

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month: A Resource Guide

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commonfund

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About Commonfund

Commonfund was founded in 1971 as an independent asset management firm with a grant from the Ford Foundation. Today, Commonfund provides investment solutions to sophisticated investors through two affiliates. Commonfund Asset Management provides outsourced CIO services designed for nonprofit institutions, using independent investment sub-advisers for discretionary and non-discretionary engagements. Commonfund Capital is a global private capital manager with over 30 years of experience offering a full suite of private investment strategies to sophisticated investors, both nonprofit and for-profit. All securities are distributed through Commonfund Securities, Inc., a member of FINRA. For additional information about Commonfund, please visit www.commonfund.org.

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month: A Resource Guide

About This Resource Guide

Commonfund, in conjunction with our Native American Heritage Month subcommittee, has created a resource guide to help all of us celebrate the contributions of Native Americans and Indigenous people in all aspects of American Life. This resource guide is not an exhaustive list by any stretch of the imagination, the hope is that you will take advantage of a few of these resources to begin your exploration of this very important part of American history; your history, our history.

About Native American Heritage Month

Native American Heritage Month started off as an effort to get a day of appreciation and acknowledgment for the unique contributions made by the first Americans for the growth and establishment of the United States. The effort has now resulted in a whole month being celebrated for that purpose.

Dr. Arthur C. Parker was one of the first supporters of having an American Indian Day. He was a Seneca Indian and the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York. He was also the one to convince the Boy Scouts of America to create a day for the Native Americans — the Boy Scouts adopted this day for three days.

In 1915, a plan concerning American Indian Day was formally approved in the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting. The president of the American Indian Association, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, called upon the country to observe this day.

The first American Indian Day was declared in May 1916. In 1990, a joint resolution was approved by George H.W. Bush, which called for November to be named National Native American Heritage Month. Declarations like these have been issued since 1994, such as Native American Heritage Month and National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

If you want to watch and enjoy

Documentaries

- *Standing Bear's Footsteps (2012)*

This documentary archives the incredible journey of legendary warrior Chief Standing Bear of the Ponca Nation, who fought in the US Supreme Court to prove he was a person—and in the process redefined what it means to be an American. "Standing Bear's Footsteps" incorporates storytelling, re-creations, and present-day scenes to explore a lesser-known piece of American history.

- *Urban Rez (2013)*

Urban Rez is an American documentary that explores the controversial history and contemporary effects of the federal government's assimilation policies that relocated Native Americans from reservations to urban areas. Written by Lisa D. and directed by Larry Porier, the documentary highlights the repercussions of the Urban Relocation Program, the largest voluntary upheaval of Native Americans during the 20th century. The film uniquely portrays how multiple generations and different tribes of Native Americans perceived their new and forced urban landscape.

- *First People – Kumeyaay (2014)*

"The Kumeyaay Nation previously occupied territory throughout Northern America but are currently comprised of 17 reservations dispersed across San Diego County and northern Baja California. The film underscores some cultural practices and traditions of the Kumeyaay Nation including the gathering and preparation of nuts and berries, agave harvesting, and the making of various tools. This Emmy nominated film explores aspects of the Kumeyaay people's resilient culture and heritage that in their words connects back "to the beginning of time".

- *Playing for the World (2009)*

First aired in 2009 "Playing for the World" is a documentary about a team of young Native American women at a boarding school in Fort Shaw, Montana, who won the "World Championship" in 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair. The film utilizes original photos, film recordings of the 1904 Fair, news articles, and discussions with descendants to tell the riveting story of how ten girls created a team that would become illustrious for its skill, tenacity, and cultivating young women's dignity—on and off the

court. "Playing for the world" garnered so much attention that in 2014, the "1904 World Champion Fort Shaw Indian School Girls Basketball Team" was inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame!

For more insightful and educational documentaries on Native American and indigenous history please visit the [PowWows.com website](http://PowWows.com).

If you want to read and absorb

Reading Resources for adults

- *Carry*
by Toni Jensen

Carry is a collection of poetic memoirs and essays, in which author Toni Jensen, depicts what it means to exist as an indigenous woman in America through her experiences with various forms of violence, including gang and domestic violence. Having a fair skin color, the author acknowledges her privilege as a white passing Native American in contrast to her family members who experience more blatant forms of racism and violence. The novel focuses on gun violence and its personal and historical impact in Native American Communities.

- *Almanac of the Dead*
by Leslie Marmon Silko

A landmark in Native American literature, *Almanac of the Dead* is a fiction novel that attempts to recreate the moral history of the Americas, told from the point of view of the conquered, not the conquerors. Silko emphasizes the often grave hardships of Native Americans to keep the core of their culture: their way of seeing, their way of being, their way of believing.

- *Prudence*
by David Treuer

The book, set on a Minnesota Indian reservation in the wartime 1940s, grapples with inequalities of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. It also raises ethical questions regarding the bombing of civilians and racially motivated violence. In *Prudence*, Treuer tells a story of loss, desire, and someone's search for a connection to their homeland.

lost his family in battle and seeks revenge. In the midst of his plot for revenge, he receives guidance from the Peacemaker who empowers him to unite the warring tribes. This powerful and inspiring story teaches children great lessons of kindness and forgiveness.

For more inspiring stories about the Native American experience and greater access to novels by influential indigenous authors please visit this page on the website of [The New York Public Library](#).

Reading Resources for children

- *A Day with Yayah*
by Nicola I. Campbell

Set in the Nicola Valley, British Columbia during the spring, a First Nations family goes foraging for mushrooms and herbs. On this outing, a grandmother shares her wise knowledge of vegetation and the natural world to her grandchildren. With soothing illustrations, *A Day With Yaya* balances teaching botanical information with a delightful story about the loving relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

- *The Girl Who Helped Thunder and Other Native American Folktales*
by James & Joseph Bruchac

The Girl Who Helped Thunder is an intriguing collection of Native American legends gathered from indigenous tribes and people across the U.S. These tales span from the origin of myths to animal fables to thrilling narratives of courage and sacrifice. Stunningly illustrated with original art, the anecdotes capture a wide range of belief systems and knowledge from the Cherokee, Hopi, Maidu, Seminole, Cheyenne, and other tribes.

- *Hiawatha and the Peacemaker*
by Robbie Robertson

Hiawatha and the Peacemaker, by famous musician and songwriter Robbie Robertson, is a riveting tale of the brave Mohawk warrior who has

If you want to listen and be engaged

- [All My Relations](#)

The "All My Relations" podcast is hosted by Matika Wilbur, from the Swinomish and Tulalip peoples of coastal Washington, and Adrienne Keene, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Together, they delve into different topics Native Americans are confronting today, bringing in other indigenous guests from all over the country to offer insights and perspectives. "All my Relation" explores what it means to be a modern Native individual.

- [This Land](#)

Debuted in 2019, "This Land" recounts the United States Supreme Court case Sharp v. Murphy. In addition, the podcast discusses multiple native issues such as land rights, sovereignty issues, and the Indian Child Welfare Act. "This Land" provides in depth legal analysis of the Murphy case, and a detailed exploration of Native American history.

- [The Red Nation](#)

With over 100 episodes available, "The Red Nation" podcast spotlights discussions on indigenous history, politics, and culture. Hosts Nick Estes and Jen Marley, are passionate about the liberation of Indigenous peoples from colonialism and use their platform to center Indigenous agendas and struggles in direct action, advocacy, mobilization, and education.

- [Red Man Laughing](#)

Podcast host, creator, and writer Ryan McMahon is a comedian who uses his degree theatre and experience with Second City Conservatory in Toronto to welcome and engage listeners to the future of indigenous storytelling. McMahon is very passionate about the preservation of indigenous voices and in 2014 created a network called the Indian and Cowboy Podcast Network where he mentors new podcasters and develops indigenous podcast projects.

For more podcasts by Native Americans and other Indigenous creators please visit the [Chatelaine website](#).

If you want to understand and connect

Cultural and historical resources

- [Voices of the Clay: San Ildefonso Pottery, 1600 – 1930](#)
- [Natural Museum of American Indian History](#)
- [Many Nations One Voice](#)
- [National Archives: Native Communities Program](#)
- [National Gallery of Art: George Catlin Paintings of Native Americans](#)

Articles and other educational resources

If you want to investigate and explore

- [Indigenous New Mexico: Sharing the Wonders of Our World](#)
- [So' bo hane = Navajo: Story of the Stars](#)
- [Native Knowledge 360](#)
- [Native American History in Detroit](#)

If you want to support and experience

Nonprofit and community resources

- [Warrior Women Project](#)
- [Stand With Standing Rock](#)
- [First Nations Development Institute](#)
- [Redhawk Native American Arts Council](#)
- [American Indian College Fund](#)
- [National Indian Council on Aging](#)

For additional resources, please visit the [Commonfund](#) website to download our [Diversity and Inclusion: Ways to Make a Change](#) resource guide.