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Did you know?

“Missouri” is a Siouan word. It comes from the tribal name Missouriia, which means “big canoe people.”

How to honor this history

Land acknowledgements honor a place’s Indigenous people - past and present - and recognize the history that brought us to where we are today. They are typically offered at the beginning of public events or meetings and presented by local Indigenous people, but more commonly by event or meeting organizers. Here is a sample:

“We begin by acknowledging that we gather today on the ancestral lands of Native peoples who were removed unjustly, and that we in this community are the beneficiaries of that removal. We honor them as we live, work, and study here at [organization name].”

Indigenous peoples have inhabited Missouri since time immemorial. Today, there are over 183,400 Native Americans living in the state.¹ Learn more about our Native history!

PRE COLONIZATION

- From 950 – 1050 A.D. the Mississippian mound-building culture emerged.
- The city of Cahokia, located in what is now southern Illinois, thrived from about 600–1400 C.E. At it’s height, it was the largest Indigenous city north of Mexico.

17TH CENTURY

- In the 17th Century, the area that is now St. Louis was occupied by the Illini Confederacy: the Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Michigamea, Moingwena, and Peoria.

19TH CENTURY - CORPS OF DISCOVERY

- In 1803, France sold what is now Missouri to the U.S. as part of the Louisiana Purchase.
- In May, 1804 Lewis and Clark left St. Louis for the Pacific Coast. Throughout their expedition, they encountered numerous Missouri tribes, including the Missouris and Otos.

19TH CENTURY - INDIAN REMOVAL

- In 1808, the Osage Nation were forced to sign Cession 67, which ceded 52.5 million acres of their land in Missouri and Arkansas. In exchange, the US government gave them \$1200 in cash and \$1500 in merchandise. The Osage Nation reservation is now located in Osage County, Oklahoma.
- In 1830, the Illini were forcibly removed.
- After the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, several tribes were forcibly relocated through Missouri, including the Cherokee, Delaware, Kickapoo, Sac and Fox, and Shawnee.
- In 1881, the Otoe-Missouria Nation were the last tribe forcibly removed from Missouri.

20TH CENTURY

- In 1904, the St. Louis World’s Fair’s Louisiana Purchase Exhibition brought in hundreds of Native people from across the U.S. for display. Images can be found at the Missouri History Museum.
- In 1956, Public Law 959 (or the Adult Vocational Training Program) caused thousands of Native Americans to relocate to St. Louis, where a Bureau of Indian Affairs opened an office that year.
- The American Indian Center of Mid America opened in 1974. It was founded by the local Native population and provided social, health and cultural resources to Natives in the area. The American Indian Center of Mid America closed in 2007.
- In 1990, the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies was founded at Washington University in St Louis.

21ST CENTURY

- In 2017, the Kansas City city council declared October 9, 2017 to be Indigenous Peoples Day.
- In 2018, the City of St. Louis Board of Alderman renamed Columbus Day to Indigenous People’s Day in perpetuity.

Learn More

Alliance for Native American Programs and Initiatives website: <https://www.nativealliance.org/>

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Din, G. and Nasatir A. (1983) *The Imperial Osages*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK.

Fowler, D.D. and Parezo, N.J. (2007) *Anthropology Goes to the Fair: The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition*. University of Nebraska Press, Omaha, NE.

National Archives (n.d.) American Indian Urban Relocation webpage. Retrieved from: <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/indian-relocation.html>

U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (n.d.) Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgment Retrieved from <https://usdac.us/nativeland/>

Woodger, E., and Topopov, B. (2014) *Encyclopedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. New York: Facts On File, 2020

¹ National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center. (2021). A first look at the 2020 census American Indian/Alaska Native redistricting data [Research policy update]. National Congress of American Indians. [Overview of 2020 AIAN Redistricting Data FL-NAL_8_13_2021.pdf \(ncai.org\)](https://www.ncai.org/overviews/2020-ai-an-redistricting-data-fl-nal-8-13-2021.pdf)

