



National American Indian Heritage Week, 1989

A Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America

During our recent celebration of Thanksgiving, our Nation paused to reflect upon the peace and prosperity with which we have been blessed by our Creator. In so doing, we carried on a tradition observed by the pilgrims at Plymouth Colony when they gathered to give thanks for an abundant harvest following a cold and bitter winter. The settlers at Plymouth Colony were able to reap that harvest largely because of the help they received from neighboring Indians. Today, as we observe American Indian Heritage Week, we recall the many contributions Native Americans have made over the years to the development of this great land.

On numerous occasions, American Indians helped the early settlers gain a firm footing in the New World, showing them how to farm the strange new soil or acting as guides through uncharted territory. Indeed, throughout our Nation's history, we have learned much from Native Americans. Our cultural heritage has been enriched immeasurably by the many different customs and traditions practiced by American Indians and Native Alaskans. Each tribe has shared with us wonderful portions of its unique history and character.

Native Americans have also served this country with distinction, sharing the wealth of their knowledge and talents. They have been courageous members of the Armed Forces, and they have participated in public service at every level—including the Office of Vice President.

While national policies regarding Indian affairs have been uncertain and often inequitable in the past, tribal elected governments and the United States have now established a unique and special government-to-government relationship, which was strengthened and renewed during the last 2 decades. Today we look forward to greater economic independence and self-sufficiency for Native Americans, and we reaffirm our support for increased Indian control over tribal government affairs.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 218, has designated the week beginning December 3, 1989, and ending December 9, 1989, as "National American Indian Heritage Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning December 3, 1989, and ending December 9, 1989, as National American Indian Heritage Week, and I ask all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush