

AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER & CHI-NATIONS YOUTH COUNCIL

# WHY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY?

*Indigenous  
Peoples'  
Day  
in  
Chicago*

## TOOLKIT FOR ADVOCATES AND ALLIES

**CHICAGO  
CITY ORDINANCE  
02019-6979**

How to show your support the  
Indigenous Peoples' Day ordinance.

**WHY  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY (IPD)  
IN CHICAGO**

It's time to celebrate and honor the past,  
present, and future of all Chicagoans.

**RESPONDING TO  
OPPOSITION AGAINST  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY**



**AMERICAN  
INDIAN CENTER**

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*Indigenous  
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in  
Chicago*

*Indigenous Peoples' Day*

# FORWARD

**In the name of transparency and healing, the American Indian Center would like to address and reflect on our past decisions.**

The American Indian Center would like to recognize that in 1992 our former leadership invited the Chicago American Indian community to march in the Columbus Day Parade. These actions were taken with the spirit of building relationships with the larger Chicago community. Today these actions have been questioned, and now we are working to recognize the histories and contributions of all-American Indians and others who were first to experience contact and the development of our current settler-colonial society.

We recognize our involvement does not absolve ourselves from the perpetuation of false narratives, but to hold ourselves accountable for the harm we have caused to those who have been working to make the change. We stand on the shoulders of those whose work has made this critical conversation possible.

# INTRODUCTION

The erasure of targeted communities who have contributed to the development of modern-day Chicago (and so-called Americas) is an ongoing dehumanizing process that perpetuates disproportionate acts of violence against said communities. The master narrative of the United States contrives a false sense of unity within a country whose documented history constructs a pattern of racism and violence that has always fallen short of united.

For over 500 years, the Native Peoples across the Western Hemisphere's Indigenous identities have been perpetually erased from the political and cultural landscape and the collective imaginations of Americans. This is due to the ongoing structural violence created by the ideology of American Exceptionalism, which lays the foundation of our current settler-colonial society.

As the American Indian Center & Chi-Nations Youth Council, we recognize the celebration of holidays such as Columbus Day erases contemporary Native voices, stories, and issues across our society and especially here in Chicago. If we as a city are dedicated to the advancement of justice, equity, and social impact, we must focus on changing the way that Americans and institutions think about and engage with Native communities. We must work together to change the narratives that are embedded in the erasure, appropriation, and replacement of Native Peoples from our homelands and within the larger context of the Americas. Supported by empirical evidence, we know that the lack of representation of Native people in mainstream society creates and perpetuates harmful stereotypes and misunderstandings that Americans have toward Native communities.

Throughout our society, the erasure and false narratives of Native peoples are incorporated in the narratives of pop culture (Chicago Blackhawks), media (Dances With Wolves) and K-12 education (Little House on the Prairie) which have served to reinforce and normalize many myths such as the "Disappearing Indian," "The Noble Savage," "The Mystical Indian" among others. Native sports mascots, Halloween costumes, and inaccurate historical representations of Native peoples in television make up the foundation of American views on Native Peoples. Dr. Adrienne Keene, Brown University, has noted, "Native Americans are only given choices of stereotypes and misrepresentation, or utter invisibility."

Moreover, the narratives that erase Native People create a society in which Native Peoples in Chicago (and across the Western Hemisphere) are invisible, creating a more modern form of racism against Native people. The invisibility of Native Peoples goes unnoticed by the majority of Americans who cling on to limited representation of Native Peoples. This representation often reinforces myths and stereotypes fueled by ignorance, misinformation, and bias perpetuated by the Master Narrative of the United States. These false narratives allow, in part, for the nationalization and indoctrination of citizens to claim the American identity. Therefore, any conversation of racial equity must acknowledge and work toward combating the false history Americans continue to be fed.

Less than a decade after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in 1977, the International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas started the movement of abolishing Columbus Day and to push to replace it with a celebration to be known as Indigenous Peoples' Day. At the heart of this movement is the need for a narrative change in order to fight against the invisibility, bias, and racism that impacts Indigenous communities. To understand the plight of modern Native people we must stop erasing the uncomfortable history of trauma and persecution carried out upon Native communities and celebrate the truths of our resilience and strength. Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day is an essential part of any movement toward a more equitable and justice-based future. Abolishing Columbus Day in Chicago and the celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the true history of the Western Hemisphere, which aims to unify people across cultural identities to celebrate our resiliency from colonial violence as we all strive for a better future.

# PROPOSED ORDINANCE

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous Nations have lived upon this land and across the Western Hemisphere since time immemorial and that the City of Chicago recognizes that the original inhabitants of the area, now known as Chicago, is the Council of the Three Fires: Ojibwe, Potawatomi and Odawa along with over a dozen additional tribal nations; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the near decimation of the Indigenous Peoples here in Chicago due to European migration our city continues to be a site of gathering, trade, and ceremony for descendants from tribal nations that span across the Americas; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago has a responsibility to oppose the ongoing systematic racism towards Indigenous Peoples residing in the United States and recognizes the historic discrimination and violence inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere, including their forced removal from ancestral lands, and the deliberate and systematic destruction of their communities and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, in the late 1970's, a movement began to replace the Columbus Day holiday with a celebration known as Indigenous Peoples Day to recognize and commemorate the contribution of Indigenous Peoples to the United States and to condemn the atrocities that were committed against them. Many cities and states have since chosen to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on the same date as, and in lieu of, Columbus Day; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago recognizes the Celebration of Columbus Day perpetuates violence against the Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized communities through the promotion of American Exceptionalism, which continues to be grounded in the ideologies of white supremacy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Indigenous Populations of modern day Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad, Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as, the Bahamas, Cuba, Venezuela and Central America have never recuperated from the invasion, extraction and exploitation caused by Christopher Columbus' four trips across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain that laid the blue print for force removal, assimilation, genocide and slavery throughout American history; and

**WHEREAS**, establishing a Day to recognize the contributions of and diversity within Indigenous populations of the Western Hemisphere is appropriate and necessary to ensure these histories are not forgotten; and

**WHEREAS**, the abolishment of Columbus Day promotes a more equitable and inclusive city for all Chicagoans

**SECTION 1.** The recites above are hereby incorporated by reference.

**SECTION 2.** Chapter 1-8 of the Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding the language underscore below:

(Omitted text is unaffected by this ordinance)

## **1-8-110 Commemoration of City founder**

In conjunction with annual celebrations of its date of incorporation, the City of Chicago shall commemorate and promote public awareness of the life and accomplishments of its founder, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable.

## **1-8-120 Commemoration of Indigenous Peoples**

The Second Monday in October, the City of Chicago shall celebrate Indigenous People's Day to commemorate and promote public awareness of the diversity, accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous Peoples.

**SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall be effective upon passage and approval.

# PROPOSED LETTER

City Council  
City Hall - Room 300  
ATTN: Committee on Health and Human Relations  
121 N. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

RE: Indigenous Peoples' Day

Dear Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer,

Within the last ten years, states, cities, organizations, and institutions are taking steps to portray a more accurate picture of history and are changing the holiday currently known as Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Today, Christopher Columbus is touted as a hero and the discoverer of America, thereby eliminating the voice and perspective of Indigenous Peoples throughout the Western Hemisphere, including but not limited to over 570 Federally Recognized Tribal Nations within the United States.

When discussing Columbus, it should be noted that this so-called hero was an invader upon Indigenous lands and caused irreparable damage through the extraction, exploitation and unimaginable acts of physical, mental and sexual abuse he and his men inflicted upon the original inhabitants of what would become to be known as the New World. In order for us to have an equitable future for all Chicagoans, we must reevaluate how we view, talk, teach, and think about history. We must openly recognize that Christopher Columbus' four trips across the Atlantic Ocean from Spain laid the blueprint for forced removal, assimilation, genocide, and slavery throughout American history.

Despite the atrocities committed by colonizers, Indigenous communities are still here and thriving. In Illinois alone, the American Indian population is over 65,000, and we are home to the sixth-largest Urban Indian population in the country. Additionally, there is a large Puerto Rican community within Chicago that has been growing for the past 70 years, who continue to fight back against colonial forces such as urban redevelopment. By continuing to commemorate Columbus as a hero, we undermine the rich history and diversity that created modern-day Chicago. This historic change is for all people whose indigeneity has been forcibly attacked through settler-colonial violence, forced removal, and government sanctions.

As of today, seven states and dozens of cities have made the name change in order to bring a better understanding of history and to honor the first people of the land. It is essential that all Chicagoans understand the true history of this city, including the fact that our "founder" Jean Baptiste Point du Sable was married to Kitihawa, a Potawatomi tribal member. It is time that the city of Chicago abolishes Columbus Day and takes appropriate action to develop processes of reconciliation, starting with acknowledging the second Monday in October each year as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

I stand in support of the ordinance submitted by Rossana Rodriguez of the 33rd Ward and Co-Sponsored by Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa of the 35th Ward who is working in partnership with the American Indian Center of Chicago and Chi-Nations Youth Council to demand that the city's leadership also see the importance of this historic ordinance and take action.

Sincerely,

[Insert Your Name]

# RETHINK COLUMBUS DAY

## Why we should rethink Columbus Day in Chicago.

Columbus never set foot on the Main lands of the United States, and we must stop perpetuating the myth of “discovery.” This mythology erases the original inhabitants of Turtle Island or so-called North America. Additionally, there is ample evidence of European explorers such as Leif Erickson and his fellow Vikings landing in Newfoundland/Labrador around five centuries earlier.

Christopher Columbus initiated the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Columbus’s Native American slave trade morphed into the African slave trade by the mid-16th century. Furthermore, referencing the United States as a nation of immigrants erases not only Indigenous Peoples but the history of chattel slavery and economic exploitation.

Columbus believed that he was playing a part in a divine plan to Christianize the world. As part of this plan, Spaniards aimed to convert native peoples to Christianity. The end result was forced colonization, mass genocide and the extermination of tens of millions of Native inhabitants across the diverse Nations of the Western Hemisphere.

**Columbus’ men used native girls as young as nine or ten as their sex slaves. (Columbus never denounced these actions)**

“While I was in the boat, I captured a very beautiful woman, whom the Lord Admiral [Columbus] gave to me. When I had taken her to my cabin she was naked — as was their custom. I was filled with a desire to take my pleasure with her and attempted to satisfy my desire. She was unwilling, and treated me with her nails that I wished I had never begun. I then took a piece of rope and whipped her soundly, and she let forth such incredible screams that you would not have believed your ears.”

In the year 1500, Columbus wrote:

“A hundred castellanoes are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine to ten are now in demand.”

Columbus Day was a solution to finding a Catholic role model for Americans to celebrate while assimilating European immigrants into white America. President Franklin Roosevelt created Columbus Day in 1937 largely as a result of intense lobbying by the Knights of Columbus, an influential Catholic fraternal organization.

# ANTI-COLUMBUS

This effort is not an anti-Italian campaign, and rather it is an anti- Columbus campaign. Some will attempt to position this movement as anti-Italian; however, that is not the case the purpose of the movement is to end the celebration of a man who is responsible for the perpetuation of genocide and chattel slavery across the Western hemisphere.

In particular, many people have been exposed to the propaganda created and distributed by the Italic Institute of America whose rhetoric undermines the lived experience of the Indigenous Peoples who were massacred, tortured and enslaved at the hands of Columbus and erases the impacts of chattel slavery as "African immigration".

The lack of historical empathy for any other group of people (outside of Christian European Men) continues to reinforce the ideologies of Manifest Destiny. The concept of Manifest Destiny is embedded in the belief that the expansion of the United States was a divinely ordained, justifiable, and inevitable, and has been used to rationalize the removal of American Indians from their native homelands.

While some may argue that Manifest Destiny should not be mentioned as a reason to denounce the celebration of Columbus Day, it is crucial to understand it's seeds were sown from the fundamental beliefs of the Doctrine of Discovery. As a direct result of Columbus' voyages and accounts thereof, Pope Nicholas V issued a Papal Bull (1452) - a decree that declared war against all non-Christians throughout the world and also approved and encouraged the conquest, colonization, and exploitation of non-Christian nations and their territories. It was also decreed that Christians had the right to "capture, vanquish, and subdue the Saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ," to "put them into perpetual slavery," and "to take all their possessions and property."

Christopher Columbus' voyages may have intended to be another capitalist venture to find new trading routes, but the impact and legacy are that of invasion and unspeakable acts of violence.

The rhetoric we encounter in the context of the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny, though dismaying, helps us to understand better the racial politics that established our current settler colonial government of the United States.



# RESOURCES

Action and accountability start with inquiry. We have listed resources that can help navigate the Indigenous Peoples' Day Movement.

## Books

Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years Readings and lessons for grades 5 to 12 about the impact and legacy of the arrival of Columbus in the Americas. [https://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC44\\_scans/44.monograph.rethinking.columbus.1991.pdf](https://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC44_scans/44.monograph.rethinking.columbus.1991.pdf)

"All the Real Indians Died Off": And 20 Other Myths About Native Americans. Deconstructs persistent myths about American Indians rooted in fear and prejudice—an astute and lively primer of European-Indian relations.

Christopher Columbus and the Conquest of Paradise Very detailed, with extensive quotes from far-ranging original sources. Links Columbus's legacy to environmental degradation.

Columbus: His Enterprise A biography that gives a true account of Columbus' life and voyages. An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States Four hundred years of Native American history from a bottom-up perspective. (Also An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States: For Young People- middle grades and young adult readers)

A People's History of the United States: A groundbreaking work on U.S. history. This book details the lives and facts rarely included in textbooks—an indispensable teacher and student resource.

Puerto Rico: What Everyone Needs to Know: An authoritative introduction to the Island's rich history, culture, politics, and economy Rouse, Irving

Indian Nations of Wisconsin & Seventh Generation Earth Ethics Native Voices of Wisconsin by Patty Loew (Because the State of Illinois has no Sovereign Native Nations we look toward the work of Wisconsin Tribal Nations and Academic Patty Loew to better understand Sovereignty)

Find more books on Native Americans: <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>

## Scholarly Articles

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society*, 1(1).

Aviles, A., & Davila, E. (2019). Un réquiem para la lucha Afro-Boricua: Honoring Moments of Decolonization and Resistance to White Supremacy in Academia. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 18 (1). <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/taboo/vol18/iss1/10>

Hooghiemstra, H., Olijhoek, T., Hoogland, M., Prins, M., van Geel, B., Donders, T., ... Hofman, C. (2018). Columbus' environmental impact in the New World: Land use change in the Yaque River valley, Dominican Republic. *The Holocene*, 28(11), 1818–1835. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959683618788732>

[irpp.uic.edu/pdf/publications/IRRPP\\_TheStateOfRacialJusticeForAmericanIndianChicagoansReport.pdf](http://irpp.uic.edu/pdf/publications/IRRPP_TheStateOfRacialJusticeForAmericanIndianChicagoansReport.pdf)

## Websites

[www.aicchicago.org/indigenous-peoples-day/](http://www.aicchicago.org/indigenous-peoples-day/)

[chinationsyouth.weebly.com](http://chinationsyouth.weebly.com)

[www.illuminatives.org](http://www.illuminatives.org)

[www.indigenouaction.org](http://www.indigenouaction.org)

[unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com](http://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com)

[warriorpublications.wordpress.com](http://warriorpublications.wordpress.com)

# SUPPORTERS

## **Aldermans**

Alderman Rodriguez-Sanchez 33rd Ward  
Alderman Ramirez-Rosa 35th Ward  
Alderman Taylor 20th Ward  
Alderman Sigcho-Lopez 25th Ward  
Alderman Maldonado 26th Ward  
Alderman Martin 47th Ward  
Alderman Hadden 49th Ward  
Alderman Vasquez Jr. 40th Ward  
Alderman Waguespack 32nd Ward  
Alderman Rodriguez 22nd Ward  
Alderman La Spata 1st Ward  
Alderman Cardona Jr. 31st Ward

## **Organizations**

Chi-nations Youth Council  
The American Indian Center

## **Call your local Officials**

Call your local officials and ask them where they stand on this issue.

## **Sign the Petition**

Add your name to the list! Sign the petition at: <https://forms.gle/AcmeyTYbmjMn7c1K8>

# DEFINITIONS

THE DEFINITIONS ARE LISTED IN THE CONTEXT OF HOW THIS TEXT IS MEANT TO BE READ.

**Ancestral Homelands:** the place of origin of one's linear and extended family, particularly the lands and territories occupied by the same family, community, tribe in which development of culture borne generations of natural interactions within an environment which allowed for the evolution of relationships and societal norms.

**American Exceptionalism:** the theory of the American Exceptionalism has developed over time and can be traced to many sources. Within the context of this toolkit, American Exceptionalism is the perception or belief that the dominant American society or rather "White" society is extraordinary and perpetuates that the referent is superior or to justify America's actions domestically and globally ignoring the arguments of moral corruption.

**Appropriation:** also phrased as cultural (mis)appropriation, is the adoption of elements of one culture by members of another culture. This becomes problematic when members of a dominant culture take something for their use, typically without approval from or recognition of the targeted minority cultures. Appropriation in this form is an act of colonialism due to the nature of taking cultural elements from an oppressed culture by members of the dominant external culture. The stolen elements are often used outside of their original cultural context against the expressly stated wishes of members of the originating culture for capital gain. The exploitative state loses the original meaning of these cultural elements belittling the cultural practices and elements of targeted groups.

**Chattel Slavery:** is the most common form of slavery known to Americans and a critical component in the emerging global capitalist economy and is the foundation of much of the American economy. This system is based on the legal treatment of primarily African Slaves who were forced into civil relationships in which primarily European/White Americans held absolute power over the slave's life, fortune, and liberties.

**Collective Imaginations:** the processes of how the imagination has shaped historically significant social institutions. Within America, Invaders/Settlers and their descendants have shaped that view the territories of America as "founded by white settlers," which ignores the history that Native Peoples had across territories, as well as the contributions of people of color and minorities throughout American history. Within the "White community," there are vast cultural differences and ancestral lines that are ignored in favor of being blanketed by white identification. Humanity can slide from one universe of meaning to another almost imperceptibly by having already associated one thing with another forming our collective.

**Colonialism:** is the domination of Indigenous Peoples, Lands, Water, and other resources by foreign invaders who, through the creation of policies, the invading nation seeks to extend or retain its authority over Indigenous peoples and territories, generally with the aim of economic dominance. This takes the form of the colonizing country benefiting from the colonized country, landmass, labor, and extraction of resources. Throughout the process, colonizers impose their world- views, including religious, economic, and medicinal practices on the native population.

**"Disappearing/Vanishing Indian":** Steaming from America's so-called frontier movement and thereafter romanizations of frontier life comes this myth. This myth paints the image of American Indians being noble and bravely willing to sacrifice everything for the making of America. Supported by Manifest Destiny, this image of the "Vanishing Indian" was sculpted in the American imagination for centuries as ordained by God and, therefore, destiny. Literature, Cinema, and American media push this narrative into our homes, schools, and politics. This myth is the foundation for the movie "The Last of the Mohicans." The acceptance of this myth is deeply rooted within the American imagination that many believe that Indians no longer exist- or at least no more "real Indians."

**Erasure:** when applied to people, it means ignoring, removing references to, falsifying, or re-defining evidence about some individual or group in history, in books, academia, the news media, or other similar sources. In the cases of Indigenous histories and experiences this is more than just a matter of ignorance about history or laziness about doing research, but an implemented design process of denialism of Indigenous realities because it creates a counter-narrative to the Master Narrative of the United States and to elude any uncomfortable truths about whiteness.

**False Narratives:** created with the intent to deceive by limiting the number of narrative elements provided to assemble the bulk of the narrative themselves (American Dominate Society/ White Men), thereby taking ownership of the narrative. This can be accomplished by limiting the scope of information available or the time in which to consider it. In this manner, the author establishes a constrained narrative space in which both content and context are controllable to the desired effect reinforcing ideologies of American Exceptionalism.

**Genocide:** the mass destruction of entire communities of indigenous peoples including all attempts to destroy Indigenous cultures through physical means like mass killings, forced sterilization, forced removal, destruction of family structures, or psychological through oppression, destruction, and erasure of indigenous ways of life.

**Indigeneity:** the state of being Indigenous with kinships and ancestral connections to a specific region or territory of land. In this text, we are referring to members of an Indigenous group pushing back against erasure, genocide, and forced acculturation under colonial regimes.

**Indoctrination:** teaching someone to accept a set of beliefs without questioning them. Within this text, we are referencing a results-driven approach that aims to instill habits and beliefs that align with the ideology of American Exceptionalism. This process of indoctrination creates a narrow lens in which all of the information we receive is interpreted through the filter of American Exceptionalism regardless of our ethnic/cultural origin(s).

**Master Narrative of the United States:** is synonymous with the idea of “whitewashing” history. Primarily, as a result of our political leadership being predominantly white throughout the United States colonial history, people tend to see America as a “White” nation erasing the Indigenous histories before colonial occupation and the active ignoring of the vast multicultural diversity that exists in the country. The story of how the world works as viewed and validated by the colonial or dominant culture. The master narrative reinforces the “natural order” of the privileged position of the dominant “White or European descendant” by virtue of their class, race, gender, religion, and national origin/lineage. It maintains a pernicious classist, racist, sexist, nationalistic (American), and theistic (Christian) view that the non-dominant is inferior, a view quite often absorbed and internalized by the non-dominant themselves, whether they live in an inner-city or the remote country. This is a methodical tactic used to maintain the settler-colonial framework.

**The Myth of Discovery:** is based on the Doctrine of Christian Discovery and goes back to the 15th century, which perceives lands owned by ‘non-Christians’ like nobody’s land starting the erasure of the Indigenous populations across the Western Hemisphere. Columbus’s exploration of the Caribbean is often understood as discovering a “New World.” This ideology comes at the expense of the millions of people who lived in North America for tens of thousands of years before 1492 and their descendants. Columbus’s arrival initiated immense suffering to Native people, and their population was quickly decimated due to disease, war, and enslavement. This myth is at the core of the master narrative, in which the United States origin story of a democratic republic being born out of opposition to European empires creating a new world; the United States Supreme Court has invoked the doctrine of discovery as law.

**Nationalization:** a form of political indoctrination that emphasizes idealism by replacing organic cultures. This form of American patriotism is an artificial construct built around the propagandizing federal government, including educational institutions and entertainment media, which are designed to spread a new pseudo-culture that abolishes the growth of actual culture and works to eradicate culture(s) that have developed before colonial rule. Our argument claims that culture requires generations of natural interactions within an environment and community that develops bonds of kinship and understanding, which Americans have never been able to process properly.

**“The Noble Savage”:** This stereotype is the romantic notion of American Indians as AN embodiment of an outsider, “wild,” and/or “other” who has not been tamed by civilization, and therefore symbolizes innocence and naivety. This stereotype was ushered in with the railroads spanning west of the Mississippi River, allowing tourists and U.S. society in general access to diverse Tribal Peoples and their communities. This increased exposure caused a romantic notion of Native cultures having a more in-depth spiritual and serene life in comparison to white Americans and European immigrants. These romantic viewpoints were adopted by many Americans who had become disillusioned with the growing capitalist economy, industrialization, and the increasingly crowded urban conditions. However, this romanticized version of Indian culture still works to belittle American Indian intellect as less than due to their inability to ward off colonial encroachment.

**Occupied Lands:** the exploitation of Indigenous lands created the foundation of the so-called United States. Within this text, we reject the idea that land can be stolen rather settlers/invaders and their descendants have taken residence and created permanent domiciles by the expelling of the Indigenous population(s). In addition, the land has not been removed, and despite the manipulation, extraction, and exploitation of its resources, it remains. The construct that the lands of the so-called Americans have been stolen creates a human-centric hierarchy that lands can be fully possessed and commodified. Rather from our perspective, we believe no entity can own land as the Earth sustains life and therefore, will always exist before and long after human existence. Rather we view the use of the land and appropriation of not from an individual stance but of the tribal or communal stance. This is not to say that American Indians do not understand or have their ways to determine the validity of their personal property. Therefore, cooperative production does not inherently imply communal ownership.

**Racism:** a social structure that is designed and implemented through the master narrative to assign characteristics to whole groups of people to advance the idea of race and the superiority of whiteness, which serves the interests of both white people in power (the elites) materially and working-class white people psychically. This perpetuates the systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group.

**Settler Colonial:** a distinctive form of colonialism which seeks to replace the Native population of the colonized territory with a new society of settlers/invaders by any means necessary. As with all forms of colonialism, it is based on external domination, which extends imperial authority from one country over a foreign country by military force and erection of political and economic control. Settler colonialism is enacted by a variety of means ranging from violent depopulation of the Indigenous inhabitants including extermination, biochemical warfare, forced removal, assimilation or elimination of culture and the replacing of a territory’s history with the history of the imperial authority and development of a new national or social identity.

**Systemic Racism:** refers to a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. Racism of this kind pollutes every structure of our society, such as inequalities in education, housing, employment, wealth, representation in leadership positions, and the social relations within our society. These inequalities are tethered to our country’s racist foundation that gives an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to white people while denying them to Indigenous, Black, and other People of Color.

**Time Immemorial:** existence extending beyond the reach of modern memory, record, or tradition.

**White Supremacy:** is the racist belief that white people are superior to people of other races and therefore, should be dominant over them. The United States is backed by two pseudo-legal documents the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny which provides a useful strategy for “Eurocentrism” and therefore “whiteness” to enshrine itself into law which legitimizes racial superiority and deliberately provides legal preference to Europeans and their descendants as this process reproduces itself across generations.

# EXAMPLES

**This section is to help readers to understand how intext examples relate to the messaging of this document.**

Chicago Blackhawks: Professional ice hockey team which rebranded in Chicago in 1926 when Major Frederick McLaughlin purchased the Western Canadian Hockey League's Portland (Oregon) Rosebuds and moved the team to Chicago, renaming them the Blackhawks. The name was inspired by the 333rd Machine Gun Battalion of the 86th Infantry Division in WWI, which was commanded by Major Fredrick McLaughlin. McLaughlin's wife, Irene Castle, created the original Blackhawks logo.

**What does this mean in correlation with this document?**

The billion-dollar franchise, known as the Chicago Blackhawks, has been able to capitalize on their pan-Indian logo at the expense of modern-day American Indians. The logo isn't a depiction of the Sauk Leader but rather a whitewashed idea of the "Noble Savage." The process of developing the Hockey franchise reinforced denialism of Indigenous realities by making claims that the "Beheaded Indian" logo is a homage to Black Hawk the Man, as well as, American Indians rather than a racist character with overdramatic features.

The real Black Hawk was held in captivity after the Black Hawk War and taken by steamboat, carriage, and railroad to be put on display in front of large crowds as part of a circuitous route. On "tour" in western cities closer to the battles of the time over Indigenous Lands and resources, the reception was violent; crowds burned and hanged effigies of Black Hawk and other prisoners. The story of Black Hawk is entrenched within colonial violence that not only forcibly removed him and his people from their lands but exploited his losses and dehumanized him. The Blackhawk team continues to exploit the legacy of Black Hawk by devoiding his legacy of the factual events and colonial violence he endured throughout his life and the continuation after death.

Little House on the Prairie: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." This book has long been revered as American classics. "Little House on the Prairie," a series of books that follow the fictionalized Ingalls family as they settle in Kansas, has been read in third-grade Classrooms as a "timepiece for decades and has been translated into more than 40 languages and adapted for television. Riddled with racism this series never allows for or questions the perspectives

of American Indian characters. These novels fog the readers (often children's) ability to determine what is right and wrong for themselves and further indoctrinate them to believe the ideology of American Exceptionalism. The series is supported by the ideology of Manifest Destiny and celebrates the encroachment of Native lands as righteous- which makes it difficult for the reader (especially children) to see the injustice within those actions. The Ingalls family is designed to be honest, and trustworthy narrators. Their story and experiences are taken as fact. This eliminates the American Indian narrative and perspective, thereby continuing the cycle of erasure.



# JOIN THE CONVERSATION

/AmericanIndianCenter

@americanindiancenter

@aicchicago

[www.aicchicago.org](http://www.aicchicago.org)

/NativeYouth

@chinationsyouthcouncil

@Chi\_Nations [chinationsyouth.weebly.com/](http://chinationsyouth.weebly.com/)

**AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER & CHI-NATIONS YOUTH COUNCIL**