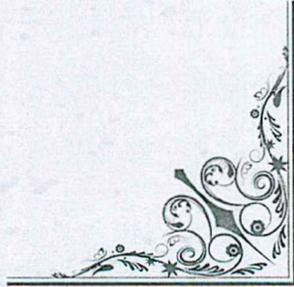
Use this information to answer the questions on your notes.

1. The Indian Congress at the Exposition was the largest gathering of Native leaders in US history. More than 545 Native people from 35 different tribal nations attended
2. The U.S. Government gave \$40,000 to create the Indian Congress. James Mooney at Smithsonian helped organize.
3. The purpose was to "highlight Native history and traditions. The goal was to gather different tribes to display their way of life, including their customs, clothing, and homes." Many White people were convinced that this may be the last time they could "glimpse a culture very different from their own," as Native people were being pushed off their land and assimilated into White culture by the US Government
4. The official guidebook said the Indian Congress showed Native people in the "utmost state of savagery," and the final report said that visitors to the Exposition were "most interested in traditional aspects, like tepees, dances, and ceremonies, rather than modern, educated Native Americans"



WHAT WAS THE INDIAN CONGRESS?

Together, we will watch a video created by past Omaha Public Schools Making Invisible Histories Visible students about the Indian Congress.

1. Read the questions on your notes so you know what to look for in the video
 2. As the video plays, write down answers to your questions as you hear them
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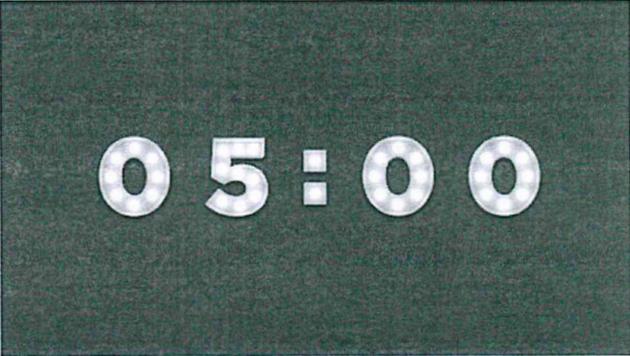
<https://youtu.be/qyGNGH8qX1>
M?si=vrER-rhIJqQjflw



INDIAN CONGRESS STATIONS

GOAL: Determine the attitudes toward Native people featured at the Indian Congress

- **MOVEMENT:** Every 5 minutes, the timer will go off and you will go to a new station. Do NOT move on your own time
- **VOICE:** Feel free to read and discuss with the people at your station. We shouldn't hear you from across the room
- **PARTICIPATION:** Read the text and look at the images at your station to help you answer the questions. Make sure you know which station you're visiting!



05:00

Name:

The Indian Congress

DIRECTIONS: Use the slide to answer the questions below.

1. WHO participated in the Indian Congress?
2. WHY was the Indian Congress included in the exposition?
3. WHAT types of events or displays were included in the Indian Congress?
4. Based on what you read, do you think the Indian Congress was a positive experience for the Native people who participated? Why or why not?

DIRECTIONS: Use the video to answer the questions below.

1. What was one purpose of the Indian Congress, according to this author?
2. What positive outcomes might the Indian Congress have had for Native leaders and nations that attended?
3. Why was it important for each Native nation that attended to be photographed?
4. In the video, the author says the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was “a celebration of victory of White people over Native Americans.” What examples of that “celebration” does he give?

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions below about each station you visit.

Source Name	Who created this source? Why did they create it?	How are Native people described in this source?	Are there any stereotypes mentioned in this source? If yes, what are they?	What is the overall emotion created by reading or looking at this source?
Trans-Mississippi Exposition Guidebook				
Rinehart's portraits				
Indian Congress Entertainment Events				
Indian Congress final report				

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Based on what you read, heard, and saw in this lesson, why do you think some Native leaders chose to participate in the Indian Congress?
2. What was one possible positive impact on the Native nations that chose to participate?
3. What was one possible negative impact on the Native nations that chose to participate?

Station #1: Indian Congress Description from the Official Guidebook

An exhibit of extraordinary interest will be the gathering of all the different Indian tribes on the North American continent.

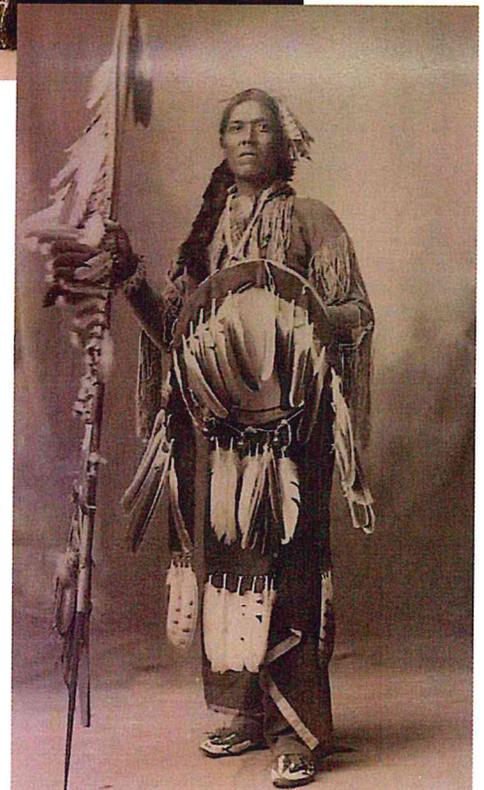
This will show the progress of the Indian towards civilization. It will show tribes in the utmost state of savagery, with their appropriate abodes, dress, utensils, weapons, games and amusements, forms and ceremonies, ceremonial objects, burial structures, etc., and it will show the highly civilized tribes, with their modern dwellings, their printing presses and their books in the Indian language. The civilized tribes of the Five Nations of the Indian Territory, living under their own form of government, will here show their traits, their peculiarities, their weakness, and on many points their superiority over their white brethren. Incident to the encampment will be exemplified the mysterious side of the character of the red man. The folk lore of the Indian — rich in legends, the system of heraldry in use for ages with its signs and symbols, mysterious significance and ceremonies, and the different kinds of decorations.

There will be a reproduction of the last great council of the amalgamated tribes of the Kiowas and Apaches. This encampment will cover about four acres and consist of 250 tepees. This will be only a part, however, of the great Indian town, as it is intended to bring at least twelve types of each of all the different tribes now living in North America.



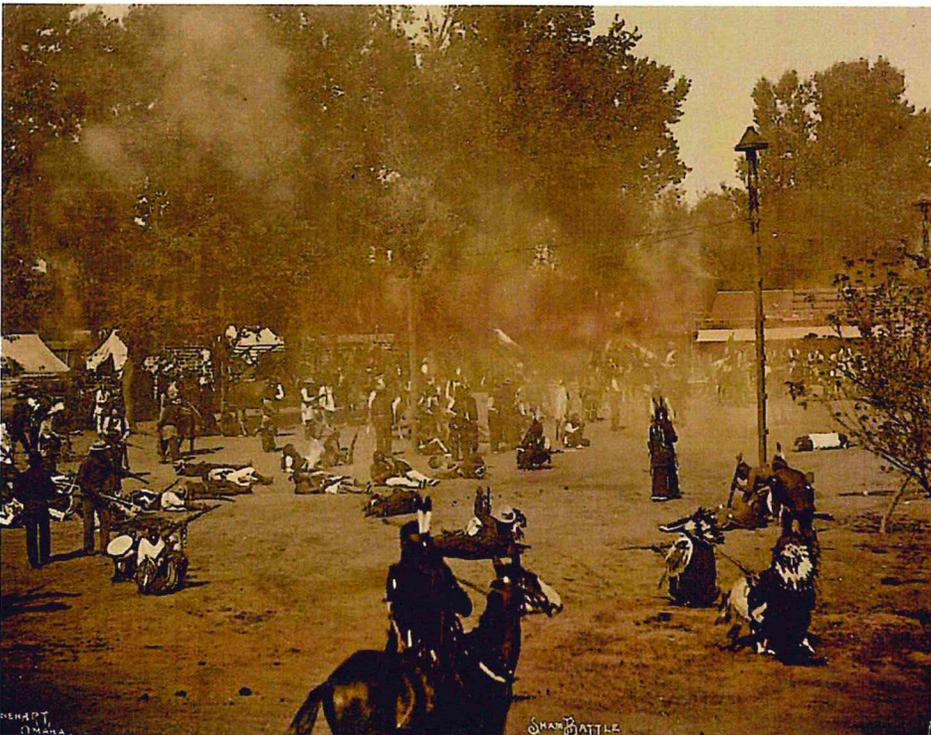
Station #2: Rinehart's Portraits

Frank A. Rinehart's photographs of the participants of the Indian Congress have become one of the largest and most detailed albums of Native culture and leaders at the beginning of the 20th century. These photographs have become important pieces of history, documenting the transition between traditional ways of living and the US government's efforts to assimilate Native people (assimilate means to make them more like the dominant White culture). The different styles of clothes and expressions on each person's face tell the stories of the changes happening for Native nations in the 1890s.



Station #3: Indian Congress Entertainment Events

Sham battles were the big attraction at the Indian congress, even though they were not originally planned to be part of the exposition. The Indian Congress was intended to be a gathering of Native leaders and government leaders and an opportunity for White settlers to learn about the cultures of Native people who had been forced off the land they now lived on. Army Captain William Mercer, who oversaw the Omaha and Winnebago Indian Reservations at the time, arranged the sham battles, which were fake battles between members of the US Army and various Native warriors. The battles were held three times a week in front of a paying audience in the middle of the "Indian Village." At some points, more than 150 warriors and 300 horses were involved, and it was predetermined that the Native warriors would win. A scholar studying the exposition named James Mooney described the sham battles as "a great deal of shooting and yelling, and about 50 of them roll around on the ground and pretend to be dead."



Mooney organized dance performances, such as a war dance by members of the Apache tribe and a Ghost Dance by members of tribes from Nebraska, like the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux. Paying visitors would watch "men and women clasp hands and move around in a circle to a peculiar step, singing songs of lamentation for the old life which has gone by, while the medicine men in the center of the ring work them into a frenzy," according to a reporter from the *Omaha Bee* newspaper. He called the performance "one of intense excitement."

The famous Apache chief Geronimo attended several sham battles. In 1886, Geronimo surrendered to the US Army after years of battle. It took 5,000 army troops to capture him. At the Indian Congress, Geronimo was still technically being held prisoner, and his tent was guarded by US Army troops, but he was able to take part in the activities of the Indian Congress. He even embraced his old captor, General Miles. They had a long conversation and watched a sham battle together. Many other famous chiefs attended the Indian Congress, too.



Station #4: Indian Congress Final Reports

This report was written by W.V. Cox, who organized the government exhibits at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

The Indian Congress at the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition was a major event showcasing Native American culture. Just 30 years earlier, Omaha residents feared attacks from Native tribes, but by 1898, they wanted to highlight Native American history and traditions. The goal was to gather different tribes to display their way of life, including their customs, clothing, and homes.

Originally, Congress was asked to provide \$100,000 for the event, but due to the Spanish-American War, only \$40,000 was approved – too late for proper planning. Despite this, the exhibit was a success. More than 500 Native Americans from 35 tribes attended. The public was most interested in traditional aspects, like tepees, dances, games, and ceremonies, rather than modern, educated Native Americans. The US government managed the exhibit, led by Captain W.A. Mercer. Officials aimed to make the display as authentic as possible, selecting full-blooded Native Americans who represented their tribes well. The participants lived in traditional homes, wore native clothing, and created crafts to sell. Thousands of visitors attended daily, fascinated by war dances and other performances. The Indian Congress became one of the most popular and unique parts of the exposition.

This report was written when the Exposition ended by Captain W.A. Mercer, a US Army captain who managed the Indian Congress.

There were many challenges in organizing the Indian Congress. The money for the event was approved late, making it hard to find and prepare the best representatives from each tribe. Some tribal leaders were hesitant to join. The most traditional and well-known tribes did not send representatives. However, once the event started, many Native Americans enjoyed meeting members of other tribes – some for the first time ever.

Visitors to the Exposition were most interested in the parades, dances, and battles that the Native Americans performed. While the government hoped to educate people about Native culture, most visitors came for entertainment.

