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Seminar Paper

The topic that was discussed this semester was Native American culture and government. The focus was on that of the tribes in Minnesota. Native Americans had a very different way of life compared to the Europeans that came to America. Even today there are still drastic differences between Native Americans and Americans. After Europeans arrived in America the Native Americans faced many trials, especially in the form of war. When the wars were done, Native Americans were forced out of their homes in very cruel ways. All of this information will be crucial to me in my future classroom because I can better educate students in the history of America.

Native Americans could either move around throughout America or stay in one spot depending on if they decided to be a farming or hunting community. If a tribe decided to farm they could only grow what would work best in the environment that they were in. For instance, a dry climate would be successful for growing corn, beans, ague, and squash. Farming allowed Native Americans to stay in one spot because they had all of their main resources were growing. Other tribes did not farm because they valued hunting. A very common thing that was hunted was buffalo because it provided so much for the tribes. Hunting buffalo gave Native Americans food, clothing, and weapons. Tribes that hunted would have to move around more because they did not want to over use the resources the land provided. This was because they wanted to make sure the land was

cared for and there were still living things there. Depending on which lifestyle the Native Americans chose, farming or hunting, would determine how often they moved if at all.

The two main tribes in Minnesota were the Chippewa and Dakota Sioux. The Chippewa were known for being a woodland culture. They used birch bark for houses, canoes, and many other things. A lot of their clothes were made out of buckskin. The Chippewa were a farming based community that grew corn, beans, squash, and wild rice. The tribe was also successful in making friends with the French and was able to trade with them for guns. The other tribe in Minnesota was the Dakota Sioux. Sioux stood for treacherous little snakes, so Europeans were very cautious around them. They were a hunting community so they moved around more. This was done so that they did not exhaust the fields. Planting was done by the Dakota Sioux, but it was very limited.

There were some benefits and downfalls of Europeans coming to American. Trading became very useful between the Native Americans and Europeans. Native Americans were able to give Europeans things like fur for survival. Likewise, Europeans gave Native Americans guns and other weapons that were also useful to Native Americans for survival. Another thing that came with Europeans were horses, which ended up being very useful for Native Americans. The French, Spanish, and Russians brought horses to America. Once there, horses were rapidly reproducing and became the main source of transportation for all peoples. Horses made hunting easier for Native Americans and provided more opportunities for hunting as well. Trade and horse were good for both people, but there was always arguments over land which led to fighting.

Numerous wars had taken place and both sides lost citizens. Europeans began to view Native Americans as obstacles and something to get rid of. In 1830 Andrew Jackson created the Indian Removal Act. The act was created to do away with violence between the people. Jackson also had good intentions with this act because he wanted to protect the Native Americans. The

problem with where they moved the Native Americans was that tribes were being moved next to their enemies. Another problem was the process of the removal. It was a very brutal process during the worst time of the year which led to a significant loss of members to all tribes. Later, Martin Van Buren began what was known as the trail of tears. This occurred during the recession when the Cherokees attempted to fight back. Van Buren thought that it was getting out of hand and so he exiled all the Native Americans. This too was a brutal process. Soldiers made them walk at an unreasonable pace covering 200 miles in just 116 days. During the trail of tears 4,000 Native Americans died and 46,000 were relocated.

Native Americans still did not give up so easily. Another battle that had a huge impact was the Sioux Uprising. There was already tension between the Native Americans and Europeans. Harsh things were being said especially by one man who said that the Native Americans should “eat grass” when the Native Americans were suffering from a food shortage. Native Americans raided the homes of many Americans and killed many innocent people. One could probably guess that the Europeans fought back. In the end, Abraham Lincoln ordered the hanging of about 38 Native Americans and exiled the rest to Nebraska.

In my classroom I would like to incorporate a unit on Native Americans and their history. It is important that children understand the history of the place they live in and who was here before them. Children should learn about the way people used to live in the same places that they lived. They should also be aware of the suffering that was endured before them that made America what it is today. One thing that really interested me was the different learning styles. There are many Native American children that still learn through observation because it is a part of their culture. Being aware of this will help me better educate the children that come from

different cultural backgrounds. Native Americans have a rich culture and have faced many trials that impacted many people and should be discussed among students in the classroom.