

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand aspects of the Native American culture.
- explain how Native American women were equal and in some cases more powerful than men.
- learn the contributions of Native Americans to U.S. society.
- state the exploitation of Native American values used to gain land by European settlers.
- describe the genocide of Native Americans by the pilgrims.
- identify specific treatment of Native Americans in the U.S. today.
- describe why mascots that stereotypically depict Native American culture is culturally insensitive.



What is your view of Indians/Native Americans?

- Do you think of savages running around half naked?
- Do you think of a people incapable of maintaining their land which is why they no longer have it?
- Is it of a defeated people?
- Groups who live on reservations in tepees because they know of no other way to live or survive the land?
- A stubborn people who disrespect America?

If any of these are your views of Indians/Native Americans then you have a viewpoint full of untruths. None of the above depicts Native Americans, their history or their story. To know the truth about Native Americans is to understand the indigenous people of this land known as America and how far removed America is from this great people's values.

Native Americans are the indigenous people of this country. According to researchers, the indigenous people of "America" have been here for at least 12,000 years where some even believe that these people first started living here much earlier than that.

It is estimated, based on archaeological data and written records from European settlers, that up to a possible 30 to 100 million indigenous people lived in the Americas when the 1492 voyage of Christopher Columbus began a historical period of large-scale European interaction with the Americas.¹

Native American Living

Before the Europeans came, there were no people here that called themselves "Indians." Instead, there were and still are Navajo or Menominee or Hopi, or Dakota, or Nisqually, or Tlingit, or Apache, etc. They referred to themselves by their specific nation. They received the name "Indian" from Christopher Columbus because he thought he landed in India. That is why we preferably use the nation name or the term Native American to refer to the original inhabitants of America.

The natural environment of the Great West provided life to Native Americans. It also took life. People learned that working together, and hunting together, was extremely important. Living alone on especially the plains meant certain death. It could be a hard life, taught by Nature. The power of a tornado, a thunderstorm and its lightning, the pressing heat of a summer day, or the sweeping cold air made everyone very observant of the Earth. The native people learned from the Earth, the animals and plants. Everything fit together in this Universe as many tribes understood it, and everyone and everything had its role and responsibility.

Instead of often being taught the many viewpoints of Native Americans--one story has often been told. This story involves tepees, war paint and the savage image. But, when it came to their lifestyle and homes there were many different types of Native American houses that would fit their lifestyle and their climate. Since North America is a continent of various land types and conditions, different tribes had varying degrees of weather to contend with. In the Arizona deserts, temperatures can hit 120 degrees Fahrenheit, and in the Alaskan tundra, -50 is not unusual. Naturally, Native Americans developed different types of dwellings to survive in these different environments as they were a cunning and skillful people.²

Native American tribes also had different traditional lifestyles. Some tribes were agricultural-- they lived in settled villages and farmed the land for corn and vegetables. They wanted houses that would last a long time. One such group, the Eastern Woodland Indians had homes called longhouses. Like the homes of the Northwest Culture, these were rectangular homes with barrel shaped roofs. As their name states, these homes were very long.³ Families shared these homes, as many could hold up to 60 people. The insides had a long hallway with rooms for each family on either side.

Not all tribes were agricultural, some tribes were more nomadic, moving frequently from place to place as they hunted and gathered food and resources. They needed houses that were portable or easy to build, such as a tent. The tribes of the Southwest Culture lived in apartment-style buildings. These buildings were made of adobe, clay and vegetables dried in the sun. This type of home was especially good for areas that had very little rainfall and a hot desert climate.⁴ Many families lived in each apartment and as families grew, rooms were added on top of the rooms that were already there. Other homes were built that sheltered them from the heat.

If you have ever traveled to the Red Mountains in Sedona, Arizona, you would find mansions that Native Americans built within the structure of these mountains. Many of these homes had 10 or more rooms and are still standing inside these mountains today. It is spectacular to view the architecture and modern day building of these homes by a people who lived in them many years ago.

No matter what the conditions on the land, the Native Americans survived by gathering all the things they needed from the natural world around them. They built structures that fit the environment while also preserving the Earth.

Native American Respect for Women

Native American women traditionally belonged to a culture that gave them respect, power, autonomy and equality. In the Iroquois tribes of New York, women had the political right to nominate and recall civil chiefs, they controlled and managed their families, they had the right to divorce and could determine how many children they would raise.⁵

In Blackfoot society, a woman owned the products of her labor including the tipi that her family lived in.⁶ A woman was judged by the quality of her work and treated with respect in reference to her good work.⁷ Women were seen as powerful due to their ability to give life.⁸ The female was so powerful that it was she who unwrapped and rewrapped holy bundles because a man would not be able to handle this power directly, without her intercession.⁹ A woman's superior spiritual power was seen in her ability alone to hold the Sun Dance ceremony.¹⁰ Women were also Shamans like the men acting as a medium between the visible and spirit worlds; practices used for healing or divination. Shaman's brought blessings to the people. Clearly, Blackfoot women had influence, power, freedom and autonomy.

It was understood in most Native cultures that men and women's work was of equal value and is complimentary. Men hunted and women processed the fruit of his hunts. One did not function well without the other. Each person worked for and counted the possessions one had that they would then give away, because the giving of gifts was seen as a powerful and prestigious act.¹¹

In addition, unlike the culture of the pilgrims and many in the U.S. today where relationships are based on a patriarchal structure many Native societies including the Iroquois, Cherokee and Navajo had equality between men and women. In some nations, men even took the name of the women. These families operated under either matriarchal (a form of social organization in which a female is the family head and title is traced through the female line) or matrilineal (a form of marriage in which, after the wedding, the bridegroom moves to his new wife's family home) structures.¹²

Exploitation of Native American Values

The First Nation's Peoples had a great value system. There were normally only four commandments and they were as follows¹³:

1. Respect Mother Earth
2. Respect the Great Spirit
3. Respect our fellow man and woman
4. Respect for individual freedom

Native Americans respected the earth but did not feel ownership of it. But with this viewpoint does this mean that the original inhabitants or indigenous people of the U.S. did not have any rights to the land they occupied?

The historical antecedents of the legal rights of indigenous people were found centuries prior to the European arrival in the Western hemisphere.¹⁴ So, yes they did have rights. However, after the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire, but prior to the colonial travels of Europeans, distinctions were being made between the various people of the known world. These distinctions were in terms of Christians and "infidels" where infidels was a term given to people who were not Christians.¹⁵ If you were not a Christian, then you were viewed as a savage-- someone seen as wild and menacing; who would attack brutally and fiercely as a member of an uncivilized people. This superior/inferior religious attitude continued despite the similarities between Christianity and the Native's religions.

Laws that governed everyone but were only agreed upon by a few countries, the law of nation, allowed the expansion of Christianity, by acquiring territory from newly discovered peoples (such as those in Asia and Africa) or from familiar peoples (particularly the Saracens and Turks) who were unwilling to accept Christian doctrines.¹⁶ Under these laws, a "discoverer" could legally occupy a territory that was already inhabited (by "infidels") and extend Christian sovereignty over it.¹⁷

This may answer the question as to how Christopher Columbus who was working on behalf of the Spaniards could be labeled the discoverer of America when many had previously traveled here, and the Native Americans were living here when he arrived.

But, how exactly did the Native Americans get exploited?

When the English started to come to the Americas from Europe, they didn't particularly care who was already living on the land and they certainly didn't have any regards for the Native Americans way of life as the Natives were infidels or plainly put just savages. Europeans looked at their discovery as a new way of starting over and due to the law of nations they felt they had complete rights to conquering land from infidels. The English wanted the land and they did whatever was necessary to take it from "these savages" as they referred to them.

But, why would you take unfamiliar land from those who are familiar with how to live and survive on this new territory? This taking of the land was done after the Europeans knew how to live off the land. Living off the land was only possible because the Native Americans showed the newcomers how to starve off disease and survive on a soil that they themselves had lived on for thousands of years. The Natives respected individual freedom and it was their culture to provide this assistance. Therefore, instead of trying to force these newcomers (the pilgrims) off the land they gave them all the assistance they needed to survive and thrive on it.

As more settlers came they began to expand. But did they honor the "Indians" for helping them to survive the land or for allowing them to occupy? No, instead they (the pilgrims and early settlers) not only treated the Natives poorly but many tried to kill them altogether. These settlers even brought with them disease like small pox that they purposely gave to the Natives because they knew the Natives had no cures.

Genocide of Native Americans

Throughout decades of English immigrants and the formation of the United States, Native Americans were continually mistreated. They were looked at as "savages" and were even made slaves. The English had no tolerance of them and many wanted them dead. This was mostly because they did not share religious beliefs and they did not share the same way of living. Natives were killed by attack after attack. Their crops were destroyed by settlers, leaving them dying of starvation. The settlers had the advantage since a bow and arrow could not beat a gun.

In his book, *American Holocaust*, David Stannard argues that the destruction of the aboriginal peoples of the Americas, Native Americans, in a "string of genocide campaigns" by Europeans and their descendants, was the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world and he further states:¹⁸

During the course of four centuries - from the 1490s to the 1890s - Europeans and white Americans engaged in an unbroken string of genocide campaigns against the native peoples of the Americas. [It] was, far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world. (p. 147)"

In 2003, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez urged Latin Americans to not celebrate the Columbus Day holiday. Chavez blamed Columbus for leading the way in the mass genocide of the Native Americans by the Spanish.¹⁹

So, now you may be wondering why did the English/Pilgrims or Puritans as they were called do this.

Puritan Values

The Pilgrims who settled in America were not innocent exiles who unjustly had been banished from their country as some historians put it. Instead, they were "political revolutionist" belonging to the Puritan movement, which was seen as unorthodox and intolerable by the King of the Church of England.²⁰

The Puritans viewpoint could be considered extreme. They had a two-fold ideology: 1) They knew their Bible well and consequently wrote deeply, and passionately about it, and 2) They put their knowledge about Christ into action.²¹ Compared to the 21st century church, they were biblically intellectual and felt that they were spiritual giants longing intensely for holiness of saintly living through Jesus Christ. This yearning and desire for a pure spiritual experience, or an experimental Calvinism, was so overwhelming that they were religiously zealous for the Kingdom of God and for purity of doctrine in every area

of life and nothing held them back from attempting to attain this.²²

Puritans also had some beliefs that became a part of the culture of this "new" America. The essence of Puritan social order lay in the authority of husband over wife, parents over children, and masters over servants. Puritan marriage choices were influenced by young people's inclination, by parents, and by the social rank of the persons involved. Upon finding a suitable match, husband and wife in America followed the steps needed to legitimize their marriage.²³

Contrary to popular belief, slavery was not established in America by uneducated Southern whites as the origin of American slavery sprang from the minds of Northeastern Puritan colonists, who through a twisted interpretation of the Bible and a corrupted practice of Europeanized Christianity, delegated black people to sub-human status, fit only to serve whites and to submit to their every whim under the threat of the most cruel reprisals and penalties.²⁴

Unlike the Southern slavers and plantation owners, Northern Puritans prided themselves on their culture, intellectualism, religious piety and moral purity allowing them to inflict some of the most atrocious crimes against Native Americans and people of African descent. These Puritans on the new land considered themselves blessed in the sight of God even while committing the most evil of acts against the dark skinned people they encountered.²⁵

Pilgrims were "seeing for innocence" in their way of thinking. Since they were God's chosen elect, they felt this gave them the right to treat women second to men and to believe that "white" skin was superior to dark skin and that Native Americans were infidels/savages who could be exposed of--killed off. These are the value systems upon which this country was founded--is there any wonder why we have sexism, racism and religious intolerance toward certain groups who appear different?

But does this mean that certain groups aren't entitled to their beliefs?
When is power in the wrong hands dangerous to those who are different?

What about Thanksgiving?

Given this terrible history between Native Americans and Pilgrims, why is there a celebration of Thanksgiving?

Rather than give you my perspective, I'll give you the perspective of a Native American and her view of Thanksgiving. Jacqueline Keeler, a member of the Diné Nation and the Yankton Dakota Sioux works with the American Indian Child Resource Center in Oakland, California. Her work has appeared in *Winds of Change*, an American Indian journal. She writes the following in an article titled, "Thanksgiving: A Native American View" excerpt below taken from the website found at <http://www.alternet.org/story/4391/>:

I celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving...Thanksgiving to me has never been about Pilgrims. When I was six, my mother, a woman of the Diné nation, told my sister and me not to sing "Land of the Pilgrim's pride" in "America the Beautiful" but "Land of the Indian's pride" instead.... Bigotry, hatred, greed, self-righteousness... We have seen the evil that it caused in the 350 years since. Genocide, environmental devastation, poverty, world wars, racism... when I give thanks this Thursday...I will be thinking of ...how my ancestors survived the evil it caused.²⁶

Manifest Destiny

After killing the Native Americans, taking their land there still was conquering to be done by the settlers here in North America. War with the Native Americans or other nations was not of moral or ethical concern for the European settlers as they made it their right to continue seizing land. With all the settlers means (guns and technology) by which to conquer land it became a philosophy that white America had the "manifest destiny" which is the right to dominate the North American continent.²⁷ This is where there became a clear distinction not just in religious beliefs but also in color differences, as now only White settlers had the right to occupy and possess these lands. Based on this accepted philosophy of the settlers, the early 1800s were years of extraordinary territorial growth for free White settlers of the United States.²⁸ During a four year period, the national domain increased by 1.2 million square miles. Yet, this expansionist agenda was never a clearly defined movement or one that enjoyed broad support due to lost rights of the indigenous people and the fact that this was also a racist philosophy.

Native American Myths

The image that has been presented to so many of us regarding the founders of this land brings humility to a group of people who deserve our utmost respect. Bias about American Indians is often the result of inaccurate information. The realities of American Indian life are often oversimplified and distorted. Stylized classroom accounts of Indian life reinforce the "buckskin and feather" and the "Eskimo and igloo" stereotypes. With such instruction, students are certain to develop misguided impressions of Native Americans.

In textbooks, movies, and TV programs, American Indians and Alaska Natives have been treated in ways that tend both to overlook their dignity and to disgrace their heritage. For example, Indians who defended their homeland from invaders (and who today seek to preserve their languages and culture) have often been viewed as enemies of progress. In the context of history, White people are portrayed as having viewed the Native Americans as barriers to the settlement of the frontier. In the present, Native Americans have been viewed as a "social problem", a drain on national resources. In order to value the contributions of this indigenous people we must challenge the distortions, stereotypes, myths and racist information that have been commonplace.

Explanation of Laws Passed to Control Native Americans

When the Constitution was written, it included a provision that implied federal authority over the conduct of Indian relations. Thereafter, the federal government - not state governments - was empowered to deal directly with Indian nations.

The Dawes Act

On February 8, 1887, Congress passed the Dawes Act, named for its author, Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts. Also known as the General Allotment Act, this law allowed the president to break up reservation land, which was held in common by the members of a tribe, into small allotments to be parceled out to individuals. Thus, Native Americans registering on a tribal "roll" were granted allotments of reservation land. Each head of family would receive one-quarter of a section (120 acres); each single person over 18 or orphan child under 18 would receive one-eighth of a section (60 acres); and other single persons under 18 would receive one-sixteenth of a section (30 acres).²⁹

While this may seem like a lot of land, let's first remember that the land was the Native Americans' to begin with. Between 1887 and 1934, the U.S. Government took over 90 million acres, nearly 2/3 of reservation lands from the tribes without compensation and gave it to the settlers.³⁰ Then once the best lands were given to the settlers they gave back to the Indians desert land or near-desert lands unsuitable for farming. Many Indians did not want to take up farming anyway as the techniques of self-sufficient farming were much different from their tribal way of life. But, of the Indians who were willing to give this a try they could not afford the tools, animals, seed, and other supplies necessary to get started. So, they were left with land that was worthless and could not provide them a means by which to live.

The Indian Reorganization Act

The Indian Reorganization Act is legislation that passed in 1934 in an attempt to secure new rights for Native Americans on reservations. Its main provisions were to restore to Native Americans management of their assets (mostly land); to prevent further depletion of reservation resources; to build a sound economic foundation for the people of the reservations; and to return to the Native Americans local self-government on a tribal basis.³¹ The objectives of the bill were vigorously pursued until the outbreak of World War II. While the act seems to restore some dignity to Native Americans, many Native Americans questioned its purpose which seemed more of gradual assimilation. Their opposition to the act reflects their efforts to reduce federal condescension in the treatment of Native Americans and their cultures.³²

1924 Citizenship Acts

By the act of June 2, 1924 (43 Stat. 253, ante, 420), Congress conferred citizenship upon all noncitizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States. The text of the act follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all noncitizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: Provided, that the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property and prior to the passage of the act of June 2, 1924, about two-thirds of the Indians of the United States were already citizens. There were a number of different provisions of law by which or under which Indians became

citizens previous to June 2, 1924.³³ But, why did they need citizenship when they were here first?

The participation of American Indians in the Great War probably accelerated the granting, by an Act of Congress in 1924, of American citizenship to all American Indians born in the United States.³⁴ But while it may appear a great gesture, this citizenship act did not grant Native Americans the right to be both a citizen and live according to their culture. It granted them only the right to be a citizen and be governed by the rules of the "White man."³⁵

Treatment of Native Americans Today

Despite broken treaties and numerous laws created to control American Indians, the indigenous people of America have never stopped fighting for self-determination-- government of a political unit by its own people.

Given the track record between the U.S. and Native Americans, one would hope that the dismal treatment was over. However, Native Americans must still face very racist symbols and defamation that is often accepted by mainstream America. From the racially derived "Washington Redskins" to the American Indian mascots that are found at the professional sports level as well as the elementary, high school and college levels. Far from honoring Native Americans, many of these mascots are a national insult, and represent the last vestiges of a time thought to have long passed when such stereotypes were commonplace. Just as "Sambo" served to perpetuate racism and bigotry toward the African-American community, these "Indian" mascots and team names that are depicted stereotypically serve to keep Native Americans in a similar position. How much more insult should Native Americans take?

Indian Mascots--politically incorrect or horrifically defaming

While some people are tired of being told how to think and act politically correct, it is important to note that being politically correct is not just the moral thing to do but makes good business sense. Many State School Boards have taken a strong stand against the mascot and team names; in many cases, people have strong emotional attachments to these names but if they are perceived as being culturally insensitive then shouldn't they be changed?³⁶

Why is Native people the only *race* of people that are permitted to be used as mascots? Interchange the name of any race with the Indians and it immediately becomes clear that we cannot have teams called The Negroes, or The Asians.³⁷

There is a lot of debate over Indian mascots. But how do you debate the appropriateness of using racist terms like *redskin* or using cultural artifacts in a disrespectful manner? Would there be a debate if it was customary to go a U.S. baseball game and burn the American flag?

The controversy over the Washington Redskins trademark has brought this debate to the mainstream. It began with a petition by seven American Indian activists led by Suzan Harjo in 1992 to the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board of the US Department of Commerce requesting cancellation of the trademark on the grounds that the word *redskin* was and is a pejorative, derogatory, denigrating, offensive, scandalous, contemptuous, disreputable, disparaging and racist designation for a Native American person

It becomes clear that valuing diversity is not as simple as we would like to make it. It becomes an issue, when asked to give up something you may value because it devalues someone else. Issues like the Indian mascots really test our commitment to diversity, why? It is simple, revisit the definition of cultural sensitivity and you will see why it is an issue for valuing diversity. Cultural sensitivity does not mean that a person need only be *aware* of the differences. But, to interact effectively with people from other cultures we must move beyond cultural biases, symbols, language etc. that creates a barrier.

A document titled "What's Wrong With Indian Mascots, Anyway?" (found at <http://www.racismagainstindians.org/UnderstandingMascots.htm>) tries to answer the question it poses³⁸:

"Because virtually the only images that non-native children view of Native people are of the mascots, most children assume that Native people are dead or were war-like people. This stereotype diminishes the Native culture and is hurtful to Native people. Our myths and legends that the Native people were bloodthirsty killers are perpetuated by the mascot. These myths are what psychologists deem as "dehumanization," which is necessary in any war to justify the killing of people. In other wars, we can remember the names used for Germans, "krauts," Japanese were "Nips," etc. But when wars are over we drop those names and show respect once again for people who are not our enemies.

We have never dropped those names and perpetuate a war like attitude towards Native people by the continuance of those names."

If you believe the claim of being called war-like is an "honor," read *Smashing People: The "Honor" of Being an Athlete* that can be found on the Internet. In an interview with CBSNews.com, on March 20, 2001, author Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) adds another important point:

"The mascot thing gets me really mad" Alexie says. "Don't think about it in terms of race. Think about it in terms of religion. Those are our religious imagery up there. Feather, the paint, the sun that's our religious imagery. You couldn't have a Catholic priest running around the floor with a basketball throwing communion wafers. You couldn't have a rabbi running around..."³⁹

I could keep providing examples of how the mascot issue is culturally insensitive and in some cases downright disrespectful but instead I ask you—Is having a mascot (depicted stereotypically) really worth the continued racist, culturally inconsiderate actions that it represents? Do you think it is necessary to take into account the treatment of Native Americans in this country as it relates to how sensitive we should be today? If according to your answers you still don't see anything wrong with Indian mascots or at best don't see the need to speak up against them, then I leave you the following words:

"In Germany they came first for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak up because I was a protestant.

Then they came for me,
and by that time no one was left to speak up."

--- Said by Rev. Martin J. Niemoller in 1945

Native American Contributions and Inventions*

*Information below is copied with permission from various encyclopedias.

- Foods** Edible plants domesticated by Indians have become major staples in the diets of peoples all around the world. Such foods include corn (maize), manioc, potatoes, sweet potatoes, peanuts, squashes and pumpkins, tomatoes, papayas, avocados, pineapples, guavas, chili peppers, chocolate (cacao), and many species of beans.
- Animals** Indians were the first to raise turkeys, llamas, guinea pigs, and honeybees for food.
- Non-edible plants** Other plants of great importance developed by Indians include cotton, rubber, and tobacco.
- Medicines** Indians discovered the medicinal use for quinine. Also, Canadian Indians knew how to prevent scurvy by eating plants rich in vitamin C, and they passed this information along to the Europeans.
- Mathematics** The Maya of Mexico appear to have been the first to use the zero in mathematics. Scholars believe that Asians traveled across the Pacific Ocean and learned zero from the Maya.
- Government** Indian governments in eastern North America, particularly the League of the Iroquois, served as models of federated representative democracy to the Europeans and the American colonists. The United States government is based on such a system, whereby power is distributed between a central authority (the federal government) and smaller political units (the states).

Economy Indian contributions to the modern world's economy have been enormous. In the 1500's, Indian labor produced the gold and other valuable metals that helped bring the Spanish Empire to the height of its power. In the following centuries, Indian labor in the North American fur trade contributed significantly to the wealth of England, France, the Netherlands, and Russia.

Partial List of Inventions

abstract art- Abstract art was used by nearly all tribes and civilizations of North and South America. Native American art was believed to be primitive until the 1990s, when it served as inspiration for the modern American abstract art movement.

adobe- Adobe was used by the peoples from South America, Mesoamerica, and up to Southwestern tribes of the U.S. It is estimated that it was developed around the year 3000 B.C.

almanacs- Almanacs were invented independently by the Maya. Their culture arose and they began using them around 3,500 years ago, while Europeans are known to have created written almanacs only after 1150 A.D. Almanacs are books containing meteorological and astronomical information, which the Maya used in various aspects of their life.

anesthetics- American Indians used coca, peyote, datura and other plants for partial or total loss of sensation or conscious during surgery. Non-Indian doctors had effective anesthetics only after the mid 1800s. Before this, they either had to perform surgery while the patient felt pain or knock the patient out.

balls, rubber- The Olmec produced rubber balls around 1700 B.C. They were the first people to develop and play with rubber balls as well as manufacture other objects of rubber.

basketball- Basketball was played by the Olmec 3,000 years ago. The game followed the Olmec's creation of the rubber ball. See Mesoamerican ballgame for more information on this ancient sport.

calendars- Were developed throughout North America, Mesoamerica, and South

America. They are known to have been in used since 600 B.C. American Indian calendars were so precise that by the 5th century B.C. they were only 19 minutes off.

chewing gum- American Indians in New England introduced the settlers to chewing gum made from the spruce tree. The Mayans, on the other hand, were the first people to use latex gum; better known to them as chicle.

chocolate- The Mayans were the first to drink cocoa. This tradition was later passed on to the Aztec's who called the beverage xocalatl. Natives in mesoamerica introduced it to the Spanish and Portuguese, but they kept the beloved xocalatl from the rest of Europe for nearly a century.

corn (maize) - The domestication of maize, now cultivated throughout the world, is one of the most influential technological contributions of Mesoamericans.

dog breeds- Dog breeds believed to have been bred by Native Americans are the xochiocoyotl (coyote), xoloitzcuintli (known as xolo or Mexican hairless), chihuahua, the Carolina dog, and the Alaskan malamute.

electricity- The Moche invented electricity through chemical means somewhere between 200 B.C. and 600 A.D. Electrical current was produced by dipping copper into an acid solution.

embalming- Egyptians are known for mummification which began around 2000 B.C. In what is now Chile however, the Chinchoro are known to have been embalming and mummifying their dead since 5000 B.C. which would make them the world's earliest embalmers. Embalming is using preservatives to prevent decay of the body.

geographical names- Native Americans have had a major impact in names of locations and places commonly used today. There are 26 states in the United States alone whose names derive from Native Americans. Most notable however, are the countries of Canada and Mexico. Names do not limit themselves to political states; there are also mountains, rivers, cities, lakes, and counties deriving from indigenous terms.

hammocks- Hammocks were commonly used in the Caribbean, South and Central America at first contact with Europeans. The Spanish liked the comfortable way of sleeping and adopted them. Europeans eventually used them as the primary way of sleeping on ships.

hockey- Both field hockey and ice hockey are based on a game called shinny. This American Indian stickball game was played throughout North America well before the European arrival.

llamas- Indigenous people from Peru domesticated llamas in around 5000 B.C.

rubber balloons- The Olmec were the first people to use rubber balloons. Their civilization arose in B.C 1700 in the Yucatan Peninsula.

spinning top- North American Indians invented the spinning top. A device used as a toy and made out of wood.

tipi- A cone shaped, portable dwelling popularized by Native Americans of the Great Plains. Tipis were warm, durable and comfortable and could be easily broken down and packed. A settlement could be ready to move in about one hour.

tortillas- this staple food well known today was used throughout Mesoamerican and Southwestern cultures. Although they were mainly made of corn, squash and amaranth were also popular among the natives. The tortillas were wrapped around different fillings such as avocado. Today this has resulted in the creation of the modern taco, burrito, and enchilada.

Concluding Thoughts

As we close with this chapter, one thing should be clear—America has treated the Natives of this country with disdain, disrespect and in some cases dishonor toward their humanity and culture. This can make some feel ashamed, embarrassed and even guilty for this treatment. It is okay to feel this, but what becomes more important is what we do with these feelings.

If you feel ashamed, don't—feel empowered. Make it a point to teach your children, friends and family the truth about the Natives of this country—this can go a long way toward erasing the many myths that exist. If you feel embarrassed, don't—feel empathy. Celebrate Thanksgiving in a different manner not as a victory toward the pilgrims but as respect and honor toward the Natives of this country for their suffering and loss. If you feel guilty, don't—instead feel responsible. Use this accountability to work toward restoring honor to this culture

as it relates to the mascot issue, Native American sovereignty, and other issues that Native Americans still must fight for. Remember, strength lies in numbers and we all need to use our voices to speak up for this most honorable race of people.

End of Chapter Questions

1. Define the following terms and indicate how they relate to Native Americans:
 - a. Indigenous People
 - b. Discoverer
 - c. Infidels
 - d. Law of Nation(s)
2. Name and describe two laws that were implemented to control Native Americans.
3. What is manifest destiny and how does it relate to “who” could acquire land?
4. How does America explain the taking of Native American land or does it and what does continued disrespect say about how Native Americans are valued in U.S. society?
5. What were the four values of Native Americans? How were these exploited by the pilgrims?
6. Why did the Venezuelan President urge Latin America not to celebrate Columbus Day?
7. In what ways did Native American nations respect their women?

8. What were the Puritan viewpoints toward the following:
 - a. dark-skinned people
 - b. women
 - c. religious freedom
9. Besides tipis, what were some styles of homes that Native American nations utilized? Indicate if they are still used today in U.S. society?
10. For each statement below, indicate if it is an appropriate way to show respect to Native Americans and indicate why or why not.
 - a. A company creates a new potato chip and names it "redskin" potato chips and on the bag shows a Native American in "red" face.
 - b. During a school pep rally, the school utilizes the religious symbols (such as the images of eagle feathers, symbols of clothing, song, dance) of Native Americans to get the crowd excited.
 - c. When someone at work takes back a gift they gave you, you refer to them as an "Indian Giver."
 - d. During the month of November your organization creates factual literature on the various cultures of Native Americans.

Internet Exercise

Using the Internet, look up the following address:

<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/iroquois.html> or go to www.google.com and search for "Iroquois Constitution". Once you have retrieved the document, skim it so that you can answer the two questions below.

- a. What famous document in U.S. history sounds similar to the document on the above website?
- b. What is this document's view on women, religious freedom, and the designation of power?

End of Chapter Exercise

What is the "real" Thanksgiving Story?

Using the Internet, look up the following address:

<http://www.manataka.org/page269.html> or go to www.google.com and search for "The Real Thanksgiving Story." Once at the website *Teaching About Thanksgiving* read "Introduction for Teachers" and "The Plymouth Thanksgiving story." Now complete the following:

- (1) Explain five things that you learned from this story.
- (2) State if you were taught this version of the story and if yes what impact did this have on your view of Native Americans. If you were not taught this version of the story, indicate what impact did the story you were taught have on your view of Native Americans. If you did know about Thanksgiving, state what your views are regarding the U.S. treatment of Native Americans.