

Document #1: Letter of Amerigo Vespucci describing his first voyage to the New World To Pier Soderini, Gonfalonier of the Republic of Florence 1499

1. We learned of their manner of life and customs, it was that they go entirely naked, as well the men as the women. . . . They are of medium stature, very well proportioned: their flesh is of a colour that verges into red like a lion's mane: and I believe that if they went clothed, they would be as white as we: they have not any hair upon the body, except the hair of the head which is long and black, and especially in the women, whom it renders handsome: in aspect they are not very good-looking, because they have broad faces, so that they would seem Tartar-like: they let no hair grow on their eyebrows, nor on their eyelids, nor elsewhere, except the hair of the head: for they hold hairiness to be a filthy thing: they are very light footed in walking and in running, as well the men as the women:
2. Their arms are bows and arrows very well made, save that (the arrows) are not (tipped) with iron nor any other kind of hard metal: and instead of iron they put animals' or fishes' teeth, or a spike of tough wood, with the point hardened by fire: they are sure marksmen, for they hit whatever they aim at: and in some places the women use these bows: they have other weapons, such as fire-hardened spears, and also clubs with knobs, beautifully carved.
3. When they go to war, they take their women with them, not that these may fight, but because they carry behind them their worldly goods, for a woman carries on her back for thirty or forty leagues a load which no man could bear: as we have many times seen them do. They are not accustomed to have any Captain, nor do they go in any ordered array, for everyone is lord of himself: and the cause of their wars is not for lust of dominion, nor of extending their frontiers, but for some ancient enmity which in by-gone times arose amongst them: and when asked why they made war, they knew not any other reason to give than that they did so to avenge the death of their ancestors, or of their parents: these people have neither King, nor Lord, nor do they yield obedience to any one, for they live in their own liberty.

Document #2 "They keep their word, and hate lies." Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck, Georgia, 1736 13 Von Reck was a leader of the German settlement of Ebenezer, Georgia, founded in 1734.

As strange and wild as the Indians seem superficially, yet when one associates with them, one finds they are very polite, of natural good understanding, sensible, brief in their conversation and agile and quick in their behavior. Their table is open to everyone, and one can sit at it uninvited. They love one another, when they are of the same nation. They are satisfied with the little that they have, even if it consists only of a gun, kettle, and mirror. They keep their word, and hate lies.

They are cruel to their war captives, and they either take off the skin from the top of their heads, or burn them up while they are still alive. During all these torments the captive takes care to show a constant undaunted courage, to rebuke his enemies as cowardly and womanish people for inflicting on him such a womanish death, that he only laughs at all these torments, that nothing better has previously happened to him, that his death even in this manner will soon be found out. All this he sings in many songs in order to dispel the death pangs. Sometimes the captive, before he is entirely consumed by fire, is thrown into the river where the boys shoot arrows at him until he is dead. But the reason they are so cruel is that they hold death itself to be no punishment and do not fear it. They are treacherous, lie in wait secretly for their adversaries and make war with ambushes and deception.

Document 3

“You have your Laws and Customs, so have we.”

Gachradodow, Pennsylvania, 1744¹⁶

Gachradodow, a leader of the Iroquois, addressed colonial officials during negotiations for the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 between the Iroquois and the colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

Gachradodow in a strong voice, and with a proper action, spoke as follows:

Great Assaragoa, The World at the first was made on the other Side of the Great Water, different from what it is on this Side, as may be known from the different Colors of our Skin and of our Flesh, and that which you call Justice may not be so amongst us. You have your Laws and Customs, and so have we. The Great King might send you over to conquer the *Indians*, but it looks to us that God did not approve of it. If he had, he would not have placed the Sea where it is, as the Limits between us and you. . . .¹⁶

Brother Assaragoa, . . . You know very well when the white people came first here, they were poor; but now they have got lands and are by them become rich, and we are now poor: what little we have had for the land goes soon away, but the land lasts forever.

Document #4

***“In a little time white men
will be dust as well as I.”***

Tomachichi, Georgia, 1736¹²

A Creek leader who befriended James Oglethorpe in the early years of the Georgia colony, Tomachichi travelled to England with Oglethorpe in 1734 where his portrait was painted with his nephew. After his return to Georgia, Tomachichi met the young missionary John Wesley.

On another occasion, upon the termination of a public audience with the Indians, Wesley and the venerable chief dined with Governor Oglethorpe. After dinner the missionary asked the gray-headed old man what he thought he was made for. “He that is above,” replied the mico [chief], “knows what He made us for. We know nothing. We are in the dark. But white men know much, and yet white men build great houses as if they were to live forever. But white men cannot live forever. In a little time white men will be dust as well as I.”

Wesley responded, “If red men will learn the Good Book they may know as much as white men.

But neither we nor you can understand that Book unless we are taught by Him that is above; and He will not teach unless you avoid what you already know is not good.”

“I believe that,” said the Indian. “He will not teach us while our hearts are not white, and our men do what they know is not good. Therefore He that is above, does not send us the Good Book.”

Questions on Different View Points between the Europeans and Native Americans Encounters

1. Using document 1, describe three different observations Vespucci had about the Natives he saw on his first voyage. (one from each paragraph)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. Using document 2, describe the two different sides Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck from Georgia is describing about the Native Americans living in the colony of Georgia.

1. Side One: _____

2 Side Two: _____

3. Based on the reading, do you think Friedrich von Reck valued the Native Americans as equals or saw them as inferior to the Europeans? Why/why not? _____

3. Using information from document 3, state at least 1 way Gachradodow, an Iroquois leader, describe the differences between the Native Americans and Europeans.

1. _____

2. _____

4. Using document 4, what evidence does Tomachici give for thinking the white man believed they would live forever?
