

Why Treaties Matter

Self-Government in the Dakota and Ojibwe Nations

exhibit

coming soon to Osseo Jr. High!

This traveling exhibition explores Minnesota's Native nations and the history of treaty-making with the U.S. government.

Treaties are agreements between self-governing, or *sovereign*, nations. The story of Native nations within Minnesota is the story of making treaties--from the time before Europeans came to this land, through treaty making with the United States, to the growth of tribal self-determination in our time.

We are honored to have ISD 279 Native American students hosting this exhibit during the American Indian Education Day, Saturday, April 28., at Osseo Junior High.



CURRICULUM GUIDE

This guide has been developed specifically for this exhibition by

*Priscilla Buffalohead
& Ramona Kitto-Statelty*

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Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian



Indian Affairs Council
State of Minnesota



A DEEP CONNECTION TO PLACE

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

CURRICULA AREA: Social studies, history, language arts, geography, and science

MATERIALS:

1. Map of Indian Tribes of North American
2. Map of the Dakota Communities (panel 2)
3. List of Dakota Place names and sacred sites in Minnesota
4. Blank Minnesota state map

GOALS: Students will

- ◆ gain an understanding of Mnisota before white people contact; and
- ◆ gain an understanding and appreciation for Mnisota as the homeland of the Dakota people for centuries.

OUTCOMES: Students will be able to

- ◆ locate the Dakota on a map of Native America;
- ◆ locate the four Dakota communities on a Minnesota map;
- ◆ describe the significance of the panel, “A Deep Connection to Place”;
- ◆ name places within the state that are the Dakota words; and
- ◆ name places within the state that are sacred to the Dakota.

ACTIVITIES: Students will

- ◆ locate the Dakota on a map of Native American and the locations of Minnesota communities on a Minnesota map;
- ◆ name two locations in the state that are words in the Dakota Language and one site that is sacred to the Dakota;
- ◆ express in their own words the historical evidence that the Dakota were in Minnesota before the Ojibwe arrived;
- ◆ locate and write the names of the four Dakota communities in the proper location on a blank Minnesota map; and
- ◆ list some of the historical evidence showing that Minnesota was Dakota homeland before any other group.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: Students demonstrate they are able to

- ◆ locate the Dakota and the four Dakota Communities in Minnesota, name two places in the state that are Dakota words, and locate one place sacred to the Dakota by accurately placing them on a blank Minnesota map; and
- ◆ express the deep connection the Dakota have to “place” through verbal feedback.

BACKGROUND

The Dakota are a part of a larger group known to outsiders as the “Sioux.” The larger group also includes the Dakota and Lakota. All three are language dialects within the same Nation. The Dakota are also related to a large group of Siouan speaking Indian nations who live primarily around the Upper Mississippi Valley. Siouan speaking tribes include, among others, the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Iowa, Omaha, Osage, Ponce, Quapaw, Kansa (Kaw), Missouriia, and Otoe.

A note on terminology: Most Dakota prefer to be called Dakota. It means “we are allies.” The term Sioux is a contraction of Nadouessioux, a word given to them by the Ojibwe meaning snakelike enemy and is a negative and offensive word to the Dakota. The word Sioux is still used however because when tribes established themselves with the Federal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they were known as the Sioux. That word is also entrenched in the treaty terminology and cannot be easily changed.

Humans first came to Minnesota during the last ice age as glaciers melted, following herds of large game. Long before the first Europeans arrived, Indians from as far away as 1,000 miles came to make ceremonial pipes from soft reed pipestone carved from sacred quarries. The Pipestone National Monument in southwest Minnesota illustrates how these quarries were and still are used.

Five thousand years ago, humans made rock carvings of people, animals, and weapons that can be seen today at Jeffers Petroglyphs in southwest Minnesota. These people brought to Minnesota the idea of building earth mounds for graves and sacred ceremonies. At one time, there were more than 10,000 of these mounds in Minnesota.

The creation story of the Dakota takes place at Bdote—a Dakota word that translates to “where the energy is” or “the place where things are happening.” Physically, it is where the Minnesota and the Mississippi rivers come together at a juncture. Today, Dakota place names are prevalent and many of these names are still used across the state.

When the first French fur traders, or voyageurs, arrived in the late 1600s, the Dakota (Sioux) people had lived in Minnesota for many years. They hunted buffalo; fished; planted corn, beans, and squash; and harvested northern beds of wild rice. They lived in warm animal skin tipis in the winter and had airy bark houses, or wigwams, for the summer. The first written accounts of the Dakota were listed in these voyagers’ writings.

By the time Euro-American immigrants arrived in the lands, the Dakota called Mnisota, the Dakota had lived in the area for a very long time. They knew how to use the natural resources for food, clothing, and homes; and how to grow crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They knew how to dry and preserve foods for later use. They knew how to create large villages and fortify them, and govern themselves in a democratic manner. They knew where plant medicines could be found. They could show others how to navigate the rivers and lakes and where worn trails led. They knew how to

keep the land, air, and water clean. The immigrants had a great deal to learn from the Dakota.

What makes a Dakota, Dakota? We cannot separate ourselves from the environment. None of our ceremonies or cultural activities can happen without interacting with our environment. Water is essential for any life—it provides the medicines and foods. All are sustained and provided by the water.

Additional Resources:

Priscilla Buffalohead—Cultural Anthropologist

Indian Boyhood. Charles Alexander Eastman. Dover Publications. New York. 1971.

Games of the North American Indians. Stewart Culin. Dover Publications. New York. 1971.

Ohiyesa. Charles Alexander Eastman. Raymond Wilson. University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Dakota Language and Culture. Joanne Zacharias. Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. 2006.

Dakota Indians Coloring Book. Chet Kozlack. Minnesota Historical Society, 1979.

Painting the Dakota. Seth Eastman at Fort Snelling. Marybeth Lorbiecki. Afton Historical Society Press. 2000.

COMPARING WORLD-VIEWS AND CULTURAL VALUES

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

CURRICULA AREA: Social studies (history, economics, and human geography)

MATERIALS: Student Reading, Questions About the Reading, My Values Essay

GOALS: Students will

- ♦ gain an understanding that different cultures may have different views of the world and the place of humans within our world; and
- ♦ gain an understanding that each culture may have its own priority of values.

OUTCOMES: Students will

- ♦ explain the meaning of the culture, world-view, and values concepts;
- ♦ describe how the Ojibwe and Dakota used their homeland resources;
- ♦ describe how Euro-Americans planned to use Minnesota lands; and
- ♦ identify three Euro-American values described by Charles Alexander Eastman's uncle.

VOCABULARY

- ♦ Culture: a way of life that is learned and shared by a group of people
- ♦ World-view: a picture of the world we learn from our cultural traditions
- ♦ Values: that which is important to us

ACTIVITIES

- ♦ Student reading and accompanying question
- ♦ My values paragraph

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: Students will demonstrate they can

- ♦ explain the meaning of the concepts of culture, world-view, and values by providing an example of each;
- ♦ describe the way the Dakota and Ojibwe people used the resources of their homeland, and how Euro-Americans planned to use the same land, through verbal feedback and by correctly answering the questions at the end of the reading; and
- ♦ identify Dakota ideas about Euro-American values by listing three of these values and writing a paragraph comparing their values to those echoed by Eastman's uncle.

STUDENT READING

Our picture of the world and our place within it is shaped by the people around us including our family, community, and culture. Our values refer to what we consider to be important in life. This picture is what social scientists call our “world-view.” As we learn this picture, we come to believe that our world-view is right and best for us and for everyone else regardless whether or not they grow up in different cultures. Usually the people around us share our world-view, because we are members of a common culture. Our culture is the way of life we accept as our own. That way of life is learned and shared.

When we encounter representatives of another culture, our way of thinking is challenged; because they may have a different world-view and express a different priority of values than ours. This is what happened when Euro-American immigrants met the Native people of Minnesota—the Dakota and Ojibwe. Euro-Americans saw the land and the animal and plant life upon it as being placed there for people to use. In this view, humans represent the most important form of life, and have an inherent right to use their earth's resources as they see fit.

In Native philosophy, the earth is a living being and the symbolic “mother” of all living things. Plants, animals, and humans all have a purpose in the scheme of things; and humans are not necessarily above, or more important than, other living things. Humans have the right to use the earth's resources in a respectful way. Respect means not wasting resources, honoring the animals killed as food, and not taking any more food and other resources than is necessary to sustain life.

The greatest clash between world-views came with regard to the land. Euro-Americans thought of land as parcels of private property that could be bought and sold. They saw resources such as forests of timber, hides of fur-bearing animals, minerals, and other gifts of the earth as commodities that could be possessed and sold to create private wealth. Since these resources were there for humans to take in their world-view, they saw no reason to take only what was necessary to sustain their families.

To Native people, land was not something that could be bought or sold. It was part of a living earth. Dakota and Ojibwe families and communities had the right to harvest resources such as wild rice, maple sap, fish, or game; but these were also living beings and not commodities. This traditional way of life required a larger land base than a particular acreage; because the rice beds, maple groves, fishing waters, and game were not necessarily located in any one place. This way of life followed the cycle of the seasons from summer fishing villages to winter hunting camps.

In addition to differing world views, Euro-American immigrants and Native people had difficulty understanding the priority of each other's values. In many ways, people around the world hold the same values, especially with regard to how to treat each other; but different cultures often have a different priority of values. Native people placed great value on sharing what they had with others. Sharing food was especially important. Food was offered even to strangers who happened to come by. Sharing also took place between tribal nations when they met for feasting, trading, and performing ceremonies. In this view, food sharing is what makes us human. Food sharing for Euro-Americans takes place within the family and at community events; but as a commodity, food is not freely shared. For Native people, Euro-Americans seemed very “stingy” and perhaps not quite human.

Charles Alexander Eastman, a Dakota physician and writer, spent his early childhood and part of his adult life in Minnesota. In his book, *Indian Boyhood*, he quotes his uncle's opinion of the European immigrants [Euro-Americans]:

“The great object of their [Euro-Americans] lives seems to be to acquire possessions—to be rich. They desire to possess the whole world. For thirty years they were trying to entice us to sell our land. Finally, the outbreak (Dakota War of 1862) gave them all, and we have been driven away from our beautiful country.

They (Euro-Americans) are a wonderful people. They have divided the day into hours, like the moons of the year. In fact, they measure everything. Not one of them would let so much as a turnip go from his field, unless he received full value for it. I understand that their great men make a feast and invite many, but when the feast is over the guests are required to pay for what they have eaten before leaving the house. I myself saw at White Cliff (St Paul, Minnesota) a man who kept a brass drum and a bell to call the people to his table, but when he got them in he would make them pay for the food (probably a restaurant).”

From: Charles Alexander Eastman. Indian Boyhood. Dover Books New York 1971

READING QUESTIONS

1. How would you define the phrase, “world-view”?
2. Do people around the world have the same or different world-views?
3. Is the concept of culture the same as the concept of race? Why or why not?
4. How did Euro-American immigrants to Minnesota view the land? How did Native people view the same land?
5. How did Native people demonstrate respect for the Earth's resources?
6. Compare Native vs. Euro-American ideas about the distribution of food.
7. For what did Euro-American immigrants plan to use the land in Minnesota? How did Native people use the same land?
8. What is a value? What values did Charles Eastman's uncle see Euro-Americans as expressing?

MY VALUES PARAGRAPH

Do you think Eastman's uncle accurately describes Euro-American values?

Does this describe your values? Why or why not?

TEACHER INFORMATION

Students may provide examples of the concepts of culture, world-view and values in many ways. Culture is learned behavior; so brushing our teeth, buying a hamburger at McDonald's, or even attending a church service is cultural behavior.

Our world-view is our picture of the world. This view may see land as private property that should have fences around it, or as a part of a loving nurturing earth. Euro-American world views come partly from religion and partly from science. A world-view in Native philosophy may consist of seeing the earth as held up by the four sacred directions, or the moon as a grandmother closely connected to women.

Our values consist of things that are important to us. We may value accumulating possessions or having a lot of money. We may value sharing what we have with others, or our family, or friendships. People around the world often express the same values at particular times. What is important is our priority of values.

READING QUESTIONS KEY

1. How would you define world-view?
It is our picture of the world that is learned through our cultural traditions
2. Do people around the world have the same world view? *No. Different cultures may have many different world views.*
3. Is the concept of culture the same as the concept of race? Why or why not?
Some people confuse the two concepts, but race refers to the physical characteristics of groups of people, while culture is learned behavior. That is why culture can be shared.
4. How did Euro-American immigrants to Minnesota view the land? How did Native people view the same land?
Euro-Americans saw the land as rich in resources that could be exploited, and these resources included private pieces of property. Native people viewed the land as part of Mother Earth, a living being. No one could own the land outright, but people had the right to use resources in order to survive.
5. How did Native people demonstrate respect for the Earth's resources? They demonstrated respect by not wasting these resources, by honoring the animals they killed as food, and by taking only enough to last the season or year.
6. Compare Native vs. Euro-American ideas about the distribution of food.
Euro-Americans saw food as private property that could be shared with family and on occasions the community, but beyond these situations, food was a commodity to be bought and sold. Native people believed that food should always be shared freely.
7. For what did Euro-American immigrants plan to use the land in Minnesota? How did Native people view the same land?
Euro-Americans saw the land as a place where each family could own enough property to feed their families and sell the surplus. They also saw the resources, such as timber, as a way to make money and possibly become rich. Native people used the land to sustain their families and communities. They harvested wild rice, maple sap, fish, and game. If they had a surplus, this could be traded for the resources available to other tribal nations
8. What is a value? What values did Charles Eastman's uncle see Euro-Americans as exhibiting?
A value is something that is important to people. Often people from the same culture exhibit the same values. Eastman's uncle saw Euro-Americans as valuing possessions, valuing wealth, valuing the precise measurement of everything including time, and valuing food as property that could be sold at a profit.

COMPARING GOVERNMENTS AND LAND USE

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

CURRICULA AREA: Social studies (history, civics, human and physical geography)

VOCABULARY

- ◆ Allotment: the process of dividing land into sections for single families
- ◆ Usufructuary rights: the right to retain certain rights to land that is sold to others

GOALS: Students will understand

- ◆ the effects of immigrant actions with regard to the land and lifestyle of the Ojibwe and Dakota; and
- ◆ how the federal government imposed their model of government on the Dakota and Ojibwe people.

OUTCOMES: Students will

- ◆ describe the effects of dam building and forest harvesting on the environment and lifestyle of the Native people of Minnesota;
- ◆ describe the government structure imposed on Minnesota tribal nations through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934; and
- ◆ explain how the Dakota and Ojibwe traditionally governed themselves.

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Use the 11 tribal websites to describe modern tribal government structure and record the findings as individuals or groups
- ◆ Complete the student reading and accompanying questions

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: Students demonstrate they can

- ◆ describe the effects of dam building and forest harvests on the environment and on traditional Native economics through verbal feedback and by correctly answering the questions at the end of the essay; and
- ◆ describe and explain traditional tribal governments and modern tribal government structure through research notes, verbal feedback, and by correctly answering the questions at the end of the essay.

STUDENT READING

Prior to the influx of Euro-American immigrants to the land we call Minnesota, the Ojibwe and Dakota tribal nations held land in common for all tribal members to use. After the Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1825, the Dakota generally placed their villages in the forest and prairie lands of southern Minnesota, while the Ojibwe homeland became the forest and lake country in the northern half of the state. In using resources such as wild rice, maple sap, fish and game animals it was understood which families or groups of families had the right to use certain locations

After most of the land was ceded to the federal government through treaties during the 1800's government agents and others began to change the landscape to their liking. In many of these treaties, Indian nations retained the right to hunt, fish, and gather on the lands they ceded. These are called usufructuary rights. These rights are even recognized in the American law when individuals retain the mineral rights to the lands they sell. For the time being, government agents ignored these rights. Some Euro-American immigrants saw an opportunity for individuals to become rich by harvesting the vast stretches of timber in Minnesota's forests. They also built dams, some on Indian land, to facilitate the movement of logs to saw mills which affected the environment drastically. Before this massive timber cutting, it is said that the forests extended unbroken from Lake Mille Lacs to St. Paul. It took saw mills seven years to burn the sawdust from the trees that were cut in this location alone. Animals that lived in these forests migrated elsewhere. Dams affected the water levels, and the cycles of spawning fish and wild rice growth. These changes made it increasingly difficult for Native people to practice a traditional way of life.

Things were made even more difficult when Congress passed the General Allotment Act of 1887. This congressional act divided Indian land (now called reservations) into 80 or 160 acre parcels to be distributed to each family head. The intent was to make Indians more like whites by forcing them to become "white style" farmers. Both the Dakota and Ojibwe (living at the southern end of their territory) cultivated crops before Europeans came to this land. The women planted and harvested fields of corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers. "White-style" farming meant using horse-drawn plows to cultivate wheat, oats, and barley. It also meant keeping domesticated animals such as pigs, cows, and chickens. A portion of the seed crops went to feed the animals, and animal manure fertilized the fields. This plan assumed men would be the farmers, robbing Indian women of their traditional roles.

The Red Lake Nation rejected the Allotment Act and became the only reservation in Minnesota to hold its lands in common. After the land was allotted on the other reservations, surplus land was sold to Euro-American entrepreneurs. Outright fraud caused Native people to lose even more land. For example, Native people living on the White Earth reservation own only 10% of the total reservation land base.

Even after losing much of their original land base, the Dakota and Ojibwe never gave up their right to be sovereign (independent) nations. However, U.S. policies during the 19th and early 20th

centuries lessened the authority of tribal leaders, and many decisions with regard to Native welfare were made by government agents assigned to each reservation.

To strengthen the sovereign authority of tribal nations, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. This act imposed a Euro-American style of government on Indian people regardless of tribal leadership traditions. Most decisions among the Ojibwe and Dakota were made by a consensus of community members. The Dakota had civil or village chiefs, but their authority was limited, and leadership also rested with young men who formed the soldier's lodge along with other interest groups. The Ojibwe had hereditary civil chiefs coming from the tribe's Crane and Loon clans. Separate individuals provided leadership for particular activities, such as the hunting and harvesting activities.

The Indian Reorganization Act also helped Indian tribes to function more like corporations, so they could initiate business enterprises to strengthen the tribal economic base. The "white-style" of government the IRA imposed always included a "head person," called president or chairperson, and secretary, treasurer, and representatives. Decisions came to be made, not by consensus, but by majority rule possibly causing more factionalism among tribal members.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What concept of land ownership did the Ojibwe and Dakota have prior to the General Allotment Act?
2. What treaty divided Minnesota lands between the Ojibwe and Dakota?
3. What rights to ceded land did many Ojibwe groups retain?
4. How did Euro-American land-use affect the Native people of the state?
5. What effect did the General Allotment Act have on Native people living on Indian Reservations?
What Ojibwe nation did not accept this act?
6. What style of agriculture did the Dakota and Ojibwe practice before Europeans contact?
7. What style of agriculture did Euro-Americans impose?
8. What kind of government did the Ojibwe and Dakota have before the 20th century?
9. What kind of government was imposed by the Indian Reorganization Act?

READING QUESTIONS KEY

1. What concept of land ownership did the Ojibwe and Dakota have prior to the General Allotment Act? *Land was not privately owned but held in common by tribal members. Each group that lived together had an understood plan whereby families and groups of families could use certain portions such as maple sugar groves, to sustain a livelihood.*
2. What treaty divided Minnesota lands between the Dakota and Ojibwe? *The Treaty of Prairie du Chien*
3. What rights to ceded land did some Indian nations retain? *They retained the rights to hunt, fish, and gather on ceded lands.*
4. For what purpose did Euro-Americans want to use the prairie and forest lands of Minnesota? *They wanted to divide the land into parcels for individual families to farm. They also wanted to harvest the forests so certain individuals could become rich.*
5. How did Euro-American land-use affect Native people? *When forests were cut and dams built, it became increasingly difficult for Native people to harvest traditional resources such as fish, game animals, maple groves, and wild rice.*
6. What effect did the General Allotment Act have on Native people living on Indian reservations in Minnesota? What Ojibwe group rejected allotment? *The act divided land into small parcels owned by family heads who were supposed to farm this land. It also left surplus land that was grabbed up by white entrepreneurs. The result was that Native people today, own very little of their original reservation. The Red Lake Ojibwe refused to have their lands allotted.*
7. What style of agriculture did the Ojibwe and Dakota practice before European contact? *The women grew foods domesticated in the Americas such as corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers.* What style of agriculture did Euro-Americans impose? *They expected men to be farmers, grow crops such as wheat, and keep domesticated animals.*
8. How did the Ojibwe and Dakota govern themselves before contact with Europeans? *Both groups made decisions by consensus democracy. The Dakota had village chiefs and a powerful young men's organization called the "soldier's lodge." The Ojibwe had clan chiefs and selected leaders for each economic endeavor.*
9. What style of government was imposed by the Indian Reorganization Act? *A "white-style" democracy was imposed that included the concept of majority rule, and officers who mirrored the office of the executive branch of the federal and state governments.*

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

1. As individuals or in groups, locate the eleven tribal websites on the Internet. (For political purposes each reservation is considered a separate nation.) The 11 reservations are Red Lake, White Earth, Leech Lake, Grand Portage, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Mille Lacs, Prairie Island, Shakopee-Mdewakanton, Lower Sioux and Upper Sioux.
1. Record the type of government each group describes. What conclusion can be drawn from these findings?

THE RIGHTS OF SOVEREIGN NATIONS & TRIBAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

CURRICULA AREA: Social studies (civics, history, and economics)

MATERIALS

1. Student reading and accompanying questions
2. Map of the Indian Reservations and Communities in Minnesota
3. Blank Map of Minnesota

VOCABULARY

- ◆ Sovereign nations: Groups of people who are politically independent from others
- ◆ Casino: A Place Where People Can Gamble—usually taking the form of slot machines, high stakes poker, and other games of chance
- ◆ Games of chance: Games where the chance of winning is based on luck rather than skill

GOAL: Students will

- ◆ understand that as sovereign nations, American Indians have the right to govern themselves and create revenue for tribal members.

OUTCOMES: Students will be able to

- ◆ identify four activities tribes have a right to carry out for tribal members;
- ◆ explain the legal basis for Indian gaming in Minnesota;
- ◆ describe how gaming revenue benefits tribal members and other groups in the state of Minnesota; and
- ◆ provide one example of gambling (betting on games of chance) in ancient tribal traditions.

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Complete the student reading and answer the questions at the end of the essay
- ◆ Locate on a map the 11 Indian reservations and communities in Minnesota
- ◆ Locate and name at least five of the Indian casinos in Minnesota
- ◆ Use the Internet to discover and describe traditional games of chance among the Dakota and Ojibwe. Examples: Dakota games of chance and Dakota dice games

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION: Students should be able to

- ◆ identify four activities of tribal nations;
- ◆ explain the legal basis for Indian gaming in the state;
- ◆ describe some of the benefits going to tribal members and other Minnesotans through gaming revenue, using verbal feedback and correctly answering the questions at the end of the reading;
- ◆ demonstrate an understanding that gambling is a very old Native tradition by re-creating an ancient game of chance from the Dakota or Ojibwe, or by writing a paragraph about the game of chance that involved gambling.

STUDENT READING

The sovereignty or political independence of Indian tribes was legally acknowledged by the U.S. government through the process of treaty-making, because treaties only took place between independent nations. The American Constitution upholds treaties as the law of the land and acknowledges that treaty law supersedes state law. As sovereign nations, each of the eleven Indian reservations and communities in Minnesota has its own government. In addition, six of the seven Ojibwe reservations are governed by an umbrella organization called the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

As is the case of all governments, tribal nations have the right to elect government officials, make and uphold laws for tribal members, take actions for the general welfare of tribal members, and create revenue for the collective benefit of tribal members. The federal and state governments collect revenue by taxing citizens. Indian nations create revenue through tribal business enterprises. An example of tribal enterprise that has been very successful in generating revenue in Indian communities is the Indian casinos. Presently, high stakes gaming is forbidden on Minnesota state lands; but since tribal lands are not state lands but Indian lands held in trust by the federal government, they are not subject to state law. This loophole allowed Indian tribes to enter into the casino gaming business of which some Indian communities have greatly benefited. One example is the Shakopee-Mdewakanton Dakota nation that owns Mystic Lake and Little Six Indian Casinos. These enterprises donate 20% of their income to charitable projects—not only within Indian communities but also projects such as the new Gopher stadium at the University of Minnesota. The Mille Lacs Ojibwe own the Grand Casinos at Mille Lacs and Hinkley and have been able to purchase adjoining lands that were originally part of the reservation. Tribes have also used revenues to build infrastructure on reservation lands, such as water and sewer treatment facilities; restore natural habitat, develop language and cultural restoration programs, and build new housing for tribal members. The casinos and other tribal business enterprises also hire people from the surrounding communities. This has helped the unemployment problem on reservations and in rural areas where many of the casinos are located.

Non-Indian government agents who wielded considerable influence in the 19th century outlawed traditional games of chance, and confiscated gaming equipment on Indian reservations. As a result, many of these games were forgotten. Games of chance made with natural materials included a variety of dice games, hand game, moccasin game, and many others. Participants would bet beadwork, clothing, tools, jewelry, and other items on winning the game. Some of these games were played exclusively by men, women, or children. They taught hand-eye coordination, as well as math skills. The gambling portion of games of chance allowed property to move from those who made items to those who needed them. Social scientists call this a “redistribution” economy.

READING QUESTIONS

1. With regard to government, what does the term “sovereign” mean?
2. What kinds of activities can tribal governments engage in for the benefit of tribal members?
3. Why can Indian tribes in Minnesota have casinos?
4. What kinds of activities does tribal gaming support?
5. How do non-Indians benefit from tribal casinos and other tribal business enterprises?
6. Did the Dakota and Ojibwe have a tradition of gambling before casinos were created? If so, what kinds of activities included a gambling component?

READING QUESTIONS KEY

1. With regard to government, what does the term “sovereign” mean?
Sovereign means “independent of all others” or self-government.
2. What kinds of activities can tribal government engage in for tribal members?
Tribal governments can hold elections and appoint people to office to represent the interests of the people. They can make laws and enforce laws by having courts and police of their own. They can engage in contracts and other activities such as business enterprises on behalf of tribal members.
3. Why can Indian tribes have Casinos with high stakes gambling?
Indian land is not part of state land but is held in trust by the federal government. High stakes gambling is outlawed by the state legislature on state lands only.
4. What kinds of activities does tribal gaming support?
Some tribes donate 20% of their revenue for projects for other tribes and for state residents in general. Tribes use casino revenue to buy back reservations lands, improve water and sewer systems on the reservations, build new housing for tribal members, and many other activities.
5. How do non-Indians benefit from tribal gaming casinos?
Tribal casinos are the fifth largest employer in the state. They hire hundreds of non-Indian employees in areas where unemployment used to be very high. They also fund projects such as the new Gopher stadium at the University of Minnesota.
6. Did the Dakota or Ojibwe have a tradition of gambling before casinos were created? If so, what are some examples of gambling?
Yes, Native people have created games of chance and gambling for centuries. These games of chance included among others, dice games, hand games and moccasin games.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Students locate the eleven Indian reservations and communities on a Minnesota map and record these locations by name on a blank map of Minnesota. They name and locate at least five Indian casinos in the state. (A partial list is Mystic Lake Casino, Little Six Casino, Treasure Island Casino, Jackpot Junction Casino, Firefly Casino, Grand Casinos, Black Bear Casino, Fortune Bay Casino, Shooting Star Casino, Northern Lights Casino, and Seven Clans Casino.)

Students conduct Internet research to find an example of a traditional Dakota or Ojibwe game of chance and either make and demonstrate the game to the class or write a paragraph about the game.