

American Indian Quotes

Unit: Politics and Diplomacy (Elementary and Middle School)

Interview with Calvin Grinnell, Hidatsa December 2002

“[It is] said, today, that smoking the pipe of peace or the traditional pipe among peoples, like Lewis and Clark had smoked with the Plains tribes, that it was a visible prayer.

But the transaction, the agreement wasn't between two races or whatever. It was three people present; me and you and the Creator. We were doing this under a spiritual bond, and He was witness to it, or the Creator was witness to it.”

Interview with Reba Teran, Eastern Shoshone December 2002

“I always had a problem with ‘peace pipe.’ Tobacco was found only in America and that’s what we’d smoke and that’s what the spirits craved, our helpers. When we would smoke that tobacco, and you’re praying to the Creator and you’re singing your songs and the songs bring the spirits to you and you smoke that pipe and you’re praying, that whoever you smoke with to speak the truth and when you make an agreement that’s like a prayer with God or Creator and so that’s what you’re doing. It wasn’t a peace pipe. It wasn’t saying we want peace. It was truth pipe. That’s why when I see that tomahawk mixed with the pipe to me that’s blasphemy. It’s a total contradiction of an object. You don’t kill on the pipe.”

Interview with LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Lakota (Sioux) December 2002

“We don’t own a thing called a peace pipe. We learned about peace pipes from white people. We don’t have such a thing in our culture. A pipe is prayer and sacred and an object of prayer. When you’re having a gathering you have prayer. And so when you bring people from other countries you sit down and pray for goodwill and truth and so it’s prayer.”