

# Acoma origin myth essay samples

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The Acoma myth origin story is about two sisters Iatiku and Nautsiti. They emerged from the underground and were given a basket with small carved animals and seeds and were informed by the spirit that the components of the basket would help them for completing the world. The supernatural or spirit taught everything to the sisters to help them live in the world. The spirit taught them to pray, grow & prepare food, how to use salt and interdependence of plants, earth, humans and animals. Then the spirit told them to shape the earth, starting with the first mountain they made Kaweshtima, Mountain of North which they followed with Mountain of West, then South and finally they created the Mountain of east. The sisters then populated these mountains with animals and plants from the carved animals and seeds given to them in the basket from the spirit. One of the sisters Iatiku then made the spirits of seasons, with the first being Shakak the spirit of winter, this spirit was made to give life during the winter. The spirits of mountains provided the necessities for survival, example, receiving moisture from North.

Some Acomas believe that the Spanish Conquistadors and Priests travelling from New Spain to Acoma during the 1500s and 1600s descended from the Nautsiti, the vanished sister. In 1562, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado sent an expedition under Captain Hernando Alvarado for exploring regions which were to the east of Hawikuh. Alvarado was instructed by Coronado to find the kingdom of Acoma, which Fray Marcos de Niza had talked about.

Alvarado employed Bigotes the chief of Pecos for guiding him across Malpais Badlands to the Kingdom of Acoma. Alvarado and his companions were the first Europeans (Spaniards) to see the lofty cliff where the pueblos of Acoma

lived. The Acoma and the European had very different world views. To be specific the worldview which was held by an Acoma Indian and Non-Indians were complex and varied, one of the important differences was the philosophy pertaining to nature of creation. Acoma Indians used have a spiritual foundation where the world comprised of equal and interdependent beings, Humans and other beings had equal spiritual identities, but separate mortal functions. This contrasted the belief of Non-Indians who believed that humans were the only beings which had souls. The Non-Indians saw the world as ordained hierarchy which they termed as ‘ the Genesis Pyramid’. On top of the genesis pyramid were humans possessing souls and beneath humans were other mortal beings which had no souls and were made for human use.

The first colonial/Colonization expedition was under Juan de Onate’s leadership, who was given the role of governor for the new territory. When he traveled across New Mexico, the Pueblo Indians gave their allegiance and pueblos were assigned Franciscan friars to convert the native Indians to Christianity. The pueblos once heard about their plans to colonize started to renege on their allegiance and started the pueblo revolt against the Spanish. In December 1598, when Acoma learned about Juan de Onate’s intention to colonize their region they ambushed his nephew and 11 of his men. This was followed by a brutal revenge by the Spanish, who attacked the village and burned much of it, along the way killing more than 600 Acoma Indians and imprisoning 500. The one who survived were forced to serve as their slaves and men above the age of 25 had their right foot amputated. At the time of

Spanish inquisition there were 40, 000 Pueblo Indians in pueblos of Acoma, Zuni and Hopi among others which fell to 15, 000 by the Pueblo revolt.

## **Conclusion**

Acoma Indians used to live in ancient pueblo called sky city, which was perched atop 600 ft maternal butte. Acoma society has matrilineal origin and unsurprisingly the Acoma creation myth has a female spirit orchestrating the birth of two sisters. The birthing process starts from the earth's womb where sisters lay till they were old enough to exit the underground life. The female spirit fed them and taught them everything in life to survive and build the world around them. Just like other Indian societies Acoma also had different worldviews especially in the terms of creation of nature. The early exchanges with the European settlers were friendly as the Acoma and Spaniards shared their knowledge and resources. Spaniards who gained allegiances from all pueblos and started to spread Christianity had plan colonization to which the pueblos reacted with warfare.