



TIMELINE

1824

The **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** is founded as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The BIA was designed to subjugate and assimilate American Indians and Alaska Natives to U.S. society but has since changed its purpose to advocate for policies that promote Indian self-determination.

James McDonald, Choctaw, becomes the nation's first Native American lawyer. He goes on to represent the Choctaw tribe in negotiations with politicians on behalf of Native American rights.

1830

President Andrew Jackson signs the **Indian Removal Act**, which evicts Native American tribes east of the Mississippi River and forces them to move to plots of land in the west. This removal policy later becomes known as the Trail of Tears because of the deaths during the forced migration.

1851

Congress passes the Indian Appropriations Act, which creates the Indian reservation system. It does not allow Native Americans to leave their reservations without permission.

1871

The **Indian Appropriations Act** dissolves the status of tribes as sovereign nations.

1879

Carlisle Indian Industrial School — run by the government's BIA — opens in Pennsylvania. It forces Native American children to assimilate into white U.S. culture. It goes on to exist for 39 years.

1887

The **Dawes Act** gives the president authority to divide up land allotted to Native Americans on reservations.

1889

Susan La Flesche Picotte, Omaha, becomes the first Native American woman to earn a medical degree in the U.S. She goes on to open her own hospital on the Omaha reservation, the first hospital built on Native American land without government assistance.

1890

About 300 Sioux are killed at **Wounded Knee** in the last battle between U.S. troops and Indians.

1907

Charles Curtis, whose ancestry included Kaw, Osage and Potawatomi lineage, becomes the first Native American U.S. Senator.

1916

New York becomes the first state to celebrate American Indian Day.

1929

Charles Curtis becomes the first Native American vice president under President Herbert Hoover.

1934

The Indian New Deal is introduced to help Native Americans rediscover and revitalize their cultural heritage and traditions. Central to this deal is the Indian Reorganization Act, which sought to promote tribal self-governance. Though many tribes accepted it, many rejected it out of fear of more federal intervention.

1941

About 25,000 Native Americans serve in World War II, and 40,000 others work in wartime industries. Some Native Americans fighting in the war served as "code talkers" who represented over 14 tribes and used their native languages to convey secret messages.

1944

The **National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)** is formed. It goes on to be the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization advocating for the interests of tribal governments and communities.

1956

The **Indian Relocation Act** establishes vocational training to encourage Native Americans to move off reservations.

1968



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the **Indian Civil Rights Act**, which finally grants Native American tribes rights included in the Bill of Rights.

N. Scott Momaday, a Kiowa writer, publishes *House Made of Dawn*, his first novel about a young veteran returning to his Kiowa pueblo after serving in the U.S. Army. The novel wins the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969 and is regarded as a progenitor to a Native literature renaissance. He goes on to earn a National Medal of Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship and 12 honorary degrees.

1972

More than 500 Native American activists travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to establish ways to address treaty violations. Guards of the BIA building attempt to turn the activists away, but they begin a weeklong siege of the building. The BIA agrees to review the demands and transport the activists back home.

The Indian Education Act establishes funding for bilingual and bicultural education programs.

1975

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act simplifies Indian access to federal funds and gives tribes help in meeting the educational needs of children.

1980

In *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*, the Supreme Court rules that the Sioux land seizure at the Black Hills violated the Treaty of Fort Laramie. Sioux Indians are offered a total of about \$106 million but refuse the money. To this day, the money sits in a trust fund, collecting interest.

1981

The Lakota Times is first published. To this day, it is the only official South Dakota Native American newspaper on tribal land, based on the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota.

1985

Wilma Mankiller becomes the first woman to be elected chief of the Cherokee Nation. Despite threats, she advanced education, job training, housing and health care for her people. She also doubled annual Cherokee Nation tribal revenue and tripled tribal enrollment. President Bill Clinton awarded Mankiller the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, in 1998.

1988



Minneapolis Native Americans host the **first Two-Spirit Gathering**, which honors LGBTQ Native Americans who identify as “two spirits” (a culturally distinct form of gender-fluid identity, of having a masculine and a feminine spirit). Richard LaFortune, a Native American LGBTQ activist, organizes this meeting.

1989

The American Indian College Fund is founded to support Native American people's access to higher education.

1990

The Native American Languages Act makes it a U.S. policy to preserve and protect Native languages.

Jo Ann Kauffman, Nez Perce, founds Kauffman & Associates, Inc., a management consulting firm dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable populations.



The Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) of 1990 promotes Native American artwork and small businesses.

President George H.W. Bush designates November as National American Indian Heritage Month. “Two-Spirit” becomes the appropriate label to encompass the spectrum of gender identities within Native American communities.

1992

The first **Indigenous Peoples' Day** is celebrated in opposition to Columbus Day.



Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Northern Cheyenne, is elected to serve Colorado in the U.S. Senate. Some of his notable achievements included passing legislation to secure Native American water rights, protect wilderness areas, prevent fetal alcohol syndrome, create Colorado's Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and establish the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.

1996

President Clinton authorizes a **White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities** to support and develop tribal colleges.

1997

Charlene Teters, Spokane, an artist and activist who protested against the use of Native Americans as mascots, is profiled in Jay Rosenstein's documentary “In Whose Honor?”



2002

John Bennett Herrington, a Chickasaw member, becomes the first Native American in space.

2008

The Coquille Indian Tribe in Oregon becomes the first to openly adopt marriage-equality policies.

2009

The Federal government agrees to a **\$3.4 billion settlement** with Native American tribes who say they were defrauded out of royalties overseen by the Department of the Interior since 1887.

2014

Keith Harper is confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to United Nations Human Rights Council, becoming the first American Indian ambassador.

2016

Native Americans from the **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe** in North Dakota protest the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which is set to run through their sacred tribal land. In 2017, their motion in court is denied, but they are still fighting to try to halt construction.

2018

Sharice Davids, Ho-Chunk, of Kansas and **Deb Haaland**, Laguna Pueblo-American, of New Mexico, become the first Native American women elected to Congress.

2019

Sioux Tribal Council Member Cody Two Bears founds "**Indigenized Energy**," a nonprofit organization that opens a 300-kilowatt solar farm on the Standing Rock Reservation and educates young people about ancestral ecological knowledge.

2020

Native Americans advocate within their tribes for people to fill out the **Census** to ensure sufficient resources are allotted to areas where they live.

2021

President Joe Biden issues the **first-ever presidential proclamation commemorating Indigenous Peoples' Day in the United States** — 40 years after it was established.

2022

Mohegan Chief Marilyn "Lynn" Malerba is sworn in as the first Native American Treasurer of the United States. Her signature will now appear on U.S. currency along with Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



What can be done to help improve living conditions for Native American communities in the face of tremendous historical oppression?



What more could be done to protect native cultures from being whitewashed?



Health equity is a major issue for Native American communities due to a lack of health resources, funding and culturally competent care. What can be done to improve healthcare in Native American communities?