



November 1 – November 30
American Indian Heritage Month

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

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Welcome to the second issue of Diversity Matters. In this edition of the newsletter we pay tribute to the rich cultural traditions, history, contributions and proud ancestry of the indigenous people of North America.

Although the first "American Indian Day" was declared by the State of New York in 1916, a month long recognition of Native Americans was not achieved until 1990. In that year, on August 3, President George Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued each year since 1994. The national theme for this year's activities and programs is "Strengthening the Spirit."

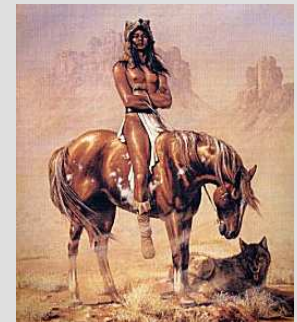
Throughout our history, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against the odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence. Tribal America has brought to this great country certain values and ideas that have become ingrained in the American spirit: the knowledge that humans can thrive and prosper without destroying the natural environment; the understanding that people from very different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and traditions can come together to build a great country; and the awareness that diversity can be a source of strength rather than division.

During American Indian Heritage Month, we also remember with sorrow the suffering they endured because of past actions and policies on the part of the Federal government that had long-term and often devastating consequences for Native Americans and their culture. Even today, few Native Americans enjoy the full bounty of America's prosperity. But even as we look to the past, we must also look to the future. Along with other Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives will face new challenges in the coming century. We can ill afford to leave any of our people behind. Tribal America must figure as prominently in our future as it has in our past. 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.

In recognition of "National American Indian Heritage Month," the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center is sponsoring MSU's first Native American Pow Wow on November 12, 2003, from 11:00a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Come join us on the Drill Field and learn all about the dance styles and costume regalia, the music, and crafts of our native peoples.

Who is an American Indian or Alaska Native?

The term "American Indian or Alaska Native" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.



**MSU 1st Annual Native American
Pow Wow**

Date: November 12, 2003
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Location: MSU Drill Field
Events:

- Choctaw Dancers
- Native American Storytellers
- Basket making demonstrations
- Beading demonstrations
- Dress and shirt making
- Stickball "Towa"
- Traditional Foods
- Native American Music

**The Largest Indian Tribes in
America ***

<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

!WOW! Facts (U.S. Census Bureau)

- In 2002, the Native American population in the United States reached 2,537,588 persons and represents 0.9 percent of the total population.
- There are about 560 Native American tribes recognized by the Federal government.
- The Native American population in the United States is concentrated in the West. Forty-three percent (43%) of American Indians live in the west; 31% in the south; 17% in the Midwest; and 9% in the Northeast. Over half of all American Indians live in California, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, North Carolina, Michigan and Alaska.
- The 2000 Census indicated that, of all places in the United States with 100,000 or more in population, New York and Los Angeles had the largest American Indian populations with 87,241 and 53,092 respectively.
- The median household income for American Indians and Alaska Natives, based on a 1998-2000 average, was \$31,799. This amount is higher than the median household income for African Americans (\$28,679), but not statistically different than that of Hispanics (\$31,703), and lower than the amount for non-Hispanic whites (\$45,514) and Asians and Pacific Islanders (\$52,553).
- Over half of all people who reported their ethnicity as American Indian or Alaska Native live in just ten states.
- Nearly thirty-three percent (33%) of all Native Americans live on reservations or federal trust lands.

POW WOW!!

“Pow Wow” is the Algonquin Indian word for “ceremony,” but the word holds a different meaning according to each Native American Indian tribe. There are several different stories of how the Pow Wow was started. Some believe that the war dance societies of the Ponca and other Southern Plains tribes were the origin of the Pow Wow. In past, most pow wows were either religious celebrations or war victories with ceremonial dancing and sacred rituals

Pow Wows are the Native American people’s way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, renewing old friendships and make new ones. This is a time to renew thoughts of the old ways and to preserve a rich heritage.

Dancing has always been a very important part of the life of the American Indian. The outfits worn by the dancers, like the styles of clothing today, evolve over time. It is not a stagnant culture but a vibrant and changing way of life.

Until this century non-Indians usually did not participate in pow wows.



Did you Know?

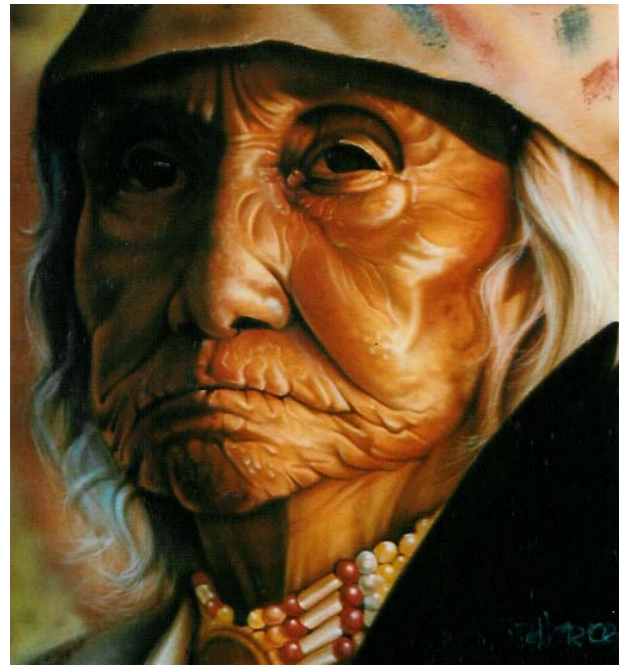


The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is the federally recognized tribe in Mississippi. The Choctaw Indians are generally assumed to have descended from the "Mound Builder" culture. The Choctaws formerly occupied central and south Mississippi with some outlying groups in Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. Choctaw culture was similar to that of the Creek and Chickasaw, who were their enemies in repeated wars. The Choctaw economy was based on agriculture, and the Choctaw were perhaps the most competent farmers in the southeast. Friendly toward the French colonists, the Choctaw were their allies in wars against other tribes.

After being forced to cede their lands in Alabama and Mississippi, as a result of the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, they moved (1832) to the Indian Territory in Oklahoma, where they became the one of the Five Civilized Tribes. Twenty thousand Choctaw began the journey, known as the infamous "Tail of Tears," but only seven thousand survived.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has gone from poverty to relative affluence in just one generation. Listed below are some facts about the tribe.

- The tribe is a federally recognized sovereign nation.
- The Choctaws are governed by a democratically elected tribal chief and 16-member council.
- There are 9,000 tribal members in the State of Mississippi.
- The tribe reservation covers 35,000 acres spread across 10 counties.
- The Choctaws have 1.4 billion in assets, including the \$600 million Pearl River Resort.



Links to Native American Education Sites:

American Indian Culture Research Center
<http://www.bluecloud.org/dakota.html>

Native American Resources
<http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmai/start.htm>

Southern Native American Pow Wow
<http://library.thinkquest.org/3081/index.htm>

Pow Wow Resources
<http://library.thinkquest.org/3081/resource.htm>

Mississippi Native American Genealogy
<http://www.nanations.com/mschoctaw>

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
<http://www.choctaw.org>

Native American Sites
<http://www.nativculture.com/lisamitten/indians.html>