

Native American Reservations, Now and Then

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Research Focus

- To determine the history of living conditions at Native American Reservations
- To learn how Native American leaders tried to improve their community
- To discover how traditions are passed down the generations to the present day



Native American exhibit at Spurlock Museum of World Cultures. Image Credit: Ben Hubbard and Alec Valentino.

Research Methods

- Participant Observation at:
 - Native American House
 - Spurlock Museum
- Surveys
- Online research

Results

- Conditions
 - Large amounts of poverty, drug abuse, and incentives to stay on the reservation
 - Little freedoms, access to water, connection outside the reservation, and infrastructure.
- Leadership
 - Reservations were tightly constricted by government officials
 - Congress was involved in sovereignty with the Major Crimes Act of 1885.
- Traditions
 - Indian Boarding Schools were used to try and strip Native American culture
 - Native American culture and traditions have been attacked since the creation of reservations

Sources

- Afraid of Bear, Loretta. "Traditions; Culture." Indian Youth, Running Strong for American Indian Youth, 22 July 2021, <https://indianyouth.org/mission-history/traditions-culture/>.
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- Elliot, Sarah K. "Antiques Roadshow." PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 2016, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/stories/articles/2015/5/25/how-american-indian-reservations-came-be/>.



Image credit: <https://indianyouth.org/a-love-of-native-cultures/>

Research Focus

- The quality of life and maintaining Native American culture in the United States
- The location of most Native American Reservations
- The current state of Native American Reservations
- Cultural and traditional practices

Research Method

- Participant Observation at Native American House
- Surveys
- Online Research

Results

- Location
 - Most Reservations are located in the West of the United States
 - California is the state with the most reservations
 - Alaska is the state with the highest Native American Population
- Culture
 - Each tribe has their own unique traditions and styles of clothes, food, or housing
 - Practices and traditions are carried on and taught to the next generation
 - Ceremonies and rituals are preserved
- Life in America
 - Tribes have governed themselves for hundreds of years
 - Only about 22% of Native Americans live on a Reservation
 - Children who live on Reservations don't go to school

Sources

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- Reich, D. Patterson, et al. "Reconstructing Native American population history. *Nature* 488 (7411): 370-374, 2012.