Native Americans: 
A Look into the Lives of Native Americans in North America

Manifest Destiny

Manifold destiny was an American belief that the United States had a God-given right to expand across the continent.

Westward Expansion of the United States

With the new found opportunity that God had granted them the rights to expand westward, Americans began their journey to the west, which directly impacted the lives of Native Americans.

WHERE ARE THEY FROM & HOW DID THEY GET HERE?

Initially the Americas were not inhabited by human beings. The America was once a desolate land with wildlife but no humans.

The first people to come inhabit the Americas were the nomads. Nomads by definition are groups of people who didn’t have a permanent place of residence. They would travel from one place to another.

Nomads traveled from place to place following livestock. The nomads followed livestock because wherever the animals were going there was food.

By following their livestock they eventually crossed the landbridge from Asia to Alaska and from there dispersed all through North, Central, and South America.

TRAIL OF TEARS

In 1830 and 1839, as part of Andrew Jackson’s removal policy, the Cherokee nation was forced to give up its land east of the Mississippi River and to migrate to an area in present-day Oklahoma. The Cherokee people called this journey the Trail of Tears. Because of its devastating effects, the migrants faced blizzards, disease, and starvation on the forced march. Over 4,000 out of 12,000 of the Cherokees died.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Native Americans were a heterogeneous society. They were divided into categories which groups of Native Americans were very peaceful while others were very war hungry.

They believe everything is sacred from the largest mountains to the smallest plant and animals. The nations educated their young by storytelling and games designed to work on hunting skills.

Spiritually the native were about honor, law and respect to them it is about being in touch with themselves and the nature around them. Unlike the Europeans, the Native Americans do not want to be building kingdoms.

Unlike the Europeans, the Native American seem to have no desire to be building kingdoms.

AMERICAN IMPACT

Native Americans have a lower overall high school graduation rate of about 65 percent earn a high school diploma. Their college graduation rate is also much lower with 3.3 percent earning a college degree compared to the national average of 23.3 percent.

One way the Native Americans have been able to reassert themselves from extinction are casinos. After some years of having to young adults are moving back to reservations, finding an 11.5% population increase; employment has increased by 26%; and there has been a 14% decline in number of working poor.

Native Americans teach their children about the traditions of other tribes, to hunt and fish, and to open new businesses. They also pass down their traditions, such as Native dances, to their children.

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

The Europeans limited Native American’s resource to owning ownership of the land. 

Distributive Justice refers to a set of rules, set forth by the social elite, which govern the use, distribution and access to resources in every social group. The Europeans limited Native American’s resource to having ownership of the land.

Native American epistemology governs their views and beliefs, thus they higher appreciation for the land and what it can provide them. They attached a spiritual component to their land, and as a result, they approached the sale of these lands with great apprehension. However, they were not an advanced people, they lacked access to distributive justice based on their environment, where as the Europeans

EXPERIENCE WITH EUROPEANS

Native Americans learned about Christianity. They were also exposed to diseases that they had no natural immunity against such as chicken pox, small pox and measles.

They were exposed to different kinds of trade, including rice, tobacco, sugar, rum, cotton, and agricultural products (e.g., corn, beans, and squash).

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