Native (Indian) Americans and Place Meanings

Out there... but how visible?

1491
THE LAKOTAS AND THE BLACK HILLS
Native (Indian) Americans

- Over 550 federally recognized tribes which are self-governing entities
- Tribal governments formally list their members and enrollment criteria vary by tribe
- Over 330 reservations (not all tribes have reservations)
- Indian Americans have dual citizenship: United States (as of 1924) and their respective tribe
Exploitation of Native Americans

• Indian Removal Act (1830)
• Dawes (General Allotment) Act (1887)
  ▪ Remained in effect until 1934
• Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding Schools
• Indian Citizenship Act (1924)
• American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978)
  ▪ Ghost Dance

Stereotypes and misconceptions

• Child of nature (noble savage)
Stereotypes and misconceptions

- Primitive hunter and gatherer

Stereotypes and misconceptions

- Culturally backward and need civilizing

“When you go down on the reservations and see these hundreds of thousands of Indians living in dirt and without culture or refinement of any kind, you can hardly believe it. Then you see these boys and girls placed in Mormon homes playing the flute, the piano. All these things bring about a normal culture.”

--President of the Mormon church as cited by Feagin, 1989

Native Americas as “The Other”

- “Othering” is a way of depicting “others” as different, inferior, and/or unworthy of consideration
- “Othering” is central to exploitation of Indians and other people of color
Native American Artifacts

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<th>White Americans</th>
<th>Native Americans</th>
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<td>Archeological and of scientific interest</td>
<td>Stolen objects</td>
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<td>Curiosities and tourists attractions</td>
<td>Sacred</td>
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Native American Prayer Stick

Indians as sport mascots

USA Today Letter to the editor:

Focus on more important issues

From your article (emphasis mine): "Jesse Steinfield, an Indiana University psychology professor who has studied the effects of the nicknames and mascots, says they create 'a racially hostile education environment that ... can affect the self-esteem of Native American kids.'"

So, when is Indiana going to change its name? How about that big race, the Indianapolis 500? I was born in Iroquois County, Ill. Should the county have to get a new name? How about all the rivers, mountains and towns named after a tribe, chief or guide?

And what about people from India who live here legally or are citizens? Does anybody care what they think about the names or that "Indian" refers to the people of North America? I say just get over it. Don't we have many more important issues to deal with in this country and our world than names?

Frances Schrader; Darby, Montana (October 13, 2010)
Actual name of a University of Northern Colorado sport team (2002)

Indian Americans as tourist attractions

Wyoming
What places are important to you and why?

Categories of Place Meaning

- Aesthetic – relatively tangible emotional responses to scenic beauty of landscapes
Categories of Place Meaning

- Individual/expressive – those where a person individually identifies with a place (deep, personal attachment)
Categories of Place Meaning

- Instrumental/goal directed – natural resources are managed to provide specific benefits or commodities.

- Cultural/Symbolic – a place creates a sense of emotional, symbolic, historic, spiritual and cultural significance for a whole group.
Place meanings

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- Devils Tower, Wyoming