

A DIALOGUE ON RACE SERIES

I Am A Native American Indian

BY DARYL EASTMAN, ROSE HIGH BEAR AND "SMOKE SIGNALS"

Which is Correct: American Indian or Native American?

Either term is generally acceptable, although individuals may have a preference. But, when I describe myself, I use the term native American Indian. It respects both preferences. Native American is a term recently used to describe American Indians. Whereas American Indians under the laws of the United States and the treaties is the correct terminology used to describe our indigenous people under this country's legal definition.

Where did American Indians come from originally?

Many anthropologists believe that Indians traveled about 35,000 years ago across a land bridge spanning the Bering Strait from Asia to North America. Most tribes have their own creation story. Many believe that Native people originated on this continent.

What is an Indian tribe?

It's a body of indigenous native American Indians bound together by blood ties who were socially, religiously and politically organized to live together in a territory where they speak the same language or dialect. These territories were seasonally inhabited for their purpose of gathering food/medicine, conducting religious ceremonies, hunting, and other reasons.

What powers do the tribes hold?

They have nationhood status, enjoying the powers of government, except those expressly taken away by Congress or overruled by the Supreme Court. The

United States recognized the tribes' right to form their own government, determine membership, administer justice, raise taxes, establish business and have the power to remove other Indians or non-Indians from their

though more than 5,000 Cherokees live on their reservation in North Carolina.

Are reservations and tribal governments the same?

No. Tribal governments existed long before reservations

In the United States, there are two kinds of reservations: Indian and military.

Who regulates Indian casinos?

The National Indian Gaming Commission, established by Con-

well, have their own gaming commissions, tribal police forces, and court systems.

The federal law requires states to enter into compacts with tribal governments that plan to engage in casino gambling, including slot machines and blackjack. Gaming must be conducted on tribal land, and the state's control is limited to the terms of the compacts. Compacts are approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Indian gaming is growing at a rapid pace, but represents only 8 percent of the revenue market share, according to the Nation Indian Gaming Association.

Roughly one-third of the 554 tribes have gaming operations, and may be limited to bingo.

Is there an American Indian religion?

Many Native Americans believe in a Great Spirit that reveals itself through nature and influences all life.

Indigenous religions also are filled with lesser spirits that inhabit the everyday world. In the 19th century, Native Americans lost many of their religious customs as colonists forced them to convert to Christianity, sent children to mission schools, and banned some of their ceremonies.

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What is a Peace Pipe?

We look at the pipe as a sacred object that has a great deal of power and meaning to us. There are two pieces: a bowl and stem. The bowl side is the female and the stem, the male. When we place the pieces together and fill it with herbs or tobacco, we then make a prayer to reach out to Spirit and ask for help.

Why is the eagle a sacred animal to Native Americans?

Eagles soar through the sky in a clockwise motion. We believe that it doesn't live here with the rest of us. When we pray, the eagle is able to send our prayers skyward to the eagle's home with the Great Spirit. In ceremonies, we use the plume, feather bone and talon.

What is a pow-wow?

Pow-wow comes from the Narragansett word for Shaman. It is a celebration and social gathering. It is a celebration and social gathering, honoring sacred Indian traditions through dancing, drumming, singing, and the gathering of people. Pow-wows may be held to honor an individual or a special occasion. Most commonly, a pow-wow is a social event. All non-Native Americans are welcome at these events.

What is a sweat lodge?

It's a place to pray. We use the red willow bark and make a womb shape calling it the "Womb of Mother Earth." Sweat lodges are used to induce sweating for spiritual or medicinal purposes. Sweat lodges are heated by fire or by pouring water over hot stones. A sweat ceremony is very sacred for purification. We release ourselves from unresolved grief, fears, disease and anger and give this negativity to the elder spirits.



reservation due to tribal violations.

In 1998, there were 554 federally recognized tribes in the United States, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This includes 226 villages in Alaska. With a 1990 population of 308,132, Cherokees are the largest U.S. tribe. Most live in Oklahoma,

were established. However, governing authority on reservations is the tribal council. In cases where different tribes share a reservation, they often separate governments, as the Shoshone and Arapaho do in Wyoming.

The term originates from the federal government's act of reserving land for federal purposes.

gress, oversees bingo operations, casinos, and certain types of gambling on tribal land. It sets rules for licensing, reviews yearly audits, and approves ordinances that tribes develop to run gaming operations. The U.S. departments of Treasury, Justice, and Interior have authority over aspects of Indian gaming. Indian nations, as

Our Meaningful Ties

BY ROSE HIGH BEAR

There is a great commonality between Native Americans and African Americans because of the connection of our heart, the depth of our spirit.

Ever since African Americans came to Turtle Island (this country), we were related. Our spiritual practices are alike in the observance of ceremony and ritual.

There's similarity in our drumming, dance, the honoring of spirit guides, the honoring of the four legged animals (like deer, elk and the horse) of the winged nation and a reverence for all of God's creation.

Native Africans are at risk today because many of their valued traditions are not being practiced. Some Native American tribal nations have kept their customs alive. They've been preserved from generation to generation within some families.

We recognize all four colors within the Native American Wheel: **Black** (for Africans) stand to the west, **Red** (for Native Americans) stand to the north, **Yellow** (for Asians) stand to the East, and **White** (for Europeans) stands to the south. We look at ourselves as interrelated to all colors of people. And without those colors, we're not complete.

Native Americans spiritually understand our common ties to life. When we pray, we always pray for ALL PEOPLE - everyone of every race and nation of mankind.



In 1849, the Oregon Territorial Legislature passed the Exclusion Act (repealed in 1926), which banned "Negroes and Mulattoes" from the Oregon Territory.

This year, one hundred and fifty years later, Oregon Uniting will acknowledge Oregon's discriminatory history, condemn the attitudes that led to that discrimination and acknowledge the people of ALL races and ethnic backgrounds who have worked for positive change.

"Whereas, situated as the people of Oregon are, in the midst of an Indian population, it would be highly dangerous to allow free Negroes and mulattoes to reside in the territory or to intermix with the Indians, instilling into their minds feelings of hostility against the white race, therefore:

Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the territory of Oregon that it shall not be lawful for any Negro or Mulatto to come into or reside within the limits of this territory..."

Territorial document # 3666

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