

Introducing the *American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817 – 1899* website

Anyone who works with the history of an American Indian or Alaska Native nation, tribal government-federal/state government relations, federal/state Indian policy, or aspects of tribal culture should be working with the primary sources that are in the Congressional Serial Set. Containing more than 13 million pages from 50,000 titles in 376,300 documents and published since 1817, the Serial Set is one of the most important official histories of the United States government. The Serial Set got its name from the serial numbering of its volumes; example, Serial Set 660, Senate Executive Document 29, *Alleged Frauds of Superintendent of Indian Affairs on Sioux Indians*.

Our website, *American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817 – 1899*, is a subset of the entire Serial Set that focuses on materials about Native Americans. This website contains documents from 1817 to 1899. Its contents are based on the bibliography of Steven L. Johnson, *Guide to American Indian Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817 – 1899* as first published by Clearwater Publishing Co. in 1977. Included in this collection are U.S. Senate and House reports, documents, executive documents, miscellaneous documents, Senate treaty documents, and Presidential documents. Among the types of documents included in the Serial Set are directories, manuals, administrative reports, and reports from investigative offices or commissions. Johnson's bibliography is selective. In the forward Raymond J. DeMallie wrote, "It is likely that someone else preparing this guide would have omitted some of the documents here or added others. Johnson, however, has defined his subject area broadly and the result is a nearly comprehensive listing of documents in

the Serial Set prior to 1900 relating to the American Indian.” Two limitations that I’ve noticed is that this bibliography doesn’t include the Taino Indians of Puerto Rico, and that the report that I note below about the Indians of New Jersey isn’t included, perhaps because it is included in the *Annual Report*...as an archeological study of a prehistoric tribe.

Examples of titles it includes are: *Investigation of Conditions of Indians in Indian Territory*, 3 volumes, Serial Set 1278; *Inquiry on Condition of All Tribes of Indians*, House Misc. Document 190, Serial Set 2418; and *Operations in New Mexico and Mexico, 1846; Doniphan’s Expedition campaign against Navajos, and March on Chihuahua*, Senate Document 608, Serial Set 6589. Congressional content predominates, but content from the Executive Branch abounds, including annual messages from the President and annual reports of departments and agencies. Some examples of these titles are: *Report on Indians Taxed and Not Taxed, the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census: 1890*, House Misc. Document 340, Serial Set 3016 from the Census Bureau; *Contributions to North American Ethnology: Dakota- English Dictionary*, House Misc. Document 26, Serial Set 2979 from the Bureau of American Ethnology; “*The Stone-Age in New Jersey*” (this is a 142-page report about the Indian tribes of New Jersey) in *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution...1875*, Senate Misc. Document 115, Serial Set 1665; and *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting, in Compliance with a Senate Resolution of July 7, 1876, Information in Relation to the Hostile Demonstrations of the Sioux Indians, and the Disaster to the Forces Under General Custer*, Senate Executive Document 81, Serial Set 1664.

Most Serial Set volumes gather like materials in them, such as volumes that contain only House or only Senate documents or reports. An exception is that some materials were included or excluded from a particular volume because of their size, for example a large document being excluded from the Serial Set volume in which it logically belongs because it's significantly larger than that volume; it was collected and printed in a volume of similar large documents.

Historians and other students of American Indians and Alaskan Natives have consulted and used information from the Serial Set. But there are thousands of documents which have not been used or discovered. Based on these scans from Johnson's bibliography many of these are now to be found in this database.

Steve Beleu and Marilyn Nicely, June 14, 2018