Preparing for Native American Heritage Month

An overview of Native American history as described in books and movies.

BALTIMORE, MD, UNITED STATES, November 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to recognize the cultures, histories, and contributions of Native communities across the United States. Native American observances and programs in November range from festivals, to learning Native American recipes, wearing moccasins, attending a sweat lodge, helping to preserve a Native language, and much more. You can learn more about the range of activities for Native American Heritage Month at the website for Running Strong for American Indian Youth, which was founded by Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills. National Native American Heritage Month 2026 | Indian Youth.

> “Fundamental to many Native narratives is an understanding that the Earth acts as a host to human beings. . . All Beings must share the Earth as equal partners, each responsible to the other.”
>
> *Larry J. Zimmerman*

The U.S. government officially recognizes 574 Indian tribes; however, when we break them into subtribes and clans there are many more. Just how many more? The answer is in John Swanton’s classic work, The Indian Tribes of North America. This is the definitive one-volume guide, and it covers all groupings such as nations, confederations, tribes, subtribes, clans, and bands. It is a vast and impressive digest of all Indian groups and their historical locations throughout the continent. Formatted as a dictionary, or gazetteer, and organized by state, it includes all known tribal groupings within the state and the many villages where they were located. https://genealogical.com/store/?

gpc_search=1&textinput_author_last_name=Swanton
Another foundational book for learning about our Native American heritage is Algic Researches: Indian Tales and Legends, by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (two vols. in one). Schoolcraft, widely regarded as the father of American Folklore, was a one-time Indian agent and the son-in-law of an influential Chippewa. He was convinced that folktales could help unlock the origins of Native Americans. Algic Researches contains accounts of nearly fifty of the elemental myths and legends of the Ojibwa, Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee, Muskego, Saginaw, Algonquin, and Sioux. Algic Researches |

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Native American culture's relationship to Nature is seamless. To experience what it means to live in harmony with nature, pick up a copy of Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. Kimmerer is a botany professor and member of the Pottawatomi Nation. In Braiding Sweetgrass she describes working with plants and returning to the customs of her people while retaining her perspective as a scientist. Amazon.com : braiding sweetgrass

Ultimately, contact between Native Americans and Euro-Americans, beginning in the Fifteenth Century, marked a clash of civilizations. Native Americans defended their lands and hunting grounds as best they could but were overwhelmed by the ever-expanding numbers and superior technology of the European occupiers. Atrocities were committed on both sides. In general, the American conquest of the continent and its inhabitants was characterized by forced migrations, broken agreements, and the pursuit of economic profit, until the U.S. held sway over what would become the 48 states. For a listing of the ante bellum battles that occurred below the Mason-Dixon Line, see Indian Wars of the American South, 1610-1858, by Michael J. Ports. Beginning with the Powhatan Wars of 1610-1646 and concluding with the Third Seminole War of 1855-1858, Ports has assembled the pertinent facts related to the scores of battles or campaigns on the advancing frontier. Indian Wars of the American South, 1610-1858. https://genealogical.com/store/indian-wars-of-the-american-south-1610-1858/

Dee Brown's classic Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West picks up the story in the American West after 1850. It is a "fully documented account of the systematic destruction of the American Indian during the second half of the nineteenth century." Amazon.com: 1970 BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE by DEE BROWN Paperback Book: Dee Brown: Movies & TV. More recently, Killer of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI, by David Grann, documents how the oil-rich Osage of Oklahoma were robbed and murdered in a conspiracy of greed and racism. Amazon.com : Killers of the Flower Moon. The story is also available as an excellent movie directed by Martin Scorcese. For more about the history of the Osage, see Louis Burns' Osage Bands and Clans Osage Indian Bands and Clans.

https://genealogical.com/store/?gpc_search=1&pa_subject=native-american
Paradoxically, when all is said and done, Native Americans may have the last word on the future, not only of the Americas, but of the entire planet. While Native actions like the 2016-2017 Standing Rock protest to halt an oil pipeline threatening the water and sacred areas in their reservation in the Dakotas were overturned, resuming the U.S. government's practice of breaking treaties with Native Americans Dakota Access Pipeline - Wikipedia, Native wisdom nonetheless shows the way forward. According to Larry J. Zimmerman, the author of The Sacred Wisdom of Native Americans, "Fundamental to many Native narratives is an understanding that the Earth acts as a host to human beings.

Many indigenous traditions view humans as spiritually rooted in the Earth, which gave life to them just as the soil gives life to a plant. But people are seen as no more important than any other living or non-living thing. All Beings must share the Earth as equal partners, each

responsible to the other." The Sacred Wisdom of the Native Americans: Zimmerman, Larry J.: 9780785833901: Amazon.com: Books

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