

The history and culture of the sioux native americans



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| || The History and Culture of The Sioux Native American??™s || || Carla Bauer || COM/150 || 3/5/2010 || Rachael Caldwell, Faculty || | The Sioux Native American Tribe was born of the Earth, multifaceted loving tribe who are not your typically stereotyped ??? Indians???. The Lakota (also known as the Lakhota) which means ??? friendly or allied??? are one of the seven tribes related to the Sioux Native American Tribes and they speak Lakota, which is one of the three dialects of the Sioux language. The Sioux were located in the north part of the United States and extended into Canada, with over 26, 000 speaking Sioux language.

??? Still, these languages are considered to be endangered, since more than half the Sioux people no longer speak their language fluently??? (sioux languages include the Lakota (or Lakhota), Dakota, and Nakota dialects, 2007). The three major dialects of the Sioux are Lakota, Western Dakota, and Eastern Dakota. Around the early 1800??™s when there was a vast amount of white settlers and more so Christian missionaries. Soon there after the Sioux language was translated into English- and a grammar/dictionary was created for the white settlers to read and so that they could eventually translate the Bible into the Sioux language. Mythology and Beliefs are very important to the Sioux tribes and are still around today. The legend of the dream catcher began with Lakota; it all started out with a dream by a spiritual leader.

??? In his vision, Iktomi, the great trickster and teacher of wisdom, appeared in the form of a spider.??? (Crystal, 1995) They spoke about the cycle of life and how there are forces in life and must choose the right path and “ Use the web to help yourself and your people to reach your goals and make good use

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of your peoples ideas, dreams and visions??? (Crystal, 1995). The elder passed his the vision on to the people of the Sioux tribe and they now use the dream catcher as their web of life. The Dream catcher is used by hanging above the beds in their home and this way it will help to remove bad visions and dreams. The good ??? part??? of their dreams is captured in the web of life and is always with them, at the same time as the good gets caught, the bad and evil goes though the hole in the center and will never be part of them. They believe that the dream catcher holds the destiny of their future (Crystal, 1995).

The Lakota have seven sacred rites that shape the spiritual foundation of their nation. They represent ceremonies and beliefs of which seem to be similar to many Native American tribes across the nation. They all are considered to be very powerful and critical to the way of life and to live a meaningful life according to the Sioux Native Americans. The keeping of the soul (Nagi Gluhapi Na Nagi Gluxkapi) is a ceremony of which spiritual healing is performed after a death. This will help them to cross over to the land of the Great Spirit and stay at peace. The Sweat Lodge (Inipi) is to help cleanse the spirit and bring the person closer to the Great Spirit or toward a solution of a personal crisis. This is a very common rite and always they always have the same general goal at hand. The Vision Quest (hanbleceyapi) is designed to bring a new found awareness to ones self as well as his place in the world.

This is one of the most prevailing ways to bringing oneself closer to the Great Spirit. The Sun Dance (wiwanyag wachipi) is a ceremony that lasts for several days, typically four day days and is normally fast dancing and is designed to help ease suffering among the tribe, this is a common way for <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-and-culture-of-the-sioux-native-americans/>

those to help others in a time of suffering. The making of relatives (Hunkapi) is a ceremony that will help to make stronger relationships with others, and involves giving; receive gifts and sharing food and conversation. This is the most common way for those to extend their family and grow to know each other. The Puberty Rite (ishna ta awi cha lowan) is where a girl becomes a woman once she has her first menstrual period. She will then be known as an adult and will be prepared to play her part as an adult woman and soon wife and mother.

Throwing the ball (tapa wanka yap) is no longer in practice and when it was this rite was only used 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 (Lakota Seven Sacred Rites., 2007) The Healing (yuwipi) is a modern rite and an addition to the original Lakota rights; this is to help see the way and is practiced by a medicine man or elder. While these rites helped to mold the day to date life of the Lakota they also helped them to grow from a child into an adult and from there they found peace and the true meaning of life. The Sioux nations were not governed by laws but by customs. With no centralized government each tribe had several sub-tribes which each had their own chief.

Each sub-tribe's leaders, who again had no written rules or regulations by which to follow, established their own customs and social standards as well as regularly esteemed taboos were avoided. There was also a tribal council, which included leaders and elders who helped to solve and resolve issues by advising them rather than making the choice themselves. To become a leader, a tribal member would have to have nobility from being in battle and <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-and-culture-of-the-sioux-native-americans/>

had to be a great community member. Morals were very important to the Sioux and to be a leader one must show that they are benevolent, do good deeds and generally came from a well respected family. ??? Through a long oral tradition, elders passed on tribal stories and ancestral values to the younger generations.

??? (Sioux Nation > Life and Culture - Community, 2009) The Elders were responsible for educating the children on how to conduct themselves and politeness. Lakota girls often learned values and how to be a homemaker from their mother or any other female relative. All of this was based on the fact that men and women are equal however women tend to have different responsibilities. (Sioux Nation > Life and Culture - Community, 2009) In each village there was a holy person normally known as a medicine man or otherwise known as a shaman or priest, who held an abundance of influence over the people.

While only chiefs could be men, a holy person could be a woman. The holy person could see into the future, bring good weather, or even casting of a love spell. The Lakota actually had more than one holy person, those who could heal and those who could communicate with the other side. (Sioux Nation > Life and Culture - Community, 2009) The Lakota were travelers and followed the migration of the buffalo herds. They lived in a tipi, which was extremely easy to set up and take down. The women of the Lakota actually were the owners and handymen who took care of the tipis.

The Elders would typically gather the women all together and they would supervise as the women shaped the hides and sewed them together using

thread made of the veins of the buffalo. The men would paint the outside of the tipis; however they had to have their wife's approval before doing so. As the buffalo began to become scarce, many tribes began to use the canvas from the government to cover their tipis, while this made the reservation look like most other western communities and eventually log homes or houses with real frames replaced the tipis. (Sioux Nation > Life and Culture - Housing and Shelter, 2009)The Sioux were very calm friendly people, however when the white settlers began to take over their land and eat their food they had a major conflict. The Sioux believed that the buffalo were sacred, they used every part of the buffalo when they hunted, unlike the Americans who saw the buffalo as a nuisance and slaughtered them to make room for the railway and ranching, they also just left the corpse to decompose. The family units of the Sioux were very close knit and uncles, aunts, cousins were all considered immediate family, and elders were considered essential members as they taught the ways of life and the children the basics of life. The new Americans family unit strictly consisted of a mother, father and children and sometimes grandparents who were not to teach the children.

As far as housing for the Americans it was stationary and once they settled down they were there to stay, building elaborate houses and stores which basically turned into a whole town being built. Whereas the Sioux could pick up and move at any time. The American soldiers were taught to kill anything and everything they thought this would get them admiration. The Sioux tribes as well as many other Native American tribes were taught that it was more important to show ones bravery by "counting coup" than killing

ones enemy.??? (Sioux Nation > Life and Culture - Culture Clash, 2009)

Counting coup is the Sioux ritual to establish individual position in a tribal honor system. To achieve counting coup points or notches one would show supreme bravery and in most cases they would need to be in very close proximity and would harmlessly touch a member of the enemy tribe with their coup stick. This was in most cases higher praised than actually killing an enemy. The honor given was based on the amount of danger required in order to touch another with ones coup stick.

If an individual was touched with a coup stick by another tribe it was followed with great shame. Each individual would have their own coup stick and with each coup would receive a new notch in their stick. (Vogler, 1991)

The Sioux Native American tribe were not your typical stereotyped ???

Indians??? as one can see they were very family orientated and had strong morals, which makes them quiet different than the savage killers that movies make them out to be. One of the most well known of all Native American beliefs is of the dream catcher, which is still around and practiced today.

The sacred rites guide the Sioux tribe members though life from the time of birth until they pass. With strong morals and customs the elders and chiefs kept the tribes ??? sprit??? and traditions alive for many generations. With the buffalo being a staple in the Sioux day to day life and the white man killing the buffalo for sport there was a major clash between the white man the Sioux. White the Sioux were not fighters and would resist killing the white man they soon began to slowly transform more and more into the ways of the white man.

Through years of the white man trying to reform the Sioux they still remain a special and unique nation practicing many of the old ways of life their ancestors practiced generations before. References PageBibliographyCrystal, E. (1995). Lakota - Dakota - Sioux Nation. Retrieved 2 24, 2010, from Crystal Links: [http://www. crystalinks. com/sioux.](http://www.crystalinks.com/sioux.html)

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