The Red Tao

A Native American Path of Learning

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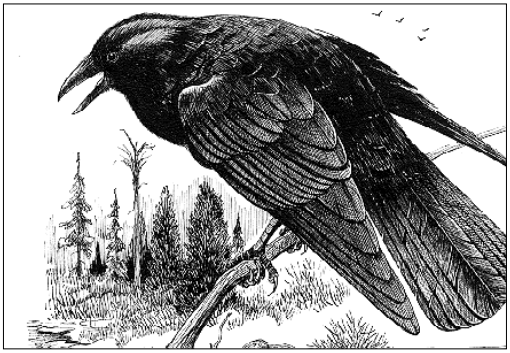


Sleeping Crow

Written and published without profit for the benefit of Native American and First Nation peoples education.

For **Ala:Kalahanamae**, the **Man Who stood Between the Two Rivers**, my spiritual father. He has walked the Western Path but stays among us still with his wit and wisdom. A promise fulfilled.

- Sleeping Crow, Ridge Walker.

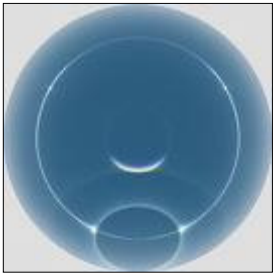
About this Book

My name is **Sleeping Crow**, spiritual son of **Ala:Kalahanamae**, a walker and Elder on the Red Path, the Native American and First Nations/First Peoples tradition. My last promise to my father was to share what he had gifted me as a young man, the wisdom of his long life, when the time should come. It is now a part of my own journey on the Western Path to keep this promise, following in his footsteps. May it be worthy and useful.

Each of the chapters in this book deals with a topic of importance in the Native American and First Nations/First Peoples tradition as taught to me or as made part of the learning path by other, wiser teachers. Order is not especially important in reading through these pages; however, there are a few terms typical to our tradition that may be unfamiliar to some. If so, please continue to read on. The meaning will become clear in time. I have tried to keep these pieces short and simple, yet complete enough to capture the nature of our beliefs and learning, both traditional and contemporary. I have also tried to include a broad cross-section of our beliefs so that the reader will recognize the harmony and unity among our people. The Native way, the Red Path, is not easily expressed in words but it comes to each of us naturally, if we are willing to open ourselves to the possibilities all around us.

Finally, please listen closely to the words spoken by our Elders and recorded in the chapters that follow. The words are true and express the essence of our Native American and First Nations tradition.

The Great Spirit



The Great Spirit cannot be known, yet exists verywhere and nowhere at the same time.

It has no name, yet it belongs to us all, is the essence of all, and is also nothing at all. We are the Great Spirit, as is the rock, the hawk, the far star, and the wind that rustles against our cheek.

It is not approachable, yet the Great Spirit is filled with expression. Our universe is the limitless, infinite experience of the expression of the Great Spirit. It is the nature of the Great Spirit to express itself, yet it has no nature at all.

We come to know something of the Great Spirit through our concept of "Grandfather." It is a gentle, approachable expression of Greatness that gives us some understanding and comfort. It gives us a way to approach the unapproachable, a way to move forward on our path, a sense of our true belonging.

But "Grandfather" is only a name, a way of moving closer to the Great Spirit, the point to which we all return, the point from which we all emerged. There are many other names for many other peoples. All are accepted on the Red Path. Grandfather is not ours alone, he is for everyone. To shun another is not the way of Grandfather, it is the mark of a man who has lost his way on the path.

The Seven Directions

The directions allow us to know where we stand on our path, what surrounds us, and where we must journey for spiritual understanding. Some have physical counterparts, some do not. Each, however, is a true direction for our spirit and each must be explored along our journey through life. In our tradition, these directions are essential points of learning and wisdom:

East: the place from which we are born into the world. Our first path. The realm of the young ones.

West: the place from which we return to the Great Spirit, to Grandfather. Our final path. The realm of the Elders.

North: the place of secrets and things hidden from our senses. A place of knowledge. The journey of learning and danger. The realm of those who walk the wind.

South: the realm of comfort and warmth, friendship and happiness. A domain of respite. A gathering of Elders, family, young ones, and loved ones.

Above: the domain of Grandfather and those who fly near to him. A place of wisdom and understanding. The rising of our spirit. The realm of messages and spiritual learning.

Below: the domain of stability, nourishment, and foundation. A place of belonging. The Mother we protect and honor. Our earthly home.

Within: the domain where Grandfather places his seed for us to express in our living form. Our own, true path. Our way to his home.

Elders

Our Elders are wise. They have lived long, meaningful lives and have experienced each of the paths in the seven directions. They have fulfilled the tasks given them by their Elders and are now ready to teach the young ones. They are closer to Grandfather than the young, close enough to understand both their own strengths and frailities. They do not act in haste or anger. They act for the benefit of others and try to fulfill the teachings that they have gathered throughout a long life.

The Elders value silence and respect above other qualities. Their strength has been gathered slowly over the years, accumulated by their understanding and willingness to live close to the Mother and in the way that Grandfather has taught. They understand that each living thing reflects a perfect expression of the Great Spirit, as they, themselves, do. They can walk the wind and can tell us much.

Our Elders are living treasures, storehouses of wisdom and tradition, foundations of trust and understanding. They are respected above others among us and never relegated to "old age" for the sake of convenience. They hold the essence of who we are and are sought out to share what they have learned.

When an Elder speaks, we listen, in silence and respectfully.

The Lodge

Our lodge is much more than a simple shelter. It is a place of learning, sharing, and safety. The lodge is an expression of our home life, our center of education and tradition, our place of prayer and purification. Whatever is of value to us outside the lodge is brought within its walls and freely shared with our families, friends, young ones and Elders. In all its many forms, the lodge is a sacred and honored place among our people.

Although our homes are simple, they are filled with expressions of love, respect, and our way of life. They are constructed with both physical and spiritual material, always gathered from surrounding land, always blessed and made sacred before use. They are crafted with care and with an eye to tradition and Native American/First Peoples symbology.

To live in a lodge is to live within the spirit of our people and close to The Mother. It is a reflection of who we are and how we express ourselves, day-to-day, within the world that Grandfather has gifted us. Every home should be a lodge, a place of harmony and sharing, not a place of anger and disrespect.

Without respect, a lodge cannot be a home. Without love, no lodge will stand.

Talking

There is great danger in talking at the wrong moment.

One cannot listen while talking.

One cannot breathe while talking.

One cannot ride the wind while talking.

One cannot learn while talking.

One cannot drum while talking.

One cannot become the spirit while talking.

One cannot ever express the whole truth by talking.

One cannot become the animal while talking.

One cannot stalk while talking.

One cannot pray in truth while talking.

The Elders know this and talk only when their words can help. When words are wasteful, as they often are, the path becomes unclear and dangerous. The safer path is one of respectful silence.

Let the crow speak his message while we listen in silence.

The Drum

We drum to celebrate, pray, communicate and bring our people together. Drumming is an inherent part of our lives and is especially important for ceremonial occasions.

We also drum at informal gatherings and often simply for our own entertainment, or as a way of praying. Drumming reflects the natural rhythms that surround us as well as our own internal rhythm. It is a way of expressing who we are as well as offering a prayer to Grandfather. Some forms of drumming are spontaneous and unscripted, others are more formal.

Our drumming usually takes one of two physical forms: Spirit Drumming (often called a Hoop Drum), which is a drum played by a single individual, or Ceremonial Drumming, which is playing with others on a large, stationary drum.

A Spirit Drum is considered less formal than a Ceremonial Drum. Spirit Drums are often accompanied by other Native American or First Peoples instruments, such as the flute, while Ceremonial Drums are typically played without any accompaniment (but vocals) and on more solemn or fomal occasions.

Singing, chanting and praying are part and parcel of drumming. In Native American/First Peoples tradition, drumming is the equivalent of sending a prayer to Grandfather, offering him a part of ourselves and asking for his blessing.

One cannot be unhappy and drum at the same time.

Diversity

I have a good friend, perhaps my best friend, who is not Native American. He is Afro-American. I invited him to a Native American gathering some time ago. It was his first encounter with one of our traditional gatherings and he obviously had a good time.

Sometime during the day, he pulled me aside to talk about what he had seen. He had noticed another black man, a few obviously gay folks (two spirit), and a lot of diversity in general. It was a typical rainbow gathering and nothing unusual by Native American/First Peoples standards. Still, he was very surprised by this. Like most folks who aren't familiar with the Native Way, he assumed that we flocked together like the crows in the field.

I explained to him that we celebrate diversity in a very pronounced way. Those who are "in our circle" and who may be different from any one of us are typically viewed as special, as having been granted a unique blessing by Grandfather. He was amazed at this point of view, but obviously very pleased. It was something beyond theoretical and a practical part of our everyday lives. He got it!

It was a special moment for me, too. A moment of pride in my Native traditions and the way we gather to celebrate our diversity, woven together by our overriding belief in the Red Path. We were one that day, and it showed.

We all end up the same place, don't we? It's how honestly we get there that counts.

Call me What?

It's a matter of taste.

I'm of Canadian ancestry — Cowichan Nation.

Up there (from America's point of view), we are called **First Peoples** or **First Nations**.

Down here (from Canada's point of view), we're known as **Native Americans**.

Which is closer to the truth?

May The Force Be With You

What could be more Native than the core concept of the **Star Wars** saga?

The **force** of the Great Spirit unites the diverse Jedi to bring peace to a galaxy at war with itself. History is finally re-written by the goodness of the spirit within good men. The force of the Great Spirit eventually becomes known to the universe and understood for its true power and beauty.

It's a universal, primordial story of good versus evil, one that teaches us the basics of living our lives in accordance with universal principles. It's a theme that repeats itself throughout the history of mankind. It is another example of the Red Path, the Native Way, this time put forward to the distant future.

In turn, the Red Path is a reflection of a much older, even more primordial path. It is the way of the Mother — the way of nature without interference from man. It is the way of the force. It is the endless circle that leads us always back to Grandfather, to the Great Spirit.

Today, we are the Jedi. Yesterday, we were other heroes. Still, we are all the same.

The Lesson of the Wolf

It is Grandfather who creates perfection.
Only perfection.

It is man who finds fear in perfection.
Only man.

A short, powerful Cherokee legend sums it all up quite well:

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two "wolves" inside us all.

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

The Western Path

Every Elder understands that we must each walk the Western Path to rejoin Grandfather, the Great Spirit, for our next journey. We must all leave this world and cross over into the next, whatever we believe this to be. Only the ignorant man denies this inevitability. Only the foolish man fears this gift. Only the man without heart tries to turn away.

The Western Path is one of shedding, stripping away whatever it is that can make our journey more difficult or burdensome. We must walk this path alone and with nothing more than what we were given at birth, except what is in our heart. This means that our days of gathering have come to an end, our days of giving and teaching have arrived, and we are growing ever closer to that place where there is no suffering, loneliness, or disharmony. We are close to fulfilling our promises and expressing the full potential of Self we have created and nurtured over the years of our life. It is a time of anticipation and celebration of a life well lived.

To walk the Western Path we must have patience, tolerance for ourselves and others, a sense of sharing whatever we have gathered over the years, and a peaceful happiness in our accomplishments and failures. To the Elder, this is a time of contentment, a time when our vision becomes more clear, and our steps, although feeble, are still sure in their direction. There is no room for indecision on the Western Path.

We are close to home, finally, and ready to fulfill our life expression. All we have to do is relax, understand that this is but one of many journeys, and that life has been a wondrous experience. We are moving on to new worlds and a new, unexpected journey, ever closer to Grandfather. It is the crow who will guide us with his whispers.

"When it comes time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with the fear of death, so when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and die like a hero going home."

- Chief Aupumut, Mohican, 1725

The Elders' Words of Living

They come from diverse Nations and different times. Often, they cannot understand each other's language. Yet, they speak with one voice. They have walked the same path and have been true to their teachings. They are our Elders. Read their words and understand the unity of the Red Path, whoever is speaking:

The Great Spirit is in all things. He is in the air we breathe. The Great Spirit is our Father, but the earth is our Mother. She nourishes us. That which we put into the ground she returns to us.

- Big Thunder (Bedagi), Wabanaki Algonquin

The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us."

- Black Elk, Oglala Sioux

The growing and dying of the moon reminds us of our ignorance, which comes and goes. But when the moon is full, it is as if the Great Spirit were upon the whole world.

- Black Elk, Oglala Sioux

You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. The Sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves.

- Black Elk, Oglala Sioux

The Wise Man believes profoundly in silence, the sign of a perfect equilibrium. Silence is the absolute poise or balance of body, mind and spirit. The man who preserves his selfhood ever calm and unshaken by the storms of existence, not

as a leaf, as it were, on the tree, not a ripple upon the surface of the shinning pool, his, in the mind of the unlettered sage, is the ideal attitude and conduct of life. Silence is the cornerstone of character.

- Ohiyesa (Charles Alexander Eastman), Wahpeton Santee Sioux

It was our belief that the love of possessions is a weakness to be overcome. Its appeal is to the material part, and if allowed its way, it will in time disturb one's spiritual balance. Therefore, children must early learn the beauty of generosity. They are taught to give what they prize most, that they may taste the happiness of giving.

- Ohiyesa (Charles Alexander Eastman), Wahpeton Santee Sioux

Among the Indians there have been no written laws. Customs handed down from generation to generation have been the only laws to guide them. Every one might act different from what was considered right should he choose to do so, but such acts would bring upon him the censure of the Nation. This fear of the Nation's censure acted as a mighty band, binding all in one social, honorable compact.

- George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-bowh), Ojibwa Chief, 1818-1863

Respect means listening until everyone has been heard and understood, only then is there a possibility of "Balance and Harmony," the goal of Indian Spirituality.

- Dave Chief, Grandfather of Red Dog

In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for Tirawa, the One Above (Great Spirit), did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beast, and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and moon, should man learn. All things tell of Tirawa. All things in the world are two. In our mind we are two, good and evil. With our eyes we see two things, things that are fair and things that are ugly. We have the right hand that strikes and makes for evil, and the left hand full of kindness, near the heart. One foot may lead us to an evil way, the other foot may lead us to good. So are all things two, all two.

- Eagle Chief (Letakots-Lesa), Pawnee

If you talk to the animals they will talk with you and you will know each other. If you do not talk to them you will not know them, and what you do not know you

will fear. What one fears one destroys.

- Chief Dan George

We had no churches, no religious organization, no sabbath days, no holidays, and yet we worshiped. Sometimes the whole tribe would assemble and sing and pray. Sometimes a smaller number, perhaps only two or three. The songs had a few words, but were not formal. The singer would occasionally put in such words as he wished instead of the usual tone sound. Sometimes we prayed in silence; sometimes each prayed aloud; sometimes an aged person prayed for all of us. At other times one would rise and speak to us of our duties to each other and to Usen. Our services were short.

- Geronimo (Goyathlay) Chiricahua ("one who yawns"), 1829-1909

We are taught to believe that the Great Spirit sees and hears everything, and that he never forgets: that hereafter he will give every man a spirit-home according to his deserts. This I believe, and all my people belive the same.

- Chief Joseph (Hinmaton, Yalatkit), Nez Perce (Nimiputimt)

It does not require many words to speak the truth.

- Chief Joseph

When I am dead, cry for me a little. Think of me sometimes, but not too much. It is not good for you or your wife or your husband or your children to allow your thoughts to dwell too long on the dead. Think of me now and again as I was in life, at some moment which is pleasant to recall, but not for long. Leave me in peace as I shall leave you, too, in peace. While you live, let your thoughts be with the living.

- Ishi, Yahi of California, 1862-1916

*(With Thanks to **Native American Wisdom**)*

Code of Ethics

Traditionally, our wisdom has not been written down. It has been passed on from generation to generation by our Elders. Still, we live in a modern world and our people are widely scattered. Sometimes, the traditional ways must be given a helping hand. Writing and publishing is one way to do this, one way to reach many of our people.

We are diverse in our ways and paths but one in our core beliefs. The following Code of Ethics is from the Inter-Tribal Times *(1994) and does a good job of summarizing the Red Path, the way we choose to live:*

1. Each morning upon rising, and each evening before sleeping, give thanks for the life within you and for all life, for the good things the Creator has given you and for the opportunity to grow a little more each day. Consider your thoughts and actions of the past day and seek for the courage and strength to be a better person. Seek for the things that will benefit others (everyone).

2. Respect. Respect means "To feel or show honor or esteem for someone or something; to consider the well being of, or to treat someone or something with deference or courtesy". Showing respect is a basic law of life.

a. Treat every person from the tiniest child to the oldest Elder with respect at all times.

b. Special respect should be given to Elders, Parents, Teachers, and Community Leaders.

c. No person should be made to feel "put down" by you; avoid hurting other hearts as you would avoid a deadly poison.

d. Touch nothing that belongs to someone else (especially Sacred Objects) without permission, or an understanding between you.

e. Respect the privacy of every person, never intrude on a person's quiet moment or personal space.

f. Never walk between people that are conversing.

g. Never interrupt people who are conversing.

h. Speak in a soft voice, especially when you are in the presence of Elders,

strangers or others to whom special respect is due.

i. Do not speak unless invited to do so at gatherings where Elders are present (except to ask what is expected of you, should you be in doubt).

j. Never speak about others in a negative way, whether they are present or not.

k. Treat the earth and all of her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world, and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute our Mother. Rise up with wisdom to defend her.

l. Show deep respect for the beliefs and religion of others.

m. Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel that what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.

n. Respect the wisdom of the people in council. Once you give an idea to a council meeting it no longer belongs to you. It belongs to the people. Respect demands that you listen intently to the ideas of others in council and that you do not insist that your ideas prevail. Indeed, you should freely support the ideas of others if they are true and good, even if those ideas are quite different from the ones you have contributed. The clash of ideas brings forth the Spark of Truth.

3. Once a council has decided something in unity, respect demands that no one speak secretly against what has been decided. If the council has made an error, that error will become apparent to everyone in its own time.

4. Be truthful at all times, and under all conditions.

5. Always treat your guests with honor and consideration. Give of your best food, your best blankets, the best part of your house, and your best service to your guests.

6. The hurt of one is the hurt of all, the honor of one is the honor of all.

7. Receive strangers and outsiders with a loving heart and as members of the human family.

8. All the races and tribes in the world are like the different colored flowers of one meadow. All are beautiful. As children of the Creator they must all be respected.

9. To serve others, to be of some use to family, community, nation, and the

world is one of the main purposes for which human beings have been created. Do not fill yourself with your own affairs and forget your most important tasks. True happiness comes only to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.

10. Observe moderation and balance in all things.

11. Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction.

12. Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms; in prayer, in dreams, in times of quiet solitude, and in the words and deeds of wise Elders and friends.

The Great Flood

Among Westerners and Europeans, the story of Noah and the great flood is well known. Among Native Americans, this legend is also common. Here is the Cowichan version of the Great Flood, handed down by the Elders of this Canadian First Peoples Nation. When such a legend is so pervasive among all peoples, it is wise to give it some serious consideration.

A Cowichan Legend

In ancient times, there were so many people in the land that they lived everywhere. Soon, hunting became bad and food scarce, so that the people quarreled over hunting territories.

Even in those days, the people were skilled in making fine canoes and paddles from cedars, and clothing and baskets from their bark. In dreams, their wise old men could see the future, and there came a time when they all had similar bad dreams that kept coming to them over and over again. The dreams warned of a great flood. This troubled the wise men, who told each other about their dreams. They found that they all had dreamed that rain fell for such a long time, or that the river rose, causing a great flood so that all of the people were drowned. They were much afraid and called a council to hear their dreams and decide what should be done. One said that they should build a great raft by tying many canoes together. Some of the people agreed, but others laughed at the old men and their dreams.

The people who believed in the dreams worked hard building the raft. It took many moons of hard work, lashing huge cedar log canoes together with strong ropes of cedar bark. When it was completed, they tied the raft with a great rope of cedar bark to the top of Mount Cowichan by passing one end of the rope through the center of a huge stone which can still be seen there.

During the time the people were working on the raft, those who did not believe in the dreams were idle and still laughed, but they did admire the fine, solid raft when it was at last finished and floated in Cowichan Bay.

Soon after the raft was ready, huge raindrops started falling, rivers overflowed, and the valleys were flooded. Although people climbed Mount Cowichan to avoid the great flood, it too was soon under water. But those who had believed the dreams took food to the raft and they and their families climbed into it as the waters rose. They lived on the raft many days and could see nothing but water. Even the mountain tops had disappeared beneath the flood.

The people became much afraid when their canoes began to flood and they prayed for help.

Nothing happened for a long time; then the rain stopped.

The waters began to go down after a time, and finally the raft was grounded on top of Mount Cowichan. The huge stone anchor and heavy rope had held it safe. As the water gradually sank lower and lower, the people could see their lands, but their homes had all been swept away. The valleys and forests had been destroyed. The people went back to their old land and started to rebuild their homes.

After a long time the number of people increased, until once again the land was filled and the people started to quarrel again. This time they separated into tribes and clans, all going to different places.

The storytellers say this is how people spread all over the Earth.

Thanksgiving Day

Today is Thanksgiving Day, a long-honored American holiday.

Among my people, Thanksgiving Day is a controversial topic. We tend to view it as a mythical holiday, peculiar to the European culture and not necessarily applicable to the Red Path. In fact, it often stirs memories of conflict. It marks, for us, the beginning of our cultural integration into the European society that re-settled North America. With the early North American settlers, we began to lose our widespread identity and were forced into learning new ways of keeping our culture alive and thriving.

Today, our people are widely scattered and we have been largely absorbed into the American culture (if this even exists). Our Ancient Ones foretold this turn of events and even saw it as beneficial. Yes, it was a bloody, unhappy journey in many ways. Still, it had the benefit of bringing us together in a new, unique and blended culture. It was, in the end, all for the best. It was the way Grandfather desired it to be.

The Red Path is still alive and well, but it looks much different than it did when the Pilgrims arrived. Like any strong people, we have learned to adapt and survive. Our traditions still thrive and are passed on by our Elders. There is room enough in this society for many forms of giving thanks.

Today, we on the Red Path also give thanks along with our European partners. Perhaps it is a different form of thanks, but it is something that we can share with the many cultures that now occupy our land.

Prayer Before Meals

Here are two meal prayers that are typical of our traditions. They embody the essence of our view of sustenance and gratitude:

Now that I am about to eat, O Great Spirit, give my thanks to the beasts and birds whom You have provided for my hunger; and pray deliver my sorrow that living things must make a sacrifice for my comfort and well-being. Let the feather of corn spring up in its time and let it not wither but make full grains for the fires of our cooking pots, now that I am about to eat.

Smudging the food and self with sage smoke we say: We thank Great Spirit for the resources that made this food possible; we thank the Earth Mother for producing it, and we thank all those who labored to bring it to us. May the wholesomeness of the food before us bring out the wholeness of the Spirit within us.

*(Thanks to **BeliefNet**)*

Black Elk's Prayer

Black Elk's prayer of gratitude is one of the most beautiful and meaningful among our people. It represents our relationship with the Great Spirit and expresses how we view our unity with Grandfather, the expression of the Great Spirit:

Grandfather, Great Spirit, once more behold me on earth and lean to hear my feeble voice. You lived first, and you are older than all need, older than all prayer. All things belong to you — the two-legged, the four-legged, the wings of the air, and all green things that live.

You have set the powers of the four quarters of the earth to cross each other. You have made me cross the good road and road of difficulties, and where they cross, the place is holy.

Day in, day out, forevermore, you are the life of things.

- Black Elk, 1863-1950

Prayer for Peace

It is a myth that the Red Path is one of violence and aggression. Our Native tradition is to shun violence, unless it is undertaken in defense of our family, community or Nation. In fact, we thrive on peace and harmony, working very hard to ensure that any kind of violence and disharmony is avoided.

Here are two prayers for peace, typical of our Native tradition:

Let us know peace.
For as long as the moon shall rise,
For as long as the rivers shall flow,
For as long as the sun will shine,
For as long as the grass shall grow,
Let us know peace.

O Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you, to your messengers the four winds, and to Mother Earth, who provides for your children. Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other so that they may grow with peace in mind. Let us learn to share all the good things that you provide for us on this Earth.

*(Thanks to **BeliefNet**)*

Indian Time

There are a hundred jokes about "Indian time," most of which go something like this: "It'll happen when the spirit moves me." The essence of these jokes centers on what is perceived to be a somewhat "loose" view of deadlines in the Native culture. The truth, though, is very different.

We have a very strong sense of time, but it is not measured by wristwatches or atomic clocks. Our sense of time comes from the Mother, from nature. We view time in cycles and in circles, in a rhythm that guides our world and all the living things that Grandfather has placed here. We do not "read" time; we try to understand its meaning and try to work within its natural cycles and circles.

When we gather, we do so when the time is right. What does that mean? It may mean that we gather when the Elders tell us it is time, or when we are hungry, or when dusk has come and we wish to pray or celebrate. It is not time that guides us to our destination, it is us who reach our destination in accordance with Grandfather's time.

We know that we will meet again when it is time for our paths to cross, not when our clocks tell us it is the right time. We are guided by an inner sense of time, Grandfather's time, which keeps us connected with each other and the Mother, the Earth. For us, time is not an imperative, not a deadline, but a rhythm. It is our job to learn to read and understand that rhythm. We do not sleep at a certain time, but when sleep comes. We do not awake at an appointed hour, but when our winged brothers and sisters summon us.

What is "Indian time?" It's always the right time. Grandfather has made it so. All we need to do is listen to the whispers all around us and we will know when to take action and when to remain still.

Red Cloud's Final Address

"My sun is set. My day is done. Darkness is stealing over me. Before I lie down to rise no more, I will speak to my people.

"Hear me, my friends, for it is not the time for me to tell you a lie. The Great Spirit made us, the Indians, and gave us this land we live in. He gave us the buffalo, the antelope, and the deer for food and clothing. He moved our hunting grounds from the Minnesota to the Platte and from the Mississippi to the great mountains. No one put bounds on us. We were free as the winds, and like the eagle, heard no man's commands.

"I was born a Lakota and I shall die a Lakota. Before the white man came to our country, the Lakota were a free people. They made their own laws and governed themselves as it seemed good to them. The priests and ministers tell us that we lived wickedly when we lived before the white man came among us. Whose fault was this? We lived right as we were taught it was right. Shall we be punished for this? I am not sure that what these people tell me is true.

"As a child I was taught the Taku Wakan (Supernatural Powers) were powerful and could do strange things. This was taught me by the wise men and the shamans. They taught me that I could gain their favor by being kind to my people and brave before my enemies; by telling the truth and living straight; by fighting for my people and their hunting grounds.

"When the Lakota believed these things they were happy and they died satisfied. What more than this can that which the white man offers us give?

"Taku Shanskan is familiar with my spirit and when I die I will go with him. Then I will be with my forefathers. If this is not in the heaven of the white man I shall be satisfied. He is my father. The Wakan Tanka of the white man has overcome him. But I shall remain true to him.

"Shadows are long and dark before me. I shall soon lie down to rise no more. While my spirit is with my body the smoke of my breath shall be towards the Sun for he knows all things and knows that I am still true to him.

Chief Joseph's Plea

On his visit to Washington, D.C., in 1879, Chief Joseph made the following heart-rending plea for peace between his people and those who had settled Native American land. The words he spoke are still powerful and meaningful today:

At last I was granted permission to come to Washington and bring my friend Yellow Bull and our interpreter with me. I am glad I came. I have shaken hands with a good many friends, but there are some things I want to know which no one seems able to explain. I cannot understand how the Government sends a man out to fight us, as it did General Miles, and then breaks his word. Such a government has something wrong about it. I cannot understand why so many chiefs are allowed to talk so many different ways, and promise so many different things.

I have seen the Great Father Chief [President Hayes]; the Next Great Chief [Secretary of the Interior]; the Commissioner Chief; the Law Chief; and many other law chiefs [Congressmen] and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice, but while all their mouths talk right I do not understand why nothing is done for my people. I have heard talk and talk but nothing is done.

Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father's grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words do not give me back my children. Good words will not make good the promise of your war chief, General Miles. Good words will not give my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises.

There has been too much talking by men who had no right to talk. Too many misinterpretations have been made; too many misunderstandings have come up between the white men and the Indians. If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian, he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike. Give them the same laws. Give them all an even chance to live and grow.

All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect all rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small spot of earth and compel him to stay there, he will

not be contented nor will he grow and prosper. I have asked some of the Great White Chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.

I only ask of the Government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in a country where my people will not die so fast. I would like to go to Bitter Root Valley. There my people would be happy; where they are now they are dying. Three have died since I left my camp to come to Washington.

When I think of our condition, my heart is heavy. I see men of my own race treated as outlaws and driven from country to country, or shot down like animals.

I know that my race must change. We cannot hold our own with the white men as we are. We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law shall work alike on all men. If an Indian breaks the law, punish him by the law. If a white man breaks the law, punish him also.

Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself — and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty.

Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike — brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers' hands upon the face of the earth.

For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying. I hope no more groans of wounded men and women will ever go to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above, and that all people may be one people.

Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-kekht has spoken for his people.

Red and White (1927)

The white people, who are trying to make us over into their image, they want us to be what they call "assimilated," bringing the Indians into the mainstream and destroying our own way of life and our own cultural patterns. They believe we should be contented like those whose concept of happiness is materialistic and greedy, which is very different from our way.

We want freedom from the white man rather than to be integrated. We don't want any part of the establishment, we want to be free to raise our children in our religion, in our ways, to be able to hunt and fish and live in peace. We don't want power; we don't want to be congressmen, or bankers. We want to be ourselves. We want to have our heritage because we are the owners of this land and because we belong here. The white man says there is freedom and justice for all. We have had "freedom and justice," and that is why we have been almost exterminated.

We shall not forget this.

Red and White (Metea)

The words of Metea, Potowatami Chief:

My Father: a long time has passed since first we came upon our lands. Our people have all sunk into their graves. They had sense. We are all young and foolish, and do not wish to do anything that they would not approve, were they living.

We are fearful we shall offend their spirits if we sell our lands; and we are fearful we shall offend you if we do not sell them. This has caused us great perplexity of thought, because we have counseled among ourselves and do not know how we can part with our lands. My Father, we have sold you a great tract of land already but it is not enough! We sold it to you for the benefit of your children, to farm and to live upon. We have now but a little left. We shall want it all for ourselves.

We know not how long we shall live, and we wish to leave some lands for our children to hunt upon. You are gradually taking away our hunting grounds. Your children are driving us before them. We are growing uneasy. What lands you have you may retain. But we shall sell no more.

Lakota Defense of Spirituality

The following declaration was unanimously passed on June 10, 1993, at the Lakota Summit (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota). It can easily be applied to all Native American, First Peoples traditions and path of spirituality:

Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality

WHEREAS, we are the conveners of an ongoing series of comprehensive forums on the abuse and exploitation of Lakota spirituality; and

WHEREAS, we represent the recognized traditional spiritual leaders, traditional Elders, and grassroots advocates of the Lakota people; and

WHEREAS, for too long we have suffered the unspeakable indignity of having our most precious Lakota ceremonies and spiritual practices desecrated, mocked and abused by non-Indian "wannabes," hucksters, cultists, commercial profiteers and self-styled "New Age shamans" and their followers; and

WHEREAS, with horror and outrage we see this disgraceful expropriation of our sacred Lakota traditions has reached epidemic proportions in urban areas throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, our precious Sacred Pipe is being desecrated through the sale of pipestone pipes at flea markets, Pow Wows, and "New Age" retail stores; and

WHEREAS, pseudo-religious corporations have been formed to charge people money for admission into phony "sweat lodges" and "vision quest" programs; and

WHEREAS, sacrilegious "sun dances" for non-Indians are being conducted by charlatans and cult leaders who promote abominable and obscene imitations of our sacred Lakota Sundance rites; and

WHEREAS, non-Indians have organized themselves into imitation "tribes," assigning themselves make-believe "Indian names" to facilitate their wholesale expropriation and commercialization of our Lakota traditions; and

WHEREAS, academic disciplines have sprung up at colleges and universities institutionalizing the sacrilegious imitation of our spiritual practices by students and instructors under the guise of educational programs in "shamanism;" and

WHEREAS, non-Indian charlatans and "wannabes" are selling books that promote the systematic colonization of our Lakota spirituality; and

WHEREAS, the television and film industry continues to saturate the entertainment media with vulgar, sensationalist and grossly distorted representations of Lakota spirituality and culture which reinforce the public's negative stereotyping of Indian people and which gravely impair the self-esteem of our children; and

WHEREAS, individuals and groups involved in "the New Age Movement," in "the men's movement," in "neo-paganism" cults and in "shamanism" workshops all have exploited the spiritual traditions of our Lakota people by imitating our ceremonial ways and by mixing such imitation rituals with non-Indian occult practices in an offensive and harmful pseudo-religious hodgepodge; and

WHEREAS, the absurd public posturing of this scandalous assortment of psuedo-Indian charlatans, "wannabes," commercial profiteers, cultists and "New Age shamans" comprises a momentous obstacle in the struggle of traditional Lakota people for an adequate public appraisal of the legitimate political, legal and spiritual needs of real Lakota people; and

WHEREAS, this exponential exploitation of our Lakota spiritual traditions requires that we take immediate action to defend our most precious Lakota spirituality from further contamination, desecration and abuse;

THEREFORE WE RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

1. We hereby and henceforth declare war against all persons who persist in exploiting, abusing and misrepresenting the sacred traditions and spiritual practices of our Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people.

2. We call upon all our Lakota, Dakota and Nakota brothers and sisters from reservations, reserves, and traditional communities in the United States and Canada to actively and vocally oppose this alarming take-over and systematic destruction of our sacred traditions.

3. We urge our people to coordinate with their tribal members living in urban areas to identify instances in which our sacred traditions are being abused, and then to resist this abuse, utilizing whatever specific tactics are necessary and sufficient; for example, demonstrations, boycotts, press conferences, and acts of direct intervention.

4. We especially urge all our Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people to take action to prevent our own people from contributing to and enabling the abuse of our sacred ceremonies and spiritual practices by outsiders; for, as we all know, there are certain ones among our own people who are prostituting our spiritual ways for their own selfish gain, with no regard for the spiritual well-being of the people as a whole.

5. We assert a posture of zero-tolerance for any "white man's shaman" who rises

from within our own communities to "authorize" the expropriation of our ceremonial ways by non-Indians; all such "plastic medicine men" are enemies of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people.

6. We urge traditional people, tribal leaders, and governing councils of all other Indian nations, to join us in calling for an immediate end to this rampant exploitation of our respective American Indian sacred traditions by issuing statements denouncing such abuse; for it is not the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people alone whose spiritual practices are being systematically violated by non-Indians.

7. We urge all our Indian brothers and sisters to act decisively and boldly in our present campaign to end the destruction of our sacred traditions, keeping in mind our highest duty as Indian people: to preserve the purity of our precious traditions for our future generations, so that our children and our children's children will survive and prosper in the sacred manner intended for each of our respective peoples by our Creator.

Wilmer Stampede Mesteth; (Ogallala Lakota); Traditional Spiritual Leader & Lakota Culture Instructor; Ogallala Lakota College, Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Darrell Standing Elk; (Sicangu Lakota); President, Center for the SPIRIT, San Francisco, California, & Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Phyllis Swift Hawk; (Kul Wicasa Lakota); Tiospaye Wounspe Waokiye; Wanblee, South Dakota

The Self-Delusion of Control

One of the great human delusions is that we can exercise control over the world that we inhabit. It is a self-delusion born from Grandfather's gift of a high-order of intelligence. But, just as everything in Nature has its opposite, the false concept of control is the dark side of our experience.

Like any great gift, we can use our intelligence for good or evil, for the benefit of all or to harm others and the world we inhabit. There is no end to the number of examples of how our feeble attempts to exert control have brought death and destruction to the planet and its inhabitants. Just give it a moment's thought and the futility will become obvious.

To attempt to bend the world to our will, even in the smallest detail, sets us against the cycles and flow of Nature and puts us at odds with our true path. This false sense of control is unique to us as humans and does not exist in nature. Spend some time close to the Mother, with the animals, and you will learn this lesson. We cannot control that which is already a perfect design. We can only strive to understand its beauty and complexity, to become one with what we see around us every day.

Our intelligence is a great gift, given to us to express our unique nature as Grandfather deems appropriate. It is our task to become a full partner in Grandfather's perfect design, not the imperfect re-designer of His work. Learn to let the cycles and flow of Nature carry us to where we need to be. Learn to adapt to the path we are walking, the environment in which we find ourselves.

There is harmony and beauty all around us, and there is nothing we can do to make it more perfect. We can only ruin what we don't understand, or learn from the gifts we have been given.

The crow does not build a nest out of season, does not pave roads, and wears no wristwatch.

Native American Factoid

Q: *I want to insult a Native American. What is the best way to do it?*

A: Well, there are many, many ways. Try using one of these words: redskin, squaw, primitive, red Indian, skin, injun, and the always-favorite, "savage." Many of us don't even like the term "Indian." Why not just call us what we are: First Peoples or, if you must assign a nation to us, Native Americans. It's always best to just call us by our individual names.

Q*: How long have Native Americans been around?*

A: Most of our legends tell us that we have always been here. Typically, these legends tell us that we sprang from the earth or the sky at the time Grandfather wished us to come into existence. There are many, many such legends. Modern science tells us that the First Peoples of North and South America crossed a land bridge across the Bering Strait somewhere around 20,000 years ago. However, there is no evidence one way or the other.

Q: *I met a person who said he/she was Native American but he/she sure didn't look like it. What's up with that?*

A: Yikes! This may come as a major surprise, but we all don't look alike. In America, the media has portrayed the image of Native Americans as they appear on the Plains and in the Southwest. My people, for example, are from Canada and look quite different from our Plains or Southwestern brothers and sisters. Why, we can even grow hair on our faces! Imagine that! Amazing how Grandfather worked out his plan, isn't it? Here's something else to ponder: there are Native Americans with blue eyes! Wonderful, isn't it?

Q*: How many Native Americans live in this country today?*

A: This is almost impossible to know because we are so widely scattered and have been so integrated into the broader American cultural landscape. The best guess is around two million. These days, it's common to meet someone who has some Native American blood running around their system.

Q: *How many Native American languages are there?*

A: Again, this is very hard to know. It also depends upon how you define the term "language." Many of our languages are similar, many are not. The best guess is somewhere between 150-200 distinct languages. Many, if not most, of our languages are dying or already dead. There are efforts in place to keep some of these languages alive but it is difficult work.

Q: *Is there a Native American religion?*

A: Absolutely not! Our path includes all religions and none at all. What we share is a system of beliefs and traditions that bind us together in a unique way. We tend to view religions as a way of separating people instead of bringing them together. Religion is fine, as a matter of individual choice, but it does not apply on the Red Path.

A Quick Look at the Leonard Peltier Case

Leonard Peltier is an imprisoned Native American considered by Amnesty International, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Congress of American Indians, and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Jesse Jackson, amongst many others, to be a political prisoner who should be immediately released.

Leonard Peltier was convicted for the deaths of two FBI agents who died during a 1975 shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Mr. Peltier has been in prison for more than 30 years.

The Wounded Knee occupation of 1973 marked the beginning of a three-year period of heightened political violence on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The tribal chairman hired vigilantes, self titled as "GOONS," to rid the reservation of American Indian Movement (AIM) activity and sentiment. More than 60 traditional tribal members and AIM members were murdered, and scores more were assaulted. Evidence indicated GOON responsibility in the majority of crimes but despite a large FBI presence, nothing was done to stop the violence. The FBI supplied the GOONS with intelligence on AIM members and looked away as GOONS committed crimes. One former GOON member reported that the FBI supplied him with armor piercing ammunition.

Leonard Peltier was a talented AIM organizer in the Northwest and was asked by traditional people at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to go to Pine Ridge to support and protect the people being targeted for violence. Mr. Peltier and a small group of young AIM members set up camp on a ranch owned by the traditional Jumping Bull family.

On June 26, 1975 two FBI agents in unmarked cars followed a pickup onto the Jumping Bull ranch. The families immediately became alarmed and feared an attack. Shots were heard and a shoot-out erupted. More than 150 agents, GOON's, and law enforcement surrounded the ranch.

When the shoot-out ended, two FBI agents and one Native American lay dead. The agents were injured in the shoot-out and were then shot at close range. The Native American, Joseph Stuntz, was shot in the head by a sniper bullet. Mr. Stuntz's death has never been investigated.

According to FBI documents, more than 40 Native Americans participated in the gunfight, but only AIM members Bob Robideau, Darrell Butler, and Leonard Peltier were brought to trial.

Mr. Robideau and Mr. Butler were arrested first and went to trial. A federal jury in Iowa acquitted them on grounds of self-defense, finding that their participation in the shoot-out was justified given the climate of fear that existed. Further, they could not be tied to the close range shootings.

Leonard Peltier was arrested in Canada. The U.S. presented the Canadian court with affidavits signed by Myrtle Poor Bear who said she was Mr. Peltier's girlfriend and she saw him shoot the agents. In fact Ms. Poor Bear had never met Mr. Peltier and was not present during the shoot-out. Soon after, Ms. Poor Bear recanted her statements and said the FBI terrorized her and coerced her into signing the affidavits.

Mr. Peltier was returned to the U.S. where his case was mysteriously transferred from the judge who tried his co-defendants to a more conservative federal judge in North Dakota. Key witnesses like Myrtle Poor Bear were not allowed to testify and unlike the Robideau/Butler trial in Iowa, evidence regarding violence on Pine Ridge was severely restricted.

An FBI agent who had previously testified that the agents followed a pickup truck onto the scene, a vehicle that could not be tied to Mr. Peltier, changed his account, stating that the agents had followed a red and white van onto the scene, a vehicle which Mr. Peltier drove on occasion.

Three teenaged Native witnesses testified against Mr. Peltier, all admitting later that the FBI terrorized them and forced them to testify. Still, not one witness identified Mr. Peltier as the shooter.

The U.S. Attorney prosecuting the case emphatically stated that they had given the defense all FBI documents. To the contrary, more than 18,000 had been withheld in their entirety.

An FBI ballistics expert testified that a casing found near the agents' bodies matched the gun tied to Mr. Peltier. However, a ballistic test proving that the casing did not come from the gun tied to Mr. Peltier was intentionally concealed.

The jury, unaware of the aforementioned facts, sentenced Mr. Peltier to two consecutive life terms.

Following the discovery of new evidence obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, Mr. Peltier demanded a new trial. The Eighth Circuit ruled, "There is a possibility that the jury would have acquitted Leonard Peltier had the records and data improperly withheld from the defense been available to him in order to better exploit and reinforce the inconsistencies casting strong

doubts upon the government's case." Yet, the court denied Mr. Peltier a new trial.

During oral arguments, the U.S. Prosecutor conceded that the government does not know who shot the agents, stating that Mr. Peltier is equally guilty whether he shot the agents at point blank range, or participated in the shoot-out from a distance. Mr. Peltier's co-defendants participated in the shoot-out from a distance, but were acquitted.

Judge Heaney, who authored the decision denying a new trial, has since voiced firm support for Mr. Peltier's release, stating that the FBI used improper tactics to convict Mr. Peltier, the FBI was equally responsible for the shoot-out, and that Mr. Peltier's release would promote healing with Native Americans.

Mr. Peltier has served over 30 years in prison and is long overdue for parole. He has received several human rights awards for his good deeds from behind bars, which include annual gift drives for the children of Pine Ridge, fund raisers for battered women's shelters and donations of his paintings to Native American recovery programs. However, the parole commission will not release him unless he admits to a crime he did not commit.

Recently, Mr. Peltier's attorneys filed a new round of Freedom of Information Act requests with FBI Headquarters and various FBI field offices in an attempt to secure the release of additional documents concerning Mr. Peltier. Although the FBI has engaged in a number of dilatory tactics in order to avoid the processing of these requests, 30,000 additional FOIA documents were released in June 2002. Previously, according to the FBI, more than 6,000 full documents remain undisclosed. The 30,000 documents released in 2002 reveal the FBI's prior estimate to be a significant undercount of actual documents still withheld. Currently, FOIA requests submitted to 30 FBI field offices around the country are pending. Similar FOIA requests have been submitted to the CIA. More dilatory responses following the recent requests have resulted in FOIA Complaints filed by Peltier's attorneys against the FBI, CIA and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys.

The FBI has disseminated false and inflammatory statements to members of the U.S. Congress, the Department of Justice, the White House, and the public, thus denying Mr. Peltier his right to fair clemency and parole reviews and Congressional oversight. Despite repeated calls for Congressional hearings by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Amnesty International, and individual members of Congress, no Congressional committee has yet had the courage to provide a forum by which to air the truth and bring closure to this case.

Source: The Case of Leonard Peltier, Native American Political Prisoner

The Words of Leonard Peltier

LEONARD PELTIER'S PRE-SENTENCING STATEMENT
June 1, 1977 - Fargo, North Dakota

"There is no doubt in my mind or my people's minds you are going to sentence me to two consecutive life terms. You are and have always been prejudiced against me and any Native Americans who have stood before you; you have openly favored the government all through this trial and you are happy to do whatever the FBI would want you to do in this case.

"I did not always believe this to be so! When I first saw you in the courtroom in Sioux Falls, your dignified appearance misled me into thinking that you were a fair-minded person who knew something of the law and who would act in accordance with the law! Which meant that you would be impartial and not favor one side or the other in this law suit. That has not been the case and I now firmly believe that you will impose consecutive life terms solely because that way you think will avoid the displeasures of the FBI. Neither my people nor myself know why you would be so concerned about an organization that has brought so much shame to the American people. But you are! Your conduct during this trial leaves no doubt that you will do the bidding of the FBI without any hesitation!

"You are about to perform an act which will close one more chapter in the history of the failure of the United States courts and the failure of the people of the United States to do justice in the case of a Native American. After centuries of murder could I have been wise in thinking that you would break that tradition and commit an act of justice? Obviously not! Because I should have realized that what I detected was only a very thin layer of dignity and surely not of fine character.

"If you think my accusations have been harsh and unfounded, I will explain why I have reached these conclusions and why I think my criticism has not been harsh enough. First, each time my defense team tried to expose FBI misconduct and tried to present evidence of this, you claimed it was irrelevant to this trial. But the prosecution was allowed to present their case with evidence that was in no way relevant - for example, an automobile blowing up on a freeway in Wichita, Kansas; an attempted murder in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for which I have not been found innocent or guilty; a van loaded with legally purchased firearms and a policeman who claims someone fired at him in Oregon state. The Supreme Court of the United States tried to prevent convictions of this sort by passing into law that only past convictions may be presented as evidence. This court knows very well I have no prior convictions, nor am I even charged with some of these alleged crimes; therefore, they cannot be used as evidence in order to receive a

conviction in this farce called a trial. This is why I strongly believe you will impose two life terms, running consecutively, on me.

"Second, you could not make a reasonable decision about my sentence because you suffer from at least one of three defects that prevent a rational conclusion: you plainly demonstrated this in your decision about the Jimmy Eagle and Myrtle Poor Bear aspects of this case. In Jimmy's case, only a judge who consciously and openly ignores the law would call it irrelevant to my trial; in the mental torture of Myrtle Poor Bear you said her testimony would shock the conscience of the American people if believed! But YOU decided what was to be believed - not the jury! Your conduct shocks the conscience of what the American legal system stands for, the search for the truth by a jury of citizens. What was it that made you so afraid to let that testimony in? Your own guilt of being part of a corrupted pre-planned trial to get a conviction no matter how your reputation would be tarnished? For these reasons, I strongly believe you will do the bidding of the FBI and give me two consecutive life terms.

"Third, in my opinion, anyone who failed to see the relationship between the undisputed facts of these events surrounding the investigation used by the FBI in their interrogation of the Navajo youths - Wilford Draper, who was tied to a chair for three hours and denied access to his attorney; the outright threats to Norman Brown's life; the bodily harm threatened to Mike Anderson; and, finally, the murder of Anna Mae Aquash - must be blind, stupid, or without human feelings so there is no doubt and little chance that you have the ability to avoid doing today what the FBI wants you to do, which is to sentence me to two life terms running consecutively.

"Fourth, you do not have the ability to see that the conviction of an A.I.M. activist helps to cover up what the government's own evidence showed: that large numbers of Indian people engaged in that fire fight on June 26, 1975. You do not have the ability to see that the government must suppress that fact that there is a growing anger amongst Indian people and that Native Americans will resist any further encroachments by the military forces of the capitalistic Americans, which is evidenced by the large number of Pine Ridge residents who took up arms on June 26, 1975, to defend themselves. Therefore, you do not have the ability to carry out your responsibility towards me in an impartial way and will run my two life terms consecutively.

"Fifth, I stand before you as a proud man; I feel no guilt! I have done nothing to feel guilty about! I have no regrets of being a Native American activist - thousands of people in the United States, Canada, and around the world have and will continue to support me to expose the injustices which have occurred in this courtroom. I do feel pity for your people that they must live under such an ugly system. Under your system, you are taught greed, racism, and corruption - and most serious of all, the destruction of Mother Earth. Under the Native American system, we are taught all people are Brothers and Sisters; to share the

wealth with the poor and needy. But the most important of all is to respect and preserve the Earth, who we consider to be our Mother. We feed from her breast; our Mother gives us life from birth and when it's time to leave this world, who again takes us back into her womb. But the main thing we are taught is to preserve her for our children and our grandchildren, because they are the next who will live upon her.

"No, I'm not the guilty one here; I'm not the one who should be called a criminal - white racist America is the criminal for the destruction of our lands and my people; to hide your guilt from the decent human beings in America and around the world, you will sentence me to two consecutive life terms without any hesitation.

"If you were impartial, you would have had an open mind on all the factual disputes in this case. But you were unwilling to allow even the slightest possibility that a law enforcement officer would lie on the stand. Then how could you possibly be impartial enough to let my lawyers prove how important it is to the FBI to convict a Native American activist in this case? You do not have the ability to see that such conviction is an important part of the efforts to discredit those who are trying to alert their Brothers and Sisters to the new threat from the white man, and the attempt to destroy what little Indian land remains in the process of extracting our uranium, oil, and other minerals. Again, to cover up your part in this, you will call me a heartless, cold-blooded murderer who deserves two life sentences consecutively.

"Finally, I honestly believe that you made up your mind long ago that I was guilty and that you were going to sentence me to the maximum sentence permitted under the law. But this does not surprise me, because you are a high-ranking member of the white racist American establishment which has consistently said, "In God We Trust," while they went about the business of murdering my people and attempting to destroy our culture."

Luther Standing Bear

These are the words of Luther Standing Bear, Ogallala Sioux:

We cannot all sit on the same side of the Fire. A Council Fire forms a circle, not a line or a square. When we move to the side, we still sit at the Fire with our Brothers and Sisters, but as we move away from one we move toward another.

The circle, like the Dream Hoop, brings us ever back to where we start. Any time words of respect and love are spoken, they will return as given. A harsh word runs forever in the circle, eventually vanishing from the wear against itself. Love settles within the Circle, embracing it and thereby lasting forever, turning within itself.

The Medicine Wheel is the circle of life (sometimes referred to as the Scared Hoop) starting with birth and continuing throughout our lives until death, when we have gone full circle. The Medicine wheel has four Directions, each direction offering it's own lessons, color, and animal guide. There are two paths shown, which cross in the center, at which point, for me, is the heart. (For when you work from your heart, you can reach all directions.)

The path from East to West is the path of spirits, (the Blue Road) the path from South to North is our physical Walk (the Red Road).

East: Beginnings, purity, family, innocence, amazement of life

South: Youth - passions of life, friendships, self-control

West: Adulthood - solitude, stillness, going inside oneself, reflection

North: Place of the Ancient Ones who have gone over. A place of wisdom

Above: Freedom of mind, body, spirit

Below: Nurturing, Mother, life

Native American Banking

The following words were spoken by Chief Maquinna, of the Nootka Nation:

Once I was in Victoria, and I saw a very large house. They told me it was a bank and that the white men place their money there to be taken care of, and that by and by they got it back with interest.

We are Indians and we have no such bank; but when we have plenty of money or blankets, we give them away to other chiefs and people, and by and by they return them with interest, and our hearts feel good.

Our way of giving is our bank.

Geronimo's Words

There are no words to really describe the role Geronimo played among our people. His was the true spirit, his words were the true words, and he lives on in our hearts and legends. Here are some of his memorable thoughts:

"I was born on the prairies where the wind blew free and there was nothing to break the light of the sun. I was born where there were no enclosures."

"When a child, my mother taught me to kneel and pray to Usen for strength, health, wisdom and protection. Sometimes we prayed in silence, sometimes each one prayed aloud; sometimes an aged person prayed for all of us, and to Usen."

"I had no weapon, nor did I hardly wish to fight, neither did I contemplate recovering the bodies of my loved ones, for that was forbidden. I did not pray, nor did I resolve to do anything in particular, for I had no purpose left. I was never again contented in our quiet home."

"I was warmed by the sun, rocked by the winds and sheltered by the trees as other Indian babes. I was living peaceably when people began to speak bad of me. Now I can eat well, sleep well and be glad. I can go everywhere with a good feeling."

"I cannot think that we are useless or God would not have created us. There is one God looking down on us all. We are all the children of one God. The sun, the darkness, the winds are all listening to what we have to say."

"I was no chief and never had been, but because I had been more deeply wronged than others, this honor was conferred upon me, and I resolved to prove worthy of the trust."

"The soldiers never explained to the government when an Indian was wronged, but reported the misdeeds of the Indians."

"We took an oath not to do any wrong to each other or to scheme against each other."

The Nine Stone Way

The art of the Seeing Way is deeply entrenched in Native American and First Peoples traditions, although the methods and practices vary widely among different Nations and even, sometimes, among different clans. One of these traditions is known as the Nine Stone Way.

Like all similar traditions, the details and practice of the Nine Stone Way is passed down orally from our Elders. Its roots are lost in time and, in the end, mean very little. Like other Native American Seeing Ways, the practical application of this tradition is what counts. Its origins are simply not important in the scheme of things.

There is no easy or quick method to describe the Nine Stone Way in meaningful terms. Like so many other of our traditions, it is a practice that must be learned over time from an experienced Elder. Still, there are a few details that describe a bit about this Seeing Way and how it is practiced.

The Nine Stone Way is based on the use of a collection of sacred objects. As the name implies, nine of these are stones. However, in practice, there are actually ten stones.

Let me explain.

Nine particular stones are carefully collected. They must represent the seven directions (and the seven expressions) as well as the nature of dark and light. In addition, a tenth stone is gathered. It is known as the "heart stone." Without going into too much detail, each of these stones has a particular quality and each is carefully selected. The stones are then decorated and blessed according to the teachings of the Elders.

In addition to the stones, a circular ring is made from wood, reed, or fiber. This ring (known as "the world") has a specific size based upon the size of the user's hand. It also has a specific depth. The "world" is occupied by a large number of much smaller stones, also gathered carefully and blessed.

To finish off the sacred objects, two small, straight sticks are gathered, prepared with one pointed end, and blessed. All the objects are then assembled and used as a Seeing Way. In practical use, the "throwing" of the stones into "the world" is interpreted for the benefit of others by an Elder trained in the Seeing Way.

Since Native American teachings tell us that there is much more to be known than our senses can experience, the Nine Stone Way is used to "see" those important aspects of life that are not apparent or obvious.

The Nine Stone Way is used to advise Elders or the Council on matters important to the community, or to advise other members of the community when help is sought on a variety of issues.

The Seeing Way is so common to Native American and First Peoples traditions that it is impossible to enumerate all the various practices among our Nations. The general tradition, though, is essential to the spiritual life of our people and is used in very practical ways.

Water

Water is a powerful medicine for our people.

Water can cut through the thickest rock yet it is soft enough to run through our fingers.

Our entire world depends on water for survival.

Our bodies are mostly water, as are the bodies of the animals.

Water purifies, cleanses, and washes our bodies, our clothing, and our homes.

Where there is little water there is little life. Where there is much water there is abundant life.

Water speaks to us in streams, creeks, and the ocean, yet water, itself, is silent.

Water is magical and can take many forms, like ice, snow, and steam.

Water binds people together yet always remains separate itself.

Water has deep color when gathered but is without color in the hand.

Water carves out the beauty of the land for us to use and enjoy.

Water feeds our crops, flowers, and herbs, keeping us healthy and wise.

Water is a powerful medicine, one of the greatest of Grandfather's gifts.

The Full Moon

In our tradition, the full moon has very special meaning. Here are some typical Native American names for the full moon throughout the calendar year:

January: Old Moon, Wolf Moon

February: Snow Moon

March: Sap Moon, Worm Moon, Crow Moon, Crust Moon

April: Grass Moon, Pink Moon, Moon of the Red Grass Appearing

May: Milk Moon, Flower Moon

June: Rose Moon, Strawberry Moon

July: Thunder Moon, Buck Moon

August: Green Corn Moon, Corn Moon, Sturgeon Moon

September: Fruit Moon, Harvest Moon

October: Harvest Moon, Hunter's Moon

November: Frost Moon, Beaver Moon

December: Long Night Moon, Cold Moon

Native Dancing

We dance to celebrate at gatherings, honor Grandfather and the Elders, and to enjoy and entertain each other. The actual number of Native dance forms is unknown because it is quite large.

Each Nation has its own dancing traditions, which are often embellished and changed to suit the changing times and our fluid culture. In fact, much of our "traditional" dancing is anything but traditional. It is often free-form.

There are, however, a number of dance forms that are widely recognized among various Nations. Here are a few of the most common forms:

Grass Dance, which is perhaps the most widely-recognized dance form. It is performed by men and can be found in nearly every Nation.

Men's Fancy Dance, which is also known as a "feather dance." Its origin is from our American Plains brothers; it is danced by men, and is often seen at Pow Wows or more formal Native gatherings.

Women's Fancy Dance, often called a "shawl dance," originated among Northern Nations. It is a rigorous dance that is often performed at more formal gatherings.

Buckskin Dance, which is performed only by women, is the oldest known form of Native female dancing. It may have originally been incorporated into mating ceremonies, although there is some dispute about this role. What is known for sure is that it is at once one of the most simple and beautiful of the dance forms.

Cloth Dance is very similar to the Buckskin Dance but the performers wear cloth regalia rather than buckskin.

Straight Dance, which is performed by men, is elegant and quite formal. Its origins may have been among our Southern (American) Nations or the Plains, depending upon who is telling the history. This is a dance of strength and stoicism.

Traditional Dance, which is the oldest form of dancing for men, is seen in virtually every Nation, although its form is more free-flowing and less rigid than other types of dance. Its origin is thought to be from the Sioux.

Jingle Dance is a specialized dance form used for healing ceremonies.

Green Corn Dance, which is thought to originate with the Seminole, is a spiritual dance used to celebrate (what else) Green Corn gatherings and ceremonies.

Pow Wow Dances, which are mostly performed by men, constitute a variety of dance forms that appear at formal gatherings. They tend to be stylized and the dancers are usually dressed in spectacular regalia.

Modern Threat to Our Cultural Identity

What follows is one example of the forces that have combined to destroy our cultural unity and the root traditions of our people. Sadly, it's all about greed and money — two elements that our Elders fought against successfully for so many generations. Now, the threat is at our doorstep and is yet another force that we must somehow overcome. You can be the judge of what such an outside force can do to a community whose foundations were never built on wealth and status:

Native Americans Face Controversy Over Tribal Citizenship
USA TODAY
Emily Bazar
November 29, 2006

Native American tribes are facing allegations of greed and racism as they purge members from their rolls and deny the applications of others.

The expulsions have sent tremors through Indian country. Thousands of Native Americans have lost their cultural identities and access to tribal benefits, such as medical care, housing and education. Certain gaming tribes divide casino profits among members, in some cases thousands of dollars a month per person. Those expelled lose their cut.

Tribal officials say they're protecting legitimate members by making sure everyone in the tribe is qualified.

As sovereign nations, tribes have the final say in who can — and cannot — join. Each tribe determines what degree of Indian blood is necessary for membership, a requirement that varies among the 561 federally recognized tribes.

In California, at least 2,000 Native Americans have been taken off the rolls of their tribes since 1999, says Laura Wass, executive director of the Many Lightnings American Indian Legacy Center, an education and advocacy group in Fresno. Disenrollments have surged with the rise of Indian casinos, she says.

Thousands of Native Americans elsewhere have lost, or may lose, their tribal status. An upcoming vote at the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma could deny citizenship to more than 1,000 of the tribe's 260,000 members.

"The motive varies from tribe to tribe," says Daniel Littlefield, director of the Sequoyah Research Center at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, an archive for contemporary Native American issues. "I would say money is at the bottom of a lot of it."

Mary Chapman of Fresno was disenrolled from the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians last month, along with 20 members of her family. About 250 members of the tribe have been disenrolled this year, Wass says, and about 400 others have received letters questioning their status.

The 1,200-member tribe, which opened a casino in Coarsegold, Calif., in 2003, expelled Chapman because she didn't meet the eligibility criteria in the tribe's constitution, a complex set of categories based on ancestry, according to a disenrollment letter sent to her by the tribe.

Mark Levitan, attorney for the tribe, wouldn't discuss numbers. There is a moratorium on enrollment until the tribe completes an audit of every member's eligibility, he says, and tribal leaders "are a government that's responsible for following their own laws."

'Just kicked to the curb'

Chapman, 69, says she traces her Chukchansi lineage to her great-great-grandmother. She blames the tribe's move on casino-related greed, which Levitan disputes.

He says the tribe does not yet distribute casino profits to members and has to show it is meeting the needs of the tribe before it can do so.

"As far as they're concerned, I'm a non-Indian," Chapman says tearfully. "I feel totally displaced, totally homeless. Just kicked to the curb."

She feels helpless, she says, because there's nothing she can do: "There's no way to fight it."

State and federal courts do not have jurisdiction over Native American membership disputes, says Kevin Gover, law professor at Arizona State University and former assistant secretary of the Interior for Indian affairs.

"Congress has not given individual Indians the right to sue their tribes," he says.

Gover does not believe disenrollments are up because of gaming but says casino profits raise the stakes. He thinks expulsions are most often related to feuding families that form political factions.

"The majority family will throw the others out," he says. "It's clannish and unworthy of institutions that claim to be nations."

Yvette Champlain told The Providence Journal that she and dozens of her relatives were kicked out of the Narragansett Indian Tribe in Rhode Island this year because she questioned how the tribe spent $1 million it received from Harrah's Entertainment, which had been planning a casino with the tribe. "They

don't want real accountability," she told the newspaper.

The casino plan was rejected by Rhode Island voters this month.

Tribal councilman Randy Noka declined to discuss the specifics of Champlain's case but says her allegations are false.

Members must be able to document that they're descendants of Narragansetts listed on a tribal roll from the 1880s, Noka says. The tribe has about 2,500 people enrolled.

"It has nothing to do with personalities or politics," he says. "Tribes have a responsibility to look out for their members. No one would expect to recognize someone that isn't a member of their family as a family member.

"You don't want anybody who may be looking to benefit from opportunities, who don't deserve them, to take away from someone who truly is a member," Noka says.

"If someone does have a definite interest in trying to prove themselves to be a member, and can prove it, they deserve every benefit other tribal members receive."

At the Cherokee Nation, a membership dispute centers on the Cherokee Freedmen, who are descendants of former slaves owned by Cherokees or, in some cases, descendants of free blacks who lived with the Cherokees. After the Civil War, the Cherokees, who had sided with the Confederacy, signed a treaty with the American government granting freedmen and their descendants tribal citizenship.

The tribe, which ratified a new constitution in 1976, has denied freedmen citizenship for much of the past three decades.

The tribe's highest court ruled in March that freedmen could obtain citizenship. Since then, more than 1,500 have enrolled, tribe spokesman Mike Miller says.

The dispute didn't end there. After Cherokee citizens circulated a referendum petition, Chief Chad Smith called a special election for February to consider changing the constitution. The proposed amendment would limit citizenship to those of Indian ancestry, based on membership rolls from the early 20th century. Those whose ancestors were freedmen would not be eligible.

Marilyn Vann's membership hangs in the balance.

"I've always considered myself a Cherokee Native American with African blood," says Vann, who says she is Cherokee, Chickasaw and black, and that being listed as a freedman means her Indian ancestry is ignored.

Vann, a petroleum engineer in Oklahoma City, says she was shocked when her citizenship application was rejected in 2001. She reapplied after the court's ruling in March and is now a citizen.

She wanted to join so she could vote and "have a voice in the affairs of the tribe," she says. "I did not come to my tribe to get something."

The Cherokee Nation does not pay gaming profits to members. The money funds the government, social services and job creation.

Vann believes the tribe fears the freedmen's voting power. Littlefield's assessment is more blunt: "It's racism."

Just action or greed?

Some recently disenrolled members of the Pechanga Band of Luiseoo Indians in California cite greed.

John Gomez Jr., 38, helped found the American Indian Rights and Resources Organization last year to address civil rights issues. Gomez and about 130 adults in his family were disenrolled from the tribe in 2004. Another family of about 90 adults was kicked out earlier this year.

"Both were large families that opposed the leadership," he says.

The Pechanga Indians run a lucrative casino in Temecula, Calif., and split the profits among tribe members. Each member of Gomez's family used to get about $15,000 a month, he says. Once they were disenrolled, the payments stopped and the money went to remaining tribe members.

In an e-mailed statement, Pechanga Chairman Mark Macarro says courts have consistently upheld tribes' sole responsibility for determining their citizenship. He noted that a state court this month dismissed a suit brought by disenrolled members. His tribe has 1,370 members.

The allegation of casino-related greed "is ridiculous, irresponsible and simply distorts the facts," he says. "This is about determining who is a rightful citizen and who was enrolled under false pretenses."

Michael Madariaga lost his membership this year.

The tribe had hired John Johnson, curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, to trace the family's lineage.

Johnson determined that Madariaga's family can be traced to one of the original members of the tribe. "They did disregard my findings," Johnson says.

Madariaga, 43, and his family lost access to tribal benefits, including the monthly

casino payout and meals for the elderly, he says. He lost his job at the casino. The children had to leave the reservation school.

Madariaga's 89-year-old grandfather, Lawrence, has prostate cancer. After his health insurance was cut off, he didn't take his medications for a few months, Madariaga says. Now, he's dipping into his retirement to pay for them.

'Took a lot out of' grandparents

Madariaga describes his grandfather as an integral member of the tribe who helped upgrade the water system and bring electricity and phones to tribe members. "He designed and helped build the health clinic," he says of his grandfather.

Madariaga says disenrollment "took a lot out of" his grandfather and grandmother, Sophia, 86.

"The anger, the stress, that's not good at their age and for their health," he says. "When they were cut off from the health benefits, they were very stressed."

But the hardest part hasn't been losing benefits and casino payouts, Madariaga says.

"What matters is taking away our heritage," he says.

"It's like taking your family and wiping them out of history."

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The Vision Quest

Taking part in a Vision Quest has become very trendy in America over the past several decades. However, the Vision Quest is a long-honored Native tradition that differs greatly from the more common "quest" practices seen in non-Native communities today. In fact, an illegitimate Vision Quest can be life-threatening at worst and useless at best.

Like most of our traditions, it's impossible to say when Vision Quests (Crying for a Vision) became a fundamental part of our spiritual path. There are many different opinions about how and when the practice came into being. What is undisputed, though, is that the core practice and intent of the Vision Quest are pure Native and remarkably common among our various Nations.

Vision Quests are not taken lightly by our people. In fact, it can be a very dangerous undertaking if not handled properly. A Vision Quest is only endured at the direction of an appropriately experienced Elder. It is not something that an individual chooses as a spiritual path without expert guidance.

The Vision Quest is designed to put the seeker into a deep and transcendental connection with the Mother, with Nature, in order to understand a more fundamental meaning in our life. It relies on the Native concept of using more than our physical senses to gain knowledge and wisdom that is all around us. This is a common thread throughout our spiritual practices and the Vision Quest is one of many ways to make this Mother connection for our own knowledge and growth as well as the benefit of our community.

When an Elder directs an individual into a Vision Quest, it is used to help the seeker come to grips with significant issues that he or she may be facing, or to determine a life course that is thought best under the circumstances. Although the practice of the Vision Quest varies widely from tribe to tribe, and even among Medicine Men of the same Nation, its core components are similar and recognizable.

The Elder will design a proper Vision Quest and remain with the seeker throughout the ordeal, although the connection will often be a spiritual one rather than a physical presence. His role will be to construct the details of the Quest in the best interest of the seeker, pushing him to the maximum of his learning capabilities without endangering him physically. It's also the role of the Elder to interpret the meaning of the Vision Quest and help the seeker to understand and integrate the new knowledge that he has gained.

Vision Quests are undertaken alone after a significant period of preparation, typically in a sacred place selected by the Elder, and surrounded by sacred objects appropriate to the particular Quest. The seeker will often spend two to four days alone, in his sacred place, without food or water and with minimal sleep. During this extended period of isolation, amazing knowledge can be gained through unexpected and highly symbolic interactions with the Mother. The natures of these experiences are then brought back to the Elder for interpretation and integration.

If undertaken properly and with expert guidance, Visions Quests are commonly life-altering, sometimes in remarkable ways. A successful Quest will change the seeker permanently and can mark a period of learning and growth that will last a lifetime. On the other hand, a Vision Quest that is undertaken with a poor or inexperienced guide (or alone) can be disastrous and often very dangerous.

If you are truly interested in a Vision Quest, seek out an experienced Elder, Medicine Man or Shaman. There is no safe shortcut when it comes to this kind of a spiritual journey. Finally, anyone who wants to accept payment or a reward in exchange for guiding you through a Vision Quest is taking your life in his hands. This is something that is never done among our people and must be avoided.

Red and White, the Right Way

Here are the words of Brenda Cowe, a woman who understands a very Native tradition of how we should all come together with an emphasis on respect for all:

This is an issue that just makes my blood boil. Because when we talk about Native Americans in this country, most people are just so incredibly ignorant. I worked for a Native agency for years, and when people would find that out, I'd inevitably get these "oohs" and "ahhhs" and comments like "OH. How did you get THAT job?"

This never failed to annoy me. I really didn't understand what the big deal was. I mean, I applied for the job because it was working with children and at the time, I had been working with mentally ill adults and wanted to go back to kids. So I applied and got the job. I was one of 2 Caucasian people working there, and I was told later that the reason they hired me was because I just kept saying over and over again in the interview, that I wanted to work with kids (I also think that another reason was because I grew up 2 miles from one of the local reservations and some of my friends in school were Native–though I never really thought of them that way until later on). The executive director sensed my sincerity I guess, and so I was hired. Some of my co-workers were cautious of me at first, probably because they were thinking I might be one of those "Oh it's so cool and trendy to work for Native American Services." Eventually they realized who I was. Just a person like them.

I worried sometimes, that people would not accept me, that I would not be trusted (you always hear this about Native Americans not trusting the white people, even Native people themselves said this–I don't know how true it is, just another way to generalize, which isn't fair). I remember my Dad had been traveling in the Southwest and he'd brought me some lovely jewelry that was made by some Native Americans there. I loved to wear it, but honestly, I purposely avoided wearing it because I didn't want anyone to think I was trying to "fit in." Funny how I avoided being myself, just to avoid the idea of being false.

Eventually, I was invited to Pow Wows and social dances. I didn't go at first but eventually I did. I remember clearly the first social I went to and how I was asked to join the circle dance. I didn't want to do it (more self-consciousness), but when I did, I remember just having this overwhelming feeling of acceptance and caring surround me.

The other day, someone who is involved with equity issues where I work, was "bragging" about her work experience for a university American Indian program. It felt like bragging to me, because it was brought up not as part of a conversation, but as a way to prove to others that she has the sort of monopoly

on understanding of Native issues (she's not Native). I didn't say anything, but I couldn't pinpoint just why her statement irritated me so much.

Later on, I was discussing my feelings with a friend of mine, who does happen to be Mohawk. I asked her, "Why does it bug me so much? I can't quite explain it."

Without missing a beat she answered me, "Because she still has a romanticized idea of 'us'."

That was exactly it. So it's an issue that I am committed to talking and educating people on.

Even the term Native Americans, isn't really very good. Indigenous is more accurate. Or more specifically the tribe name, in their own language is most accurate. Just my reluctance and fear of using the wrong language here, and wondering if even I am behaving as that woman did, shows how deeply ingrained stereotyping is in our society.

—

My name is Brenda Cowe and I am a social-worker-turned-librarian who still has a deep interest in social justice issues.

From Elder to Warrior

When you stand, do so like the horse. Always in balance, always poised, never strained, never hurried, always ready, always elegant, always tall.

When you sit, do so like the buffalo. Always compact, always near the Mother, at ease, unworried, unhurried but with strength and stamina nearby.

When you walk, do so like the deer and elk. Each step firm but quiet, toes first onto the path, a high lift with muscles ready, paced but always at the ready, strong but silent.

When you eat, do so like the bear. Accept what is given, take nothing, waste nothing, share with the young ones, eat your fill, give thanks and smile.

When you sing, do so like the crow or raven. Make your words rise, share them without reservation, make them meaningful, make them your own. Do not argue or fight.

When you drum, do so like the woodpecker or beaver. Be intent, be purposeful, be in the rhythm of what you do, be without other thoughts, be without pride, offer your sounds to Grandfather.

When you gather, do so like the squirrel. Gather only what you will need for each season, knowing when to gather more and gather less, be shy when gathering, do not take all for yourself.

When you meet another on the path, be like the big cat. Be wary but not aggressive, wait to see what happens, give the other his place on the path and do so willingly, do not commit yourself until you are sure. Show your beauty and strength, never your rage.

When you greet a friend, do so like the eagle in season. Rejoice in his presence, share what you have, respect and honor his ways, always show him the best, journey with him to his place and take him to yours.

When you come upon an enemy, be like the bull. Stand strong but not stupidly. Move away quickly but without fear. Do not threaten, do not bellow, do not argue. Be true to your own expression.

When you come upon an Elder, be like the dog in camp. Honor his presence, stand with him, show him your loyalty, wait without begging, ask for nothing and you will receive everything.

Prayer to the Great Spirit

A traditional Native prayer to the Great Spirit — a prayer whose roots seem lost in time but which has spread widely among our people:

Whose voice I hear in the wind,

Whose breath gives life to the world,

Hear me!

I come to you as one of your many children.

I am small and weak.

I need your strength and wisdom.

May I walk in beauty.

Make my eyes behold the red and purple sunset.

Make me respect the things that you have made,

And my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may know the things

That you have taught your children,

The lessons that you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

Make me strong, not to be superior to my brothers,

But to be able to fight my greatest enemy: myself.

Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes

So that when life fades as the faded sunset

My spirit will come to you without shame.

Native American Tarot Foolery

Do you want to buy the Brooklyn Bridge?

They're everywhere. Native American tarot cards, shaman cards, even sweat lodge cards. There is obviously a big market for this kind of merchandise, at least judging by the number and variety of "Native American" divinatory devices available in America. Here's the problem: not a single one of these has any legitimacy from a traditional Native point of view. No matter how beautiful they may be, no matter what the promises that lay behind their use, these trinkets are not of our tradition. They may be of use in some ways (perhaps many ways), but they are not part of our spiritual path.

First of all, divinatory devices like decks of cards find no place in our tradition or spiritual practices. It is true that we value the Seeing Way, but this practice does not rely on some formula painted on a series of cards and interpreted by rote. Nor, in fact, is it even considered divination in our culture. That kind of belief has no place on the Red Path and is, at best, insulting. Fortunetelling is not what we seek.

The tarot is of (probable) European origin and has value unto itself as a symbolic method of passing on important wisdom. However, this is not the Native way of passing on wisdom. That is done in a much more personal, verbal manner that does not make use of decks of cards, secret documents, or esoteric images. Remember that our culture relies heavily on an intimate connection with the Mother, Nature, and wisdom passed on from our Elders throughout the generations. That was our way going back to our first appearance in this world and the tradition still remains.

So, if you come across any "deck" of "Native American" wisdom or divination, keep a fast hold on your wampum belt. Save your money for the Brooklyn Bridge. It would be better spent that way.

Young Ones

We do not refer to them as "kids" or "children." We call them "young ones" because, like us, they are full reflections of Grandfather's wisdom and love. They just have the wondrous gift of youth, fleeting though it might be.

We do not "own" our young ones; we honor and guide them to learn to express their own, unique role in the world.

We do not yell at or strike our young ones lest we give them a lesson that will haunt us forever. We grant them the respect that they deserve as perfect expressions of Grandfather.

Young ones are the responsibility of our entire community. We share their lives and, together, are obligated to guide them on their paths.

Young ones are taught the fundamental concept of respect — respect for the Elders, each other, and the Mother. There is no more important lesson.

Young ones dance when we dance, eat when we eat, sleep when we sleep, hunt when we hunt, pray when we pray, and learn with us throughout their lives.

Young ones are taught our traditions but also urged to look beyond what we, as Elders, can share. They are encouraged to seek their own paths, always remembering the lessons of respect and the obligations they carry to others.

Young ones are to be celebrated. They are Grandfather's gift, bequeathed to us to keep our ways alive and well.

Young ones are to be protected by all in the community. They are a precious resource that cannot be put in jeopardy.

Young ones are to be listened to. They have their own wisdom to share.

Young ones will someday be revered Elders. It is only the young shell that we see. Within that shell we will find an Elder-in-the-making, who is to be respected.

Young ones should be encouraged to play. Play is the gateway to a deep wisdom that benefits us all.

Young ones should join us on our spiritual journeys as full partners, equally taking part in the wisdom of the Mother.

Young ones bring us joy, honor, and challenges. They make our lives full and give us the gift of responsibility. They are to be celebrated, loved, and cherished.

Native Ten Commandments

I found these words on the Internet. The author is, apparently, anonymous, although the words are attributed to my people. Frankly, I had never heard of Native commandments put into this form. But, after reading them through, I certainly have no problem adopting them into my learning path. Whether these are truly "Native commandments" or something else, they are written in the spirit of my people and apply to us all:

- Treat the Earth and all that dwell thereon with respect.
- Remain close to the Great Spirit.
- Show great respect for your fellow beings.
- Work together for the benefit of all Mankind.
- Give assistance and kindness wherever needed.
- Do what you know to be right.
- Look after the well-being of mind and body.
- Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater good.
- Be truthful and honest at all times.
- Take full responsibility for your actions.

The Elder Pretender

It's just amazing how many folks peddle (and meddle in) our Native traditions of spirituality and learning. I suppose it's the nature of America — everything for sale. However, when it comes to learning our ways, especially our spiritual ways, there is no shortcut and no price tag. The problem is finding the right way to learn, which means finding the right Elder. It's obvious that the number of charlatans far outweigh the number of true Elders and teachers. Frankly, your odds of finding a true Elder are not great. However, they are out there, as they have always been.

First, it's a myth to believe that an Elder will refuse to guide a non-Native. That is not our modern way, not the path that we must follow in order to continue to evolve and adapt to the changing landscape. The real test of whether or not an Elder would be interested in sharing his (or her) wisdom is based solely on whether or not he believes the student is "listening to his heart" when it comes to the Red Path. No words will ever persuade an Elder. In fact, they may just make him turn away from you forever. You may be the best, most sincere seeker on the planet but, if you do not speak to the Elder's heart, you are wasting your time, and his. You'll be lucky to get the time of day (approximately) and a wry smile.

Here's another point. The quickest way to be ignored by an Elder (a legitimate Elder) is to walk up to him and ask for teaching. You'll probably get a good belly-laugh, unless he's in a bad mood that day. Yes, even the wisest Elders have "bad days." Elders don't like to speak but they miss nothing of what others say or do. Want to disinterest an Elder? Just start talking before you are asked to do so. Talkers are not learners and everyone in our culture knows it.

Elders, who are also often excellent teachers, are not chatty and they are certainly not in the market for students. Teaching is a tremendous responsibility, one that is not taken lightly by the Elder and must not be taken lightly by the student. Learning our ways, particularly our spiritual ways, it not a game for the curious; it is anything but an intellectual exercise. It is a life-long pursuit that demands a great deal and rewards us richly. However, it is a heck of a lot of work and requires a level of commitment that many, perhaps most, people just cannot sustain. It is a lonesome path, but also the most beautiful imaginable.

So, you think that you want to attach yourself to an Elder and learn our ways? OK, that's fine. There are no restrictions on who may be accepted. In other words, being non-Native is not a disqualifier; it just makes things a bit more difficult. The first step is to learn our ways, and not "by the book."

A good start is to become part of a circle in our Native tradition.

How do you do this? Well, there's no application form to fill out, that's the good news. Best to seek one of us out. Convince us that you don't see us as curiosities. Show respect in everything you do, in every word, in every movement. If, in getting to know you, we sense that your heart is true, you will eventually be invited "into the circle." Then, the real waiting begins.

Is it worth the trouble? For most folks, certainly not. Most people simply don't have the patience or stamina to stay the course. The rewards are far, far down the line and the work is always at your doorstep. But, the way to Grandfather is open to all who really, really want to get there.

Still interested?

Cherokee Prophecies of Lee Brown

These words were spoken by Lee Brown, Cherokee, at the 1986 Continental Indigenous Council in Fairbanks, Alaska:

There was the cycle of the mineral, the rock. There was the cycle of the plant. And now we are in the cycle of the animal, coming to the end of that and beginning the cycle of the human being. When we get into the cycle of the human being, the highest and greatest powers that we have will be released to us.

At the beginning of this cycle of time, long ago, the Great Spirit made an appearance and gathered the peoples of this earth together, and said to the human beings, "I'm going to send you to four directions, and over time I'm going to change you to four colors, but I'm going to give you some teachings, and you will call these the Original Teachings; when you come back together with each other, you will share these so that you can live and have peace on earth, and a great civilization will come about. During the cycle of time, I'm going to give each of you two stone tablets. When I give you those stone tablets, don't cast them upon the ground. If any of the sisters and brothers cast their tablets on the ground, not only will human beings have a hard time, but almost the earth itself will die."

And so, He gave each of us a responsibility, and we call that the Guardianship. To the Indian people, the red people, He gave the Guardianship of the Earth. We were to learn during this cycle of time the teachings of the earth, the plants that grow from the earth, the foods that you can eat, and the herbs that heal so that, when we came back together with the other sisters and brothers, we could share this knowledge with them. Something good was to happen on the earth.

To the South, He gave the yellow race of people the Guardianship of the Wind. They were to learn about the sky and breathing and how to take that within ourselves for spiritual advancement. They were to share that with us at this time.

To the West, He gave the black race of people the Guardianship of the Water. They were to learn the teachings of the water, which is the chief of the elements, being the most humble and the most powerful. The Elders have told me that the black people would bring the teachings of the water.

To the North, He gave the white race of people the Guardianship of the Fire. If you look at the center of many of the things they do, you will find the fire. They say a light bulb is the white man's fire. If you look at the center of a car you will find a spark. If you look at the center of the airplane and the train you will find

the fire. The fire consumes, and also moves. This is why it was the white sisters and brothers who began to move upon the face of the earth and reunite us as a human family.

And so a long time passed, and the Great Spirit gave each of the four races two stone tablets. Ours are kept at the Hopi Reservation in Arizona at Four Corners Area on Third Mesa. I talked to people from the black race, and their stone tablets are at the foot of Mount Kenya. They are kept by the Kukuyu Tribe. I was at an Indian spiritual gathering about 15 years ago. A medicine man from South Dakota put a beaded medicine wheel in the middle of the gathering. It had the four colors from the four directions; he asked the people, "Where is this from?" They said, "Probably Montana, or South Dakota, maybe Saskatchewan." He said, "This is from Kenya." It was beaded just like ours, with the same colors.

The stone tablets of the yellow race of people are kept by the Tibetans. If you went straight through the Hopi Reservation to the other side of the world, you would come out in Tibet. The Tibetan word for sun is the Hopi word for moon, and the Hopi word for sun is the Tibetan word for moon.

The guardians of the traditions of the people of Europe are the Swiss. In Switzerland, they still have a day when each family brings out its mask. They still know the colors of the families, and they still know the symbols, some of them. Each of these four peoples happens to live in the mountains.

Each of the four races went to their directions and learned their teachings. It was in Newsweek not long ago that eight out of ten foods that people eat on the earth are developed here in the western hemisphere because that was our Guardianship — to learn the teachings of the earth and the things that grow from the earth. We were given a sacred handshake to show, when we came back together as sisters and brothers, that we still remembered the teachings.

It was indicated on the stone tablets that the Hopis had that the first sisters and brothers who would come back to them would come as turtles across the land. They would be human beings, but they would come as turtles. So when the time came close, the Hopis were at a special village to welcome the turtles that would come across the land. They got up in the morning and looked out at the sunrise. They looked out across the desert, and they saw the Spanish conquistadors coming, covered in armor, like turtles across the land. So this was them. So they went out to the Spanish man, and they extended their hand, hoping for the handshake. But into the hand the Spanish man dropped a trinket. And so word spread throughout North America that there was going to be a hard time, that maybe some of the brothers and sisters had forgotten the sacredness of all things and all the human beings were going to suffer for this on the earth.

So tribes began to send people to the mountains to have visions to try to figure out how they could survive. At that time there were 100,000 cities in the

Mississippi Valley alone, called the mound civilization: cities built on great mounds. Those mounds are still there. They began to try to learn to live off the land because they knew a hard time was going to come. They began to send people to have visions to see how we could survive this time. They were told in the prophecies that we should try to remind all the people that would come here of the sacredness of all things. If we could do that, then there would be peace on earth. But if we did not do that, if we had not come together as a human family, the Great Spirit would grab the earth with His hand and shake it.

The elders on the west coast prophesied that they would then begin to build a black ribbon. And on this black ribbon there would move a bug. And when you begin to see this bug moving on the land, that was the sign for the First Shaking of the Earth. The First Shaking of the Earth would be so violent that this bug would be shaken off the earth into the air and it would begin to move and fly in the air. And by the end of this shaking this bug will be in the air around the world. Behind it would be a trail of dirt and eventually the whole sky of the entire earth would become dirty from these trails of dirt, and this would cause many diseases that would get more and more complicated. So the bug moving on the land, of course it's easy to see now. In 1908, the Model-T Ford was mass produced for the first time. So the elders knew the First Shaking of the Earth was about to come about — that was the First World War.

In the First World War the airplane came into wide usage for the first time. That was that bug moving into the sky. And so they knew something very important would happen. There would be an attempt to make peace on earth on the west coast of this land, and so the elders began to watch for this. They began to hear that there was going to be a League of Nations in San Francisco, so the elders gathered in Arizona around 1920 or so, and they wrote a letter to Woodrow Wilson. They asked if the Indian people could be included in the League of Nations.

The United States Supreme Court had held that a reservation is a separate and semi-sovereign nation, not a part of the United States but protected by it. This became a concern because people didn't want the reservations to become more and more separate. They didn't want them to be considered nations. So they did not write back, and the Native people were left out of the League of Nations so that circle was incomplete. In the League of Nations circle there was a southern door, the yellow people; there was a western door, the black people; there was a northern door, the white people; but the eastern door was not attended. The elders knew that peace would not come on the earth until the circle of humanity is complete, until all the four colors sat in the circle and shared their teachings, then peace would come on earth.

So they knew things would happen. Things would speed up a little bit. There would be a cobweb built around the earth, and people would talk across this cobweb. When this talking cobweb, the telephone, was built around the earth, a

sign of life would appear in the east, but it would tilt and bring death (the swastika of the Nazis). It would come with the sun. But the sun itself would rise one day, not in the east but in the west (the rising sun of the Japanese Empire). So the elders said when you see the sun rising in the east, and you see the sign of life reversed and tilted in the east, you know that the Great Death is to come upon the earth, and now the Great Spirit will grab the earth again in His hand and shake it, and this shaking will be worse than the first. So the sign of life reversed and tilted, we call that the Swastika, and the rising sun in the east was the Rising Sun of Japan. These two symbols are carved in stone in Arizona. When the elders saw these two flags, they knew that these were the signs that the earth was to be shaken again.

The worst misuse of the Guardianship of the fire is called the gourd of ashes. They said the gourd of ashes will fall from the air. It will make the people like blades of grass in the prairie fire, and things will not grow for many seasons. The atomic bomb, the gourd of ashes, it was the best-kept secret in the history of the US. The Elders wanted to speak about it in 1920.

They would have spoken of it and foretold its coming if they could have entered into the League of Nations. The Elders tried to contact President Roosevelt to ask him not to use the gourd of ashes because it would have a great effect on the earth and eventually cause even greater destruction and a the Third Shaking of the Earth, the Third World War.

So they knew after the Second Shaking of the Earth when they saw the gourd of ashes fall from the sky, there would be an attempt to make peace on the other side of this land. And because the peace attempt on the west coast had failed, they would build a special house on the east coast of this Turtle Island, and all the nations and peoples of the earth would come to this house, and it would be called the House of Mica, and it would shine like the mica on the desert shines.

So the elders began to see they were building the United Nations made out of glass that reflects like the mica on the desert so they knew this was the House of Mica, and all the peoples of the earth should go to it. So they met and talked about this. They said that in the 1920's they had written and they had not been responded to, so they said this time we'd better go to the front door of the House of Mica because things might get a lot worse.

So elders representing a number of tribes drove to New York City. When the United Nations opened, they went to the front door of the house of Mica and they said these words, "We represent the indigenous people of North America, and we wish to address the nations of the Earth. We're going to give you four days to consider whether or not we will be allowed to speak."

They retreated to one of the Six Nations Reserves in New York State. Four days later they came back, and I believe the nations of the earth heard that the

Indians had come to the door. And they voted to let the Indians in. They wanted to hear what they had to say. But the United States is one of five nations of the United Nations with a veto power, and still they were concerned because this time the Native sovereignty was even stronger. And I believe they vetoed the entrance of the Native people.

So then they knew other things would happen on the Earth. So they retreated to the Six Nations Reserve, and they talked about this, and they said the time is really getting close now — 1949. They said, "We're going to divide the United States into four sections, and each year we're going to have a gathering. We're going to call these the White Roots of Peace Gatherings." They began to have these around 1950. And they authorized certain people to speak in English for the first time about these prophecies.

One that I used to listen to many times, over and over, was Thomas Banyaca. He was authorized to speak in English about what was on the stone tablets, and he has dedicated his life to doing this. And they began to tell us at these gatherings, "You're going to see a time in your lifetime when the human beings are going to find the blueprint that makes us." They call that now DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid. They said, "They're going to cut this blueprint." They call that now genetic splicing. And they said, "They're going to make new animals upon the earth, and they're going to think these are going to help us. And it's going to seem like they do help us. But maybe the grandchildren and great-grandchildren are going to suffer." The Elders said long ago, "They will release these things, and they will use them." This is going to be released not too long from now. They are making new animals. The Elders talked about this. They said, "You will see new animals, and even the old animals will come back, animals that people thought had disappeared. They will find them here and there. They'll begin to reappear." [Note: Mr. Brown's talk was given about ten years before scientists announced that they had cloned a sheep.]

They said, "You're going to see a time when the eagle will fly its highest in the night, and it will land upon the moon. And at that time, many of the Native people will be sleeping," which symbolically means they have lost their teachings. We're at that time now. The Eagle has landed on the moon, 1969. When that spaceship landed, they sent back the message, "The Eagle has landed." Traditionally, Native people from clear up in the Inuit region have shared with us this prophecy, clear down to the Quechuas in South America.

At this time you're going to see that things will speed up, that people on the earth will move faster and faster. Grandchildren will not have time for grandparents. Parents will not have time for children. It will seem like time is going faster and faster. The Elders advised us that, as things speed up, you yourself should slow down. The faster things go, the slower you go. Because there's going to come a time when the earth is going to be shaken a third time.

The Great Spirit has shaken the earth two times: the First and Second World Wars, to remind us that we are a human family, to remind us that we should have greeted each other as brothers and sisters. We had a chance after each shaking to come together in a circle that would have brought peace on earth, but we missed that.

Tonight they were talking on the news about the sign for the Third Shaking of the Earth. They said they're going to build what the Elders called the house in the sky. In the 1950's they talked about this: they will build a house and throw it in the sky. When you see people living in the sky on a permanent basis, you will know the Great Spirit is about to grab the earth, this time not with one hand, but with both hands. When this house is in the sky, the Great Spirit is going to shake the Earth a third time, and whoever dropped that gourd of ashes, upon them it is going to drop.

They say at that time there will be villages in this land so great that when you stand in the villages you will not be able to see out, and in the prophecies these are called villages of stone, or prairies of stone. And they said the stone will grow up from the ground, and you will not be able to see beyond the village. At the center of each and every one of these villages will be Native people, and they will walk as hollow shells upon a prairie of stone. They said hollow shells, which means they will have lost any of their traditional understandings; they will be empty within. They said that, after the Eagle lands on the moon, some of these people will begin to leave these prairies of stone and come home and take up some of the old ways and begin to make themselves reborn, because it's a new day. But many will not.

And they said there's going to come a time when, in the morning, the sun is going to rise, and this village of stone will be there, and in the evening there would just be steam coming from the ground. They will be as steam. And in the center of many of those villages of stone, when they turn to steam, the Native people will turn to steam also because they never woke up and left the village.

They say there's going to be the Third Shaking of the Earth. It's not going to be a good thing to see, but we will survive it. We will survive it. And when we survive it, there's going to be another attempt to make a circle of the human beings on the earth. And this time the Native people will not have to petition to join but will be invited to enter the circle because they say the attitude toward us will have changed by then, and people will let us into the circle, and all the four colors of the four directions will share their wisdom, and there will be a peace on earth.

This is coming close.

The prophecies are always either/or. We could have come together way back there in 1565, and we could have had a great civilization, but we didn't. Always along the path of these prophecies, we could have come together. We still could.

If we could stop the racial and religious disharmony, we would not have to go through this third shaking. The Elders say the chance of that is pretty slim. It seems to me like it's pretty slim, too. But they say what we can do is we can cushion it so it won't be quite as bad.

How do we do this?

We do this by sharing the teaching that will reunite us.

The Words of Wovoka

Wovoka was a Paiute holy man who lived from 1857-1932. Here are some of his words:

"When the sun died, I went up to heaven and saw God and all the people who had died a long time ago. God told me to come back and tell my people they must be good and love one another, and not fight, or steal, or lie. He gave me this dance to give to my people."

"All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in the next spring Great Spirit comes. He brings back all game of every kind. The game will be thick everywhere. All dead Indians come back and live again. They all (will) be strong just like young men, be young again. Old blind Indians see again and get young and have fine time. When Great Spirit comes this way, then all the Indians go to the mountains, high up away from the whites. Whites can't hurt Indians then. Then while Indians way up high, big flood comes like water and all white people die, get drowned. After that, water go away and then nobody but Indians everywhere and game all kinds thick. Then medicine man tells Indians to send word to all Indians to keep up dancing and the good time will come. Indians who don't dance, who don't believe in the word, will grow little, just about a foot high, and stay that way. Some of them will be turned into wood and be burned in fire."

"You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest. You ask me to dig for stones! Shall I dig under her skin for bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men, but how dare I cut my mother's hair? I want my people to stay with me here. All the dead men will come to life again. Their spirits will come to their bodies again. We must wait here in the homes of our fathers and be ready to meet them in the bosom of our mother."

"Grandfather says that when your friends die you must not cry. You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life."

The Ghost Dance

What is commonly known as the "Ghost Dance" and often associated with the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 is more properly called the "Spirit Dance" among our people. It is a ceremony that is rarely practiced in public and has a controversial history in Native culture. Nonetheless, it is considered a powerful and very healing ceremony among many of our people.

The Ghost Dance is derived, in part, from our traditional Circle Dance, whose history is lost in time. In its revised form, the Ghost Dance was first performed in 1889 when it was introduced into our culture by Wovoka (Jack Wilson), a Nevada Paiute and shaman.

Wovoka became a renowned and respected holy man at a young age. Having lived with a European family (the Wilsons) as well as among his own tribe, Wovoka was the son of a weather shaman and felt that his destiny was to follow in his father's footsteps. On January 1, 1889, the young man claimed to have been transported to the presence of the Great Spirit and given certain teachings, among which was the correct way to perform what came to be known as the Ghost Dance.

Wovoka and the Ghost Dance were looked upon with a great deal of suspicion by our European brothers and sisters, especially in the federal government. In truth, the shaman's message was one of peace and brotherhood. The object of the Ghost Dance was to help regenerate the earth, keep us in close contact with the Ancient Ones, and bring our people together. Unfortunately, this message was misunderstood by the federal government and taken for a separatist and violent Native movement. This misunderstanding led to the use of unnecessary and brutal force that resulted in the Wounded Knee Massacre in connection with the performance of the Ghost Dance in 1890.

Wovoka's messages and the Ghost Dance were embraced by some of our people and rejected by others. It was controversial when first introduced and remains a subject of debate today. However, for a time, both Wovoka's philosophy and the dance itself spread widely across our Nations. Today, the dance is rarely seen with the exception of private ceremonies, often among our people in the Northwestern United States. However, Wovoka's message of peace and brotherhood is now understood more completely and is no longer seen as a threat to the government or other Nations. Wovoka has taken his place among the long history of Elders who have tried to spread the message of peace and brotherhood among all cultures.

Tasks and Responsibilities

When I was a young man, my Elder gave me three personal life-tasks and one community responsibility. The passing on of these tasks and responsibilities has a timeless and rich tradition in our Nation. It also marks the end of a long period of training and the honor of taking ones rightful place among our people.

Because my teachings were based on the traditions of a small Nation that had lived in isolation throughout its history, these teachings were spiritual in nature, pacifistic, and a reflection of the best of our collective wisdom. Although my journey was to take me away from my people, these tasks and the responsibility came along with me as a vital part of my life. They were never given to me as gifts only for a Native culture. Their intent was to benefit anyone with whom I came into contact, so long as it was in accordance with the teachings I had received over the years. My Elder understood quite well that our people have become scattered and that I, too, was destined to move on from our homeland. He looked forward to a world in which there was no separation whatsoever, which is in accordance with many of our ancient beliefs.

We hold our Elders and Teachers in high esteem. We consider it an honor if an Elder decides to share his wisdom and learning with us. This honor also brings a responsibility that lasts a lifetime. Once we are chosen to walk the path given us by an Elder, we do so with complete commitment until we cross over and rejoin the Great Spirit.

To many who do not walk the Red Path, our traditions seem odd and not practical. However, they are just the opposite. We learn from the Mother, our Elders and Teachers, and from what we call "listening to the heart." In other words, our learning process is life-long and based upon much more than the five senses can impart to us.

If one is fortunate enough to be chosen by an Elder for the learning way, it brings a sense of direction to life that is wonderful but almost impossible to describe. We realize the meaning of our lives, our place in Grandfather's scheme, and our obligations to others. We live without fear. We also share a community bond that is unique and incredibly strong. We are, in every sense, one with each other and all that Mother shows us of her beauty and wisdom. Best of all, our learning goes on each day, becoming more full, more complete, and the continuing foundation of our lives. The teachings bring us an optimistic outlook on life that is unique and almost transcendental.

My three teachings and one responsibility are easily expressed in words but take a lifetime to master. They have guided me throughout my life and have given me more happiness than is possible to express. Here are the words as given to me

so many years ago:

Your tasks are these, Sleeping Crow:

To know the hearts of men but to do so without interference.

To see beyond the far horizon and speak of these things to the Elders and those who need.

To walk the Western Path as a warrior.

Your responsibility to your people, Sleeping Crow:

To walk the ridge each day, gather what must be known, and speak of these things to the Elders. To help keep our people safe and in unity.

I think these words speak for themselves.

Cunning Coyote

From a Karok legend first reported by E.W. Gifford in 1930:

Kareya was the God, who in the very beginning created the world. First he made the fishes in the ocean; then he made the animals on land; and last of all he made man. He had, however, given all the animals the same amount of power and rank.

So, he went to the man he had created and said: "Make as many bows and arrows as there are animals. I am going to call all the animals together, and you are to give the longest bow and arrow to the one that should have the most power and the shortest to the one that should have the least.

So the man set to work making bows and arrows, and at the end of nine days he had turned out enough for all the animals created by Kareya. Then Kareya called them all together and told them that the man would come to them the next day with the bows and the one to whom he gave the longest bow would have the most power.

Each animal wanted to be the one with the longest bow. Coyote schemed to outwit the others by staying awake all night. He thought that if he was the first to meet the man in the morning, he could get the longest bow for himself. So when the animals went to sleep, Coyote lay down and only pretended to sleep. About midnight, however, he began to feel genuinely sleepy. He got up and walked around, scratching his eyes to keep them open. As time passed, he grew sleepier. He resorted to skipping and jumping to keep himself awake but the noise waked some of the other animals so he had to stop.

About the time the morning star came up, Coyote was so sleepy that he couldn't keep his eyes open any longer. So he took two little sticks and sharpened them at the ends, and with these he propped his eyelids open. Then he felt it was safe to sleep since his eyes could watch the morning star rising. He planned to get up before the star was completely up, for by then all the other animals would be stirring. In a few minutes, however, Coyote was fast asleep. The sharp sticks pierced right through his eyelids and, instead of keeping them open, they pinned them shut. When the rest of the animals got up Coyote lay in a deep sleep.

The animals went to meet the man and receive their bows. Cougar was given the longest, Bear the next-longest, and so on until the next-to-last bow was given to Frog.

The shortest bow was still left, however.

"What animal have I missed?" the man cried.

The animals began to look about, and soon spied Coyote lying fast asleep. They all laughed heartily and danced around him. Then they led him to the man, for Coyote's eyes were pinned together by the sticks and he could not see. The man pulled the sticks out of Coyote's eyes and gave him the shortest bow. The animals laughed so hard that the man began to pity Coyote, who would be the weakest of them all. So he prayed to Kareya about Coyote and Kareya responded by giving Coyote more cunning than any other animal.

And that's how Coyote got his cunning.

Rainbow Crow and Fire

This legend is from the Lenni Lenape Tribe. It has been retold here by S. E. Schlosser:

It was so cold.

Snow fell constantly and ice formed over all the waters. The animals had never seen snow before. At first, it was a novelty, something to play in. But the cold increased tenfold and they began to worry. The little animals were being buried in the snow drifts and the larger animals could hardly walk because the snow was so deep. Soon, all would perish if something was not done.

"We must send a messenger to Kijiamuh Ka'ong, the Creator Who Creates By Thinking What Will Be," said Wise Owl. "We must ask him to think the world warm again so that Spirit Snow will leave us in peace."

The animals were pleased with this plan. They began to debate among themselves, trying to decide who to send up to the Creator. Wise Owl could not see well during the daylight, so he could not go. Coyote was easily distracted and liked playing tricks, so he could not be trusted. Turtle was steady and stable but he crawled too slowly. Finally, Rainbow Crow, the most beautiful of all the birds with shimmering feathers of rainbow hues and an enchanting singing voice, was chosen to go to Kijiamuh Ka'ong.

It was an arduous journey, three days up and up into the heavens, past the trees and clouds, beyond the sun and the moon, and even above all the stars. He was buffeted by winds and had no place to rest, but he carried on bravely until he reached Heaven. When Rainbow Crow reached the Holy Place, he called out to the Creator but received no answer. The Creator was busy thinking up what would be to even notice the most beautiful of birds. So, Rainbow Crow began to sing his most beautiful song.

The Creator was drawn from his thoughts by the lovely sound and came to see which bird was making it. He greeted Rainbow Crow kindly and asked what gift he could give the noble bird in exchange for his song. Rainbow Crow asked the Creator to un-think the snow so that the animals of Earth would not be buried and freeze to death. But the Creator told Rainbow Crow that the snow and the ice had spirits of their own and could not be destroyed.

"What shall we do then?" asked the Rainbow Crow. "We will all freeze or smother under the snow."

"You will not freeze," the Creator reassured him, "For I will think of Fire,

something that will warm all creatures during the cold times."

The Creator stuck a stick into the blazing hot sun. The end blazed with a bright, glowing fire, which burned brightly and gave off heat. "This is Fire," he told Rainbow Crow, handing him the cool end of the stick. "You must hurry it to Earth as fast as you can fly before the stick burns up."

Rainbow Crow nodded his thanks to the Creator and flew as fast as he could go. It was a three-day trip to Heaven and he was worried that the Fire would burn out before he reached the Earth. The stick was large and heavy but the fire kept Rainbow Crow warm as he descended from Heaven down to the bright path of the stars. Then the Fire grew hot as it came closer to Rainbow Crows feathers. As he flew past the Sun, his tail caught on fire, turning the shimmering beautiful feathers black. By the time he flew past the Moon, his whole body was black with soot from the hot Fire. When he plunged into the Sky and flew through the clouds, the smoke got into his throat, strangling his beautiful singing voice.

By the time Rainbow Crow landed among the freezing-cold animals of Earth, he was black as tar and could only Caw instead of sing. He delivered the fire to the animals and they melted the snow and warmed themselves, rescuing the littlest animals from the snow drifts where they lay buried.

It was a time of rejoicing, for Tindeh (Fire) had come to Earth. But Rainbow Crow sat apart, saddened by his dull, ugly feathers and his rasping voice. Then he felt the touch of wind on his face. He looked up and saw the Creator Who Creates By Thinking What Will Be walking toward him.

"Do not be sad, Rainbow Crow," the Creator said. "All animals will honor you for the sacrifice you made for them. And when the people come, they will not hunt you, for I have made your flesh taste of smoke so that it is no good to eat and your black feathers and hoarse voice will prevent man from putting you into a cage to sing for him. You will be free."

Then the Creator pointed to Rainbow Crow's black feathers. Before his eyes, Rainbow Crow saw the dull feathers become shiny and inside each one, he could see all the colors of the rainbow. "This will remind everyone who sees you of the service you have been to your people, and the sacrifice you made that saved them all."

And so shall it ever be.

Frybread

Frybread is a much-enjoyed staple of many Native American Nations. Here are two recipes that reflect the most common way to make this great treat:

From the Tulalip Nation:

Ingredients

1 tablespoon of sugar
1 teaspoon of salt
1 tablespoon Baking Powder
3 cups of flour
1 ½ cups of water

Directions

Make the dough by mixing all the ingredients but the water together. After mixing the ingredients, add the water and kneed the dough. Let the dough stand for 20-30 minutes. Take a roll out of the dough and flatten it to about 1 ½ inches and punch a hole in the middle. Add 1 ½ cups of butter to 4 or 5 cups of oil in a frying pan. Bring the oil to a boil and drop the dough into it. Turn until each side is a golden brown.

From the Cherokee Nation:

Ingredients

½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon baking powder
3 cups of flour
1 cup warm water

Directions

Mix all of the ingredients together except the water. Add water slowly and knead until the dough is soft but not sticky. Cover and let it stand for 15 to 20 minutes. When the dough is ready, pull off egg-sized balls of dough and form them into thin rounds. Fry these rounds in hot oil until bubbles appear in the dough, then turn until the bread is golden brown.

Animal Spirits and Meanings

In our culture, every animal has at least one primary meaning and, often, several alternate meanings. The animals are our teachers and part of our community in the world. Here is what we typically believe about some of the many animals Grandfather has given to us to enjoy and protect:

Ant works hard and is strong in the community.

Antelope is agile and willing to give all for his family.

Butterfly carries the secrets of a long life and transformation.

Bear is a powerful protector, who can heal.

Bee is an organizer and teaches the lesson of hard work.

Buffalo is a bringer of abundance and peace.

Cat teaches self-reliance.

Coyote is a trickster and clever hunter.

Cougar is cunning and teaches the lesson of patience.

Crane teaches the beauty of solitude.

Dog is loyal and strong in the community.

Dolphin teaches grace and good-heartedness.

Dove brings peace to the community.

Dragonfly teaches the lesson of harmony and freedom from worry.

Eagle represents the Great Spirit.

Elk teaches heart, strength and stamina.

Falcon is swift and teaches listening to the heart.

Fox is agile and cunning.

Frog teaches the medicine of water.

Goat is sure-footed and steady.

Goose is demanding.

Horse teaches stamina, speed, and balance.

Jaguar is a shape-shifter.

Lizard teaches patience and vision.

Mouse is stealthy.

Owl teaches quiet wisdom and insight.

Peacock shows us beauty and self-confidence.

Panther is a strong protector.

Puma teaches us speed, grace and power.

Rabbit is humble.

Raven and **Crow** bring far-away messages and omens.

Skunk teaches us about presence.

Snake is quiet and shrewd.

Spider is a creator.

Turtle is steady and shy.

Vulture teaches us purification.

Wolf teaches us intelligence, loyalty and strength.

Rabbit and the Man in the Moon

Our legends and the art of storytelling are designed to help us learn about ourselves and our world. They are often simple on the surface but, when studied, show many layers of subtle meaning. Here is the story of the Rabbit and the Man in the Moon from the Micmac Nation:

Long ago, Rabbit was a great hunter. He lived with his grandmother in a lodge which stood deep in the Micmac forest. It was winter and Rabbit set traps and laid snares to catch game for food. He caught many small animals and birds, until one day he discovered that some mysterious being was robbing his traps. Rabbit and his grandmother became hungry. Though he visited his traps very early each morning, he always found them empty.

At first Rabbit thought that the robber might be a cunning wolverine, until one morning he found long, narrow footprints alongside his trap line. It was, he thought, the tracks of the robber, but they looked like moonbeams. Each morning Rabbit rose earlier and earlier, but the being of the long foot was always ahead of him and always his traps were empty.

Rabbit made a trap from a bowstring with the loop so cleverly fastened that he felt certain that he would catch the robber when it came. He took one end of the thong with him and hid himself behind a clump of bushes from which he could watch his snare. It was bright moonlight while he waited, but suddenly it became very dark as the moon disappeared. A few stars were still shining and there were no clouds in the sky, so Rabbit wondered what had happened to the moon.

Someone or something came stealthily through the trees and then Rabbit was almost blinded by a flash of bright, white light, which went straight to his trap line and shone through the snare that he had set. Quick as a lightning flash, Rabbit jerked the bowstring and tightened the noose. There was a sound of struggling and the light lurched from side to side. Rabbit knew by the tugging on his string that he had caught the robber. He fastened the bowstring to a nearby sapling to hold the loop tight.

Rabbit raced back to tell his grandmother, who was a wise old woman, what had happened. She told him that he must return at once and see who or what he had caught. Rabbit, who was very frightened, wanted to wait for daylight but his grandmother said that might be too late, so he returned to his trap line.

When he came near his traps, Rabbit saw that the bright light was still there. It was so bright that it hurt his eyes. He bathed them in the icy water of a nearby brook, but still they smarted. He made big snowballs and threw them at the light, in the hope of putting it out. As they went close to the light, he heard them

sizzle and saw them melt. Next, Rabbit scooped up great paws full of soft clay from the stream and made many big clay balls. He was a good shot and threw the balls with all of his force at the dancing white light. He heard them strike hard and then his prisoner shouted.

Then a strange, quivering voice asked why he had been snared and demanded that he be set free at once, because he was the man in the moon and he must be home before dawn came. His face had been spotted with clay and, when Rabbit went closer, the moon man saw him and threatened to kill him and all of his tribe if he were not released at once.

Rabbit was so terrified that he raced back to tell his grandmother about his strange captive. She too was much afraid and told Rabbit to return and release the thief immediately. Rabbit went back, and his voice shook with fear as he told the man in the moon that he would be released if he promised never to rob the snares again. To make doubly sure, Rabbit asked him to promise that he would never return to earth, and the moon man swore that he would never do so. Rabbit could hardly see in the dazzling light, but at last he managed to gnaw through the bowstring with his teeth and the man in the moon soon disappeared in the sky, leaving a bright trail of light behind him.

Rabbit had been nearly blinded by the great light and his shoulders were badly scorched. Even today, rabbits blink as though light is too strong for their eyes; their eyelids are pink, and their eyes water if they look at a bright light. Their lips quiver, telling of Rabbit's terror.

The man in the moon has never returned to earth. When he lights the world, one can still see the marks of the clay which Rabbit threw on his face. Sometimes he disappears for a few nights, when he is trying to rub the marks of the clay balls from his face. Then the world is dark; but when the man in the moon appears again, one can see that he has never been able to clean the clay marks from his shining face.

The Two-Spirit Tradition

The Two-Spirit Tradition
By Harlan Pruden and Melissa Hoskins, Co-Chairs of NE2SS

On the land we know as North America, there were approximately 400 distinct indigenous Nations. Of that number, 155 have documented multiple gender traditions. Two Spirit is a contemporary term that refers to those traditions where some individuals' spirits are a blending of male and female spirit.

The existence of Two Spirit people challenges the rigid binary view of the world of the North American colonizers and missionaries, not just of a binary gender system, but a binary system of this or that, all together. The Two Spirits' mere existence threatened the colonizers' core beliefs; the backlash was violent. Sketches, housed at the New York City public library, depict Two Spirit people being attacked by colonizers' dogs. Word of this brutal treatment spread quickly from nation to nation. Many nations decided to take actions to protect their honored and valued Two Spirit people. Some nations hid them by asking them to replace their dress, a mixture of men and women's clothing, with the attire of their biological sex. After years of colonization, some of those very same nations denied ever having a tradition that celebrated and honored their Two Spirit people.

The Two Spirit tradition is primarily a question of gender, not sexual orientation. Sexual orientation describes the relationship a person of one gender has with another gendered person. Gender describes an individual's expected role within a community.

Within traditional American Indian communities, there was an expectation that women farmed/gathered food and cooked; men hunted big game. Although there was division of labor along gender lines, there was no gender-role hierarchy. Within the American Indian social construct of gender, a community could not survive without both of the equal halves of a whole. The American Indian commitment to gender equality opened the door for the possibility of multiple genders, without the idea that a man was taking on a lesser gender by placing himself in a women's role.

Gender Roles of Two Spirit People

People of Two Spirit gender functioned as crafts-people, shamans, medicinegivers, mediators, and/or social workers. In many American Indian

communities, men and women styles of speech were distinct; sometimes even different dialects were spoken. The Two Spirit people knew how to speak both in the men and women's ways. They were the only ones allowed to go between the men's and the women's camps. They brokered marriages, divorces, settled arguments, and fostered open lines of communication between the sexes.

Their proficiency in mediation often included their work as communicators between the seen (physical) and un-seen (spiritual) worlds. Many of the great visionaries, dreamers, shamans, or medicine givers were Two Spirit people. In some traditions, a war party could not be dispatched until their Two Spirit person consulted the spirits of the un-seen world and then gave their blessings. In the Lakota tradition, before any war party's departure, the party preformed a dance with the Two Spirit person at the center of the circle to show their respect and honor.

It is traditional to present gifts at gatherings to those who exemplify the "spirit" of the community or who have done the most for the community. Two Spirit people were respected and honored with gifts when they attended gatherings. They did not keep the gifts, but passed them on to spread the wealth. In this respect, Two Spirit people were similar to modern day social workers.

When a family was not properly raising their children, the Two Spirit person would intervene and assume the responsibly as the primary caretaker. Sometimes, families would ask the Two Spirit person for help rearing their children. This unique role of social worker was specific to Two Spirit people, for they had an excess of material wealth as a result of the gifts they received.

Remembering Our Traditions

Since the time of colonization many American Indians have forgotten the "old" way. Many converted to a Western religion, which did not accept traditional spirituality and community structures.

However, there are groups of elders and activists that have quietly kept the Two Spirit tradition alive. In some nations that have revived this tradition, or brought it once again into the light, Two Spirit people are again fulfilling some of the roles and regaining the honor and respect of their communities.

The Two Spirit tradition is a very rich one that deserves a closer examination. The LGBTI activists engaged in achieving equality for all should remember that there was a time when people who engaged in same-sex relationships were accepted and honored for their special qualities.

Two Spirit people are a part of the fabric of this land, and we stand here today as a testament of our collective strength and fortitude.

Giving and Taking

It's such a common phrase in American English, "give and take." The implication is that "give" and "take" are somehow equal, flip sides of the same coin, a kind of *quid-pro-quo* or *tit-for-tat*. On the Red Path, though, nothing could be further from the truth. "Give" and "take" are far from equal actions. In fact, they do not even relate to each other. One is expected behavior, the other a cause of dishonor.

Our culture teaches that "taking" is disrespectful and dishonors the taker. It's not that we forbid accepting a gift or a helping hand. The point is that nothing is ever taken, it is only accepted. And, when it is accepted, it is done so with humility, reluctance, respect, thanks, and only to the extent that is absolutely necessary. There is simply no room for "taking" on our path.

On the other hand, giving is considered vital to our personal well-being and to our community. However, the act of giving also brings obligations that are not always obvious. When we give, we must do so without thought of reward or recognition, and we must be sure that what we give will actually benefit the recipient of our gift. In other words, we would consider the gift of a bottle of liquor to a person who suffers from alcoholic dependency to be an act of aggression and disrespect. So, the gift must be given only after serious consideration of its impact on the recipient and must be done in such a way that honors his or her own path. Gifts are not given to answer the "wants" of the recipient, no matter how important those "wants" might be.

We do have a number of traditional gifts that are given to certain community members or on certain occasions. Perhaps the best known of these traditions is the giving of tobacco to an Elder when one comes visiting. More personal gifts, however, must be given a good deal of thought and consideration before they are passed on. The act of giving brings a good deal of responsibility with it. Items that reflect a personal investment in the gift, or express the personal art of the giver, are the most highly valued. Monetary value, in our tradition, counts for little.

To "give and take" is to stray far from the Red Path. To give quietly, respectfully, and without thought of reward or recognition is honorable. To take is to dishonor oneself and, ultimately, the community of which one is a member. To "be a taker" in our tradition is to be one who is shunned and without respect in the community, a situation that is perilous for one's spiritual and physical wellness.

To "be a giver" is the expectation of the Red Path.

The Talking Stick

Here is an excellent description of the Talking Stick as told by Silent Wolf:

Sticks

Sticks were important to the early American Indians. Sticks were used to plant corn, to beat drums, as pipes and flutes, as walking aides, as weapons, and as methods of counting "coup" on enemies. They were also important parts of tribal entertainment being used with games such as hoop rolling, hoop spearing, and in various forms of stick dancing. Their importance was often demonstrated in early photographs which often showed the subject holding some sort of well-decorated "stick" (usually a pipe, hatchet or coup stick).

The Talking Stick

The Talking Stick was taken to council meetings or gatherings and used as a symbol of the speaker's importance and was decorated to show the individual's accomplishments and spirituality. The person doing the talking or teaching would bring his or her own Talking Stick but if responses were called for or were sought by the speaker the stick could be passed on to others and they, too, would be given respect and attention. Often, an "Answering Feather" was used. The feather would be passed to persons wanting to respond to the main talker.

The Main Stick

Each part of the Talking Stick should mean something to the speaker. The stick, itself, is the main staff and should have meaning with regard to the type of wood it is and to where it is found. Perhaps, even, how it was found. It took me a long time to decide what to use for my stick. Finally, I remembered an old stick stuffed in the back of my storage room which, many years before, I had found and used as a walking stick in Bryce Canyon, Utah. On many outings I had used that stick as a hiking stick, brace and companion. One year, for my birthday, my brother gave me a modern hiking stick so I put the old stick away. Since Bryce Canyon is a Spiritual Place for me and since my old stick had meaning to me, I decided to use it as my Talking Stick.

The Fur

It is common to attach fur and animal tokens to the Talking Stick. I decided to attach a piece of fur symbolizing my animal totem, the Wolf. The Wolf is the pathfinder or teacher in many Native American Indian cultures. The fur that is on the stick is not Wolf fur; it is probably rabbit but is the same color as the Gray Wolf. At Ruby's Inn near Bryce Canyon, you can see Talking Sticks which have

the actual skulls of coyotes or wolves attached as well as fur.

The Feathers

From the main fur section of the stick, I decided to attach a feather for each meaningful accomplishment of my life; especially those endeavors which would show that I have the knowledge, education, or experience to "walk the talk." The four feathers represent my high school graduation, college graduation, United States Marine Corps experiences and my ongoing learning experiences. Each feather is attached with leather bindings which also hold tiny feathers. These tiny feathers are important in that they symbolize the beginnings of things. "Even the mighty eagle was once a tiny, crying, dependent fledgling." They are meant to remind us that all things have a beginning; and that includes - ideas.

The Medicine Bag

I have added a Medicine Bag to my stick mainly so students can see what one is like. I doubt if the early American Indians put theirs on their Talking Stick. They probably kept it at home or had a small one tied around their neck. Medicine Bags usually contain rocks, feathers, fetishes, totems, and anything that the person feels will help them get through the day. In modern days, we, in a similar fashion, collect tiny things for good luck or souvenirs which remind us of trips and experiences. Authentic Medicine Bags don't necessarily contain items to make us well or to keep us from getting sick but, to be on the safe side, my bag contains two Tylenol and two Rolaids.

The Colored Bands

Wrapped around the stick are five colored bands of leather. These represent the knowledge gained and appreciation for learning that I have received from the Great Mysteries that control our lives. The blue band represents Grandfather Sky which covers us all and provides life-giving rain and light. The white band represents the wind, air and our breath. The dark green band represents all life on earth (the trees and plants, the crawling creatures, the winged and water creatures and the four and two legs). The red band represents fire; not only the blazing fire that burns but, also, the fire in our bellies which gives us the gumption to try things and be seekers. The bottom brown band is for Grandmother Earth upon which all things depend. The bands do not completely encircle the stick thus forming a "crack" down the stick. That crack represents the "Crack in the Universe" which encompasses many things we can't explain. Especially dream states, intuition and feelings brought on by alcohol and hallucinogenic substances. This "Crack in the Universe" was spiritually sought by early American Indians through the Peyote Ceremony.

The Beads

The Talking Stick had a string of beads. There are twenty-five beads on a leather thong. Each bead represents one year of my profession as a teacher.

Other Items

I have attached other items which help establish my dignity to teach and to speak of global things. One of those items is a shell which represents my travels across the United States and in Asia. The other item is a red rock symbolizing my Power Place, Bryce Canyon. Two pieces of turquoise from Arizona are tied to them denoting my place of residence. Other items may be added later.

Your Talking Stick

Making the Talking Stick can be a fulfilling experience. You are forced to look back at your life and remember your accomplishments as well as the trials you faced that got you where you are. If you make your own Talking Stick, it does not have to be full of grandiose achievements. Even though we are all related, we are not all alike and each of us encounters different types of successes each day. "In just a few leaps, the deer can surpass the distance that the ant has walked in a day and yet, the deer can never drill a hole and see the inside of the earth like the ant can." Even the smallest accomplishment may be worthy of a place on your Talking Stick. The most important thing to remember when using the Talking Stick is that everyone has knowledge and experiences worth sharing and that we need to respect the words of others no matter who they are.

Is a Rock Alive?

Ala:Kalahanamae called me into his lodge late one afternoon. He looked very serious, which worried me a bit. This was an Elder who almost always had a smile, or at least a smirk, on his face.

"What have you learned today?" he asked, motioning me to sit across from him.

I went on for a while, describing this, talking about that, chattering, really. I hadn't yet learned the true value of silence. He listened patiently for a time then suddenly began to nod his head from side to side. It was a clear sign to "shut up" and listen.

"Is a rock alive?" he asked, still very serious.

I thought for a few moments. The question seemed obvious at first, until I thought about it. Then, no answer seemed right. I wondered where he was going with this.

"No, I don't think so," was my response. "A rock doesn't move, doesn't hunt, has no eyes, and doesn’t pray. I guess a rock is not alive, Father."

He shook his head from side to side once again, this time in disgust. He waved the back of his hand at me and sent me packing for the day.

A long time passed before Father brought up the subject again. During that time, I decided to find out what I could about rocks. It seemed silly since I thought I knew all about rocks. Still, there was much more than I ever expected. I even read physics manuals and researched elementary particles, down to String Theory. I was determined to be ready should Father ever ask that question again. Now, I **really** knew about rocks, or so I thought.

Father stopped me one day by the river.

"Is a rock alive?" he asked, smiling now.

"Sure," I shot back.

I launched into my newly-found "star stuff" argument, the principle of physics that tells us we are all made of the same elementary particles, which may, themselves, be alive -- or even contain entire universes unto themselves. I was about to get to the heart of the matter, right down to String Theory, when he slapped me hard on the shoulder.

"You've learned nothing!" he shouted. "Get your ass out there for a week and talk to the rocks. Do nothing else but talk and listen. Just to the rocks. When you come back, come to my lodge and tell me if a rock is alive."

I was confused and, frankly, more than a little embarrassed. Father wasn't happy about rocks not being alive and he didn't seem to be very pleased about them being alive either. How was I going to get myself out of this situation?

I decided that the best place to talk to the rocks was somewhere in the mountains. I went to the Lassen area in Northern California, a land of honor to our ancestors. I camped for a week, alone, watching, listening and talking to the rocks. It was an amazing experience, and one that has stayed with me for this long life.

Rocks move! They change shape. They become round, disappear back to Mother, just like we do. They are created when Mother is angry. They are as varied as Mother herself. They are comfortable on the land, in the lakes, and at the bottoms of the streams and rivers. Rocks are everywhere! They dominate so much of our land, so much more than we can ever hope to understand. I had missed all of this because I had always moved too quickly through life. I had to learn to move at the speed of a rock to know the rock spirit.

I also learned the value of silence on this trip, and returned to my Father considerably older and a bit wiser. When I came back to our village, I went straight to his lodge with a gift of tobacco.

"Well," he mused. "Is a rock alive?"

I smiled back at him, a copy of his own smile.

"It's really a silly question, Father, isn't it?"

He nodded.

The Shape-Shifter Legend

The origins of this legend are lost. However, its imagery and importance are obvious enough and well-known in Native circles. So, also, is the less-than-subtle undertones of the message:

In the beginning, the Great Creator formed Mother Earth in the heavens and was pleased. Mother Earth was a beautiful sight. The Great Creator decided to add living creatures to take care of Her. The creatures were all beautiful in the Great Creators mind, but he decided to give two of them greater power and knowledge in order to help protect the great Mother Earth. The Great Creator chose the eagle and the snake to bestow this great honor upon. The eagle was the master of the skies and the snake was so close to Mother Earth that the Great Creator felt it would make the perfect protector on the ground.

The majority of eagles and snakes got along very well, initially. They communicated freely with each other, and all of the other creatures were in awe of them. However, there was one snake named "White Eye" that seemed to have more power than all of the other snakes. White Eye was not friendly to his brother the eagle. White Eye was very jealous that the Great Creator enabled the eagle to be such a beautiful creature and have the ability to fly free through the skies. White Eye thought "I am just as powerful as the eagle, yet I am ugly and must crawl along the ground like a lower form of life. Someday, I will take Mother Earth completely away from the eagle and be the complete ruler of all creatures. Of this I promise!"

As time passed, the greatest eagle of all, named "Redman" became aware that he possessed superior powers that all other eagles were unaware of. He was also aware that White Eye was a powerful trouble maker and that certain discoveries of powers from the Great Creator must never fall into the possession of the evil snake. Redman discovered an art called "shape shifting".

He discovered that he could, after deep, silent prayer and soft chanting, actually change his physical body into an all together different form. As Redman began to experiment with his newly discovered power, he discovered that he could assume the shape of an upright being with two legs and two arms. As Redman looked into the lake one day, he discovered that his two-legged form was actually a beautiful shape with a reddish hue to the skin covering his body. The two-legged form also looked very impressive with two arms, with hands and fingers and toes on the feet attached to the two legs. Redman was very happy. As he began to experiment with his new form, he was impressed to see that he would be able to do many things that could be very helpful in taking loving care of Mother Earth.

Redman met with eight of the most trusted eagles to discuss the new power. The eight eagles were named "Sioux", "Cherokee", "Cheyenne", "Apache", "Chippewa", "Iroquois" and "Seminole". These eight eagles together began to experiment with the new form that Redman had discovered and they agreed that there was much that could be done for Mother Earth with this new form. The eight then returned to their respective eagle families and met secretly with the wisest male and female eagles to discuss their plan. The plan was simple enough. These chosen eagles would select the best male and female eagles to shape shift to the new form and from their different locations upon Mother Earth, they would reproduce in the new form and be even better able to take care of Her and all of Her creatures.

One day when Redman was walking through the woods, he came across White Eye. Needless to say, White Eye was stunned. "So, Redman, what is this?"

Redman was immediately fearful of White Eye's evil powers and was momentarily speechless. "So Redman!" I said, "What is this?"

"Oh, hello White Eye", said Redman. "This is a new form that I have discovered and I believe that this form may enable me to better serve the Great Creator in protecting Mother Earth."

"I see." said White Eye. "Won't you be so kind as to show me how to do that, so that I may also help protect our dear Mother Earth?"

Redman thought quickly and said "Well White Eye, right now I am simply experimenting with the form. If it ends up being as good as I think it may be, I'll talk to all of the creatures to discuss it. I have to go now. Farewell, White Eye."

Now White Eye was furious! He must know how to assume that beautiful form! White Eye returned home and gathered together the most evil snakes that he could find to discuss this new situation. The other snakes were amazed! They all agreed to a secret pact that would enable them to search hard and secretly to discover how Redman had been able to assume this beautiful new form!

Low and behold, the snakes began seeing these new upright creatures all around their areas of Mother Earth, and the eagles seemed to be multiplying rapidly in the new form. White Eye was absolutely furious! He called a meeting of the evil snakes and they decided to kill one of the new upright eagles with the two-legged shape.

One day White Eye and his evil friends saw a lone upright eagle and they approached him in a seemingly friendly manner, complimenting his new form. As the snakes' questions became more aggressive, the eagle decided to run. However, it was too late. The snakes attacked. As the eagle was dying, in his weakened condition, White Eye summoned his greatest, most focused power, which was the ability to telepathically impart knowledge and ideas from other

creatures. If the eagle were healthy, he would have been able to escape, or mentally try to block White Eyes mind-reading. Unfortunately, the poor eagle was very weak from the attack of the evil snakes and White Eye successfully gained the process of shape shifting.

White Eye let out an enormous, evil, blood curdling laugh. That was the final sound the dying eagle heard in his physical life on Mother Earth. White Eye was laughing hysterically! The other snakes gathered around. "What is it, White Eye? What is so funny?" Suddenly White Eye's beady little snake eyes narrowed and he became very nasty looking.

"Now I know how to transform my ugly body into the beautiful new form!" said White Eye. White Eye ordered the other evil snakes to leave him alone for awhile, and he promised that he would rejoin them as soon as he had tried the new shape shifting idea that he had taken from the poor dying eagle. The other snakes left as White Eye had requested.

Now White Eye became very quiet and began to really focus on the energy of the universe. After a few moments, he felt a very unusual tingling and began to softly chant the words that the dying eagle had known to utter in order to successfully shape shift to the upright, two-legged form.

"Hey - Ya…Hey-Ya…Hey - Ya…Hey Ya."

White Eye knew the exact cadence and inflections for the chant. After a few more minutes, White Eye felt an enormous rushing of energy entering his ugly snake body. White Eye suddenly screamed out in pain, as the energy rush was beyond description. White Eye passed out of consciousness. When he felt himself awakening, he felt very different and strange. As his eyes began to regain their sight, White Eye saw something that he could not believe! He had arms and hands and legs and feet! Just like Redman! He was ecstatic! The only difference was that his skin covering was a white color. Redman's had been slightly reddish. White Eye was actually glad that he was a different color than the eagle! He thought, "This will make it easy for us snakes to know what upright creatures are snakes and what upright creatures are the loathsome eagles!"

White Eye found that at first, it was hard to make the new form work. He practiced for awhile and then could not wait to show his evil friends! He ran through the woods to the place where he was to meet them. The other snakes at first were frightened, but then excited! "Is that really you, White Eye?" "Yes it is," said White Eye without any trace of the hissing that always had been part of his language. He immediately showed the other evil snakes how to shape shift, and they began to try it. They too were white, but very happy!

The evil snakes spent time practicing shape shifting and did many different things in order to master the new shape shifting idea that White Eye had

discovered. None of the snakes had any tell-tale sign of the evil hissing that accompanied their language when in the upright form. However, when they shape shifted back to their original snake form, the hissing would return. The snakes made a pact to act friendly at first to the upright eagles in order to make them believe that they were their friends. But White Eye had vowed long ago that the snakes would take everything away from the eagles and this vow would never be forgotten! Then the upright snakes would have control of Mother Earth and all of her creatures.

As the snakes began to experiment with their new form, they discovered that they could take things from mother earth that would help them become even more powerful. The evil snakes began to get very greedy and no longer even remembered, let alone did they act like that they were actually supposed to protect Mother Earth. No, now the snakes thought only of themselves and their greedy plan to take over Mother Earth from the beautiful upright eagles.

In the beginning, the upright snakes were congregated in the east, where their meeting had taken place, and where they had originally killed the upright eagle. In their self-serving greed, they forgot all about their families and simply stayed where they were to reproduce and learn more about their new upright form. The upright snakes began to discover how to make deadly weapons from the gifts of Mother Earth. They began to kill other creatures simply for a strange, sick enjoyment that they began to feel in their new, powerful, upright form. The other creatures became very frightened of the upright snakes, and that fear continues even today.

Meanwhile, the upright eagles continued their peaceful, loving care for Mother Earth. Some of the eagles made some unwise choices as to who would be the appropriate selections for the shape shifting plan and some of the shape shifted eagles also became overly aggressive in their new form. Redman was very upset about these aggressive eagles, but it was beyond his control. He did however banish them from the circle of good eagles until such time that they would exist peacefully with their fellow eagles.

The Great Creator soon became concerned about the problems that were occurring on Mother Earth as a result of the shape shifting. He sent word with his most trusted raven for Redman and White Eye to meet him on the mountain the next Sunday morning at sunrise. When sunrise came that Sunday morning, only Redman had come to meet with the Great Creator. The Great Creator expressed to Redman disappointment. The Great Creator explained to Redman that he should have discussed his new plan with him first. He still loved Redman and he made that clear. He went on to explain to Redman that he would eliminate the ability to shape shift from all creatures except for Redman himself. The Great Creator went on to explain to Redman that from then on, only the highest medicine eagles could be taught about shape shifting, and they were to understand that they were not then to teach it to anyone else!

The Great Creator passed over Mother Earth and did as he said he would. He eliminated the shape shifting ability of all creatures, except Redman. At first, White Eye was very angry. He knew that he had defied the Great Creator by not attending the meeting but, in his greed, he did not care. White Eye knew that enough snakes had already shape shifted and were reproducing rapidly enough, so that his great plan to take Mother Earth from the eagles would still be possible.

As time passed, the upright snakes and eagles lost even the memory that they had originally been different creatures. The upright snakes became known simply as "white eyes." The upright eagles became simply known as "red men." Only Redman himself retained the knowledge of how all of this had come to pass. Even the evil White Eye soon forgot about how he had become upright. However, White Eye did still have the intense, burning desire to control Mother Earth. In his mind, as well as all of the other white eye creatures, the hatred of the redskin creatures continued, and their collective greed could not be denied. They took, and took, and took from Mother Earth.

As more time passed, the white eyes multiplied and soon needed additional space to greedily take the resources from Mother Earth that they had grown to need. The white eyes began to move westward, where they encountered more red men. The red men tried to help the white eyes understand that Mother Earth should be loved and taken care of. At first, the white eyes pretended to befriend the red men. The white eyes were really not interested in what the red men said. They really just wanted to steal from them and take their land. The white eyes lied to the red men and even began killing them.

White Eye had become a great military leader with the white eyes and was determined to take all of Mother Earth from the red men. He was willing to kill as many of them as was necessary in order to keep his promise of long ago. There came a great, greedy hostility that even brought death to the women and children of the red men. The white eyes lied, cheated and stole their beloved lands from them.

As more time passed and these treacheries grew more outrageous, great war erupted. The white eyes far outnumbered the red men, and even though the red men were fierce, tenacious fighters, the odds were simply impossible. Finally, the white eyes and their evil leader White Eye had militarily conquered the red men. However, they could never conquer their spirit.

The red men were treated in a terrible fashion. They were forced to live in communities against their will, far from their beloved homelands. Their rights were completely stripped away from them. They were humiliated and disgraced by the white eyes. Through all of this, Redman became very bitter. He was saddened that he had brought all of this to pass. He vowed to reclaim Mother Earth from the white eyes.

Redman struggled to try to develop a plan to reclaim Mother Earth for the rest of his life in the physical world. Redman banished himself in self-imposed shame. He retreated to a remote, but beautiful area.

It was early spring when Redman arrived and the area was alive with beautiful creatures, and beautiful wild flowers were everywhere. Redman loved this spot and the beauty of it helped ease his pain. Each and every spring the area virtually comes to life and is absolutely covered with the most splendid display of wild flowers imaginable. The sight was so magnificent that it always seemed to renew Redman's spirit. However, his thoughts of what had happened as a result of white eyes greed could never escape his tormented mind. Redman continuously searched his soul about how to regain his beloved red mans' homelands.

However, the real opportunities seemed to diminish more and more as time passed by and Redman grew older and older. Finally, Redman's time in the physical world was drawing to an end. He spoke daily with the Great Creator through ceremonies, chants and words. The Great Creator was sympathetic to Redman's plight, but could do very little for him.

Redman fell into a deep sleep one beautiful spring morning. In his sleep, the Great Creator appeared to him. The Great Creator told Redman that his time in the physical world was ending. The Great Creator told Redman that he would allow him certain abilities to interact with the physical world on a limited basis, once he passed into the spirit world. The Great Creator told Redman that he would be allowed to maintain his spirit world existence in very close parallel to the physical world and that he would be able to see what was happening in the physical world. This way, if and when Redman saw an opportunity to influence earthly events in his limited capacity, then he was to feel free to do so. In this way, the Great Creator had allowed Redman an opportunity to guide his peoples destiny if the right opportunity presented itself. Redman was extremely grateful and was filled with great hope for the future of the red men.

Time in the spirit world is completely unlike time in the physical world. There are no human emotions to confuse or distort reality, and time is immaterial. Redman was finally able to exist in peace and happiness. He knew that someday, somehow the opportunity would present itself for the red men to return to a peaceful, harmonious time when they could once again provide the dear Mother Earth with the loving care that once had been possible. He knew that he would be ready and when the right time did come, the red men would have the Great Creator to thank for their opportunity to reclaim their beloved Mother Earth.

This we know is true, for the legend says that it is so.

The Dream Catcher

Here is a Lakota legend about the origins and use of the Dream Catcher:

Long ago, when the world was young, an old Lakota spiritual leader was on a high mountain and had a vision.

In his vision, Iktomi, the great trickster and teacher of wisdom, appeared in the form of a spider. Iktomi spoke to him in a sacred language that only the spiritual leaders of the Lakota could understand. As he spoke, the spider took the elder's willow hoop, which had feathers, horse hair, beads and offerings on it, and began to spin a web.

He spoke to the elder about the cycles of life, and how we begin our lives as infants and we move on to childhood, and then to adulthood. Finally, we go to old age, where we must be taken care of as infants, completing the cycle.

"But," Iktomi said as he continued to spin his web, "in each time of life there are many forces, some good and some bad. If you listen to the good forces, they will steer you in the right direction. But if you listen to the bad forces, they will hurt you and steer you in the wrong direction. There are many forces and different directions that can help or interfere with the harmony of nature, and also with the Great Spirit and all of his wonderful teachings."

All the while the spider spoke, he continued to weave his web, starting from the outside and working toward the center.

When Iktomi finished speaking, he gave the Lakota elder the web and said, "See, the web is a perfect circle but there is a hole in the center of the circle. Use the web to help yourself and your people to reach your goals and make good use of your people's ideas, dreams and visions. If you believe in the Great Spirit, the web will catch your good ideas and dreams, and the bad ones will go through the hole."

The Lakota elder passed on his vision to his people and now the Sioux use the dream catcher as the web of their life. It is hung above their beds or in their homes to sift their dreams and visions. The good in their dreams is captured in the web of life and carried with them, but the evil in their dreams escapes through the hole in the center of the web and is no longer a part of them.

The Buffalo Dance

Here is the Blackfoot Nation's legend about how the Buffalo Dance was given to our people. The dance was typically performed before the hunt to ensure success:

When the buffalo first came to be upon the land, they were not friendly to the people. When the hunters tried to coax them over the cliffs for the good of the villages, they were reluctant to offer themselves up. They did not relish being turned into blankets and dried flesh for winter rations. They did not want their hooves and horns to become tools and utensils, nor did they welcome their sinew being used for sewing.

"No, no," they said. We won't fall into your traps. And we will not fall for your tricks."

So when the hunters guided them towards the abyss, they would always turn aside at the very last moment. With this lack of cooperation, it seemed the villagers would be hungry and cold and ragged all winter long.

Now, one of the hunters had a daughter who was very proud of her father's skill with the bow. During the fullness of summer, he always brought her the best of hides to dress, and she in turn would work the deer-skins into the softest, whitest of garments for him to wear. Her own dresses were like the down of a snow goose, and the moccasins she made for the children and the grandmothers in the village were the most welcome of gifts.

But now, with the hint of snow on the wind and deer becoming more scarce in the willow breaks, she could see this reluctance on the part of the buffalo families could become a real problem.

Hunter's Daughter decided she would do something about it.

She went to the base of the cliff and looked up. She began to sing in a low, soft voice, "Oh, buffalo family, come down and visit me. If you come down and feed my relatives in a wedding feast, I will join your family as the bride of your strongest warrior."

She stopped and listened. She thought she heard the slight rumbling sound of thunder in the distance. Again she sang, "Oh, buffalo family, come down and visit me. Feed my family in a wedding feast so that I may be a bride."

The thunder was much louder now. Suddenly the buffalo family began falling from the sky at her feet. One very large bull landed on top of the others, and walked across the backs of his relatives to stand before Hunter's Daughter.

"I am here to claim you as my bride," said Large Buffalo.

"Oh, but now I am afraid to go with you," said Hunter's Daughter.

"Ah, but you must," said Large Buffalo, "For my people have come to provide your people with a wedding feast. As you can see, they have offered themselves up."

"Yes, but I must run and tell my relatives the good news," said Hunter's Daughter.

"No," said Large Buffalo. "No word need be sent. You are not getting away so easily."

And with that said, Large Buffalo lifted her between his horns and carried her off to his village in the rolling grass hills.

The next morning, the whole village was out looking for Hunter's Daughter. When they found the mound of buffalo below the cliff, the father, who was in fact a fine tracker as well as a skilled hunter, looked at his daughter's footprints in the dust.

"She's gone off with a buffalo," he said. "I shall follow them and bring her back."

So Hunter walked out upon the plains with only his bow and arrows as companions. He walked and walked a great distance until he was so tired that he had to sit down to rest beside a buffalo wallow.

Along came Magpie and sat down beside him.

Hunter spoke to Magpie in a respectful tone, "O, knowledgeable bird, has my daughter been stolen from me by a buffalo? Have you seen them? Can you tell me where they have gone?"

Magpie replied with understanding, "Yes, I have seen them pass this way. They are resting just over this hill."

"Well," said Hunter, "would you kindly take my daughter a message for me? Will you tell her I am here just over the hill?"

So Magpie flew to where Large Buffalo lay asleep amidst his relatives in the dry prairie grass. He hopped over to where Hunter's Daughter was quilling moccasins, as she sat dutifully beside her sleeping husband. "Your father is waiting for you on the other side of the hill," whispered Magpie to the maiden."

"Oh, this is very dangerous," she told him. "These buffalo are not friendly to us and they might try to hurt my father if he should come this way. Please tell him to wait for me and I will try to slip away to see him."

Just then her husband, Large Buffalo, awoke and took off his horn. "Go bring me a drink from the wallow just over this hill," said her husband.

So she took the horn in her hand and walked very casually over the hill. Her father motioned silently for her to come with him, as he bent into a low crouch in the grass.

"No," she whispered. The buffalo are angry with our people who have killed their people. They will run after us and trample us into the dirt. I will go back and see what I can do to soothe their feelings."

And so Hunter's daughter took the horn of water back to her husband who gave a loud snort when he took a drink. The snort turned into a bellow and all of the buffalo got up in alarm. They all put their tails in the air and danced a buffalo dance over the hill, trampling the poor man to pieces who was still waiting for his daughter near the buffalo wallow.

His daughter sat down on the edge of the wallow and broke into tears.

"Why are you crying?" said her buffalo husband.

"You have killed my father and I am a prisoner, besides," she sobbed.

"Well, what of my people?" her husband replied. "We have given our children, our parents and some of our wives up to your relatives in exchange for your presence among us. A deal is a deal."

But after some consideration of her feelings, Large Buffalo knelt down beside her and said to her, "If you can bring your father back to life again, we will let him take you back home to your people."

So Hunter's Daughter started to sing a little song. "Magpie, Magpie help me find some piece of my father which I can mend back whole again."

Magpie appeared and sat down in front of her with his head cocked to the side.

"Magpie, Magpie, please see what you can find," she sang softly to the wind, which bent the grasses slightly apart. Magpie cocked his head to the side and looked carefully within the layered folds of the grasses as the wind sighed again. Quickly he picked out a piece of her father that had been hidden there, a little bit of bone.

"That will be enough to do the trick," said Hunter's Daughter, as she put the bone on the ground and covered it with her blanket.

And then she started to sing a reviving song that had the power to bring injured people back to the land of the living. Quietly, she sang the song that her grandmother had taught her. After a few melodious passages, there was a lump under the blanket. She and Magpie looked under the blanket and could see a man, but the man was not breathing. He lay cold as stone.

So Hunter's Daughter continued to sing, a little softer, and a little softer, so as not to startle her father as he began to move. When he stood up, alive and strong, the buffalo people were amazed. They said to Hunter's Daughter, "Will you sing this song for us after every hunt? We will teach your people the buffalo dance, so that whenever you dance before the hunt, you will be assured a good result. Then you will sing this song for us, and we will all come back to live again."

How the World Was Spoiled

Hupa legends are complex and full of vivid characters. The Hupa Nation has a long, rich tradition of storytelling that is generally overlooked in mainstream Native American studies. Oftentimes, their storytelling deals with the interaction between humans and immortals to make a point or teach an important lesson.

Here is a legend about "how the world was spoiled," which is another way of telling how "death" came about. In the Hupa tradition, it is customary for a person who has touched a dead body to cover his or her head, and this legend explains a bit about that practice. The story was first recorded in writing in 1901, as told by McCann at the Hupa Nation:

Yimankyuwiñxoiyan and the two women who were to be his wives grew at Leldiñ. When the time was near for Indians to appear upon the earth the smoke which was a token of their coming was seen. It hung along on the mountains as far down as those which stand in the middle of the world. Yimankyuwiñxoiyan got lonesome and started to travel over the world. He went down this way through Hupa toward the north. When he had traveled nearly around the world he saw a handsome woman living there. He liked her. Finishing his journey he came back where he used to live and saw his wives and his child.

Then he went away to the world's edge toward the south where the handsome woman lived and became the father of a son. When the child was large enough to stand, his father told him to lie down back of the fire. Someone called out, "A Southfork man is running along from the north on the other side. He has the cover of the fire-pit on his head."

"Quick, take the boat over to him," Yimankyuwiñxoiyan said. He was surprised to hear the stranger asking, "Where is the one who lives here?"

"Why, what do you want?" they asked him. "Your child they have put in the ground still alive," said the messenger. Immediately Yimankyuwiñxoiyan put his hand under himself and got up. He went into the house and girded himself.

Picking up his child he put him in his sack and crossed over. He ran down Southfork creek to Leldiñ. There was no one to be seen walking about. He saw his former wives sitting facing each other. He went to that something (grave) which had been made. He dug out the child and put it by the fire. It ran into the grave again. He dug in out ten times and it ran back each time. It quite spoiled the world. People would never have died but for that. "Well, let it be that way," thought Yimankyuwiñxoiyan.

Then he started down toward Hupa after the Kixûnai who had fled. He went on foot following those who had gone in a boat. When he came down the hill to Djictañadiñ he found they had been gone some time. He ran on to the mouth of the Trinity. He was surprised to see from there that they were passing Kaikisdeke. He passed Natinoxoi Tcewilindiñ and at last ran down to the mouth of the Klamath. There he saw the Kixûnai dancing in a boat which was headed across the ocean. One of them said, "Way over there is walking the one who spoiled the world." "Wait," called Yimankyuwiñxoiyan, "only take my child." One of them took the child from him, and having painted it, put it into the boat. Then they went away.

Yimankyuwiñxoiyan tumbled about on the sand in his grief and cried. Then Smaller hawk, Cotton-tail, Jack-rabbit, Ground-squirrel, Pine-martin, Coyote, Wildcat, Wolf, Fox, Hawk, and Crow came to him. "Come dance, my grandchildren," said Yimankyuwiñxoiyan. And they danced. Then someone said to the others, "Way over there, that one who spoiled the world is leaving a dance." "Ye-he!" he exclaimed, "I wish something would happen to him." Yimankyuwiñxoiyan went back. "I wish I had left dances for them at other places," he thought.

He came back and arranged another dance. Some bears danced this time. He came back across Redwood creek and thought to go south. There he left two more dances. Then someone who was living way to the north said, "I wish something would happen to that one who did wrong." Finally he told TsoyoLtel to go and lie in the trail to tempt Yimankyuwiñxoiyan. She did as she was told. Yimankyuwiñxoiyan was surprised to see her lying there but he walked on by her toward the south. Yielding to temptation he returned to her. Immediately she caught him against her breast and went with him through the water back across the ocean. As often as he became unconscious she held his head above water for him to recover.

(Note: Hupa is sometimes spelled "Hoopa." The former refers to the people, the latter to the location of the Hupa Nation.)

The Seven Sisters

A story told by the Kiowa People in Wyoming and South Dakota, and by other tribes — a beautiful legend about the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades:

One day long ago a traveling party of the Kiowa People were crossing the great prairie and camped by a stream. Many of the Bear People lived nearby, and they smelled the Kiowa People. The Bear People were hungry, and some of the bear warriors went out to hunt the Kiowa People.

Seven young girls from the Kiowa camp were out gathering berries, up along the stream, far from the campsite. The Bears came upon them and growled to attack. The girls ran and ran, out across the open prairie, until they came to a large gray rock. They climbed onto the rock, but the bears began to climb the rock also.

The girls began to sing a prayer to the rock, asking it to protect them form the Bear People. No one had ever honored the rock before, and the rock agreed to help them. The rock, who had laid quietly for centuries, began to stand up and reach to the sky. The girls rose higher and higher as the rock stood up. The bear warriors began to sing to the bear gods, and the bears grew taller as the rock rose up.

The bears tried and tried to climb the rock as it grew steeper and higher, but their huge claws only split the rock face into thousands of strips as the rock grew up out of their reach. Pieces of rock were scraped and cut away by the thousands and fell in piles at the foot of the rock. The rock was cut and scarred on all of its sides as the bears fought to climb it.

At last, the bears gave up the hunt, and turned to go back to their own houses. They slowly returned to the original sizes. As the huge bears came back across the prairie, slowly becoming smaller, the Kiowas saw them and broke camp. They fled in fear, and looking back at the towering mountain of rock, they guessed that it must be the lodge of these giant bears. "Tso' Ai'," some People say today, or "Bears' Lodge."

The Kiowa girls were afraid, high up on the rock, and they saw their People break camp and leave them there, thinking the girls had all already been eaten by the bears.

The girls sang again, this time to the stars. The stars were happy to hear their song, and the stars came down and took the seven girls into the sky, the Seven Sisters, and each night they pass over Bears' Lodge and smile in gratitude to the rock spirit.

The Native Soul

It may seem like a strange concept, but many of us (Native Americans and First Nations/First Peoples) believe there is such a thing as the "Native soul." What that means is a bit difficult to explain in a clear way. Perhaps the best way to talk about the Native soul is to describe who we are in the innermost sense, what it is that binds us together as a people, despite our obvious diversity, scattering, and different languages. So, here are a few things that we all seem to share:

Keep us free. Like our winged brother and sisters, we don't do well in any form of captivity, including "reservations." It is in our nature to be free, in the widest possible sense. Now, it's obvious that the kind of freedom we once experienced will never return. We know that and we are adapting as best as we can. However, a happy Native is a free Native, always.

Keep us close to the Mother. We do not do well when we are away from our Mother, Nature, for any period of time. In fact, we can get downright cranky and hard to live with. Our connection with the Mother is very strong, and our belief in Her power and ability to teach us lies deep within our soul. A happy Native is a Native who lives very close to Nature. The closer, the better.

We are not curiosities. For a variety of social reasons, our people have run the gamut of opinions from the Europeans who share our land. We've been seen as savages, troublemakers, war-mongers, drunkards, radicals, and every other conceivable stereotype. Today, it seems as though we are looked upon as curiosities, especially when it comes to our spiritual paths and practices. America is filled with charlatans and sellers of our most sacred rituals and artifacts. We do not want to be viewed as curiosities. Like all others, we want to be seen for who we are. Do not romanticize us, please.

Give us respect. Our culture is one of deep respect for each other, the community, our brothers and sisters outside the community, and the Mother. We give this respect easily and willingly. It is a part of our upbringing and a vital part of our belief system. Can we not also be respected in return?

Give us quiet and solitude. We value peaceful quiet and alone time. This is a way of learning in our culture, a way of "listening to the heart," which is how we stay close to our path throughout life. No, we are not indifferent, antisocial, or stand-offish. We just need our periods of solitude to listen to our hearts and learn from Grandfather and Mother. It is who we are, by nature.

Do not lie to us. Our culture is based on truth. Our word is our bond (or should be). We do not speak easily or foolishly, just to be heard. Do not tell us lies, lest

you lose our respect forever. Speak truthfully, honestly, and by listening to your heart and you will be rewarded with friendship and loyalty for a lifetime.

Do not play with our ceremonies, sacred artifacts, or spiritual ways. We have no problem helping others along our spiritual path, but never, never deal with them foolishly or for profit. These things lie at the very heart of our culture and help make us who we are. Do not practice our ceremonies unless you have been "brought into the circle" by us. Do not peddle our knowledge or sacred objects. Show us the respect to never denigrate those things that we most value.

Do not tell us who we are. We know who we are, and we know it well. We may not express this knowledge in elegant terms. We may not even talk much about it. But, inside, we know who we are and have always known. Don't try to tell us that we "are," or "should" be like you, or anyone else. This is a point of dignity and respect that we treasure. Our individuality is very important to us. The trendy term these days is, "Native pride," which expresses the concept well enough.

Laugh. Yes, we love to laugh. We love life. The way to a Native's heart is through respect, patience, and a hearty, happy outlook on life. This, too, is who we are.

The Lament of Chief Plenty Coups

The lament of Chief Plenty Coups, a Crow. These heart-rending words are a powerful reminder of the culture-shattering events of his lifetime:

The ground on which we stand is sacred ground. It is the dust and blood of our ancestors. On these plains the Great White Father in Washington sent his soldiers armed with long knives and rifles to slay the Indian. Many of them sleep on yonder hill where Pahaska, White Chief of the Long Hair [General Custer], so bravely fought and fell.

A few more passing suns will see us here no more, and our dust and bones will mingle with the same prairies. I see as in a vision the dying spark of our council fires, the ashes cold and white. I see no longer the curling smoke rising from our lodge poles. I hear no longer the songs of the women as they prepare the meal.

The antelope have gone; the buffalo wallows are empty. Only the wail of the coyote is heard. The white man's medicine is stronger than ours; his iron horse [the railroad] rushes over the buffalo trail. He talks to us through his "whispering spirit" [the telephone].

We are like birds with a broken wing. My heart is cold within me. My eyes are growing dim - I am old.

Nature – Our Mother

These are the words of Kahgegagahbowh (George Copway), an Ojibwe, on our relationship with the Mother (Nature) and who makes the real rules by which a Native guides his or her path, where the real strength of our lives is drawn, and where the real lessons are taught and learned:

I was born in Nature's wide domain. The trees were all that sheltered my infant limbs, the blue heavens all that covered me. I am one of Nature's children. I have always admired her. She shall be my glory. Her features, her robes, and the wreath about her brow, the seasons, her stately oaks, and the evergreen, her hair, ringlets of earth, all contribute to my enduring love of her.

And wherever I see her, emotions of pleasure roll in my breast, and swell and burst like waves on the shores of the ocean, in prayer and praise to Him who has placed me in her hand. It is thought great to be born in palaces, surrounded with wealth, but to be born in Nature's wide domain is greater still!

I have much more glory in this birthplace, with the broad canopy of heaven above me and the giant arms of the forest trees for my shelter, than to be born in palaces of marble, studded with pillars of gold. Nature will be Nature still, while palaces shall decay and fall in ruins.

Yes, Niagara will be Niagara a thousand years hence. The rainbow, a wreath over her brow, shall continue as long as the sun, and the flowering of the river, while the work of art, however carefully protected and preserved, shall fade and crumble into dust!

Native Stereotypes

The following information is from an excellent website, **Understanding Prejudice** *(understandingprejudice.org), which teaches us how to deal with common stereotypes and pervasive prejudice. This is a series of suggestions in a "do" and "do not" format that deal especially with Native American stereotypes and how they can be avoided in the classroom and elsewhere.*

This website and the information below is an excellent starting resource for teaching our young ones about sensitivity to the Native American cultures. Unfortunately, it is a bit flawed itself in that these points insist on using the term "Indian" when, in fact, "Native American" or "First Nations" would be more appropriate. I have added the more acceptable (to us) term where it was needed. You will see the added term in parentheses. Just count the number of insertions and you will understand how very easy it is to stereotype Native Americans, even when the intentions are good:

The following checklist is based in part on recommendations from the Council on Interracial Books for Children:

Do not equate Indians (Native Americans) with "things." For example, if alphabet cards say, "A is for apple, B is for ball, …. I is for Indian," pick a different word so that Indian (Native American) people are not presented as objects.

Do not speak of Native Americans exclusively in past tense. There are nearly one million Native people in the U.S. today, yet many books and videos still have titles such as *How the Indians Lived*.

Do not perpetuate the myth that a few Europeans defeated thousands of Indians (Native Americans) in battle. Historians say the number killed in battle was relatively small; what really defeated Native Americans were European diseases from which they had no immunity.

Do not let children imitate Indians (Native Americans) with stereotypes such as one-word sentences ("Ugh," "How"), Hollywood-style grammar ("Me heep big hungry"), or gestures (e.g., war whoops and tomahawk chops).

Do not encourage children to dress up as Indians (Native Americans) for Halloween. Even when well-intentioned, costumes involving imitation feathers, face paint, headdresses, and buckskin are disrespectful of traditional Native dress (which many Indians (Native Americans) consider honorable or even sacred).

Do not divide Indians (Native Americans) and non-Indians into "us" and "them." Instead, explain that Indians (Native Americans) were the first Americans and that today Indians (Native Americans) are American citizens with the same rights as all Americans.

Do highlight the Native American philosophy of respect for every form of life and for living in harmony with nature.

Do discuss a variety of Indian (Native American) nations, such as Hopi, Lakota, and Navajo, rather than lumping all Native Americans together. Explain that each nation has its own name, language, and culture.

Do challenge TV and movie stereotypes of Native Americans. Discuss the meaning of stereotypes and help children understand that Native Americans were no more savage than others who fought to defend their homes and community.

Do understand that Native American children are not always aware of their heritage. Native children sometimes know more about "TV Indians" than about their own heritage, and they should not be singled out to provide a Native perspective or asked to recount Native history.

A Hard Heart at Christmas

It's a shame that these hurtful words were found flowing through the Internet during a season that should have been one of unity and understanding, a time of the year that is supposed to bring us all together as one.

There is no point in specifically attributing this to the individual source, except to say that it was first discovered on a personal blog just a few days before Christmas, 2006. It's enough to read the misguided thoughts and wonder about the kind of insensitivity that still clouds so many lives. Hopefully, we can all learn more tolerance and understanding by reading the words of those whose hearts and minds are still hardened against us for reasons that are completely unfathomable. I have made no alterations whatsoever to the text:

TOP TEN WAYS THINGS WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF SANTA WAS NATIVE AMERICAN:

At bed time, kids would leave dry-meat and bannock for the big guy.

He would wear a red turtleneck to hide his hickeys.

Santa's new moccasins are made out of Dasher.

His name would be "Santa Bear Claws" instead of "Santa Claus".

There would be a bingo marker under every tree.

His elves would never show up for work on Friday's and sometimes on Monday's too.

His sleigh would need a boost every other province.

His outfit would consist of a red flannel ribbon shirt, with matching leggings, moccasins and a beaded black belt with matching beaded rimmed hat, all to match his over-sized gift bag. Underneath it all would be a beaded thong with a small delicate plume attached to the back.

Indian preference hiring would require you to hire all Crees to fit in those teeny tiny elf outfits.

According to Indian time, our gifts would arrive in February.

Note

It has always been my intention to make this book an instrument of learning, not of politics or disharmony. I gave a great deal of thought to this article since it strays from the main purpose of the book. However, I simply could not ignore the words. Hopefully, they will also be a path of learning for those whose minds still remain open to the Native commitment to respect and unity.

Finally, for those who are familiar with the differences in how English is spoken between the United States and Canada, the genesis of this misguided trinket should be obvious.

A Native Christmas

It is an essential part of the Red Path to accept all religions and beliefs, so long as they bring no harm to others or the Mother. If you were to take a cross-section of our culture, you would find believers in virtually all religions that have come to our shores. Many of our people are Christians, which makes this time of year very special to them and, by extension, to the rest of our community.

I am not a Christian, although I was sent to Christian schools when I was young. Many of my Native friends are devoted Christians and find no contradiction between their adopted faith and our traditional cultural beliefs. Like them, I find no contradiction. This world view is very much in the spirit of the Red Path and an essential part of our commitment to respect and honor all people and their views, no matter how much they may diverge from our own. It often comes as a surprise to non-Natives that so many of us have adopted a wide variety of religious beliefs and that we can still live in harmony with each other. However, we see no conflict in this way of life. In fact, we see this diversity as an important part of our spiritual path. It opens up great opportunities to learn from each other and discover new ways that the Great Spirit expresses Himself through each of us. We believe that, ultimately, we all share the same Creator or Creative Spirit. How we honor the Great Spirit is a matter of individual choice.

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. To some, he was the Son of God and the Savior of us all. To others, he was a wise Elder of tremendous faith and goodness. I have yet to meet a true Native who did not accept Jesus as an extraordinary individual, if not much more. For us, celebrating his birth is honoring him in the way we would honor the most revered of our Elders — often called "Ancient Ones" in our culture. His words are the words of an unsurpassed Elder, and his life was lived straight and true, something that we all strive to accomplish. His words also speak directly to our hearts, no matter where our spiritual path leads us.

Beyond the religious aspects of Christmas, it is a season of giving and sharing. That, too, is very much in our collective spirit and consciousness. We not only honor Jesus but each other with gifts, gatherings, and happiness. Perhaps we might choose to celebrate in a different way from the typical American or Canadian traditions, but we, too, honor the spirit of Christmas and the good will that it represents. It is an important gathering time that crosses and re-crosses our culture in all directions.

The First Fire

This Cowichan legend tells us how we first acquired fire. Like so many of our legends, it also has a strong moral component that is impossible to overlook:

Our fathers tell us that very long ago our people did not know the use of fire. They had no need for fire to warm themselves because they lived in a warm country. They ate their meats raw or dried by the sun. But after a while their climate grew colder. They had to build houses for shelter and they wished for something to warm their homes.

One time when a number of them were seated eating an animal they had just found in one of their pits, a pretty bird came and fluttered above their heads. It seemed to be either watching them or looking for a share in the meat. Seeing the bird flying about, some people tried to kill it. Others, more kind, said, "Little bird, what do you want?"

"I know your needs," the bird replied, "and I have come to you, bringing the blessings of fire."

"What is fire?" asked all of them.

"Do you see that little flame on my tail?" asked the bird.

"Yes," all answered.

"Well, that is fire. Today each of you must gather a small bunch of pitch wood. With it you can get fire from the flame on my tail. Tomorrow morning I will come here early. Every one of you will meet me here, bringing your pitch wood with you."

Early next morning all arrived at the chosen place, where the bird was awaiting their coming.

"Have you brought your pitch wood?" asked the bird.

'Yes," replied all of the people.

Well, then," said the bird, "I am ready. But before I go, let me tell you the rules. None of you can obtain my fire unless you obey the rules. You must be persevering and you must do good deeds. You must strive for the fire in order that you may think more of it. And none need to expect to get it who has not done some good deed. Whoever comes up with me," continued the bird, "and puts his pitch wood on my tail, he will have the fire. Are you all ready?"

"Yes," replied everyone.

Away flew the bird, followed by all the people, young and old, men and women and children. Helter-skelter they ran, over rocks and fallen timber, through swamp and stream, over prairies and through forests. Some of them got hurt. Others peeled their shins as they fell off the rocks and stumbled over the logs. Many people splashed through mud and water. Others were badly scratched and had their clothes torn among the bushes. Many turned and went home, saying, "Anything so full of danger is not worth trying for." Other people became so weary they gave up. But the bird kept on.

At last a man came up to it, saying, "Pretty bird, give me your fire. I have kept up with you and I have never done anything bad."

"That may be true," replied the bird. "But you cannot have my fire because you are too selfish. You care for nobody as long as you yourself are right."

So away flew the bird.

After a while another man came up, saying, "Pretty bird, give me your fire. I have always been good and kind."

"Perhaps you have been," answered the bird. "But you cannot have my fire because you stole your neighbor's wife."

So the bird flew away again. By this time, few people followed it, most of them having given up the chase.

At last the bird came to where a woman was taking care of a poor, sick old man. It flew straight to her and said, "Bring your pitch wood here and get the fire."

"Oh, no," said the woman. "I cannot do so because I have done nothing to deserve it. What I am doing is only my duty"

"Take the fire," said the bird. "You are welcome to it. It is yours, for you are always doing good and thinking it only your duty. Take the fire and share it with the other people."

So the woman put her pitch wood on the bird's tail and got the fire. Then she gave some to all the others, and people have never since been without it. Fire has cooked their food and warmed their lodges. That is how, in the long, long ago, the Cowichan first got fire.

A Hopi Creation Legend

This legend describes how the Hopi came into existence in this world. It's origin, like so many of our other legends, has been lost long ago. However, the theme of the story is much like many other creation tales that are told across so many of our Nations. As is typical of these stories, the unique and close relationship of our people with the Mother and the spiritual world are retold in vivid and imaginative detail. It also gives us insight into the origins of many of the attributes we now associate with traditional Hopi existence:

When the world was new, the ancient people and the ancient creatures did not live on the top of the earth. They lived under it. All was darkness, all was blackness, above the earth as well as below it. There were four worlds: this one on top of the earth, and below it three cave worlds, one below the other. None of the cave worlds was large enough for all the people and the creatures.

The people increased so fast in the lowest cave world that they crowded it. They were poor and did not know where to turn in the blackness. When they moved, they jostled one another. The cave was filled with the filth of the people who lived in it. No one could turn to spit without spitting on another. The people filled the place with their complaints and with their expressions of disgust.

Some people said, "It is not good for us to live in this way."

"How can it be made better?" one man asked.

"Let it be tried and seen!" answered another.

Two Brothers, one older and one younger, spoke to the chiefs of the people in the cave world, "Yes, let it be tried and seen. Then it shall be well. By our wills it shall be well."

The Two Brothers pierced the roofs of the caves and descended to the lowest world, where people lived. The Two Brothers sowed one plant after another, hoping that one of them would grow up to the opening through which they themselves had descended and yet would have the strength to bear the weight of men and creatures. These, the Two Brothers hoped, might climb up the plant into the second cave world. One of these plants was a cane.

At last, after many trials, the cane became so tall that it grew through the opening in the roof, and it was so strong that men could climb to its top. It was jointed so that it was like a ladder, easily ascended. Ever since then, the cane has grown in joints as we see it today along the Colorado River.

Up this cane many people and beings climbed to the second cave world. When a

part of them had climbed out, they feared that that cave also would be too small. It was so dark that they could not see how large it was. So, they shook the ladder and caused those who were coming up it to fall back. Then they pulled the ladder out. It is said that those who were left came out of the lowest cave later. They are our brothers west of us.

After a long time the second cave became filled with men and beings, as the first had been. Complaining and wrangling were heard as in the beginning. Again the cane was placed under the roof vent, and once more men and beings entered the upper cave world. Again, those who were slow to climb out were shaken back or left behind. Though larger, the third cave was as dark as the first and second. The Two Brothers found fire. Torches were set ablaze, and by their light men built their huts and kivas, or traveled from place to place.

While people and the beings lived in this third cave world, times of evil came to them. Women became so crazed that they neglected all things for the dance. They even forgot their babies. Wives became mixed with wives, so that husbands did not know their own from others. At that time there was no day, only night, black night.

Throughout this night, women danced in the kivas, ceasing only to sleep. So the fathers had to be the mothers of the little ones. When these little ones cried from hunger, the fathers carried them to the kivas, where the women were dancing. Hearing their cries, the mothers came and nursed them, and then went back to their dancing. Again the fathers took care of the children.

These troubles caused people to long for the light and to seek again an escape from darkness. They climbed to the fourth world, which was this world. But it, too, was in darkness, for the earth was closed in by the sky, just as the cave worlds had been closed in by their roofs. Men went from their lodges and worked by the light of torches and fires. They found the tracks of only one being, the single ruler of the unpeopled world, the tracks of Corpse Demon or Death. The people tried to follow these tracks, which led eastward. But the world was damp and dark, and people did not know what to do in the darkness. The waters seemed to surround them, and the tracks seemed to lead out into the waters.

With the people were five beings that had come forth with them from the cave worlds: Spider, Vulture, Swallow, Coyote, and Locust. The people and these beings consulted together, trying to think of some way of making light. Many, many attempts were made, but without success. Spider was asked to try first. She spun a mantle of pure white cotton. It gave some light but not enough. Spider therefore became our grandmother.

Then the people obtained and prepared a very white deerskin that had not been pierced in any spot. From this they made a shield case, which they painted with turquoise paint. It shed forth such brilliant light that it lighted the whole world. It

made the light from the cotton mantle look faded. So the people sent the shield-light to the east, where it became the moon.

Down in the cave world, Coyote had stolen a jar that was very heavy, so very heavy that he grew weary of carrying it. He decided to leave it behind, but he was curious to see what it contained. Now that light had taken the place of darkness, he opened the jar. From it, many shining fragments and sparks flew out and upward, singeing his face as they passed him. That is why the coyote has a black face to this day. The shining fragments and sparks flew up to the sky and became stars. By these lights the people found that the world was indeed very small and surrounded by waters, which made it damp. The people appealed to Vulture for help. He spread his wings and fanned the waters, which flowed away to the east and to the west until mountains began to appear.

Across the mountains the Two Brothers cut channels. Water rushed through the channels, and wore their courses deeper and deeper. Thus the great canyons and valleys of the world were formed. The waters have kept on flowing and flowing for ages. The world has grown drier, and continues to grow drier and drier.

Now that there was light, the people easily followed the tracks of Death eastward over the new land that was appearing. Hence, Death is our greatest father and master. We followed his tracks when we left the cave worlds, and he was the only being that awaited us on the great world of waters where this world is now.

Although all the water had flowed away, the people found the earth soft and damp. That is why we can see today the tracks of men and of many strange creatures between the place toward the west and the place where we came from the cave world.

Since the days of the first people, the earth has been changed to stone, and all the tracks have been preserved as they were when they were first made. When people had followed in the tracks of Corpse Demon but a short distance, they overtook him. Among them were two little girls. One was the beautiful daughter of a great priest. The other was the child of somebody-or-other. She was not beautiful, and she was jealous of the little beauty. With the aid of Corpse Demon the jealous girl caused the death of the other child. This was the first death.

When people saw that the girl slept and could not be awakened, that she grew cold and that her heart had stopped beating, her father, the great priest, grew angry.

"Who has caused my daughter to die?" he cried loudly.

But the people only looked at each other.

"I will make a ball of sacred meal," said the priest. "I will throw it into the air, and when it falls it will strike someone on the head. The one it will strike, I shall know as the one whose magic and evil art have brought my tragedy upon me."

The priest made a ball of sacred flour and pollen and threw it into the air. When it fell, it struck the head of the jealous little girl, the daughter of somebody-or-other. Then the priest exclaimed, "So you have caused this thing! You have caused the death of my daughter."

He called a council of the people, and they tried the girl. They would have killed her if she had not cried for mercy and a little time. She begged the priest and his people to return to the hole they had all come out of and look down it.

"If you still wish to destroy me, after you have looked into the hole," she said, "I will die willingly."

So the people were persuaded to return to the hole leading from the cave world. When they looked down, they saw plains of beautiful flowers in a land of everlasting summer and fruitfulness. And they saw the beautiful little girl, the priest's daughter, wandering among the flowers. She was so happy that she paid no attention to the people. She seemed to have no desire to return to this world.

"Look!" said the girl who had caused her death. "Thus it shall be with all the children of men."

"When we die," the people said to each other, "we will return to the world we have come from. There we shall be happy. Why should we fear to die? Why should we resent death?"

So they did not kill the little girl. Her children became the powerful wizards and witches of the world, who increased in numbers as people increased. Her children still live and still have wonderful and dreadful powers.

Then the people journeyed still farther eastward. As they went, they discovered Locust in their midst.

"Where did you come from?" they asked.

"I came out with you and the other beings," he replied.

"Why did you come with us on our journey?" they asked.

"So that I might be useful," replied Locust. But the people, thinking that he could not be useful, said to him, "You must return to the place you came from."

But Locust would not obey them. Then the people became so angry at him that they ran arrows through him, even through his heart. All the blood oozed out of

his body and he died. After a long time he came to life again and ran about, looking as he had looked before, except that he was black.

The people said to one another, "Locust lives again, although we have pierced him through and through. Now he shall indeed be useful and shall journey with us. Who besides Locust has this wonderful power of renewing his life? He must possess the medicine for the renewal of the lives of others. He shall become the medicine of mortal wounds and of war."

So, today the locust is at first white, as was the first locust that came forth with the ancients. Like him, the locust dies, and after he has been dead a long time, he comes to life again as black. He is our father, too. Having his medicine, we are the greatest of men. The locust medicine still heals mortal wounds.

After the ancient people had journeyed a long distance, they became very hungry.

In their hurry to get away from the lower cave world, they had forgotten to bring seed. After they had done much lamenting, the Spirit of Dew sent the Swallow back to bring the seed of corn and of other foods. When Swallow returned, the Spirit of Dew planted the seed in the ground and chanted prayers to it. Through the power of these prayers, the corn grew and ripened in a single day.

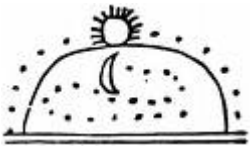
So for a long time, as the people continued their journey, they carried only enough seed for a day's planting. They depended upon the Spirit of Dew to raise for them in a single day an abundance of corn and other foods. To the Corn Clan, he gave this seed, and for a long time they were able to raise enough corn for their needs in a very short time.

But the powers of the witches and wizards made the time for raising foods grow longer and longer. Now, sometimes, our corn does not have time to grow old and ripen in the ear, and our other foods do not ripen. If it had not been for the children of the little girl whom the ancient people let live, even now we would not need to watch our cornfields whole summers through, and we would not have to carry heavy packs of food on our journeys.

As the ancient people traveled on, the children of the little girl tried their powers and caused other troubles. These mischief-makers stirred up people who had come out of the cave worlds before our ancients had come. They made war upon our ancients. The wars made it necessary for the people to build houses whenever they stopped traveling. They built their houses on high mountains reached by only one trail, or in caves with but one path leading to them, or in the sides of deep canyons. Only in such places could they sleep in peace.

Only a small number of people were able to climb up from their secret hiding places and emerge into the Fourth World.

Legends reveal the Grand Canyon is where these people emerged. From there they began their search for the homes the Two Brothers intended for them. These few were the Hopi Indians that now live on the Three Mesas of northeastern Arizona.



The Vanishing Native

We are a vanishing culture, a disappearing treasure, which is being steadily absorbed into the huge sea of immigrants who settled in North America over the past few hundred years. With the various forms of enforced resettlement and the destruction of our traditional way of life, this appears to be our fate. We are quickly (and almost completely) becoming an unidentified ripple in the mainstream melting-pot societies of the United States and Canada. Our young ones, as they grow, typically do not follow the old ways but become part of the bigger, more powerful society, in an effort to live a prosperous and fulfilling life as they have come to learn about it in our modern schools, through the media, and among their peers.

We are fast becoming a vanished civilization as true Native Americans and First Nations peoples. Our many languages are dead or dying, unwritten and unspoken, for the most part. Our traditional way of passing on knowledge, from Elder to Elder, does not work in a scattered and fragmented society. Virtually none of our people had an alphabet or written language upon which they could rely. This technology was not needed in our customary way of life. Now, we find that much of our old wisdom and practices have been lost because the practice of oral tradition cannot keep up with the demands of modern society and the changes that have so radically impacted our recent generations.

In time, perhaps in a relatively short period of time, the Native American and First Nations culture may be indistinguishable from the broad society in which we now exist. This is not necessarily a bad situation, depending upon what can be saved and how quickly action can be taken. Many of our Elders predicted a time when the Red Path would join with the paths of the other three races in peace and harmony. If we are approaching such a time, if we are nearing an epoch of peace and understanding, then the integration of our culture could be to the benefit of all. If not, if we continue on our war-like path, it would be a tragedy to lose so many ancient and valued traditions.

Most of our Nations are very old and well-settled. For example, my people, the Cowichan, established their homeland as far back as 10,000 BCE, according to archaeological research done in the late 1990s (*Those Who Fell From The Sky*, D.P. Marshall, 1999:Cowichan Tribes). It was only since the time of the European settlement of North America that our culture was uprooted, our traditional homelands altered, taken away, or abandoned, and the long oral histories began to be lost forever. This is a heart-breaking story that has been repeated across our many Nations, both Canadian and American, often to the point that the language and traditions of a particular Nation have been lost altogether. It now

seems as though we have run out of time in our efforts to protect these ancient and honored cultural treasures.

The good news is that there is a recognizable resurgence of interest in our traditions and culture, and it is happening at a time when technology allows us to permanently record and disseminate information easily and without great expense. However, much help is needed to accomplish the enormous task because our Nations are so many and so varied. Generations of our Elders have passed on, without the opportunity to leave us with their learning. The loses are painful and, worse, impossible to recapture. It is true that there are pockets of cultural traditions across the United States and Canada that carry on with the old ways but these, too, are quickly dwindling. Our time is short.

In the final analysis, it is the ancient wisdom of our culture that must be saved. Our traditions of respect, living close to the Mother, peacefulness, and our complete integration into our various and different environments bring forth lessons that could be of great benefit to the larger society in which we live. It would be a tragedy if the spiritual teachings of such ancient and truly original cultures were to be lost forever. Hopefully, our larger society will find a renewed interest in how we have lived so well for so long, bringing with us only our simple beliefs and strong commitment to each other and the Great Spirit who watches over us all.

A single individual strongly committed to saving just a small piece of our history and traditions, can make an enormous difference to us all. Perhaps you will be one of the saviors of our culture.

Happy Hunting Ground

It is a well-worn and usually misunderstood concept: the "happy hunting ground." Unfortunately, it has taken on many meanings that were never intended and it's even used to poke fun at us as Native Americans and First Peoples. Yet, the idea has lasting and historic roots that reflect a much deeper meaning than the words convey in modern society. It was but one of many Native visions of an afterlife that brought the individual ever closer to the Great Spirit.

We generally attribute this phrase to the Sioux, whose beliefs included the concept that one who lived a good life would cross over into a realm where their spirit would be free to hunt and where Mother would provide all that would be needed. In the happy hunting ground, animals would not flee, nothing would be taken that could not be used, there would be no interference to our traditional way of life, and peace among all people would be pervasive. All of this was conditioned on a life well-lived and an honorable death. In other words, the concept of the "happy hunting ground" was another way of describing an afterlife that suited the honor of the individual who crossed over. Sounds a lot like the Christian concept of heaven, doesn't it?

The most well-known and clearly documented use of the phrase "happy hunting ground" has traditionally been attributed to Many Horses, an Ogallala Sioux and close friend of Sitting Bull. Many Horses was deeply involved in the 1890 Ghost Dance ritual held at Standing Rock Reservation, undertaken in an effort to drive away Federal soldiers who were camped on Native ground and hostile to our people. When the Ghost Dance did not succeed in ridding the land of the soldiers, Many Horses brought the community together and said these words:

I will follow the white man's trail. I will make him my friend, but I will not bend my back to his burdens. I will be cunning as a coyote. I will ask him to help me understand his ways, then I will prepare the way for my children. Maybe they will outrun the white man in his own shoes. There are but two ways for us. One leads to hunger and death, the other leads to where the poor white man lives. Beyond is the happy hunting ground where the white man cannot go.

From Many Horses point of view, these were desperate times for his community. Although there had been many efforts to make peace between the Natives and soldiers, nothing but bloodshed and bad will ensued. Still, the concept of the "happy hunting ground" lived on, despite the many misinterpretations it has gathered over the years.

Hupa Brush Dance

The Hupa Brush Dance, used to help cure the ill, was once an important ceremony for this West Coast Nation. In 1901, the last living member of the Nation to perform the Brush Dance gave her oral tradition about its meaning and practice. Fortunately, the story was recorded and preserved:

Preparing for the ceremony. I always get up at dawn. I go to the south corner of the house and rap and call, then I do the same at the north corner, and last at the west corner. I do this to notify the people of the underworld that they must give back the soul of the sick person who is to be treated.

Meaning and history of the ceremony. In the middle of the world, there lived a woman with her granddaughter. After a time the granddaughter became pregnant. "Hei," exclaimed the grandmother, "it looks as if the Indians were about to appear," she said. "Their smoke is everywhere."

The baby contracted some sort of sickness from its mother before its birth. The child was born.

"What shall we steam the baby with?" thought the grandmother. "You must go out and try to find the medicine," she told the granddaughter. She went out and looked over the world. She was surprised to see something standing toward the southeast. Then she saw it was the herb, and going to it she dug it out. It was wild ginger. Placing it in a basket, she put it under the baby and steamed (the baby) with it. It was then evening. At dawn she noticed the baby was feeling around in her armpit.

The old woman went out. When it was light, she was surprised to see pitch sticks lying there. She carried two of them into the house. Having lighted them in the fire, she waved them over the baby. When it was broad daylight she stopped. "Hei," she thought, "Indians are soon to come. It may be their babies will take sick from them. They will think about us. With what shall we make them think about us?" "Oh, yes," she thought, "one night will intervene between the dances. That is the way they will do it. There will not be one medicine only," she thought.

Then she told her granddaughter again, "Go out and look for an herb." She went out again to look for it. She looked everywhere in vain. As she looked toward the east she saw Mount Shasta standing there. She started toward it and when she came near, she saw a basket-cup floating at its base. She looked into the cup but saw nothing in it. There was not even a leaf, which she could put into the baby's mouth.

She walked along after it. She turned her eyes away and when she looked again the cup was gone. She saw it floating by Kitokût. She looked into it but there was nothing there. "I wonder why I can't find the medicine which I am to put into the baby's mouth?" she thought.

Again she missed the cup. She saw it floating by Kilaigyadiñ. It had floated by her. When she came where it was, she looked into it again. She looked away again and it was gone. She found it floating by Bluff creek. She went to it and looked into it. Again it disappeared and reappeared in a fog above Weitchpec. "Where am I to find that medicine?" she thought.

When she looked away again it was floating around below Weitchpec. She looked into it but there was no medicine in it. Again she looked away and the cup floated down the middle of the river. She saw it a little above Tcexoltcwediñ below the rock that stands in the water. Again she looked into it in vain. The cup did the same thing again. It went down the middle of the river and she followed it. Below Cappel it stopped until she came up and looked into it. There was nothing in it. It did that way again. It floated right down the middle of the river. She went after it. She was surprised to find it at Pecwan creek. She came up and looked into it. There was nothing in it. "Where am I going to find that medicine?" she thought. And then it did that again. It floated right down the middle of the river. She went after it. When she came to the mouth of the Klamath River she saw it floating across to the north. "Hei!" she thought. When she turned her head slowly about, the tears fell. "How can I find that medicine?" she thought.

When she looked for it again, it floated back. Then she went along the shore toward the south. The cup came back and floated along beside her. South of Redwood Creek she came down to the beach. The cup floated back to her. She went along again and the cup floated after her. At Fresh water Lagoon she again came down to the beach. She saw the cup was floating across the ocean toward the west, but it came back to her as if it had been shot from a bow. She looked into it. There was nothing in it.

She was surprised to see a house standing in the distance toward the east. "I will go there," she thought. She went to the house and went in. She saw an old woman sitting there. "You can't find that medicine anywhere," the old woman told her. "Day before yesterday it came into my head. This is what they said of you: This way her child dies. In vain she will look for it.' There in the corner stands your cup."

Then the old woman took the cup and held it up to the sky. Something fell into it. She was holding it up, pointing crosswise. She gave it to her saying, "Take it along and put it into your baby's mouth."

Directions for the ceremony. When I get through speaking, I bathe the child with the medicine. In the morning I bathe it all over. I always leave the medicine there.

In the woods I always set up two forked sticks on each side. Then I place the pitch sticks crosswise on them. I put four stones along side. I put pitch sticks and incense root on these stones. When there are good coals, I put the incense roots into the fire. I always put the stones back from the fire. I do not drop the forked sticks just anyway. I always lay them down carefully. I tie up the pitch sticks.

I do not have my face white (unpainted). I have my face painted black. I paint my wrists, my shoulders, my ankles, my thighs, and my breast. I tie up my hair with tseûk. I do not wear dirty things. I wear only good things. I take along all the utensils; I do not leave any of them for the one over whom I wave the fire.

A Native View of New Year

The celebration of New Year on January first of each year is not part of our Native tradition. However, we have adopted the Holiday because of its importance to the larger society in which we live and because of its powerful and symbolic meaning.

Our non-Native brothers and sisters typically see January first as a time of both celebration and hope. It is a time of optimism and looking forward. It is also a time of reflection upon the past twelve months. As Natives, we share this view of the holiday. We see the larger society coming together for the celebration of life and to combine their spirits in the hope of a better future.

In our tradition, there are many ceremonies that are designed to honor the spirit of renewal. These range from the practical, like ceremonies to promote a healthy crop or a good hunt, to the more spiritual, often practiced privately or in small groups. We view the process of renewal as critical to our survival and always in the loving hands of the Mother. Without the renewal we see all around us, there would be no culture to celebrate. On January first, we see this spirit on a grand scale.

We also celebrate new beginnings in many different ways. These are times of transformation and change, representing stages in which growth and maturity are often made especially clear to us. The celebration of New Year reminds us of this vital aspect in the infinite circle of life.

What we also find intriguing and wonderful about the celebration of New Year is how it cascades around our globe, walking through time zones and cultures, binding us all together in a way that is not seen often enough. For this bringing-together, we also celebrate. For a short moment, it seems as though we are all one, which is one of the most ancient and profound teachings of our Elders.

So, to all my friends, Native and non-Native, I wish you the best of the New Year celebration. I hope that you find renewal and new beginnings that bring you the best of what is to come.

First Man and First Woman

This is a Navajo legend about the First Man and First Woman. It is very similar to many other Native tales about the appearance of the first people. In fact, it is remarkable to find the similarities among these various "first people" legends, despite the fact that many, if not most, of these Nations had no contact with each other until relatively recent times. This tale was first recorded by Washington Matthews in 1897.

The first people came up through three worlds and settled in the fourth world. They had been driven from each successive world because they had quarreled with one another and committed adultery. In previous worlds they found no other people like themselves. But, in the fourth world, they found the Kisani or Pueblo people.

The surface of the fourth world was mixed with black and white, and the sky was mostly blue and black. There was no sun, no moon, no stars, but there were four great snow-covered peaks on the horizon in each of the cardinal directions.

Late in the autumn the first people heard in the east the distant sound of a great voice calling. They listened and waited, and soon heard the voice nearer and louder than before. Once more they listened and heard it louder still, very near. A moment later, four mysterious beings appeared. These were White Body, god of this world; Blue Body, the sprinkler; Yellow Body; and Black Body, the god of fire.

Using signs but without speaking, the gods tried to instruct the people, but they were not understood. When the gods had gone, the people discussed their mysterious visit and tried without success to figure out the signs. The gods appeared on four days in succession and attempted to communicate through signs, but their efforts came to nothing.

On the fourth day when the other gods departed, Black Body remained behind and spoke to the people in their own language: "You do not seem to understand our signs, so I must tell you what they mean. We want to make people who look more like us. You have bodies like ours, but you have the teeth, the feet, and the claws of beasts and insects. The new humans will have hands and feet like ours. Also, you are unclean and you smell bad. We will come back in twelve days. Be clean when we return."

On the morning of the twelfth day, the people washed themselves well. Then the women dried their skin with yellow cornmeal, the men with white cornmeal.

Soon they heard the distant call, shouted four times, of the approaching gods. When the gods appeared, Blue Body and Black Body each carried sacred buckskin. White Body carried two ears of corn, one yellow, one white, each completely covered with grains.

The gods laid one buckskin on the ground with the head to the west, and on this they placed the two ears of corn with their tips to the east. Over the corn they spread the other buckskin with its head to the east. Under the white ear they put the feather of a white eagle; under the yellow ear the feather of a yellow eagle. Then they told the people to stand back and allow the wind to enter. Between the skins, the white wind blew from the east and the yellow wind from the west.

While the wind was blowing, eight of the gods, the Mirage People, came and walked around the objects on the ground four times. As they walked, the eagle feathers, whose tips protruded from the buckskins, were seen to move. When the Mirage People had finished their walk, the upper buckskin was lifted. The ears of corn had disappeared and a man and a woman lay in their place.

The white ear of corn had become the man, the yellow ear the woman, First Man and First Woman. It was the wind that gave them life, and it is the wind that comes out of our mouths now that gives us life. When this ceases to blow, we die.

The gods had the people build an enclosure of brushwood, and when it was finished, First Man and First Woman went in. The gods told them, "Live together now as husband and wife."

At the end of four days, First Woman gave birth to hermaphrodite twins. In four more days she gave birth to a boy and a girl, who grew to maturity in four days and lived with one another as husband and wife. In all, First Man and First Woman had five pairs of twins, and all except the first became couples who had children.

In four days, after the last twins were born, the gods came again and took First Man and First Woman away to the eastern mountain, the dwelling place of the gods. The couple stayed there for four days, and when they returned, all their children were taken to the eastern mountain for four days. The gods taught them the awful secrets of witchcraft. Witches always use masks and, after they returned, they would occasionally put on masks and pray for the good things they needed, like abundant rain and abundant crops.

Witches also marry people who are too closely related to them, which is what First Man and First Woman's children had done. After they had been to the eastern mountain, however, the brothers and sisters separated. Keeping their first marriages secret, the brothers now married women of the Mirage People and the sisters married men of the Mirage People. But they never told anyone,

even their new families, the mysteries they had learned from the gods. Every four days the women bore children, who grew to maturity in four days, then married and, in their turn, had children every four days. In this way, many children of First Man and First Woman filled the land with people.

Wisdom of Chief Seattle

Chief Seattle was probably born in 1786 and died on June 7, 1866. He was also known as Sealth or See-ahth and was the chief of the Suquamish and Duwamish Nations in Washington State. He strove to work out mutually respectful relationships with the early settlers of the region but was ultimately relegated to a reservation with his people and without ever seeing his vision become reality.

During the course of his interaction with the new settlers, Chief Seattle befriended the well-known and influential David Swison Maynard, who later recommended that Seattle, Washington, be named after the Chief. Although many quotes attributed to Chief Seattle have been questioned over the years, here are a few that seem to be universally accepted as his own words. They lend a keen insight into this remarkable leader:

"We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on."

"You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves."

"What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected."

"Whatever befalls the earth befalls the son of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

"How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people."

"Take only memories, leave nothing but footprints."

"The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man."

"There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring, or the rustle of an insect's wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears."

"Today is fair. Tomorrow may be overcast with clouds. My words are like the stars that never change."

"When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Where is the eagle? Gone."

"Every part of all this soil is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hollowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. The very dust you now stand on responds more willingly to their footsteps than to yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch."

"And when the last red man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall become a myth among the white men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe; and when our children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the pathless woods, they will not be alone."

"Your religion was written on tablets of stone, ours on our hearts."

"And what is it to say farewell to the swift and the hunt, to the end of living and the beginning of survival? We might understand if we knew what is was that white man dreams, what he describes to his children on long winter nights, what visions he burns into their minds, so they will wish for tomorrow. But we are savages. The white man's dreams are hidden from us."

"Like a man who has been dying for many days, a man in your city is numb to the stench."

"The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with pinion pine. The air is precious to the red man, for all things are the same breath - the animals, the trees, the man."

"Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only change of worlds."

Lakota Seven Sacred Rites

The Seven Sacred Rites of the Lakota Sioux form the spiritual foundation of that Nation. These rites are also representative of similar ceremonies and beliefs that criss-cross many Native American and First Nations. Here is a brief description of the Lakota rites, which are viewed by most Natives (Lakota as well as others) as both powerful and critical to living a spiritually meaningful life:

The Keeping of the Soul (Nagi Gluhapi Na Nagi Gluxkapi):
A ceremony of spiritual healing performed after the death of a loved one. This rite helps the deceased cross over into the realm of the Great Spirit in peace. It is also a ceremony of closure that is used to help family, friends and community members deal with the deceased's absence, and as a celebration of his or her life.

The Rite of Purification or Sweat Lodge (Inipi):
One of the most powerful and pervasive of ceremonies, the Sweat Lodge ritual is designed to cleanse the spirit and bring the participant ever closer to the Great Spirit, Wakan Tanka, or to work towards the solution of a spiritual crisis. This rite is common among many of our Nations, always with the same general goal in mind.

Crying for a Vision or Vision Quest (Hanblecheyapi):
As discussed elsewhere in this book, the Vision Quest is a rigorous and specialized ceremony designed to bring the participant to a new level of awareness of himself and his place in the greater world. It is considered one of the most powerful means of contacting the unseen universe and drawing oneself closer to the revelations of the Great Spirit.

The Sun Dance (Wiwanyag Wachipi):
A ceremony that involves fasting and dancing for several days (typically, four days), and is designed to help relieve the suffering of others in the community. It is considered a means of assisting others during times of spiritual suffering or indecision.

The Making of Relatives (Hunkapi):
A ceremony of "bringing together" or of forging stronger relationships with others. This rite involves the giving and receiving of gifts, sharing food and smoke, and conversation. It is best thought of as a way of "bonding" individuals or small groups into an extended family relationship.

Preparing for Womanhood or Puberty Rite (Ishna Ta Awi Cha Lowan):
The ceremony that marks the transition from girl to woman following her first

menstrual period. It is designed to spiritually prepare the woman to take her rightful place in the community as wife and mother, and to acknowledge her new, adult role to the Nation at large.

Throwing of the Ball (Tapa Wanka Yap):
This rite is no longer actively practiced. When it was popular, it was performed only by women, who used a ball filled with buffalo hair covered with a red-and-blue painted buffalo, which represented the material and spiritual aspects of the universe.

The Healing (Yuwipi):
This is a modern addition to the original Lakota sacred rites. It is designed for healing and to practice the "seeing way" as called for by a respected Elder or Medicine Man. Since the Tapa Wanka Yap is no longer practiced, the Yuwipi ceremony is now generally accepted as the seventh sacred rite.

Listening to the Heart

In contemporary Western civilization it seems as though the mind–the intellect–is viewed as the primary and unequalled tool of survival and success. Throughout childhood, into young adulthood, and into the workforce and beyond, the mind is honed, valued, rewarded, regarded, and viewed as the final and fullest measure of the individual. The United States and Canada both place tremendous value on formal education and reward the achievements of intellect handsomely. For the most part, Western civilization gauges individual success and failure on the ability of a person to use (or, sadly, misuse) the mind and the intellect. To have a powerful mind and intellect in this society is to achieve status and success.

From a traditional Native perspective, this is not a balanced approach to living a spiritually healthy life. We do not undervalue the mind and intellect, but we also do not place it in such high esteem as our non-Native brothers and sisters. Instead, we rely on a broader range of tools to make our way through life. The mind is but one of Grandfather's gifts to help us along the path. It is not seen as the supreme gift. We have learned from the Mother that we, like Her, must stay balanced in heart, body and spirit if we are to survive and thrive. Intellect, alone, is not enough.

Our teachings tell us that the mind can lie, and can often do so with ease and indifference to the effect its actions have on others. The mind can lie to us, also, and sometimes in devastating ways. It can be a powerful tool to help us navigate the problems we face each day but, like any powerful tool, it can also misguide and mislead us if we do not use it carefully and wisely. The intellect can easily be honed to the point that it overshadows the other gifts that Grandfather has given us to live our lives. Like a stone whose edge has been over-sharpened, the mind can reach out and hurt us, or others, with little effort. It must be used with great care and sensitivity.

From our point of view, there are many ways to learn about the world around us, many gifts we have been given to lead a straight and honorable life. We do not judge a man only by the words that he utters but by his actions, his steadfastness, his respect, and how he speaks to our heart. Although the intellect may give us a good deal of information about any number of complicated secrets, we look to the heart to feel the sense of goodness or harm that may surround us. This sense of "speaking to the heart" has been given to all men and women. It is an invaluable gift and it is certainly not reserved for Natives alone. It is Grandfather's gift to all of us.

When we walk in the woods, it is not the mind that hears and understands the messages that surround us–the utterings of the trees, birds, and other animals.

We gather that information by other means, by the use of our senses and by listening to how these utterances speak to our heart. It is not the mind that senses danger or embraces peace and happiness when we are alone. In other words, it is far more important for us to "feel" the Mother around us than to try to analyze Her workings. We have learned this skill from the other living beings that surround us, none of which place such a high esteem on the mind. None, that is, but man.

When we dream, it is not the mind that tells us the meaning of the message. We know that there is no formula that will bring us the truth of such deep symbology. However, we see in dreams, as we do in Nature, those people and things that are familiar to us in some way. We see the images that speak to our heart and teach us how to live our lives. We have been taught to listen without the mind, to seek out truth without the noisy workings of the intellect.

Does this mean that we disregard the mind? Of course not. We value the mind, the intellect, as a marvelous gift. However, we do not view it as the highest of our senses or the most powerful of the tools needed to live a good life. That is reserved for the heart and those things that speak directly to the heart. This is what our Elders tell us, and what they have told us for countless generations.

The Pow Wow

In Native culture, the Pow Wow is among the most pervasive and important ways of gathering us together. These gatherings can be formal or informal, large or small. However, when we come together for a Pow Wow, it is understood that we are beginning a time of sharing and goodwill among all our Nations.

The following description of a typical Pow Wow is straightforward and understandable. It has been excerpted from the Internet site ***Pow Wow Info*** *at (www.powwows.com). For anyone interested in learning more about this form of Native gathering, a visit to the website is a must:*

Pow Wow time is the Native American people's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships and making new ones.

This is a time to renew thought of the old ways and to preserve a rich heritage.

There are several different stories of how the Pow Wow was started. Some believe that the war dance societies of the Ponca and other Southern Plains tribes were the origin of the Pow Wow.

Another belief is that when the Native Americans were forced onto reservations the government also forced them to have dances for the public to come and see. Before each dance they were led through the town in a parade, which is the beginning of the Grand Entry.

Pow Wow singers are very important figures in the Native American culture. Without them there would be no dancing. The songs are of many varieties, from religious to war to social.

As various tribes gathered together, they would share their songs, often changing the songs so singers of different tribes could join. With these changes came the use of "vocables" to replace the words of the old songs. Thus, some songs today are sung in vocables with no words.

Yet they still hold special meaning to those who know the song. Many songs are still sung in Native tongue either newly composed or revivals of old songs. These songs are reminders to the Indian people of their old ways and rich heritage.

Dancers have always been a very important part of the life of the American Indian. Most dancers seen at Pow Wows today are social dances which might have had different meanings in earlier days. Although dance styles and content have changed, their meaning and importance has not. The outfits worn by the

dancers, like the styles of clothing today, evolve over time. It is not a stagnant culture but a vibrant and changing way of life.

Pow Wows are organized by committees that work for weeks before the event. At the Pow Wow, the MC runs the events. The MC works with the Arena Director to keep the Pow Wow organized and running smoothly. These two individuals along with the committee work hard to bring the people together to dance in the circle.

The Pow Wow begins with the Grand Entry. This is the entry of all the people entering the arena. This originally was a parade through the town the Pow Wow was in. Even today in some Pow Wows, these parades are still held. During the Grand Entry, everyone is asked to stand as the flags are brought into the arena. The flags carried generally include the US flag, tribal flags, POW flag, and eagle staffs of various tribes present. These are usually carried by veterans. Native Americans hold the United States flag in an honored position despite the horrible treatment received from this country. The flag has a dual meaning. First it is a way to remember all of the ancestors that fought against this country. It is also the symbol of the United States, which Native Americans are now a part. The flag here also reminds people of those who have fought for this country

Following the veterans are other important guests of the Pow Wow including tribal chiefs, Princesses, Elders, and Pow Wow organizers. Next in line are the men dancers. The men are followed by the women dancers. Once everyone is in the arena, the song ends and a new song is sung to honor the flag and the veterans. After a prayer, the dancing resumes, usually with a few Round Dances. After the Round Dances, inter-tribal dancing songs are sung and everyone dances to the beat of the drum.

Native Cosmology

Our culture is based on oral traditions and learning, passed on for countless generations by Elders. There are so many Nations, some of which no longer exist, that it is difficult to try to find a cohesive cosmology that can be understood as the root of Native American or First Nations beliefs. Still, when the legends are heard and understood, there emerges a unity among these beliefs that is remarkably consistent and cohesive.

There is a core Native cosmology, which is powerful, consistent, simple and quite beautiful. Here are a few of the basic beliefs that underlie the Native American and First Nations cosmology, and which are accepted by most, if not all, Nations:

1. There is a Great Spirit, who precedes and predates everything in the Cosmos. The Great Spirit is usually described in very general terms and is viewed as pervasive and gentle. In the purest form of Native traditions, the Great Spirit is not seen as either male or female. It is understood to be the cause of all things, all beings, but something that cannot be directly experienced in our lifetime. However, most Nations believe that when we cross over into the next world, we join with the Great Spirit in a higher order of existence, in a universe where struggles are vanquished and peace and plenty abounds.

2. Natives often refer to the expression of the Great Spirit as "Grandfather." There is a generally-held belief that Natives attribute spirits to all things in the Universe. On one hand, this is true. On the other, it is often misunderstood and usually misinterpreted. When we refer to the "spirit" of a thing, we are really talking about its "expression," or the way that we experience its existence in the world that we know. Everything in the Cosmos has its own unique expression, its own way of "being" in our experience. Grandfather, in a similar way, is the expression of the Great Spirit. It is how we experience the Great Spirit in the world in which we live.

3. The most common Native cosmology is that mankind appeared countless eons ago from some combination of natural and supernatural causes. Sometimes, a few of these original people would appear from the sky, the earth, the water, or a sacred mountain. Regardless of how these first people appeared, they are typically called "Ancient Ones" and are credited with organizing the first families and, sometimes, the animals. The Ancient Ones are considered to be the First Elders and are usually thought of as having special powers and wisdom. These Ancient Ones taught us how to organize our Nations and gave us the various skills and knowledge that we needed to survive.

4. Man and animals, and everything else we see in the world, is considered sacred. The Ancient Ones emphatically tell us that we are not the dominant species in the Cosmos. We are but one of many of Grandfather's creations. Therefore, we are obligated to respect everything we encounter in this world, regardless of its size or appearance. This is one of the most common and sacred teachings of the Ancient Ones.

5. Grandfather is seen as protecting the entire Cosmos, regardless of our culture, color, or nationality. How we show our respect to Grandfather and, ultimately, the Great Spirit, is as varied as there are beings on the planet. We do not view any one way as correct when it comes to honoring Grandfather. In fact, the Ancient Ones often tell us that there is not a single, proper way to come to know and respect Grandfather. We should look for as many ways and follow what our hearts tell us, along with the teaching of our Elders.

6. When we die, cross over, we will exist in a higher, more peaceful realm than we have known in this life. Our deeds will follow us and be remembered, so it is especially important to live an honest and respectful life. However, no one is ever denied this other realm (sometimes called the Western Path). We will all meet again and will do so under better circumstances, especially if we have lived a good life. In other words, we will come ever closer to Grandfather and, by extension, the Great Spirit.

7. The afterlife tends to be seen in many different ways by different Nations. This has much to do with the specific experiences of a given Nation and how their earthly lives have played out. However, what is commonly accepted is that there need be no fear of death, no worry about our existence after we have walked the Western Path. We will journey to another world and, once there, will be happy with our new existence. It is especially important to face death with strength, calmness and understanding.

8. Our spiritual beliefs and behavior are often learned from the limitless world of living entities that surround us in this world. Since each being expresses itself in accordance with the Great Spirit, each of them is a potential teacher. It is our spiritual obligation to seek out these lessons, learn them well, and pass them on to the next generation. This is our best spiritual path. However, as men, we have been given some additional gifts by Grandfather, some powerful tools that we can use for good or bad. One of them is our intelligence. What we may lack in strength or speed, can be compensated for (in some ways) by our mind. With this special gift comes the special obligation to protect the Mother, Nature, and care for the beings that surround us. We are also capable of understanding the Great Spirit in a unique way, with both our heart and mind. This obligates us to live our lives in accordance with the best principles we know.

9. Our way it not a warring way unless there are no options. Our path is one of respect, as taught to us by the Ancient Ones. We will war to protect our families,

friends, and the community, but only as a last resort. In the end, we will do what the world around us has taught us to do—adapt and continue on our path, knowing that we will eventually rejoin the Great Spirit.

Prophecy of the Six Nations

Here is the prophecy of the Six Nations (Iroquois) and the Mohawk prophecy of the Seventh Generation spoken by Leon Shenandoah:

Leon Shenandoah Speaks. Supreme Sachem of the Iroquois, successor to the Original Tododaho, Speaker of the Hotinoshonee/Haudenosaunee Iroquois Confederacy.

Among the Iroquois, (as with many cultures) the spiritual people and their medicine societies have "staffs" resembling walking canes. On some of these staffs, there are three serpents. There's a white and a red serpent with the same tail. This indicates that they have the same purpose towards humanity: domination, conquest, and control.

The prophecy given by Mad Bear Anderson says that the white serpent would be the first here in America, and the red serpent come down over the North Pole, and would wrestle with the white serpent until the rivers boiled and fish turned up dead. When they locked in battle, the red men would be released from their reservations somehow, and would go to the hilly country, where they would smoke tobacco and get to know each other once again. They would rally around a seer, perhaps just a young man, who would form them into one nation in a single day.

Then a black serpent would come out of the ocean and wrestle and defeat both the white and the red serpent. Then he would look around to see if there were other people to fight with. He would see the Native people gathered in the hilly country, along with all the other people gathered with them wanting to understand the spiritual way of the Earth. He would turn as if to fight with them, but then he would see coming the great light of Deganawidah, the great teacher of the Northeast Indian people. He would become frightened, flee and never bother the people again. They would go back into the ocean from whence they came, never to return again.

The interpretation given to Sunbear by the Spirit is that the white and red serpents represent the United States and Russia. They wrestled for a long time until the rivers boiled and the fish turned dead from their atomic weapons testing. They wrestled in the cold war, supplying armaments to get other people to fight against each other. They wrestled; they exhausted almost all their resources, until they were in so much debt from wrestling they couldn't afford to continue anymore. This is the stage we're at right now. In the version published by Zula, the battle takes place here in America - perhaps a future invasion. The

young choice seer, also spoken of in the Bible, is only in the versions told to Zula by Mad Bear, and in the version published by Scott Peterson in his book "Native American Prophecies."

Then the black serpent comes into the battle. The black serpent is the Moslem Nations with control of the world's oil supplies. The Moslem nations have gotten both the United States and Russia into wars they didn't know how to fight. Vietnam was really fought over control of vast oil reserves. They defeated the U.S. in Lebanon and the Soviets in Afghanistan. Neither country knows how to battle the black serpent, because they are holy warriors.

Now we're coming into the second stage of the wrestling of the serpents: the war of the Muslim Nations. This war can affect all the nations of the world. In it, the battlefield will be the gas pumps. It will drain the last dollar from those countries that have become overly dependent on oil for the life blood of their economies. The Moslem nations control most of the world's petroleum; they can make quite a noose for Western Civilization from their fuel lines.

Mohawk Prophecy of the Seventh Generation. According to the prophecy of the Seventh Generation, seven generations after contact with the Europeans, the Onkwehonwe would see the day when the elm trees would die.

The prophecy said that strange animals would be born deformed and without the proper limbs. Huge stone monsters would tear open the face of the earth. The rivers would burn. The air would burn the eyes of man. According to the prophecy of the Seventh Generation, the Onkwehonwe would see the time when the birds would fall from the sky. The fish would die in the water. And man would grow ashamed of the way that he had treated his Mother and Provider, the Earth.

Finally, according to this prophecy, after seven generations of living in close contact with the Europeans, the Onkwehonwe would rise up and demand that their rights and stewardship over the Earth be respected and restored. According to the wisdom of this prophecy, men and women would one day turn to the Onkwehonwe for both guidance and direction. It is up to the present generation of youth of the Kanienkehaka to provide leadership and example to all who have failed.

The children of the Kanienkehaka are the seventh generation. Deganawidah: The Two Serpents [From *Native American Prophecies* by Scott Peterson].

When Deganawidah was leaving the Indians in the Bay of Quinte in Ontario, he told the Indian people that they would face a time of great suffering. They would distrust their leaders and the principles of peace of the League, and a great

white serpent was to come upon the Iroquois, and that for a time it would intermingle with the Indian serpent as a friend.

This serpent would in time become so powerful that it would attempt to destroy the Indian, and the serpent is described as choking the life's blood out of the Indian people. Deganawidah told the Indians that they would be in such a terrible state at this point that all hope would seem to be lost, and he told them that when things looked their darkest a red serpent would come from the north and approach the white serpent, which would be terrified, and upon seeing the red serpent he would release the Indian, who would fall to the ground almost like a helpless child, and the white serpent would turn all its attention to the red serpent. The bewilderment would cause the white serpent to accept the red one momentarily. The white serpent would be stunned and take part of the red serpent and accept him.

Then there is a heated argument and a fight. And then the Indian revives and crawls toward the land of the hilly country, and then he would assemble his people together, and they would renew their faith and the principles of peace that Deganawidah had established. There would at the same time exist among the Indians a great love and forgiveness for his brother, and in this gathering would come streams from all over - not only the Iroquois but from all over - and they would gather in this hilly country, and they would renew their friendship.

And Deganawidah said they would remain neutral in this fight between the white and red serpents. At the time they were watching the two serpents locked in this battle, a great message would come to them, which would make them ever so humble, and when they become that humble, they will be waiting for a young leader, an Indian boy, possibly in his teens, who would be a choice seer. Nobody knows who he is or where he comes from, but he will be given great power, and would be heard by thousands, and he would give them the guidance and the hope to refrain from going back to their land and he would be the accepted leader.

And Deganawidah said that they will gather in the land of the hilly country, beneath the branches of an elm tree, and they should burn tobacco and call upon Deganawidah by name when facing the darkest hours, and he will return. Deganawidah said that as the choice seer speaks to the Indians that number as the blades of grass, and he would be heard by all at the same time, and as the Indians are gathered watching the fight, they notice from the south a black serpent coming from the sea, and he is described as dripping with salt water, and as he stands there, he rests for a spell to get his breath, all the time watching to the north to the land where the white and red serpents are fighting.

Deganawidah said that the battle between the white and the red serpents opened very slowly but would then become so violent that the mountains would crack and the rivers would boil and the fish would turn up on their bellies. He

said that there would be no leaves on the trees in that area. There would be no grass, and that strange bugs and beetles would crawl from the ground and attack both serpents, and he said that a great heat would cause the stench of death to sicken both serpents. And then, as the boy seer is watching this fight, the red serpent reaches around the back of the white serpent and pulls from him a hair which is carried toward the south by a great wind into the waiting hands of the black serpent, and as the black serpent studies this hair, it suddenly turns into a woman, a white woman who tells him things that he knows to be true but he wants to hear them again.

When this white woman finishes telling these things, he takes her and gently places her on a rock with great love and respect, and then he becomes infuriated at what he has heard, so he makes a beeline for the north, and he enters the battle between the red and white serpents with such speed and anger that he defeats the two serpents, who have already been battle weary. When he finishes, he stands on the chest of the white serpent, and he boasts and puts his chest out like he's the conqueror, and he looks for another serpent to conquer.

He looks to the land of the hilly country and then sees the Indian standing with his arms folded and looking ever so noble that he knows that this Indian is not the one to fight. The next direction that he will face will be eastward and at that time he will be momentarily blinded by a light that is many times brighter than the sun. The light will be coming from the east to the west over the water, and when the black serpent regains his sight, he becomes terrified and makes a beeline for the sea. He dips into the sea and swims away in a southerly direction, and shall never again be seen by the Indians.

The white serpent revives, and he too sees the light, and he makes a feeble attempt to gather himself and go toward that light. A portion of the white serpent refuses to remain but instead makes its way toward the land of the hilly country, and there he will join the Indian People with a great love like that of a lost brother. The rest of the white serpent would go to the sea and dip into the sea and would be lost out of sight for a spell. Then suddenly the white serpent would appear again on the top of the water and he would be slowly swimming toward the light.

Deganawidah said that the white serpent would never again be troublesome to the Indian People. The red serpent would revive and he would shiver with great fear when he sees that light. He would crawl to the north and leave a bloody, shaky trail northward, and he would never be seen again by the Indians. Deganawidah said as this light approaches that he would be that light and he would return to his Indian People, and when he returns, the Indian People would be a greater nation than they had ever been before.

It's prophesied in our Instructions that the end of the world will be near when the trees start dying from the tops down. That's what the maples are doing

today. Our Instructions say the time will come when there will be no corn, when nothing will grow in the garden, when water will be filthy and unfit to drink. And then a great monster will rise up from the water and destroy mankind. One of the names of that monster is "the sickness that eats you up inside" - like diabetes or cancer or AIDS. Maybe AIDS is the monster. It's coming. It's already here. Our prophet Handsome Lake told of it in the 1700s. He saw Four Beings, like four angels, coming from the Four Directions. They told him what would happen, how there would be diseases we'd never heard of before.

You will see many tears in this country. Then a great wind will come, a wind that will make a hurricane seem like a whisper. It will cleanse the earth and return it to its original state. That will be the punishment for what we've done to the Creation.

Indian Reorganization Act

Here is the Wheeler-Howard Act and its Amendments. In some ways, much has changed since the passage of this act. In other ways, not much progress has been made. However you may view this Act and its impact on Native Americans, it certainly altered our cultural landscape forever. You be the judge of its intent and wisdom:

The Indian Reorganization Act, June 18, 1934
(Wheeler-Howard Act)

An Act to conserve and develop Indian lands and resources; to extend to Indians the right to form business and other organizations; to establish a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians; to provide for vocational education for Indians; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That hereafter no land of any Indian reservation, created or set apart by treaty or agreement with the Indians, Act of Congress, Executive order, purchase, or otherwise, shall be allotted in severalty to any Indian.

Section 2. The existing periods of trust placed upon any Indian lands and any restriction on alienation thereof are hereby extended and continued until otherwise directed by Congress.

Section 3. The Secretary of the Interior, if he shall find it to be in the public interest, is hereby authorized to restore to tribal ownership the remaining surplus lands of any Indian reservation heretofore opened, or authorized to be opened, to sale, or any other form of disposal by Presidential proclamation, or by any of the public land laws of the United States; Provided, however, That valid rights or claims of any persons to any lands so withdrawn existing on the date of the withdrawal shall not be affected by this Act: Provided further, That this section shall not apply to lands within any reclamation project heretofore authorized in any Indian reservation: Provided further, That this section shall not apply to lands within any reclamation project heretofore authorized in any Indian reservation: Provided further, That the order of the Department of the interior signed, dated, and approved by Honorable Ray Lyman Wilbur, as Secretary of the Interior, on October 28, 1932, temporarily withdrawing lands of the Papago Indian Reservation in Arizona from all forms of mineral entry or claim under the public land mining laws is hereby revoked and rescinded, and the lands of the said Papago Indian Reservation are hereby restored to exploration and location, under the existing mining laws of the United States, in accordance with the express terms and provisions declared and set forth in the Executive orders

establishing said Papago Indian Reservation: Provided further, That the damages shall be paid to the Papago Tribe for loss of any improvements of any land located for mining in such a sum as may be determined by the Secretary of the Interior but not exceed the cost of said improvements: Provided further, That a yearly rental not to exceed five cents per acre shall be paid to the Papago Indian Tribe: Provided further, That in the event that any person or persons, partnership, corporation, or association, desires a mineral patent, according to the mining laws of the United States, he or they shall first deposit in the treasury of the United States to the credit of the Papago Tribe the sum of $1.00 per acre in lieu of annual rental, as hereinbefore provided, to compensate for the loss or occupancy of the lands withdrawn by the requirements of mining operations: Provided further, That patentee shall also pay into the Treasury of the United States to the credit of the Papago Tribe damages for the loss of improvements not heretofore said in such a sum as may be determined by the Secretary of the Interior, but not to exceed the cost thereof; the payment of $1.00 per acre for surface use to be refunded to patentee in the event that the patent is not required.

Nothing herein contained shall restrict the granting or use of permits for easements or rights-of-way; or ingress or egress over the lands for all proper and lawful purposes; and nothing contained therein, except as expressly provided, shall be construed as authority by the Secretary of the Interior, or any other person, to issue or promulgate a rule or regulation in conflict with the Executive order of February 1, 1917, creating the Papago Indian Reservation in Arizona or the Act of February 21, 1931 (46 Stat. 1202).

Section 4. Except as herein provided, no sale, devise, gift, exchange or other transfer of restricted Indian lands or of shares in the assets of any Indian tribe or corporation organized hereunder, shall be made or approved: Provided, however, That such lands or interests may, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, be sold, devised, or otherwise transferred to the Indian tribe in which the lands or shares are located or from which the shares were derived or to a successor corporation; and in all instances such lands or interests shall descend or be devised, in accordance with the then existing laws of the State, or Federal laws where applicable, in which said lands are located or in which the subject matter of the corporation is located, to any member of such tribe or of such corporation or any heirs of such member: Provided further, That the Secretary of the Interior may authorize voluntary exchanges of lands of equal value and the voluntary exchange of shares of equal value whenever such exchange, in his judgment, is expedient and beneficial for or compatible with the proper consolidation of Indian lands and for the benefit of cooperative organizations.

Section 5. The Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to acquire through purchase, relinquishment, gift, exchange, or assignment, any interest in lands, water rights or surface rights to lands, within or without existing reservations, including trust or otherwise restricted allotments whether

the allottee be living or deceased, for the purpose of providing lands for Indians.

For the acquisition of such lands, interests in lands, water rights, and surface rights, and for expenses incident to such acquisition, there is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, a sum not to exceed $2,000,000 in any one fiscal year: Provided, That no part of such funds shall be used to acquire additional land outside of the exterior boundaries of Navajo Indian Reservation for the Navajo Indians in Arizona and New Mexico, in the event that the proposed Navajo boundary extension measures how pending in congress and embodied in the bills (S. 2531 and H.R. 8927) to define the exterior boundaries of the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona, and for other purposes, and the bills (S. 2531 and H.R. 8982) to define the exterior boundaries of the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico and for other purposes, or similar legislation, become law.

The unexpended balances of any appropriations made pursuant to this section shall remain available until expended.

Title to any lands or rights acquired pursuant to this Act shall be taken in the name of the United States in trust for the Indian tribe or individual Indian for which the land is acquired, and such lands or rights shall be exempt from State and local taxation.

Section 6. The Secretary of the Interior is directed to make rules and regulations for the operation and management of Indian forestry units on the principle of sustained-yield management, to restrict the number of livestock grazed on Indian range units to the estimated carrying capacity of such ranges, and to promulgate such other rules and regulations as may be necessary to protect the range from deterioration, to prevent soil erosion, to assure full utilization of the range, and like purposes.

Section 7. The Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized to proclaim new Indian reservations on lands acquired pursuant to any authority conferred by this Act, or to add such lands to existing reservations: Provided, That lands added to existing reservations shall be designated for the exclusive use of Indians entitled by enrollment or by tribal membership to residence at such reservations shall be designated for the exclusive use of Indians entitled by enrollment or by tribal membership to residence at such reservations.

Section 8. Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to relate to Indian holdings of allotments or homesteads upon the public domain outside of the geographic boundaries of any Indian reservation now existing or established hereafter.

Section 9. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary, but not to

exceed $250,000 in any fiscal year, to be expended at the order of the Secretary of the Interior, in defraying the expenses of organizing Indian chartered corporations or other organizations created under this Act.

Section 10. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of $10,000,000 to be established as a revolving fund from which the Secretary of the Interior, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, may make loans to Indian chartered corporations for the purpose of promoting the economic development of such tribes and of their members, and may defray the expenses of administering such loans. Repayment of amounts loaned under this authorization shall be credited to the revolving fund and shall be available for the purposes for which the fund is established. A report shall be made annually to Congress of transactions under this authorization.

Section 11. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any funds in the United States Treasury not otherwise appropriated, a sum not to exceed $250,000 annually, together with any unexpended balances of previous appropriations made pursuant to this section, for loans to Indians for the payment of tuition and other expenses in recognized vocational and trade schools: Provided, That not more than $50,000 of such sum shall be available for loans to Indian students in high schools and colleges. Such loans shall be reimbursable under rules established by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Section 12. The Secretary of the Interior is directed to establish standards of health, age, character, experience, knowledge, and ability for Indians, who maybe appointed, without regard to civil-service laws, to the various positions maintained, now or hereafter, by the Indian office, in the administrations functions or services affecting any Indian tribe. Such qualified Indians shall hereafter have the preference to appointment to vacancies in any such positions.

Section 13. The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any of the Territories, colonies, or insular possessions of the United States, except that sections 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16 shall apply to the Territory of Alaska: Provided, That Sections 2, 4, 7, 16, 17, and 18 of this Act shall not apply to the following named Indian tribes, together with members of other tribes affiliated with such named located in the State of Oklahoma, as follows: Cheyenne, Arapaho, Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Caddo, Delaware, Wichita, Osage, Kaw, Otoe, Tonkawa, Pawnee, Ponca, Shawnee, Ottawa, Quapaw, Seneca, Wyandotte, Iowa, Sac and Fox, Kickapoo, Pottawatomi, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole. Section 4 of this Act shall not apply to the Indians of the Klamath Reservation in Oregon.

Section 14. The Secretary of the Interior is hereby directed to continue the allowance of the articles enumerated in section 17 of the Act of March 2, 1889 (25 Stat.L. 891), or their commuted cash value under the Act of June 10, 1886 (29 Stat.L. 334), to all Sioux Indians who would be eligible, but for the provisions

of this Act, to receive allotments of lands in severalty under section 19 of the Act of May 29, 1908 (25 (35) Stat.L. 451), or under any prior Act, and who have the prescribed status of the head of a family or single person over the age of eighteen years, and his approval shall be final and conclusive, claims therefore to be paid as formerly from the permanent appropriation made by said section 17 and carried on the books of the Treasury for this purpose. No person shall receive in his own right more than one allowance of the benefits, and application must be made and approved during the lifetime of the allottee or the right shall lapse. Such benefits shall continue to be paid upon such reservation until such time as the lands available therein for allotment at the time of the passage of this Act would have been exhausted by the award to each person receiving such benefits of an allotment of eighty acres of such land.

Section 15. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to impair or prejudice any claim or suit of any Indian tribe against the United States. It is hereby declared to be the intent of Congress that no expenditures for the benefit of Indians made out of appropriations authorized by this Act shall be considered as offsets in any suit brought to recover upon any claim of such Indians against the United States.

Section 16. Any Indian tribe, or tribes, residing on the same reservation, shall have the right to organize for its common welfare, and may adopt an appropriate constitution and bylaws, which shall become effective when ratified by a majority vote of the adult members of the tribe, or of the adult Indians residing on such reservation, as the case may be, at a special election authorized by the Secretary of the Interior under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe. Such constitution and bylaws when ratified as aforesaid and approved by the Secretary of the Interior shall be revocable by an election open to the same voters and conducted in the same manner as hereinabove provided. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws may be ratified and approved by the Secretary in the same manner as the original constitution and bylaws.

In addition to all powers vested in any Indian tribe or tribal council by existing law, the constitution adopted by said tribe shall also vest in such tribe or its tribal council the following rights and powers: To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and fixing of fees to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior; to prevent the sale, disposition, lease, or encumbrance of tribal lands, interests in lands, or other tribal assets without the consent of the tribe; and to negotiate with the Federal, State, and local Governments. The Secretary of the Interior shall advise such tribe or its tribal council of all appropriation estimates or Federal projects for the benefit of the tribe prior to the submission of such estimates to the Bureau of the Budget and the Congress.

Section 17. The Secretary of the Interior may, upon petition by at least one-third of the adult Indians, issue a charter of incorporation to such tribe: Provided, That such charter shall not become operative until ratified at a special election by a majority vote of the adult Indians living on the reservation. Such charter may

convey to the incorporated tribe the power to purchase, take by gift, or bequest, or otherwise, own, hold, manage, operate, and dispose of property of every description, real and personal, including the power to purchase restricted Indian lands and to issue in exchange therefore interests in corporate property, and such further powers as may be incidental to the conduct of corporate business, not inconsistent with law, but no authority shall be granted to sell, mortgage, or lease for a period exceeding ten years any of the land included in the limits of the reservation. Any charter so issued shall not be revoked or surrendered except by Act of Congress.

Section 18. This Act shall not apply to any reservation wherein a majority of the adult Indians, voting at a special election duly called by the Secretary of the Interior, shall vote against it application. It shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Interior, within one year after the passage and approval of this Act, to call such an election, which election shall be held by secret ballot upon thirty days' notice.

Section 19. The term "Indian" as used in this Act shall include all persons of Indian descent who are members of any recognized Indian tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members who were, on June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any reservation, and shall further include all other persons of one-half or more Indian blood. For the purposes of this Act, Eskimos and other aboriginal peoples of Alaska shall be considered Indians. The term "tribe" wherever used in this Act shall be construed to refer to any Indian tribe, organized band, pueblo, or the Indians residing on one reservation. The words "adult Indians" wherever used in this Act shall be construed to refer to Indians who have attained the age of twenty-one years.

Approved, June 18, 1934.

Amendments to the Wheeler-Howard Act, June 18, 1934 (The Indian Reorganization Act)

Section 15 of the Indian Reorganization Act was modified in part by the following provisions contained in the Act of August 12, 1935 (Public 260 - 74th Congress, 1st Session):

Section 2. In all suits now pending in the Court of claims by and Indian tribe or band which have not been tried or submitted, and in any suit hereafter filed in the Court of Claims by any such tribe or band, the Court of Claims is hereby directed to consider and to offset against any amount found due the said tribe or band all sums expended gratuitously by the United States for the benefit of the said tribe or band; and in all cases now pending or hereafter filed in the Court of Claims in which an Indian tribe or band is party plaintiff, wherein the duty of the court is merely to report its finding of fact and conclusions to Congress, the said

Court of Claims is hereby directed to include in its report a statement of the amount of money which has been expended by the United States gratuitously for the benefit of the said tribe or band: Provided, that the expenditures made prior to the date of the law, treaty, agreement, or Executive order under which the claims asserted; and expenditures under the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. L. 984), except expenditures under appropriations made pursuant to section 5 of such Act, shall not be charged as offsets against any claim on behalf of an Indian tribe or tribes now pending in the Court of Claims or hereafter filed.

Section 19. The term "Indian" as used in this Act shall include all persons of Indian descent who are members of any recognized Indian tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members who were, on June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any Indian reservation, and shall further include all other persons of one-half or more Indian blood. For the purposes of this Act, Eskimos and other aboriginal peoples of Alaska shall be considered Indians. The term "tribe" wherever used in this Act shall be construed to refer to any Indian tribe, organized band, pueblo, or the Indians residing on one reservation. The words "adult Indians" wherever used in this Act shall be construed to refer to Indians who have attained the age of twenty-one years.

A Bloody History

Since 1500, with the arrival of large numbers of European settlers, the history of Native Americans and First Nations Peoples has been marked by recurring periods of intense bloodshed. Our path over the past 500 years has not been pleasant and we are, today, a culture that is quickly vanishing. Atrocities were committed on all sides of the ongoing settlement of North America. This is our past and we must recognize our role as well as the part played by the settling cultures. Here are a few of the most shameful incidents during the long period of time that marked our cultural transition from what it was prior to 1500 to what it is today:

Pandemics. Beginning in the early 16th century, a variety of diseases wiped out millions of Native Americans and First Nation Peoples. No one is sure how many of us died. Low estimates are 1 million. The highest estimate is 110 million. Despite this disagreement about numbers it is obvious that these pandemics changed the face of our culture forever and took far too many innocent lives. Among the worst recorded pandemics were smallpox (1525, 1558, 1589), typhus (1546), influenza (1558), diphtheria (1614), and measles (1618). The years noted were the worst periods of death; however, the waves of diseases rolled almost continuously across our Nations for well over 100 years.

Jamestown Massacre. In 1622, members of the Powhatan Nation attacked and killed 347 British settlers in the Virginia Colony.

Mystic River Massacre. in 1637, British colonists, with Native American allies, attacked a Pequot village on the Mystic River, killing some 500 Natives.

Schenectady Massacre. In 1690, members of the Algonquin Nation attacked the Schenectady settlement, killing 60 settlers, including women and children.

Deerfield Massacre. In 1704, members of the Abenaki, Kanienkehaka, Wyandot, and Pocumtuck Nations, along with a contingent of French Canadian militia, attacked the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts, killing 56 civilians and taking hostages.

Gnadenbutten Massacre. In 1782, nearly 100 civilian members of the Lenape collective of Native Americans were killed by Pennsylvania militiamen. Most were women and children.

Fort Mims Massacre. In 1813, after the Battle of Burnt Corn, a band of Red Sticks attacked Fort Mims, Alabama, killing 400 civilians and taking 250 scalps.

Chehaw Massacre. In 1818, Federal troops attacked a Native American village during the First Seminole War, killing an estimated 10 to 50 men, women and children.

Battle of Bad Axe. In 1832, approximately 300 Native American men, women and children were killed in Wisconsin by Federal soldiers.

Whitman Massacre. In 1847, missionaries Marcus Whitman, Narcissa Whitman and twelve others were killed at Walla Walla, Washington, by Cayuse and Umatilla Native Americans, resulting in the Cayuse War.

Kaibai Creek Massacre. In 1854, more than 40 Winnemem Wintu men, women and children were killed by settlers at Kaibai Creek, California.

Grattan Massacre. The following year (1855), 29 Federal soldiers were killed by members of the Brulé Lakota Sioux Nation in Nebraska Territory.

Indian Island Massacre. In 1860, one of the most notorious massacres occurred in Humboldt County, California. At least 100 Wiyot Nation members, mostly women and children, were slaughtered by settlers in a series of planned attacks.

Bear River Massacre. In 1863, Col. Patrick Connor led a regiment of soldiers, who killed at least 200 Native American men, women and children near Preston, Idaho.

Sand Creek Massacre. In 1864, Militiamen killed nearly 200 members of the Cheyenne Nation at Sand Creek, Colorado.

Fetterman Massacre. In 1866, 80 Federal soldiers and two civilians were sent to relieve a wagon train under attack from the Oglala Sioux Nation. The soldiers, led by Crazy Horse, were ambushed and annihilated near Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming.

Marias Massacre. In 1870, settlers slaughter 173 members of the Piegan Nation, mainly women, children and Elders.

Battle of the Little Big Horn. in 1876, 250 members of the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment, led by Lt. Col. George A. Custer, were killed in a battle against Sioux and Northern Cheyenne Nations.

Wounded Knee Massacre. In 1890, approximately 300 members of the Sioux Nation (men, women and children) were killed by US soldiers at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

Sadly, these are but a few of the many bloody battles that have laced our history since the arrival of European settlers to our shores. This short list provides a view of the kind of anger and animosity that existed on all sides of the settlement period. Unfortunately, our encounters with the early settlers changed the face of our culture forever. It is a period of history that must always be remembered but never repeated.

The Plains Flute

The following essay (excerpted) was written by Robert Gatliff. His website, **Flute Tree** (www.flutetree.com), is an excellent resource for learning about this ancient and valued musical instrument.

This particular work describes the style of flute made and used by plains Native Americans after the early settlement of North America. Older and much different flutes were also used by many Nations over an unknown (but quite long) period of time:

Earliest Plains Flute and Courting in the 1800's

Whistles and flutes have been used by Native Americans for thousands of years and have many shapes and sizes. Bone and reed flutes appear in the writings of the earliest North America explorers, but not until the 1800s do we have accounts of juniper and cedar flutes. This style of flute, commonly called the plains flute or courting flute, appears to be a recent invention in the long history of first peoples. The earliest accounts of courting with such flutes are found in diaries and travelogues of the 1820's and 1830's from the western half of the Great Lakes to the Upper Missouri River. Two of the oldest flutes found in museums are also from this area and time.

The oldest is a cedar flute, intestine wrapped, painted red, with a spacer and block with deep side walls that was part of a collection of items donated to the Peale Museum by the family of Lt. George Christianson Hutter in 1828. Hutter was part of the Atkinson-O'Fallon military expedition of 1825-1826 that traveled up the Missouri on man-powered wheel boats. Their objective was to sign treaties with the tribes, which was in part an attempt to stop the Canadian fur traders who were still active in the area and to encourage peace and trade with Americans.

There was some confusion over the providence of Hutter's flute; some scholars thought it was part of artifacts from the Lewis and Clark expedition that were also donated to the Peale Museum. However, contemporary scholars are now attributing this flute and other related contributions to Hutter. Today, the flute resides in the Peabody museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard University.

Since the flute's providence doesn't state where Hutter acquired the flute, it will be six years after the Atkinson-O'Fallon expedition before the first undeniable example of courting flutes from the upper Missouri is found. George Catlin, a Pennsylvania attorney and self-taught painter, made a number of trips between

1832 and 1839 along the riverways of the Plains in an attempt to capture on canvas what he considered was a vanishing way of life. In 1832, Catlin penned a letter from the mouth of the Teton River on the upper Missouri river. In this letter, Catlin provides both a description of a courting flute and an illustration:

There is yet another wind instrument which I have added to my Collection and from its appearance would seem to have been borrowed, in part, from the civilized world. This is what is often on the frontier called a 'deer-skin flute', a Winnebago courting flute, 'tsal-eet-quash-to'; it is perforated with holes for the fingers, sometimes for six, at others for four, and in some instances for three only, having only so many notes with their octaves. These notes are very irregularly graduated, showing clearly that they have very little-taste or ear for melody. These instruments are blown in the end, and the sound produced much on the principle of a whistle. In the vicinity of the Upper Mississippi, I often and familiarly heard this instrument, called the Winnebago courting flute; and was credibly informed by traders and others in those regions, that the young men of that tribe meet with signal success, oftentimes, in wooing their sweethearts with its simple notes, which they blow for hours together, and from day to day, from the bank of some stream — some favorite rock or log on which they are seated, near to the wigwam which contains the object of their tender passion; until her soul is touched, and she responds by some welcome signal, that she is ready to repay the young Orpheus for his pains, with the gift of her hand and her heart. How true these representations may have been made, I cannot say, but there certainly must have been some ground for the present cognomen by which it is known in that country.

This passage was found in Letter #30, and was later published in his Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians, an important source of ethnographic information from that time. The Smithsonian Exhibit, George Catlin and His Indian Gallery, includes a large number of Catlin's paintings and a plains flute that he had collected.

A year after Catlin's trip to the upper Missouri river, an autobiography was published of Chief Black Hawk, Sauk tribe. It briefly speaks to flute playing in the context of courting:

Our women plant the corn, and as soon as they get done, we make a feast, and dance the crane dance, in which they join us, dressed in their best, and decorated with feathers. At this feast our young braves select the young woman they wish to have for a wife. He then informs his mother, who calls on the mother of the girl, when the arrangement is made, and the time appointed for him to come. He goes to the lodge when all are asleep (or pretend to be), lights

his matches, which have been provided for the purpose, and soon finds where his intended sleeps. He then awakens her, and holds the light to his face that she may know him-after which he places the light close to her. If she blows it out, the ceremony is ended, and he appears in the lodge the next morning, as one of the family. If she does not blow out the light, but leaves it to burn out, he retires from the lodge. The next day he places himself in full view of it, and plays his flute. The young women go out, one by one, to see who he is playing for. The tune changes, to let them know that he is not playing for them. When his intended makes her appearance at the door, he continues his courting tune, until she returns to the lodge. He then gives over playing, and makes another trial at night, which generally turns out favorable. During the first year they ascertain whether they can agree with each other, and can be happy-if not, they part, and each looks out again. If we were to live together and disagree, we should be as foolish as the whites. No indiscretion can banish a woman from her parental lodge-no difference how many children she may bring home, she is always welcome-the kettle is over the fire to feed them.

During 1833-34, German Prince Maximilian and painter Karl Bodmer explored and documented the Western wilderness of America. So far, I have been unable to find any flute references in abridged writings of Maximilian. Some 10 years later, Margaret Fuller gives an accounting of her visit to Mackinaw Island in Michigan. In her book 'Summer on the Lakes, in 1843', she describes the Winnebago courting flute.

With the first rosy streak, I was out among my Indian neighbors, whose lodges honey-combed the beautiful beach, that curved away in long, fair outline on either side the house. They were already on the alert, the children creeping out from beneath the blanket door of the lodge; the women pounding corn in their rude mortars, the young men playing on their pipes. I had been much amused, when the strain proper to the Winnebago courting flute was played to me on another instrument, at any one crying it a melody; but now, when I heard the notes in their true tone and time, I thought it not unworthy comparison, in its graceful sequence, and the light flourish, at the close, with the sweetest bird-songs; and this, like the bird-song, is only practiced to allure a mate. The Indian, become a citizen and a husband, no more thinks of playing the flute than one of the 'settled down' members of our society would of choosing the 'purple light of love' as dye-stuff for a surtout.

In 1869, Rev. Alfred Longley Riggs, a missionary, friend, and educator to the Santee Sioux people, provides the most detailed description of their flutes.

The pipe or flute is called cho-tan-ka, which means literally, 'big-pith.' It has two varieties, one made of wood, and the other of bone. The first is the most common, and much resembles the flageolet. It is made by taking the sumac–a wood which has the requisite "big-pith"–a straight piece nineteen or twenty inches long, and, when barked and smoothed down, an inch and a quarter in

diameter. This is split open in the middle, and the pith and inner wood carefully hollowed out to make a bore of five eighths of an inch diameter, extending through the whole length, except that it grows smaller at the mouth-piece, and at a point four inches below that, it is interrupted entirely by a partition three eighths of an inch thick, which is left to form the whistle. The halves are glued together. Finger-holes one quarter of an inch in diameter, and usually six in number, are burnt along the upper face. On the same face the whistle is made by cutting a hole three eights of an inch square each side of the partition. Then, over these, and connecting them, is laid a thin plate of lead, with a slit cut in it, a little more than an inch long and three eights of an inch wide. On top of this is a block of wood, two inches long and three fourths of an inch wide, flat on the bottom, and carved above into rough likeness of a horse; and a deer-skin string binds the whole down tight. A brass thimble for a mouth-piece, some ribbon streamers, a few lines of carving, and a little red and yellow paint, and the instrument is complete.

The pitch of the particular pipe to which this description mainly refers, seems to have been originally A prime, and changed to G prime by boring a seventh hole. The second variety of the cho-tan-ka is made of the long bone of the wing or thigh of the swan and crane. To distinguish the first from the second, they call the first the murmuring (literally 'bubbling') cho-tan-ka, from the tremulous note it gives when blown with all the holes stopped.

This 'bubbling' flute reference is one of the earliest descriptions of the warble, which is sound that appears to be highly prized in earlier times. Such flutes could be blown forcefully with all holes covered while the pitch of the flute would repeatedly jump an octave and then immediately fall an octave. When first heard, many mistake the warble for a strong vibrato, which it is not. But the warble is a whole other topic, which is covered in another essay (at **Flute Tree** - www.flutetree.com).

Native Language Sampler

Most of our languages are extinct or dying. Fortunately, there are still pockets of individuals who speak and understand their original tongue. A few, forward-looking scholars and anthropologists managed to document some words or phrases of a number of Native American languages that have since become extinct. However, much has been lost over the past few hundred years.

Our languages are varied and have origins that are lost in time. To give some idea of how different each language was, here is the word "water" translated into a variety of Native American tongues. General language families have been grouped to emphasize those Nations whose languages probably shared the same root development, although some of these relationships may not be completely accurate. Listed first is the Nation of origin, then the approximate English representation of the word. Since there were originally more than 300 Native American languages before North America was settled, this is only a very small sample of the rich heritage that once existed among our people:

Penobscot-Abenaki: Nebi
Algonquin: Nibì
Arapaho: Nech
Blackfoot: Aohkíí
Cheyenne: Mahpe
Cree: Nîpîy
Etchemin: Shamogoon
Gros Ventre: Nech
Kickapoo: Nepi
Lenape: Mpi
Lumbee Croatan: Umpe
Passamaquoddy-Maliseet: 'Samaqan
Meskwaki-Sauk: Nepi
Mohican: Npe
Ojibwe: Nibi
Potawatomi: Mbish
Shawnee: Nepi
Yurok: Pa'ah
Garifuna: Duna
Taino: Ni
Western Apache: Tú
Chipewyan: Tu
Clatskanie: Tu
Hupa: To
Navajo: Tó

Sarcee: Tú
Arikara: Pa
Pawnee: Kiítsu’
Wichita: Gits
Atakapa: Kakau
Natchez: Koon
Cochimi: Tasi
Karok: Áas
Kiliwa: Ehaa
Mojave: ‘Aha
Oaxacan Chontal: Lajah
Pomo: Ka or Xa
Shasta: ‘Á·csa
Cherokee: Ama
Six Nations: Ohneganohs, Ohneka, Ohne:kánus, O:ne:ka’, À:we
Oneida: Ohne:kánus
Seneca: O:ne:ka’
Alabama: Oki
Chickasaw: Oka’
Muskogee: Owv
Chinook: Ltsuq
Klamath-Modoc: ‘Ambo
Nez Perce: Kús
Yakama: Chúush
Columbia-Wenatchi: Šawoliq or Sa’ulq
Nooksack: Hotsim
Okanagan: Si’ulq
Salish: Se’ulku, Se’uliq, Se’ulq
Biloxi: Ani
Crow: Bilé
Dakota Sioux: Mini
Lakota Sioux: Miní
Osage: Ni
Comanche: Paa
Hopi: Kuuyi
Northern Paiute: Paa
Pima Bajo: Sudagi
Shoshone: Baa’
Yaqui: Vaa’am

Navajo Code Talkers

Most citizens of the United States and Canada are familiar with the Navajo Nation Code Talkers and the critical role these men played in World War II. The NSA (National Security Agency) created a short summary about the Code Talkers, which presents their role clearly and with honor. What makes this summary especially moving is that it fully recognizes the vital role of Philip Johnston during a crucial period of this Nation's history. It was Johnston who pushed for his dream of a Code Talker corps to help his country during the war. His persistence and courage paid off for all of us:

Years after the Pacific War, the world would learn of the courage and bravery of a dedicated group of Navajo Indians who provided a priceless advantage to their country at a crucial time. They would come to be known as the "Code Talkers." This is the story of how they came to be and the vital role they played in helping thousands of Marines to return home at war's end.

Beginnings

As long as he could remember, Philip Johnston had loved the Navajo culture and language. By age five, he had learned the tribal language well enough to serve as a translator for his missionary parents. By age nine, when most boys his age were riding bikes and trading baseball cards, he had served as an interpreter for a Navajo delegation sent to Washington, DC, to lobby for Indian rights. He had no way of knowing it at the time, but his affinity for, and mastery of, the Navajo tongue would one day help to save the lives of countless United States Marines. In time, Johnston would leave the American Southwest and the people he loved to serve in World War I. After the war, he would earn his civil engineering degree at the University of Southern California. December 7, 1941, found him hard at work as an engineer for the city of Los Angeles. At the time, Johnston was in his 50s and well beyond the grasp of his local draft board; however, his experiences on the battlefields of Europe in an earlier time motivated him to try to put into action a plan that he was sure could help the war effort.
Johnston's hope was to help the Marine Corps protect their communications so well that every Marine who wore the uniform would be provided a huge advantage in combat. His idea revolved around a code. But, unlike many coding systems, this code was not dependent on a complicated machine or a series of numbers or ciphers. Rather, the heart of his proposal rested on the language of the Navajo Indians. He was convinced that, used properly, the Navajo dialect would provide unprecedented security to those who would need it most. All he needed was a chance to prove it.

Camp Elliott

Johnston's initial efforts to convince the Marines of the worth of his project were less than successful. The Corps had serious doubts. American Indians, particularly the Choctaw, had been used as Code Talkers in WWI with positive results. However, it was no secret that after 1918, any number of German nationals had visited the United States with the expressed purpose of learning the languages of American Indian tribes. Most assumed that the Third Reich would share its knowledge of these American Indian languages with its Axis partners. For this reason, many viewed the notion of using these languages to protect military communications as an idea whose time had long passed. But Johnston persisted in his efforts. He believed, with good reason, that the Navajo language was unique. The tribe came from a remote region, and only a handful of non-Navajos had any knowledge of the language.

Despite the prevailing wisdom of the time, the Marine Corps finally agreed to host a test of Johnston's proposed system at Camp Elliott near San Diego, California. At the conclusion of the trial run, everyone agreed that the results had been impressive. The Navajos involved in the demonstration had clearly shown that they could take messages from a variety of sources in English, translate and transmit them in Navajo, and then send them back in English. Due to the success of the trial run, those who had witnessed the testing initially lobbied for the recruitment and training of over 200 "Code Talkers." In the end, a total of only 30 men would be approved for the first group; however by VJ Day, over 400 Navajos would work in the program.

From Window Rock to Camp Pendleton

In May of 1942, with the imprimatur of the Navajo Tribal Council, formal recruiting efforts began at Window Rock, Arizona, the capitol of the Navajo Nation. Johnston, despite his age, expressed a desire to be involved in the recruiting and training of the men. After some thought, the Corps agreed to grant him a waiver and allowed him to enlist in the Marine Corps at the rank of Staff Sergeant. Johnston would only remain in uniform for a short time; but he would always have the satisfaction of knowing he had been the driving force behind a program that would benefit the Corps for years to come.

Shortly after the initial recruit training at the San Diego Depot, the group was sent to Camp Pendleton for training in standard radio procedures. After their primary skills had been honed, Johnston and his compatriots began putting into place the system that would protect critical Marine battlefield communications for the duration of the war. At first glance, it would seem that the language itself would be enough to provide the required level of security. However, the Marine Crops realized they could make the system virtually unbreakable by further encoding the language through word substitution. In addition, because the Navajo language contained no words to describe the modern implements of war, the trainees took familiar words from their language and applied them to items

such as tanks (turtles) and planes (birds). Finally, in order to protect the code from falling into enemy hands, the aforementioned system was committed to memory. This intense training regimen achieved the desired goal of making the code undecipherable to everyone but the Code Talkers.

From Guadalcanal to Okinawa

The work of the men of the Marine Corps in its conquering of the strategic islands and atolls of the South Pacific is one of the great success stories of modern warfare. Many were responsible for their success, but it cannot be denied that the Code Talkers played a critical role. Whenever they were employed, whether it was on Saipan or Tarawa, Peleliu or Guam, they performed brilliantly.

On Iwo Jima, the Marines fought an entrenched enemy in caves and redoubts, from one end of the island to the other. In many cases the enemy could only be dislodged through fierce hand-to-hand combat, followed up by grenades and flamethrowers. When the battle began, 20,000 Japanese troops occupied the island; 36 days later, at battle's end, only 1,083 members of the Imperial Army were left. In this kind of environment, any advantage one could gain over the enemy was welcomed. In this regard, the Code Talkers, and their ability to provide secure communications, were a godsend.

The record shows that despite the horrific conditions previously described, during the first 48 hours on Iwo Jima, 6 Code Talkers working 24-hour shifts sent and received over 800 messages, all without error. Major Howard, the 5th Marines Division Signal Officer, stated succinctly that, "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would have never taken the island." The work of the Navajos on Iwo Jima was impressive, but the larger point is that wherever they did their work they provided an indispensable advantage to those who wore the Globe and Anchor.

Semper Fi

At war's end, Johnston, ever the believer in the Code Talkers' abilities, sought to make the program permanent, but was ultimately turned down. Instead, like millions of other American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, the Navajo Code Talkers returned to their homes and their families. Of the 400 or so Code Talkers who fought on the unforgiving battlefields of the South Pacific, 13 never returned. Those who lived would have the privilege of knowing that they played an indispensable role in protecting critical information from the enemy and in saving countless lives. Even today, when communications circle the globe and the universe at lightning speed, their accomplishments serve as an outstanding example of what can happen when cryptologic brilliance is combined with linguistic expertise and dedication to duty.

Navajo Night Chant

Very few Native American songs have been accurately translated into English, although a number of relatively recent songs or prayers use English as their original language. In fact, many Native American and First Nations songs do not use a fixed language at all, but rely on vocables, which are impromptu words without a specific meaning but whose sound fits the song.

Words are not necessarily an essential component of songs, sung poems, or even certain prayer ceremonies. Although this is sometimes a difficult concept for non-Natives, many of our most important songs and musical chants rely wholly on vocables and a drum beat that can be either simple or quite complex.

Here is a song (or poem) used by the Navajo Nation as a prayer in the healing ceremony known as the Night Chant. It uses fixed words and phrases, and is recited to a rhythmic ceremonial drum beat or, sometimes, to a small spirit drum:

Tségihi,
House made of dawn.
House made of evening light.
House made of the dark cloud.
House made of male rain.
House made of dark mist.
House made of female rain.
House made of pollen.
House made of grasshoppers.
Dark cloud is at the door.
The trail out of it is dark cloud.
The zigzag lightning stands high upon it.
Male deity!
Your offering I make.
I have prepared a smoke for you.
Restore my feet for me.
Restore my legs for me.
Restore my body for me.
Restore my mind for me.
This very day take out your spell for me.
Your spell remove for me.
You have taken it away for me.
Far off it has gone.
Happily I recover.
Happily my interior becomes cool.
Happily I go forth.

My interior feeling cool, may I walk.
No longer sore, may I walk.
Impervious to pain, may I walk.
With lively feeling may I walk.
As it used to be long ago, may I walk.
Happily may I walk.
Happily, with abundant dark clouds, may I walk.
Happily, with abundant showers, may I walk.
Happily, with abundant plants, may I walk.
Happily, on a trail of pollen, may I walk.
Happily may I walk.
Being as it used to be long ago, may I walk.
May it be beautiful before me
May it be beautiful behind me.
May it be beautiful below me.
May it be beautiful above me.
With it be beautiful all around me.
In beauty it is finished.

A Brief Native American Chronology

The chronological history of Native Americans and First Nation peoples is exhaustive. Here are just a few of some of the many momentous events in our history. They occurred during the early settlement era in North America. This time-line focuses on the period between 1778, when the first United States/Native American treaty was signed, until 1841, when the farthest western settlement was occupied:

1778: The first treaty between Native Americans and the United States is negotiated with the Delaware Nation. Natives are offered the opportunity of statehood, which never happens.

1778: The Iroquois Nation, with British regular troops, attacks American settlers in New York and Pennsylvania (Cherry Valley and Wyoming Valley Massacres).

1779: American settlers, led by Generals Sullivan and Clinton, attack several Native American settlements and destroy the foundation of the Iroquois (Native American) League.

1780-1800: Pandemics, including smallpox and measles, spread across Native Nations in Texas, Mexico, and Washington.

1781-1789: The Articles of Confederation are constructed to regulate federal and state relationships. Under these Articles, it is decided that the federal government should regulate the affairs and trade of all Native Americans.

1782: A large Christian contingent of the Delaware Nation is massacred at Gnadenhutten, Ohio.

1783: The Continental Congress proclaims a policy against "squatting" on Native American land. It is never enforced with any consistency.

1784: Congress passes legislation that empowers militia troops to enforce negotiations with Native Americans.

1786: The Secretary of War is appointed in charge of Native American affairs. This is formalized again in 1789.

1787: The Northwest Ordinance defines Native American rights, establishes reservations, and recognizes the sanctity of Native American land. Unfortunately, the ordinance also defines guidelines for the speedy development of the Northwest, resulting in mass settlement into the area.

1787-1789: The federal government is given the sole power to regulate commerce with Native Americans.

1790: Spain cedes the Pacific Northwest to England and the United States, ignoring the indigenous population of the area.

1790-1794: Northwest Nations up rise, resulting in Little Turtle's War, culminating in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794.

1790-1799: Several trade ordinances are passed, which regulate and limit commerce with Native Americans.

1797: A devastating epidemic of smallpox befalls the Natives of Mexico.

1799: Seneca Nation Chief, Handsome Lake, establishes the Longhouse religion.

1800: Silver working becomes a widespread art form among Native Americans, first in the Northeast and eventually reaching the Southwest.

1802: Congress funds programs to "civilize and educate" Native Americans without regard to their own practices and traditions.

1803: The Louisiana Purchase adds large numbers of Native Americans into the population of the United States.

1804: The Louisiana Territory Act outlines the intent of the Federal government to move Native Americans from the eastern United States to the new frontiers in the west.

1805-1820: The explorer, Simon Fraser, becomes the first white man to establish relations with the First Nation peoples of Carrier.

1806: The Office of Superintendent of Indian Trade is established within the War Department. It now has the authority to administer federal Native American trading establishments.

1809: General William H. Harrison signs a treaty and wins 2.5 million acres of Native American land in Ohio and Indiana.

1809-1811: Tecumseh, a Chief of the Shawnee Nation, leads a rebellion of indigenous peoples from the Northwest, South, and Mississippi against the Federal government. By 1811, the rebellion is defeated.

1809-1821: Cherokee Nation Chief Sequoyah creates the first alphabet among Native Americans.

1812-1815: In the War of 1812 between the United States and England, Tecumseh, who is made a general for the British, is killed in 1813.

1812-1841: Russian settlers occupy Fort Ross in California, permanently displacing many Pomo Native Americans.

1830: The Indian Removal Act is passed, which demands the mass relocation of eastern Native Americans to areas west of the Mississippi River. This Act eventually results in the Trail of Tears debacle, which occurred in 1838-1839.

1830-1836: George Catlin travels across the plains and creates magnificent paintings of Native Americans.

1832: The Sauk and Fox Nations are involved in the Black Hawk War against the federal government in Illinois and Wisconsin.

1834: Congress creates the U.S. Department of Indian Affairs and passes the Trade and Intercourse Act, which greatly redefines Native American territory and gives the U.S. Army the power to quarantine Native Americans at will.

1835-1842: The Second Seminole Nation War.

1837: A smallpox epidemic devastates the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nations. Further epidemics race through Native American Nations between this date and 1870.

1838: Chief Osceola dies in prison.

1843: The Russian-Greek Orthodox Church establishes the first mission school among Alaskan indigenous peoples.

1846: Paul Kane travels throughout Southern Canada and the Northwest, painting Native American scenes.

1847: An epidemic of measles devastates the Cayuse Nation.

1847-1850: The Cayuse Nation War takes place in Oregon territory.

1848: Commercial whalers arrive in Alaska.

1849: The Bureau of Indian affairs is moved from the War Department to the Department of the Interior.

1850: The first of many treaties between Canada and First Nations peoples is signed.

1850-1851: A bloody war breaks out between California gold miners and the Miwok and Yokut Nations.

1851: The Yuma and Mojave Nations rebel in California and Arizona.

1853-1854: Native American land is liquidated and the state of Kansas and the territory of Nebraska is established.

1853-1856: The federal government enters into 52 treaties with Native American Nations, acquires 174 millions acres of land, and subsequently breaks each and every one of the treaties.

1855-1856: The Yakima War in Washington takes place, involving the Yakima, Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Cayuse Nations.

1855-1856: The Rogue River War takes place in Oregon, involving the Taklmas and Tututnis Nations.

1858: The Coeur d'Alene War (Spokane War) takes place in Washington, involving the Coeur d'Alene, Spokane, Palouse, Yakima, and Northern Paiute Nations.

1860: The Paiute War takes place in Nevada, involving the Southern Paiute Nation.

1861-1863: Chief Cochise and Mangas (Colorado) lead Apache Nation uprisings, which result in the Bascom Affair.

1862: The Homestead Act is passed, allowing settlers to be deeded 160-acre parcels of land after inhabiting it for five years. The act does not recognize prior Native American territory.

1862-1863: The Santee and Teton Sioux Nations revolt under the leadership of Chief Little Crow. When the Native Americans are finally defeated, more than two dozen are hanged for their roles in the uprising.

1863: The Shoshoni War (Bear River Campaign) takes place in Utah and Idaho, involving the Western Shoshoni Nation.

1863-1866: The Navajo War takes place in New Mexico and Arizona.

1864-1865: The Cheyenne-Arapaho War takes place in Colorado and Kansas resulting in a massacre of more than 300 Native Americans at Sand Creek.

1866: The Railroad Enabling Act takes away vast Native American land for railway use.

1866-1869: The Bozeman Trail War takes place in Wyoming and Montana, involving the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations under the leadership of Chief Red Cloud. Hostilities cease with the second Fort Laramie Treaty.

1866-1868: The Snake War takes place in Oregon and Idaho, involving the Yahuskin and Walpapi Nations.

1867: The British North American Act establishes the Confederation of Canada. The U.S. purchases Alaska from Russia.

1867: The Treaty of Medicine Lodge is signed. Plains Native American leaders receive permanent land within the "Indian Territory" of the United States. This same year, the Peace Commission makes a study of "Indian affairs" and recommends that the treaty process in place be permanently abandoned.

1868: Native Americans are denied the right to vote under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

1868-1869: The Southern Plains War takes place, involving the Cheyenne, Sioux, Arapaho, Kiowa and Comanche Nations.

1869: Brigadier General Ely Parker, a member of the Seneca Nation, becomes the first "Indian Commissioner" (Bureau of Indian Affairs). He serves for two years.

1869-1870: A smallpox epidemic devastates the Canadian First Nations of Blackfeet, Piegan, and Bloods.

1870: U.S. President Grant removes control of Native American agencies from the Army and gives them to 12 different Christian denominations.

1871: Congress passes a law forbidding further treaties with Native Americans. U.S. General Sheridan forbids Native Americans in the western U.S. to leave their reservations without the permission of civilian agents. A massive desecration of Native American burial grounds takes place by settlers stealing human bones to make buttons.

1872-1873: The Modoc War takes place in California, involving Chief Captain Jack and the Modoc Nation. At the end of the War, Captain Jack is hanged.

1874-1875: The Red River War takes place on the southern plains, involving the Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne Nations.

1876: The Canadian Indian Act is passed, which allows First Nations peoples to gain individual Canadian rights but only if they renounce their Native rights and privileges.

1876-1877: The Sioux War for the Black Hills takes place under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. It involves the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Nations. In 1876, the Battle of Little Bighorn takes place.

1877: Under the leadership of Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce flee to the Northwest.

1878: The Bannock War takes place in Idaho and Washington, involving the Bannock, Northern Paiute and Cayuse Nations.

1879: A federal court in Nebraska grants Native Americans the right to bring suit.

1881: Sitting Bull and his small band of fighters surrender at Fort Buford, North Dakota.

1881-1886: Geronimo leads his men in a long resistance movement, which eventually ends with his surrender in 1886.

1884: Canada outlaws the Potlatch Ceremony among Northwest Coastal First Nations.

1885: The last large herd of buffalo is exterminated.

1887: Congress passes the Dawes Act, which results in Native Americans losing millions of acres of their land.

1889: The Land Run results in over 2 million acres of land being transferred from Native Americans to European settlers.

1890: The infamous Wounded Knee Massacre takes place, resulting in the murder of 350 members of the Sioux Nation.

The Medicine Man Myth

The terms "medicine man" and "shaman" are commonly used by non-Natives to express certain roles in our Native culture. Even among ourselves, these terms are used quite often, although with a different understanding of their meaning. Neither term has a basis in traditional Native culture. Both terms come from non-Native sources, although they do (somewhat) represent important and recognized roles in our culture.

In traditional Native practices, the names of "medicine men" or "shamans" are not used in a public setting but are reserved for our various Native tongues and private ceremonies. Still, even these misnomers are not entirely objectionable. We understand how they came about and why they are so common these days. Although ultra-traditionalists among us might object to these labels, most of us have come to accept the use of the terms, at least somewhat. What is problematic for us is a deeper truth–that the role of the "medicine man" or "shaman" is so often misunderstood and even misused.

Within each Nation there are certain individuals who are recognized as especially spiritual individuals, as spiritual community leaders. The common perception is that these individuals are usually male. However, this is far from accurate. Our Spiritual Elders are male, female and two-spirit, depending upon the Nation, the lineage, and the training that is undertaken. A Spiritual Elder is viewed as a person who has committed his or her life to a certain critical role in the community. He or she has spent decades learning the spiritual ways, and being a community Spiritual Elder is their lifelong task.

Spiritual Elders often follow in the footsteps of a close relative or under the continuing guidance of another Elder, who is already recognized as a powerful Spiritual Elder. In other words, there is a long, arduous apprenticeship that is required to walk this specialized kind of spiritual path. It is certainly not for the lazy or faint-hearted.

Spiritual Elders may specialize their skills and knowledge into certain tasks. Some will focus on traditional healing of the body or mind. Others may follow a path that guides the community through visions or interpretations. Many are considered great teachers in their areas of specialization. All of them are given the highest respect in our culture because, next to the Chief, they are considered exceptionally powerful individuals.

Sadly, the concept of "medicine man" has drifted over to non-Native society with some very unwholesome effects. It's not unusual to find charlatan medicine men who are willing to provide a service for money. This is abhorrent to our culture

and we view it as one of the worst forms of disrespect that can be imagined. For this reason (and others), we guard this important role as much as possible and do not allow our Spiritual Elders to become victimized by non-Native interference. This is a tragedy because so many people could benefit from the wisdom and skills of our Spiritual Elders. However, the risk is not worth the reward, at least from our point of view.

A truly Spiritual Elder is an exceptionally powerful and magnetic individual. The decades of arduous training, their inherent wisdom, and their total commitment to the good of the community make them individuals worthy of our highest respect. They are among our most precious resources and we will protect and honor them throughout their lifetimes. For our non-Native brothers and sisters, do not expect to easily find a true Spiritual Elder. They are quiet, hidden away, and reluctant to allow their wisdom and skills to be misused or misinterpreted. Anyone who makes such a claim is absolutely not a true Spiritual Elder, so beware.

Native Pride

Since the 1970s, the term "Native pride" has become a recognizable concept in the English language of North America. Judging by the number of hats, tee-shirts, and other adornments that bear this phrase, there must be a fairly robust market for the idea. However, there is no such thing as a "Native Pride Movement," nor is there even a structured base of individuals who somehow organize members for the purpose of expressing pride in our traditions or beliefs. The concept remains as it has always been–an idea whose time has come, but nothing more.

For many of us who are elders, memories of our Native American or First Nations roots carry with them a sense of shame and discomfort. For too many generations, our people were reluctant to even admit to their own heritage because of the pervasive racism that smothered our cultures and limited our rights in this country. If we wanted to "fit in," we had to cut our hair, dress like our non-Native friends, and stay away from many of our traditions, most of which were viewed as "unhealthy" or "pagan." Consequently, many of us buried our Native natures and only let them loose when we were in the presence of other Native Americans or First Nations people, or on our own land. The upshot of these generations of hiding resulted in the loss of many of our languages and traditions, which can never be retrieved. This was a true cultural tragedy, as "reservations" were drained of our younger people, taking away our future. Fortunately, in recent years, this trend has been somewhat reversed as many of our younger people are rediscovering their roots and even returning to our land.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a number of Native American leaders took us in a different direction in thinking about our heritage. The concept of "Native pride" was born and took root, replacing the decades of embarrassment and shame. Not all of our actions during this early period were in the best Native traditions. Violence again became a problem on all sides. However, we also began to let our Native natures breath the air that other Americans and Canadians had enjoyed since the early settlement days. In the end, this grass-roots movement gave us much and helped open the hearts and minds of many who thought ill of us.

Our best Native teachings warn us against pride, which is something we share in common with most non-Natives. However, we spent so many years hiding away from ourselves that it became a blessing to freely express our Native beliefs and practices. This freedom reflects the highest meaning of the term "Native pride." We can be rightfully proud of our heritage, just as proud as any other member of our society. However, we should never be so proud as to cut ourselves off from others or blind ourselves to who we are and the culture that we represent.

Trickster Tales

Trickster tales are a staple of Native culture. They are meant to pass on important lessons and provide guidance from our Elders. Often, they indirectly tell us how to keep our proper place in a much larger, more complex world. They are humbling and humorous.

The following trickster tale is known as "Manabozho's Adventures." It is primarily of Ojibwa origin and was first published in 1929 by Stith Thompson in "Tales of the North American Indians":

At Lake St. Clair, Manabozho saw a number of ducks, and he thought to himself, "Just how am I going to kill them?" After a while, he took out one of his pails and started to drum and sing at the same time. The words of the song he sang were," I am bringing new songs."

When the ducks saw Manabozho standing near the shore, they swam toward him and as soon as he saw this, he sent his grandmother ahead to build a little lodge where they could live. In the meantime, he killed a few of the ducks, so, while his grandmother started out to build a shelter, Manabozho went towards the lake where the ducks and geese were floating around and around. Manabozho jumped into a sack and then dived into the water.

The ducks and geese were quite surprised to see that he was such an excellent diver, and came closer and closer. Then Manabozho challenged them to a contest at diving. He said that he could beat them all. The ducks all accepted the challenge, but Manabozho beat them. Then he went after the geese and beat them too. For a time he was alternately diving and rising to the surface, all around.

Finally he dived under the geese and started to tie their legs together with some basswood bark. When the geese noticed this, they tried to rise and fly away, but they were unable to do so, for Manabozho was hanging on to the other end of the string. The geese, nevertheless, managed to rise, gradually dragging Manabozho along with them. They finally emerged from the water and rose higher and higher into the air. Manabozho, however, hung on, and would not let go, until his hand was cut and the string broke.

While walking along the river he saw some berries in the water. He dived down for them, but was stunned when he unexpectedly struck the bottom. There he lay for quite a while, and when he recovered consciousness and looked up, he saw the berries hanging on a tree just above him.

While Manabozho was once walking along a lake shore, tired and hungry, he observed a long, narrow sandbar, which extended far out into the water, around

which were myriads of waterfowl, so Manabozho decided to have a feast. He had with him only his medicine bag; so he entered the brush and hung it upon a tree, now called "Manabozho tree," and procured a quantity of bark, which he rolled into a bundle and placing it upon his back, returned to the shore, where he pretended to pass slowly by in sight of the birds. Some of the Swans and Ducks, however, recognizing Manabozho and becoming frightened, moved away from the shore.

One of the Swans called out, "Ho! Manabozho, where are you going?" To this Manabozho replied, "I am going to have a song. As you may see, I have all my songs with me." Manabozho then called out to the birds, "Come to me, my brothers, and let us sing and dance."

The birds assented and returned to the shore, when all retreated a short distance away from the lake to an open space where they might dance. Manabozho removed the bundle of bark from his back and placed it on the ground, got out his singing-sticks, and said to the birds, "Now, all of you dance around me as I drum; sing as loudly as you can, and keep your eyes closed. The first one to open his eyes will forever have them red and sore."

Manabozho began to beat time upon his bundle of bark, while the birds, with eyes closed, circled around him singing as loudly as they could. Keeping time with one hand, Manabozho suddenly grasped the neck of a Swan, which he broke; but before he had killed the bird it screamed out, whereupon Manabozho said, "That's right, brothers, sing as loudly as you can."

Soon another Swan fell a victim; then a Goose, and so on until the number of birds was greatly reduced. Then the "Hell-diver," opening his eyes to see why there was less singing than at first, and beholding Manabozho and the heap of victims, cried out, "Manabozho is killing us! Manabozho is killing us!" and immediately ran to the water, followed by the remainder of the birds.

As the "Hell-diver" was a poor runner, Manabozho soon overtook him, and said, "I won't kill you, but you shall always have red eyes and be the laughing-stock of all the birds." With this he gave the bird a kick, sending him far out into the lake and knocking off his tail, so that the "Hell-diver" is red-eyed and tailless to this day.

Manabozho then gathered up his birds, and taking them out upon the sandbar buried them–some with their heads protruding, others with the feet sticking out of the sand. He then built a fire to cook the game, but as this would require some time, and as Manabozho was tired after his exertion, he stretched himself on the ground to sleep. In order to be informed if anyone approached, he slapped his thigh and said to it, "You watch the birds, and awaken me if anyone should come near them." Then, with his back to the fire, he fell asleep.

After awhile a party of Indians came along in their canoes, and seeing the feast in store, went to the sandbar and pulled out every bird which Manabozho had so carefully placed there, but put back the heads and feet in such a way that there was no indication that the bodies had been disturbed. When the Indians had finished eating they departed, taking with them all the food that remained from the feast.

Some time afterward, Manabozho awoke, and, being very hungry, bethought himself to enjoy the fruits of his stratagem. In attempting to pull a baked swan from the sand he found nothing but the head and neck, which he held in his hand. Then he tried another, and found the body of that bird also gone. So he tried another, and then another, but each time met with disappointment. Who could have robbed him?" he thought. He struck his thigh and asked, "Who has been here to rob me of my feast; did I not command you to watch while I slept?" His thigh responded, "I also fell asleep, as I was very tired; but I see some people moving rapidly away in their canoes; perhaps they were the thieves. I see also they are very dirty and poorly dressed."

Then Manabozho ran out to the point of the sandbar, and beheld the people in their canoes, just disappearing around a point of land. Then he called to them and reviled them, calling them "Winnibe'go! Winnibe'go! " And by this term the Menomini have ever since designated their thievish neighbors.

After this Manabozho began traveling again. One time he feasted a lot of animals. He had killed a big bear, which was very fat and he began cooking it, having made a fire with his bow-drill. When he was ready to spread his meat, he heard two trees scraping together, swayed by the wind. He didn't like this noise while he was having his feast and he thought he could stop it. He climbed up one of the trees and when he reached the spot where the two trees were scraping, his foot got caught in a crack between the trees and he could not free himself.

When the first animal guest came along and saw Manabozho in the tree, he, the Beaver, said "Come on to the feast, Manabozho is caught and can't stop us." And then the other animals came. The Beaver jumped into the grease and ate it, and the Otter did the same, and that is why they are so fat in the belly. The Beaver scooped up the grease and smeared it on himself, and that is the reason why he is so fat now. All the small animals came and got fat for themselves.

Last of all the animals came the Rabbit, when nearly all the grease was gone - only a little left. So he put some on the nape of his neck and some on his groin and for this reason he has only a little fat in those places. So all the animals got their fat except Rabbit. Then they all went, and poor Manabozho got free at last. He looked around and found a bear's skull that was all cleaned except for the brain, and there was only a little of that left, but he couldn't get at it. Then he

wished himself to be changed into an ant in order to get into the skull and get enough to eat, for there was only about an ant's meal left.

Then he became an ant and entered the skull. When he had enough he turned back into a man, but he had his head inside the skull; this allowed him to walk but not to see. On account of this he had no idea where he was. Then he felt the trees. He said to one, "What are you?" It answered, "Cedar."

He kept doing this with all the trees in order to keep his course. When he got too near the shore, he knew it by the kind of trees he met. So he kept on walking and the only tree that did not answer promptly was the black spruce, and that said "I'm Se'segandak" (black spruce). Then Manabozho knew he was on low ground. He came to a lake, but he did not know how large it was, as he couldn't see. He started to swim across. An Ojibwa was paddling on the lake with his family and he heard someone calling, "Hey! There's a bear swimming across the lake." Manabozho became frightened at this and the Ojibwa then said, "He's getting near the shore now."

So Manabozho swam faster, and as he could understand the Ojibwa language, he guided himself by the cries. He landed on a smooth rock, slipped and broke the bear's skull, which fell off his head. Then the Ojibwa cried out, "That's no bear! That's Manabozho!" Manabozho was all right, now that he could see, so he ran off, as he didn't want to stay with these people.

The First White Man (Cheyenne)

An old Cheyenne legend, which is both hopeful and bittersweet in the context of history. Pay special attention to the last gift given to Red Eagle:

In a summer long ago, the Cheyennes were camped near some lakes beyond the Missouri River. Awakening from their sleep one morning, Red Eagle and his wife saw a strange creature lying in their tepee. The woman was frightened and was about to cry out, but Red Eagle quieted her and went closer to the strange being which was slowly rising to a sitting position. Red Eagle saw that this creature was a man who looked something like a Cheyenne, but he had a white skin and hair on his face and spoke in a strange language.

The man was so thin that he had scarcely any flesh on his bones, and for clothing he wore only moss and grass. He was very near death. Red Eagle gave him something to eat, but at first the man was so weak and exhausted that his stomach would not hold it, yet after a little while he got stronger.

Red Eagle told his wife to keep the presence of the stranger a secret. He feared that some of his tribesmen would kill the man, believing that he might bring them bad luck. A few days later, the chiefs sent a crier through the camp, announcing that the Cheyennes would be moving camp the next day.

Knowing that the stranger could no longer be concealed, Red Eagle revealed his presence. "I have taken him for my brother," he said. "If anyone harms him I will punish them. The Great Spirit must have sent this man to us for a good reason."

And so Red Eagle clothed him, fed him, and led him back to life. After a time the man learned to speak a few words of Cheyenne. He also learned the sign language of the tribe. In this way he was able to tell Red Eagle that he came from the East, the land of the rising sun. "With five other men I started out to trap the beaver. We were on a lake in a boat when the wind came up suddenly, overturned the boat, and drowned all the others. After I struggled ashore, I wandered about, living on roots and berries until all my clothes were worn and scratched off. Half blind, and nearly dead with hunger, I wandered into your camp and fell into your tepee."

For the hundredth time the man thanked Red Eagle for saving his life, and then he continued: "For many days I have watched how hard you and your wife work. To make a fire you must use two sticks. Your wife uses porcupine quills for needles in sewing. She uses stone vessels to cook in, and you use stone knives and stone points for your spears and arrows. You must work hard and long to make these things. My people, who are powerful and numerous, have many wonderful things that the Cheyennes do not have."

"What are these wonderful things?" Red Eagle asked.

"Needles that keep their points forever for your wife to sew with. Sharp knives of metal to cut with, steel to make a fire with, and a weapon that uses a black powder and sends hard pieces of metal straight at any wild game you need to kill. I can bring you these things if you and your people will help me get beaver skins. My people are fond of beaver fur, and they will give me these wonderful things for you in exchange."

Red Eagle told his tribesmen what the stranger had said, and they collected many beaver skins for him. The skins were loaded on several travois drawn by dogs, and one day the stranger went off toward the rising sun with his dog-train of furs.

Several moons passed, and Red Eagle began to wonder if the stranger would ever return. Then on a bright sun shiny morning, the Cheyennes heard a noise like a clap of thunder near their camp. On a bluff to the east, they saw a man wearing a red cap and red coat. Above his head he lifted a strange weapon that resembled a black stick, and then he shouted a greeting to them in their own language.

As he approached, they recognized him as the stranger who had taken away the beaver skins. He had brought the Cheyennes all the wonderful things he had told about–knives, needles and steel — and he showed the people how to use them. Then he showed them the black powder and hollow iron with which he had made the noise like thunder. And that is how the first white man came to the Cheyennes.

American Indian Movement (AIM)

The American Indian Movement (AIM) is now over 30 years old. Here is a brief chronology of AIM as compiled by Laura Waterman Wittstock and Elaine J. Salinas. It highlights a few of the organizational accomplishments over the years. Regardless of your views about AIM and its activities, there is no doubt that the organization has changed our cultural views, both Native and non-Native, and heightened awareness of significant social issues that have impacted all Native American and First Nations peoples:

1968 - MINNEAPOLIS AIM PATROL created to address issues of extensive police brutality.

1969 - ALCATRAZ ISLAND occupied for 19 months. AIM was there when United Indians of All Tribes reclaimed federal land in the name of Native Nations. First Indian radio broadcasts–Radio Free Alcatraz–heard in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

1969 - INDIAN HEALTH BOARD of Minneapolis founded. This is the first Indian urban-based health care provider in the nation.

1970 - LEGAL RIGHTS CENTER created to assist in alleviating legal issues facing Indian people. By 1994, over 19,000 clients had legal representation, thanks to AIM's founding of the Legal Rights Center.

1970 - AIM takeover of abandoned property at the naval air station near Minneapolis focuses attention on Indian education and leads to early grants for Indian education.

1970 - CITIZEN'S ARREST OF JOHN OLD CROW: Takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' main office in Washington D.C. to show improper BIA policies. 24 arrested for "trespassing" and released. BIA Commissioner Louis Bruce shows his AIM membership card at the meeting held after the release of those arrested.

1970 - FIRST NATIONAL AIM CONFERENCE: 18 chapters of AIM convened to develop long-range strategy for future directions of the movement.

1970 - TAKEOVER OF DAM: AIM assists the Lac Court Orieles Ojibwa in Wisconsin in taking over a dam controlled by Northern States Power which flooded much of the reservation land. This action leads to support by government officials and eventual settlement, returning over 25,000 acres of land to the tribe and actually providing significant monies and business opportunities to the tribe.

1972 - RED SCHOOL HOUSE: the second survival school to open, offering culturally based education services to K-12 students in St. Paul, MN.

1972 - HEART OF THE EARTH SURVIVAL SCHOOL: a K-12 school established to address the extremely high drop-out rate among American Indian students and lack of cultural programming. HOTESS serves as the first model of community-based, student-centered education with culturally correct curriculum operating under parental control.

1972 - TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES: a march on Washington, DC ending in the occupation of BIA headquarters and resulting in the presentation of a 20-point solution paper to President Nixon.

1973 - LEGAL ACTION FOR SCHOOL FUNDS: In reaction to the Trail of Broken Treaties the government abruptly canceled education grants to Heart of the Earth Survival School, Red School House and the Indian Community School of Milwaukee. Through successful legal action, the US District Court orders the grants restored and government payment of costs and attorney fees.

1973 - WOUNDED KNEE '73: AIM was contacted by Lakota elders for assistance in dealing with the corruption within the BIA and Tribal Council, which led to the famed 71-day occupation and battle with the U.S. armed forces.

1974 - INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL (IITC): an organization representing Indian peoples throughout the western hemisphere at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

1974 - WOUNDED KNEE TRIALS: Eight months of trials in Minneapolis resulted from events which occurred during the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation. This was the longest Federal trial in the history of the United States. Many instances of government misconduct were revealed with the result that US District judge Fred Nichol dismissed all charges due to government "misconduct" which "formed a pattern throughout the course of the trial" so that "the waters of justice have been polluted."

1975 - FEDERATION OF SURVIVAL SCHOOLS: created to provide advocacy and networking skills to 16 survival schools throughout the US and Canada.

1975 - LITTLE EARTH OF UNITED TRIBES: HUD chose AIM to be the prime sponsor of the first Indian-run housing project.

1977 - MIGIZI Communications founded in Minneapolis. The organization is dedicated to produce Indian news and information and educate students of all ages as tomorrow's technical work force.

1975 - INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL: establishes Non-government organization status within United Nations in Geneva and attends the International NGO conference and presents testimony to the United Nations.

1975 - AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE LEGISLATION: AIM introduces legislative language which is adopted, recognizing State responsibility for Indian education and culture. This legislation was recognized as a model throughout the country.

1978 - FIRST EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR AMERICAN INDIAN OFFENDERS: AIM establishes the first adult education program at Stillwater Prison in Minnesota. Programs later established at other state correctional facilities modeled after the Minnesota program.

1978 - CIRCLE OF LIFE SURVIVAL SCHOOL established on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota. The school receives funding for three years of operation from the U.S. Department of Education.

1978 - RUN FOR SURVIVAL: AIM youth organize and conduct 500-mile run from Minneapolis to Lawrence, Kansas to support "The Longest Walk."

1978 - THE LONGEST WALK: Indian Nations walk across the US from California to DC to protest anti-Indian legislation calling for the abrogation of treaties. A tipi is set up and maintained on the grounds of the White House. The proposed anti-Indian legislation is defeated.

1978 - WOMEN OF ALL RED NATIONS (WARN): established to address issues directly facing Indian women and their families.

1979 - LITTLE EARTH HOUSING PROTECTED: an attempt by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to foreclose on the Little Earth of United Tribes housing project is halted by legal action and the US District Court issues an injunction against HUD.

1979 - AMERICAN INDIAN OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION CENTER (AIOIC): creates job training schools to attack the outrageous unemployment issues of Indian people. Over 17,000 Native Americans have been trained for jobs since AIM created the American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center in 1979.

1979 - ANISHINABE AKEENG Organization is created to regain stolen and tax forfeited land on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota.

1984 - FEDERATION of NATIVE CONTROLLED SURVIVAL SCHOOLS presents

legal education seminars for educators of Indian children at colleges and law schools in Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, South Dakota, Nebraska and Oklahoma. National conference held in San Jose, California, concurrent with the National Indian Education Association Convention.

1986 - SCHOOLS LAWSUIT: Heart of the Earth and Red School House– successfully sue the U.S. Department of Education, Indian Education Programs for unfairly ranking the schools' programs below funding recommendation levels. The schools proved bias in the system of ranking by the Department staff.

1987 - AIM PATROL: Minneapolis AIM Patrol comes full circle in restarting the Patrol to deal with the serial killings of American Indian women in Minneapolis.

1988 - ELAINE STATELY INDIAN YOUTH SERVICES (ESIYS): developed to create alternatives for youth as a direct diversion to gang-involvement of Indian youth.

1988 - FORT SNELLING AIM ANNUAL POW WOW: With the 20th Anniversary of AIM, an annual pow wow is established at historic Fort Snelling. The event becomes the largest Labor Day Weekend event in any Minnesota state park.

1989 - SPEARFISHING: AIM is requested to provide expertise in dealing with angry protesters on boat landings. Spearfishing continues despite violence, arrests, and threats from white racists. Senator Daniel Inouye calls for a study on the effects of Indian spearfishing. The study shows only 6% of fish taken are by Indians. Sports fishing accounts for the rest.

1991 - PEACEMAKER CENTER: with an American Indian spiritual base, AIM houses its AIM Patrol and ESIYS in a center in the heart of the Indian community.

1991 - SUNDANCE RETURNED TO MINNESOTA. With the support of the Dakota communities, a great spiritual rebirth took place at Pipestone, Minnesota. Ojibwe nations, too, have helped make the Minnesota Sundance possible. The Pipestone Sundance has since become an annual event.

In 1991, leaders of the Oglala Lakota, Cheyenne and other nations declared independence from the United States. The group established a provisional government and began the other work of developing a separate nation.

1991 - NATIONAL COALITION ON RACISM IN SPORTS AND MEDIA: organized to address the use of Indians as sports team mascots. AIM led a walk in Minneapolis to the 1992 Superbowl. In 1994, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune agreed to stop using professional sports team names that refer to Indian people.

1992 - THE FOOD CONNECTION: organized summer youth jobs program with an organic garden and spiritual camp (Common Ground) at Tonkawood Farm in Orono MN.

1993 - EXPANSION OF AMERICAN INDIAN OIC JOB TRAINING PROGRAM: the Grand Metropolitan, Inc. of Great Britain, a parent of the Pillsbury Corporation merges its job training program with that of AIOIC and pledges future monies and support.

1993 - LITTLE EARTH: after an 18-year struggle, HUD secretary Cisneros rules that Little Earth of United Tribes housing project shall retain the right to Indian preference.

1993 - WOUNDED KNEE ANNIVERSARY: Gathering for a twentieth anniversary of the Wounded Knee action, Oglala Sioux tribal president thanks AIM for the 1973 actions.

1996 - As a representative of the American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council (AIMGGC) and special representative of the International Indian Treaty Council, Vernon Bellecourt along with William A. Means, President of IITC, attended the Preparatory Meeting for the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism hosted by the Emiliano Zapata Liberation Movement (EZLN), held in LaRealidad in the Lancondone Rainforest of Eastern Chiapaz, Mexico

1996 - The second meeting for the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism was again hosted by the EZLN and was attended by delegates of the International Indian Treaty Council and the American Indian Movement.

1998 - 25th Anniversary of Wounded Knee, an Oglala Lakota Nation resolution established February 27th as a National Day of Liberation.

1998 - 25th Annual Lac Courte Oreilles Honor the Earth Homecoming Celebration to celebrate and honor the people of Lac Courte Oreilles and the American Indian Movement who participated in the July 31, 1971 takeover of the Winter Dam and the Birth of Honor the Earth.

1998 - 30th Anniversary of the American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council; Sacred Pipestone Quarries in Pipestone, Minnesota. Welcoming Feast and Celebration/Conference commemorating AIM's 30th Anniversary.

1999 - Three activists working with a group of UÕwa Indians in Colombia kidnapped by rebels. Ingrid Washinawatok, 41 (Menominee), a humanitarian, Terence Freitas, 24, an environmental scientist from Santa Cruz, California, and

LaheÕenaÕe Gay, 39 of Hawaii were seized near the village of Royota, in Arauca province in northeastern Colombia on Thursday, February 25th while preparing to leave the territory of the UÕwa after a two week on-site visit. Ingrid, Lahe and Terence were kidnapped by armed gunmen in Uw'a Indian Territory of northeastern Columbia. On March 5th, their brutalized and bullet-riddled bodies were discovered across the border in Venezuela.

2000 - AIM 32nd Anniversary Conference on the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation Reservation in northern Wisconsin

2000 – Commission to seek justice for Ingrid Washinawatok and companions established.

2001 – Representatives of the American Indian Movement Grand Governing Council attend the Zapatista Army of National Liberation March for Peace, Justice and Dignity, Zocolo Plaza, Mexico City.

2001 – 11th Annual Youth & Elders International Cultural Gathering and Sundance, Pipestone, Minnesota

2001 – Civil lawsuit for false arrest brought by five anti-wahoo demonstrators against the city of Cleveland

2001 – The American Indian Forum on Racism in Sports and Media, Black Bear Crossing, St. Paul, Minnesota

2002 – 12th Annual International Youth & Elders Cultural Gathering and Sundance, Pipestone, Minnesota

2003- Quarterly Meeting of the AIM National Board of Directors, Thunderbird House, Winnipeg, Manitoba

2003 – 13th Annual International Youth & Elders Cultural Gathering and Sundance, Pipestone, Minnesota

2004 - 14th Annual International Youth & Elders Cultural Gathering and Sundance, Honor Your Grandparents: Wisdom Keeper of Tomorrow, Pipestone, Minnesota

2005 – First Annual Clyde H. Bellecourt Endowment Scholarship Fund and Awards Banquet, Minneapolis Convention Center

2005 – 15th Annual International Youth & Elders Cultural Gathering and Sundance, International Prayer Vigil for the Earth, Pipestone, Minnesota

2006 – Second Annual Clyde H. Bellecourt Endowment Scholarship Fund and Awards Banquet, Minneapolis Convention Center

2006 - 16th Annual International Youth & Elders Cultural Gathering and Sundance, Pipestone, Minnesota

Curtis and the Apache Nation

Sadly, there is little authentic information available about many of our Nations and how they existed in the pre-settlement days of North America. However, more information is available about our later history. One of the great chroniclers of the settlement era was Edward S. Curtis, known world-wide for his beautiful and haunting photographs of Native life.

Here is Curtis' summary of his encounter with the Apache Nation and his observations (excerpted from his book, The North American Indian). His words provide a glimpse into the Apache Nation during a time of transition that changed their way of life forever. Although his "Tribal Summary" shows some lack of understating of Native ways and beliefs, his heart rings true when it comes to keeping an open mind towards our path:

TRIBAL SUMMARY - THE APACHE (by Edward S. Curtis)

Language—Athapascan.

Population—Fort Apache Agency, Arizona (White Mountain Apache), 2,072;

San Carlos Agency: San Carlos Apache, 1,066;

Tonto Apache, 554; Coyoteros, 525; Tonto Apache on Beaver Creek, 103;

Total Apache of Arizona (not including the so-called Mohave Apache and Yuma Apache), 4,320.

Mescaleros in New Mexico, 460; Jicarillas in New Mexico, 784;

Chiricahua Apache at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, 298; Kiowa Apache in Oklahoma, 155;

Grand total of Apache tribes, 6,017.

Dress — The primitive dress of the men was deerskin shirt (epuntltésis), leggings (isklé?tlikai), and moccasins (epú?nke). They were never without the loin-cloth, the one absolutely necessary feature of Indian dress. A deerskin cap (cha), with attractive symbolic ornamentation, was worn; but for the greater part the headgear consisted of a band braided from the long leaves of the yucca, which they placed rather low on the head to keep the hair from the eyes. The dress of the Apache women consisted of a short deerskin skirt, high boot-legged moccasins, and a loose waist which extended to the hips and was worn outside the skirt. Both skirt and waist were ornamented with deerskin fringe and latterly with metal pendants. The men's hair always hangs loose; it is never braided. At

time of mourning the hair is cut horizontally just above the shoulder line. Apache matrons, like the men, do not braid the hair, but let it hang loosely over the shoulders. The maidens tie their hair in a low long knot at the back of the head, to which is fastened a decorated deerskin ornament, denoting maidenhood. So arranged it is called pitsivé?sti, and the wrapping, tsigé?.

Dwellings — The Apache dwelling consists of a dome-shaped frame of cottonwood or other poles, thatched with grass. Average diameter at the base, twelve feet. The house itself they term kówa; the grass thatch, pin. Bear-grass, or what the Spanish term palmillo, is used exclusively in thatching. Since the institution of the Messiah religion the houses are built rather elongate in form, with a doorway in each end, and all the houses of the village are arranged in long rows. Doorways are termed dáitin, or chogúnti, interchangeably. Summer houses are generally built at a distance from the winter houses, in fact wherever the Apache would have occasion to stop, and are little more than brush shelters to afford temporary shade.

Primitive Foods — No tribe is more capable of living on the natural products of their pristine haunts than the Apache. Whether allowed to live peacefully in the river valleys or driven in war to seek protection of impenetrable mountains, nature provided amply for their support; for practically all the flora and fauna indigenous to the Southwest are considered food by the Apache.

Arts and Industries — The art expression of the Apache is manifested chiefly in their basketry, which shows much taste in form and decoration. The tus, an urn-shaped water bottle, is loosely woven of the stems of aromatic sumac, then coated inside and out with piñon gum. The flat tray basket, called tsa-naskú?di, is much used in their domestic life. The most pretentious basket is the immense tus-naskú?di, urn-shaped, like the tus—whence its name—and used principally for the storage of grain. No Apache home is without the burden basket, tú?tza, round and deep, often somewhat conical in form, and invariably decorated with deerskin fringe.

Political Organization — The Apache never had a very stable form of government. Chiefs were elected, or chosen, and ruled so long as it pleased their followers. If the son of a chief proved himself capable, he would be accorded opportunity to rule, otherwise he received no special recognition. Medicine-men were always more influential than the chiefs. Social customs and habits and much of the government of the tribe are guided by the medicine-men; but often they lose all influence by meeting with failure in the treatment of disease. Like the chiefs, the medicine-men depend on popular approval for their success.

Clans — The Coyoteros are divided into five bands, each consisting of a number of clans. In one band there are survivors of one clan only; in other bands as many as seven or eight clans are yet to be found. Descent is reckoned through

the mother; that is, the children belong to the mother's clan, except among the Chiricahua, where, it is said, descent is traced through the father.

Coyotero Clans
Band I

1. Tse Chin (Red Rocks).
2. Glesh Chin (Red Clay).
3. Des Káin (Cottonwood People).
4. Nú?gwu Dilhkízn (Between Two Mountains).
5. Des Lántin (Where the Cottonwoods Meet).
6. Kai Hin Chin (Through the Willows).
7. Kestéchi Nádakin (Ford between Sycamores).

Band II
1. Klúqa Di Káin (Many-reeds People).
2. Il Chen Tián (Long Row of Pines).
3. Chénche Chichíl Káin (Clump-of-oaks People).
4. Tzilh Ádin (By the Mountain).
5. Yakúi Káin (White-hill People).

Band III
1. Ia On Ye (In Black Brush).
2. Ta Káin (Sand People).
3. Tentolzú?ga (Juts into the Water).
4. Dosh To An (Many Flies).
5. Tse Des Káin (White-rock People).
6. Tse Teú?n (Rocks in the River).
7. Tu Dilhkí?h Shan (By the Black Water).
8. Ke Shin Tián (Long Row of Sycamores).

Band IV
1. Nde Ndé?zn (Tall People).

Band V
1. Nádotz Ózn (By Sharp Mountains).
2. Pis A Hón (Bank Caved In).

Arivaipa Clans:
1. Glesh Chin (Red Clay).
2. Des Zepú?n (Big Gray Cottonwoods).
3. Tsez Zhuné? (By the Little Black Rocks).
4. Tse Des Káin (White-rock People).

Chiricahua Clans:
1. Aiahán (People of the East).
2. Nde Ndái (Apache Half Mexican).

3. Cho Kuné? (Ridge on the Mountain-side).
4. Chan Han (Red People).

Marriage — Strictly speaking, barter for women at an agreed price was never the custom among the Apache, so the older of the present generation contend, personal choice on the part of the girl having always to be considered. Nevertheless, payment for the bride is always made to her parents in the form of grain, money, horses, saddles, blankets, or cattle. The bride's consent is necessary, custom requiring the young man to prove his moral strength, and ability to support a wife and himself, by erecting a neat house and permitting the girl of his choice to occupy it with him for four nights without being molested or having her presence observed. By preparing his breakfast the morning following the fourth night the girl acknowledges her willingness to marry, and the agreement as to the definite payment her parents shall receive may be made any time later. She then becomes the man's wife, though a month may sometimes elapse before the agreement is sealed and the consequent payment made.

Genesis — In the unbroken darkness of the beginning of time appeared a small spot, which grew as embryonic life and became a human figure, known in the myth as Kúterastan, The One Who Lives Above. This creator then made light, and next Stenátlihan, Woman Without Parents. Next he created Chuganaái, The Sun, and following him Hádintin Skhin, Pollen Boy. The creator next made the earth, and then the other gods of the Apache pantheon. Following their creation he instructed the various gods in their respective duties, and then disappeared into the sky through the smoke from a miraculous fire.

Person of Miraculous Birth — Stenátlihan, a goddess, is the mother of two boys, who perform miracles and act as saviors of the people. The elder brother, Nayé?nezgani, conceived by the Sun, is the more active and is revered as the God of War. To Tubadzischí?ni, conceived by Water, is ascribed the making of the ocean as it now is, and he is supposed to have much to do with water in the form of rain and snow.

Ceremonies — The ceremonies are invariably called "dances." Among these are: a rain dance, a puberty rite, a harvest or good-crop dance, and a spirit dance. The medicine dance is the creation of a medicine-man and varies with his individual views. The ceremonial paraphernalia of the other four dances may vary in accordance with the dictates of the medicine-man, but for the greater part follows prescribed formula. The Apache are devoutly religious and pray on many occasions and in various ways: sometimes with the aid of little images representing gods, sometimes with painted deerskins and caps, and sometimes by merely facing the cardinal points and scattering pollen to the four winds for the gods from whom they seek favor. Usually the plants employed by them as medicine are dug in a ceremonial way, one notable exception being the gathering of pollen, no prayers being offered at that time. In secluded spots in

the hills and mountains are found round cairns, with cedar and other twigs deposited upon them. These are shrines at which the Apache make offerings to their favorite gods. The medicine ceremonies are very numerous and vary with the dreams and personal views of the medicine-man who conducts them.

Burial — Everywhere throughout the hills and mountains of the reservation one finds small heaps of stones. In most instances these mark Apache graves. A favorite place of burial is a[pg 134] cleft in the rocks, in which the body is placed by the deceased's relatives and covered with stones. These small stones are always deposited one at a time, the Apache believing that to put them on the body all at once would shorten the life of the one so doing. Infants are usually placed on the upper branches of large cedar or piñon trees. The child is wrapped in its carrier, or cradle-board, which is left face up and covered with any sort of cloth, the belief being that the souls of infants are not strong enough to come out through the stones, should they be placed in the ground and covered therewith.

After-world — Re-created in the human form, Apache spirits are supposed to dwell in a land of peace and plenty, where there is neither disease nor death. The Milky Way is the path of all souls to the after-world. Yólkai Nalí?n is the guardian goddess of this spirit land, and the spirits of the dead are supposed to journey four days before reaching it. Formerly horses were killed beside the grave of the dead, that they might use them in the after-world. For the same reason wearing apparel was also placed at the grave, together with available articles of adornment and accoutrement.

Names for Indian Tribes:

Apache - Nde (The People)
Arivaipa Apache - Chulinné?
Chiricahua Apache - Aiahán (People of the East)
Coyotero Apache - Klinápaha (Many Travel Together)
Havasupai - Dezhí?piklakulh (Women Dress in Bark)
Hopi - Tsekulkinné? (Houses on the Rocks)
Navaho - Yutahán (Live Far Up)
Northern Indians - Nda Yutahán (White-man Navaho)
Pima - Saikinné? (Sand Houses)
Rio Grande Pueblos - Tu Tlú?ni (Much Water)
San Carlos Apache - Tseénlin (Between Rocks)
Tonto Apache - Dilzhá?n (Spatter-talkers), or Koún (Rough)
Zuñi - Nashtizhé? (Blackened Eyebrows)

How the World Was Created

Here is the Cherokee legend of how the world was created. It was first recorded by James Mooney and published in 1900 as a part of the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (1897-98, Part I):

The earth is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this.

When all was water, the animals were above in Gälûñ'lätï, beyond the arch; but it was very much crowded, and they were wanting more room. They wondered what was below the water, and at last Dâyuni'sï, "Beaver's Grandchild," the little Water-beetle, offered to go and see if it could learn. It darted in every direction over the surface of the water, but could find no firm place to rest. Then it dived to the bottom and came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth. It was afterward fastened to the sky with four cords, but no one remembers who did this.

At first the earth was flat and very soft and wet. The animals were anxious to get down, and sent out different birds to see if it was yet dry, but they found no place to alight and came back again to Gälûñ'lätï. At last it seemed to be time, and they sent out the Buzzard and told him to go and make ready for them. This was the Great Buzzard, the father of all the buzzards we see now. He flew all over the earth, low down near the ground, and it was still soft. When he reached the Cherokee country, he was very tired, and his wings began to flap and strike the ground, and wherever they struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain. When the animals above saw this, they were afraid that the whole world would be mountains, so they called him back, but the Cherokee country remains full of mountains to this day.

When the earth was dry and the animals came down, it was still dark, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go every day across the island from east to west, just overhead. It was too hot this way, and Tsiska'gïlï', the Red Crawfish, had his shell scorched a bright red, so that his meat was spoiled; and the Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers put the sun another hand-breadth higher in the air, but it was still too hot. They raised it another time, and another, until it was seven handbreadths high and just under the sky arch. Then it was right, and they left it so. This is why the conjurers call the highest place Gûlkwâ'gine Di'gälûñ'lätiyûñ', "the seventh height," because it is seven hand-breadths above the earth. Every day the sun goes along under this arch, and returns at night on

the upper side to the starting place.

There is another world under this, and it is like ours in everything--animals, plants, and people--save that the seasons are different. The streams that come down from the mountains are the trails by which we reach this underworld, and the springs at their heads are the doorways by which we enter, it, but to do this one must fast and, go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide. We know that the seasons in the underworld are different from ours, because the water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the outer air.

When the animals and plants were first made--we do not know by whom--they were told to watch and keep awake for seven nights, just as young men now fast and keep awake when they pray to their medicine. They tried to do this, and nearly all were awake through the first night, but the next night several dropped off to sleep, and the third night others were asleep, and then others, until, on the seventh night, of all the animals only the owl, the panther, and one or two more were still awake. To these were given the power to see and to go about in the dark, and to make prey of the birds and animals which must sleep at night. Of the trees only the cedar, the pine, the spruce, the holly, and the laurel were awake to the end, and to them it was given to be always green and to be greatest for medicine, but to the others it was said: "Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your, hair every winter."

Men came after the animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since.

A Letter About Death

Sister Blackhawk:

Last night, you asked me what happens when we die. I gave you a very short, probably terse, answer because I've been so conditioned to keep my learning to myself. That was the way I was taught to deal with Native teachings so many years ago and I trust that you understand my reluctance to talk about these things. They are considered sacred to me and not something that is talked about lightly or in an idle way.

Still, your question was a legitimate one and deserves an answer, as best as I can. What I believe is based mostly upon what my spiritual father, Ala:Kalahanamae, passed on to me many years ago. His was an ancient tradition and I believe he was a very wise Elder. Over the years since we parted, I have come to learn just how very wise he was.

The question is not what happens when we die but how we live our lives. If we follow our path according to the teachings we have been given, death is nothing more than turning a page, a shift in how we experience the universe that is an expression of the Great Spirit. Many, perhaps most, people fear death because they fear uncertainty. If we are not completely comfortable with the existence we have been given, we can fall into the trap of fearing the unknown, worrying about what is around the next corner. Our Native teachings lead us to become comfortable with the world as we know it, to learn to live within the Great Spirit and not as an outsider.

The truth of life is that we cannot know what is around the next corner. That is one of the great wonders that the Great Spirit has given us. We are a part of a constantly unfolding, constantly evolving universe which is, itself, an expression of the Great Spirit. Just like all the animals, all living things, the universe around us is always moving, changing, and growing. It is expressing the nature of the Great Spirit, who is constantly self-evolving.

One of the most common causes of fear of death is placing too much emphasis on ourselves. Yes, we are important, as is everything we see around us. But, we are not so important as to be able to understand the universe or control even a small part of it. The beauty of our lives is that we are riding with the Great Spirit on his or her journey, which is a journey of wonderment and fulfillment. We are along for the ride, we are not the driver. When we place ourselves in a self-important role and try to look around the next corner, we will almost surely make a mistake and make ourselves unhappy and worried.

Nothing in the universe disappears. Not only do our old teachings tell us that,

but contemporary knowledge in many of the sciences now point in the same direction. For example, physics has now caught up with the teachings of the Ancient Ones and tells us that our universe is a continuum from which nothing ever appears or disappears. It is a universe of change and evolution, of which are but a small part. Sadly, we delude ourselves into believing that we are somehow a more important piece of the puzzle than we really are. We begin to believe that we are somehow in control of situations and other living beings. This is not only a dangerous delusion, it is an act of disrespect to the Great Spirit, who has created a universe in perfect harmony with itself. It is only us who fail to see and understand that wisdom.

What happens when we die? It's not the right question. It's a question that is based upon fear or a useless act of trying to control, through understanding, that which is not for us to know. We are an expression of the Great Spirit and it is our responsibility to make that expression as pure and straight as we can. This is why, in our tradition, we do not view religious organizations as necessary. They tend to separate us rather than bring us together, which is the essence of the Great Spirit – infinite harmony.

What happens when we die?

We go back home and experience that unity with the Great Spirit. It's not important if we experience it in the same way as we experience our daily lives. Our lives, our many actions and activities, are also an expression of the Great Spirit. The real question is whether or not we are doing our best to make the expression honest.

Look at our brothers and sisters in the animal world. Do they fear death? Do they need to know what happens when they die? Of course not, because they are already perfect expressions of the Great Spirit. It is us who have to work hard to become as wise as our animal friends. We have to overcome Grandfather's great gift of a fine intellect in order to return to where we ultimately belong, in the bosom of the Great Spirit.

Your brother,

Sleeping Crow

Epilog

There is so much more to say but time, as always, works in its own way and we must obey its rules and rhythms.

I hope that you have enjoyed these words and that they have helped you along your path. So much of our teachings—most of them—are handed down verbally, from our Elders, that it is impossible to put all of this wisdom into writing. Nor, should I try to do so. That effort would not be in our best tradition.

Still, there is so much to share, so much of importance in our Native world that it only makes sense to do what we can to offer it as a gift to others.

Aho,

Sleeping Crow.