

November 2015

Theme: Growing Native Leaders: Enhancing Our Seven Generations.”



This year's theme originates from the *Great Law of the Iroquois Seven Generations* sustainability concept, which urges leaders to remember seven generations in the past and consider seven generations in the future when making decisions that affect their constituents. Today, American Indians are leaders across all segments of our society, from the classroom, to the boardroom, and to the battlefield.

During this month, we celebrate the cultural traditions, languages, and experiences represented by more than 566 Indian tribes; 326 American Indian reservations; approximately 140,556 Veterans of the Armed Forces; and over 150 languages. An interesting fact is that there was a misconception about Native Americans having only one native language. In reality, there were perhaps a thousand languages spoken in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans. In addition to the 150 Native American languages in Canada and the United States, there are another 600-700 languages in Central and South America. In reality not everyone agrees on which languages are unique. If two languages are similar enough that speakers can usually understand each other, they are called *dialects* of the same language. A trio of individuals from three areas a hundred miles apart might very likely have been completely unable to communicate by speech. There was, however, a sign language used in some areas to allow communication between those of different tribes. This is described in detail in William Clark's book, *"The Indian Sign Language"*.

In the United States NATIVE AMERICANS are

considered to be people whose pre-Columbian ancestors were indigenous to the lands within the nation's modern boundaries. These peoples were composed of numerous distinct tribes, bands, and ethnic groups, and many of these groups survive intact today as sovereign nations. The terms Native Americans use to refer to themselves vary regionally and generationally, with many older Native Americans self-identifying as "Indians" or "American Indians", while younger Native Americans often identify as "Indigenous".

Which terms should be used to refer to Native Americans has at times been controversial. The term "Native American" has been adopted by major newspapers and some academic groups, but has not traditionally included Native Hawaiians or certain Alaskan Natives.

Native American US Stamps



Famous Native Americans:

Native American **Jim Thorpe** won the pentathlon & decathlon at the 1912 Olympics but was stripped of his gold medals for violating amateur eligibility rules. Jim Thorpe was born circa May 28, 1888, near current-day Prague, Oklahoma. A child of Sac and Fox and Potawatomi Indian bloodlines, he was given the name Wa-Tho-Huk, meaning "Bright Path," but christened Jacobus Franciscus Thorpe.

Native American activist and actor **Russell Means** is known for leading an armed takeover of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973, and for appearing in films like *The Last of the Mohicans*. In 2007, he helped draft a proposal to create a new nation for the Lakota tribe. Born on November 10, 1939, Russell Means was a member of the American Oglala Sioux tribe and longtime Native American activist. He was also an early leader of the American Indian Movement; with the goal of establishing sovereignty for indigenous American tribes.

Johnny Depp is an award-nominated actor known for his portrayal of odd-ball characters. Johnny Depp was born John Christopher Depp II, in Owensboro, Kentucky, on June 9, 1963, to parents John and Betty Sue Depp. Depp's father worked as a civil engineer, and his mother came from full-blooded Cherokee stock.

Sacagawea, the daughter of a Shoshone chief, was born circa 1788 in Lemhi County, Idaho. Sacagawea was a Shoshone interpreter best known for being the only woman on the Lewis and Clark expedition into the American West.

Quentin Tarantino jolted onto the Hollywood scene with his screenplay for *True Romance*, before directing the early 1990s films *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*. Quentin Tarantino was born in Tennessee in 1963, Quentin Tarantino grew up loving movies more than school. In his early 20s, he got a job at the Video Archives, where he wrote the scripts for *True Romance* and *Natural Born Killers*.

Rita Coolidge is an American singer born on May 1, 1944, in Lafayette, Tennessee. Rita Coolidge has embraced her mixed heritage throughout her musical career. Her father was a full-blooded Cherokee, and her mother was half Cherokee and half Scottish.