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IMPLIED LIMITATIONS ON THE JURISDICTION OF INDIAN TRIBES

Richard B. Collins*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1978 the Supreme Court in Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe held that the retained sovereignty of Indian tribes over tribal reservations does not include the power to punish non-Indians who commit offenses against tribal law. Based on a number of facts and premises, the Court concluded that it had been assumed from the beginning that the tribes lack this authority except where expressly recognized or conferred by treaty provision or act of Congress. The Court also relied on the fact that during the formative years few Indian tribes had the governmental structure necessary to comply with Anglo-American requirements of due process of law.

This article reviews the Oliphant decision and discusses the authority of Indian tribes to make and enforce civil laws applicable to non-Indians within tribal Indian country. The Court's analysis in Oliphant...
phant has already become the focus for lower court decisions dealing with the scope of tribal jurisdiction. In the following discussion, the tribal claim to authority in noncriminal matters and the opposing view that the Oliphant rationale should be extended to all forms of tribal authority are evaluated.

A. Retained Tribal Sovereignty

The background for the Court's decision in Oliphant was the well-established doctrine that when Indian tribes became subject to the authority of the United States, they nevertheless retained substantial powers of self-government. A number of diverse precedents contributed to this rule, but its survival in our law is most directly attributable to the decisions of the Supreme Court during the tenure of Chief Justice John Marshall. In three opinions written between 1823 and 1832, Marshall articulated the concepts and vocabulary that have defined the legal status of Indian tribes to this day.

usually made that the relevant category, the discussion in this article does the same except where noted.


7. At times attempts have been made to determine what authority Indian tribes have by arguments about the meaning of the legal term "sovereignty." See, e.g., Martone, American Indian Tribal Self-Government in the Federal System: Inherent Right or Congressional License?, 51 NOTRE DAME LAW. 600 (1976). This approach confuses two distinct uses of the term. In international law a sovereign has the full range of powers of a nation state, and these powers collectively comprise its sovereignty. American Indian tribes are not full sovereigns in that sense. It is also common in the United States to refer to the states as sovereigns, although they do not fit the international law definition either. What we mean in the latter case is that the states exercise substantial, independent authority within the American constitutional system. Indian tribes do also, so the term in the latter sense is properly applied to them. Supreme Court opinions have implicitly reflected this analysis. The Court has referred to tribes as "quasi-sovereign," Morton v. Mancari, 417 U.S. 535, 554 (1974); the Court has also described the powers tribes exercise as "retained tribal sovereignty." United States v. Wheeler, 435 U.S. 313, 324 (1978). Cases like Oliphant turn on how much sovereignty the tribes retain, so semantic debates about the word largely beg the question. As the Court stated in McClanahan v. Arizona Tax Comm'n, 411 U.S. 164 (1973): "The Indian-sovereignty doctrine is relevant, then, not because it provides a definitive resolution of the issues in this suit, but because it provides a backdrop against which the applicable treaties and federal statutes must be read." Id. at 172.


9. The most significant practice was entering into treaties with many tribes implying that the tribes were independent states capable of making them. Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 559-60 (1832).

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First, the Marshall Court established that the Constitution delegated paramount authority over Indian matters to the national government.\(^{11}\) Thus, federal treaties with Indian tribes and statutes regulating Indian matters prevail over state laws. This rule on allocation of power survived later Courts less generous to federal authority\(^ {12}\) and has been consistently followed.\(^ {13}\)

Second, the Marshall Court described the tribes’ status in relation to the United States as a dependent one, based on the common treaty provision that the tribe placed itself under the protection of the United States “and of no other sovereign whatsoever.”\(^ {14}\) This dependency has several important consequences. The Court held that the

\(^{11}\) Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 559, 561 (1832). As the Court there stated, the previous allocation of authority had been uncertain because of ambiguous wording in the Articles of Confederation.

\(^{12}\) Modern decisions of the Court hold that the federal power over commerce with the Indian tribes, U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 3, and the treaty power, id. art. II, § 2, cl. 2, are the most important sources of federal authority over Indian affairs. United States v. Mazurie, 419 U.S. 544, 554 (1975); McClanahan v. Arizona Tax Comm’n, 411 U.S. 164, 172 n.7 (1973). But many federal statutes on Indian matters do not fit ordinary notions of commerce, particularly as “commerce” was construed before the middle of the twentieth century. For this reason the Court in United States v. Kagama, 118 U.S. 375, 378–79 (1886), in sustaining a federal criminal statute dealing with offenses committed on Indian reservations, declined to rely on the Indian commerce power and based its decision on federal guardianship over Indian tribes. The Kagama Court referred to the duty of protection assumed by the United States in treaties, see note 14 and accompanying text supra, but there was no treaty with the tribe involved in the case. The better view is that of Chief Justice Marshall in Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515 (1832), that the commerce clause and the treaty clause when read in light of the early history of relations with Indians (particularly the pre-1789 treaties) manifest a general intent to invest the federal government with plenary authority over Indian affairs.

On the other hand, the Court has rejected the argument that the Indian commerce clause alone precludes all state authority. Moe v. Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, 425 U.S. 463, 481 n.17 (1976); McClanahan v. Arizona Tax Comm’n, 411 U.S. 164, 172 (1973). Rather, under the supremacy clause, U.S. Const. art. 6, cl. 2, federal statutes (as well as treaties) preempt state laws which interfere with federal Indian policies. Id.; see also note 224 infra. Certain matters may be preempted by the Constitution alone. See, e.g., Oneida Indian Nation v. County of Oneida, 414 U.S. 661 (1974); Johnson v. McIntosh, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823).

\(^{13}\) E.g., Williams v. Lee, 358 U.S. 217, 219 (1959). The Supreme Court has never held a federal Indian statute or treaty to be an unconstitutional invasion of state authority, and on several occasions it has reversed contrary holdings of lower courts. E.g., United States v. Sandoval, 231 U.S. 28 (1913).

\(^{14}\) Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 551–52, 555 (1832) (quoting one of the Cherokee treaties). Later treaties, including that at issue in Oliphant, included language acknowledging the tribe’s “dependence on the government of the United States.” 435 U.S. at 207. In others the tribes acknowledged the “supremacy” of the United States. E.g., Treaty with the Cheyenne Tribe, July 6, 1825, art. 1, 7 Stat. 255, 255. Some treaties, for example, the important Treaty of Greeneville, included no such terms. Treaty with the Wyandot and Other Indian Tribes, Aug. 3, 1795, 7 Stat. 49 (Treaty of Greeneville).
general practice of European sovereigns to monopolize land acquisitions from the Indian tribes had been absorbed into our law.\textsuperscript{15} Under this rule, the tribes' use and occupancy of their lands is respected, but they are disabled from selling their lands externally to anyone not acting under authority of the sovereign.\textsuperscript{16} The same dependent relationship authorized Congress to legislate broadly respecting the Indians.\textsuperscript{17} It was described as imposing on the federal government the duty of protecting the Indians and their property.\textsuperscript{18} Marshall analogized the dependent relationship to a common law guardianship over the tribes.\textsuperscript{19}

Third, the Marshall Court concluded that the parties to the early Indian treaties intended that the tribes would retain self-government within the territory reserved to them, subject only to federal authority.\textsuperscript{20} In reaching this conclusion, Marshall relied on the terms of treaties, the general course of federal legislation and Indian treaties, and the principle of international law that the internal law of conquered or protectorate territory remains in force until affirmatively superseded by the new sovereign.\textsuperscript{21} This doctrine has subsequently been applied to tribal lands set aside by unilateral federal action as well.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{15} Mitchel v. United States, 34 U.S. (9 Pet.) 711, 746 (1835); Johnson v. McIntosh, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543, 584-88 (1823).
\textsuperscript{17} This principle is implicit in much of Marshall's language, particularly Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) at 561, and later decisions have depended directly on it. \textit{See, e.g.}, Delaware Tribal Business Comm. v. Weeks, 430 U.S. 73, 83-84 (1977); Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock, 187 U.S. 553, 565 (1903); United States v. Kagama, 118 U.S. 375, 384-85 (1886).
\textsuperscript{22} Both Congress and the executive have treated tribal self-government in Indian
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Fourth, the Marshall Court construed Indian treaties and federal statutes in favor of federal protection for and self-government by the tribes.23 From this principle have evolved several closely related rules of construction governing the interpretation of federal laws and treaties respecting Indian matters. Consensual agreements are to be interpreted as the Indians would have understood them,24 ambiguities or doubts about the meaning of statutory or treaty provisions are to be resolved in the Indians' favor,25 ambiguities are to be construed in favor of Indian reservation self-government as opposed to competing federal or state authority,26 and treaties and statutes are to be interpreted so as to carry out their protective purpose.27

A fifth principle, not specifically articulated by Marshall, was developed in later cases: the reservation to tribes of federally protected territory is intended for the Indians' economic self-support as well as their continued self-government. The fish, game, timber, minerals, waters, and other resources are implicitly reserved with the land itself to provide a productive economic base for the Indians.28
The Court in recent decisions has sustained each of these principles, and the *Oliphant* decision depended on the interplay of several of them.

B. *Tribal Courts and Laws*

The Suquamish Tribe, whose criminal jurisdiction was denied in *Oliphant*, intended to try the defendants for offenses defined similarly to those of a common law jurisdiction in a tribunal structured much like Anglo-American courts. Most other tribes have adopted legal machinery resembling that of Anglo-American society. The original legal systems of tribes were, of course, quite different. There were many causes for the demise of traditional systems, but a major rea-
son for the adoption of common law courts was the Courts of Indian Offenses. Beginning in 1883, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established these courts on some Indian reservations to undermine the authority of the traditional chiefs and to provide law and order where tribal systems had deteriorated. Because the Bureau appointed and paid the judges and police, it exercised significant influence over the system. But judges and police were tribal members, so self-government continued under an imposed structure.

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and other reforms of the 1930's were intended to revitalize tribal self-government. The Courts of Indian Offenses were retained and extended to more reservations. In 1935 the Secretary of the Interior issued a new code for

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need to confront the settlers, by the effects of European technology and trade, by missionaries and other private efforts to assimilate the Indians, and by social integration with non-Indians. See Institute for Government Research, The Problem of Indian Administration 757 (1928) [hereinafter cited as the Meriam Report].

34. W. Hagan, supra note 32, at 104–25; Meriam Report, supra note 33, at 769; F. Prucha, American Indian Policy in Crisis 208–11 (1976). Hagan states that two-thirds of the reservations had these courts in 1900, their initial peak period. The Meriam Report mentioned 30 such courts serving less than half the reservations in 1928. The courts then operated under very general regulations giving them jurisdiction over "misdemeanors" and the civil jurisdiction of a justice of the peace. Id.; Hagan, supra note 32, at 110, 173–74. The government began setting up Indian police forces in 1878. Id. at 23–50.

Congress never directly authorized these courts. In United States v. Clapox, 35 F. 575, 577 (D. Ore. 1888), their validity was sustained under the general authority of the Secretary of the Interior over Indian matters. Congress gave implicit sanction to the courts beginning in 1888 by appropriating money to pay for them. Oliphant, 435 U.S. at 196 n.7; W. Hagan, supra note 32, at 112; Meriam Report, supra note 33, at 769. Subsequent cases cast some doubt on the rationale of Clapox, see, e.g., Organized Village of Kake v. Egan, 369 U.S. 60, 63 (1962), but congressional ratification or acquiescence is a valid basis for the courts. See Ex parte Wilson, 140 U.S. 575, 576–77 (1891). Congress also recognized the courts in 25 U.S.C. § 1301 (1976).


37. Id. at 97, 113, 161, 174.


40. This fact may appear to contradict the prior textual sentence, but in the circumstances of that time, the only realistic alternatives were greater federal court authority or state jurisdiction. See W. Hagan, supra note 32, at 150; Meriam Report, supra note 33, at 46–47. The government chose the alternative most consistent with tribal self-government. See also note 43 infra.
the courts; with minor amendments it remains in force today. The code expressly authorized tribes to establish tribal courts and codes to supplant the secretarial code and courts. Most tribes have established their own judicial systems, using the secretarial code provisions as their point of departure. Consequently, tribal institutions generally resemble this common antecedent, although many tribal codes substantially augment the secretarial code.

II. THE DECISION IN OLIPHANT V. SUQUAMISH TRIBE

The Oliphant decision struck down two prosecutions initiated by the Suquamish Tribe against non-Indian residents of its treaty reservation in Washington. Defendant Oliphant was charged with assaulting a peace officer and resisting arrest, defendant Belgarde with reckless endangering and damaging tribal property. Both defendants unsuccessfully sought habeas corpus in the federal district court.

41. See 3 Fed. Reg. 952 (1938). This code was much more comprehensive than earlier regulations, but it eliminated most of the direct prohibitions of traditional tribal practices. It also restricted criminal jurisdiction to offenses occurring within reservations. See 25 C.F.R. § 11.2(a) (1978). The earlier regulations applied to Indians "belonging to the reservation." M. Price, supra note 35, at 141–42.


43. 25 C.F.R. § 11.1(e) (1978). The tribes always had that authority. In fact, the Five Civilized Tribes had established effective courts and codes during the nineteenth century. See notes 137–47 and accompanying text infra. The Bureau of Indian Affairs originally assumed that Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) tribes would immediately set up their own courts, and the 1935 Code was applied only to tribes who rejected the IRA. Concerning these tribes, see note 179 infra. When IRA tribes did not set up their own courts, the Bureau extended the code to all tribes. 3 Fed. Reg. 952 (1938).

44. The Oliphant opinion stated that 71 tribes operated tribal courts, while there were 30 Courts of Indian Offenses. 435 U.S. at 196 n.7. These figures are a bit misleading, however, because virtually all large tribes are in the former group and some courts in the latter category are operated only for limited purposes.


46. 435 U.S. at 192–93. The population of the reservation was 2,928 non-Indians, while only 50 Indians lived there, according to the Court. Id. at 193 n.1. This circumstance resulted from the federal allotment and opening laws which affected many reservations between 1854 and 1934. See notes 124–25 and accompanying text infra. At Port Madison, 63% of the land was non-Indian owned. Defendants in argument relied strongly on the reservation's demography and on the fact that non-Indian residents could not participate in tribal government. The tribe in response argued that it sought only to punish offenses directly affecting Indians. The Court recited the population figures, but the decision appears by its terms to apply to all reservations, including those where there are few non-Indians and the tribe owns all the land. See also notes 159–61 and accompanying text infra.

47. 435 U.S. at 194–95. The district court had habeas corpus jurisdiction pursuant
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The court of appeals affirmed in Oliphant’s case, one judge dissenting, holding that criminal jurisdiction is included in the tribe’s retained sovereignty. The Supreme Court reversed by a vote of six to two. The Supreme Court’s opinion seemed to approve the court of appeals’ statement of the underlying principle that the tribes retain those sovereign powers not expressly terminated by treaty or statute or “inconsistent with their status.” The Court in Wheeler v. United States, decided the same term, specifically relied on this principle. Thus, the reversal was not based on disagreement over the basic concept of tribal self-government.

A. Statutory Preemption: An Argument Declined by the Court

The Oliphant Court decided that retained criminal jurisdiction to try and punish non-Indians is “inconsistent” with the tribes’ status. It sidestepped a closely related argument pressed by defendants that federal statutes had preempted tribal power to punish non-Indians, although the Court did rely on these statutes to support its conclusion to 25 U.S.C. § 1303 (1976), conferring jurisdiction to test the legality of confinement under the authority of an Indian tribe. See also Colliflower v. Garland, 342 F.2d 369 (9th Cir. 1965); Ex parte Kenyon, 14 F. Cas. 353 (C.C.W.D. Ark. 1878).

48. Oliphant v. Schlie, 544 F.2d 1007 (9th Cir. 1976), rev’d sub nom. Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe, 435 U.S. 191 (1978). The dissenting opinion framed the issue as whether the tribal power “is consistent with the powers granted by Congress to tribal governments,” 544 F.2d at 1014, a formulation that apparently looked for an express federal grant for all tribal powers. To that extent the dissent differed conceptually from the Supreme Court majority and from the Court’s holding in United States v. Wheeler, 435 U.S. 313 (1978). See text accompanying note 53 infra. But the dissent considered and rejected the possibility of authority based on congressional acquiescence and, in so doing, cited a number of the factors relied on by the Supreme Court.

49. Justice Rehnquist delivered the Court’s opinion. Justice Marshall, joined by Chief Justice Burger, filed a one paragraph dissent concluding that tribal sovereignty to try and punish all offenders against tribal law had never been lost or withdrawn. They relied on the majority opinion of the court of appeals. Justice Brennan did not participate owing to illness. The Court noted that it had granted review of Belgarde’s case while it was still pending in the court of appeals. 435 U.S. at 195 n.5. The Court has jurisdiction to grant such review. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1254(1), 2101(e) (1977). Its own Rule 20 apparently limits such review to cases of “imperative public importance,” but in fact the Court has granted early review in a number of other cases where an issue identical to one already before the Court in another case was presented. R. STERN & E. GRESSMAN, SUPREME COURT PRACTICE § 4.21 (5th ed. 1978).

50. 435 U.S. at 208.


that the power was implicitly surrendered. An examination of this preemption contention is therefore pertinent.

In 1790 the first Congress included in the first Indian Trade and Intercourse Act a provision for federal punishment of any crime by non-Indians against Indians or their property within tribal territory. Earlier treaties made under the Confederation had similar provisions. In 1817, the general federal enclave law was extended to Indian tribal territory except for crimes by Indians against Indians, and that scheme has continued to the present for many interracial crimes. Defendants asked the Court to hold that this comprehensive and continuous federal jurisdiction preempted tribal authority that might otherwise exist. One of the authorities on which the Oliphant

53. 435 U.S. at 197 n.8, 201, 208.
54. Act of July 22, 1790, ch. 33, §§ 5-6, 1 Stat. 137, 138. The provision applied to offenses by “any citizen or inhabitant of the United States,” a phrase that appears comprehensive but in context clearly did not include Indians. The victim had to be a “peaceable and friendly Indian;” the offense had to occur within “any town, settlement or territory” belonging to a tribe. The offense was then punished in federal court according to the substantive law of the state or territorial district to which the defendant “may belong” applicable to like cases with white victims. The provision was continued with little change in the Act of Mar. 1, 1793, ch. 19, §§ 4-5, 1 Stat. 329, 329-30. The Act of May 19, 1796, ch. 30, §§ 4, 6, 15, 1 Stat. 469, 470-73, added specific penalties but was otherwise substantially the same. Those sections were continued unchanged in the Act of Mar. 3, 1799, ch. 46, §§ 4, 6, 15, 1 Stat. 743, 744-48, and the Act of Mar. 30, 1802, ch. 13, §§ 4, 6, 15, 2 Stat. 139, 141-44. The 1802 Act was the first “permanent” Indian Trade and Intercourse statute; i.e., it had no automatic expiration date as had the earlier acts. The cited sections of the 1802 Act were largely superseded by the 1817 Act. See note 56 and accompanying text infra.

55. Treaty with the Wyandot and Other Tribes, Jan. 9, 1789, art. 5, 7 Stat. 28. 29; Treaty with the Chickasaw, Jan. 10, 1786, art. 6, 7 Stat. 24, 25; Treaty with the Cherokee, Nov. 28, 1785, art. 7, 7 Stat. 18, 19.

56. Act of Mar. 3, 1817, ch. 92, 3 Stat. 383. This Act applied to offenses within “any town, district, or territory” belonging to an Indian tribe. Crimes by Indians against non-Indians, and by non-Indians against each other, were included. The Act expressly excluded crimes “by one Indian against another” and also specified that it should not be construed “to affect any treaty now in force” with any tribe.

The 1834 Indian Trade and Intercourse Act continued the 1817 provision with a few changes. Act of June 30, 1834, ch. 161, § 25, 4 Stat. 729, 733. The territorial application was changed to “Indian country,” a term defined in sections 1 and 24 of the Act, and the treaty proviso was deleted. Section 29 continued the prior act for tribes residing east of the Mississippi River. The Act of Mar. 27, 1854, ch. 26, § 3, 10 Stat. 270, added provisos excluding offenses by Indians already punished under tribal law and excluding offenses where exclusive jurisdiction was reserved to a tribe by treaty. See notes 85, 86 & 150 and accompanying text infra. The 1854 Act also specified that the applicable substantive laws did not include those passed for the District of Columbia. There have been no substantive amendments since 1854, but the codifications of 1873 and of the Federal Criminal Code in 1948 altered the wording. The present section, 18 U.S.C. § 1152 (1976), has not been changed since 1948. This article uses “Indian Country Crimes Act” as a convenient descriptive term for this statute, reflecting its terms since 1834.
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Court relied was predicated on this line of reasoning, rather than on the theory adopted in the Oliphant decision that the federal statutes reflect the lack of retained tribal authority.

There were a number of difficulties with defendants' preemption argument. The Indian Country Crimes Act was amended in 1854 to prohibit federal prosecution of an Indian already punished for the same act under tribal law. That amendment clearly contemplated concurrent tribal jurisdiction. Defendants pointed to the fact that the amendment applied only to Indians, an argument the Court relied on to support the rationale it actually accepted, that the tribes had no jurisdiction over non-Indians in the first place. But the 1854 amendment made the preemption argument difficult, for it could not succeed unless the pre-1854 statute were fully preemptive and the amendment created an exception only for offenses by Indians, or if the pre-1854 statute were preemptive only of jurisdiction over non-Indians. The words of the statute plainly do not support the latter view, and the former is contrary to the evidence. The event recited in the legislative history as giving rise to the 1854 amendment was a federal prosecution of an Indian already punished under tribal law for the same act, showing that tribes had actually exercised jurisdiction before 1854. The legislative history of the 1854 amendment suggests no congressional disapproval of this tribal jurisdiction, and the legislative history of the 1834 reenactment reflects a congressional understanding that the tribes had concurrent authority with the federal government. Contemporary federal policy generally supported tribal authority at least over tribe members.

Two other observations lead to the same conclusion. The later

57. See note 78 and accompanying text infra.
58. 435 U.S. at 201, 208, 211.
59. See note 56 supra.
61. See 435 U.S. at 203; notes 85 & 86 and accompanying text infra.
62. The House of Representatives was informed that federal prosecution of a Creek Indian for a liquor offense already punished by the tribe gave rise to the amendment. CONG. GLOBE 33d Cong., 1st Sess. 700-01 (1854). See note 86 infra.
64. This is demonstrated by the Indian-against-Indian exception in the Indian Country Crimes Act, see note 56 supra; by the 1854 double jeopardy exception; by another part of the 1854 Act removing all federal prosecutions of Indians for introducing liquor into Indian country; and by numerous statements of policy, such as those cited in note 63 supra.
Courts of Indian Offenses established by the Interior Department have consistently exercised concurrent jurisdiction over some offenses by Indians, showing an administrative understanding that the Indian Country Crimes Act does not preempt tribal authority. It is also well established that federal criminal laws do not ordinarily preempt state criminal jurisdiction over the same acts, so the general presumption is that Congress does not intend to preempt concurrent criminal jurisdiction.

The evidence thus weighs strongly against the view that the Indian Country Crimes Act preempted tribal authority. If any doubt remains, the general rule of construction requires that it be resolved in favor of retained tribal sovereignty. For these reasons, the Court correctly declined to adopt the preemption argument.

B. Absence of Retained Tribal Authority: The Rationale Adopted by the Court

The Court's conclusion that it is implicit in the status of Indian tribes that they did not retain authority to punish non-Indians was based on inferences from several sources. As already noted, the Court relied on the existence of comprehensive federal jurisdiction over the subject matter. The Court also pointed to the Indians' dependent relationship to the United States, which the Court viewed as inconsistent with retained jurisdiction over non-Indians. A third basis for the Court's conclusion was its review of some prior opinions and of

65. For a description of these courts, see notes 33-44 and accompanying text supra. It appears that general misdemeanor jurisdiction of these courts has applied irrespective of the race of the victim. 25 C.F.R. pt. 11 (1978); W. HAGAN, supra note 32, at 130.


67. See note 26 and accompanying text supra.

68. The Court did not directly refer to the preemption argument. See note 52 supra. The circumstances imply that the Court declined the argument, but that is not completely certain. The Court's actual rationale is similar and entirely moots the question as to non-Indian defendants. Preemption would have applied as well to those crimes by Indians which are subject to federal jurisdiction. See note 56 supra and notes 87-90 & 278 and accompanying text infra.

69. See note 54 and accompanying text supra.

70. 435 U.S. at 209-11; see notes 14-19 and accompanying text supra and notes 107-11 and accompanying text infra.

71. See notes 78-84 and accompanying text infra.
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legislative and executive actions apparently reflecting the belief that such authority did not exist.\textsuperscript{72} The Court also stressed that until recently few tribes had the governmental machinery necessary to comply with the Anglo-American requirements of due process of law and presumed that the government intended to guarantee its citizens due process of law within the territorial limits of the United States.\textsuperscript{73}

From all those sources the Court concluded that historically the "commonly shared presumption"\textsuperscript{74} was that Indian tribes did not retain authority to try and punish non-Indians within tribal territory. The Court then examined the particular treaty governing the relationship between the Suquamish Tribe and the United States and concluded that it was consistent with the presumption, so the tribe lacked the authority it had claimed.\textsuperscript{75}

The Court's pursuit of the common understanding on the scope of retained tribal authority is not objectionable in principle. As noted above, the doctrine of retained tribal sovereignty within tribal territory is based on the Marshall Court's perception of the common understanding of the tribes and the United States in making treaties, and the Court's construction of the Constitution, statutes, and the law of nations. No particular statute or treaty stated the rule in so many words.

The complement of the doctrine of retained tribal jurisdiction is the exclusion of powers generally understood not to be retained. What is "generally understood" necessarily includes the understanding of the Indians as well as the United States, because treaties are consensual documents. No Indian treaty has ever been construed based on hidden or technical meanings known only to the federal negotiators.\textsuperscript{76} The duty of the federal government to protect the Indians requires that, while searching for a general understanding, the Indians be accorded the benefit of doubts.\textsuperscript{77} But this affects only the clarity of proof required. The persuasiveness of the \textit{Oliphant} opinion must depend on whether the historical record is as clear as the Court said it was:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{72} See notes 85–106 and accompanying text infra.
  \item \textsuperscript{73} 435 U.S. at 210–11.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} \textit{Id.} at 196–97, 206.
  \item \textsuperscript{75} \textit{Id.} at 206–08 (construing the Treaty of Point Elliott, Jan. 22, 1855, 12 Stat. 927).
  \item \textsuperscript{76} To the contrary, the accepted rules of construction require that treaties be interpreted as the Indians understood them, see note 24 supra, and that ambiguities be resolved in the Indians' favor, see note 25 supra.
  \item \textsuperscript{77} See notes 18 & 19 and accompanying text supra.
\end{itemize}
C. The Oliphant Opinion Examined

The prior expressions of legal opinion relied on by the Court are thin support for the Oliphant decision. The one judicial precedent cited, a district court holding in 1878, relied on preemption by the federal criminal statutes, a position which the Oliphant Court declined to adopt.\textsuperscript{78} Even this preemption rationale was at best an alternative holding.\textsuperscript{79} An 1834 opinion of the Attorney General, which depended primarily on the construction of a particular treaty, based its

\textsuperscript{78} 435 U.S. at 200 (citing \textit{Ex parte} Kenyon, 14 F. Cas. 353 (C.C.W.D. Ark. 1878)). \textit{Kenyon} involved a prosecution by the Cherokee Nation of Kenyon, a white man, for larceny of a horse. The court's opinion concluded in one sentence that the Indian court had no jurisdiction, because "to give this court jurisdiction of the person of an offender, such offender must be an Indian and the one against whom the offense is committed must also be an Indian. Rev. St. 1873, § 2146." 14 F. Cas. at 355. The cited statute is now the Indian-against-Indian exception of 18 U.S.C. § 1152 (1976). That reference and the court's language make it clear that the \textit{Kenyon} court viewed tribal jurisdiction as limited by the statute. In its reference to \textit{Kenyon}, the \textit{Oliphant} opinion obscured this rationale by quoting the passage above but omitting the part about the victim. Since Indian courts have exercised jurisdiction over interracial and "victimless" crimes by Indians, the \textit{Kenyon} view was at least overbroad. The judge who decided \textit{Kenyon} reached the same conclusion in \textit{Ex parte} Morgan, 20 F. 298 (W.D. Ark. 1883), a case not cited by the \textit{Oliphant} Court nor in any brief to it. The \textit{Morgan} opinion makes the court's preemption view very clear. \textit{Id.} at 308. The opinion is very doubtful on several issues beyond the scope of this article.

\textsuperscript{79} The defendant's race was the second of three grounds for the court's decision in \textit{Ex parte} Kenyon, 14 F. Cas. 353 (C.C.W.D. Ark. 1878). The court's first basis was its conclusion that the alleged offense had been committed outside the territory of the Cherokee Nation. 14 F. Cas. at 354–55. The third ground was a response to the Cherokees' reliance on the Treaty with the Cherokee Indians, July 19, 1866, 14 Stat. 115. Article 13 agreed to the future establishment of U.S. courts in Cherokee Territory, provided, that the judicial tribunals of the [Cherokee] nation shall be allowed to retain exclusive jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases arising within their country in which members of the nation, by nativity or adoption, shall be the only parties, or where the cause of action shall arise in the Cherokee nation, except as otherwise provided in this treaty. 14 Stat. at 119. Kenyon had been an adopted member of the Cherokee Nation, so this clause was at least relevant. The court concluded, however, that Kenyon had become a domiciliary of Kansas and ceased to be subject to tribal authority. The court said the same conclusion would have applied to a member of the Cherokee Nation by blood. That view was certainly wrong, because the Cherokees claimed that the offense had been committed in their territory before Kenyon left. In \textit{Ex parte} Morgan, 20 F. 298, 308 (W.D. Ark. 1883), the court apparently held that treaty clause to be preempted also. Later Supreme Court decisions to the contrary are cited in note 148 \textit{infra}.

The \textit{Oliphant} opinion placed great reliance on the \textit{Kenyon} decision, even giving biographical data about its author, Judge Isaac C. Parker. 435 U.S. at 200 n.10. The apparent reason was to show that Judge Parker was in a position to know what he was talking about. This part of the \textit{Oliphant} opinion is peculiar. As stated in note 78 \textit{supra}, the \textit{Kenyon} rationale is not at all certain, and the Court's quote from it is misleading. The Court does not usually rely very much on lower court decisions. Judge Parker served
view in large part on the doubtful supposition that concurrent jurisdiction was impossible, because a citizen could not have divided "allegiance." This divided allegiance argument was rejected by a later Attorney General's opinion sustaining tribal civil jurisdiction over non-Indians, though the 1834 opinion was favorably mentioned in passing. Felix Cohen's 1942 Handbook of Federal Indian Law stated that jurisdiction to punish non-Indians had not been allowed by the federal courts but cited only the 1878 case. A 1970 opinion of the Interior Solicitor, later withdrawn, also relied entirely on past decisions. None of these legal opinions articulated the rationale relied on by the Oliphant Court.

The Court relied on inferences drawn from two pieces of legislation in which Congress addressed criminal jurisdiction only over Indians. The first, the 1854 amendment to the Indian Country Crimes Act, is some support for the Court's decision. In reaction to the federal prosecution of an Indian already punished by his tribe, Congress prohibited such double punishment but did not similarly protect non-

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80. 2 Op. ATT'Y GEN. 693, 695 (1834), cited in 435 U.S. at 199. The opinion concerned an alleged offense by a black woman who was the slave of a white resident of Choctaw country, but their status does not otherwise appear. The opinion interpreted the Treaty with the Choctaw, Sept. 27, 1830, 7 Stat. 333. Article 4 indicated the tribe's understanding that it did not have criminal jurisdiction over white men "who shall come into their nation." See notes 95 & 145 and accompanying text infra. The opinion assumed that the Indian Country Crimes Act was passed on the premise that tribal jurisdiction did not extend to whites.

81. 7 Op. ATT'Y GEN. 174, 177-78 (1855). This opinion recognized that concurrent jurisdiction is unrelated to allegiance and is in fact an ordinary feature of a federal system.


84. As noted in text accompanying note 81 supra, the only view similar to the Court's was expressed in a portion of the 1834 Attorney General's opinion that relied on supposed problems of "divided allegiance." 2 Op. ATT'Y GEN. 693, 695 (1834).
The nature of the amendment, however, does not reflect a deliberative overview of the issue. Reliance on the second legislative action, the 1885 enactment of the Indian Major Crimes Act, is perhaps the weakest point in the Court's reasoning. The Court said that if the 1885 statute were preemptive of tribal authority, then it would be anomalous that non-Indians were not addressed as well. But the Court declined to find the statute preemptive, reserving the question, and, instead, acknowledged that the legislative history of that statute expressly favored retained concurrent authority of the tribes. Furthermore, the terms of the statute which the Court suggested might be preemptive are similar to terms in the Indian Country Crimes Act, which the Court declined to hold is preemptive of tribal authority. Actual practice under the 1885 law also raises doubts about its preemptive effect.

85. See notes 56 & 62 and accompanying text supra.

86. The amendment was added to a bill concerning the federal courts in Arkansas in the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, which made no written report. The bill as amended passed the Senate without discussion or debate. CONG. GLOBE 33d Cong., 1st Sess. 185, 473, 580-81 (1854). In the House it received no committee review and passed the full House with a brief explanation reciting as its cause the federal prosecution of a Creek Indian for a liquor offense after tribal punishment. Id. at 700-01. The Act repealed federal jurisdiction entirely over that type of offense, and the double jeopardy wording was inapt and not tied directly to the general Indian Country Crimes provision. We may owe the survival and juxtaposition of the double jeopardy exception as much to the compilers of the Revised Statutes of 1873, who arranged the words in their present form, as to the Congress of 1854.


88. Both acts refer to the laws applicable to places within the "exclusive jurisdiction of the United States," which the Court has logically held identifies the laws incorporated, not the nature of the jurisdiction extended. Ex parte Wilson, 140 U.S. 575 (1891). The Major Crimes Act also specifies that the offender shall be subject to the same "penalties" (as well as "laws") as persons committed offenses within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States. But in context and in light of the legislative history, it is more reasonable to interpret this phrase also as an incorporation by reference rather than a preemption.

89. See note 68 and accompanying text supra.

90. The Major Crimes Act was passed about the same time as the Courts of Indian Offenses were begun. See notes 34-45 and accompanying text supra. The jurisdiction of the latter has been confined to minor crimes, mostly ones generally categorized as misdemeanors, and tribal courts have followed the same practice. But some of these tribal offenses punish the same offenses as the Major Crimes Act or punish acts which are "lesser included offenses" within the latter. E.g., compare 25 C.F.R. § 11.42 (1978) (theft) with 18 U.S.C. § 661 (1976) (larceny, including petty larceny); see also 25 C.F.R. §§ 11.39 (assault and battery), 11.75 (attempted rape) (1978). Within one sovereignty, jeopardy for an included offense will preclude prosecution for the greater crime. Waller
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Thus the Court's argument based on the 1885 statute either begs the question or is wrong.

A third bill enacted in 1960 included legislative history which tends to support the Court's conclusion, although it is rather distant from the years in which the basic rules were formulated to be of much significance. It is also susceptible to a more neutral interpretation, that Congress was merely expressing the scope of tribal jurisdiction then being exercised, not the scope of the tribes' full authority.

The Court also cited as support for its decision the pattern of treaty provisions which addressed the matter of tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians to any degree. Here the decision is on safer ground. The Court showed that early treaties acknowledged tribal authority to punish illegal white settlers, and one treaty included an explicit indication that the tribe knew it needed federal assent to general criminal

v. Florida, 397 U.S. 387 (1970). Also, the Court in Keeble v. United States, 412 U.S. 205 (1973), held that a Major Crimes Act defendant has a right to a "lesser included offense" jury instruction, thus invading the traditional field of tribal misdemeanors. See also M. Price, Law and the American Indian 10-11 (1973).

Another reality is the reluctance of some federal prosecutors, often located far from reservations, to prosecute Major Crimes Act cases. See NAICJA, supra note 31, at 33. The tribes thus deal with what are felonies in fact under their own codes of lesser crimes. Since 1968 federal law has limited tribal punishments to six months imprisonment and a $500 fine, 25 U.S.C. § 1302(7) (1976), and this limits tribal effectiveness in dealing with serious crimes or habitual offenders. But sentences for lesser felonies often do not result in actual time served exceeding six months, and the tribes may be able to impose longer periods of probation.

It may be argued that the act preempts some tribal penal authority, such as the right to impose the death penalty. See United States v. Whaley, 37 F. 145 (C.C.S.D. Cal. 1888). But that sort of preemption applies to the acts of tribal authorities, not to jurisdiction over defendants in a tribal court, so it does not support the Oliphant rationale.

91. See 435 U.S. at 205-06 (quoting legislative history leading to the enactment of 18 U.S.C. § 1165 (1976)). See also notes 269-71 and accompanying text infra.


93. As described in notes 33-45 and accompanying text supra, tribal legal machinery had long been dominated by the Courts of Indian Offenses established by the Interior Department and, at least after 1935, the jurisdiction of those courts clearly applied only to Indian defendants. Tribal courts did not in fact assert jurisdiction over non-Indians until after 1960. See Oliphant, 435 U.S. at 196-97 & n.7. Thus the 1960 statements that the tribes did not have jurisdiction over non-Indian trespassers accurately described the scope of tribal authority then being exercised, irrespective of potential authority.

94. 435 U.S. at 197 n.8. Such clauses were common to all treaties made between 1785 and 1795, except for those in New York State. It is doubtful that the clauses survived the later removal treaties under which many of these tribes were moved to the Indian Territory. See notes 142-45 and accompanying text infra. The first treaty to break the pattern was the Treaty with the Sacs & Foxes, Nov. 3, 1804, 7 Stat. 84. Between 1795 and 1804, all treaties outside New York were with tribes which had previous treaties including illegal settler clauses.
jurisdiction over whites. Many treaties, including the one construed in *Oliphant*, expressly stated that the tribes would turn over offenders to the United States. Yet the treaty pattern is not as certain an indication of the absence of tribal sovereignty as the Court suggested. Each treaty is a particular bargain to be separately construed. Some treaties expressly addressed tribal authority over non-Indians. Many others were silent on the matter of criminal jurisdiction over whites in tribal territory. Most of the agreements to turn over offenders are equally consistent with an intent to extradite fugitives, indicating concurrent jurisdiction, as with the Court’s inference.

Another source the Court invoked was the Western Territory Bill, proposed in 1834 to establish the Indian Territory as a self-governing territory under a confederation of the tribes. That bill, which did not pass, would have expressly precluded tribal authority to punish agents of the government, travelers, and others residing among the tribes on government business or pursuant to treaty stipulation. The legislative history, as the Court noted, viewed that provision as necessary for the protection of persons for whom the government was responsible. But what the Court does not mention is that illegal

95. 435 U.S. at 197 (citing Treaty with the Choctaws, Sept. 27, 1830, art. 7 Stat. 333). *See also* note 80 *supra*.

96. 435 U.S. at 207. These provisions were common from the earliest treaties, e.g., Treaty with the Cherokees, Nov. 28, 1785, art. 7. 7 Stat. 18. See 435 U.S. at 197 n.8. Other treaties included explicit clauses providing that non-Indians who committed offenses against Indians should be delivered up to the United States, and the government undertook to punish them "in like manner as if the injury had been done to a white man." Treaty with the Osages, Nov. 10, 1808, art. 9, 7 Stat. 107, 109.


99. This was true of the *Oliphant* treaty except for the agreement to turn over offenders. 435 U.S. at 206; *see* note 96 and accompanying text *supra*; note 100 and accompanying text *infra*.

100. For example, the Treaty with the Sacs & Foxes, Nov. 3, 1804, art. 6, 7 Stat. 84, 86, relied on by the *Oliphant* Court, 435 U.S. at 197 n.8, said that the government agreed to remove illegal settlers upon the Indians’ complaint. Any implication that such was an exclusive remedy is very weak. In article 11 of the same treaty the tribes agreed to the safety of “traders and other persons traveling through their country under the authority of the United States,” but nothing was said about illegal settlers.

101. *See* H.R. REP. NO. 474, 23d Cong., 1st Sess. 36 (1834), *cited in* 435 U.S. at 201 n.12; R. SATZ, *AMERICAN INDIAN POLICY IN THE JACKSONIAN ERA* 138-42 (1975). The proposed Western Territory was to include most of what is now Oklahoma, Kansas and portions of Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming. *Id.* at 141.


103. *Id.*
settlers or non-Indians adopted into tribal societies would have been subject to tribal punishment.\textsuperscript{104} They were treated as voluntarily submitting to tribal authority.\textsuperscript{105}

Because the Western Territory Bill did not pass, reliance on it for any purpose is uncertain. There is no indication that any issue relevant to \textit{Oliphant} caused it to fail, and in any case the bill and its history only support the Court's conclusion with respect to persons directly under the government's responsibility.\textsuperscript{106} Also, the fact that Congress proposed to preclude tribal authority over certain non-Indians is equally consistent with the view that these persons were otherwise believed to be under tribal authority.

The Court viewed the tribes' dependent relationship with the United States as support for its position.\textsuperscript{107} As pointed out above, the treaties commonly expressed the relationship in terms stating that the tribal party acknowledged itself to be under the protection of the United States, and Congress undertook to provide that protection by federal criminal laws.\textsuperscript{108} If the Court meant to read the treaty language as an implied cession or relinquishment of the right to punish non-Indians under all circumstances, the conclusion is doubtful. In \textit{Worcester v. Georgia} the Marshall Court rejected these treaty terms as a general surrender of self-government and analogized the treaties to protectorate treaties in Europe between strong and weak states.\textsuperscript{109} So understood, the dependent relationship supports a partial surren-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{104} This might be gathered by implication from the provisions just cited; other passages in the House Report make the intent clear. H.R. REP. No. 474, \textit{supra} note 101, at 18, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{105} \textit{Id.}
\item \textsuperscript{106} The Court said that the Western Territory Bill "contrasted markedly" with the lack of similar provisions respecting "other reservations, which frequently bordered non-Indian settlements." 435 U.S. at 203. This reasoning is based on two erroneous assumptions. First, some treaties had clauses which also reflected the government's recognition that it had particular responsibility for persons lawfully present in tribal territory as opposed to all non-Indians, drawing the same distinctions as the bill. \textit{E.g.}, Treaty with the Cherokees, Dec. 29, 1835, art. 5, 7 Stat. 478, 481; Treaty with the Sacs & Foxes, Nov. 3, 1804, art. 11, 7 Stat. 84, 86. Second, the contemporary policy of the government was the removal of the tribes to the Indian Territory. Act of May 28, 1830, ch. 148, 4 Stat. 411; R. SATZ, \textit{supra} note 101, ch. 1–4. That policy expressed an abhorrence for reservations which "bordered non-Indian settlements" and sought to eliminate them. \textit{See}, \textit{e.g.}, United States v. Forty-Three Gallons of Whisky, 93 U.S. 188 (1876). The modern use of the term "Indian reservation" as a place set apart for the Indians dates only to the 1850's. Therefore the Court's conclusion makes sense only if the 1834 bill is contrasted to events of the 1850's and later, a very weak inference.
\item \textsuperscript{107} 435 U.S. at 209–11.
\item \textsuperscript{108} \textit{See} note 14 and accompanying text \textit{supra}.
\item \textsuperscript{109} 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 560–61 (1832), \textit{discussed at} notes 20–22 and accompanying text \textit{supra}.
\end{itemize}
der of authority. When powerful states enter into protectorate relationships with weak ones, agents of the former are generally not punishable by the latter. Although the Indians did not know European international law, the circumstances of the treaties make it reasonable to assume the Indians' understanding that the soldiers and other agents of the United States who came among them pursuant to the treaties would not be subject to their punishments. To that extent the Court's inference from the dependent relationship is justified.

Finally, the Court relied on the fact that in 1789 no tribes had governmental structures suited to guarantee an accused person Anglo-American due process of law before being deprived of life, liberty, or property. By 1834, when the basic laws were last reenacted, Congress recognized that still only a few tribes had written laws and courts. As the Court pointed out, the Bill of Rights was a basic achievement of the Nation's recently obtained independence, and it is highly unlikely that the United States would allow persons under its

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110. There was (and is) no universal, implicit rule to this effect. See, e.g., J. Briery, THE LAW OF NATIONS 133-34 (6th ed. 1963). Most international agreements provide for some form of diplomatic immunity for envoys and consuls. Nineteenth century treaties establishing protectorates and other clearly unequal relationships commonly included clauses exempting broader classes of the stronger state's citizens from the criminal jurisdiction of the weaker state. See, e.g., Convention, Feb. 1, 1858, The Netherlands-Siak Sri Indrapoera, art. 12, 118 Consol. Treaty Series 293. 299: Treaty, July 3, 1844, China-United States, art. 21, 8 Stat. 592. 596-97; Treaty, May 7, 1830, United States-Ottoman Porte, art. 4, 8 Stat. 408, 409; Secretary of State v. Charlesworth, [1901] App. Cas. 373 (P.C.). The existence of these clauses suggests a common understanding on the part of those versed in international law analogous to the Oliphant Court's finding. The absence of like clauses in Indian treaties gives rise to a competing argument, but in context the former inference is more compelling. Both in terminology and in circumstances, the Indian treaties were more unequal than international protectorate treaties. Exemptions from local jurisdiction in international treaties, no matter how unequal, involve extraterritorial jurisdiction, while tribal territory is within the United States.

Some international protectorate treaties also included clauses addressing civil jurisdiction. See, e.g., Papayanni v. Russian Steam Nav. & Tr. Co., 2 Moore, P.C., N.S. 161 (1863). But such clauses were less common than criminal clauses and were less uniform. Some covered only matters not involving citizens of the weaker state; others addressed only particular subjects, such as the death of a citizen.

111. This much can be implied from the treaty language placing the tribes under the protection of the United States; the officials of the United States were the agents to carry out that protection. Most treaties were made under sufficiently unequal circumstances to support the Indians' understanding of the protection clauses.

112. 435 U.S. at 197, 202, 209-11.

113. H.R. REP. No. 474, supra note 101, at 91, quoted in 435 U.S. at 197. The only two tribes which had then established legal systems similar to the whites' were the Choc-taws and the Cherokees, both under the leadership and influence of descendants of intermarried whites. See M. Young, REDSKINS, RUFFLESHIRTS & REDNECKS ch. 1 (1961).
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lawful protection and within its borders to be tried and punished without such protections as the rights to trial upon evidence before an independent tribunal, to confrontation of witnesses, and to freedom from cruel and unusual punishment and arbitrary search and seizure.\footnote{114}{435 U.S. at 210. The Court itself assumed the absolute worth of due process by describing present day tribal courts' assimilation of it as demonstrating "dramatic advances over their historical antecedents." \textit{Id.}}

The Court's dependency and due process analyses are convincing, particularly the latter.\footnote{115}{It might be argued that the due process problem only disabled the tribes from trying non-Indians because they could not comply with due process protections, a disability that would be removed when they could do so. But it is far-fetched to assume any such understanding in the context of the early treaties. Also, the Court has held that the constitutional provisions which by their terms limit the state and federal governments do not apply to Indian tribes. Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez, 436 U.S. 49 (1978); Talton v. Mayes, 163 U.S. 376 (1896). In 1968 Congress imposed some of these limitations on tribes by statute. 25 U.S.C. §§ 1301–1303 (1976); \textit{Oliphant}, 435 U.S. at 195 n.6. \textit{See also} notes 241–44 and accompanying text \textit{infra}.}

They largely remove the doubts remaining after considering the Court's other reasons and precedents. The question remains whether the Court's reasoning justified its inclusion of all non-Indians or should have applied only to persons whose protection the government may be presumed to have intended. As we shall see, the early precedents make the decision more doubtful as applied to intruders and to non-Indians who became tribal members.

\textbf{D. The Scope of Due Process Protection}

The first step toward evaluating the breadth of the \textit{Oliphant} decision is to look at the federal laws and treaties governing non-Indian presence in tribal territory. In the early years, the federal policy intended the rigid separation of tribal territory from white settlements. The treaties reserved the land for the tribes' exclusive use,\footnote{116}{This was the intent behind all the treaties reserving land to tribes, with the possible exception of those after 1854 contemplating allotment. \textit{See} notes 124 & 125 and accompanying text \textit{infra}. The wording varied, but the implication in all was quite clear. \textit{See}, \textit{e.g.}, McClanahan v. Arizona Tax Comm'n, 411 U.S. 164, 174–75 (1973); Treaty with the Wyandot and Other Indian Tribes, Aug. 3, 1795, art. 5, 7 Stat. 49, 52 (Treaty of Greeneville).} and early treaties, as already noted, expressly allowed tribal punishment of illegal settlers.\footnote{117}{\textit{See} note 94 and accompanying text \textit{supra}.}

The treaty pattern was supported by statutes. Between 1796 and 1834, it was illegal for non-Indians to enter the treaty lands of the
powerful southeastern tribes without a federal passport,\textsuperscript{118} and federal law punished several kinds of trespass on all tribal lands.\textsuperscript{119} There was often a wide gap between these laws and their practical enforcement,\textsuperscript{120} but the legal separation of Indian country was so comprehensive that the Supreme Court in 1832 held that the laws of Georgia had "no force" within Cherokee territory in Georgia.\textsuperscript{121}

The 1834 statutory revisions altered the pattern to some extent. The passport requirement was repealed except for aliens.\textsuperscript{122} The Jackson administration’s policy was to move all tribal Indians away from white settlements, to vacant lands in the West.\textsuperscript{123} The dominant government policy remained one of complete separation, but it now relied on physical distance as much as legal rules.

After 1845, changing circumstances overtook the early policies. The United States acquired Texas, New Mexico, California, and Oregon, ending any idea of separating the tribes to the west of a frontier. In 1854 the government initiated a basic policy of breaking up tribal lands into individual holdings and trying to assimilate the Indians by making them into family farmers.\textsuperscript{124} This program, known as the allotment policy, contemplated that some land within tribal territory would become available for white ownership, either indirectly by sale from individual Indian allottees, or directly from the government.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{118} See section 3 of the Indian Trade and Intercourse statutes of 1796, 1799, and 1802, discussed in note 54 supra.

\textsuperscript{119} E.g., Act of Mar. 30, 1802, ch. 13, §§ 2, 5, 2 Stat. 139, 141–42.

\textsuperscript{120} F. Prucha, supra note 3, ch. 7.

\textsuperscript{121} Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 561 (1832).

\textsuperscript{122} Act of June 30, 1834, ch. 161, § 6, 4 Stat. 729, 730. That section was repealed by the Act of May 21, 1934, ch. 321, 48 Stat. 787.

\textsuperscript{123} See note 106 supra.


\textsuperscript{125} Some treaties provided for allotment of reservations followed by sale of some or all of the remainder. See, e.g., Treaty with the Kaskaskias, May 30, 1854, arts. 1–4, 10 Stat. 1082, 1082–83, construed in Kansas Indians, 72 U.S. (5 Wall.) 737, 759–61 (1867). The Indian allotments in Kansas were to be subject to such restrictions as the Secretary of the Interior might impose, Act of Mar. 3, 1859, ch. 82, § 11, 11 Stat. 430, and the Secretary made them inalienable. The General Allotment Act and related special acts and agreements provided that the Indian allotments would be held in trust for
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During the period when the allotment policy was pursued, the Supreme Court held that legal matters within reservations which had no effect on Indians were subject to state or territorial jurisdiction.126

In the early years, the period to which the Oliphant Court looked to discern its "commonly shared presumption," those persons present within tribal territory under federal authority included agents of the government, both civilian and military, licensed traders and missionaries, and travelers lawfully passing through.127 Others were either intruders or persons who joined tribal societies by marriage, adoption, or other recognition.

A common understanding that tribes could not punish persons in tribal territory under United States' authority, and that these persons would be under the government's protection, is consistent with the available evidence. There is no recorded instance in which a tribe in the formative years exercised lawful power to punish such persons either under a treaty provision or otherwise. The proposed 1834 Western Territory Bill and a few treaties which addressed this issue precluded tribal authority over these persons.128 The inferences available from international law and due process of law problems make the conclusion compelling.129

The situation of intruders—persons in tribal territory in violation of both federal and tribal law—is less certain. The government showed them much less solicitude. Treaty provisions allowed some tribes to punish illegal settlers, and federal laws punished illegal settlers on tribal lands and other trespassers.130 The 1834 Western Territory Bill would have omitted intruders from federal protection,131 and the inference from international law runs against protection of this class of persons. For these reasons a common under-

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127. These categories are referred to in various treaties, statutes, court opinions and other sources. See notes 98–106 supra.
128. See notes 101–06 and accompanying text supra.
129. See notes 109–14 and accompanying text supra.
130. See notes 94, 117–19 and accompanying text supra.
131. See notes 101–06 and accompanying text supra.
standing that the tribes were precluded from punishing intruders found in their territory is not convincingly shown by the sources relied on by the Court. Resolution of the problem depends on the inferred intent of the government to guarantee due process of law. If that intent was to include all who did not knowingly waive it by joining tribal societies, then even intruders should be within the protection. If, instead, the intent was to protect only persons whose presence the government authorized, as in the Western Territory Bill, then intruders should not be protected from tribal authority.

One circumstance which supports inclusion of intruders within the Oliphant holding is the matter of vengeance and retaliation on the frontier. Indian tribes were mostly small groups, and relations among them were governed by the laws of war, which included vengeance and depredations between warring states. Relations between frontier whites and the tribes were frequently similar. Although private white provocations were often the cause, Indian retaliation was greatly feared and was often in turn the pretext for violence. From the beginning, a basic goal of government policy was to suppress revenge, retaliation, depredations, and the like by both whites and Indians on the frontier. This is reflected in treaty clauses and in a number of provisions of the Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts. There is a reasonable inference from these sources that control over frontier raiding was meant to be a federal monopoly.

When considering the third group, non-Indians who became resident members of tribal societies, we first observe, as did the Oliphant Court, that in the early years most tribal societies were internally regulated by punishments largely different from the fines, lashes, imprisonment, and execution favored by the whites. Common methods were social ostracism, ridicule, forced restitution, religious controls, and banishment. The Oliphant decision did not mean that the tribes were unable to apply these measures to non-Indians; the issue was the criminal jurisdiction of tribal courts to try and punish.

132. The Oliphant Court referred briefly to this subject. 435 U.S. at 201.
135. 435 U.S. at 197. Flogging was a common punishment by local jurisdictions in the early 19th century, while imprisonment was much less common than today. See H. Barnes, The Story of Punishment 55–60, 150, 164 (1930).
136. See note 32 supra; W. Hagan, supra note 32, at 93, 123.
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Thus, to evaluate the application of *Oliphant* to non-Indians adopted as tribal members, it is necessary to look at situations in which tribes employed courts and penal sanctions. The earliest reported instances involved the five major tribes moved by the government from the southeast to the Indian Territory. These tribes had also early adopted whites who intermarried. The 1834 and 1855 opinions of the Attorney General previously discussed arose in Choc-taw country. The former expressed the view that the tribes would not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians even if they were tribal members, but, as discussed above, it based that view on the doubtful ground that a citizen could not have divided allegiance.

The Cherokee Nation was one of the first to adopt Anglo-American courts and punishments, together with formal rules recognizing adopted whites as tribal members. In 1835 the Treaty of New Echota set the pattern for Cherokee self-government in the Indian Territory. It supplanted the Cherokees' eastern treaties, which had earlier recognized the right to punish white intruders. Article 5 of the 1835 treaty arguably recognized tribal criminal jurisdiction over adopted, non-Indian members. A later treaty clearly recognized

137. These tribes were the Cherokees, the Creeks and Seminoles, and the Choctaws and Chickasaws, known from the Anglo-American perspective as the “Five Civilized Tribes.” The paired tribes are distantly related and shared common territory for a time. *See* note 145 *infra*. The first two tribes to establish Anglo-American style courts were the Choctaws and Cherokees. *See* note 113 *supra*.

138. *E.g.*, R. STRICKLAND, FIRE AND THE SPIRITS 49 (1975). Most of the authorities relied on by the *Oliphant* Court related to one of these tribes. *See* notes 62, 78–83 and accompanying text *supra*, note 148 *infra*.

139. *See* note 81 and accompanying text *supra*.

140. *Id*.


142. Treaty with the Cherokees, July 2, 1791, art. 8, 7 Stat. 39, 41; Treaty with the Cherokees, Nov. 28, 1785, art. 5, 7 Stat. 18, 19. Later treaties prior to removal to the west reaffirmed these, and the Court in *Worcester v. Georgia*, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515, 553, 556 (1832), viewed them as the principal treaties in force and referred specifically to the right to punish illegal settlers. In an 1819 treaty the United States undertook to remove and punish white intruders, although there is no indication that that was meant to supersede the earlier provisions. Convention with the Cherokee Nation, Feb. 27, 1819, art. 5, 7 Stat. 195, 197.

143. In relevant part, articles 5 and 6 stated:

*Article 5*. The United States . . . shall secure to the Cherokee nation the right by their national councils to make and carry into effect all such laws as they may deem necessary for the government and protection of the persons and property within their own country belonging to their people or such persons as have connected themselves with them: provided always that they shall not be inconsistent with the constitution of the United States and such acts of Congress as have been or may be passed regulating trade and intercourse with the Indians; and also, that they shall not be considered as extending to such citizens and army of the United States as
this right and seemed to assume that the 1835 treaty had included it. The other four tribes had the same right recognized later, as they too adopted Anglo-American forms of government. This jurisd-

may travel or reside in the Indian country by permission according to the laws and regulations established by the Government of the same.

Article 6. . . . The Cherokees shall . . . be protected against interruption and intrusion from citizens of the United States, who may attempt to settle in the country without their consent; and all such persons shall be removed from the same by order of the President of the United States. But this is not intended to prevent the residence among them of useful farmers mechanics and teachers for the instruction of Indians according to treaty stipulations.

Treaty with the Cherokees, Dec. 29, 1835, art. 5. 6. 7 Stat. 478, 481.

144. The treaty of July 19, 1866, stated:

Article XIII. The Cherokees also agree that a court or courts may be established by the United States in said Territory, with such jurisdiction and organized in such manner as may be prescribed by law: Provided, That the judicial tribunals of the [Cherokee] nation shall be allowed to retain exclusive jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases arising within their country in which members of the nation, by nativity or adoption, shall be the only parties, or where the cause of action shall arise in the Cherokee Nation, except as otherwise provided in this treaty.

Treaty with the Cherokees, July 19, 1866, art. 13, 14 Stat. 799, 803.

145. The Choctaw removal treaty specified self-government for the Choctaws in the west but made it clear that the tribe understood it did not have jurisdiction over "any white man who shall come into their nation, and infringe any of their national regulations." Treaty with the Choctaws, Sept. 30, 1830, art. 4. 7 Stat. 333. 333–34. See note 95 supra. There was no particular reference to non-Indian members, and the quoted language appears to describe visitors. The Creek removal treaty referred to tribal self-government in the west but did not refer to authority over whites or intruders. Treaty with the Creeks, Mar. 24, 1832, art. 14. 7 Stat. 366, 368. A supplemental treaty with the Creeks provided for placing removed Seminoles with the Creeks. Agreement with the Creeks, Feb. 14, 1833, art. 4. 7 Stat. 417, 419. A treaty with the Choctaw and Chickasaw placed the Chickasaws in Choctaw country. Convention between the Choctaws and Chickasaws, Jan. 17, 1837. 11 Stat. 573.

The 1855 treaty with the Choctaw and Chickasaw separated the tribes:

Article 7. So far as may be compatible with the Constitution of the United States and the laws made in pursuance thereof, regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, the Choctaws and Chickasaws shall be secured in the unrestricted right of self-government, and full jurisdiction, over persons and property, within their respective limits; excepting, however, all persons with their property, who are not by birth, adoption, or otherwise citizens or members of either the Choctaw or Chickasaw tribe, and all persons, not being citizens or members of either tribe, found within their limits, shall be considered intruders, and be removed from, and kept out of the same, by the United States agent, assisted if necessary by the military, with the following exceptions, viz: such individuals as are now, or may be in the employment of the government, and their families; those peacefully travelling, or temporarily sojourning in the country or trading therein, under license from the proper authority of the United States, and such as may be permitted by the Choctaws or Chickasaws, with the assent of the United States agent, to reside within their limits, without becoming citizens or members of either of said tribes.

Treaty with the Choctaws and Chickasaws, June 22, 1855, art. 7. 11 Stat. 611, 612. This provision was reaffirmed by a later treaty with the same tribes. Treaty with the Choctaws and Chickasaws, Apr. 28, 1866, arts. 38, 43, 14 Stat. 769, 779.
tion was preserved by statutes in 1889 and 1890, and abolished only upon the general dismantling of these tribes' courts in 1898.

Sources recognizing tribal jurisdiction over adopted tribal members, which the Oliphant Court does not mention, could possibly

The Treaty with the Creek and Seminole Tribes, Aug. 7, 1856, 11 Stat. 699, separated these tribes. Article 15 of this treaty was very similar to article 7 of the 1855 Choctaw and Chickasaw treaty quoted supra. This provision was implicitly continued by the Treaty with the Seminole Indians, Mar. 21, 1866, art. 7, 9, 14 Stat. 755, 758, 760, and the Treaty with the Creek Indians, June 14, 1866, art. 10, 12, 14 Stat. 785, 788, 790.

Some members of these five tribes had owned slaves before the Civil War. The four treaties made in 1866 abolished slavery and conferred the rights of tribal members on freed slaves. See F. COHEN, supra note 82, at 181–82.

A number of other tribes were settled on lands of the five tribes and some became members for many purposes. See, e.g., Cherokee Nation v. Journeycake, 155 U.S. 196 (1894).

146. The Act of Mar. 1, 1889, ch. 333, 25 Stat. 783, established a federal court in Indian Territory. Section 5 conferred on the court exclusive original jurisdiction over seven offenses against federal law defined in the Act except by one Indian against another, and section 6 conferred jurisdiction over civil causes of action except those “between persons of Indian blood only.” The exclusive criminal jurisdiction appeared to invade the treaty jurisdiction over non-Indian members described in the previous note, and the civil jurisdiction appeared to invade the exclusive civil jurisdiction of the Cherokee courts. See note 144 supra. But the Act of May 2, 1890, ch. 182, 26 Stat. 81, amended or clarified the 1889 Act. It reduced the Indian Territory to its eastern portion and established the remainder as the Territory of Oklahoma. Sections 29 through 31 altered the 1889 Act in several ways. A proviso to section 30 stated “that the judicial tribunals of the Indian nations shall retain exclusive jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases arising in the country in which members of the nation by nativity or by adoption shall be the only parties.” This Act preserved the prior tribal jurisdiction, with the possible exception of causes of action which “arise in the Cherokee Nation.” Alberty v. United States, 162 U.S. 499, 503 (1896).

147. The courts of these tribes were abolished by the Curtis Act. Act of June 28, 1898, ch. 517, § 28, 30 Stat. 495. See F. COHEN, supra note 82, at 429–30. Nonmember whites over whom the tribes had no criminal jurisdiction had entered tribal territory in overwhelming numbers, generating severe law and order problems and prompting abolition. R. STRICKLAND, supra note 138, at 175–82. Although there were special laws applicable, this history is additional support for the Court's holding as applied to nonmembers of the tribes.

148. The validity of tribal authority to prosecute non-Indian members was a necessary premise to the holding in Alberty v. United States, 162 U.S. 499, 500–05 (1896). See also Cherokee Intermarriage Cases, 203 U.S. 76, 82 (1906); Nofire v. United States, 164 U.S. 657 (1897); Westmoreland v. United States, 155 U.S. 545, 548 (1895); Ex parte Mayfield, 141 U.S. 107 (1891); G. SHIRLEY, LAW WEST OF FORT SMITH 183 (1961). The Oliphant Court quoted a passage from the Mayfield opinion, 435 U.S. at 204, which seemed to recognize the understanding that the United States had undertaken to protect non-Indians in tribal territory, thus supporting the Court’s due process rationale. See notes 112–14 and accompanying text supra. The Court also quoted another passage which in isolation might reach non-Indian tribal members but which read in the context of the full opinion and other cases does not. The Court in United States v. Wheeler, 435 U.S. 313, 322 (1978), said the tribes have criminal jurisdiction over “tribe members,” but it is doubtful whether the Court intended to refer to the adopted member question. See note 4 supra.
be distinguished on the ground that those persons legally became Indians upon adoption, but the Court has several times held to the contrary. The Court might also have said the right depended on express grants, but this is far from clear. The treaties apparently began to recognize the right as soon as it became relevant to do so. The situation of non-Indian members prior to the execution of these treaties is unclear, and the common provisions in the early treaties allowing punishment of illegal settlers are at least consistent with the view that non-Indians who voluntarily joined tribal societies subjected themselves to tribal laws. It is thus doubtful that the "commonly shared presumption" included non-Indian members of the tribes. Having voluntarily joined tribal societies, the government could assume that they had relinquished their claim to its protection.

The early pattern may be summarized as follows: the tribes had no authority to punish non-Indians lawfully present in tribal territory under federal authority and protection, jurisdiction over non-Indian members of tribal societies was extensively exercised by Indian Territory tribes, and the status of intruders was uncertain except under a few treaties.

E. The Position of Non-Indian Residents Under the Allotment Policy

How then do we classify non-Indians who became lawful residents of reservations under the later allotment policy? Most allotment

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149. The leading case is United States v. Rogers, 45 U.S. (4 How.) 567, 573 (1846). The Rogers Court left open the "obligations" of non-Indian members to tribal jurisdiction but sustained federal jurisdiction to prosecute them as non-Indians. See also 7 Op. ATT'Y GEN. 174, 184–85 (1855). The holding respecting federal jurisdiction was followed in Alberty v. United States, 162 U.S. 499, 501 (1896), and Westmoreland v. United States, 155 U.S. 545, 548 (1895).

150. See notes 94, 101–06 supra. Implied support for the contention that an express grant was needed might be sought in the proviso excepting from federal jurisdiction "any case where, by treaty stipulation, the exclusive jurisdiction over such offenses is or may be secured to the Indian tribes respectively." 18 U.S.C. § 1152 (1976). It is more likely, however, that the purpose of the proviso was to guarantee exclusive jurisdiction, rather than to grant any jurisdiction. The proviso was added as part of the Act of Mar. 27, 1854, ch. 26, § 3, 10 Stat. 270, 289. Curiously, there were at that time no treaties explicitly providing for exclusive tribal jurisdiction. But the proviso used specifically future language (the original terms were "exclusive jurisdiction may now or hereafter be secured to said Indian tribes") and treaties with exclusive jurisdiction clauses were made in 1855 and 1856. See note 145 supra. Concurrent jurisdiction, on the other hand, had been previously authorized under the illegal settler treaty clauses, see note 94 supra, and at least by the Cherokees over adopted members, see notes 143 & 149 and accompanying text supra.
schemes directly contemplated non-Indian settlement within the reservations on what was deemed to be "surplus" Indian land,\textsuperscript{151} and the resulting integration was an affirmative policy of the government.\textsuperscript{152} For purposes of criminal punishments, these settlers must be classified with those under federal protection.\textsuperscript{153} Some allotment schemes resulted in non-Indian ownership indirectly; Indian allotments were made alienable and were subsequently acquired by non-Indians. The same conclusion of federal protection is likely because alienability was a deliberate policy of the government.\textsuperscript{154} Furthermore, the allotment schemes presupposed the eventual withering away of the reservations and tribal authority through assimilation of the Indians, a view that was not abandoned until 1934.\textsuperscript{155}

The Port Madison Reservation, the site of the \textit{Oliphant} cases, is more than half non-Indian-owned as a result of allotment and sale, and the reservation's population is overwhelmingly non-Indian.\textsuperscript{156} Both defendants were residents as a consequence of the allotment policy. The Suquamish Tribe attempted to base its jurisdiction on the implied consent of non-Indians present on the reservation.\textsuperscript{157} For the reasons already discussed, residents under the allotment policy should be classified with those under government protection. Therefore tribal criminal authority over the defendants was properly precluded.

The same reasoning applies to most non-Indians within reservations today. Tribal adoption of resident non-Indians is no longer prac-

\textsuperscript{151} See notes 124 & 125 and accompanying text supra.
\textsuperscript{152} Mattz v. Arnett, 412 U.S. 481, 496 (1973).
\textsuperscript{153} Their situation was very similar to the blacksmiths, farmers, and teachers who were to reside among and assist the tribes under the terms of many treaties and who were clearly under the same protective policy as government agents. See notes 98, 102, 103 & 127 supra; cf. 25 U.S.C. § 48 (1976) (authorizing the Secretary to allow tribes to supervise such persons). Lawful travelers had generally been treated as under government protection anyway, and this would extend to those visiting resident non-Indians. See notes 100, 102, 118 & 122 and accompanying text supra.
\textsuperscript{154} Allotment purchasers were not the direct instruments of government policy in the same sense as described in the previous note. But the laws allowing sale of allotments generally took effect later than the reservation opening laws, and alienability was an integral part of the basic assimilation scheme of the allotment laws. After an allotment was taken out of trust, the allottee was made subject to state laws. 25 U.S.C. § 349 (1976). That policy was later reversed within reservations. Moe v. Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, 425 U.S. 463, 477–79 (1976). It nevertheless suggests an original understanding that non-Indian purchasers of allotments were an anticipated part of the allotment scheme.
\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Oliphant}, 435 U.S. at 193 n.1, 202 n.13; see note 46 supra.
\textsuperscript{157} 435 U.S. at 193 n.2.
ticed, and most reservations established by agreement with the tribes have been opened by allotment. Some reservations, especially in the southwest, were never allotted and opened, and distinct portions of other reservations were never opened. On these reservations, a continued tribal right to try and punish non-Indian intruders was not clearly precluded by the reasoning or precedents of the Oliphant decision. But the Court's conclusion appears to deny the authority anyway.

III. TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY IN NONCRIMINAL MATTERS

The Oliphant decision established that no tribal court authority exists to punish non-Indians except where Congress grants it. Tribal authority in other than criminal cases, however, was not determined. The Court was careful to limit its statement of the issue to criminal matters, and the opinions in other cases decided the same term reaffirmed the reasoning of prior cases sustaining tribal civil jurisdiction over non-Indians.

In most respects the Oliphant Court's rationale does not apply to noncriminal cases. As discussed above, an important basis for the

158. One factor discouraging the practice was the enactment in 1888 of an act prohibiting intermarried white men from acquiring rights in tribal property. 25 U.S.C. § 181 (1976).

159. The aridity of some reservations saved them from allotment; in other cases better functioning tribal economies led to the same result. Both factors were present in the southwest.


161. See also notes 130-34 & 147 and accompanying text supra; notes 194-96 and accompanying text infra.

162. As discussed in Part II-D, the Oliphant rationale applies less certainly to intruders, but the Court's opinion appears to include all non-Indians.

163. 435 U.S. at 195. The Court's opinion included a few comments which taken in isolation can be cited for or against application of the decision to noncriminal matters. The Court cited with approval Morris v. Hitchcock, 194 U.S. 384 (1904), a leading case sustaining tribal authority to tax non-Indians within a reservation. 435 U.S. at 206: see note 186 and accompanying text infra. However, the Court quoted the concurring opinion of Justice Johnson in Fletcher v. Peck, 10 U.S. (6 Cranch.) 87, 147 (1810), to the effect that the tribes lost "the right of governing every person within their limits except themselves." 435 U.S. at 209. The Court also mentioned civil and criminal jurisdiction together in a footnote that rejected any relevance of the Indian Civil Rights Act. 435 U.S. at 195 n.6. In the context of the full opinion, none of these references can be taken as an indication of the Court's view in noncriminal cases.


165. A number of relevant distinctions between civil and criminal matters were discussed in 7 Op. ATT'Y GEN. 174 (1855), cited in 435 U.S. at 199. See note 81 and accompanying text supra.
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decision was the presumed intent of the government to guarantee its citizens due process of law. This concern has traditionally been less important in civil litigation than criminal prosecution.166

Federal law has always been less comprehensively involved in civil than in criminal jurisdiction. In the treaties, the tribes placed themselves under the protection of the United States, and the government implicitly undertook to provide that protection. This duty of protection was fulfilled by comprehensive criminal laws governing interracial matters.167 But most civil matters are not within the government’s duty of protection,168 and Congress has never attempted to supply a legal system governing civil relationships between Indians and non-Indians in tribal territory.169

The denial of tribal criminal authority is thus set against a backdrop of comprehensive federal court authority.170 A similar denial of tribal civil authority would leave most interracial matters to state or, formerly, territorial law.171 But federal policy in the formative years consistently excluded state authority over Indians in tribal territory.172 The states were recognized as hostile to the Indians.173 As the Supreme Court stated in Rice v. Olson, “The policy of leaving Indians free from state jurisdiction and control is deeply rooted in the Na-
tion's history." Thus, the absence of federal statutes governing the field impairs any inference that the tribes were presumed not to have civil authority in interracial matters. 

Finally, as noticed below, tribal authority over non-Indians has historically been sustained in a variety of circumstances where non-Indians enter into voluntary relationships with Indians.

A. The Indian Reorganization Act and Prior Precedents

In 1934 Congress enacted the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). A basic purpose was to revitalize tribal self-government by establishing a framework in federal law for tribal governments under written codes. Some tribes, especially those which then had better functioning tribal governments, declined to adopt the federal structure, but a majority of tribes chose to operate pursuant to the IRA's governmental provisions.

The Act specified certain tribal powers but largely relied on the existing, retained sovereignty of the tribes. Like most Indian legislation, the IRA is administered by the Interior Department. Shortly

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175. Oliphant held that criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians is inconsistent with the tribes' dependent status. See note 107 and accompanying text supra. In United States v. Wheeler, 435 U.S. 313 (1978), the Court identified from its precedents two other aspects of original tribal sovereignty whose exercise would be inconsistent with their dependent status. "Indian tribes can no longer freely alienate to non-Indians the lands they occupy." 435 U.S. at 326; see also notes 15 & 16 and accompanying text supra. Also, Indian tribes "cannot enter into direct commercial or governmental relations with foreign nations." 435 U.S. at 326. Because these three limitations on tribal sovereignty are based on the tribes' dependent relationship with the federal government, they do not imply any federal consent to state jurisdiction over Indian country.
178. The bill which became the Indian Reorganization Act was to apply to all tribes, but the opposition of many tribal spokesmen led to a section which provided for a tribal referendum on whether or not to accept the Act. 25 U.S.C. § 478 (1976).
179. A 1947 report stated that 181 tribes accepted the Act, 77 declined it and 14 others came under it because they had not voted. T. Haas, Ten Years of Tribal Government Under the IRA (1947). Tribes in Alaska and Oklahoma are governed by special sections, and figures for them are not included. Of those accepting the Act, all but a few operate pursuant to it. Id.
180. 25 U.S.C. § 476 (1976). The second paragraph of that section begins: "In addition to all powers vested in any Indian tribe or tribal council by existing law . . . ." In its submission to Congress of the bills which became the IRA, the Interior Department described these powers as the "right of an Indian tribe to deal with many matters affecting the lives and property of its members." Hearing on S. 2755 Before the Senate Comm. on Indian Affairs, 73d Cong., 2d Sess. 24 (1934).
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after its enactment, the Department published an opinion detailing the scope of retained tribal powers and the precedents sustaining them.\textsuperscript{181} The matter was further elaborated in Felix Cohen's \textit{Handbook of Federal Indian Law}.\textsuperscript{182} And the Supreme Court favorably cited the Interior Department opinion in \textit{United States v. Wheeler}, in a context directly relevant to the decision,\textsuperscript{183} shortly after \textit{Oliphant} was decided.

The 1934 Interior opinion is thus an authoritative starting point for analysis of tribal authority over non-Indians in civil matters. The opinion dealt with tribal government authority in general, addressing the particular question of jurisdiction over non-Indians only on some subjects. Prominent among these were the powers of licensing and taxation. The opinion concluded that tribes may tax nonmembers "so far as such nonmembers may accept privileges of trade, residence, etc., to which taxes may be attached as conditions."\textsuperscript{184} In other words, the tribes may tax non-Indians within tribal territory who enter into consensual relationships with Indians or who use Indian land. That rationale includes taxing, licensing, and regulatory authority over non-Indians who have commercial dealings or contractual relations with Indians, or leases, licenses, contracts or other arrangements with tribes.

The Interior opinion based its conclusion on a series of decisions sustaining the authority of the tribes in Indian Territory to impose taxes and business license fees on non-Indians using tribal land or engaging in trade with Indians.\textsuperscript{185} The leading court decisions are \textit{Morris v. Hitchcock},\textsuperscript{186} sustaining a tribal tax on white-owned cattle which were grazed within tribal territory, and \textit{Buster v. Wright},\textsuperscript{187} sustaining a business license fee on white-owned businesses which traded with Indians within tribal territory. In the latter case the court said:

The authority of the Creek Nation to prescribe the terms upon

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\textsuperscript{181} 55 Interior Dec. 14 (1934).
\textsuperscript{183} 435 U.S. 313, 328 (1978).
\textsuperscript{184} 55 Interior Dec. 14, 46 (1934).
\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Id.} at 46–48.
\textsuperscript{186} 194 U.S. 384 (1904); \textit{see} note 163 \textit{supra}.
\textsuperscript{187} 135 F. 947 (8th Cir.), \textit{appeal dismissed}, 203 U.S. 599 (1905). This decision was quoted in a brief submitted by the Interior Department to Congress during its consider-
which noncitizens may transact business within its borders did not have its origin in act of Congress, treaty, or agreement of the United States. It was one of the inherent and essential attributes of its original sovereignty. It was a natural right of that people, indispensable to its autonomy as a distinct tribe or nation, and it must remain an attribute of its government until by the agreement of the nation itself or by the superior power of the republic it is taken from it.

... It is said that the sale of these lots and the incorporation of cities and towns upon the sites in which the lots are found authorized by act of Congress to collect taxes for municipal purposes segregated the town sites and the lots sold from the territory of the Creek Nation, and deprived it of governmental jurisdiction over this property and over its occupants. But the jurisdiction to govern the inhabitants of a country is not conditioned or limited by the title to the land which they occupy in it, or by the existence of municipalities therein endowed with power to collect taxes for city purposes, and to enact and enforce municipal ordinances. Neither the United States, nor a state, nor any other sovereignty loses the power to govern the people within its borders by the existence of towns and cities therein endowed with the usual power of municipalities, nor by the ownership nor occupancy of the land within its territorial jurisdiction by citizens or foreigners.188

Between the 1934 Interior opinion and the Oliphant decision, the only reported tax cases sustained a tribal tax on non-Indian lessees of Indian trust lands within the tribe’s reservation.189 Since Oliphant, several cases have been initiated in which the Oliphant rationale is raised by the parties opposing the taxes or fees. None has been finally resolved. A federal court in Arizona refused to extend Oliphant to preclude taxing jurisdiction over non-Indians. The case involved a tribal possessory interest tax levied on mineral lessees of tribal lands.190 A federal court in Washington held that the Oliphant rationale precludes all civil as well as criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians.191 Both cases are now on appeal. Other cases involving tribal taxes are pending in several courts.192

188. 135 F. at 950–52.
192. Merrion v. Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Nos. 77-292, 77-343 (D.N.M. Dec. 29,
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The 1934 Interior decision seems consistent with Oliphant and, as noted, the decision was cited with approval the same term in United States v. Wheeler. The importance of fundamental constitutional considerations is reduced both by the shift from criminal law, where the greatest protection has traditionally been required, and by the emphasis on consensual relationships voluntarily undertaken. As the Interior decision documents, the precedents support retained tribal civil jurisdiction over non-Indians in consensual circumstances.

The 1934 Interior opinion also discussed the right of an Indian tribe to exclude nonmembers from its reservation, concluding as follows:

Over tribal lands, the tribe has the rights of a landowner as well as the rights of a local government, dominion as well as sovereignty. But over all the lands of the reservation, whether owned by the tribe, by members thereof, or by outsiders, the tribe has the sovereign power of determining the conditions upon which persons shall be permitted to enter its domain, to reside therein, and to do business, provided only such determination is consistent with applicable Federal laws and does not infringe any vested rights of persons now occupying reservation lands under lawful authority.

The cases on which this part of the opinion relied were basically the same as those supporting tribal taxing power discussed above.

The importance of the exclusion right to the issues discussed in this article is that "the tribe has the sovereign power of determining the conditions upon which persons shall be permitted to enter its domain, to reside therein, and to do business." This right is similar in its effect to the consensual relationship basis discussed above.

B. Civil Jurisdiction of Tribal Courts

Tribal enforcement of tax, licensing, and regulatory laws is some-

1977), appeal docketed, Nos. 78–1154, 78–1201 (10th Cir. 1978), was decided before Oliphant. It involves a tribal oil and gas severance tax which the district court held to be invalid. One ground for the decision was that the tribe had no jurisdiction to tax non-Indians. Snow v. Quinault Indian Nation, No. C77–138T (W.D. Wash. 1977) involves a tribal business license tax and fee; it is pending in the district court. Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation v. Washington, 446 F. Supp. 1339 (E.D. Wash. 1978) (three judge panel), review granted, 99 S. Ct. 1210 (1979) (No. 78–630), involves a tribal tax on tobacco sales to non-Indian customers; the district court sustained the tax.

194. 55 Interior Dec. 14, 49 (1934).
195. Id. at 50.
196. See notes 185–88 and accompanying text supra; see also F. Cohen, supra note 82.
what restricted by the lack of criminal jurisdiction found in *Oliphant*. In the Indian Territory tax and fee cases discussed above, it was further restricted by application of the rule that a tax is generally not a civil debt collectible in a civil action,197 and by congressional abolition of those tribal courts.198 But the government viewed enforcement of the taxes as a duty it owed the tribes and enacted an administrative enforcement system, which was sustained by the federal courts.199 The cases do not discuss tribal use of the traditional enforcement methods of liens and property seizures. Where the taxes are valid, these methods should be available.200

The 1934 Interior decision concluded that the tribal judicial power is generally coextensive with legislative and executive, and it said that the tribes had civil court jurisdiction over an interracial property dispute in the Indian Territory.201 But the Indian Territory cases arose under specific laws which recognized exclusive tribal court jurisdiction over cases involving tribal members, whether Indian or not and in civil as well as criminal cases, and established federal courts with exclusive jurisdiction in interracial matters.202 These laws are no longer in force, and there was little other precedent in 1934.

In 1959 the Supreme Court in *Williams v. Lee*203 reviewed a state court's assertion of jurisdiction over an action on a debt filed by a non-Indian against an Indian couple. The debt arose on a self-governing reservation which had a Court of Indian Offenses.204 The Supreme Court held that the Indian court had jurisdiction exclusive of the state court.205 The Court stated, "It is immaterial that [plaintiff] is not an Indian. He was on the Reservation and the transaction with an Indian took place there . . . . The cases in this Court have consistently guarded the authority of Indian governments over their

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197. Crabtree v. Madden, 54 F. 426 (8th Cir. 1893). But see Barta v. Oglala Sioux Tribe, 259 F.2d 553, 555–56 (8th Cir. 1958), *cert. denied*, 358 U.S. 932 (1959) (sustaining jurisdiction when the United States sued to collect the tax). Barta, however, involved a federal district court, while Crabtree arose in proceedings before the U.S. Court for the Indian Territory.

198. See note 146 supra.

199. Buster v. Wright, 135 F. 947, 954–58 (8th Cir. 1905).

200. *Id.* at 956.


202. See note 146 and accompanying text supra; Raymond v. Raymond, 83 F.721 (8th Cir. 1897).


204. *Id.* at 222.

205. *Id.* See also Kennerly v. District Court, 400 U.S. 421 (1971); Hot Oil Service Co. v. Hall, 366 F.2d 295 (9th Cir. 1966); Littell v. Nakai, 344 F.2d 486 (9th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 382 U.S. 986 (1965).
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reservations." Subsequent state and lower court decisions have recognized like principles in tort and domestic relations cases, and the Court has indicated that state court jurisdiction is preempted by federal protection of the tribal right of self-government over tribal reservations. In Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez, the Court stated, “Tribal courts have repeatedly been recognized as appropriate forums for the exclusive adjudication of disputes affecting important personal and property interests of both Indians and non-Indians.”

Where non-Indians have entered into consensual relationships with Indians or for the use of Indian land, the historical case for tribal civil jurisdiction and related tribal legislative authority is quite strong. As noted above, the authority to tax, license, and regulate has been sustained in those situations. The same reasoning should apply to matters of domestic relations in instances of intermarriage to contracts, leases, and agreements concerning the use of Indian land, and other interracial matters. Torts arising directly out of such relationships should be governed by the same principle.

The important question not settled by authoritative court decisions is whether and to what extent the tribes may assert civil court jurisdiction over non-Indian defendants when the claim does not arise out of a consensual relationship. Most tribes had not asserted such authority except in the Indian Territory, but recently some tribes have

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206. 358 U.S. at 223.
212. For example, a claim by an Indian customer against a non-Indian trading post for damages based on the negligent failure to maintain a safe premises should be subject to tribal authority.
213. See notes 143--50 and accompanying text supra (jurisdiction over non-Indian tribal members). Many Indian Reorganization Act tribal constitutions expressly provide for authority to exclude nonmembers from tribal land, condition their entry, license their use of property, license businesses, and govern trade. These are consistent with the powers recognized in 55 Interior Dec. 14 (1934), discussed in Part III--A supra. The constitutions typically provide for secretarial approval of such tribal ordinances.
amended their codes to do so. The propriety of such jurisdiction is discussed in the following section.

C. Tribal Authority over Non-Indians Not Based on Consensual Relationships

There are few precedents dealing with tribes seeking to exercise jurisdiction, legislative or judicial, over non-Indians in matters not arising out of consensual relationships. The category includes regulatory, tax, and licensing authority over non-Indians using land not owned by Indians and jurisdiction over torts. As already noted, some cases have implicitly sustained authority over tort actions against Indians, and these are surely correct.\(^{214}\) Also, the court in \textit{Buster v. Wright} sustained tribal power to impose a license tax on white-owned businesses on fee land, but those businesses were trading with Indians.\(^{215}\)

These issues did not arise in the formative years, making their resolution more difficult. Tribal societies often had a system of forced restitution in lieu of both criminal and tort law,\(^{216}\) and this was imposed on non-Indian tribal members, but was not suited for resolution of controversies involving nonmembers. In the early years, most kinds of tax, regulatory, and licensing laws which we now take for granted were not yet employed by Anglo-American governments, much less by Indian.\(^{217}\)

The case for tribal jurisdiction has two bases in policy and history. First, the Supreme Court has clearly accepted the proposition that the tribes retain so much of their original sovereignty as was not explicitly taken from them or implicitly surrendered by their submission to federal authority.\(^{218}\) Although the \textit{Oliphant} Court found that criminal law authority over non-Indians was yielded, the reasons for that view do not apply to civil matters involving or affecting Indians or tribal property.\(^{219}\) Because the authority has not clearly been taken away, it should continue.

\textit{See, e.g., Const. of Shoshone-Bannock Tribe of Fort Hall Reservation art. VI, §§ 1(i), (l); Amended Const. of Washoe Tribe of Ne\-\va\-da & California art. VI, § 1(f); Const. of Fort Belknap Indian Community art. V, § 1(s).}


\(^{215}\) 135 F. 947, 952–54 (8th Cir. 1905).

\(^{216}\) See W. Hagan, supra note 33, at 93, 123.

\(^{217}\) The government has, however, always required a license to trade with Indians in Indian country. See notes 248–52 and accompanying text infra.


\(^{219}\) See notes 166–74 and accompanying text supra.
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The principal difficulty with this proposition is that, without further analysis, it would seem to establish the right to make laws applicable to the relations of non-Indians with each other in matters of no direct concern to Indians—for example in tort, contract, or domestic relations cases where no party is an Indian. Given the great differences between Indian and Anglo-American societies during the early years, a point emphasized in the Oliphant opinion, the authority to govern relations of non-Indians with one another seems unlikely to have been contemplated as part of retained tribal sovereignty.

A more satisfactory analysis begins with the recognition that tribal sovereignty has a dual nature, relating to certain subject matters as well as to territory. The two principal subjects of retained sovereignty are internal self-government and economic self-support. Authority over non-Indians is included within those subject areas only in interracial matters. Thus, tribal authority over non-Indians exists only when there is a direct impact on Indians or their property. The purposes of federal protection of Indians justify the exercise of tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians only in these subject areas, not over tribal territory generally. This view is reflected in a number of statutes and court decisions.

220. 435 U.S. at 197, 201, 210-11.
221. See notes 20-22 and accompanying text supra.
222. See note 28 and accompanying text supra.
223. The Suquamish Tribe had asserted authority over non-Indians only in cases affecting Indians. See Brief for Tribe at 52-56, Oliphant v. Suquamish Tribe, 425 U.S. 494 (1978). No tribe has ever sought to assert jurisdiction over non-Indians who were not tribal members in matters having no direct effect on Indians or the tribe. See note 224 infra.
224. The federal criminal jurisdiction over Indian country reflects a subject matter as well as territorial scope. The earliest laws applied only to crimes by non-Indians against Indians. See note 54 supra. The Indian Country Crimes Act excepts crimes by an Indian against another Indian. See note 56 supra. The Supreme Court has interpreted it to except non-Indian against non-Indian crimes also. See United States v. Antelope, 430 U.S. 641, 644, n.4 (1977) (citing United States v. McBratney, 104 U.S. 621 (1882)); notes 124 & 170 and accompanying text supra; see also New York ex rel. Ray v. Martin, 326 U.S. 496, 501 (1946); Donnelly v. United States, 228 U.S. 264 (1898). The test formulated by the Court to determine when state jurisdiction in Indian country is precluded (in the absence of a particular federal statute allocating authority) is whether state jurisdiction interferes with the Indians' right to govern themselves. Fisher v. District Court, 424 U.S. 382, 386 (1976); Williams v. Lee, 358 U.S. 217, 220 (1959). This test applies to interracial matters. As the Court stated in McClanahan v. Arizona Tax Commission: [In situations involving Indians and non-Indians], both the tribe and the State
The basis for tribal authority over non-Indians is thus distinct from that for authority over tribal members. Within reservations the tribes have plenary, direct, and exclusive authority over members except when expressly limited by federal law.\textsuperscript{225} Tribal authority over non-Indians is retained only where necessary to carry out the purposes of the reservations, that is, it is derived from authority over Indians and over tribal property. This instrumental view underlies all prior instances when tribal authority over non-Indians has been recognized or sustained.

The tribes should retain sufficient authority to carry out these purposes. To deny tribal authority over non-Indians who injure Indians or whose property is intermingled with Indian property to the extent that the use of one affects the other would derogate from the purposes of the reservations. For the tribes to have self-government, they must be able to govern the relations of their members with others within tribal territory.\textsuperscript{226} For the tribes to have the full economic use of their reservations, they must be able to deal with non-Indian practices substantially affecting tribal property and its uses.\textsuperscript{227} A related point supporting tribal authority is that state regulatory laws cannot apply to tribal lands,\textsuperscript{228} so only the tribes can supply a uniform regulatory system for the intermingled lands in “opened” reservations.

Parties opposing tribal authority have argued that the rationale of \textit{Oliphant} should be extended to preclude all tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians. Both precedent and analysis suggest that argument will could fairly claim an interest in asserting their respective jurisdictions. The [test of \textit{Williams v. Lee}] was designed to resolve this conflict by providing that the State could protect its interest up to the point where tribal self-government would be affected.


226. \textit{See} notes 203-06 and accompanying text \textit{supra}.

227. A number of important court decisions have held that express or implied Indian economic and property rights necessary to fulfill the purposes of a reservation prevail over competing non-Indian rights. For example, in Winters v. United States, 207 U.S. 564, 576 (1908), the Supreme Court held that an implied retention of rights to the waters of a river was necessary to make a reservation productive. The Court recognized that non-Indian landowners along the river had great need of the same water but held that the Indian claim must predominate. \textit{See also} Choctaw Nation v. Oklahoma, 397 U.S. 620 (1970); Arizona v. California, 373 U.S. 546, 599-601 (1963); Alaska Pacific Fisheries v. United States, 248 U.S. 78 (1918); United States v. Winans, 198 U.S. 371 (1905); Pelcyger, \textit{supra} note 28.

228. Santa Rosa Band of Indians v. Kings County, 532 F.2d 655 (9th Cir.), \textit{cert. denied}, 429 U.S. 1038 (1975); \textit{see} Bryan v. Itasca County, 426 U.S. 373, 388 n.14 (1976); 25 C.F.R. § 1.4 (1978); note 233 \textit{infra}.

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fail. But in the more specific area of nonconsensual relationships, aspects of the argument have more force. Although the due process protection inferred by the *Oliphant* Court is most significant in criminal law, it is nevertheless of importance in those civil cases involving a possible taking of private property without just compensation. In Indian traditions concerning property, particularly land, are very different from Anglo-American traditions. Although non-Indians who enter into consensual relationships with Indians might justly subject themselves to tribal authority, those who do not do so should arguably retain the same implicit protection from tribal authority found in *Oliphant*. Also, some precedents sustaining tribal jurisdiction have emphasized the consensual relationships involved; there is no reported authority supporting tribal jurisdiction in nonconsensual cases.

Another argument made against tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians is lack of consent of the governed. The Supreme Court did not mention this point in deciding *Oliphant*, and in two prior cases it expressly rejected arguments of this sort. But the authority formerly exercised by some tribes over adopted non-Indian members indicates that consent has some relevance to the due process questions of criminal jurisdiction.


230. This proposition is perhaps most graphically illustrated by the allotment policy of 1854 to 1934 which sought to induce and compel the Indians to convert their communal lands into family holdings. *See* note 124 and accompanying text *supra*. While that policy succeeded in some individual cases, it was generally recognized as a failure, showing the tenacity of Indian communal traditions.

231. Buster v. Wright, 135 F. 947, 949 (8th Cir. 1905); 55 Interior Dec. 14, 46 (1934).

232. It must be emphasized that the "consent" is not to jurisdiction over the dispute itself but to the relationship giving rise to it. Thus non-Indians who become tribal members consent to all tribal authority. *See* notes 105 & 135–50 and accompanying text *supra*. Non-Indians who enter into contracts, leases, marriages, or other arrangements with Indians are subject to tribal authority respecting those arrangements. Non-Indians who seek to sever the parental rights of Indians and adopt Indian children are subject to tribal authority pro tanto. *See* note 211 and accompanying text *supra*. Non-Indians who wish to recover damages or other judicial relief from reservation Indians must bring suit in tribal court and submit to its jurisdiction. *See* notes 203–09 and accompanying text *supra*.


235. *See* notes 137–50 and accompanying text *supra*. 
Tribal jurisdiction in the noncriminal circumstances discussed in this section does not normally conflict with the reasonable expectations of those subjected to that jurisdiction. Corporations and nonresidents of a reservation have no legitimate expectation of local political representation.\textsuperscript{236} As discussed above, tribal jurisdiction depends on a consensual relationship between the non-Indian and Indians or the tribe, a conditional entry into a reservation, or an activity which has a direct impact on Indians or tribes. Only in the latter category and when a non-Indian resident of the reservation is involved are normal expectations of political representation infringed upon. Even in those cases the infringement is a fairly narrow one, confined to particular circumstances.\textsuperscript{237}

The difficulty of the problem in nonconsensual cases is perhaps illustrated by the history of a current case involving regulatory authority over underground water supplies, where salt water intrusion causes all rights to be interrelated. The court initially issued an opinion sustaining tribal authority, then withdrew it.\textsuperscript{238} The correct analysis should stress the federal purposes for the reservations by sustaining tribal authority upon a showing that the non-Indian activity has a direct impact on Indians or their property. The tribes should have authority to pass land use laws for reservation areas where non-Indian land is substantially intermingled with Indian land, but not where the land is virtually all non-Indian. Tort authority in interracial cases should be sustained.\textsuperscript{239} Tax authority, aside from the consensual and exclusionary situations described previously, should be limited to the imposition of taxes for the support of activities justified by the same

\textsuperscript{236} Nonresidents or corporations may argue that the general expectation is that all local residents regardless of race will participate politically. But that is a much more rarified interest than the right of participation of residents themselves and, in light of the nature of an Indian reservation, it is hard to sustain as a reasonable expectation.

\textsuperscript{237} In light of the many special laws and doctrines applicable to Indian reservations, some variation in expectations is implicit in presence within a reservation.


\textsuperscript{239} As noted above, tribal jurisdiction over cases against Indians arising within tribal territory is exclusive. \textit{See} notes 205 & 209 and accompanying text \textit{supra}. In the reverse situation, actions by Indians against non-Indians, the tribal courts historically have not asserted jurisdiction, and state court jurisdiction has been sustained. \textit{E.g.}, Paiz v. Hughes, 76 N.M. 562, 417 P.2d 51 (1966). Whether tribal court jurisdiction in the latter cases would be exclusive or concurrent is uncertain. Most private causes of action are traditionally transitory, and concurrent jurisdiction is common. \textit{But see} note 224 \textit{supra}.

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rationale, that is, where there is a direct impact on Indians or Indian property.

D. Effects of Specific Federal Statutes

Tribal authority is specifically limited or confirmed by a number of federal statutes. The importance of the Indian Reorganization Act in strengthening tribal self-government has already been discussed. The Indian Civil Rights Act, passed in 1968, imposed on self-governing tribes many of the limitations which the Constitution imposes on federal and state governments. In Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez, the Supreme Court held that Congress intended both to strengthen and to limit tribal self-government through this Act. These goals were in conflict because the issue was the extent of the enforcement power given to federal courts by the statute. The Court held that, in light of the legislative history and the tradition of tribal sovereignty, federal jurisdiction is limited to habeas corpus.

A statute important to the issues discussed here is the civil jurisdiction part of Public Law 280, which conferred on certain states judicial authority over civil causes of action in Indian country "between Indians and to which Indians are parties" and provided a mechanism

240. See notes 176–80 and accompanying text supra.
242. As noted in note 115 supra, constitutional provisions which by their terms limit the federal or state governments do not of their own force limit Indian tribes. The Act guaranteed to persons subject to tribal jurisdiction the right of habeas corpus and rights taken from amendments 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 14 of the federal Constitution, and it prohibited bills of attainder and ex post facto laws by tribes. Some rights are set out in the same terms as the Constitution; others are modified. The most notable omissions are the establishment clause and the right to appointed counsel in criminal cases. The Act also limits criminal punishments by tribes to the petty misdemeanor level of 18 U.S.C. § 1 (1976) (a maximum of six months imprisonment and a $500 fine). 25 U.S.C. § 1302(7) (1976); see also note 90 supra.
244. The Court indicated that enforcement of the Act would be in tribal courts, 436 U.S. at 65–66, and that in some cases the Secretary of the Interior may have authority to enforce the Act where tribal legislation requires secretarial approval, 436 U.S. at 66 n.22. Such requirements are common in Indian Reorganization Act constitutions under 25 U.S.C. § 476 (1976), see notes 174–79 and accompanying text supra, and are imposed by some statutes, e.g., 18 U.S.C. § 1161 (1976).
for other states to acquire like authority. Court decisions have made it clear that the statute does not apply to tax and regulatory authority; it is essentially concerned with private civil actions. The statute provides that general state laws governing civil actions apply, and that tribal laws apply in that sphere only when consistent with state law.

Another statutory limitation on tribal authority is the federal control over trading with Indians. Since 1790 federal law has required a federal license to trade with Indians in Indian country. Since 1882, the laws have specified that a license is needed by anyone except an "Indian of the full blood," although the persons regulated have in fact almost all been non-Indians. The federal courts have held that these statutes are broad in scope, both as to federal authority and duty. The question here is whether the tribes may tax or regulate licensed traders without federal permission. An 1824 opinion of the Attorney General denied the power to tax a licensed trader, and the 1934 Interior Decision discussed above reached the same conclusion. Neither opinion analyzed the point, and the Attorney General's opinion is based on reasoning since rejected in other contexts. It is more consistent with modern preemption law to postulate that the tribes can tax and regulate traders unless the federal pur-
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pose of the statutes and regulations is thereby frustrated.\textsuperscript{256} Tribal regulations should be allowed when not inconsistent with the federal regulatory system,\textsuperscript{257} and tribal taxes should be permitted so long as they do not frustrate the statutory purpose of having goods provided to Indian people at reasonable prices.\textsuperscript{258}

Federal laws governing allotted lands also limit tribal authority. These statutes specify that state laws governing heirship and partition shall apply even to Indians,\textsuperscript{259} and it is implicit that the tribes cannot infringe on the basic federal statutory purpose to make land available in severalty to Indians.\textsuperscript{260} Federal law also specifies that under certain circumstances Indians may sell their allotments.\textsuperscript{261} The statutes concerned apply to non-Indians who are heirs of Indians, joint or common owners with them, or purchasers from them.

As previously discussed, the allotment system allowed, and at times encouraged, non-Indians to become landowners within reservations. That purpose reduced the exclusively Indian nature of those reservations and altered related tribal power to exclude from the reservation all nonmembers except agents of the government.\textsuperscript{262} Purchasers of those lands are subject to tribal authority only when they enter into consensual relations with Indians\textsuperscript{263} or when their activities directly affect Indians or Indian lands.\textsuperscript{264}

Liquor control has long been a field of comprehensive federal control over Indian country. From an early date, federal policy mandated


\textsuperscript{257} See Rockbridge v. Lincoln, 449 F.2d 567, 571 (9th Cir. 1971).

\textsuperscript{258} See notes 125, 151-57, and accompanying text supra; 55 Interior Dec. 14, 48-50.

\textsuperscript{261} The most important provision is 25 U.S.C. § 349 (1976).

\textsuperscript{264} See Part III–C supra.
liquor prohibition in tribal territory, and that applied to Indians and others alike. In 1953 Congress authorized the tribes to remove the federal prohibition laws, and many tribes have elected to do so. The 1953 statute gave the tribes broad authority to condition the sale of liquor in tribal territory, and that authority applies equally to Indians and non-Indians.

In 1960 Congress enacted a law prohibiting hunting and fishing on restricted Indian lands without tribal permission. This reinforced with federal criminal penalties the traditional tribal right to condition entry onto tribal lands. Some tribes have enacted comprehensive codes for fish and game management, relying on the federal act for enforcement. These codes have been sustained by the courts, but an unsettled issue is whether tribal regulation of non-Indians may


268. United States v. Mazurie, 419 U.S. 544 (1975); see United States v. New Mexico, 590 F.2d 323 (10th Cir. 1978). The statute does not expressly authorize tribal punishment of non-Indians who violate the tribal laws it authorizes, and it conditionally sets aside a comprehensive federal criminal law scheme. On the other hand, the statute provides for secretarial approval of any tribal ordinance under it, a factor the Court relied on in Mazurie, 419 U.S. at 558 n.12, to reject a constitutional challenge by non-Indians. If the Secretary were to approve a tribal ordinance which included punishment of non-Indian violators, it would likely be valid under Mazurie. No tribe has yet sought that authority.

269. The statute superseded a more limited provision which had provided a civil penalty and forfeiture for hunting or trapping by non-Indians on the lands of any treaty tribe. The latter had been enacted as section 8 of the Act of June 30, 1834, ch. 161, 4 Stat. 730. Cf. United States v. Sturgeon, 27 F. Cas. 1357 (D. Nev. 1879) (prosecution of non-Indians fishing on the reservation of a nontreaty tribe under a provision prohibiting return to Indian country after lawful removal).

270. See notes 194–96 and accompanying text supra.
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preempt state regulation which interferes with the tribal scheme.\textsuperscript{271}

In 1978 Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act\textsuperscript{272} in response to growing Indian concern over attempts under state law to sever the parental rights of Indians and place Indian children in non-Indian adoptive and foster homes. The courts had previously recognized tribal rights to control these matters within reservations,\textsuperscript{273} but cases involving both state and tribal jurisdictional claims had generated no clear rules.\textsuperscript{274} The Act confirms paramount tribal rights over Indian children who are residents or domiciliaries of a reservation even if the children are temporarily outside the reservation.\textsuperscript{275} It also provides for primary tribal court authority over Indian children residing elsewhere and for full faith and credit for tribal laws in child custody matters.\textsuperscript{276} In light of the Act's purpose, it clearly includes tribal authority over any non-Indian who seeks to obtain or retain custody of an Indian child.\textsuperscript{277}

E. Territorial Scope of Tribal Jurisdiction

The authority of tribes, like that of other governments, is largely confined to tribal territory.\textsuperscript{278} In the early years that was an uncom-


\textsuperscript{273} See, e.g., Fisher v. District Court, 424 U.S. 382 (1976).


\textsuperscript{276} Id. The Act also includes requirements of notice to tribes of the pendency of a child custody case involving a member, id. § 1913, and of Indian preference in selecting adoptive parents, id. § 1915.

\textsuperscript{277} The general purpose of the Act is to assist tribes in keeping Indian children in Indian homes. Id. § 1902.

\textsuperscript{278} For example, note the emphasis on boundaries in the basic authority on the subject, Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. (6 Pet.) 515 (1832), discussed at note 20 and accompanying text supra. Tribes have off-reservation authority over members, but state laws regulating conduct usually prevail over tribal laws outside reservations, so that tribal authority is limited as a practical matter to such subjects as membership, selection of officers, use of property, and the like. When tribes have particular off-reservation federal rights, tribal courts have jurisdiction over off-reservation conduct of tribal members. Settler v. Lameer, 507 F.2d 231 (9th Cir. 1974).
plicated concept, referring to land reserved or granted to tribes by treaty or law. Tribal ownership within such territory was uniform except for small sites for government buildings, trading posts, and missions. Federal Indian country laws mostly applied to the same territory.\textsuperscript{279} Tribal and federal authority within tribal boundaries was uniform and comprehensive.\textsuperscript{280}

Beginning with the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, the matter of tribal territory became more complicated. Congress greatly reduced the complexity in 1948 by statutorily defining Indian country but did not entirely eliminate it. Also, litigants sometimes try to rely on precedents under pre-1948 law. A brief review of the matter is thus useful.

The Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834 made the principal territorial term for federal laws “Indian country,” which it defined as all land in Indian title outside the boundaries of the states then existing.\textsuperscript{281} Congress repealed the section containing this definition in 1874 but retained many laws applicable only in Indian country.\textsuperscript{282} The Supreme Court was thus compelled to define the term judicially. It did so by attempting to adjust the 1834 definition to changing conditions.\textsuperscript{283} This approach produced complications until the Court in a

\textsuperscript{279} The territorial terms of the early Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts were somewhat imprecise, but the basic terms seem consistent with this statement. See, e.g., Act of Mar. 30, 1802, ch. 13, §§ 4–11, 2 Stat. 139, 141–43. Some provisions were particularly concerned with trespasses and depredations along the principal frontier. See, e.g., id. §§ 1, 2, 14, 16.


\textsuperscript{281} Act of June 30, 1834, ch. 161, §§ 1, 24, 4 Stat. 729, 729. But section 29 of the Act included a proviso retaining the earlier 1802 Trade and Intercourse Act for all tribes residing east of the Mississippi. Also, sections 9 and 11 through 15 of the Act were not confined to Indian country. See, e.g., Oneida Indian Nation v. County of Oneida. 414 U.S. 661, 670–71 (1974); New York Indians, 72 U.S. (5 Wall.) 761, 771 (1867). This division is also reflected in the later codifications of these laws. See 25 U.S.C. chs. 5, 6 (1976).


\textsuperscript{283} Id. The principal case the Court relied on during the 1874–1913 period was Bates v. Clark, 95 U.S. 204 (1877), which generated some confusion and uncertainty in the law. The events giving rise to Bates occurred prior to the repeal of the 1834 statutory definition of “Indian country.” The Supreme Court decided the case after the repeal but took no notice of it. The problem addressed by the Court was how to apply the 1834 statutory definition to the greatly changed conditions of the 1870s. Bates involved a liquor seizure by the Army in Dakota Territory but on land ceded to the United States by the Indians. Under the imprecise wording of the 1834 definition, it was arguable that all of Dakota Territory was defined as Indian country regardless of Indian cessions. The Court sensibly rejected that view and held that ceded lands implicitly ceased to be Indian country. But the Court's opinion said that Indian country consisted of land in "original" Indian title “unless by the Treaty by which the Indians parted with their title, or by some Act of Congress, a different rule was made applicable to the case.” 95 U.S.
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series of decisions written in 1913 and 1914 shed most of the uncertainties, largely by rejecting the 1834 scheme.\(^2\) One feature of the 1834 definition which survived these decisions, however, was the rule that land within reservations to which the Indian title had been fully extinguished was not Indian country.\(^2\) This produced some rather absurd results.\(^2\)

The matter was further complicated by other actions of Congress. In 1882 Congress explicitly added "Indian reservations" to "Indian country" as places in which Indian traders needed a federal license,\(^2\) and in 1885 Congress passed a law punishing crimes "within any In-
dian reservation." These laws were apparently not confined to land in Indian title, and the Court so held in 1894.

The effect of these confusing and inconsistent laws on the territorial scope of tribal self-government is not certain. The only pre-1948 case on point appears to be *Buster v. Wright*, in which the court of appeals sustained tribal taxing authority over non-Indian traders on fee patented lands within tribal territory, even though that land could not have been Indian country under the contemporary definition.

In 1948 the federal criminal laws were unified by reestablishing one statutory definition of Indian country. That law specifies that all land within a reservation is Indian country regardless of ownership.

The Supreme Court has sustained the 1948 scheme in federal criminal cases, to which it applies directly, and has applied the definition in cases involving the civil jurisdiction of tribes over their members. The Court seems to view the 1948 statute as establishing a unitary system for most jurisdictional purposes. Subsequent actions by Congress appear to be based on the same premise.

The 1948 statute thus established a relatively practical and common sense definition of "Indian country," which applies generally to tribal as well as to federal authority.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court's holding in *Oliphant* is reasonably convincing

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291. The court specifically discussed the point in 135 F. at 952–54.


296. In 1953 Congress enacted Public Law 280, a comprehensive statute providing the principal means for transferring partial jurisdiction over Indian country to the states. See note 245 and accompanying text supra. The operative term of place in that law is "Indian country," and the statute applies to civil and tribal jurisdiction as well as to federal criminal laws. See cases cited at note 246 supra.

297. In United States v. John, 437 U.S. 634 (1978), the Court referred to the *Bates* definition discussed in note 283 supra, as "more technical and limited" than "the more expansive scope of the term that was incorporated in the 1948 revision of Title 18." Id. at 649 n.18.
as applied to persons in tribal territory under federal authority but is less certainly applied to illegal intruders and is doubtful as to non-Indians who became members of tribes. The Oliphant defendants were neither intruders nor members, however, so the decision seems correct in its result. Its application in criminal cases today raises questions only in the case of tribes retaining the right to exclude intruders from reservations.

The Oliphant holding aside, the Court’s opinion is unsatisfactory in several respects. The marshaling and use of precedents is selective and at times inaccurate and misleading. Court decisions should not be based on a “common understanding” of decisionmakers of more than a century ago without much more convincing evidence than the Court had. It is the logic of the Court’s reasoning about due process of law, tribal dependence on federal protection, and the federal criminal statutes which rescues the opinion. If the decision rested on the reconstructed opinions of the formative years alone, it would be questionable indeed.

Indians are a politically impotent minority. It is to Congress’ credit that it has generally sought to deal honorably with them and that its errors have been founded more on misguided paternalism than on baser motives. State and private interests have a much less creditable record, and popular pressures have at times induced Congress to break faith with the Indians. For any period, records of anti-Indian views can be collected to support the understanding (or desire and hope) of many that Indian rights should be swept aside.

Throughout our history the Supreme Court has protected Indians by requiring that the political will to take their rights be clearly and certainly expressed. The Court’s approach has been entirely just and proper in light of the Nation’s undertakings in treaties made when the Indians still had the power to make war. Congress in any case retains the authority to restrict the tribes where it sees the need. Where there is reasonable doubt, the Court should continue to leave that duty to Congress.

As discussed in this article, the reasoning of Oliphant as a whole is not inconsistent with the Court’s traditions and precedents in Indian cases. If that reasoning is applied with other precedents, tribal authority over non-Indians in civil matters should be sustained where necessary to fulfill the purposes of the reservations: tribal self-government and economic self-support.
