READER'S GUIDE 2023-2024

ANGELINE BOULLEY

MICHIGAN HUMANITIES PRESENTS

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GREAT MICHIGAN Read



GREAT MICHIGAN READ?



Great Michigan Read: One title, one state, and thousands engaged in literary discussion.

WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN READ?

Since 2007, the Great Michigan Read—Michigan Humanities' signature program has bridged communities across the state with Michigan-based fiction and non-fiction titles that spark dialogue among diverse perspectives, encourage a deeper understanding of the humanities, and connect thousands of readers with authors and engaging educational programming. The 2023–24 title—selected by seven regional selection committees representing all corners of Michigan—is *Firekeeper's Daughter*, by Angeline Boulley.

The 2023–24 Great Michigan Read begins in fall 2023 and concludes in fall 2024.

WHY FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER?

Angeline Boulley's debut novel, *Firekeeper's Daughter*, is a captivating and powerful story that explores complex themes such as identity, family, community, and justice. The novel follows the journey of 18-year-old Daunis Fontaine, a biracial tribal member, as she navigates the challenges of her dual identity, the trauma of losing loved ones, and the pressure of being a bridge between two cultures.

The novel is a beautifully written and well-researched work that draws on Boulley's own experiences. It provides a rare and insightful glimpse into the complexities and diversity of Indigenous communities and their struggles to maintain their traditions and sovereignty in the face of colonization, exploitation, and discrimination.

Through Great Michigan Read events and conversations, *Firekeeper's Daughter* will help readers understand how the conflicts of the past have shaped Indigenous cultures and their commitment to move forward today.

The Great Michigan Read aims to enhance your understanding and appreciation of

this remarkable novel and its contribution to the ongoing conversation about Indigenous identity and representation in literature.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

There are many ways to participate in the Great Michigan Read! To find a participating organization near you, visit the Great Michigan Read website at MichiganHumanities.org and click on "Find a Partner Near You." Partner organizations are able to provide free print copies, including large-print, accessible copies of the book, and other materials including Reader's Guides, Teacher's Guides, and bookmarks.

In the fall of 2023 and the spring of 2024, audio and e-book versions of *Firekeeper's Daughter* will be available on ReadMichigan.org. Anyone with a Michigan IP address will be able to download the book for free.

For the most up to date information including when the audio and e-book will be available for free download, upcoming event dates, additional resources, and online registration, visit MichiganHumanities.org. "Although *Firekeeper's Daughter* is rooted in my tribal community, it is a work of fiction, and I have taken a great deal of creative license. Among other changes, I chose to fictionalize a tribe facing issues in the realm of what my actual tribe, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, might experience." ANGELINE BOULLEY

CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE GREAT MICHIGAN REAL
AUTHOR ANGELINE BOULLEY
ABOUT FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER
IDENTITY
TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY
CULTURE AND LANGUAGE
CONTEMPORARY NATIVE COMMUNIT
ABOUT MICHIGAN HUMANITIES



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A SPECIAL THANKS | Michigan Humanities is grateful to the following individuals, groups, and organizations for their collaboration during the development of the 2023-24 Great Michigan Read: the regional selection committee members and committee chairs, including Trisha Baker, Jane Garver, Jessica Luther, Claire Meeker, Neil Shepard, Lloyd Wescoat, and Valerie Wright; Angeline Boulley and MacMillan Publishers, Thorndike Press, Authors Unbound, and Bibliolabs; Library of Michigan; Jennifer Rosseter (Image Creative Group); Eric Hemenway; teachers Gregory Dykhouse, Peter Middleton, and Kendra Shaw; the Michigan Humanities Board of Directors and staff; and the statewide network of Great Michigan Read partners and program resources.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR, ANGELINE BOULLEY







ANGELINE BOULLEY, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, is a storyteller who writes about her Ojibwe community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She is a former Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Angeline lives in southwest Michigan, but her home will always be on Sugar Island. *Firekeeper's Daughter* is her debut novel.

Also by Angeline Boulley Warrior Girl Unearthed Accolades

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH LITERATURE AWARD YA HONOR BOOK!

MORRIS AWARD WINNER

REESE WITHERSPOON X HELLO SUNSHINE BOOK CLUB YA PICK

Coming Soon: *Firekeeper's Daughter* Adaptation on Netflix **GRA** WITH ANGELINE BOULLEY

How did you come to the story of *Firekeeper's Daughter*?

My senior year of high school, a friend wanted me to meet "the new boy" at her school. She initially thought he might be "my type," but after learning he didn't play sports and was hanging around with the "stoners," we didn't pursue it. At the end of the school year, there was a drug bust, and it was revealed that the new guy was, in fact, an undercover law enforcement officer. I wondered what would've happened if we had met? If we had liked each other? My overactive imagination went into overdrive. What if he had needed my help? That was the idea that sparked the story: Why would an undercover drug investigation need the help of an ordinary, 18-year-old, Ojibwe girl?

Why is it important for Michiganders to read *Firekeeper's Daughter*?

Too few Michiganders know about the Native peoples and communities in the state. Treaties that were necessary for Michigan becoming a state are seldom taught but still impact the lives of Michiganders today (water rights, hunting and fishing rights, education, and taxation issues.) Through stories like mine, readers can learn about Anishinaabek people—we are living modern, dynamic lives and are an essential part of the state.

What is the story's most compelling lesson?

Claiming your identity and finding your place in the world is not just a comingof-age rite of passage for teens. Adults, as well, can find strength in embracing all facets of their identity and living in their truth.

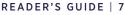
"Firekeepers strike the fire for ceremonies, funerals, sweat lodges, and other cultural events where our prayers are carried by the smoke to the Creator. A ceremonial fire is special; you don't roast marshmallows or sing forty-niner songs at it. Firekeepers ensure that protocols are followed the entire time it burns: no politics, no drinking, and no gossip. Only good thoughts to feed the fire and carry our prayers."

- Firekeeper's Daughter, page 99



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANGELINE BOULLEY: angelineboulley.com

AN EXCERPT from firekeeper's daughter





"

'Ziisabaaka Minising.' I whisper in Anishinaabemowin the name for the island, which my father taught me when I was little. It sounds like a prayer. My father's family, the Firekeeper side, is as much a part of Sugar Island as its spring-fed streams and sugar maple trees." –*Firekeeper's Daughter*, page 6



NASA

In *Firekeeper's Daughter*, the land in which the story takes places is just as important as the characters involved. For this story, that place is Sugar Island. The lead character, Daunis Fontaine, continually goes to Sugar Island for family, ceremony, and to find answers to questions. The place defines her in many ways, sometimes with tragedy and sometimes with unconditional love. The place not only tells of her Anishnaabe roots, but the island is part of the identity of her tribe, the Sugar Island Band of Ojibwe.

"The ferry is all mine for the last trip of the night. Stepping from the Jeep midway through the crossing, I release a pinch of semaa over the railing. It carries my prayer of thanks.

Miigwech for trusting me..."

—Firekeeper's Daughter, page 332

Sugar Island, located in the St. Marys River between the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Ontario, Canada, has great significance to Native American culture. The Ojibwe believe that Sugar Island is a sacred place where they can connect with their ancestors and the spirits of nature. The island is also home to many Ojibwe medicinal plants and herbs that are used in traditional healing practices.

Today, Sugar Island remains an important place for the Ojibwe people to connect with their cultural heritage, practice traditional ways of life, and maintain their spiritual and medicinal traditions. It is also a place where visitors can learn about and appreciate the deep connection between Native American culture and the natural world.



Sugar Island Ferry cruising across tranquil waters to Sugar Island.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: saulttribe.com

Firekeeper's Daughter is divided into the four cardinal directions. How does Daunis's story travel through the directions? Does she ever achieve harmony?

SEMAA

Semaa, or tobacco, holds a sacred place in Ojibwe culture as a powerful spiritual medicine. It is used in various ceremonies and is seen as a way to connect with the spirit world and offer prayers and messages to the Creator and other spiritual beings. Offering tobacco is a sign of respect and gratitude, and is often accompanied by prayers, songs, or other forms of communication with the world around them. Semaa plays a central role in acknowledging the interconnectedness of all things in the natural world.

their land and traditions. In the book and throughout this

guide, traditional medicines and sacred spaces are discussed. We ask all readers to be respectful of these practices, lands, and traditions.

Indigenous Cultures

It is important to acknowledge and respect the rich history

and culture of Native American

communities in Michigan, including

ZOONGIDE'EWIN

According to Ojibwe teachings, zoongide'ewin translates into love. The concept can be large, abstract, and challenging to convert into English. It is a part of the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers.





OJIBWE OF SAULT STE. MARIE The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is a federally recognized tribal nation that is based in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The tribe traces its origins to the Ojibwe (Chippewa) people who have lived in the region for thousands of years. In 1972, a group of Ojibwe leaders came together to form the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, with the goal of promoting tribal sovereignty, protecting tribal rights, and preserving Ojibwe culture and traditions.

IDENTITY

EBRAT WHUMANITIES SO YEARS

"

My father isn't listed on my birth certificate, and Lily doesn't meet the minimum blood-quantum requirement for enrollment. We still regard the Tribe as ours, even though our faces are pressed against the glass, looking in from the outside." –*Firekeeper's Daughter*, page 18





WHO IS A NATIVE AMERICAN?

Identity is a central theme throughout *Firekeeper's Daughter*. The question of "who is a Native American" presents itself in many ways to numerous characters. This question is very complicated within Native communities and has no definitive answer. The methods used to determine if someone is Native may include, but is certainly not limited to: tribal affiliation, family name and lineage, hometown, appearance, cultural knowledge, and proficiency in a Native dialect. These factors, especially appearance, vary drastically from community to community and can cause just as much harm as good through lateral violence perpetuated within tribes. Daunis is often confronted for being "light skinned" and "white looking" based on her mixed ancestry. This contributes to a unique situation in tribes today: blood quantum.

BLOOD QUANTUM AND TRIBAL ENROLLMENT

Native Americans are the only population in the United States that are legally defined by blood quantum. Essentially, this is how much Native American blood a person has that can be verified through documentation. The documentation of blood quantum is primarily reported in United States federal records, such as census, annuity payments, and boarding school records. These records and their corresponding blood quantum, can show how much Indian blood a person has. There are variables that must be accounted for, and the records by no means determine



Walking in Two Worlds

Throughout the book, Daunis struggles with her identity as someone who walks in two worlds: the Indigenous world of her fathers's family, and the non-Indigenous world of her mother's family. Daunis's mixed heritage makes her feel like she doesn't fully belong in either community, and she struggles to find her place. Despite these challenges, Daunis slowly begins to embrace her dual identity over the course of the novel.

Through her journey, Daunis learns to embrace both sides of her heritage and recognize the unique perspective that comes with walking in two worlds. Ultimately, Daunis becomes a bridge between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds. In doing so, she finds a sense of purpose and belonging that she had been searching for. By embracing both sides of her identity, Daunis learns that she doesn't have to choose between her Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage but can instead use her unique perspective to create positive change in the world.

What makes you uniquely you?

if someone is truly Native or not. Such variables include: adoption, Indian Boarding Schools, and errors in record keeping.

This matrix is used to enroll into federally recognized Indian tribes. Blood quantums vary from tribe to tribe. For example, one tribe may require one quarter Indian blood of that tribe to enroll, while another may only require proof of being a descendant. Descendants often require a much lower proof of blood quantum. There are over 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States. All of them have their own specific requirements for enrollment into their tribes.



Genealogical Research

There are many resources available for genealogical research, both online and offline. It's important to note that these are starting points and that there are some cultural biases in some of these methods. Some of the most popular and useful resources include:

Ancestry.com

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Library of Congress State and local archives Tribal Enrollment Department

DISCUSSION

The concept of blood quantum can be seen as controversial, with some arguing that it is a colonial construct that does not accurately reflect Indigenous identities or communities.

How has the use of blood quantum affected Native American communities and their ability to access resources and services?

How has the history of colonization and forced assimilation impacted the use of blood quantum in determining Native American identity?

IDENTITY

"

Yet even with such deep roots, I don't always feel like I belong. Each time my Fontaine grandparents or their friends have seen my Ojibwe side as a flaw or a burden to overcome. And the less frequent but more heartbreaking instances when my Firekeeper family sees me as a Fontaine first and one of them second." --Firekeeper's Daughter, page 33



APPEARANCES

Blood quantum goes hand in hand with another defining characteristic in Indian Country, which is appearance. Native Americans deal with numerous stereotypes of how they should look in the public eye. This is largely due to over a century of media, pop culture, and society in general determining how a Native should appear. The main stereotype has been dark skin, high cheekbones, and straight black hair. Granted, many Natives do have these physical features, but many do not. Hundreds of years of mixing with other populations, even other tribes, has made people unique and different. Daunis and her best friend Lily are both unenrolled Ojibwe women from the same community. However, Daunis often refers to her "white appearance" and Lily's "brown skin". In the book, Daunis even refers to a "spectrum of color" and where Natives tend to fall within that spectrum. Where you fall into this spectrum often determines how others will treat you as either Native or non-Native. This constant self-awareness applies to the larger, non-Native community, as well as within the tribal community. Throughout the book. Daunis notes how she interacts with both the Native and non-Native communities. Like Daunis, many Native people must navigate this reality of being judged by their appearance in their lives today. When Daunis refers to "walking in two worlds" this is just one example of this mentality.



Native vs. Non-Native Heritage

While this book is a work of fiction, there are parallels from Daunis's life with the author, Angeline Boulley. In a 2021 interview, Boulley commented, "I'm a light-skinned Ojibwe woman. I wasn't raised on the reservation, and so there was that feeling of 'I know this is who I am—like I always knew my identity—but as far as feeling maybe not enough or too much of something else, I think that was something that I just grew up with." Daunis is biracial, with a white mother and an Ojibwe father, which makes her straddle both worlds and experience both the privileges and challenges that come with each identity. She is deeply connected to her

Native heritage, participating in traditional ceremonies and carrying on the knowledge and traditions passed down by her elders. Daunis's identity is both Native and non-Native, and her story highlights the complexity of navigating and embracing multiple cultural identities. In the end, the Ojibwe of Sugar Island accept Daunis for who she is and support her efforts to enroll in the tribe. It is important to note that even before her enrollment, she self-identified as an Anishinaabe Kwe, and the majority of the community recognized her as such.

different parts of your identity(ies)?

DISCUSSION



COMMUNITY Native American communities tend to have a strong emphasis on collective identity and shared heritage. The concept of community oftentimes extends beyond immediate family members and includes extended family, ancestors, and the land itself. Native communities often have strong spiritual and ceremonial traditions that shape their daily lives and connect them to their cultural heritage. Additionally, the historical trauma of colonization and forced assimilation has significantly impacted Native American communities, resulting in unique challenges and struggles. It is also important to note there is a strong belief in individuality. Even within a tribe, there are many beliefs and customs that differ from person to person.

Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers

"My Zhaaganaash and Anishinaabe grandmothers could not have been more different. [...] Their push and pull on me has been a tug-of-war my entire life."

your identity and what roles do you play? Have you ever felt tension between

larger conversations about race and ethnicity in society?

(Firekeeper's Daughter, page 10) How does Daunis's experience of identity relate to

Everyone in the world plays multiple roles and has multiple identities. What defines

The Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers, also known as the Seven Teachings, are a set of guiding principles and values that have been passed down for generations among Indigenous communities in North America. In the book, Daunis starts her days with practices reflective of the Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers. It's important to note that there are many interpretations and translations of this tradition and the one listed here provides a general understanding but is not all inclusive.

Respect to show respect for oneself, others, and all living beings.

Love to give and receive love from oneself, others, and the natural world.

Truth to speak and seek truth in all aspects of life.

Bravery to have the courage to do what is right, even in the face of adversity.

Wisdom to use knowledge and experience to make good decisions for oneself and the community.

Humility to remain humble and openminded, recognizing that all living beings are equal.

Honesty to be truthful and sincere in all actions and relationships.

TO LEARN MORE about the Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers scan the code:





TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

"

Scariest words ever spoken: I'm from the federal government and I'm here to help." -Firekeeper's Daughter, page 468

Sovereignty is very complicated (like many things) in Indian Country. There is the sovereignty of a tribal nation and also the sovereignty of an individual. In Firekeeper's Daughter, both are addressed. There are many scenarios within the novel that directly address the tribal world including tribal politics, issues, populations, legal standing, and history. Following are some explanations to help clarify the world of Daunis Fontaine and Native people within the United States today.

FEDERAL RECOGNITION

The fictitious Sugar Island Band of Ojibwe is portrayed as a federally recognized tribe. Federal recognition is a legal relationship between a specific tribe and the United States government. There are over 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States today. Each tribe's relationship with the United States is unique to that tribe, hence a sovereign nation. It is important to know that many tribes do not have federal recognition. This does not translate into them not being tribes. It means that the United States has yet to recognize its trust relationship with that tribe.

Tribes obtain federal recognition in numerous ways and have done so at different points in history. A key component for tribes seeking federal recognition is whether they signed a treaty with the United States. Treaties are legally binding agreements between

two sovereigns. The United States has signed over 400 treaties with tribes across the nation. Tribes negotiated for different rights, resources, and lands under the treaties. A treaty with the Cheyenne in Montana does not apply to one signed with the Ojibwe in Michigan. Unfortunately, the United States has never fully honored a single treaty. Tribes have had to fight for their federal recognition and the rights retained under these agreements.



Peace Medals

Peace medals and treaties in the United States were often used together as a means of establishing and maintaining diplomatic relationships with Native American nations. Peace medals were often presented to Native American leaders during treaty negotiations as a sign of respect and to help establish trust between the two groups. While peace medals and treaties were often presented as gestures of peace and friendship, they were also tools used by the United States government to exert control over Native American lands and resources

James Madison Peace and Friendship Medal, 1809: Wikimedia Commons

Native Americans and Substance Abuse

Even though Firekeeper's Daughter is a fictional story, substance abuse has had a devastating impact on many Native American communities. This issue has been compounded by the historical trauma of colonization, forced assimilation, and ongoing systemic oppression that has led to high rates of poverty, unemployment, and social dislocation. Native teens have the highest rate of suicide in the United States. There are many misconceptions and stereotypes about substance abuse among Native Americans that contribute to a lack of understanding and stigma. These myths overlook the fact that addiction is a complex and multifaceted problem that is influenced by a range of social, economic, and historical factors.



SELF-GOVERNANCE

With federal recognition comes a greater ability for self-governance. Additional resources are provided to the tribe from the United States government, as well as the recognition from the United States that the tribe has the right to govern its population, care for its natural resources, and advocate for the prosperity of its people. This prosperity includes numerous tribal, government departments that include but are not limited to: Natural Resources, Housing, Health, Elders, Youth, Education, History, Language, Courts, Economic Development, Police, and Administration.

TRIBAL POLICE

Tribal police play a central role in the novel, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Within tribes, certain lands have different designations such as tribal lands, which are held in trust with the federal government. The tribe has jurisdiction over these lands and

its members, to a certain degree. This means that the United States has ultimate jurisdiction over tribal lands. State police, city police, and/or county sheriffs cannot operate on tribal lands unless given permission to do so from the tribe. The tribe can police its population, and to a certain extent, non-tribal populations, on tribal lands. For major crimes, such as murder and high-level felonies, the FBI will assume jurisdiction on tribal lands.



TRIBAL POLICE are employed by Native American tribal governments to provide law enforcement services on tribal lands. Tribal police departments vary in size and jurisdiction, but many face unique challenges, such as limited resources, vast geographic areas, and complex legal jurisdictions.

Native American reservations and logging. Jurisdictional in the United States continue to face numerous land and environmental issues. One of the most pressing issues is the governments are complex. ongoing exploitation of Native Oftentimes decisions are by extractive industries such as oil and gas drilling, mining,

DISCUSSION

issues about land control between reservations, the federal government, and state American lands and resources made that do not align with the values and priorities of Native American communities.

How can partnerships between Native American communities, environmental organizations, and government agencies support environmental protection efforts on Native American lands?

READER'S GUIDE | 15

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

MIHumanities

"

People say to think seven generations ahead when making big decisions, because our future ancestors—those yet to arrive, who will one day become the Elders—live with the choices we make today." –*Firekeeper's Daughter, page 237*

TRIBAL ELECTIONS

Tribes also exert their sovereignty in another way: tribal elections. Tribes elect their own leaders, based on their own constitutions, by-laws, and other policies. Elected officials must be members of the tribe. Participation in elections is reserved for enrolled members. An Ojibwe could not participate in the election of the Hopi nation. Tribal leaders are often called tribal "chairman" or "chairwoman". Another term often used is "tribal president." A tribal council is another prominent part of tribal governments. As noted in the novel, there are varying opinions of elected leaders. Individual sovereignty grants the right to dissent or support. In many cases with tribes, the election process is very personal due to small populations. It is very common for an uncle, friend, cousin, etc. to be elected.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A more recent exercise of sovereignty by tribes is that of economic development. This often translates into casinos. As part of their ability to self-govern on tribal lands, tribes have built and operated gaming enterprises. Casinos



Casinos: The Dollars and Cents

Tribal casinos, located on tribal lands, are owned and operated by federally recognized Native American tribes. The revenues generated by tribal casinos are used to support a variety of tribal programs and services, including healthcare, education, housing, cultural preservation, and economic development. In addition to supporting tribal programs and services, tribal casinos provide employment opportunities for tribal members. Many tribal casinos have tribal employment offices that prioritize hiring tribal members and provide training and career development opportunities.

Tribal casinos often invest their revenues in businesses and infrastructure that support economic development on tribal lands. This can include funding for small businesses, tourism development, and infrastructure improvements like roads, bridges, and water systems. Casinos may also provide scholarships and educational programs for tribal members. This helps to improve educational opportunities for Native American youth and promote a more skilled workforce.

Healthcare programs, including funding for clinics, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities may also be supported by casinos. Tribal casinos may provide funding for housing programs, including the construction of affordable housing for tribal members. And, they may support cultural preservation programs, including funding for museums, language revitalization efforts, and traditional cultural events promoting and celebrating Native American cultures.

are controversial both within tribal communities and outside of them. There are many misconceptions and stereotypes that surround casinos. These include the falsehood that all Indians are wealthy because of them, crime rates skyrocket where they are located, and that it is unfair that tribes can operate them. Some tribes do pay dividends to their membership, called per capita. These amounts vary drastically. Some tribes do not provide per capita while some tribes do not have casinos at all. Casinos are a way in which tribes generate revenue for its population and infrastructure. They also employ many non-Native people, providing jobs for a variety of people. Some tribes get federal funds for some services and programs. Tribes do utilize their sovereignty in terms of economic development to better their communities.

"My girl, some boats are made for the river and some for the ocean. And there are

some that can go anywhere

because they always know the way home."

On-ge-wae

Pa-she-nine

Pe-a-jick

THE SELECTION OF A CHIPPEWA CHIEF Traditionally, Chippewa chiefs were selected based on a variety of factors, including decision making skills, negotiating ability, and vision for the tribe. Leadership was often, but not always, inherited within families or clans, and chiefs were expected to embody and uphold traditional values and practices. Today, the process for selecting Chippewa chiefs varies depending on the community and the governing structures in place. Some communities still rely on traditional selection methods, while others use methods such as community selection or elections. In both cases, however, leadership qualities and a commitment to serving the community remain essential criteria for selecting a chief.

—Firekeeper's Daughter, page 487

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

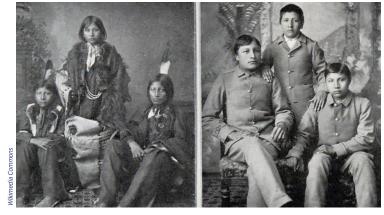




DISCOVER

HER

H.R.5444, also known as the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act, is a bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2019. The bill seeks to establish a truth and healing commission to investigate the impacts of federal Indian Boarding School policies on Native American communities and to provide recommendations for redress and healing.



Before and after forced cultural assimilation at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, 1883.

their families. While some Native children did not have bad experiences, many others had horrific times at the schools. Severe punishments and abuses were commonplace. Language, culture, and beliefs were lost at an alarming rate, all by design. The repercussions of these schools are felt by every single tribe in the country.

In 2021, the Secretary of the Interior issued an investigation into the history of boarding schools in the United States. The two main goals of the investigation were to, 1. find out who went to these schools, and 2. figure out the many names of the children who didn't make it back home. Many children died while away at these schools.

Michigan Boarding Schools

Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School (Mt. Pleasant, MI)

Holy Childhood of Jesus Indian Boarding School (Harbor Springs, MI)

Holy Name Indian School (Baraga, MI)

St. Joseph's Orphanage (St. Joseph, MI)

Additionally, many Native American children were sent to non-Indian boarding schools, placed in foster care or adoptive homes, or sent to boarding schools out of state, as part of the broader assimilationist policies of the federal government.

"

My morning prayer begins with my Spirit name, my clan, and where I am from. Which of the Seven Grandfathers should I include?" –*Firekeeper's Daughter, page 382*

ANISHINAABEMOWIN

Anishinaabemowin, the first language of the Anishinaabek, is used throughout Firekeeper's Daughter. The Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi all speak dialects of Anishinaabemowin. Tribes are working hard to revitalize Anishinaabemowin with language departments, classes, and efforts within tribal communities to use the language while speaking. Many events incorporate Anishinaabemowin. such as Pow-Wows, elders meetings, and government functions. Many Anishnaabek feel it is verv important to learn the first language in terms of identity, spirituality, sovereignty, and even resistance to years of assimilation.

Key Words

Anishinaabemowin Anishinaabe language Chi-Mukwa Big Bear Keewaydin home wind Kwe women or female Miigwech thank you Minobimaadiziwin good way of life Nokomis grandmother Semaa tobacco Wiingaashk sweet grass Zhaaganaash non-Indigenous people To learn and hear more scan the QR code.



BOARDING SCHOOLS

One example of assimilation is the Indian Boarding School. Throughout the novel, references are made to Indian Boarding Schools. These schools were institutions of forced assimilation for Native children. They were created by the United States government under federal policy to "civilize" Natives. While various Christian denominations worked with the government to operate these schools, most were run by Catholics. Over 400 boarding schools existed in the United States for over a century. One of the last boarding schools to close in the country was the Holy Childhood of Jesus Indian Boarding School. located in Harbor Springs, Michigan, It closed in 1983. Michigan had several of these schools throughout the state. Many Michigan Anishinaabek children were also sent to schools outside of Michigan in Kansas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

"CIVILIZE THE SAVAGES'

The primary goal of Indian Boarding Schools was to eliminate all Native language, culture, traditions, spirituality, and any other Native cultural identifier. A foundational tenet of the schools was to "civilize the savages." This included breaking up families, having children live at these schools for years away from

SWEET GRASS

Sweet grass is considered one of the four sacred medicines in Ojibwe culture, along with tobacco, cedar, and sage. It is used in many ceremonial practices, including smudging, healing, and prayer. The harvesting and use of sweet grass is an important part of Ojibwe teachings about respect for the natural world and the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship with the environment.

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE



Dancers don't start out with their full regalia; they get it bit by bit. Each piece is a connection to her family, her teachers, and even to ancestors generations back. If you know the story of her regalia-who and where and why each item came to be-then you know her." -Firekeeper's Daughter, page 69

BEING TRADITIONAL: FUNERALS AND SWEAT LODGES

The Anishnaabek have various beliefs concerning spirituality and religion. Many are Christian while many others practice the way before the coming of Europeans and Americans. This practice is often called being "traditional." And, in many cases. Anishinaabek blend both ways into a belief system that best suits them as individuals. In the funerals that take place in the novel, there are examples of a traditional and Christian ceremony. In the traditional funeral, the

presence of a fire is very important, as with other ceremonies such as the sweat lodge. The sweat lodge is a purification ceremony still practiced by many Natives today including the Anishinaabek. How traditional funerals and sweat lodges are performed depends on the individuals in charge of the ceremonies. There is no "one way" for these ceremonies to be held rather the tradition is passed down from one Anishnaabe to another.

The Spirit of the Dead

Ojibwe mourning and burial practices are deeply rooted in spiritual beliefs and traditions. When someone passes away, family and community members come together to mourn and celebrate the life of the individual. The body is typically prepared for burial in a respectful and ceremonial manner, often with the guidance of an Ojibwe spiritual leader or healer. The burial itself may involve various rituals and offerings, such as the burning of tobacco. Tobacco is believed to carry prayers and messages to the spirit world.



SHAPED BY STRONG WOMEN

A tradition that has remained strong in the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi is the presence of strong women in the communities. Daunis embodies this. She had to constantly prove herself, provide for others, and make the decisions best for herself. Daunis was surrounded by strong women throughout the book, such as her auntie and best friend, whom help shape her character.

CEREMONIAL DANCES

There are many different types of traditional Ojibwe dances, each with its own unique history and significance. These dances are a vital part of Ojibwe culture and continue to be an important way for *Ojibwe people to honor their heritage and connect* with their spiritual beliefs and traditions.





OJIBWE MEDICINES

Many Ojibwe medicinal plants, such as cedar, sweetgrass, and sage, are considered sacred and are used for spiritual purification and healing. These plants are not just used for their physical healing properties but also for their spiritual and emotional benefits. Ojibwe healers may also create herbal remedies from these plants, such as teas, poultices, and salves which are used to treat a variety of ailments, including colds, headaches, and digestive issues.

CONTEMPORARY NATIVE COMMUNITIES



Auntie has shown me how to be a strong Nish kwe—full of love, anger, humor, sorrow, and joy. Not as something perfect: She is a woman who is complex and sometimes exhausted, but mostly brave. She loves imperfect people fiercely." –Firekeeper's Daughter, page 328

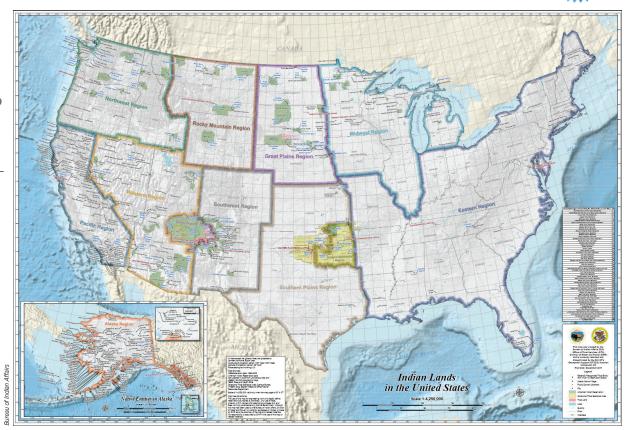
FEDERAL RECOGNITION

There are currently 574 federally recognized tribes within the United States. This number could change at any given time, as tribes pursue federal recognition on a continual basis. A tribe not having federal recognition does not make them "non-Indian". The same thinking applies to an individual not enrolled in a tribe. Some of the greatest Native leaders, such as Tecumseh, Crazy Horse, Sacagewea, and Pontiac did not have cards stating they were enrolled in a tribe recognized by the United States. These Native leaders all took action to make the lives around them better.

Federal recognition is also a legal and political relationship with the federal government. This relationship is built on treaties, executive orders, and acts of congress. Not every tribe has the same relationship with the United States and no two tribes are the same.

Key Points:

- Tribes determine their membership, often based on a blood quantum.
- The size of each tribe varies with some having tens of thousands of members and others having a few hundred.
- Not every tribe has a reservation while others have very large reservations.
- Tribes speak different languages, practice different traditions, have unique belief systems and vary in appearance.



- Many tribal people do not live on reservations.
- Native people in Alaska and Hawaii have a much different relationship with the federal government than tribes living in the continental United States.
- Native Americans constitute approximately 1.5% of the U.S. population today.

TRIBAL NAMES

Tribal people have perhaps more titles, names, and designations than any other population in the United States. Common names are: Native, Native American, Indian, American Indian, Tribal, Indigenous, First Nations, and Aboriginal. These are all western names that generally apply to tribal nations across the country. The term "Indian" **INDIAN LAND AREAS** include reservations which are lands that were reserved by treaty for a particular tribe, as well as trust lands which are lands that the federal government holds in trust for tribes. Currently, there are over 300 Indian land areas in the continental United States, covering approximately 56 million acres. These lands are home to more than 2 million Native Americans and serve as important cultural and economic centers for tribal communities.

is a legal term embedded in treaties, the Declaration of Independence, and numerous other federal documents yet it is a misnomer. The homelands of Native people on Turtle Island (North America) are not India (Asia), but through centuries of colonization, identities have been imposed on tribal nations. Many Native individuals prefer to go by the name of their tribe.



Museum of Ojibwa Culture

- Located in St. Ignace, Michigan
- Traditional Native American
 Teachings
- Longhouse/Healing Lodge
- Sculpture & Clan Park
- Exhibits
- Michigan State Historic Site
- National Historic Landmark

Vikimedia Con

CONTEMPORARY NATIVE COMMUNITIES



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I pray...for all the girls and women pushed into the abyss of expendability and invisibility. Daunis, The Firekeeper's Daughter." - Firekeeper's Daughter, page 488

THE LEGACY OF DISCRIMINATION

The ugly reality of discrimination and racism is present throughout the novel, as it is in Native communities today. Stereotypes have been reinforced through media, cultural appropriation, and the fact that Native people are such a small minority which in turn means their voices are not often heard. Daunis's Oiibwe family deal with "drunken Indian" and "lazy Indian" bigotry which mirrors the experiences of countless Natives for the last several centuries. Native populations continue to work hard at overcoming these hurdles. Many tribes have language programs, revitalization of culture, and a movement of reclaiming identity, all of which is helping to overcomes these ugly legacies of discrimination.

VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN

In Indian Country, a Native woman is ten times more likely to be murdered or go missing than any other population in the United States. Native women experience violence and sexual assault at the highest rate. Daunis and the females of her Oiibwe community do not escape this dark reality in the novel. She is exposed to the greater impact of these crimes on her community when she is invited to a special ceremony by her aunt for Native women who have survived assaults. In the novel, Daunis's best friend is murdered, and several other Oiibwe airls die vouna, mirrorina one of the most unfortunate realities for tribes in the 21st century.

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW) can no longer be ignored in the United States and Canada. Grassroots movements. government investigations, tribal

Missing and murdered Indigenous women is a pervasive issue in many Indigenous communities. Despite growing awareness and advocacy efforts, Indigenous women and girls continue to go missing or be murdered at an alarming rate, often with little or no accountability for the

DISCUSSION

initiatives, family efforts, and more are happening now, to help combat this epidemic. In 2019, the Canadian Government published its report on MMIW concluding that what was happening was genocide.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of Firekeeper's Daughter finds Daunis within the circle at her tribe's Pow-Wow. She is surrounded by

perpetrators. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that women? How can these acknowledges the root causes challenges be overcome? of the problem and prioritizes the safety and well-being of Indigenous women and girls.

What are some of the challenges that Indigenous communities face in

addressing the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous

What steps can be taken to support and uplift the voices and experiences of Indigenous women and girls in efforts to address missing and murdered Indigenous women?

her people and at home on Sugar Island. She is moving past the tragedy and into the future with a sense of determination and purpose. She is not defined by the bad that has been part of her journey but also does not ignore it. This reflects Native people today. Moving forward to look at the future, while always being mindful of the past. Just like walking in two worlds.

Learn More: Notable Anishnaabe Women

AUTUMN PELTIER is a youth activist and member of the Wikwemikong First Nation who has spoken out on issues of water conservation and Indigenous rights.

JENNIFER FOERSTER is a poet and member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians who has been recognized for her work exploring themes of identity and place in Native American culture.

KIM SIGAFUS is an author and historian who has written extensively on the history and culture of the Ojibwe people of Michigan.



Louise Erdrich

LOUISE ERDRICH is a writer and member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians who has won numerous awards for her novels exploring Native American life and identity.

MAUDE KEGG was an historian, storyteller, and advocate for Native American language preservation who was a member of the White Earth Nation of Oiibwe.

SHARON DAY is an Ojibwe Water Protector who founded the Indigenous Peoples Task Force and is known for her work advocating for clean water and environmental justice.

WINONA LADUKE is an environmental activist, writer, and two-time U.S. Vice Presidential candidate who is a member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe.



The stereotype of the "honest Indian" is a harmful and simplistic portrayal of Native American people. Stereotyping any group of people based on their cultural background, whether it is positive or negative, can be harmful and perpetuates harmful myths and biases. It is important to recognize individuals as unique and complex people, rather than reducing them to oversimplified stereotypes based on their cultural background.

AN HONEST INDIAN



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Michigan Humanities mission is to bring people together through stories, histories, cultures, and conversations.

Learn more about Michigan Humanities' programs and grants at michiganhumanities.org.

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