

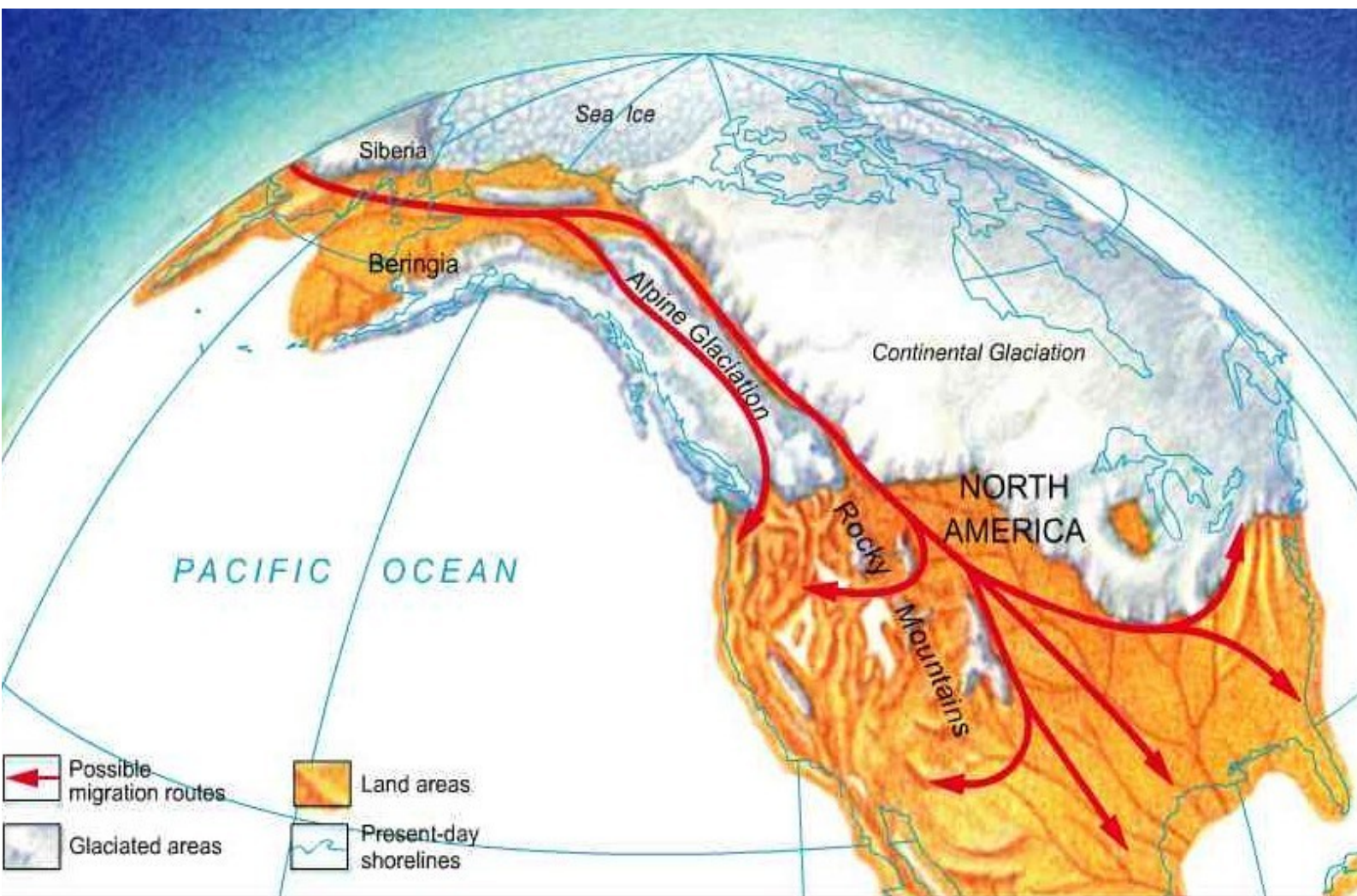
3: The United States of America

<http://thierry.raguier.free.fr/3Natives1.htm>



I/ Native Americans / the First Nations. A/ The origins.

Native Americans have been living in America for a very long time. About 30.000 / 40.000 years ago, the climate used to be colder than now and a land-bridge used to link the American continent and Asia (see map). Animals could go freely between the two continents. Groups of hunters travelled from Asia to America when they followed herds of buffaloes. They were the very first inhabitants to discover the vast American continent and the ancestors of today's native Americans.

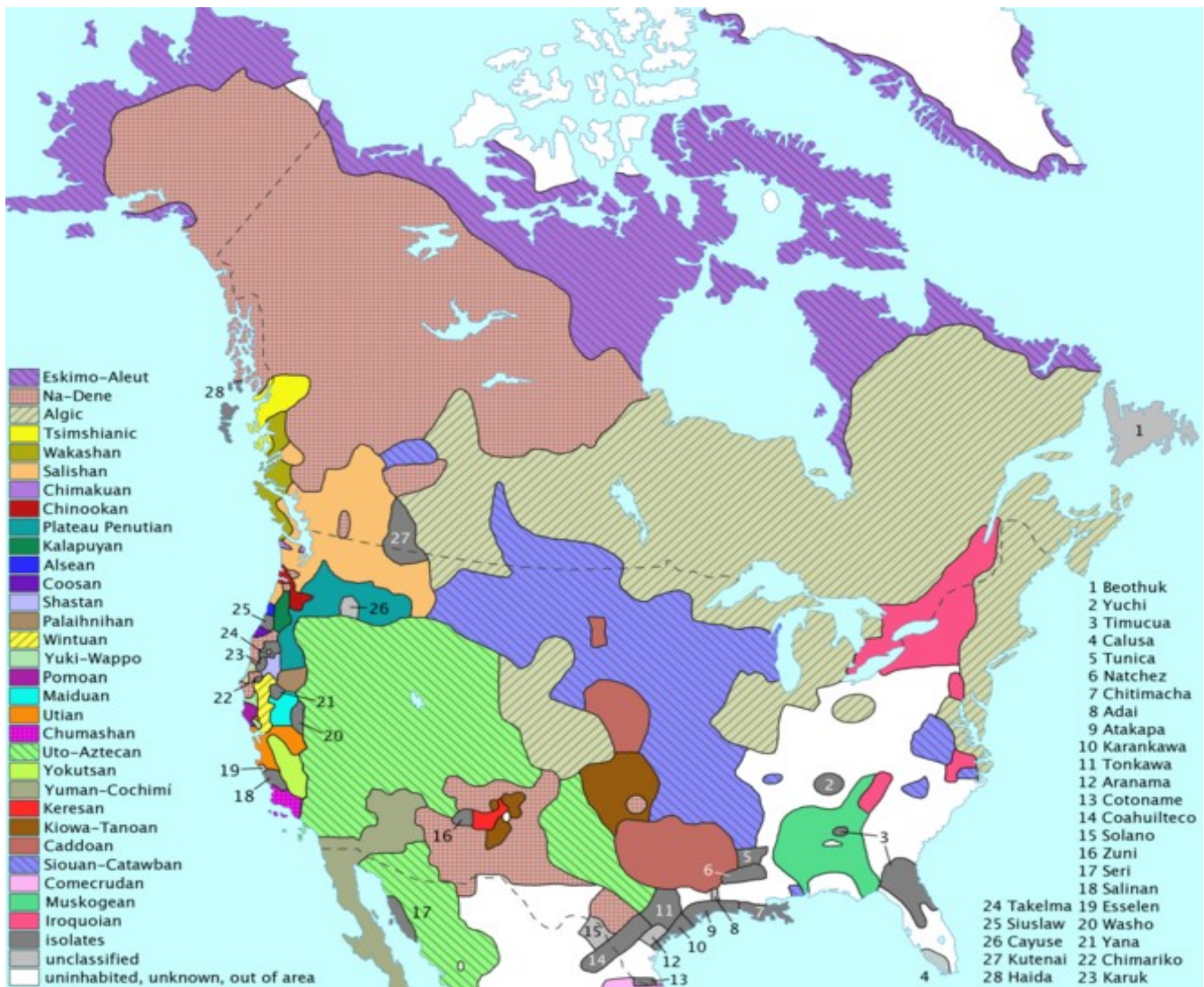


1/ Where did native Americans come from? How long ago?

2/ Were they the first people to settle the American continent?

3/ Why was it possible for them to travel to the American continent?

The groups of hunters moved inside the new continent and settled in different areas. They faced many challenges: 1/ a large variety of (often unfriendly) climates: very cold in the north, very hot in the south. 2/ different animals (snakes, crocodiles, buffaloes, coyotes, etc) they didn't know. The groups of people didn't have any choice if they wanted to live in this new land: they had to adapt to their new environment.



In a few generations, they learned to live in different parts of northern and southern America and developed different languages, beliefs, musics, legends, traditions or customs. Native American tribes became as different as people in other parts of the world (Europe, Africa, Asia, etc). Many different languages were spoken in northern America. All native Americans had / have common ancestors and had / have a common belief in (and respect for) « mother Nature », the sun, the moon, spirits, animals. They also respect their family and group.

4/ What challenges did they face on this vast continent?

5/ What did they have to do (= What were they obliged to do) to live in different environments?

6/ Is there a common « native American people » tradition in northern America? Why?

7/ How long have native people been living on the American continent?

B/ The first White men: Vikings and Christopher Columbus.

About 500 years before the « official » date of 1492, some people came to northern America. They were the Vikings, from Iceland. The photo shows the place they settled on an island near Canada (L'Anse aux Meadows). Perhaps they went to the place where New York is today, but nothing is sure. The Vikings didn't stay long in Northern America.



1492: Christopher Columbus thought he arrived in India, but in reality, he set foot in small islands in the Carribeans. He gave the name « Indians » to the local people, because he thought he was in India. From the beginning, White people brought with them diseases: many native people's tribes were wiped out by diseases they didn't use to know.

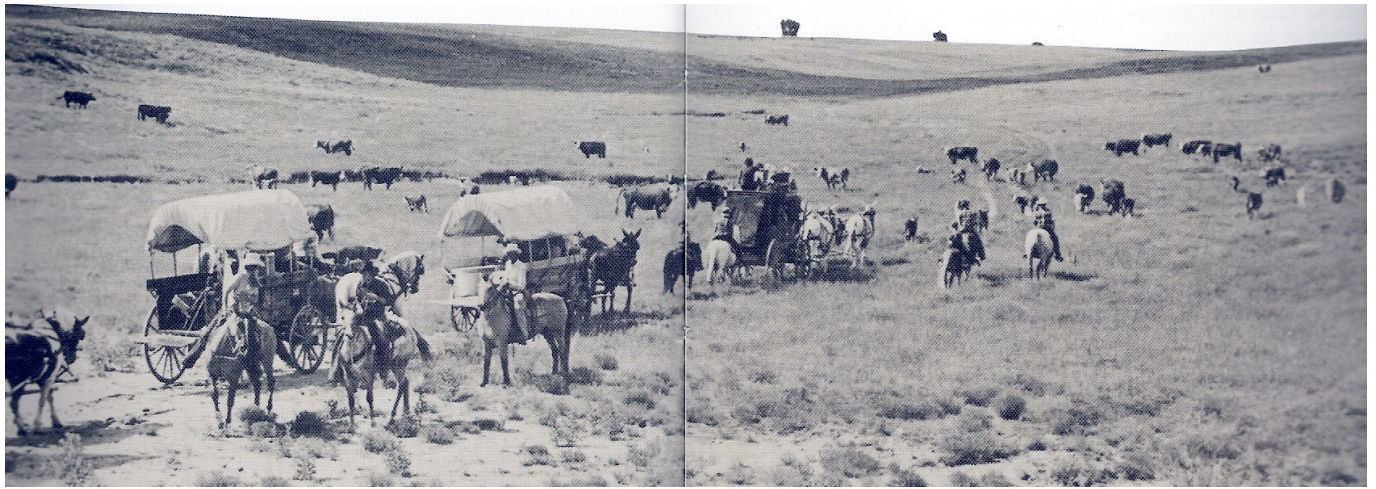
8/ How long ago did the first White people settle America? How long have White people been living on the American continent?

9/ Did they stay long?

10/ Why do we call native Americans « Indians » today?

11/ When did problems begin for native people?

In the 19th century, White people emigrated en masse from Europe to the USA (they fled poverty, wars or diseases). At first, native Americans were respected: White people gave them



reservations (=special territories) where they could live at peace. Very quickly, more European immigrants moved to America: they went west and conquered the country (the « Conquest of the West »). With firearms, alcohol or diseases to « help », White people conquered and wiped out entire native nations. Most of the time, White people didn't respect what they promised: they broke treaties. Native Americans rebelled and fought (Battle of Little Big Horn, 1876: the US Army was beaten and humiliated by a confederation of Indian tribes).



The US Army decided to take their revenge: they beat the Indians in the Battle of Wounded Knee (photo) in 1890. The First Nations were definitely beaten on that day.

12/ What was the « Conquest of the West »? Why was it created?

13/ List the 3 major allies of White people in the conquest of the USA.

-
-
-

14/ When were the First Nations definitely beaten?

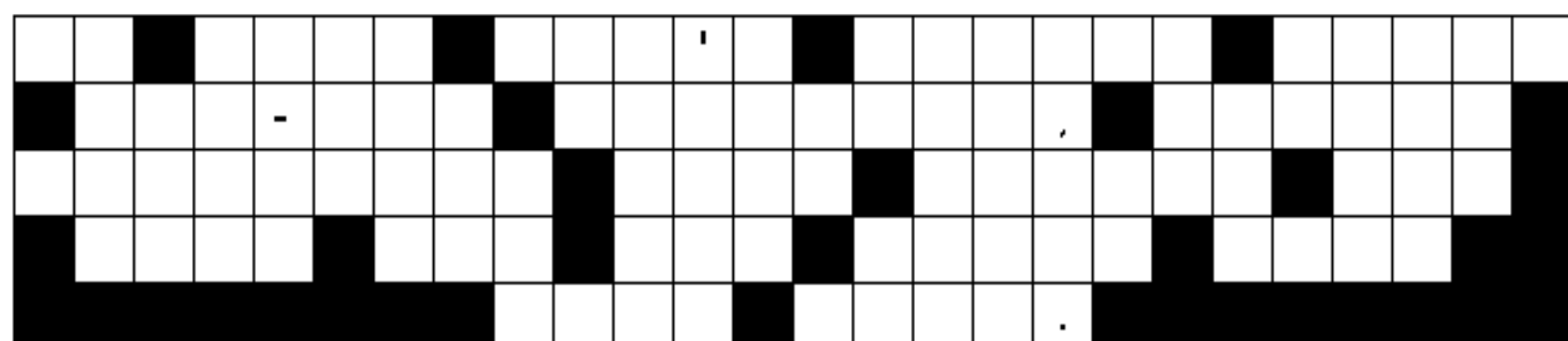
C/ Today's situation for the native Americans:

The situation today is very bad for native American people in the USA. They are a small minority (only about 2% of the American population), and the poorest part. Rates of suicide,



unemployment or teenage-pregnancy in the First Nations are the highest in the USA. Natives live in reservations: parts (usually very poor) of the US territory where they can live (see map).

Some tribes are very rich, because they have casinos, but some tribes are very poor. Since the 1960s, Native people have been trying to revive their age-old cultures. They open museums, have their schools to teach young generations the old languages or legends. They use the internet to sell CDs about their culture. Tribes meet every year in « pow-wows »: big meetings where they dance and exchange news about their tribes.



U E O

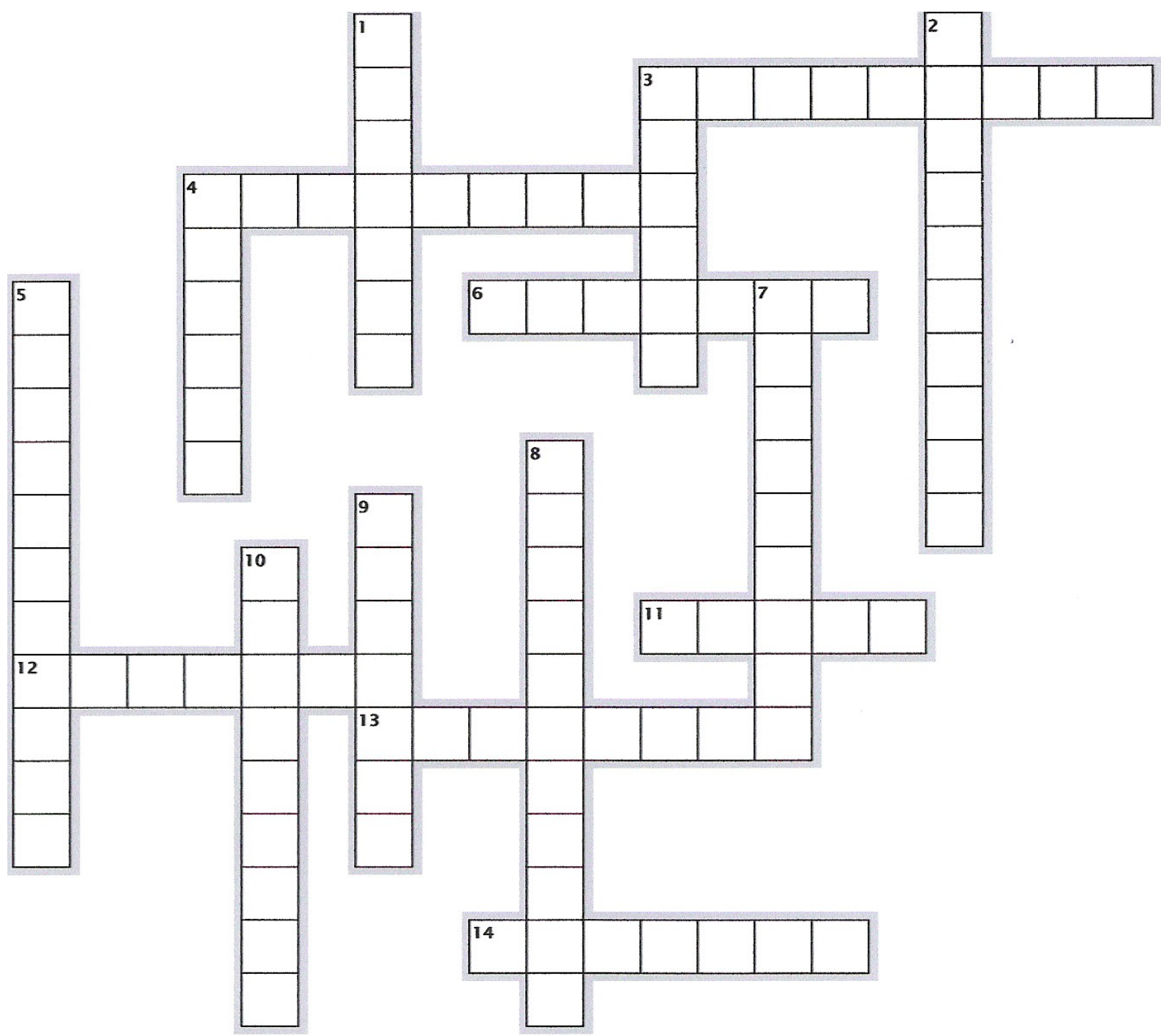
A E Y S M N L R F M W H

T E E Y C L D E O A I D L W H E R G E T T H Y E

I M H R I E A N C O W E T F R E V I V E A T E V I

A F G T H O A R D C N L T U R O S R E N T H I E O R

S:



Across

- 3. début, départ, commencement (9)
- 4. "voyager" (9)
- 6. pauvreté (7)
- 11. A group of native Americans: a (5)
- 12. faire face à, être confronté à: (7)
- 13. en paix (8)
- 14. bison (7)

Down

- 1. coutumes, traditions (7)

- 2. a person who lives in a place: an (10)
- 3. croyance (6)
- 4. essayer (6)
- 5. s'adapter à (11)
- 7. faire revivre, remettre à la mode (9)
- 8. = to destroy (11)
- 9. maladie (7)
- 10. défi (9)