



BDOTE: A BIRTHING ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

Bdote: A Birthing Island offers a walking tour revealing the deep connection Dakota people have to Bdote, where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers meet. Through Dakota oral histories and Ramona Kitto Stately's great-great-grandmother Pazahiyayewin's journey, the episode highlights Bdote's cultural and sacred importance, celebrating Dakota people's resilience across generations.

More about the series:

You Are Here is a tour through Twin Cities place and time. The premiere episode of the new nostalgia anthology series from the makers of *Lost Twin Cities* reveals the raucous, rowdy early history of Minnehaha Park area, the inspiring story of Bdote – a sacred birthing Island, and St Paul's West Side, the historic heartbeat of Minnesota's Latine community.

How to use this guide:

This guide includes discussion questions you can use as written or adapt for viewers, plus additional resources at the end to support deeper conversation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Essential Question

1. How can a place reveal stories of the past, the environment, and the people?

Supporting Questions

1. Why are stories tied to specific places important for understanding history?
2. How does understanding a place's history help create community, respect, and foster cultural understanding?

Before watching consider following questions to activate conversation

1. What is a place that holds significant value for you, and why is it important?
2. Begin by guiding viewers through the pronunciation of "Bdote"
 - a. ba-DOTE-tay (source: [MN Humanities Center](#))
 - b. Play the audio pronunciation (source: [Glossary | Bdote Memory Map](#))
3. View a map of [Bdote - Google Maps](#). Where is it located, and what might its location help us understand its significance?

While watching consider following questions

1. What is the meaning of "Bdote"? What does "the Bdote" refer to in Minnesota?
2. What is the cultural significance of Bdote for the Dakota people?
3. Why is Bdote known as a birthing island, and what were some of the traditions or practices surrounding mothers who traveled there?
4. How do plants surrounding Bdote play a crucial role for mothers?
5. What happened to the treaties made between the Dakota and the United States? What lasting impact did these treaties have on the Dakota people?



After watching consider the following questions to engage in conversation

1. What challenges, such as climate change and access, may impact the preservation of Bdote?
2. “If you think about what it's like to be removed from a place, when you're not in that place, you tend to not hear the stories of that place. You maybe forget the language of that place. You are less familiar with the plant relatives that live in that place that you would have depended on when you lived there. And so once there's any kind of land loss and removal of Native people from the land, it starts having these cascading effects.”
 - a. What emotions or thoughts arise for you after hearing this quote about the disconnection from place?
 - b. In what ways do you think the concept of "place" extends beyond just physical location to include aspects of community, connection, and history?
3. What is something that connected the most with you about the video and why?
4. What new insights or perspectives did you gain about the relationship between history, place, and community?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Research project: Explore Local History

In this activity, choose a local street or place to explore. Research the topics below, then create a presentation using visuals, maps, and video clips.

1. History: What is the historical background of the place? When was it established, and what significant events have occurred there?
2. Origins: What are the origins of the name? Does it reflect any particular significance or cultural background?
3. Notable Individuals: Are there any important figures associated with this place? What contributions did they make to the community or area?
4. Communities: What communities or groups of people have lived or gathered in this area over time? How have they shaped the place's identity?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Deepen the conversation by incorporating activities, related books, videos, exploring local restaurants, and visiting cultural heritage and history centers.

- Explore the [Bdote Memory Map](#) to learn more about the history and stories of Bdote.
- Participate in [Learning from Place: Bdote](#) with the Minnesota Humanities Center.
- Examine the [Pike Treaty of 1805](#) and its historical impact.
- Learn more about the history of Bdote and Fort Snelling through the resources below:
 - Read [“Where Two Waters Come Together”: The Confluence of Black and Indigenous History at Bdote](#) from the National Museum of American History.
 - Read [Bdote](#) from the Minnesota Historical Society.
 - Visit the [Thomas C. Savage Visitor Center](#) at Fort Snelling State Park.