

***Wapaha S̄ka Oyate: Living Our Culture,
Sharing Our Community at Pion-Era 1955 – 69***

Exhibit Reflection Resource

“Together in Reconciliation and partnership, Whitecap Dakota Nation and the Western Development Museum invite you to learn each of our perspectives on our shared past.”

Have you heard the expression "there's always two sides to every story?" That is one of the ideas at the heart of this exhibit. Why does it matter to share and reflect on different perspectives? Keep that 'big question' in mind as you explore the exhibit and answer the questions below.

About Whitecap Dakota Nation:

1. What does the riverscape inside and outside the exhibit represent?

HINT: Find the Mural Narrative panel

Whitecap Dakota Nation's connection to the vast river systems in their territories.

2. What two concepts do the seven horses in the mural around the outside of the exhibit represent?

1. *Seven Council Fires – the traditional government system of the alliance of seven Dakota, Lakota and Nakota groups.*

2. *Seventh Generation Principle – considers how decisions affect seven generations into the future.*

3. What does the word “Dakota” translate to in English?

Friend or Ally

4. What do the Dakota people believe about their relationship with the land (makoće)?

They believe that they do not possess the land or anything in it. They have a kinship relationship to it through Ina Maka (Mother Earth).



5. Did the Whitecap Dakota Nation sign Treaty Six? Why or why not?

No. Whitecap Dakota Nation has its own history Treaty-making with Canada. Canada denied the Whitecap Dakota Nation admission to both Treaty Four and Treaty Six because they were incorrectly considered "American Indians."

Since this exhibit was launched, the Nation negotiated a Governance Treaty in 2023 and is now in negotiations with Canada to expand the Treaty to deal with lands and not being allowed to be part of the historic Numbered Treaties.

6. When you think of "cowboys," who do you picture? Find the "Cattle, Cowboys and Community" sign. Does reading that sign challenge what you pictured? How?

Various answers

Pion-Era at WDM Saskatoon:

7. Where did the word "Pion-Era" come from?

It is a play on the words: "pioneer" and "era."

8. The Whitecap Dakota Nation took part in Pion-Era during what years?

1955 - 1969

9. Why was the cultural exchange that took place at Pion-Era between the Indigenous Nations participating in the tipi camp and settler visitors so unique?

For many settlers, this may have been their first contact with Indigenous peoples.

10. When was the "pass system" supposed to have ended in Canada? Are you surprised it was still used after then?

1930s



11. Who is the Pion-Era Princess? Why is that her nickname?

Bernice Royal, because she was born in a tipi at Pion-Era in 1959

12. In your own words, what changed in the relationship between the WDM and Whitecap Dakota Nation in 1967 and the later 1960s?

HINT: Find the “Asked to be Authentic” sign.

Pion-Era started to try to strictly manage Indigenous participants, instructing them in what to wear and do in order to create an “authentic” Indigenous experience for its guests. This meant, ironically, that the Indigenous participants were less able to be their true, authentic selves.

13. Look in the Pion-Era memorabilia case. Find the artifact labeled #9, from 1967. Today, the word “Indian” is considered outdated and offensive. Do you think it is all right for museums to display artifacts with this word on them? Why or why not?

Various answers

Reflections on Reconciliation:

Once you have finished exploring the exhibit, have a seat in the round room in the middle to watch the photograph presentation and reflect on the questions below:

14. The historical relationship between the WDM as an institution and Indigenous participants in Pion-Era, like the Whitecap Dakota Nation, has been described as having a “power imbalance.” What do you think is meant by this? Who had more power in the relationship? Why do you think that? How do you think that shaped the relationship?

Various answers



15. Why do you think it was important to both the WDM and Whitecap Dakota Nation to work closely with each other on this exhibit?

Various answers

16. What does Reconciliation mean to you? How did this exhibit change or reinforce your own ideas about Reconciliation?

Various answers

Your Questions

What questions does this exhibit raise for you? Are there topics or ideas you would like to learn more about?



Vocabulary:

Artifacts “held in trust” by the WDM: Unlike most artifacts on exhibit at the WDM, the Dakota artifacts in the exhibit showcase are not owned by the WDM. They are held in trust for the Whitecap Dakota Nation.

Colonialism: Control by one power over a dependent area or people. It occurs when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, often while forcing its own language and cultural values upon its people.¹

Ina Maka: Dakota language term meaning Mother Earth.

Makoće: Dakota language term meaning territory or land, comes from the word Maka for Earth.

Mni Tanka: Dakota language term meaning Great River, refers to what would become the Saskatoon area.

Oral history: Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities and participants in past events.²

Paternalism: Paternalism is when an authority, like a country or state, interferes with another person or group, against their will, and defended or motivated by a claim that the person or group interfered with will be better off or protected from harm.³

Suŋka Wakaŋ: Dakota language term meaning horse.

More Resources:

Dakota Language Lessons:

dakotalessons.com

Wapaha Ska: Whitecap Dakota Nation History Book:

dakotalessons.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/WaPaHaSKa-book.pdf

¹ National Geographic, “What is colonialism,” accessed at nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism on November 9, 2022.

² The Oral History Association, “Oral History Defined,” accessed at oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/ on October 2, 2022.

³ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Paternalism,” accessed at plato.stanford.edu/entries/paternalism/ on November 9, 2022

