Native American-Alaskan Native History Month

The origin of our current celebration of Native American-Alaskan Native History Month is varied. Several different leaders advocated historical recognition of Native Americans. Dr. Arthur C. Parker (Seneca) organized the First Americans Day for the Boy Scouts in the early 1900s. In 1914 Red Fox James (Blackfoot) rode horseback across nation to rally support for a new national holiday, American Indian Day. A few states, led by New York, voted to observe it.

Not long afterwards, in 1915 at the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, a plan celebrating American Indian Day was formally approved. The association's president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge (Arapahoe) issued issued a proclamation on September 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of May as American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of American Indians as citizens.

On December 14, 1915, Red Fox James presented the endorsements of 24 state governments to the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

National recognition would come generations later. In 1990 President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution of Congress designating November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." (based on the AOA website)

Phil Lucas (Choctaw)

Phil Lucas experienced prejudice at an early age. He grew up in Arizona and would often see in rural towns signs saying, ""No dogs or Indians allowed." These experiences pushed him to a new level of consciousness and desire to tell the untold stories. He graduated from Western Washington University with a visual-communications degree then traveled the world for several years before settling in Washington state. Lucas juggled his film projects, teaching, and family with success.

Lucas was one of the first American Indians to find national acclaim behind the camera. By his death at age 65, he had written, directed or produced more than 100 films, TV series and documentaries. Lucas won an Emmy in 1994 for co-directing "The Native Americans."

Lucas taught film at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe and the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada. At the end of his life, he was a film instructor at Bellevue Community College in Washington, where he founded an American Indian Film Festival in 2003. Lucas was active with charitable work with the Baha'i faith. (Based on a *Seattle Times* article by Ashley Bach)

Sand Creek Massacre: "It is a good day to die."
On November 29, 1864, a Confederate cavalry unit led by Col. John Chivington launched an unprovoked raid on a sleeping Indian village in Sand Creek, Colorado. More than 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho people were massacred; most of the victims were women, children and elderly men. Some genitals of the victims were paraded though Denver streets. A year after the attack the U.S. Congress condemned the action and promised reparations which never appeared. Each year, the Cheyenne people recognize the massacre with an annual 187 mile run. At its conclusion, a runner climbs atop a statue of a Civil War soldier at the Denver capitol to symbolically claim victory. In 2000, then President Bill Clinton signed a bill creating the Sand Creek National Historic Site. (based on a Denver Post article)

R.C. Gorman
Rudolph Carl Gorman was born in 1932, son of Adelle Brown Gorman and Carl Nelson Gorman. His dad would later become one of the celebrated World War II Navajo Code Talkers. He attended mission schools and was encouraged to pursue his artistic talent by his teacher, Jenny Lind. After a stint in the U.S. Navy, he attended college at the Guam Territorial College and later the Northern Arizona University. In 1958, he went to Mexico where he attended Mexico City College (later the University of the Americas). From there he moved to San Francisco and continued to paint while working as a post office employee and artist's model. Gorman picked up ideas from art instructors in the classes where he posed.

In 1965, he took a chance and had a one-man exhibit then three years later he was able to purchase an art gallery which he dubbed the Navajo Gallery. His career would then take off. He became known for his artistic accomplishments but also the eclectic life he led. Gorman was friends with an assortment of athletes, political figures and entertainment celebrities. During his life he amassed an admirable collection of works by Picasso, Chagall, Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo. His home became an art gallery including the greats of Western art but also those of Native American art. Gorman would earn honorary doctorates and the Harvard University's Humanitarian in Fine Arts Award. He died in November 2005. (based on an article by S. Derrickson Moore)

Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee)
Lloyd New was born in Oklahoma and graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a Bachelor of Art Education degree in 1938. In 1946 he founded the Kiva Craft Center in Scottsdale, Arizona.

More than a decade later, he started an experimental arts education program for young American Indian adults called the Southwest Indian Arts Project. That grew and Lloyd Kiva New became president of the Institute of American Indian Arts which was established by Executive Order of President John Kennedy. Under his leadership, the Institute grew from a government funded school in 1962 to the country's only college devoted solely to Indian arts. New followed what was then a revolutionary concept of a national arts college for Native Americans. Over 200 students currently study there. In 1972, the school expanded to include a museum, the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum.

In addition to this work, New was a founding member of the Advisory Board to the Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. New was awarded the Community Development Medal from the University of Arizona, the American Fabrics Magazine's Award of Merit, the American Indian Tourism

Industry's Art Award, the Museum of Modern Arts' Good Design Award, the Mayor's Recognition Award for Excellence in the Arts and an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He died February 8, 2002, following a brief illness. (based on the Buffalo Bill Historical Center website and the *Native* magazine)

Johnpaul Jones (**Choctaw/Cherokee)**
Johnpaul Jones was born in Oklahoma and graduated from high school in California. Like so many other Native American youth of that generation, Jones recalled to a newspaper reporter that he was told by Caucasian teachers, "'Oh, you're dyslexic — but you can draw.' So, they put me in a lot of drawing classes." He would go on to study architecture at the University of Oregon, receiving his undergraduate degree in 1967.

He now is one of the nation's best known and acclaimed Native American architects. Jones is the founding principal of Jones & Jones Architects based in Seattle, Washington. Among his many projects are the design of the San Diego Zoo, the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, and Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo.

Jones volunteers with Native American tribes and mentors young Native Americans and others of diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds to help them enter the design field. He is a Founding Member of the AIA Seattle Diversity Roundtable. Jones has been honored with the Lawrence Medal of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts and was awarded the 2005 AISES Executive Excellence Award. (Based on a *Seattle Times* article by Sara Jean Green, the American Indian Science & Technology Society (AISES) website profile and the AIA Seattle website)

Charles Curtis (Kaw/Osage)
Curtis was the first Native American to be Vice President of the U.S. Curtis, as a teen, worked as a jockey and newspaper reporter. Later, he studied law under an attorney –rather than going to law school—and was admitted to the bar when he was 21. Curtis was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1907. In 1928 he was elected on the ticket with Herbert Hoover. (Based on *Indian* magazine, Summer 2005)

Alaskan Aleut Internment
One of the little known stories of WWII is the Alaskan Aleut internment. Like most Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps by President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, Aleuts were also interned. In February 1942, 881 Aleuts were removed from there homes and relocated in camps in southeast Alaska. Although they were allowed to leave, most had no where to go and stayed in the "duration villages" until 1945. Roosevelt's Executive Order did not specifically intern the Aleuts but the government required anyone with one-eight Aleut bloom or more to be evacuated from Alaskan islands. The fear was that the Japanese would gain a foothold in the islands and their bombers could use the islands as a base to bomb the west coast of the contiguous states.

On June 3, 1942, Japanese planes attacked Dutch Harbor and Kiska Island was invaded. 42 residents of Attu Island were taken as prisoners of war and held in Otaru City on the island of Hokkaido. A third of them died there.

As a result of the attack, the U.S. government decided to evacuate the remaining Aleuts. Residents were given less than 24 hours to prepare to leave. They were taken to Wrangell Institute, a government boarding school, until permanent locations could be found. Four camps were eventually organized including a gold mine and abandoned canneries. The lack of planning led to inadequate housing, food and poor health and sanitation conditions. Many evacuees did not have heat for the harsh Alaskan winters. One in ten evacuees died, mostly the elders and babies.

The Aleut homes on the islands were burned and farm animals were slaughtered to prevent the Japanese from taking them. Even more tragically, cultural artifacts were looted by the U.S. troops and the Japanese. Strangely enough, some Aleuts were allowed to return to the islands so the $2.4 million fur seal industry could continue. The Civil Rights Act of 1988 awarded damages to Japanese Americans and Aleuts and President George H.W. Bush issued an apology. Eligible Aleuts received up to $12,000 in compensation and a $5 million restitution fund to benefits the evacuees, their descendants and their communities. (based on a *Seattle Times* article by Levi J. Long, February 19, 2004) "

Sam Lacy (Shinnecock)

Sam Lacy, a biracial Shinnecock Indian, was born in 1903 in Connecticut but grew up in Washington, DC. As a youth, he was a huge baseball fan. He graduated from Howard University where he did sports commentary on the radio with a degree in education. He also was active in semipro baseball and basketball. In 1930 he started work for the Washington Tribune and eventually became the managing editor. In 1948, Lacy became the first member of color of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

Early in his career, Lacy was barred from many baseball and football press boxes because of his color. It was he who chronicled for the black press Jackie Robinson's debut in 1947. Because of his being barred from press boxes, famed Dodgers manager, Branch Rickey told Lacy he could report from the Dodgers dugout. Once when he was barred from a New Orleans baseball press box, he took a chair and sat on the press box roof. He was soon joined by several Caucasian sportswriters from New York.

In 1997, he was named winner of the J.G. Taylor Spink Award for meritorious contributions to baseball writing and was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame's wing for writers and broadcasters. He continued in sports reporting for a total of 69 years before dying in May 2003 at age 99. (based on a *New York Times* article by Frank Litsky)