tragedy. Asked to describe the lessons he learned from King's assassination, a 35-year-old black army officer said: "Even in death, great things can occur from that. I think that the country as a whole became more sensitive, or more in tune with what Martin Luther King was trying to espouse."

"We're all basically related": The Oglala Sioux and Their Pasts

The 186 Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota shared with all respondents an emphasis on family as the primary source of personal identity and locus of historical memory.[14] Like whites (and African Americans and Mexican Americans), they told us that the past of their family was "most important" to them and that they felt "most connected" to the past when gathering with their families. More than half of them had looked into the histories of their families during the previous year—a dramatically higher figure than for any other group in our survey. Yet the Oglala Sioux also spoke in the kind of collective voice that came easily to African Americans. The Sioux referred to more than their own families when they talked about "we," "us," or "our." They repeatedly talked about "our history," "our heritage," "our culture," "our tribe," "our language," and "our traditions." The Sioux were almost ten times as likely as white Americans to describe ethnic/racial history as most important to them; indeed, a higher percentage of Sioux than African Americans made that choice.

Even more than black Americans, Oglala Sioux stretched their connections from their families to more collective identities as members of a tribe, as residents of Pine Ridge reservation, and as American Indians. Asked to explain why she had rated the history of her family as the most important, a 48-year-old Pine Ridge woman answered, "My family leads down to my Indian culture and that leads to the history of the United States. I guess it all connects." A 53-year-old homemaker offered a similar response: "You learn the past of your family and that branches out to many things, and that would include your community and your ethnic group, and not to mention the history of the U.S. too." Oglala Sioux believed that they shared a blood tie to other members of their tribe. "In the Lakota beliefs," explained a 28-year-old cook, "we're all basically related." "Around here," noted a 30-year-old fireman, "everybody treats you like brothers, sisters, moms and dads . . . even as far as the fifth and sixth cousins." To a 48-year-old professional, the most important thing for children to know about the

past was "who their people are, how they came to be here, how we're all related."

Since "we're all related," gathering with family or investigating family history meant affirming a larger collective identity. "We all feel the . . . spirit of our ancestors on a daily basis," said a 42-year-old unemployed woman. "When we are all together, it is a really strong feeling. We have ceremonies where we feed our ancestors. Invariably, everything we do has connection to our ancestors. The Native American culture thrives and lives by ritual because we're part of this oral history, and everything we do, we tie it into the past." These connections with a wide circle of ancestors as well as the reality of life in a relatively small community meant that many Pine Ridge residents reported familial ties to key figures in the local past, especially prominent chiefs. Asked to identify a figure from the public or personal past who had a major impact on them, Oglala Sioux respondents offered names that fell in both categories: "my grandpa, Chief Red Cloud"; "my sixth generation grandfather, Chief Big Foot"; Chief Spotted Tail, a relative "from my mom's side."

Yet even those Oglala Sioux who did not claim lineal descent from a prominent leader constructed family histories linking themselves to the tribe. This tie between family history and tribal history had a bureaucratic component—the Bureau of Indian Affairs required people who want to enroll as members of the tribe to prove their ancestry. "In order to be a member of a tribe," a 47-year-old man explained, "you have to do a history of your family in order to see if you have the right ancestors." Thus, most Pine Ridge residents had researched their family history. But even when the Sioux complied with a government requirement they reinforced their group identity as members of a particular tribe—what respondents variously described as Sioux, Lakota, Oglala Lakota, Oglala Dakota Sioux, or, most often, Oglala Sioux.[15]

Many Sioux used family history as a vehicle to move beyond their tribe to an identification with other American Indians. By looking at his family tree, reported a 42-year-old Pine Ridge resident, he "found out that I am related to people out in other reservations," because "the cavalry separated us into separate reservations so that there wouldn't be a big group of them." Asked to define his race, the same man told us that "the Lakotas are Native Americans, that is what we call ourselves." A 32-year-old woman noted that she had looked into her family history "to get my oldest son enrolled into our tribe," but that in the process she had "found out that I was related to some people from the Northern Cheyenne."

Some Sioux created historical narratives that undercut notions of "pure" or fixed racial identity. Like African Americans, they used the past to juggle multiple identities—which, in the context of reservation life, sometimes proved difficult. A teacher, for example, had learned from talking to "elders on my father's side" that one of her distant relatives was a Lindbergh. Although she thought this discovery was "kind of neat," she acknowledged that there are still "a lot of full-blood Indians that look down on it if you have some white blood in you. People who have white blood are called 'Iyeska' and sometimes it's a bad word." Another school employee in her twenties who had both "white relatives and Indian ancestors" was "looking up her genealogy" so that her children could know where they came from and "avoid some of the prejudice I've grown up with."[16]

Though some Sioux respondents reported their kinship with white Americans, most viewed whites as "the other," as "them" or "they." Asked to explain who she meant when she talked about "how they used to treat us," a 20-year-old women answered simply "the white people." Sometimes this presentation of white Americans as the "other" partook as much of curiosity as hostility. A 31-year-old game warden noted that he would "like to know about the white society. I know they came from overseas, but I'd like to know exactly where they came from—France or wherever."

"Pretty much opposite": The Sioux Rewriting of U.S. History

For the Oglala Sioux, a strong sense of group identity both drew upon and reinforced a distinctive sense of the past—a shared set of historical references to particular events, places, and people that they repeatedly invoked and used, albeit not always in the same ways. Asked about an event or period in the past that "has most affected you," the Sioux drew their answers from a specifically Indian historical chronology. Almost two thirds cited events from American Indian history, with most of them talking about the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, the confinement of Native Americans to reservations, the signing and violation of various Native-White treaties, and Columbus's arrival in the New World. Not a single white respondent cited any of these events.

The Sioux described a historical landscape just as distinct as their timeline. More American Indians (about two thirds of our sample) than any other ethnic or racial group reported that they had visited a museum or his-

toric site during the previous year. They almost always chose such places as the Wounded Knee massacre site, Crazy Horse Mountain, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, and the Sioux Indian Museum in Rapid City, South Dakota. At least twenty-six Oglala Sioux noted that they visited the giant sculpture of Chief Crazy Horse that is being carved in the Black Hills. Only fifteen mentioned visiting nearby Mount Rushmore, and most of them did so only in the context of a visit to the Crazy Horse monument. Or they put a distinctive spin on the trip. For a schoolteacher from Pine Ridge, a trip to Mount Rushmore was memorable because her granddaughter got to sit in the lap of Ben Black Elk, "a great Indian leader . . . who took a job of going to Mt. Rushmore each summer dressed in his native costume and having his picture taken" and who had given this woman and her husband their Indian names when they were themselves children.[17]

When we asked about a person from the past who affected them, the Sioux's most popular choice by far was Crazy Horse. Not a single white or African American cited the Sioux warrior, who was stabbed to death at age 35 by an American soldier.[18] (Whites and blacks did share the Sioux interest in men who could be considered martyrs: white Americans put Kennedy, Lincoln, and Christ first and black Americans overwhelmingly selected King.) The Sioux set themselves apart not only in the people, places, and events they cited but even more in the way they talked about them. Sioux stories reversed the conventional narrative, establishing different key turning points or viewing conventional turning points in an entirely different light. A 37-year-old Pine Ridge man described his sense of the past as "pretty much opposite" that of "most of the Americans." "Well," he pointed out, "when they were fighting the Civil War, we were fighting the cavalry and when they were homesteading the West, we were stuck on the reservations. . . . Whereas they gained their freedom, we lost ours."

In presenting their story as "pretty much opposite" the traditional narrative, the Sioux differed from African American respondents. Members of both groups offered sophisticated counternarratives of U.S. history. African Americans, however, most often saw themselves as part of the traditional story, which they told in conventional Americanist terms of emancipation and progress; they demanded inclusion in the basic narrative and complained of white failures to live up to the nation's principles. The Sioux seemed to reject the traditional narrative structure altogether, defining themselves as a separate nation with a history that followed a dramatically different trajectory.

This conviction that you needed to "reverse history" to tell the story of American Indians, as one person put it, ran through many of the interviews. "Because American history began in 1492 and Native American history began long before that, we have different histories," observed a teacher. A man who worked for the federal government said Columbus's arrival in the New World was "more or less the beginning of the downfall of the Indians"; a 38-year-old woman called it the start of "genocide." A 26-year-old student, conscious that he was talking to someone of his own generation but of a different race, declined to offer much detail about the lessons he drew from the "discovery of America." "I don't really want to be offending, so I'll have to skip that one," he explained.

The bitterness of the Sioux narrators increased as they came closer to the present. Eleven of them talked about July fourth, for example, as having either no meaning or a reverse meaning for Native Americans. "The fourth of July," noted a schoolteacher, "is supposed to be Independence Day, but we never got independence. We have nothing to celebrate about." A 33-year-old man described the founding of the United States as "the beginning of genocide of the natives of this land."

White injustice toward Native Americans, our respondents told us, intensified in the nineteenth century. White respondents said little about nineteenth-century events, except for occasional references to the Civil War, but the Sioux spent considerable time talking passionately about things that happened more than a century ago. Many of them could detail a history of broken treaties. Pine Ridge residents attached particular importance to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, which had given the Sioux control of the Black Hills. The U.S. government's blatant violations of the treaty, they told us, signified that "Native Americans, in the eyes of whites, are expendable" and that "European colonists cannot be trusted."[19]

Not surprisingly, Pine Ridge residents celebrated the Battle of Little Bighorn, where in 1876 Sioux and Cheyenne warriors under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse wiped out General George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry. One respondent called it "the greatest victory of the Lakota people" and another "our victory, our only victory." Among the Sioux, Little Big Horn Day (June 25) is a holiday celebrating "the day that Custer got killed." Yet some Pine Ridge Sioux cast even this victory within the tragic mode that characterized their overall public history. A 35-year-old unemployed man, describing how high school history classes degraded "our people," observed that teachers described the battle as Custer's "last

stand, but it was ours. We lost a way of living; after that, we were sent to the reservations."[20]

Sioux spoke most mournfully about Wounded Knee, where the U.S. Seventh Cavalry massacred 146 Sioux men, women, and children on December 29, 1890—the last military engagement between whites and American Indians. More respondents had visited the local memorial to the massacre than any other historic site. More respondents mentioned Wounded Knee as the historical event that affected them than any other but one. And that exception was the 1973 American Indian Movement occupation of Wounded Knee—a confrontation that itself drew upon and reinforced the powerful historical associations that residents had with the event and the site. More than half of our respondents mentioned Wounded Knee in the course of their interviews. And these references weren't casual; respondents graphically described how "soldiers came in and killed women, children, and babies" and said they had learned from this not to "trust the United States government" and "how cruel people can really be to another race."

When we later asked our interviewers what they particularly remembered about their interviews with the Pine Ridge Sioux, one pointed to the way that such stories about the past are deeply embedded in the present: "Their everyday life becomes the past, the past becomes their everyday life." He recalled a woman who explained to him, "We're still talking about Wounded Knee like it happened today."

Despite—or because of—their bitter criticism of the American government, Pine Ridge residents were more directly engaged with the traditional national narrative than most white respondents, even while placing themselves distinctly apart from that narrative. To a greater degree than any other group we surveyed, the Oglala Sioux cited public rather than personal events as the ones that most affected them. And more than white Americans, they talked about events—treaties signed and broken, presidential orders, actions by federal troops and agents—from our national political history. Pine Ridge Sioux more often invoked events and people from U.S. history, conventionally defined, than white Americans, though the perspective on those people and events was not exactly the one that advocates of teaching the canonical names and dates would want.[21] In contrast to the indifference with which white respondents viewed textbook narratives of American history, the Sioux spoke with the passionate interest of the outside critic.

In fact, the Oglala Sioux sometimes seemed to enjoy giving our inter-

viewers their take on cherished symbols of Americana. A 62-year-old Pine Ridge man who described himself as "a history nut" noted that "I'm not too high into . . . how Washington chopped the cherry tree. I'm not too much into that. . . . I don't think my kids are into it either. They have to study it but they're not much into it." Recalling his own grade school education, he commented on how they used to "beat into you" things like Longfellow's "Hiawatha," but that even as "a little fourth grader I thought it was a lot of bullshit."

"I was taught that Abe Lincoln and other forefathers were great men," remembered a man who grew up in the 1950s, "but . . . in real truth they were part of policies that were to wipe out Native Americans." Like this man, other Sioux respondents described their disillusionment when they discovered that Lincoln did not live up to the historical reputation that they had been taught in school. "When I learned that Lincoln had hung twenty-four Sioux in Mandan, North Dakota," a 39-year-old woman told us, "I was pretty mad. . . . He had freed the blacks and still allowed genocide to happen to Indians." A teacher said that in grade school "I was taught to praise and look up to" men like Lincoln. But while Lincoln is "most widely known for freeing the slaves . . . in fact on the day he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he also ordered the death by hanging in Minnesota of the group of men, women, and children Native Americans for defending their camp."[22]

Although every group we interviewed rated high school history teachers, nonfiction books, and movies and television as the least trustworthy historical sources, Native Americans ranked them significantly lower than anyone else. Interviews with the Oglala Sioux resonated with deep anger over the way that their story has been misrepresented in these sources—"just lies," as more than one put it. When African Americans talked about official versions of the past, they protested about exclusion; Native Americans talked about distortions. "The way they show us in schools makes us look like cavalry killers," observed one man. Instead, he argued, the schools "should teach the kids how the greed came from the immigrants coming into our country and taking our land." Movies and television, added a 23-year-old woman in a comment echoed by many others, invariably portrayed Indians as "stupid or savage." History books, an administrative assistant noted in another typical comment, "don't really tell the accurate history of our people. . . . When Columbus came over, they really made us out to be savages and murderers, when really our people helped Columbus and his people survive those first winters."

Some respondents condemned those who propagated dishonest views of the past. "Whenever a schoolteacher starts the class with the saluting of the American flag and not telling the children what happened under that flag to the Native nations," said one Pine Ridge man, they are "in the same category as the gas chamber attendants at Auschwitz." Although not all Oglala Sioux would go as far as this man, most expressed anger and pain at the way mainstream historical sources depicted American Indians. Some Pine Ridge Sioux felt so angry that they initially refused to talk to white interviewers. One woman, who at first declined to be interviewed, offered the explanation, "I hate all of you; I want to kill all of you."

When we asked white Americans what they thought children should be taught about the past, many offered relatively bland answers highlighting patriotic pieties. American Indians often had a simple yet passionate answer. As one retired man put it, children need to learn "the truth. The way it really happened and if it's right or wrong, you know, the truth." When he went to school all he learned was the "white man's version of the past." But today, he argued, history books could tell how whites "got this country. They didn't get it because God gave it to them. They stole it. Tell the truth. Tell the way it happened." No white respondents used the word "truth" in answer to the question about children and the past, but at least ten Native Americans did.

Oglala Sioux turned to alternative historical sources to challenge what they saw as the mainstream historical narrative. They sharply criticized most history books and historical films. Though some of them praised books like *Black Elk Speaks*, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, and *Lakota Woman* and films like *Dances with Wolves*, *Thunderheart*, and *Lakota Woman*, they tempered this praise with insider criticism. Many endorsed *Dances with Wolves*, which was filmed nearby, for its favorable and nonstereotypical portrayal of Native Americans as well as its use of Lakota language, but a few complained that it was overly "romantic," reflected a "one-sided" "Anglo-American" perspective, and inaccurately portrayed Indian dress and ceremonies.

Pine Ridge residents found material artifacts and oral evidence more trustworthy than books or film. Like others we interviewed, the Sioux put particular faith in museums that presented "a lot of artifacts" and especially "our things." A 33-year-old office worker praised the Sioux Indian Museum in Rapid City as "factual" because "they have this Indian lady's stuff, they had her buckskin dress, her beads and information about her." Many talked about what they had learned from historic sites like the

Wounded Knee massacre memorial and the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

The Oglala Sioux, like black, white, and Mexican American respondents, valued historical evidence that came out of "personal accounts from grandparents or other relatives" and "conversations with someone who was there." But the Sioux sharply differentiated between oral and nonoral sources. White Americans, on average, rated oral sources 16 percent more trustworthy than films, books, museums, college professors, and high school teachers; the Sioux gave them a 42 percent higher ranking. Put another way, Pine Ridge residents thought the gap between the value of the two sets of sources was more than twice as large as white Americans did.[23] "Our grandparents say our history," explained a Sioux police officer, "and we listen to all they have to say. . . . It is part of our culture to listen to what our grandparents have to say." "In my tradition," added an administrative assistant, "our past has been passed on orally." In "my culture," noted a range technician, "we were not given books to read—history was given through stories, from accounts that were given by word of mouth I can remember. When I was very young, it was passed on to me."

So powerful was this veneration of oral accounts passed on from trusted relatives and elders that Pine Ridge residents used this evidence and this way of knowing the past as the standard against which to judge other historical sources. A nurse endorsed the Sioux Indian Museum as "pretty much accurate . . . because it was part of the way things were told by our ancestors, by our elders." A maintenance man praised a particular high school history teacher because "he was an older fellow when he started teaching history, and he just seemed like he had more experience, from his grandparents, or something." And a young woman rated "college professors I've spoken to" as trustworthy sources because "they've talked to a lot of older people who really know what happened."

"You can see it from here": The Integrated Sense of the Past at Pine Ridge

Because the Pine Ridge Sioux draw their sense of the past from people, places, and artifacts they regularly encounter, their everyday lives reinforce a shared historical identity. They don't limit this engagement with their collective past to particular holidays or particular settings—as white Americans do when they study history in school or visit museums. The

Oglala Sioux experience and use a group past with the same depth and intimacy that white Americans reserve for the history of their families.

Wounded Knee, a topic mentioned in more than half of the Sioux interviews, illustrates the way a common historical consciousness is reinforced at Pine Ridge.[24] (White Americans spoke of no public historical event with remotely comparable frequency and passion; African American respondents didn't assign the same prominence even to the civil rights movement.) In part, these dense connections to Wounded Knee stemmed from its powerful physical presence for Pine Ridge residents. One 28-year-old woman could not avoid contemplating the Wounded Knee massacre site while she talked to our interviewer: "As I look out my living room window," she reported, "you can see it from here."

Sometimes a familiar historical site simply blends into the background; many Washingtonians walk or drive to work past the Jefferson or Lincoln memorials without thinking about their significance. But the familiarity of the Wounded Knee memorial reinforced its importance to Pine Ridge residents. "You see it and you look at it and it is a hurt because of what happened to the people who were there who were killed. . . . Those of us here seem to grieve over and over again." A 35-year-old man said he went to the site regularly "to pray for the people who got killed." "I just go there to think about how it was back then. I like to stand there and think about how it was. . . . It was my people who got killed there, the Cheyenne River Lakota. They were killed there. They were my people."

At least 18 respondents (in a sample of 186) brought up relatives who were present at the Wounded Knee massacre. Those personal connections made Wounded Knee a force in the lives of Pine Ridge residents more powerful than recent events like World War II and Vietnam in the lives of white Americans. A 48-year-old woman, who described the Wounded Knee massacre as "the epitome of racial hatred" and who had recently helped commemorate the event, noted that she "began hearing about [Wounded Knee] from the time I was a really small girl from my parents and grandparents." The same young woman whose house looked out at the massacre site reported discussing family history with her mother while they sorted some old photos. "My mother is a descendant of Wounded Knee," she explained. "And we talked about how the massacre to this day has influenced her, even though it was her grandmother who was shot. She was not killed. She was a child at the time. She was hit, but most of the bullet hit her shawl." A 43-year-old woman whose relatives died in the massacre said that she learned about it through "talking to different people,

mostly elderly." As a result, the events of more than a century earlier were a haunting daily presence for her: "You can almost hear the voices, you can almost see the events taking place."

An event that few white Americans could identify (the massacre site doesn't even rate a mention in the AAA guide to South Dakota) is a shaping force in the lives of almost all the Sioux residents of Pine Ridge reservation.[25] Through events like Wounded Knee, the Oglala Sioux bring together personal and collective pasts into a single shared past that is reinforced as they move through the reservation and talk with friends and relatives.

This integrated sense of the past gives the Oglala Sioux a self-confidence and self-knowledge that many white Americans seem to lack. The white Americans we interviewed turn to the past as part of a struggle to define who they are; the Oglala Sioux's clear sense of the past gives them a firmer expression of self and group identity. Unlike black Americans who struggle with W.E.B. DuBois's dilemma of "double consciousness," of being black in a white society, the Pine Ridge Sioux appear—at least to outsiders—much less conflicted over matters of identity. One of our interviewers thought that his conversations with Native Americans were memorable precisely because of this secure sense of the past. "The interviews that stand out most in my mind," he told to us after the study was over, "are the minority interviews and especially the American Indian interviews because not only were they the longest because they had the most experience with the past (the past of their family, the past of their ethnic group) but they almost all had hobbies or had taken some initiative to learn more about their society or family background." He found that many Indians seemed to know "the answers before I got done with the questions; they knew what they were going to say. It was like they had been thinking about it so much that it was 'old hat' when we asked these questions."

"We survived": The Sioux Triumph over the Past

The Oglala Sioux respondents presented a shared past, but not one free of internal conflicts. Residents of Pine Ridge have deep political disagreements—so deep that they erupted in a virtual civil war in the 1970s.[26] Many respondents used the past to debate issues of assimilation and accommodation versus resistance and tradition. Some celebrated Crazy

Horse to argue that you can't "trust the white man" or that you should never "give into the white man." Others marshalled stories about Spotted Tail, who was chief when the Sioux were put on the reservation, to contend that assimilation and education are the only routes to "a better life." Many debated resistance and accommodation as they commented on the 1973 confrontation at Wounded Knee and the 1975 Pine Ridge shoot-out that resulted in the death of two FBI agents and the imprisonment of Leonard Peltier.

Like everyone else in the survey, the Sioux used the past to deal with more personal issues as well. Their intimate uses of the past, however, differed from white respondents' because of the broader range of cultural resources they deployed. White respondents typically addressed a problem like alcoholism by thinking about personal and family histories. But Oglala Sioux respondents, who talked a great deal about alcoholism (a major problem on Pine Ridge reservation) almost invariably reached back into the past of their group when they looked for explanations and solutions.[27] They often blamed the "Europeans," the "boarding schools," "the white people," or the reservation system. And they offered solutions drawn from the Indian past. A 44-year-old Pine Ridge man maintained that a combination of family and native history would help to defeat "poverty . . . alcohol and drug abuse." Only by giving children of the "native nations" a "complete understanding of where they came from, their great-grandfathers and grandmothers," he argued, "can we circumvent a lot of the problems" like alcoholism.

Sioux respondents repeatedly told two different kinds of stories as they used the past to live in the present. They described the oppression whites have imposed on Indians starting in 1492. And they talked about how Indians have survived and taken control of their lives and culture despite the barriers imposed by white society.

The first narrative, which has innumerable variations, draws conclusions from the past about both the immorality of white settlers and the ways they have restricted the possibility of change for Native Americans. Thus, the lesson that Pine Ridge residents draw from the stories of the 1868 treaty, the death of Crazy Horse, Wounded Knee, and numerous other Indian-White encounters: "Do not trust the United States government"; don't "trust the white people"; and "never trust the European." In this emphasis on trust and the betrayal of trust, the story of broken treaties becomes the governing metaphor for understanding the history of Native Americans since 1492. In effect, Pine Ridge residents seem to be saying to

white Americans: You have abused us for centuries and then lied about the abuse.

But more often than this cautionary tale about betrayal we heard a positive and affirming tale about survival, persistence, and progress. Over and over, the Pine Ridge Sioux spoke with pride—and sometimes wonder—that they had survived despite the long history of white oppression and perfidy. The important message of the Oglala Sioux past, a Pine Ridge man explained, was "just the survival, that we survived. . . . They took our land away and put us over here where we are now. We're making do with what we have now."

The Oglala Sioux defined survival largely as the preservation of their culture—language, customs, traditions, and beliefs. Asked why he, like so many others, worked on "our cultural native crafts, things like beaded belts," an accountant explained, "It's part of our culture. We just enjoy doing it because it's within us, it's something built within us and we enjoy doing it to save our culture. [It's] part of preserving our culture." A 39-year-old who worked with children urgently insisted that "without our beadwork, without our culture and our language, we are no longer a people, we are no longer distinct."

This work of cultural preservation includes making and preserving traditional objects like beadwork, studying and teaching the Lakota language, maintaining rituals like sun dances and sweat lodges, and simply preserving the past itself. Like most efforts at cultural preservation, this one also involves recovery and reinvention; the interest in "traditional" culture has greatly increased at Pine Ridge since the early 1970s.[28] A 32-year-old student described his hobby as collecting "songs and stories that were told by our grandfathers." A 28-year-old woman explained why her mother and her sister worked with the Wounded Knee Pine Ridge Survivors Association: "That is our identity, part of our culture. A way of life that we have to teach our children." "Well," she concluded, "this is who we are. If we lose our culture then we cease to be Indians." (The Pine Ridge Sioux were more likely to participate in organizations interested in the past than any other group in the survey.)

This woman, and many other Pine Ridge residents, described the past as not simply "usable" but essential to group and individual survival. The Pine Ridge Sioux looked to the past to explain individuals' alcoholism as well as the poverty of the whole reservation. The future of their tribe, they said, depends on the lessons about adversity, struggle, and progress that they draw from the past.[29]

"You can't allow the past to be lost": American Indians Beyond Pine Ridge

Because we talked to almost 200 Oglala Sioux on a reservation with fewer than 25,000 people, we are fairly confident that we have been able to capture their distinctive sense of the past. But can these be described as "Indian" responses? Are these typical of what we would have heard if we had called Native Americans across the United States?

In certain respects, they are not. Many Oglala Sioux respondents talked about the specific history of the Pine Ridge Sioux—the repeated references to Wounded Knee or Crazy Horse, for example. Their conversations reflected the experience of people living in a community with other people of the same group. Urban Indians might not have the same intense sense of connection to a particular place.

We can't provide a full comparison, but we did interview 28 American Indians from Minneapolis, whom we located by calling phone numbers in the census tract with the highest concentration of Native Americans and from the membership lists of several Indian organizations. We also interviewed 31 American Indians in the national sample and as a result of calls made in the other minority samples. Given the nonsystematic methodology in the first case and the small numbers in the second, the results must be regarded as suggestive rather than definitive.

Urban Indians in Minneapolis and American Indians in the national and minority samples shared with the Pine Ridge Sioux a conviction about the importance of the past of their ethnic/racial group. Thirty-eight percent of the Pine Ridge residents and 27 percent of those reached in other samples said that the Indian past was more important than the past of family, nation, or community—which means that Indians expressed a greater interest in ethnic history than any other group in the survey. Both groups of American Indians, however, put family at the top of their list; thus, they shared the tendency of all groups in the survey to say that family history was most important to them. Indeed, the single exception was the sample of 28 Minneapolis residents, who were equally likely to choose family history and ethnic/racial history—perhaps because a majority of them were members of Indian organizations.

The Minneapolis Indians—most of them members of the Ojibway (Chippewa) tribe—shared the Oglala Sioux's skepticism of mainstream history. Asked to rate their sense of connection to the past in school or while watching movies and television on a 1–10 scale, they came up with a lower score than any other group in the entire sample. "It was very

painful to listen when [instructors] talked about when my forefathers were savages," said a 47-year-old man. "When I was in school there was a lot of racism. So I have these white instructors/educators telling us that. It was very difficult as a child to continue hearing that." The Minneapolis American Indians were also more skeptical about films and television programs than any other group in the survey. For a 31-year-old woman, the film *1492: Conquest of Paradise* "glorified those who were seen as discoverers when in fact they are stepping over the bones of many people to serve their own interests." Although American Indians in other samples were less critical of mainstream presentations than the Minneapolis group, they distrusted movies and high school teachers much more than white Americans did.

Not surprisingly, Indians outside the reservations did not have the strong collective sense of "we" and "us" that is so apparent among Pine Ridge residents, who live in a tight geographic community. When nonreservation Indians investigated family history, they seemed to be trying to establish a sense of personal, rather than group, identity. Yet despite these differences, they echoed the Pine Ridge narrative of cultural survival. A lawyer from a large East Coast city described her work with the Osage Language Association, which is developing a computer program to document, preserve, and teach the language. "You can't allow the past to be lost. We all have a responsibility to protect our history," she explained. Minneapolis Indians frequently talked about their interest in Indian crafts and beadwork and in organizations devoted to studying and preserving the past of their tribe. Asked "what specifically about the past of your racial or ethnic group is important to you," a Native American living in Minneapolis offered a five-word answer that summarized what many Pine Ridge residents said at greater length: "That we are still here."