Native American Heritage Month Resource Toolkit 2021

Celebrate Native American Heritage Month with this curated collection of resources honoring the contributions and influence of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

This toolkit, curated by the National Women’s History Museum, offers a variety of resources highlighting Native American women who have made, and are making, history as trailblazers, advocates, leaders, storytellers, and artists. Happy Native American Heritage Month!

November 1–5

November 1

Learn about activist Amanda Blackhorse, a member of the Navajo Nation, social worker, and mother of two whose fight against the use of Native American names and images by sports teams has led to the recent name change of the Washington Football Team.

November 2

Did you know that National Native American Heritage Month began in 1986 as a week-long celebration known as “American Indian Week?” Learn more about the timeline of National Native American Heritage Month here.

November 3

#KnowHerName: Read about Susette La Flesche Tibbles, an Omaha woman who spent her entire life tirelessly campaigning for Native American rights as a speaker, activist, interpreter, and writer.

November 4

Watch the documentary Kind Hearted Woman Part One, an unforgettable portrait of a single mother living on North Dakota’s Spirit Lake Reservation, available to stream on PBS.com as part of their Native American Heritage Month programming.

November 5

#KnowHerName: Read about Susette La Flesche Tibbles, an Omaha woman who spent her entire life tirelessly campaigning for Native American rights as a speaker, activist, interpreter, and writer.

Photo credit: Public domain. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
Did you know that Lilian St. Cyr was the first Native American actress to appear in a silent film? #KnowHerName and learn about her work as an advocate promoting Native American culture.

Join experts from across the Smithsonian for a conversation about Edson's Flag, a large wall tapestry created by Marie Watt (Seneca) to honor veterans, including Watt's great-uncle, Edison Plummer, an Air Force veteran who served during World War II.

#KnowHerName: Read about poet, activist, and musician Joy Harjo, a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation who was named the first Native American United States Poet Laureate in 2019.

Don't miss the 2021 Native Cinema Showcase's Future Focused Shorts Program, family-friendly short films that are fun for kids of all ages, available for free on demand from November 12–18, 2021.

Educators: Utilize primary and secondary accounts to examine and explain the significance of women-led activism in the fight for Native liberation and sovereignty in our 60-minute lesson plan, Red Power Prevails: The Activism, Spirit, and Resistance of Native American Women.

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November 15–19

November 15
Did you know that Maria Tallchief was one of the most accomplished dancers of the twentieth century, and was the first Native American woman to hold the rank of prima ballerina? Learn more about her in our online exhibit!

Click Here

November 16
#KnowHerName: Learn about lawyer, activist, and former presidential advisor Kimberly Teehee, the first Cherokee Nation delegate in the House of Representatives.

Click Here

November 17
Watch Without A Whisper—Konnon: Kwe, a film by Katsitsionnii Fox that uncovers the hidden history of the profound influence Indigenous women had on the beginnings of the women’s rights movement in the United States.

Click Here

November 18
#KnowHerName: Read about Elouise Cobell (“Yellow Bird Woman”), an entrepreneur, advocate, and member of the Blackfoot Nation who fought for government accountability and for Native Americans to have control over their own financial future.

Click Here

November 19
Join the National Museum of the American Indian for Youth in Action: Conversations about Our Future—Indigenous Food Sovereignty. This free webinar, designed for middle and high school students, will explore how young Native foodies are “working to decolonize their diets and restore balance in their bodies and communities.”

Click Here

Photo credit: Maria Tallchief en pointe (1961) by Chicago Tribune.
November 22–26

Did you know that Bessie Coleman was the first African American and first Native American woman pilot? #KnowHerName and learn her story.

Educators: Explore our Sacagawea lesson plan! In this lesson, students will learn about Sacagawea and her contributions to the Corps of Discovery and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. While exploring her life and her contributions, students will mind map key details.

#KnowHerName and look for her on a U.S. quarter beginning in 2022! Learn about the incredible work of Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to be elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation! Read this article and check out the 2017 documentary celebrating her life.

Celebrate Native American Heritage month with the National Register of Historic Places! Explore new listings in the National Register, like the Allegany Council House (Allegany Indian Territories, New York), which served as the primary gathering place for regular meetings of the Seneca Council beginning in 1926. Seneca women played an important leadership role at the Allegany Council House beginning in 1935, when they first petitioned the council for the right to vote.

Read about Winona LaDuke, a Native American activist, economist, and author who has devoted her life to advocating for Indigenous control of their homelands, natural resources, and cultural practices.
#KnowHerName: As the daughter of an English trader and a Native American woman, Mary Musgrove was able to understand many cultures. Her mixed heritage and language skills allowed her to become a negotiator between English and Native American communities. She is most commonly known for playing an important role in the development of Colonial Georgia. She is also known for her business knowledge as a trader and interpreter.

Click Here

Did you know that Deb Haaland, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, made history as the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary? #KnowHerName and learn more about this trailblazing woman here.

Click Here

Photo credit: Michael S. Anaya-Gorman.