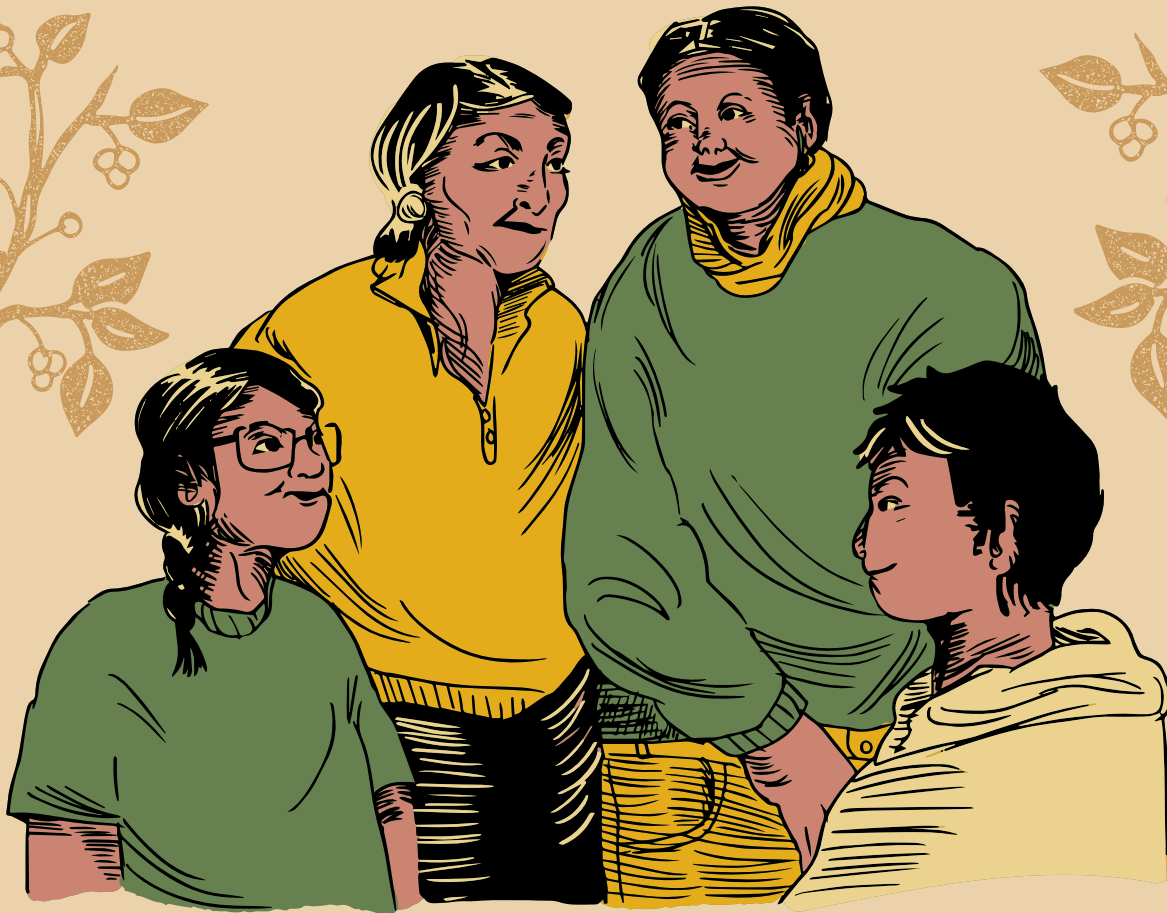




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2023 NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH SPOTLIGHT



Native American Heritage Month (designated 1990) is observed in November to call attention to the cultures, traditions, and achievements of the nation's original inhabitants and of their descendants. The day after Thanksgiving was officially named Native American Heritage Day in 2008 to honor and remember the cultures and contributions of the Indigenous peoples of America.





Chicago's Indigenous Roots



The number of people of Native American heritage who currently live in around Chicago is estimated at 65,000. Please see below for some places and resources to expand your knowledge and experiences regarding Native American Heritage Month.

[American Indian Center](#) provides cultural, social, and educational services, programming, and support to Chicagoland's large and diverse Native community.

The AIC offers free open beading classes on Tuesdays from 4-7 p.m. as well as Drum and Dance that is also open to the public every Tuesday and Thursday 5-7 p.m.

[The Field Museum](#) hosts a permanent exhibit entitled, "Native Truths: Our Voices, Our Stories" that is included with basic admission. This is an exhibit for all ages that features contemporary work and stories that celebrate the thriving modern cultures of today's Native communities - it replaces and re-examines the previous Native North America hall that existed in that space at the museum for many years, without the input of the Native people themselves. "For Native visitors, I also hope there is an instant connection. I hope they see themselves, see their relatives, their grandparents, and aunties and uncles. For non-Native visitors, we've been working to make this an immersive experience that allows them to come into our home—learning from us, not just about us." Debra Yepa-Pappan (Jemez Pueblo/Korean), Community Engagement Coordinator for The Project.

[The Center for Native Futures](#) is Zhegagoynak's (Chicago's) "epicenter of Native creativity that fosters Native artists of all backgrounds." The Center for Native Futures is the only all-Native artist-led arts non-profit organization in Zhegagoynak. CfNF promotes the advancement of Native fine arts, fosters contemporary artists, and encourages Indigenous Futurists. Located in the Marquette Building, the art center hosts gallery exhibitions, artist-in-residencies, and community events throughout the year.

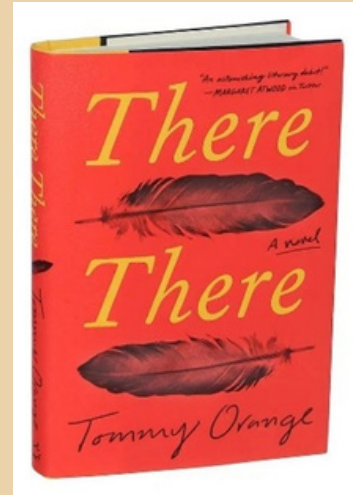
WBEZ ran an article entitled, "Without Native Americans, Would We Have Chicago As We Know It? By Jesse Dukes. The short answer to that question is naturally, no, of course not. The long answer is much more interesting and delves into the layered and prominent impact of the various Native American tribes inhabiting the lands that would become Chicago. The Potawatomi and other Algonquian tribes established trade routes via intermarriage with European traders, such as Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, considered a founder of Chicago. Most Native Americans were pressed to leave the region in 1833 after signing treaties with the U.S. government. Dukes' article explores how Native Americans helped lay the foundation for the city. The full article and 13-minute audio clip summary are available via this [link](#).



Book Recommendations

In [There There](#), Tommy Orange traces the intersecting lives of 12 characters from Native communities whose voices and perspectives converge and conflict and reach across generations.

[YouTube Video of the Keynote author Tommy Orange](#) - If you couldn't make the outing to the Harold Washington Library that a few of us from the office went to you can view the entire event online via this link.



With frank, funny, and sometimes personal prose, this [book](#) cuts through myths, guilt, and anger and builds a foundation for true understanding and positive action.

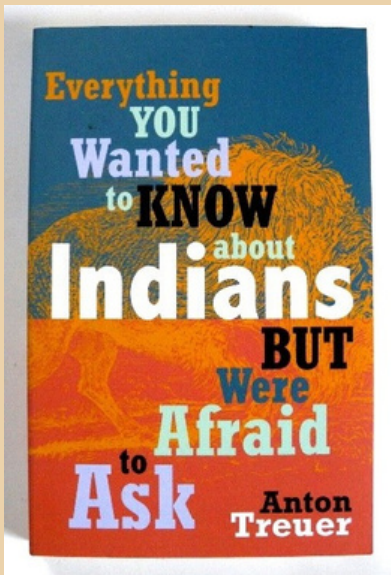
There is now a revised and expanded edition of this book (April 2023) which revisits old questions from a new perspective and expands on topics that have become increasingly relevant over the past decade, including activism and tribal enrollment; truth and reconciliation efforts; gender roles and identities in Indigenous communities; the status of Alaskan Natives and Canadian First Nations; and much more.

This book is also available in a “Young Readers Edition” making it a book for the whole family to discuss and learn from.

(Aubrey has read both books and is happy to discuss and/or give more recommendations!)

[The Marrow Thieves](#) by Cherie Dimaline

In a futuristic world ravaged by global warming, people have lost the ability to dream, and the dreamlessness has led to widespread madness. The only people still able to dream are North America's Indigenous people, and it is their marrow that holds the cure for the rest of the world. But getting the marrow, and dreams, means death for the unwilling donors. Driven to flight, a fifteen-year-old and his companions struggle for survival, attempt to reunite with loved ones and take refuge from the “recruiters” who seek them out to bring them to the marrow-stealing “factories.”





Book Recommendations



[Not a Nation of Immigrants](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Debunks the pervasive and self-congratulatory myth that our country is proudly founded by and for immigrants, and urges readers to embrace a more complex and honest history of the United States

Whether in political debates or discussions about immigration around the kitchen table, many Americans, regardless of party affiliation, will say proudly that we are a nation of immigrants. In this bold new book, historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz asserts this ideology is harmful and dishonest because it serves to mask and diminish the US's history of settler colonialism, genocide, white supremacy, slavery, and structural inequality, all of which we still grapple with today.

She explains that the idea that we are living in a land of opportunity—founded and built by immigrants—was a convenient response by the ruling class and its brain trust to the 1960s demands for decolonialization, justice, reparations, and social equality. Moreover, Dunbar-Ortiz charges that this feel good—but inaccurate—story promotes a benign narrative of progress, obscuring that the country was founded in violence as a settler state, and imperialist since its inception.

[An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

The first history of the United States told from the perspective of indigenous peoples.

Today in the United States, there are more than five hundred federally recognized Indigenous nations comprising nearly three million people, descendants of the fifteen million Native people who once inhabited this land. The centuries-long genocidal program of the US settler-colonial regimen has largely been omitted from history. Now, for the first time, acclaimed historian and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz offers a history of the United States told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and reveals how Native Americans, for centuries, actively resisted expansion of the US empire.

[Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee](#) by Dee Brown

Using council records, autobiographies, and firsthand descriptions, Brown introduces readers to great chiefs and warriors of the Dakota, Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, and other tribes, revealing in heartwrenching detail the battles, massacres, and broken treaties that methodically stripped them of freedom. A forceful narrative still discussed today as revelatory and controversial, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* permanently altered our understanding of how the American West came to be defined.

[Project 562](#) by Matika Wilbur

A photographic and narrative celebration of contemporary Native American life and cultures, alongside an in-depth examination of issues that Native people face, by celebrated photographer and storyteller Matika Wilbur of the Swinomish and Tulalip Tribes.





Pending Legislation & Government Investigations



[Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative](#) – U.S. Department of the Interior

Under Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) and Assistant Secretary Brian Newland (Ojibwe), the DOI has launched “a comprehensive effort to recognize the troubled legacy of federal Indian boarding school policies with the goal of addressing their intergenerational impact and to shed light on the traumas of the past.”

Read the DOI first investigative report [here](#).

[S. 1723](#) – pending legislation to establish the Truth and Healing Commission

The goal of S.1723 is to create a federal commission to locate and analyze records from the 521 known boarding schools located in the United States, and to investigate, document, and acknowledge past injustices of the federal government’s Indian Boarding School Policies. The Commission would develop recommendations for Congress to promote the healing of historical and intergenerational trauma caused by boarding schools and provide an environment for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people to speak about their personal experiences. Passed in Senate, pending in House.

TV & Film

[Reservation Dogs](#) created by Sterlin Harjo
Following the exploits of four Indigenous teenagers in rural Oklahoma who steal, rob and save in order to get to the exotic, mysterious and faraway land of California. To succeed, they will have to save enough money, outmaneuver the methheads at the junkyard on the edge of town and survive a turf war against a much tougher rival gang. This first-of-its-kind creative team tells a story that resonates with them and their lived experiences -- and invites audiences into a surprisingly familiar and funny world. Stream on Hulu.

[Frybread Face and Me](#) created by Billy Luther

Two adolescent Navajo cousins from different worlds bond during a summer herding sheep on their grandmother’s ranch in Arizona while learning more about their family’s past and themselves. Stream on Netflix.

[Lakota Nation vs. United States](#) directed by Jesse Short Bull

A documentary that chronicles the Lakota Indians’ century-long quest to reclaim the Black Hills, sacred land that was stolen in violation of treaty agreements. Stream on Prime.

[Somebody’s Daughter](#) and [Say Her Name](#) directed by Rain

Documentary films covering the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis on reservations throughout Montana. Stream directly on the filmmaker’s website.

“Rain’s films “Somebody’s Daughter” and “Say Her Name” unravel the multitude of causes through the voices of family members who’ve lost loved ones and are demanding justice. They shed light on the history of violence towards Tribal women and relatives; a history that began with overt colonial violence and has become embedded in pervading racist thought and indifference, complicated today even more so by a maze of jurisdictions and legal loopholes.

The families in the films are from Montana but the stories are the same across the country. For those looking for solutions, Rain’s films are a must see to understand why the killings and disappearances continue especially around border towns and “man camps” near oil fields and how it’s everyone’s responsibility to help end the violence.”

