



Center for Multicultural and Gender Studies

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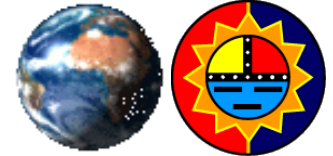
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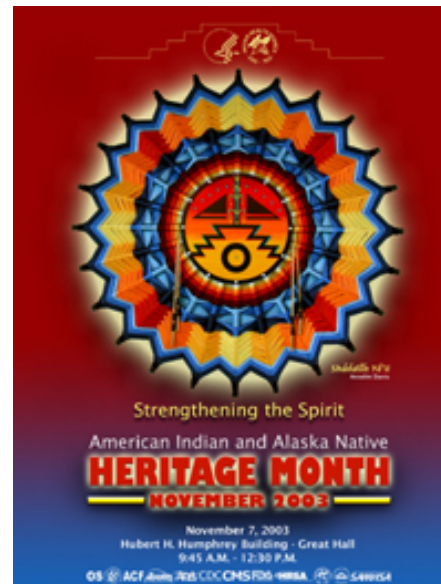
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MCGS Newsletter, November 2003



November is American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month

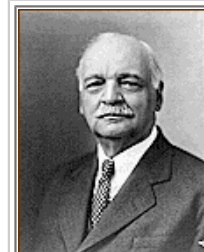


In 1990, President George Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued each year since 1994.

American Indian Contributions to World Culture:

The discovery of the "New World" brought about the pursuit of raw materials and markets, which in turn led to worldwide European colonization. The American Indian's contributions to world culture included tobacco, rubber, a new form of cotton, hundreds of new plants of medicinal value (aloe vera and aspirin), turkeys, toboggans, moccasins and snowshoes. American Indians cultivated more than 50 plant species that are now of major significance worldwide. They also gave to the world Maize ("Indian corn"), beans, potatoes, tomatoes, chili peppers, chicle (chief ingredient of chewing gum), cacao (chocolate), pineapples, squashes, artichokes, cashews, and maple sugar.

Notable American Indians:



Charles Curtis, (b.1860 - d.1936) Kaw, elected Senator and vice-president of the United States, 1929-33 (with Herbert Hoover).

"Bias and prejudice are attitudes to be kept in hand, not attitudes to be avoided."

Exhibits & Events

[MCGS Newsletter](#)

[Great Book Series*](#)

[2003 Black History Exhibit*](#)

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[Women's History Month Events*](#)

Resource Lists

Useful Links

Liberal Arts

Archive

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Did you Know?

Tribal Colleges were created in response to the higher education needs of American Indians, and generally serve geographically isolated populations that have no other means of accessing education beyond the high school level. They have become increasingly important to educational opportunity for American Indian students, and they have achieved in a relatively brief period of time. To date, there are 35 Tribal Colleges. Click here to learn more about the [AINEC](#).



Diplomacy in New England: The First Thanksgiving?

A majority of those who came to America on the Mayflower came to make a profit from the products of the land, the rest were religious dissenters who fled their own country because of religious intolerance. The little band of religious refugees and entrepreneurs (they called themselves "saints" and "strangers") who arrived on the Mayflower that December of 1620 were poorly prepared to survive. They did not bring enough food, and they arrived too late to plant. They were not familiar with the area and lacked the knowledge, tools, and experience to effectively exploit the bounty of nature that surrounded them. For the first several months, two or three died each day from scurvy, lack of adequate shelter, and poor nutrition. They discovered that the Wampanoag (the native people of the area) placed grain and precious ornaments with the dead, and they robbed Wampanoag graves to steal the ornaments and feed the living.

Graham Greene, (b.1952) Oneida, Actor, nominated for a best supporting actor Academy Award for his role as "Kicking Bird" in *Dances with Wolves* (1990).



Born on the Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, Canada



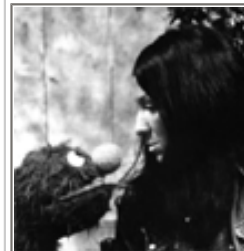
Robbie Robertson, (b. 1943) Mohawk, songwriter and guitarist, elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994 as a member of "The Band."

Composed for *Raging Bull* (1980) and *The Color of Money* (1986)

Will Rogers, (b.1879 - d.1935) Cherokee, actor and humorist, wrote more than 2,800 daily articles for the New York Times up to his death, featured on 3¢ and 15¢ American stamps.



"My ancestors may not have come over on the Mayflower, but they met 'em at the boat."



Buffy Saint-Marie, (b.1941) Cree, activist, songwriter, singer and artist, won an Academy Award in 1982 for the song *Up Where We Belong* for the film *An Officer and a Gentleman*, "Best International Artist of 1993" in France, and chosen by the UN to proclaim the *International Year of Indigenous People*.

Leslie Marmon Silko, (b.1948) Laguna Pueblo, poet and novelist, won the Poetry Award from the Chicago Review (1974), The National Endowment for the Arts grant, Lemnan Literary Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas (1994).



The Wampanoag were also facing danger, albeit of a different kind. They had been decimated by diseases introduced by European explorers three or four years previous. Whole villages had been wiped out, and it is estimated that as many as 3/4 of the Wampanoags were killed. This proved especially troubling as the Narragansett, their neighbors to the west, now outnumbered them, and were beginning to demand tribute from Wampanoag villages. The Wampanoag befriended the Europeans as part of a military alliance, led by two Indian men who knew how to speak English. Samoset, an Abenaki from Maine, and Tisquantum (Squanto), a Pawtuxet Wampanoag.

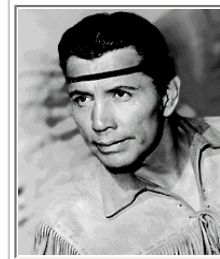


Wampanoag Dress

photo courtesy of Boston Children's Museum

As the "starving time" of winter became the spring, Tisquantum began to teach the Europeans how to survive and set up a meeting between the Chief Sachem Massaoit and the first Governor of Plymouth, John Carver. Massaoit negotiated a treaty in which they pledged to maintain friendly relations with each other, and to come to each other's aid in case of outside attack, among other things.

As a result of the help that the Europeans got from their new allies, they overcame their inexperience, and by the fall of 1621, their first year in Wampanoag country, they realized a successful harvest. They planted their fields with a mixture of European seeds and corn given to them by Massaoit. They decided to celebrate their success with a harvest festival, the Harvest Home, that they had probably all experienced as children. The Harvest Home consisted of non-stop feasting and drinking, sporting events, and parading in the fields shooting their muskets. This is the celebration that Edward Winslow relates in his letter, describing the events of the "First Thanksgiving." Although there is nothing in the letter to suggest the giving of thanks, this is the celebration that has traditionally been associated with the contemporary holiday, Thanksgiving. While the "First Thanksgiving" was based largely on European tradition, the Indians in the area contributed the menu for the feast.



Jay Silverheels, (b.1919 - d.1980) Mohawk, actor, best known for his role as Tonto on the Lone Ranger television series from 1949 through 1957, founded the Indian Actors Workshop (1963), inducted into the Hall of Honor of the First Americans (1998).

Maria Tallchief, (b.1925) Osage, ballerina, performed with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, spent 18 years at prima ballerina at the New York City Ballet, served as the Artistic Director and Teacher of the Chicago Lyric Ballet, founded and served as the Artistic Director of the Chicago City Ballet, and Kennedy Center Honoree for 1996.



Jim Thorpe, (b.1888 - d.1953) Sac and Fox, olympian, two time Olympic Gold medallist for pentathlon and decathlon (1912), inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame and Professional Football Hall of Fame, and voted the Greatest Football Player and Greatest Athlete of the First Half of the Twentieth Century by the Associated Press.

Click [HERE](#) for more famous American Indians.

Navajo Code Talker's Dictionary (a selection):

NAVAJO WORD:	LITERAL TRANSLATION	CODE FOR:
DIN-NEH-IH	clan	corps
BIH-DA-HOL-NEHI	those in charge	executive officer
NE-HE-MAH	our mother	America
JAY-SHO	buzzard	bomber plane
LO-TSO	whale	battleship
CHAL	frog	amphibious
NE-TAH	fool them	banzai
E-GAD-AH-NE-LIH	make ditch	entrench
A-ZEY-AL-IH	place of medicine	hospital



Wampanoag Dolls

photo courtesy of Boston Children's Museum

Roast wild duck, goose and turkey, venison made into pies with corn meal crusts, were Indian food. The robust ale, made from their one successful English crop of barley was the main non-native food. In many ways this three day feast symbolizes a rarely achieved relationship of peaceful coexistence between Indians and Europeans in the 17th century.

ATSANH	rib	parenthesis
GAH-BIH-TKEEN	rabbit trail	route
HA-A-SID-AL-SIZI-GIH	short racoon	scout
LO-BE-CA	fish shell	torpedo
CHAH-HO-OH-LHAN-IH	many shelter	village



Interesting Facts:

- This year, 2003, marks the 13th anniversary of celebrating Native American Heritage Month for the United States.
- Of the 50 U.S. states names, 28 are Native American in origin.
- Asking permission to take photographs is considered good etiquette at Pow Wows.
- In the 2000 census, 4.1 million United States residents were reported as American Indian and Alaska Native, alone or in combination with one or more races.
- The Nammys are the Native American Music Awards, similar to the Grammys, which honor Native American musicians.
- Totem poles cannot be read just like a book. While it is sometimes possible to identify different animals, such as bears, ravens, eagles, it is not possible to interpret what the pole really means without knowing the history of the pole and the family that owns it.

American Indian Medal of Honor Winners

- Jack C. Montgomery, Cherokee, First Lieutenant, 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds, 1944.
- Ernest Childers, Creek, First Lieutenant, 45th Infantry Division, 1943.
- Van Barfoot, Choctaw, Second Lieutenant, 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds, 1944.
- Mitchell Red Cloud, Jr., Winnebago, Corporal, Company E., 19th Infantry Regiment, 1950.
- Charles George, Cherokee, Private First Class, 1954 (posthumously awarded).

From the Department of the Navy-Naval Historical Center Web site, to learn more about American Indian participation in the military, click on: <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm>

American Indian State & City Names

(a selection):

Alabama: (*Choctaw*) thicket-clearers

Alaska: (*Aleut*) corruption of word meaning "great land."

Chicago: (*Algonquian*) garlic field

Kansas: (*Sioux*) people of the south land

Missouri: (*Missouri*) town of the large canoes

For More Information:

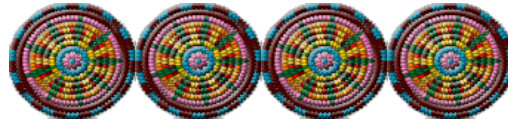
- [Las Vegas-Clark County Library District Native American Heritage Month web-site](#)
- [Four Winds Intertribal Society, Inc.](#)
- [National Museum of the American Indian](#)
- [The Native American Sites list](#)
- [Native Web](#)
- [Native Tribes of the United States and Canada](#)
- [The American Indian Heritage Foundation \(AIHF\)](#)
- [The Society for Latin American Anthropology \(SLAA\)](#)
- [The American Indian Library Association \(AILA\)](#)

Nebraska: (*Oto*) flat water

Ohio: (*Iroquoian*) great river

Saratoga: (*Mohawk*) springs (of water) from the hillside

Texas: (*Caddoan/Hasinai*) friend



[Printable Calendar of MCGS & Related Texas State
University-San Marcos Events](#)

• [The National Indian Education Association \(NIEA\)](#)



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