



An E-newsletter from the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center and the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month November 1 – November 30

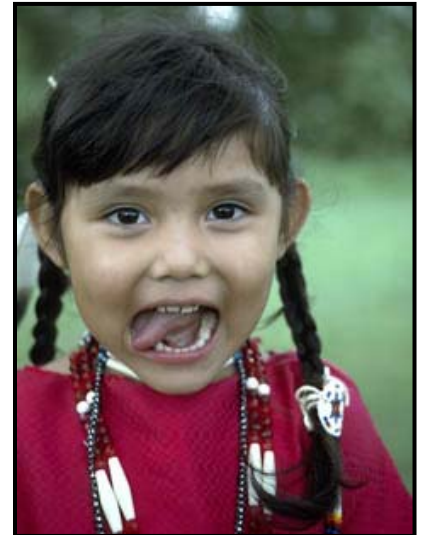
THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Aretha Jones-Cook and Carson C. Cook, Jr.

The strength of our Nation comes from its people. As the early inhabitants of this great land, the native peoples of North America played a unique role in the shaping of our Nation's history and culture. During National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month, we honor the accomplishments and culture of American Indians and Alaska Natives and recognize their contributions to our country. American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month originated in 1915 when the president of the Congress of American Indian Associations issued a proclamation declaring the second Saturday in May of each year as American Indian Day. The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994.

As we move into the 21st century, American Indians and Alaska Natives will play a vital role in maintaining our Nation's strength and prosperity. Almost half of America's Native American tribal leaders have served in the United States Armed Forces, following in the footsteps of their forebears who distinguished themselves during the World Wars and the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf.

Today, their patriotism is reflected in the more than 13,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives serving on active duty and the more than 6,400 reservists. In Iraq, Specialist Lori Piestewa of the Army's 507th Maintenance Company and a member of the Hopi tribe, was the first American servicewoman killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the only known American Indian woman killed in action in any conflict. Her bravery, service, and sacrifice are an inspiration to our men and women in uniform and to all Americans.



The theme for 2005 National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month is "**Honoring Heritage...Strengthening Our Nation's Spirit.**"

We encourage you to learn more about the history and heritage of the Native peoples of this great land. Such actions reaffirm our appreciation and respect for their traditions and way of life and can help to preserve an important part of our culture for generations yet to come.

National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month promises to be an exciting part of the MSU 2005 Fall semester. Join us in celebrating the rich culture and unique contributions of the Native peoples of the American continent.

!WOW! Facts

4.4 million

The estimated population of American Indians and Alaska natives, including those of more than one race. They make up 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population.

About 1 in 5

The proportion of Alaska's population identified as American Indian and Alaska native as of July 1, 2004, the highest rate for this race in any state in the nation. Alaska was followed by Oklahoma and New Mexico.

687,400

The American Indians and Alaska native population in California as of July 1, 2004, the highest total of any state in the nation.

153,500

The number of American Indians and Alaska natives living in Los Angeles County, California as of July 1, 2004. Los Angeles led all the nation's counties in the number of people in this racial category.

381,000

The number of people age 5 and older who speak a native North American language at home. The most common language is Navajo, spoken by 178,014 people.

There are about 560 Native American tribes defined by unique cultures, histories, languages and geography recognized by the U.S. Federal government.

--Indian Circle, 2004



Halito! Nasayukpa hoke chahta ikhana hacimalalih ga.. I am happy to be here! From the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians I bring you greetings! I am Jessica Nichole Greer, the 2005-2006 Choctaw Indian Princess. [Click here](#) to find out more about my tribe."

The Largest Indian Tribes in the United States *

<u>Name</u>	<u>Population</u>
Cherokee	729,533
Navajo	298,197
Choctaw	158,774
Sioux	153,360
Chippewa	149,669
Apache	96,833
Blackfeet	85,750
Iroquois	80,822
Pueblo	74,085

* U.S. Census Bureau

Famous Indian Chiefs

- Red Cloud
- Sitting Bull
- Geronimo
- Pontiac
- Sequoyah

Wilma P. Mankiller

First woman Chief of a Native American tribe

In 1983, Wilma Mankiller was the first woman elected as Deputy Principal Chief for the Cherokee Nation. Following the resignation of the Principal Chief in 1985, she was selected for that high position of leadership--the first woman to ever hold such an office in any Indian Tribe. In 1987, she was elected to the position by the members of the Cherokee Nation.

Mankiller was born in Mankiller Flats near Tahlequah, Oklahoma, but as a child was moved with her family to California as part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Relocation program, an event she details in her book *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*. Mankiller's concern for Native American issues ignited in 1969 when members of AIM (American Indian Movement) occupied Alcatraz Island to attract attention to issues affecting their tribes.

In 1985, she became the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and the first female in modern history to lead a major Native American tribe. She was reelected in 1991, but resigned her position in 1995 for health reasons. Mankiller's numerous awards include: Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame, 1986; Woman of the Year, Ms. magazine, 1987; John W. Gardner Leadership Award, Independent Sector, 1988; National Women's Hall of Fame, 1993. She married her second husband, Charlie Soap, in 1986. [click here to read more....](#)



The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian opened its doors to the public on September 21, 2004. The museum is the first national museum in the country to be dedicated exclusively to Native Americans, and the first to present all exhibitions from a Native viewpoint. American Indians played a key role in the design of the building and landscape near the U.S. Capitol, as well as the exhibitions and public programs. [Click here](#) to explore the museum...

Navajo Code Talkers

The code that was never broken

Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, Iwo Jima: the Navajo code talkers took part in every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They served in all Marine divisions, transmitting messages by telephone and radio in their native language—a code that the Japanese never broke.

Why Navajo?

The idea to use Navajo for secure communications came from Philip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajos and one of the few non-Navajos who spoke their language fluently. Johnston, reared on the Navajo reservation, was a World War I veteran who knew of the military's search for a code that would withstand all attempts to decipher it. He also knew that Native American languages—notably Choctaw—had been used in World War I to encode messages.

Johnston believed Navajo answered the military requirement for an undecipherable code because Navajo is an unwritten language of extreme complexity. Its syntax and tonal qualities, not to mention dialects, make it unintelligible to anyone without extensive exposure and training. It has no alphabet or symbols, and is spoken only on the Navajo lands of the American Southwest.

Did You Know....?

The Choctaw Indian Reservation contains some 35,000 acres of land situated throughout Mississippi in ten different counties. This land is held in trust for the Tribe by the federal government. The Tribe has seven officially recognized Choctaw Indian communities. Their names are Pearl River, Red Water, Bogue Chitto, Standing Pine, Tucker, Conehatta, and Bogue Homa. Pearl River, located in Neshoba County, is the largest Choctaw Indian community, and the site of Tribal government headquarters.

Veterans Day 2005: Nov. 11

- 24.5 million - total number of U.S. military veterans.
- 1.7 million - women veterans
- 2.4 million - Black veterans
- 1.1 million - Hispanic veterans
- 276,000 - Asian veterans
- 59,000 - American Indian or Alaska native
- 30,000 - Hawaiian and other Pacific islander

Origins of Native Americans

LONG BEFORE the white man set foot on American soil, the American Indians, or rather the Native Americans had been living in America. When the Europeans came here, there were probably about 10 million Indians populating America north of present-day Mexico. And they had been living in America for quite some time. It is believed that the first Native Americans arrived during the last ice age, approximately 20,000 - 30,000 years ago through a land bridge across the Bering Sound, from northeastern Siberia into Alaska. The oldest documented Indian cultures in North America are Sandia (15000 BC), Clovis (12000 BC) and Folsom (8000 BC)

Although it is believed that the Indians originated in Asia, few if any of them came from India. Christopher Columbus, who believed mistakenly that the mainland and islands of America were part of the Indies, in Asia, first applied the name "Indian" to them.

Celebrating National Native American Month

Dr. Larry Barrow

Associate Professor

MSU College of Architecture, Art and Design
&

Faculty Advisor, MSU Native American Student Association

presents...

American Indian SURVIVORS Color and Identity in the 21st Century

November 3, 2005

Colvard Union, 3rd Floor Small Auditorium
12:00 noon

Texas Becomes Nation's Newest "Majority-Minority" State

Texas has now joined Hawaii, New Mexico and California as a majority-minority state, along with the District of Columbia, the U.S. Census Bureau reported today. Five states — Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, New York and Arizona — are next in line with minority populations of about 40 percent. (The minority population includes all people except non-Hispanic single-race whites.)

According to July 1, 2004, population estimates, Texas had a minority population of 11.3 million, comprising 50.2 percent of its total population of 22.5 million. In comparison, 77 percent of Hawaii's population was minority. In New Mexico and California, the proportions were 57 percent and 56 percent, respectively, while the District of Columbia was 70 percent minority.

American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month: More Facts and Figures *

Families and Children

549,299

The number of American Indian and Alaska native families. Of these:

- 335,320, or 61 percent, are married-couple families.
- 302,249, or 55 percent, are families with their own children under 18.
- And 164,728, or 30 percent, are married couples with their own children, under the age of 18.

Homeownership

Nearly 6-in-10

The proportion of American Indian and Alaska native households who own their own home.

Education

76%

The percentage of American Indians and Alaska natives age 25 and older who have at least a high school diploma. Also, 14 percent have at least a bachelor's degree.

Businesses

\$26.4 billion

Receipts for American Indian- and Alaska native-owned businesses in 2002. These businesses numbered 206,125. An estimated 25,101 such firms had paid employees, with receipts of \$21.2 billion, or \$847,492 per firm.

Jobs

24%

The percentage of American Indians and Alaska natives age 16 and older who work in management, professional and related occupations.

* Source: [American FactFinder](#)

Thanksgiving Day November 24, 2005

What many regard as the nation's first Thanksgiving took place in December 1621 as the religious separatist Pilgrims held a three-day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest. The day did not become a national holiday until 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a national day of thanksgiving. Later, President Franklin Roosevelt clarified that Thanksgiving should always be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month to encourage earlier holiday shopping, never on the occasional fifth Thursday.

Weighing in With a Menu of Culinary Delights *

256 million

The preliminary estimate of the number of turkeys raised in the United States in 2005. That's down 3 percent from 2004. The turkeys produced in 2004 weighed 7.3 billion pounds altogether and were valued at \$3.1 billion.

44.5 million

The preliminary estimate of the number of turkeys Minnesota expects to raise in 2005. The Gopher State is tops in turkey production. It is followed by North Carolina (36.0 million), Arkansas (29.0 million), Virginia (21.0 million), Missouri (20.5 million) and California (15.1 million). These six states together will probably account for about 65 percent of U. S. turkeys produced in 2005.

649 million pounds

The forecast for U.S. cranberry production in 2005, up 5 percent from 2004. Wisconsin is expected to lead all states in the production of cranberries, with 367 million pounds, followed by Massachusetts (170 million). Oregon, New Jersey and Washington are also expected to have substantial production, ranging from 18 million to 52 million pounds.

1.6 billion pounds

The total weight of sweet potatoes - another popular Thanksgiving side dish - produced in the United States in 2004. North Carolina (688 million pounds) produced more sweet potatoes than any other state. It was followed by California (339 million pounds). Mississippi and Louisiana also produced large amounts: at least 200 million pounds each.

998 million pounds

Total pumpkin production of major pumpkin-producing states in 2004. Illinois, with a production of 457 million pounds, led the country. Pumpkin patches in California, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York also produced a lot of pumpkins: each state produced at least 70 million pounds worth. The value of all the pumpkins produced by these states was about \$100 million.

2.2 billion bushels

The total volume of wheat - the essential ingredient of bread, rolls and pies - produced in the United States in 2004. Kansas and North Dakota - combined - accounted for over 25 percent of the nation's wheat production.

\$5.2 million

The value of U.S. imports of live turkeys during the first half of 2005 - all from Canada. Our northern neighbors also accounted for all of the cranberries the United States imported (\$2.2 million). When it comes to sweet potatoes, however, the Dominican Republic was the source of most (\$2.3 million) of total imports (\$2.6 million). The United States ran a \$1.7 million trade deficit in live turkeys over the period, but surpluses of \$3.5 million in cranberries and \$10.6 million in sweet potatoes.

13.7 pounds

The quantity of turkey consumed by the typical American in 2003 and, if tradition be true, a hearty helping of it was devoured at Thanksgiving time. On the other hand, per capita sweet potato consumption was 4.7 pounds.

* Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

Contributions to *Diversity Matters*, preferably via e-mail, are welcome at any time.