

Loss of Identity, Values & Language - David Bald Eagle - OSEU 3

Before World War Two, everybody got along real good. We had white people here traveling from village...from our Indian villages...to activities maybe in Rapid City...or way over there they go by wagon trains. And they could stop any place along the way at a ranch or something to water their horses and things like this. And they were always there to welcome them...give them dinner or something...just like we did here. 'Have dinner with us.' Some of them knew my dad. They'd say, "C'mon Taylor, put your horses away. We'll feed them. Don't worry about that. We'll feed them. Have coffee or something." And we'd stop there and we'd have lunch with them. Sometimes before we'd leave there, they gave us watermelons or something to take along as lunch. We are on our way. Today, it's not that way. Any place you go, if you get what you want, you pay for it. Sometimes you pay dearly for it. There's none of that anymore. No kindness anymore. No Indian way of life. It's different. So today, after World War Two, everything turned differently. There was prejudice...all of this crap came along...gang members and all of that stuff came along. The Indians fight amongst each other in the same town. And that's how it started.

Nobody's got a friend that they can introduce to another friend that belongs to another gang...none of that anymore. Everybody's sorrow-faced...always got our minds...it's no good anymore. These Indian people go to these powwows. They stand there and look...nobody's even...even the powwow announcer speaks English. They don't explain any ceremonials that's going on out there. Just dancing, singing, that's all. They stand there and then look on. They don't understand it and so they just walk away...go drink beer or something elsewhere. They forget their own culture. They forget their own activities because they don't understand...English...English...they speak English all the time. They are forgetting their Indian language. If they could speak Indian, they could understand some of the powwows and ceremonies that are taking place. They could understand it. But they don't. They don't want to understand. They want to join the gangs...or drinking...go to a bar or something like that. They're being lost.

And it's hard to bring them back because they're too far gone...a lot of them.