

National American Indian Heritage Month 2016

Date	Fact
1	The month of November is designated by Congress and the President as a time to reflect on the rich traditions and accomplishments, as well as the suffering and injustices, which mark the history of American Indians and Alaska Natives. The theme for 2016, <i>Serving Our Nations</i> , was chosen by the Society of American Indian Government Employees.
2	National American Indian Heritage Month celebrates and recognizes the accomplishments of the peoples who were the original inhabitants, explorers, and settlers of the United States. Currently, there are 567 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and more than 100 state-recognized tribes across the United States. Each with their own unique history, beliefs, governance structure and culture.
3	Sovereignty is the right of a nation or group of people to be self-governing and is the most fundamental concept that defines the relationship between the government of the United States and governments of American Indian tribes. American Indians and Alaska Natives are U.S. citizens and citizens of their tribes. They are subject to federal laws, but they are not always subject to state laws.
4	In 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, also known as the Snyder Act, giving American Indians the right to vote. After a survey in 1938 found that eight states still prohibited Indians from voting, several cases were brought to the Supreme Court. Utah, Minnesota, and Arizona were the last states to allow the vote, and it wasn't until 1965 that all barriers to American Indians' suffrage were eliminated in the United States.
5	In 1914, Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode on horseback from state to state, seeking support for a day to honor American Indians. A year later, James presented the endorsements of 24 state governments to the White House. There is no record of a national day being proclaimed, despite his efforts.
6	Sequoyah, a Cherokee who was born around 1776 in present-day Tennessee, was a silversmith who joined the U.S. military during the War of 1812. Observing how the White soldiers communicated via the written word, he invented a written alphabet for the Cherokee language, using 85 written symbols to represent syllables. He later became a statesman and diplomat for the Cherokee people.
7	Horses were native to North America but had disappeared by about 8000 B.C. and were unknown to the Indians when the Spanish arrived. By 1700, horses were roaming wild in the Southwest and they thrived on the grasslands of the plains. Indians quickly adopted the horse, which enabled them to hunt buffalo more efficiently.
8	Buffalo were a mainstay of culture as well as a primary means of survival for American Indians on the Great Plains. Buffalo hides were used to make clothing, tepees, furniture, moccasins, religious regalia, and drums. Hooves were used ceremonially to make implements, utensils, and glue. The bladder served as a storage pouch. Meat was used for food and in ceremonies. Fat and marrow produced food, paint, and cosmetics. Fur was used ceremonially and to make rope. Buffalo dung provided fuel.

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9	In 1890, the Miniconjous of the Lakota Sioux at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, led by Sitting Bull, planned to perform a religious ritual called the <i>Ghost Dance</i> . Two Federal Agents went to arrest Sitting Bull at his home in North Dakota, where he was shot and killed during the argument that followed. The Miniconjou people fled south, where they were captured and surrounded by army troops in Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In the confusion a gun fired, and the troops began to fire upon the unarmed Indians. It is believed that as many as 300 men, women, and children were killed in the Wounded Knee Massacre.
10	Around 1804, the Poncas began to practice the ceremony that led to the pow-wow. They called it the Hethuska. They passed it to the Kaw, who gave it to the Osage. Then the Omaha incorporated the ceremony, which was passed to the Lakota (Sioux) tribe. It became popular in the late 1890s. During this time, the Omaha, or "Grass" dance as it was then called, spread quickly. The Grass dancers danced for the purpose of dancing itself, not religious ceremony.
11	In 1898, the Curtis Act dissolved Indian Territory tribal governments by abolishing tribal courts and subjecting all persons in the territory to federal law. Under this act, towns could be surveyed and incorporated, residents were permitted to vote, and the establishment of public schools was sanctioned.
12	Starting in World War I and again in World War II, the U.S. military employed a number of American Indian servicemen to use their tribal languages as a military code that could not be broken by the enemy. These "code talkers" came from many different tribes, including Chippewa, Choctaw, Creek, Crow, Comanche, Hopi, Navajo, Seminole, and Sioux. During World War II, the Navajos constituted the largest component within that elite group.
13	On November 20, 2013, American Indian code talkers from 566 tribes were honored with Congressional Silver Medals, and leaders from the tribes' 33 nations received Congressional Gold Medals. These medals recognized the contributions of the code talkers during World War I and World War II, when they used their native languages to encode secret or sensitive information so that the enemy could not decipher radio transmissions.
14	American Indians and Alaska Natives come from a multitude of different cultures with diverse languages, and for thousands of years used oral tradition to pass down familial and cultural information among generations of tribal members. As contact between Indians and non-Indians grew, so did the necessity of learning new languages. Even into the 20th century, many American Indians and Alaska Natives were bi- or multi-lingual as a result of learning to speak their own language as well as English, French, Russian, or Spanish, or even another tribal language.
15	Maria Tallchief, an Osage Indian, became a successful ballerina and in 1981 founded the Chicago City Ballet with her sister Marjorie. Tallchief is considered America's first major prima ballerina, and is the first Native American to hold the rank.
16	During World War I more than 8,000 American Indian soldiers, of whom 6,000 were volunteers, served. Their patriotism moved Congress to pass the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In World War II, 25,000 American Indian and Alaska Native men and women fought on all fronts in Europe and the South Pacific earning, collectively, two Congressional Medals of Honor, at least 71 Air Medals, 51 Silver Stars, 47 Bronze

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	Stars, and 34 Distinguished Flying Crosses. Alaska Natives also served in the Alaska Territorial Guard.
17	At the 1964 Olympics, Sioux Indian 1 st LT Billy Mills set a world record and won the gold medal in the 10k race event. He remains the only American to win gold in the event. Following this accomplishment, Mills played a keystone role in the foundation of Running Strong for American Indian Youth – an organization dedicated to helping Native American youth lead healthy lifestyles and take pride in their heritage.
18	Ohiyesa, also known as Dr. Charles Alexander Eastman, was born in 1858 on a Santee Sioux reservation in Minnesota. He graduated from Dartmouth College, and then from medical school. After graduating, he worked as a doctor for the Indian Health Service on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where he treated those injured in the U.S. Army attack on Lakota Chief Big Foot’s band at Wounded Knee. In 1910, he helped to establish the Boy Scouts of America.
19	Historically, American Indians have the highest record of military service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups. The reasons are deeply rooted in traditional cultural values that drive them to serve their country. These include a proud warrior tradition, best exemplified by the following qualities said to be inherent to most, if not all, Native American societies: strength, honor, pride, devotion, and wisdom. These qualities closely correlate with military tradition.
20	In 1924, the passing of the Citizenship Act made all Indians citizens without impairing their status as tribal members. Nevertheless, few Indians were permitted to vote before the 1960s.
21	The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was established in 1824, and it is the oldest bureau of the United States Department of the Interior. It serves about 1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. The BIA is responsible for the administration and management of 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates held in trust by the United States for American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives.
22	More than half of the U.S. states trace their names to Indian origins: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.
23	Nancy Ward was the daughter of a Delaware man and a Cherokee woman. When her husband, a Cherokee warrior, was killed in a battle, she donned men’s clothing and took over her husband’s role in the fight. In recognition of her actions she was given a position on the Council of Chiefs, making her possibly the first Cherokee woman to wield such power. She was awarded the title of “ <i>Beloved Woman</i> ,” which gave her the responsibility of deciding the fates of prisoners, and she spent the remainder of her years working for Indian-White peace.
24	In 2002, astronaut and Chickasaw Indian John Bennett Herrington became the first enrolled member of a Native American tribe to orbit the Earth. He carried a ceramic Hopi pot emblazoned with three corn motifs into space, 250 miles above the surface of the planet. Herrington also carried a decorated eagle feather given to him by an Elder of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, which was floated in the International Space Station airlock.

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25	<p><i>“Every year, our Nation pauses to reflect on the profound ways the First Americans have shaped our country’s character and culture. The first stewards of our environment, early voices for the values that define our Nation, and models of government to our Founding Fathers—American Indians and Alaska Natives helped build the very fabric of America. Today, their spirit and many contributions continue to enrich our communities and strengthen our country.”</i> —President Barack Obama</p>
26	<p>As Commissioner of Indian Affairs under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Collier crusaded to prevent the absorption of the American Indian culture into mainstream American society, and questioned the wisdom of such decisions. During his time in office, Collier reformed Indian religious freedom, public relief and conservation programs, as well as protection and retention of tribal land.</p>
27	<p>Keith Harper, a member of the Cherokee Nation, became the first member of a federally recognized Indian tribe to serve at the U.S. Ambassador level when he was confirmed as United States Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Council in June 2014. In his career as an attorney, he has focused on issues involving injustice against Native peoples.</p>
28	<p>Parkas, a perennial fashion staple, were first worn by Indians and originally taken up by Whites as military garb. Ponchos—another common Indian clothing item—became popular during World War I as soldiers’ rain gear. Indian moccasins have been adopted as house slippers, and people living in snowy climates rely on Indian-originated snowshoes.</p>
29	<p>Many aspects of American Indian and Alaska Native culture have remained a staple in modern-day American life. The hammock, common in many different Indian cultures, found its way onto Navy and merchant-marine ships as a space-saving bed. Nowadays, they can be found in our own backyards!</p>
30	<p>As the first people to live on the land we all cherish, American Indians and Alaska Natives have profoundly shaped our country’s character and our cultural heritage. Today, American Indians and Alaskan Natives are leaders in every aspect of our society—from the boardroom to the battlefield, to the classroom.</p>

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Date	Source
1	http://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/
2	http://www.loc.gov/law/help/commemorative-observations/american-indian.php
3	http://www.civilrights.org/indigenous/tribal-sovereignty/
4	http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jun02.html
5	http://www.nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/about/
6	http://www.sequoyahmuseum.org/index.cfm/m/5
7	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.5
8	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.8
9	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.11
10	https://www.jstor.org/stable/3628652?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
11	http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=CU006
12	http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm
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14	http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm
15	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.30
16	http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm
17	http://indianyouth.org/billy-mills
18	http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/1900/peoplevents/pandeAMEX38.html
19	http://blog.nativepartnership.org/memorial-day-military-service-a-native-tradition/
20	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.23
21	http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/index.htm
22	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.6
23	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.30
24	http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/herringt.html
25	https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/31/presidential-proclamation-national-native-american-heritage-month-2014-0
26	http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED167315
27	http://www.ncai.org/news/articles/2014/06/03/ncai-congratulates-keith-harper-on-his-confirmation-to-serve-as-us-representative-to-the-un-human-rights-council
28	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.29
29	The New York Public Library, <i>American History Desk Reference</i> , pg.29
30	https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/11/01/presidential-proclamation-national-native-american-heritage-month-2012