

Public Papers of the Presidents

November 5, 1994

CITE: 30 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2311

HEADLINE: Proclamation 6156 --National American Indian Heritage Month, 1994 HIGHLIGHT:
By the President of the United States of America

BODY:

A Proclamation

There is a yearning among American people for a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a sense of shared beliefs and common goals. Today, across the country, we are searching for ways to come together in friendship and mutual respect. As we look toward the promise of the 21st century, it is important that we reflect on our shared heritage and on the valuable lessons history teaches.

At this momentous time, we pay tribute to this country's first peoples --the American Indians. We celebrate the innumerable contributions that generations of American Indians and Alaska Natives have made to our country and to our world. Before there were colonists on these shores, long before our Nation's founders drafted the U.S. Constitution, American Indians had established powerful civilizations and rich and thriving cultures. Government, art, music, spirituality, and a deep and abiding respect for the natural environment --all of these are enduring traditions of the American Indians.

Native peoples were the first environmentalists, understanding that air, water, plants, and animals must be treated with respect if they are to remain available for generations to come. American Indians taught the first European settlers how to survive in new surroundings and helped them to explore uncharted wilderness. Native peoples have represented this country in every war, from the American Revolution to the Persian Gulf and are proud members of every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. Artists such as R. C. Gorman and Fritz Seholder and writers such as Louise Erdrich and N. Scott Momaday have made remarkable contributions to art and literature.

The relationship between the U. S. Government and the American Indians has not been without controversy. As we look back on our history, we must acknowledge often profound mistakes. But we also must look to and plan for a future of cooperation and respect. With the recent passage of the Indian self-governance and self-determination amendments of 1994, we celebrate the government-to-government relationship that exists between the Indian tribes and the United States. This legislation reaffirms and strengthens the political ties between all of the nations of this land.

Public Papers of the Presidents

To acknowledge the varied and inestimable contributions of the native peoples and to celebrate this proud legacy, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 271, has designated November 1994 as "National American Indian Heritage Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim November 1994 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I urge all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, and local levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety- four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:36 a.m., November 8, 1994]

NOTE : This proclamation was published in the Federal Register on November 9.