

National American Indian Heritage Month, 2006 - History

"The American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage month is a special time of year focusing on educating the public regarding the contributions, intertribal cultures, heritage, and traditions of the American Indian/Alaska Native.

Our current, month-long observance traces its roots to the turn of the 20th century when people began making proposals for a single day on which to honor Native Americans. The following chronology highlights some of the significant events contributing to our present-day "National American Indian Heritage Month."

- In 1914, Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfoot Tribe, rode horseback from state to state in the hope of gaining support for a day of tribute. He presented the endorsements of 24 state governments to the White House; however, no record exists of a national day being proclaimed.
- During the following year (1915), Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a member of the Seneca Tribe and one of the first proponents of an American Indian Day, persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to designate a day of recognition for Native Americans. For the next three years the Scouts adopted such a day.
- In 1916, by gubernatorial proclamation, New York became the first state to observe American Indian Day. Over the ensuing years, other states followed suit in designating a day to honor Native Americans via proclamation and/or legislative enactment.
- In 1976, Senate Joint Resolution 209 authorized the President to proclaim the week of October 10-16, 1976, as "Native American Awareness Week."
- In 1987, the week of November 22-28 was proclaimed as "American Indian Week" by President Reagan, pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 53.
- Prior to that, President Reagan had twice earlier designated an American Indian Day or Week.
- In 1986, he signed Senate Joint Resolution 390, which designated November 23-30 as "American Indian Week"; and during his first term he named May 13, 1983, as "American Indian Day."
- On September 23, 1988, President Reagan signed a Senate Joint Resolution designating September 23-30, as "National American Indian Heritage Week."
- On December 5, 1989, President George Bush issued a proclamation based on Senate Joint Resolution 218, designating the week of December 3-9, 1989, as "National American Indian Heritage Week."
- On August 3, 1990, a Senate Joint Resolution designating the month of November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month" was

approved by President George Bush and become Public Law 101-343 (104 Stat. 391).

- On March 2, 1992, President George Bush issued a proclamation designating 1992 as the “Year of the American Indian” based on legislation by Congress (Public Law 102-188).
- On November 5, 1994, President Clinton issued a proclamation based on Senate Joint Resolution 271 designating the month of November 1994 as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”
- Beginning in 1995, and currently, the President issues a proclamation each year designating the month of November as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”

Source: American Indian Alaskan Native Employment Program Online

National American Indian Heritage Month, 2006

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America

"During National American Indian Heritage Month, we honor the generations of American Indians and Alaska Natives who have added to the character of our Nation. This month is an opportunity to celebrate their many accomplishments and their rich ancestry and traditions.

America is blessed by the character and strength of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and our citizens are grateful for the countless ways Native Americans have enriched our country and lifted the spirit of our Nation. We are especially grateful for the Native Americans who have served and continue to serve in our Nation's military. These brave individuals have risked their lives to protect our citizens, defend our democracy, and spread the blessings of liberty to people around the world.

My Administration is working to ensure that American Indians and Alaska Natives have access to all the opportunities of this great land. My fiscal year 2007 budget proposes more than \$12.7 billion for government programs for Native Americans. Education is vital to ensuring all citizens reach their full potential, and my budget includes funding to help Native-American schools succeed and meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is providing education for approximately 46,000 American-Indian and Alaska-Native children. To help keep Native Americans safe, I have also proposed to increase law enforcement personnel and improve law enforcement facilities in American-Indian communities. My Administration will continue to work on a government-to-government basis with tribal governments, honor the principles of tribal sovereignty and the right to self-determination, and help ensure America remains a land of promise for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and all our citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2006 as National American Indian Heritage Month. *I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first."

GEORGE W. BUSH

October 30, 2006

Source: The White House Website