Forced to Abandon Our Fields:
The 1914 Pima Indian Interviews as the Context of the Arizona Water Settlements Act of 2004

While scholars often assume the West was settled under laissez faire policies, the reality is the federal government facilitated both the settlement and shaped the social thought of the West. Consequently, the Pima Indians of southern Arizona, already extraordinary farmers until deprived of their water in the latter 19th century, were neither unfit for Western-style economics nor did Western Civilization supplant them from their economy. Rather, economic liberalism displaced the Pima using liberal federal land and resource policies. The 1914 Pima interviews set the legal and moral tone for the Arizona Water Settlements Act of 2004, which restored via legislative act the largest tribal water budget in North American history.

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