

### Activity 3: Newspaper Excerpts

**Excerpt 1:** “Esquimaux Too Hot,” Providence (RI) News, Apr. 1, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91070630/1893-04-01/ed-1/seq-8/>.

Peter Mesher representing five of the Esquimaux<sup>1</sup> in the village at the World’s fair grounds, has applied for a writ of habeas corpus to release certain residents of the village, who allege that they are being detained against their will, and are not being treated well.

Magistrate Porter of Hyde Park says he will soon begin suit in the United States court here on behalf of certain Esquimaux families, asking heavy damages from the company that brought them to this country. He states that the whole trouble grows out of the refusal of certain of the Esquimaux to wear their heavy sealskin clothing on warm days. He alleges that Mr. Daniel, the superintendent of the village, has kept several Esquimaux prisoners in their huts for weeks, because they would not wear furs.

One Esquimaux is down with the measles, and Mr. Porter ascribes the sickness to confinement in a stuffy hut. He also says the Esquimaux Village company has a contract with these people, made on foreign waters, and that it is therefore illegal. The contract is one for common labor, and provides that for the entire three years that the Esquimaux are under contract, each head of the family is to receive \$100 in cash and \$100 in supplies.

Mr. Daniels denies the stories of ill treatment, and says none of his charges have been locked up. But on this latter point Mr. Porter is confirmed by Colonel Rice of the Columbian Guards.

**Excerpt 2:** “Indians for the Fair,” *Omaha (NE) Daily Bee*, Apr. 6, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99021999/1893-04-06/ed-1/seq-4/>.

Major John M. Burke, business manager for “Buffalo Bill,” is here endeavoring to get permission to take Indians from the Sioux reservation for exhibition at Chicago. Major Burke says that they are showing the government the consideration of asking it for permission to get these Indians, intimating that if “Buffalo Bill” wanted the Indians he could get them without the government’s consent, which may be true, especially those Indians who have taken allotments in severalty and become citizens of the United States and can go where they please. Acting Commissioner Belt<sup>2</sup> is opposed to the policy of allowing the Indians to go on these wild west exhibitions. Major Burke expects to command enough influence to have Secretary Hoke Smith turn down Belt and receive the government’s permission to take the Indians...

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<sup>1</sup> Esquimaux is an alternate spelling of Eskimo. This was an Inuit group was from Labrador, a region of Canada. Today, the word Inuit has mostly replaced the word Eskimo, which has come to be regarded as offensive in some contexts. However, Eskimo is the only term that applies to Eskimo peoples as a whole, including not only Inuit of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska but also the Yupik of Siberia and the Inupiaq of Alaska.

<sup>2</sup> Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Excerpt 3:** “The Flight of the Eskimos,” *Portland (ME) Daily Press*, Apr. 22, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016025/1893-04-22/ed-1/seq-1/>.

The Eskimos have fled from their huts in the World’s Fair grounds, and will start an exposition of their own outside the exposition fence. This step was taken last night, and is the culmination of a long series of restrictions placed on the men of the North by their managers.

**Excerpt 4:** *Providence (RI) News*, May 6, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91070630/1893-05-06/ed-1/seq-3/>.

The Penobscot Indians have established a village, which will form a part of the ethnological exhibit at the fair, and which in point of local interest will be second to none in that interesting department. The representatives of this historic tribe who have come to Chicago to represent their people at the World’s fair have little of the appearance of the red man with whom the western people are familiar, and whose representatives are nightly engaged in mimic attacks on stage coaches and settlers’ trains in Midway plaisance. The visitors from Maine, while they preserve some of the physical appearance of their western brethren in the matter of complexion and facial expression, nearly all show traces of the blending of the blood of the Caucasian with that of the native American. There are only 10 representatives of the tribe here at present—six men and four women—but the number will be increased to 18 if arrangements can be made to allow them the privilege of running canoes on the lagoons.

The Indians will live while here in three tepees built of birch bark, thatched on poles, which meet at the top, forming a cone-shaped tent, about 16 feet in diameter and 12 feet high. The interior is decorated with deer, moose, caribou and bear skins, along with many other trophies of the chase, such as the mounted heads of these and other animals. The Indians are expert tanners, all the skins being tanned on the flesh side, while the hair is left on. They will give exhibitions of the pow-wow and the dances, which are still kept up in the tribe.

**Excerpt 5:** “Indignant Eskimos At Chicago Over the Ill-Bred Actions of Visitors,” *Fort Worth (TX) Gazette*, June 5, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071158/1893-06-05/ed-1/seq-7/>.

The Eskimos who were brought from Labrador for exhibition at the Columbian exposition, have all returned to their quarters in the fair grounds and declare that they will go out on no more strikes.

Visitors to their village soon discover that the odors prevailing there are of a most pungent character. Women and girls entering the houses usually hold their noses and are angrily denounced for so doing by the irate native women, who consider that such conduct on the part of exposition visitors is very insulting. As the denunciation comes in the shape of elongated Eskimo words, unintelligible to the American ear, few of the offenders really know just how badly they are abused.

One old Eskimo woman has secured a hand sewing machine and is enthusiastically turning out vast quantities of garments constructed according to no fashion-plates ever known, but which seem to be in brisk demand among her sisters of the tribe.

None of the Eskimos are wearing furs. The men are attired in white cotton raiment, cut after the established style of Labrador, while the women appear in calico dresses, thus destroying much of their value as curiosities.

Here and there, standing under the umbrageous trees in front of their bark habitations, the boys crack their dog whips at pennies, or perform other tricks, for which they always exact payment in silver. A few of the men, obviously wishing for the fishing sports of their northern homes, are daily to be seen sitting in kyacks on the pond in the inclosure industriously fishing for minnows.

Now that the Eskimos have become somewhat habituated to Chicago life, they are allowed to make frequent visits to the stores and shops near Jackson Park, where they spend the money they receive from visitors for various small trinkets. In making these shopping trips they wear ordinary citizens' clothing, and would be passed on the street almost unnoticed were it not for the unnecessary amplitude of their frock coats, which were evidently purchased by their managers at some job lot sale and are twice as large as necessary.

**Excerpt 6:** *Barton County Democrat* (Great Bend, KS), July 13, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83040198/1893-07-13/ed-1/seq-7/>.

Ten Indians of the Six Nations from the reservations in the state of New York arrived at their village in the south end of the park. Among them were Solomon O'Ball, 90 years old, the grandson of Corn Planter, the chief who negotiated a treaty with George Washington. He brought his drum with him, and talked to Senator McNaughton, executive commissioner from New York to the fair, as if he had known him all his life...

**Excerpt 7:** *Seattle (WA) Post-Intelligencer*, Aug. 25, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045604/1893-08-25/ed-1/seq-8/>.

The department of Indian affairs for British Columbia will probably be heard from in connection with the performance of the tamanawas, or torture dance, by the Quackahl Indians<sup>3</sup> at Chicago on the 17th [of this month]. When the Indians from this province were permitted to go to Chicago it was the understanding that they were to illustrate the habits and mode of life of their fellow-countrymen, not the barbaric customs practiced by their ancestors centuries ago, and which, the torture dance being especially mentioned, are now prohibited by British law.

The understanding was given also that the Indians would be well cared for, and the superintendent general of the Indian department holds that to permit the Indians to engage in the tamanawas was a violation of the spirit of the agreement, both on the part of George Hunt,<sup>4</sup> who has the tribe in charge, and of the fair authorities. While so holding the department believes the accounts published of the hideous dance have been much exaggerated, the British Columbia Indians being

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<sup>3</sup> Kwakiutl or Kwakwaka'wakw, indigenous to the Pacific Northwest Coast (present-day British Columbia)

<sup>4</sup> Tlingit (indigenous to the Pacific Northwest Coast) by birth, George Hunt grew up in Kwakwaka'wakw territory and worked as an interpreter, linguist, and ethnologist/anthropologist

remarkably clever in the production of the weird spectacular effects which are a feature of their dances. The tamanawas being given at night would permit them to display their ability as illusionists, and the dance would appear more painful than it in reality is, though the reality is bad enough. Interpreter Hunt has already been asked for an explanation, and how much farther the department intends proceeding remains to be seen.

**Excerpt 8:** *Wood River Times* (Hailey, ID), Sep. 6, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86091172/1893-09-06/ed-1/seq-2/>.

When Buffalo Bill's Indians<sup>5</sup> get through their work in Chicago in the afternoon, they like nothing better than to repair to a merry-go-round near their camp and revolve to the music of a bad hand-organ.<sup>6</sup> The passer-by stops to see the show, for the bucks<sup>7</sup> and squaws<sup>8</sup> are in their full panoply of feathers and paint. Most people would get enough fun by riding horseback three or four hours every day without wanting to ride on wooden horses afterward; but, then, you see, real horses have no hand-organ attachments.

**Excerpt 9:** "Fijians Are Sensitive - Visitors Are Requested Not to Ask Them if They Are Cannibals," *Morning News* (Savannah, GA), Sep. 14, 1893,  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063034/1893-09-14/ed-1/seq-5/>.

"Visitors will greatly oblige the management if they will kindly refrain from asking these people any questions concerning cannibalism, as it is very annoying to them." Such is the admonition which greets the visitor entering the South Sea Island or Samoan village. If you should happen to meet one of these South Sea Islanders in a lonely spot at night, you would discuss neither cannibalism nor anything else which you would suppose would annoy him. They are the most muscular and finely formed people on the plaisance or on the fair grounds. They are of a light gold bronze color, and the women, as well as the men, are strong and healthy-looking... The assistant manager states that the villagers are not cannibals, but that their ancestors were.<sup>9</sup>

The village and the songs and dances of the natives are novel, but the interest of the visitor who is looking for something real barbaric, is apt to become lessened when he sees them playing cards just as civilized people do; hear some of them talk English and intelligently at that, and what is more and to the greater disappointment of the seekers for cannibals, when he learns from a placard conspicuously posted that these natives of the islands which these people come are all Christians... There are about a dozen in the party, but only two are natives of Samoa, the others being Fiji Islanders and from the cannibal race on Gilbert Islands...

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<sup>5</sup> Performers at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, located just outside the exposition grounds

<sup>6</sup> Musical instrument, a portable organ

<sup>7</sup> A disparaging term for Native American men

<sup>8</sup> A disparaging term for Native American women

<sup>9</sup> Ritual cannibalism was practiced in the South Sea Islands for cultural and religious reasons. The last documented instance in Fiji was in 1867.