

100 Questions

Who is an AMERICAN INDIAN?

1. Who is an American Indian? There are millions of people with Indian ancestry, but that does not make them American Indians in the eyes of tribes or the federal government. The federal government considers someone American Indian if he or she belongs to a federally recognized tribe. Individual tribes have the exclusive right to determine their own membership. Tribal governments formally list their members, who must meet specific criteria for enrollment. Some require a person to trace half of his or her lineage to the tribe, while others require only proof of descent.

2. Where did American Indians come from originally? Many anthropologists believe that Indians traveled about 35,000 years ago across a land bridge spanning the Bering Strait from Asia to North America. Most tribes have their own creation story: Many believe that Native peoples originated on this continent.

3. Why are native peoples referred to as Indians? Indigenous people in the United States were first referred to as Indians because Columbus believed he had reached the East Indies when he touched the shores of North America. Today, many Native people prefer to call themselves American Indian to avoid stereotypes associated with Indian.

4. Which is correct: American Indian or Native American? Either term is generally acceptable, although individuals may have a preference. Native American was first used in the 1960s for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Over time, Native American has been expanded to include all native peoples of the United States and its territories; including Hawaiian natives, Chamorros and American Samoans. (Native American and American Indian are used interchangeably in this document.)

5. How many American Indians and Alaska Natives are there? There are 2.3 million, according to U.S. Census estimates for 1997. They represent roughly 1 percent of the overall

population. Before Europeans arrived in North America, Native Americans may have numbered as many as 10 million. By the time colonists began keeping records, the population was substantially less, ravaged by war, famine, forced labor and disease from Europeans.

6. Who are Native American families? Nearly two-thirds are married couples, and 27 percent are families headed by single women. Birth rates are higher among American Indian families than the rest of the United States, and there are more American Indian families living in poverty than other Americans. American Indian families median income was \$22,000 in 1990, compared to \$35,000 for all U.S. families.

7. Are the numbers of American Indians declining today? The population is young and growing steadily. Since July 1990, the American Indian and Alaska Native population increased 12 percent, while the white population grew 3 percent. The U.S. Census projects that the American Indian and Alaska Native population will reach 4.4 million by 2050.

8. What are the reasons for the rise? American Indians and Alaska Natives get better health care and live longer than they did in the recent past. Also, more people are likely to identify themselves as American Indians and Alaska Natives than in earlier Census counts.

9. Why does the government refer to indigenous people in Alaska as Alaska Natives instead of as American Indians? Alaska Natives are Eskimo (Inupait and Yupik), Alaskan Indians (Athabaskan, Haida, Tlingit and Thimshian) and Aleut. They are culturally distinct and prefer to be called Alaska Native instead of being grouped as American Indian.

10. Are Native Hawaiians considered American Indians? No, Native Hawaiians, known as Kanaka Maoli in Hawaiian, trace their lineage and language to Polynesians, including Tahitians, Maoris and Samoans. Starting in 2000, the federal government will recognize Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as a distinct group, including in Census counts. Native Hawaiians often unite with

other Native Americans over issues of self-governance and self-determination.

WHAT IS A TRIBE?

11. What is a tribe? Originally, tribes were a society of people bound by blood ties, family relations and a common language. They also had their own religion and political system. When members of different tribes were forced to live together on reservations, some new tribal groupings formed

12. How many tribes are there? In 1998, there are 554 federally recognized tribes in the United States, according to the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. This includes 226 native villages in Alaska. Federal recognition acknowledges the government-to-government status a tribe has with the United States, and also provides for certain federal services.

13. OK, there are a lot of different tribes. But aren't American Indians pretty much the same as a group? Indian tribes are as different, for example, as the Irish and Italian. Individual tribes have their own culture, language and tradition. Many groups may be strangers to one another. Some were once enemies.

14. Which is the largest tribe? With a 1990 population of 308,132, Cherokees are the largest U.S. tribe. Most live in Oklahoma though more than 5,000 Cherokees live on a reservation in North Carolina.

15. Are Indian tribes and Indian nations the same? Yes. The federally recognized tribes are considered self-governing - or sovereign nations by Congress. Thus, the federal government deals with tribes as political entities, not as persons of a particular race. The political status of tribes is written in the Constitution: "The Congress shall have power ... to regulate commerce with foreign nations...and with the Indian tribes."

16. Can any tribe be federally recognized? A rigorous application process determines federal recognition. Many nations were recognized by treaty-making in the 18th and 19th centuries,

though several groups are petitioning for recognition today. The Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior maintains a directory of federally recognized tribes.

17. When was the last time a tribe won federal recognition? In 1996, the Huron Potawatoni of Michigan received status as a federally recognized Indian nation. In 1998, there are 14 tribes under active consideration by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which has final approval.

18. What powers do the tribes, as nations, hold? They have a nationhood status, enjoying the powers of government, except for those expressly taken away by Congress or overruled by the Supreme Court. The United States recognizes the tribes' rights to form their own government, determine membership, administer justice, raise taxes, establish businesses and exclude people from reservations. Tribal nations regulate Indian land, resources and the conduct of tribal members on Indian land.

19. What kind of governments do the tribes run? Most tribal governments are organized democratically with elected leaders in highly developed political systems that often predate the arrival of European settlers. While similar in structure to American governments, the tribal governments are smaller, with far fewer resources.

20. What is the tribal council? The tribe's governing body is usually referred to as the tribal council, and is elected by adult members of the tribe. Heading the council is one elected chairperson, president, chief or governor who is the recognized leader. The council performs the legislative aspects of tribal government

21. Are reservations and tribal governments the same? No. Tribal governments existed long before reservations were established. However, the governing authority on reservations is the tribal council. In cases where different tribes share a reservation, they often run separate governments, as the Shoshone and Arapaho do in Wyoming.

WHAT IS A RESERVATION?

22. What is a reservation? Indian reservations are areas of land reserved by the federal government as permanent tribal homelands. The United States established its reservation policy for American Indians in 1787. Today there are 314 reservations, among the last, large tracts of private lands.

23. Why is it called a reservation? The term originates from the federal government's act of reserving land for federal purposes. In the United States, there are two kinds of reserved land that are well known: military and Indian.

24. Do all American Indians live on reservations? No. More than 60 percent live away from reservations, the U.S. Census-reports. However, many return to visit family and attend ceremonies.

25. How much land do Native Americans hold?

About 56 million, acres in reservations and trust land. The Navajo Reservation is the largest, numbering 16 million acres and occupying parts of Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. Many smaller reservations are less than 1,000 acres.

26. What is trust land? Land held by the United States for the use and benefit of American Indian tribes. Virtually all trust land is located in reservations. Tribes also have the ability to purchase land and to petition the federal government to hold it in trust, protecting the land from encroachment or seizure. Actions affecting title to trust lands, including sales, are subject to approval of the U.S. Secretary of Interior.

27. Who owns reservations? The United States holds title to the land for the tribes, with the Department of Interior acting as trustee. The tribe or individual whose land is held in trust is the owner. Non-Indians also own significant portions of reservation land, though tribes may exercise jurisdiction over it.

28. Has the government tried to take away tribal land? From the 1880s to the 1930s, Congress opened tribal lands for sale, with reservations losing two-thirds of their land base. In the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration adopted a "termination" policy, closing many reservations while trying to assimilate Indians into white society.

29. What kind of mineral reserves are on tribal land? Reservations contain a wealth of minerals: 5 percent of the nation's oil and gas reserves, 50 percent of the uranium and 30 percent of low sulfur coal. Other minerals include phosphate, quartz crystal, sand, gravel, potash and sodium. Even if tribes do not mine the minerals, they may lease the rights to others.

30. What is Indian country? Indian country is a legal term used in Title 18 of the U.S. Code. It broadly defines federal and tribal jurisdiction in crimes affecting Indians on reservations. But it also has popular usage, describing reservations and areas with American Indian populations.

31. What are the living conditions in Indian country? While health, education and economic conditions have improved in the last several years, native communities still lag behind the rest of the country in most every category. Income levels are substantially lower in Indian country than the rest of the nation. Indians on reservations also are much more likely than the general population to die from accidents, alcoholism, diabetes, pneumonia, suicide, homicide and tuberculosis.

WHAT IS TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY?

32. What is tribal sovereignty? Just like states, tribes have attributes of sovereignty to govern, their own territory and internal affairs. The status of tribes as self-governing nations is affirmed and upheld by treaties, case law and the Constitution. Legal scholars explain that tribes are inherently sovereign, meaning they do not trace their existence to the United States.

33. How does sovereignty work? The doctrine of tribal sovereignty was affirmed in three Supreme Court rulings in the 1800s. It recognizes the right of American Indian tribes to self-govern and run their internal affairs as so-called "domestic, dependent nations." It keeps states from interfering with that right, while allowing Congress to override an Indian nation's authority.

34. Is sovereignty largely symbolic today? There is nothing more important to Indian governments and people than sovereignty, tribal leaders say. It is a fundamental principle of the U.S. Constitution with increasing legal significance. Recently, tribes have worked to regain control of their economies and resources by asserting their rights as sovereign powers, sometimes in conflict with neighboring states.

35. What is the government-to-government relationship? It is federal policy expressing how the United States interacts with tribes. It requires the United States to assess federal actions affecting tribes and to consult with the tribes about those actions.

36. How are tribes exercising their status as sovereign nations? In New Mexico, for example, the Islets Pueblo tribe is requiring the city of Albuquerque to abide by its clean-water standards, which are stricter and costlier than state

requirements. In the Pacific Northwest, tribes partner with state and federal governments to co-manage fisheries and protect salmon stock.

37. What is sovereign immunity? It is the ability of a government to define the terms upon which it can be sued. Tribes have invoked sovereign immunity in suits that challenge their authority to regulate land use. There have been recent efforts in Congress to limit a tribe's sovereign immunity, but they have not been adopted.

38. Do states have jurisdiction over American Indians or their land? States do not have any civil or criminal jurisdiction in Indian country unless Congress delegates it or the federal courts determine it exists. Most recently, the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, adopted by Congress, requires tribes and states to enter into compacts, or agreements, before gambling operations can open on Indian land.

39. Do American Indians have to obey the same laws as non-Indians? When tribal members are off reservations, they are generally subject to local, state and federal laws. On reservations, they are subject only to federal and tribal laws. Under federal law, known as the Assimilative Crimes Act, any violation of state criminal law on a reservation is a federal crime.

40. Are Indians American citizens? Yes. Indians have dual citizenship as tribal members and as American citizens. Congress extended citizenship to American Indians in 1924.

41. Can American Indians vote? American Indians and Alaska Natives have the same right to vote as other American citizens. They vote in local, state, federal and tribal elections. Each tribe has the right to determine its criteria for eligible voters in tribal elections.

42. Do Native Americans pay state or federal taxes? They pay the same taxes as everyone else with the following exceptions: Native Americans employed on reservations do not pay state income taxes. American Indians living on trust land are free from local and state property taxes. Generally, state sales taxes are not levied on Indian transactions made on reservations. Indians do not pay federal income taxes on money earned from trust lands, such as fees received for grazing rights and oil drilling

WHAT ARE TREATIES?

43. What are treaties? From 1777 to 1871, U.S. relations with Indian nations were negotiated

through legally binding agreements called treaties. These treaties, or agreements, between tribal governments and the United States transferred and created property rights as well as service obligations. There were 371 treaties signed with American Indian tribes, usually to gain rights to their land.

44. What agreements did the treaties contain? The treaties often promised Indians protection, goods, services, self-governing rights and a tribal homeland in exchange for their cooperation and vast acres of land.

45. Why did European settlers enter into treaties with the tribes? Tribes had power because of their military strength and knowledge of the land. They could have forced Europeans off the continent, if they had banded together. European law also taught colonists that land transactions required legal documentation.

46. Why did the tribes agree to the treaties? Faced with giving up their lands or losing their people to war, disease and a rising tide of settlers, the Indians entered into the agreements. The tribes view treaties as solemn moral obligations.

47. Were the treaties broken? Over the years, conflicting federal policy and court rulings resulted in Native peoples losing some of their civil rights and lands. An early example was the Trail of Tears, the forced march of 14,000 Cherokees from Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee to Oklahoma, despite a 1791 treaty granting them a permanent homeland. About 4,000 Cherokees — mostly babies, children and old people — died from starvation, exposure and disease.

48. What is trust responsibility? The federal Indian trust responsibility is considered one of the more important principles in federal Indian law. It is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation by the United States to protect tribal lands, assets, resources and treaty rights. Supreme Court rulings suggest that trust responsibility entails legal as well as moral duties.

49. Are treaties still valid? Although the government stopped entering into treaties with Indian tribes in 1871, the Constitution holds treaties as "the supreme law of the land." Once a treaty is signed, it stays in effect unless superseded by acts of Congress or other treaties.

50. Do treaties grant Native Americans special rights today? In the Pacific Northwest, tribes are able to hunt, fish and gather food as their ancestors did. On all reservations, tribes have access to free education and medical care provided by the federal government. These are examples of Indian rights based on treaties signed years ago.

51. Are treaties being challenged? There are many efforts in modern times to dilute and

challenge treaty rights. Most recently, bills have been introduced in Congress that seek to limit the ability of tribes to govern themselves and give authority to states over the tribes. No major changes have been enacted, however.

52. What is the American Indian Movement?

The activist organization, known as AIM, was founded in 1968 to promote civil rights for Native Americans. Over the years, it has sought recognition of treaty rights through sit-ins and highly visible protests. In 1972, AIM organized the "Trail of Broken Treaties," converging on Washington, D.C., before the presidential election. AIM is still active today, with branches across the United States.

WHAT DOES THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS DO?

53. What does the Bureau of Indian Affairs do? The bureau is the principal federal agency working with tribes. Its job is to provide services and/or funds for services to benefit tribal members. Unlike the 1800s, when the bureau was in the War Department, the bureau's stated goal is to help tribes with self-determination. Almost 100 percent of its employees are tribal members.

54. How does someone qualify for BIA services? Persons must belong to a federally recognized tribe.

55. What services does the BIA provide? The bureau's \$1.7 billion budget in fiscal 1998 funds law enforcement, social services, land management, forestry services, education and other areas.

56. What other federal offices work with tribes? Just about all federal agencies work with Indian tribes. The Health and Human Services Department, for example, runs the Indian Health Services, which provides medical care on or near reservations. The Justice Department has the Office of Tribal Justice, which coordinates law enforcement in Indian country.

57. Do American Indians have the right to hold elective office? Indians have the same rights as all citizens, and have held most all levels of elective office. Charles Curtis, a member of the Kaw tribe, was vice president under Herbert Hoover. U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Republican from Colorado, is a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe. Campbell also served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat.

58. Do Native Americans serve in the U.S. armed forces? Native Americans have Revolution, and one out of four Indian men is a U.S. military veteran. Their patriotism in World

War I led Congress to pass the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In World War II, Navajo Marines used their language as a code to transmit messages; it was the only code the enemy failed to break.

WHO REGULATES INDIAN CASINOS?

59. Who regulates Indian casinos? The National Indian Gaming Commission, established by Congress, oversees bingo operations, casinos and certain other types of gambling on tribal land. It sets rules for licensing, reviews yearly audits, and approves ordinances that tribes develop to run gaming operations. The U.S. Departments of Treasury, Justice and Interior have authority over aspects of Indian gaming. Indian nations, as well, have their own gaming commissions, tribal police forces and court systems.

60. What is the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act? The federal law requires states to enter into compacts with tribal governments that plan to engage in casino gambling, including slot machines and blackjack. Gaming must be conducted on tribal land, and the states' control is limited to the terms in the compacts. Compacts are approved by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

61. How much money do Indian gaming operators make each year? In 1997, they reported a total of \$6.4 billion in revenues. Not all tribes get rich, though. The General Accounting Office reports that nearly half of all revenue is earned by the six largest gaming tribes; the more successful operations are usually located in or near large metropolitan areas.

62. Is Indian gaming a major player in the gambling industry? Indian gaming is growing at a rapid pace, but represents only 8 percent of the revenue market share, according to the National Indian Gaming Association.

63. Do all tribes have casino gambling? No. Roughly a third of the 554 tribes have gaming operations, and many are limited to bingo.

64. Do the tribes pay taxes on their revenues? No. As sovereign governments they do not pay taxes on their revenues to the state or federal governments, though casino workers are generally subject to the same payroll and income taxes other Americans pay. States can assess fees to the tribes for costs of gambling regulation and administration. Some states, including Michigan, Connecticut and Washington, have formal arrangements with tribes to receive additional revenue.

65. Are individual tribes getting rich from casinos? While gaming has helped tribes such as the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa

in Michigan stem poverty, Indians are the nation's poorest population. They rank at the bottom of most every social and economic measure.

66. Are individual Indians getting rich from casinos? The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires tribal governments to spend revenues on operations, welfare, economic development and charity. Once tribes meet those obligations they can seek permission from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to set up a per-capita distribution plan to benefit individual members. Forty-seven tribes have approval to do so.

67. Why are Indian casinos a popular enterprise among the tribes? Gambling is an accepted tradition that figured in celebrations and ceremonies long before European settlement. With many reservations in distant and remote areas, gaming seems to be one of the few viable sources of employment and revenue.

68. Do all American Indians favor gaming? No. Some argue that the gambling operations hurt their culture, and that tribes with casinos show less interest in traditional ways and religious functions.

WHAT IS A TRIBAL SCHOOL?

69. What is a tribal school? Since the early 1800s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs assumed responsibility for the education of children on reservations through Indian schools. In 1978, the federal government began turning over school control to the tribes, while still providing oversight and funding. Today the bureau funds or operates 187 schools with 50,000 students.

70. How many American Indian Students attend public schools off the reservations? About 480,000 American Indian children attend public schools off reservations. Some states with large populations of Indian schoolchildren provide funds for Indian language and cultural education.

71. How many American Indians are high school graduates? In 1990, 66 percent of American Indians who were at least 25 years old were high school graduates, according to the U.S. Census. The national figure is 75 percent.

72. What is a tribal college? Thirty tribal colleges were developed over the past 25 years to meet the unusual educational needs of students on reservations, often located in remote areas unserved by other post-secondary schools. Most of the colleges are two-year schools that focus on local economic development and work-force training.

73. How do graduation rates for American Indians compare with the general population? College graduation rates are lower for American

Indians than any other minority group, according to the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Only 30 percent of American Indian students completed bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling, compared with 54 percent of all students.

74. What percentage of the American Indian population holds degrees? Nine percent of American Indian adults had completed four years of college, according to the 1990 U.S. Census. The national average for all adults is 20 percent. Graduation rates vary greatly among tribes.

75. Do Native Americans get a free college education? No. While some tribes offer stipends or scholarships to members, Native Americans as a group do not receive a free college education. But many students qualify for federal help and other needs based aid, because they meet poverty guidelines for all students. Eighty-five percent of students at tribal colleges live in poverty.

76. How are tribal colleges funded? The 1981 Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act provides operational funds for 25 tribal colleges. All of the colleges receive support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as land-grant institutions, and from the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, they may receive competitive grants, foundation money and private support. But the colleges receive little or no state funds, and are not supported through property taxes as are many mainstream community colleges.

DO AMERICAN INDIANS SPEAK THEIR OWN LANGUAGE?

77. Do American Indians speak their own language? The vast majority of Indians speak English as their main language, though some know their native language as well. When Europeans first arrived here about 350 Indian languages were spoken.

78. How many American Indian languages are still spoken? The precise number is unknown. It is estimated that about 200 languages are spoken. Native American languages are classified geographically rather than linguistically, since they do not belong to a single linguistic family, as the Indo-European languages do.

79. Which are the most common languages? There is no standard American Indian language, but a number are spoken regularly by the larger tribes, such as Navajo (spoken by 80,000) and Ojibwe (spoken by 40,000).

80. Were there written Indian languages? Before European settlement in North America, Indian writing was in pictographs, such as the

birchbark scrolls inscribed by the Ojibwe.

Exposure to written European languages, including their direct study, resulted in several groups developing their own forms of writing.

81. American Indian languages continuing to die out? Yes. More than a third are spoken only by elders and may not survive to the next generation, according to “The Handbook of North American Indians: Language.” Some languages are known to just two or three speakers.

82. What is being done to preserve American Indian languages? Tribes have written language books and have created teaching tools for Indian schools. Some languages are taught in universities. In cases where the number of speakers has dwindled, language may ultimately die out.

IS THERE AN AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGION?

83. Is there an American Indian religion? Many Native Americans believe in a Great Spirit that reveals itself, through nature and influences all life. Indigenous religions also are filled with lesser spirits that inhabit the everyday world. In the 19th century Native Americans lost many of their religious customs as colonists forced them to convert to Christianity, sent their children to mission schools and banned some of their ceremonies.

84. How many American Indians identify themselves as Christians? In the 1990s, more than two-thirds of Native Americans characterize themselves at least nominally as Christians. Others combine Christian beliefs with their native religions or practice two separate faiths.

85. Are Native Americans free to practice their native religion? Until the 1930s, the United States tried to ban Native American religious rituals, including the Ghost Dance, Sun Dance and peyote cult. In 1978, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, an official expression of goodwill toward Native American spirituality. Many religious practices once considered on the verge of disappearing were revived. These include pipe ceremonials, sweat lodges, vision quests and Sun Dances.

86. Where do Native Americans go to worship? In many types of Native American spirituality, followers do not consider their practices a religion, nor do they rely on an institution to worship. Instead their beliefs are an integral part of daily life. Prayers have taken a variety of forms, including songs and dances and acts such as sprinkling tobacco or corn meal.

87. What is a sweat lodge? Much like a sauna, sweat lodges are heated by fire or by pouring water over hot stones. Sweat lodges are used by

some Native Americans to induce sweating for medicinal and spiritual purposes.

88. What is a vision quest? In some traditional native religions, Indian boys performed certain rituals, including meditation and fasting, in order to receive a vision to guide them into manhood and for the rest of their lives. Sometimes they separated from the tribe and entered the wilderness to seek a guardian spirit.

89. How does tobacco figure in American Indian religion? Tobacco has been regarded as the most sacred plant, used in Indian religion, medicine and diplomacy. Smoking at gatherings was a symbol of hospitality. Sharing a pipe sealed treaties, and sprinkling leaves ensured a good harvest. Ritualistic use of tobacco continues today.

90. Did Native Americans learn about tobacco from white settlers? On the contrary, Native peoples introduced tobacco and the pipe to white explorers. Native Americans had been smoking tobacco for a thousand years or more by the time Columbus returned to Spain with some leaves, and its use spread across Europe.

WHAT IS A PEACE PIPE?

91. What is a peace pipe? When various tribes dominated North America, carrying a pipe was evidence of peaceful intent, a passport universally honored, according to “A Guide to America’s Indians.” White explorers carried “peace pipes” for chance meetings with Indians.

92. Why is an eagle feather significant to American Indians? Certain symbols including the eagle feather, seem to be universal in their importance to the various tribes. The eagle is revered for its strength, size and intelligence. Its feathers are used in religious ceremonies.

93. How do American Indians obtain the feathers of a protected bird like the eagle? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers a program that makes the feathers available to Indian religious practitioners. The feathers are from eagles that die naturally or by accident.

94. What is a medicine bundle? It is a collection of objects believed to heal disease and ward off enemies. Traditionally, individuals, households and villages kept medicine bundles for self-protection. The bundles might contain herbs, stone, pollen, horns, bone, teeth and feathers.

95. Why do Native Americans object to the use of Indian symbols, like feathers and face paint, in U.S. sports? Many Native Americans believe the use of Indian symbols by sports teams and fans trivializes their way of life. For example, some Native Americans take offense when fans paint their faces at football games. In traditional native

cultures, face painting is reserved for sacred ceremonies that include weddings and funerals.

96. What is a powwow? Powwow comes from the Narragansett word for shaman. It is a celebration and social gathering, honoring sacred Indian traditions through dancing, drumming, singing and the gathering of people. Powwows may be held to honor an individual or for a special occasion. Most commonly, the powwow is a social event.

97. Are non-Natives welcome at powwows? There are ceremonial powwows that are closed to non-tribal members, but everyone is welcome at a publicized powwow.

98. What are teepees? The teepee, or tipi, was a dwelling used by nomadic Plains tribes. Made from buffalo hides, it was stretched over a cone formed by poles, which made it strong and easy to move. Similar to the teepee, the wickiup was used by tribes in the south. It was made from brush secured over arched poles. The wigwam of the eastern woodlands was a domed or conical frame covered with bark or mats. The traditional dwellings are no longer used as shelters.

99. Why do American Indians object to the commercial use of the Crazy Horse name? Many Indians believe that using Crazy Horse to sell malt liquor exploits Indians and distorts the image of a revered leader. Crazy Horse was the Sioux leader who militarily resisted the encroachment of whites in the Black Hills of South Dakota and joined Sitting Bull in the defeat of Gen. George A. Custer at Little Bighorn in 1876. Crazy Horse was unarmed when he was stabbed to death, while being held at a federal prison camp.

100. How can a person trace his or her Indian ancestry? The first step is basic genealogical research to obtain specific information on ancestors’ names, birth dates, marriages and deaths, and places where they lived. The next step is to find out if ancestors are on official tribal rolls. For information, write to the National Archives and Records Administration, Natural Resources Branch, Civil Archives Division, 8th and Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20408. After determining tribal heritage, individuals should contact individual tribes to learn about membership. Tribes have the final determination on who qualifies.

CREDITS

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