

Women Making History



NATIONAL
MUSEUM
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AMERICAN
INDIAN

Meet six American Indian women who have blazed new trails, led nations, and challenged the status quo.

Histories of the United States have not always included stories about Native women. Learn more as you explore the exhibition *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*.



Related objects on view in the *Nation to Nation* exhibition



Questions for exploring your connection to these stories



Polly Cooper (Oneida)

Edward Hlavka, *Allies in War, Partners in Peace* (detail), 2004. Gift of

the Oneida Nation of New York

Polly Cooper was a **hero** to the American soldiers stationed at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, during the Revolutionary War. She and other Oneida Nation representatives travelled more than four hundred miles through the bitter cold during the winter of 1777–78 to deliver corn to General George Washington's starving troops. While the rest of the Oneida relief party returned home, Cooper stayed, saying it was the Oneida's duty to help their allies.



Seneca woman's outfit, 1830–1870.

Near the entrance of the *Nation to Nation* exhibition, Cooper is the central figure in a sculpture that honors this alliance between the Oneida Nation and the United States.



Which woman in your life do you respect?





Diné (Navajo) concho belt, 1870–1900. 18/2190

Asdzáá Tl'ogi/Juanita (Diné [Navajo])



Asdzáá Tl'ogi, or Juanita (Diné [Navajo]), 1874.

Asdzáá Tl'ogi, or Juanita, was a **warrior** and is a symbol of resistance to Diné (Navajo) people. In late 1863, the United States began to force about 11,500 Diné men, women, and children from their homelands in the Four Corners area of the Southwest to the Bosque Redondo prison camp in southeastern New Mexico. Four years later, a group of Diné

women that likely included Juanita were instrumental in successfully negotiating for their people's return. Later, Juanita often traveled to Washington, DC, with her husband, Manuelito, and Diné delegations to advocate for her nation.

Have you ever taken a stand for something you believe in?



Zitkála-Šá/ Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Yankton Sioux)

Zitkála-Šá, or Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, was a dedicated **activist** for Native American rights. A gifted writer, she was an outspoken critic of Indian boarding schools, having experienced as both student and teacher their policy

of forced assimilation.

In 1926, Zitkála-Šá founded the National Council of American Indians, a pan-Indian organization dedicated to social and political reforms.



Zitkála-Šá/Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Yankton Sioux), ca. 1898.

Division of Culture and the Arts, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Indian Industrial School student uniform, 1886–1889

When do you choose to get involved in social issues? Why?



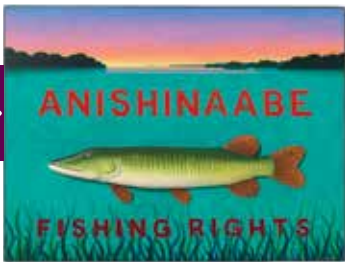


Photo: Lucy Fowler Williams, 2011. Penn Museum

Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee)

A tireless **advocate** of Indian rights, Suzan Shown Harjo was key to the passage of several acts of Congress related to Indian cultural issues, including the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978), the National Museum of the American Indian Act (1989), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990). She has helped Native peoples recover more than one million acres of land and press for their treaty-guaranteed fishing and hunting rights. Since 1992, Harjo has also led the campaign against disparaging sports team names. In 2014, Harjo received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition of her outstanding service to civil rights.

How do you define “ally”?



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David P. Bradley (Minnesota Chippewa, White Earth Ojibwe), *Anishinaabe Fishing Rights*, 2013.



Photo: Susan Hornyak, 2019. Courtesy of the Native American Bar Association D.C.

Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo) and Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk)

Deb Haaland and Sharice Davids made history in 2018 as the first Native American women elected to the United States **Congress**, joining a record number of Native women who ran for public office that year.

Who has influence in your community?
Why?



Apśáalooke (Crow) delegation, 1872.

The four women in this photo are identified as Stays with the Horses, Bear Wolf’s wife, wearing long earrings, a garment decorated with elk teeth, and a trade blanket (front row, far left); Good Medicine Pipe, Old Crow’s wife (front row, far right); Blackfoot’s wife (back row, 4th from left); and Iron Bull’s wife (back row, 3rd from right).



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American Indian women have influenced our national narrative for generations, yet their stories have not been widely told. Learn about how they helped pave the way for future generations seeking equity and opportunity for Native peoples and all Americans.

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Cover: Asdzáá Tł'ogi/Juanita (Diné [Navajo]), 1874. Po2723