

An Interview With A Native American

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This assignment required me to conduct an interview with a person from a different racial background and write about it as I gained personal experience. I consider this as a perfect opportunity to truly understand a culture and make a new friend who will share their life experiences with me. I myself am an African American person of a minority racial background in America, so it is no less than fascinating for me to understand life in America from another perspective that is from a different racial background and has different experiences and responses from society than mine. I believe this essay will help me realize that the world is indeed a global village, and we must get to know each other better and not waste more time (Straub).

I chose the place of the interview to be my mother's house, which is in Minneapolis, MN, in the Phillips. There are heterogeneous nationalities residing here in Phillips. I am African-American and was raised in Phillips with the Native Americans. I have always been attracted to their way of life, especially the way they love and give importance to nature. The fact that they love nature and try to protect it and grow further makes them more earth-friendly than many other races. Growing up in such a neighborhood that is diverse, I am aware of the fact that there are many misconceptions about Native Americans and their culture. So this was taken as the perfect opportunity to delve deep and understand more of what the Native Americans were living, and perhaps I was missing till now (Brown).

When it comes to living in a diverse area you face many problems due to the conflict between the cultures of different nations. Just for instance, I myself heard being called "Red skins" and "Rain dancers," etc. So today I am having a conversation with a 30 years old Native American woman for detailed insight into their culture. She has been living a full life and was very keen to meet with me and was pleasant to talk to. I was trying to be respectful to her as I know that in their culture, people seem to give high respect to visitors and guests, so I was making sure not to make a fool of myself by being casual about it (Sadrin).

Interviewer: It was a relief to see you were open to talking to me as I myself was feeling a little pressured to ask something that you might not be comfortable talking about. Since you have given me permission to ask how you would describe the past of Native Americans, what was their culture back then? What were their interests and beliefs?

Native-American: Thank you dear for coming up to me, I am glad that you wanted to know about us and don't just follow the stereotype narratives that media and politicians propagate. We have been living here since the Europeans arrived. When Europeans arrived in America for the very first time, they were not much aware of technology. Even at that time, they were using Stone tools. Native Americans had a belief that their God wanted them to spend their lives in a continuous motion, and so they lived a "Nomadic" life. Native Americans placed great importance on Buffaloes. Living in the

Great Plains, all their sports were designed in such a way that their people would learn how to survive in the severe conditions of these plains. Their sports included horse racing, shooting contests etc. (Dramer and Porter).

Interviewer: It's always difficult accepting the change and giving your possessions to others. What were the problems faced by Native Americans when Europeans first came there? What was the reason for the decline in the population of North Americans from that point onwards? It is history but there are now variant aspects to what might have happened back then I was really interested to know the perspective of the Native Americans regarding that time of history ("Who's Who: Exploring The Discrepancy Between The Methods Of Defining African Americans And Native Americans").

Native-American: I don't remember the exact dates now, but when the foreign sailors, i.e., Christopher Columbus with his crewman, landed here in America. He was welcomed by Taino the chief of the Natives back then. Who laid down their weapons and accepted them as guests with their parrots and pigeons as a token of friendship. Christopher Columbus built a town on Hispaniola's Island. At that time, the population of Taino was about 8 million. But the inhabitants of Hispaniola were left about 500 by 1548. This decline in population was because of imported diseases, including smallpox, measles, mumps, pneumonia, influenza and dysentery.

As Europeans aimed to colonize America, they sought Native Indians for the land to cultivate their own farmlands here. The Europeans were a bit immune to the diseases they brought to America. So, the epidemics did not affect them as they affected the natives. Also, they had horses and guns, while the Native Americans used hand weapons or arrows. Due to these reasons, the Rate of growth of Europeans was larger as compared to the natives, and thus, the Europeans' descendants became larger in number. Native Americans were forced to colonize and surrender their lands. Moreover, being the minority, the natives were forced to work as peasants, slaves and laborers (Katz and Franklin).

Interviewer: Those must have been difficult times, and I believe there are still fragments of things that might be happening today as well, but the form of these actions may have been changed. As you said, Native Americans were forced to sacrifice their lands. There must have been racial differences that led to this. How did the native Americans happen to get their legal rights and land after the fight for their rights? Further, in your view, the economic devastation is mainly because of racial differences.

Native-American: No. In my view, the economic devastation in American Indian communities is not simply the outcome of the native's history of victims of epidemics, wars and mass murders. Instead, this devastation is somehow the result of the current rules, regulations, and policies and, most importantly, the restrictions applied to the properties of the Native Americans by the federal government. There were long movements conducted and messages were sent to the politicians that we deserved the lands as they were taken from us by force.

To conclude, I must say that, indeed, the task was very informative. It helped me get in connection

with another philosophy of life and see the world from a different perspective. It is a general perception that African Americans are the only ones who get bullied or trolled. Being a Native American, how would you describe the problems faced by our people? There are more similarities between Native Americans and other minorities in America than any other culture might have. They have also faced forced intrusions and are always rated as second-class citizens when it comes to legal and land rights, and the taxes imposed are more racially targeted segregation than from any other entity.

Work Cited

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