

Expert Opinions

Group 1

"To count is a modern practice; the ancient method was to guess and when numbers are guessed they are always magnified."
(attributed to Samuel Johnson) (p. 396)

Group 2

"Eyewitnesses, whatever their biases, at least observed population trends which the modern analyst can never witness."
(Henry F. Dobyns) (p. 398)

Group 3

"The projection of historic "Indian" population figures is always subject to the error of reasoning from a racially mixed historic population to a pure Indian prehistoric population."
(Henry F. Dobyns) (p. 399)

Group 4

"The cause of this decline of nearly 90 percent within a period ranging, according to locality, from only 6 to 14 decades, is obscure. New diseases and alteration of diet, clothing, and dwellings have undoubtedly contributed largely."
(A.L. Kroeber) (p. 410)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What does the writer mean?
2. Do you agree with the point of the quote?
3. How does the information in the quote contribute to our knowledge about Native American populations in the precontact period?