

# Natives responses to modernity

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Native Responses to Modernity Explain this ment: Indians in the PNW found numerous ways to resist complete assimilation and retain elements of their traditional cultures.

The Indians in PNW greatly valued their traditional cultures. They did whatever they could to avoid complete assimilation by other dominant cultures. As they migrated, the Indians encountered different cultures and even when they encountered land that was different from the one they used to know they resolved to burn it in order to transform it to the original land that they used to know. In this essay, I will discuss the numerous ways in which the Indians tried to resist complete assimilation by other tribes and how they tried to retain the elements of their traditional cultures.

The Indians attempted to reproduce their own social environment that could help them to improve the cultures that they were leaving behind. For example, the Indian farmers tried to reintroduce the culture of setting fire at the end of every summer. The Indians signed treaties that would make them to be recognized as a kind of a political entity. Even when the Indians realized that they had signed treaties that could affect their cultures negatively they could resolve into becoming hostile and fight for their rights. For instance the Modoc Indian groups of Northern California left their reservations and went into war in 1872-73 with an aim of remaining in their homeland as these were seen as one factor that could help them maintain their culture (Findlay, 2000).

The practice of Indian religion also helped the Indians to prevent their full assimilation and preserve their cultures. In the 1850 one of the famous Indian prophets, Wanapum experienced a visionary dream that encouraged all the Indians to observe their old customs and ways. This and other

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prophecies among the natives helped to form a strong basis for the Indian resistance. The Indians also believed that if they strictly followed their cultures and resisted any attempt of being assimilated by the whites, they could hasten the arrival of a sort of cataclysm that would help them remove non-Indians from the land and bring back the harmony that they previously enjoyed before the arrival of the whites. The Indians were driven by the above dream to observe their faith and follow their traditional ways, and they also resisted pressures on them to acculturate the white ways (Findlay, 2000).

The Makah reservation helped the Indians to preserve their culture since this reserve was based on the tribe's traditional territory and it offered access not only to land based supplies but also to the salt water resources that the Makahs had long exploited. In the process of their participation in emergent market economy, they refused to be assimilated. The Indians also used litigation in with an aim of pressurizing the United States to follow the terms of the treaties that had been signed in the 19th century. They also used the courts to protect their rights. For instance, the Yakama Indians launched their first cases to uphold Indian fishing rights in Columbia River in 1887 and 1905. Although the Indians faced several challenges in their fight to resist assimilation of their culture they were able to succeed, and this helped them to retain their culture.

#### References

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