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Cover Illustration: The seal of the Upper Skagit Nation, a stylized eagle, which appears in the center of a rectangular flag.

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of the UNITED STATES

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INTRODUCTION

The closing decades of the twentieth century have witnessed a burgeoning of Native American flags without precedent in the history of native communities anywhere in the world and equally unparalleled in the history of flags. What caused this explosion of flag creativity? Why would a primarily European concept be adopted by Native Americans, who have long relied on art, dress, and symbols to distinguish themselves from one another and from the foreign cultures around them?

There are two leading answers, both recent and both powerfully relevant: The 1975 U.S. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which established the level of independence of federally-recognized Indian nations, spurred the creation of that quintessential symbol of a people’s sovereignty—the national flag. The 1988 U.S. Indian Gaming Regulatory Act led to a rapid creation of job- and revenue-producing casinos on Native reservations—with flagpoles marking these gaming facilities. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, in 1996 there were 184 tribes running 281 gaming facilities with US$4.5 billion in annual revenues.

As of 31 October 1997 there are 558 federally-recognized Native tribes and nations in the United States, including 227 in Alaska. These communities represent a large number of potential new flags—a tantalizing prospect for the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA), an organization dedicated to the study of flags. This volume focuses on the flags of the continental United States and Hawaii.

NAVA is a nonprofit group established in 1967 to promote a relatively new branch of social science dedicated to the study of flag history and symbolism. To describe this endeavor, Dr. Whitney Smith—NAVA’s president during its first ten years and the world’s foremost flag expert—had coined the word vexillology.

In 1982 Donald T. Healy, another NAVA member who would later serve as president, began a major effort to document Native flags. His work accelerated after the 1988 legislation on gaming and culminated on 30 June 1997. Mr. Healy and his NAVA colleagues traced and analyzed well over a hundred historical and current flags—the largest body of symbols of Native sovereignty ever added to the cultural treasury of the United States. NAVA presents his work in this special double volume of Raven.
HOW THIS VOLUME IS ORGANIZED

The history, art, and symbols of Native Americans have worldwide appeal. NAVA's journal, Raven, is usually devoted to several diverse essays on flag-related subjects, but this double volume is directed to a wider audience across age, culture, and geography. American Indian communities, museum bookstores in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, libraries, social studies and related programs, flag scholars and hobbyists, as well as children of all ages—all should welcome this first-ever survey.

This presentation strives to be as comprehensive as possible. Information on some flags has been published earlier in NAVA News (the newsletter of the North American Vexillological Association) or The Flag Bulletin (published by the Flag Research Center). However, most of the flags described here have not appeared in vexillological media, much less been presented to a wider audience.

For each flag, this work provides a graphic image; a detailed description of the flag; information about its development, adoption, and use; and sufficient historical background to explain its symbolism. Complex vexillological terminology has been avoided, but included when necessary. In the few instances when religious or ceremonial protocol precluded the analysis of tribal symbols, we have respectfully withheld comment.

Nations are arranged in alphabetical order; every flag is treated within the historical and geographic context of the nation it represents. The Glossary defines frequently used concepts, and the Index of Communities allows ready cross-referencing.

Whenever a flag consists of a seal on a solid background, only the seal is shown. Detailed descriptions of individual flags and seals compensate for the limitations of halftone and black-and-white images. A full-color wall chart, Flags of the Native Peoples of the United States, is also available.

The flags of federally-recognized tribes have been listed in the first section of this work, with others following. Federal recognition is a touchstone for Native communities in the United States. It acknowledges and designates Native entities that: have a direct government-to-government relationship with the United States; have their own jurisdiction separate from that
with the United States; have their own jurisdiction separate from that of the surrounding territory; and are entitled to share in benefits under Acts of Congress specifically designated for Indian tribes, bands, communities, and Native Alaskan villages and corporations. For Native Hawaiians, federal recognition is a moot issue, although their rights as an indigenous people are clearly recognized in several specific pieces of federal legislation.

THE SURVEY

In an endeavor of this scope, the vexillologist (flag scholar), like many social scientists, relies heavily on questionnaires and interviews. The original 1982 survey consisted of over two hundred questionnaires mailed to Native nations and reservations across the United States. These were followed by telephone interviews as well as by on-site visits. More recently, several mailings of questionnaires, supplemented by telephone, fax, and e-mail contacts, yielded documentation on more new flags. Key elements of the questionnaire asked about the color and image symbolism of the flag and seal, their adoption dates, and the circumstances surrounding their adoption.

The survey identified a rich panoply of themes depicted on flags: objects central to Native cultural heritage such as the peace pipe, tepee, bow, arrowheads and arrows; images of nature that include rivers, mountains, trees, rainbows, the sun, the moon, and stars; vital animals such as the eagle, bear, wolf, buffalo, and orca; certain colors (especially red/white/yellow/black); symbols such as the number four, the circle of life, sacred fire, and eagle feathers; the representation of Indian leaders, tribesmen, and warriors; maps of reservation lands; and lettering of tribal names, locations, and significant dates. This exuberant display of color, imagery, history, and symbolism—and the unity of spirit that pervades and anchors it—is an extraordinary aspect of our 15-year exploration of Native flags.

The author and NAVA are deeply grateful for the gracious cooperation received from Native men and women throughout the United States. As a small token of our gratitude, we will mail copies of this volume, along with the full-color companion flag chart, to the libraries of all Indian communities represented.
however, he has documented flags for less than a third of all federally-
recognized tribes in the United States. A small number—perhaps 20-25
tribes—are known to have flags but could not be reached in time for the
publication of this long-delayed survey. That leaves some 400 federally-
recognized tribes, along with many state-recognized and other native
communities, that have no flag or may want to change an existing one.
To all, please consider these thoughts:

• When descriptions are incomplete or faulty, please send corrections
  and additions for possible future publication.

• If an existing flag is omitted, please let us know so that we can
  pursue the necessary information.

• If a community lacks a flag or wants to design a new flag, please
  contact us. NAVA members have a wealth of experience in flag
  design, a desire to promote the creation and use of flags, and a
  vast selection of useful written materials.

Contact: NAVA, 1977 North Olden Avenue Extension, Suite 225,
Trenton, New Jersey 08618-2193, U.S.A.; through our website at
http://www.nava.org; or by e-mail at pres@nava.org.

CONCLUSION

NAVA considers it a great privilege to survey the sovereignty
symbols of the Native Peoples of the United States, to highlight their
extraordinary richness and variety, and to add them to the artistic
patrimony of America. Our experience as flag scholars makes us
painfully aware that this work is incomplete and that despite our best
efforts it contains inevitable errors. With utmost earnestness and
sincerity we therefore urge you, our readers: contact us without
hesitation, correct our mistakes without fail, and help us continue the
happy task of presenting the beauty and character of Native flags to
an ever-growing audience.

The Raven Editorial Board
References with a Guide to Notes

This work is primarily concerned with the flags of the various Native American tribes of the United States. The symbols employed by the tribes often reflect very complex histories, beliefs, and achievements. Several excellent reference works are cited throughout this work, identified by the codes which follow. Readers interested in furthering their understanding of Native American cultures are urged to look to these resources for more detailed information.


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TRIBES WITH FEDERAL RECOGNITION
Absentee Shawnee

Located in central Oklahoma is the Historic Trust Area of the Absentee Shawnee, the western-most outpost of their people. The term "Absentee" is applied to the native peoples who accepted U.S. citizenship under the Citizenship Act of 1924 and gave up claims to reservation lands. "Shawnee" meant "southerners" in the language of the Algonquin, their original northern neighbors.

The Shawnee originated in the Midwest in areas now in Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; the modern Shawnee still live in their traditional homelands. In Ohio, they do not enjoy federal recognition as an official nation, while in Oklahoma there are three federally-recognized bands of the Shawnee nation: the Eastern Shawnee are located in the northeast corner of the state; the Loyal Shawnee, which have merged with the Cherokee; and the larger Absentee Shawnee just outside Oklahoma City.

In 1974 the Absentee Shawnee adopted a flag (Janet Hubbard-Brown, The Shawnee, Chelsea House Press, New York, 1995, 104). The flag, designed by tribal member Leroy White, honors the great Shawnee leader Tecumseh [see Eastern Shawnee]. The flag is red, its central white oval bears a stylized profile of Tecumseh in red and black, facing left. Behind Tecumseh a large pair of crossed eagle feathers extends beyond the oval. Surrounding the oval are the tribe's name in Shawnee and in English in white: on top, "LI-SI-WI-NWI" and below, "ABSENTEE SHAWNEE". Two white stars separate the Shawnee and English names on either side of the oval.
AFFILIATED TRIBES OF NORTHWEST INDIANS (ATNI)

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) speaks as one voice for the many different nations in the four-state region it covers. Tribes such as the Flathead, the Yakama, the Nez Percé, and the Umatilla belong to the association, which brings together peoples from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Such associations coordinate economic development, governmental relations, and health and education issues. A prime concern of ATNI is fishing rights.

The ATNI flag (sample flag provided by Elmer’s Flag & Banner, Portland, Oregon) is white, with a red border set just inside the outer edges on all four sides. In the center is ATNI’s circular emblem—an outline map in black showing the four states covered by the Association. The map is crossed by a peace pipe, symbolizing the cooperation among member tribes, with two white-and-black feathers attached. Below the map is the acronym “ATNI” in red. Surrounding the emblem are two red rings, then “AFFILIATED TRIBES OF NORTHWEST INDIANS” in black, with red circles before and after “AFFILIATED TRIBES”.

©
AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY
(TOHONO O’ODHAM & PIMA)

The Tohono O’odham, “Desert People”, and the Pima, “River People”, share a 22,000-acre reservation in southern Arizona located between the two main reservations of those tribes. The main Tohono O’odham lands are on the Tohono O’odham Reservation to the south. The main concentration of the Pima is to the north on the lands of the Gila River Indian Community. These two small tribes, numbering 405 in 1990, function as a single entity within the Ak-Chin community. In 1962 they adopted a tribal seal designed by Wilbert “Buddy” Carlyle and drawn by Sylvester Smith.

The seal’s symbols speak of the ideals on which the Ak-Chin community is based. An arrow symbolizes the Ak-Chin people as a community of Native Americans. A pair of scales balanced on the arrow represents equality and justice. A red rising sun tells of the Ak-Chin’s belief in a brighter tomorrow while crossed lightning bolts show the inspiration and energy of the Ak-Chin to uphold the ideals of their community. These elements appear on a white circle along with the tribal motto “EQUALITY FOR ALL” above the symbols and “FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW”, below. A wide black band surrounds the circle with the official tribal name, “AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY”, across the top in white and “ARIZONA” in white on the bottom. Two small white stars represent the two nations and separate “ARIZONA” from the rest of the legend.

All elements appear in black on both the seal and flag except for the rising sun, which is red on the flag and black on the seal. When used as part of the flag, the seal is set on a plain white background. The flag was adopted in 1987 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the tribal seal.
ALABAMA QUASSARTE

The Alabama people originated in the southeastern part of the United States in the state that today bears their name, Alabama. As French allies in the French and Indian War, the Alabama moved west after the British victory, into lands now part of Louisiana and Texas. Those who remained in their original lands became close allies of the Creek (Muskogee) Indians. When the Creek were removed to the Indian Territory in 1830, their Alabama allies left with them (ENAT, 6).

Today the only recognized distinctive Alabama tribe is located in Texas, where they have united with the Coushatta nation. The Alabama, whose name means “weed gatherers”, also live on as part of the Creek nation in Oklahoma. There they share the town of Eufaula with the Quassarte, their spelling of what in Texas are the Coushatta.

The Quassarte (Coushatta) also originated in what is now Alabama and shared much of the same recent history as their Alabama cousins. Those who merged with the Creek in the early 19th century were sent to Oklahoma with the Creek. The remnants of these two nations, as existing in Oklahoma, are now considered to be Creek rather than their ancient tribes.

The flag of the Alabama Quassarte consists of a white square with a red panel half the size of the white on either side (this form is known as a “Canadian Pale”, since the flag of Canada was the first national flag to employ three vertical stripes in these proportions). Centered on the white area is a representation of a Red Tailed Hawk. The hawk's outspread
wings reach nearly to the edges of the white square. It is depicted with a black face, brown body and upper part of the wings, yellow central wings and tail feathers, and red wing-tips. All feathers are outlined in black. In its talons the hawk holds a white scroll bearing “ETVL-WVOMVLKV YRVKVV” in black (presumably the tribal name).

Over the hawk in black in two lines is the official name “Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town”; below is “Est. 1939”, the date of its founding.
The Arapaho are believed to
have migrated from the head-
waters of the Mississippi River in
the early 1700s (ENAT, 17-19).
During the 1800s, the Arapaho
people divided into northern and
southern groups. The southern
Arapaho have combined with the
southern Cheyenne in Oklahoma
to form the current Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation. The northern
Arapaho remain a distinct tribal entity although they share the Wind
River Reservation in northwestern Wyoming with the Shoshone.

The origin of the name is uncertain. It may have derived from
the Shawnee *tiapihu*, or “trader”, or from the Kiowa term for them,
*Ahyato*. The Arapaho
called themselves
*Inuna-ină*, “our people”.

The Arapaho of the
Wind River Reservation
may be one of the first
tribes to adopt a flag. The
flag of the Arapaho
(*History of the Arapaho
Flag*, www.uwlax.edu/
ls/history/students/springer/docs3.html) dates from the 1940s when the
Arapaho saw their young men going off to war in Europe and the Pacific.
After the death of the first Arapaho soldier in World War II, John L.
Brown, the tribal elders decided there should be a distinct symbol of the
Arapaho since their sons were now dying not only for the United States
but also for the Arapaho nation.

The elders designed a flag of seven stripes representing seven ceremonial
and sacred ingredients. At the top of the flag (at that time flown vertically)
a white triangle contained a circular device of red, white, and black—red
because they are human beings and Arapaho; white because they want a
long life; and black because they seek happiness.
After the war's end, the concept of a flag for the Arapaho nation faded until the Korean War, when Arapahos asked their tribal elders to adopt a flag to identify the Arapaho. On 15 June 1956 the current flag of the Arapaho nation was adopted by the general council of the Arapahos. That flag consists of seven stripes, the central stripe one-half the width of the other six. The two outermost stripes are red, the second and sixth stripes are white, the third and fifth stripes are black, and the central narrow stripe is white. At the left is a white triangle edged in black. It bears a circle of red over black separated by a narrow white band.
ASSINIBOINE & GROS VENTRE

Sharing the 589,000 acres of the Fort Belknap Reservation in northern Montana are the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventre tribes. The Assiniboine, whose name in Algonquin means “those who cook with stones”, were once part of the Yanktonai Sioux. They lived in the region around Lake Superior—today’s northern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario. The Assiniboine split off from the Sioux in the 1600s and migrated westward to what is now Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North Dakota, and Montana.

The name “Gros Ventre”, meaning “big belly” in French, derived from the hand motions used to describe this tribe in the sign language of the Plains. The Plains Indians used sign language to bridge the different oral languages of the many tribes of the region. The sign for this group (which called themselves Ah-ab-nee-nin, “White Clay People”) was to pass both hands in front of the abdomen to show they were big eaters. The Gros Ventre, decimated more by European diseases than by war, were moved to the Fort Belknap reservation in the 1880s, joining the Assiniboine.

The flag used by these two nations is green, a rare color in Native American flags, with the reservation seal in the center. The seal is formed by a traditional Indian shield which illustrates the protection of the two nations in the past, present, and future from loss of tribal identity, culture, and land (Seal of the Fort Belknap Reservation, undated pamphlet). The shape of the shield refers to the circle of life, a frequent concept in Native American beliefs in which every thing in life depends upon every other thing. Seven red-white-and-black feathers hang from the shield. Six feathers stand for the twelve elected council members who represent the
three districts of the reservation. The seventh and central feather stands for the tribal chairperson.

The shield bears many elements. The four directions and the four seasons are recalled by the use of the four main colors: red (actually a reddish-orange) for summer, yellow for fall, white for winter, and green for spring. The central buffalo skull, divided into brown and white yet remaining one figure, symbolizes the co-existence of two tribes functioning as a whole. Across the forehead of the skull is a jagged line representing the Milk River, a tributary of the Missouri, which flows through the reservation.

Above the skull in green is Snake Butte, a landmark known throughout the region. Because many Indians seek visions there, Snake Butte is considered sacred by many Plains tribes; one of the few natural springs in the area rises there. Two arrowheads facing each other emphasize strong ties with the past. Across the top of the shield in black is "SEAL OF THE FORT BELKNAP RESERVATION", below in black is "GROS VENTRE / ASSINIBOINE / FOUNDED 1889", referring to the date of the formal establishment of the Fort Belknap Reservation.
ASSINIBOINE & SIOUX

In northeastern Montana, sprawling across five counties, lies the 905,000-acre Fort Peck Reservation, home to the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes. It was established in 1871 to serve both groups (Tribal History of the Fort Peck Reservation, Fort Peck Tribes, undated pamphlet). Today, the reservation is home to several bands from each tribe. The Assiniboine include the Canoe Paddler Band and the Red Bottom Band [see Assiniboine & Gros Ventre]. The Sioux include parts of the Sisseton, Wahpeton, Yanktonai, and Hunkpapa Teton bands (the great Chief Sitting Bull was a Hunkpapa).

According to Ray K. Eder, vice chairman of the Fort Peck Tribes, "... the flag was designed and sketched by the renowned Indian artist Roscoe White Eagle... The colorful flag of the Fort Peck Tribes is contrastingly depicted on a field of blue sky. The two chiefs displaying the robe of the prairie buffalo is befitting of the fact that two Tribes, Assiniboine and Sioux, reside together in harmony on the same forty-by-eighty-five-mile reservation. The sacred robe of the buffalo symbolizes the tight and lasting bond of friendship and understanding between the two Tribes. Native Americans find this to be very gratifying during these trying years of our Indian self-determination era." (Letter, Ray K. Eder, 25 Jan. 1995).

Upon the sky-blue field is a goldenrod-yellow hide bearing "FORT PECK TRIBES" in red. The tribes' names appear in white on red along the trail of the two chiefs' headdresses. The chiefs and their costumes appear in full natural colors (Letter, Carol Lenz, Interim Business Manager, Fort Peck Community College, 25 Jan. 1995).
Bay Mills Ojibwe (or Chippewa)

One of the two easternmost homes of the Ojibwe (or Chippewa) people in the United States is the Bay Mills Indian Community on the northeastern tip of the upper peninsula of Michigan (the other is the Sault Ste. Marie Ojibwe located nearby).

Flying over this eastern outpost of the third-largest native nation in the United States (after the Cherokee and Navajo) is a flag designed by tribal member Richard LeBlanc.

That flag is divided diagonally by a central yellow stripe running from the lower left corner to the upper right corner, leaving a medium-to-dark blue triangle in the upper left and a red triangle in the lower right. Centered upon this is the seal of the Bay Mills Indian Community.

A narrow green ring surrounds the seal, bearing the legend “BAY MILLS INDIAN COMMUNITY” across the top and the Ojibwe word “GNOOZHEKAANING” or “place of the pike” (a fish) across the bottom in white. The center is divided diagonally into four equal sections recalling the sacred number four and using the four primary native colors, white at the top, and running clockwise, yellow, red, and black. These colors reflect the races of man, the four primary directions, the four stages of man’s life, the four seasons, and many other recurring elements of native and human existence. Separating the four colored quadrants are four stylized feathers of white with brown tips and brown spines.

The flag was adopted sometime after 1994.

[Thanks to Angie Carrick, of the Bay Mills tribal headquarters.]
BIG PINE PAIUTE

In east-central California, south of Yosemite National Park, are a string of small reservations, or “rancherias” (GAI, 42). A band of Paiute shares the Big Pine Rancheria with a band of Shoshone.

Officially known as the Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley, the flag of this branch of the widespread Paiute nation is the tribal seal on a white background. The circular seal shows the back of a seated Indian warrior facing into a golden sunrise, alluding to the location of the rancheria in the eastern part of California. Glimpses of a brilliant blue sky separate the sun’s rays. The landscape is white, its horizon forming a jagged edge against the rising sun. The warrior has black hair, tan skin, red pants, and a yellow breech-cloth. From the warrior’s uplifted arms flow two springs of water, shown in light blue with black detailing. This image probably refers to the clear flowing springs coming out of the mountains and nourishing the lands of the Big Pine Rancheria and the entire Owens Valley. The seal on the flag is unusually large.

A black ring surrounds the seal. Across the top of the ring is “THE GREAT SEAL OF THE BIG PINE” and around the bottom is “PAIUTE TRIBE OF THE OWENS VALLEY”, all in red. 🧑‍♀️

[Thanks to NAVA member Jim Ferrigan for providing data on this flag.]
The Piegans, or Pikuni branch of the Blackfoot Confederacy, are the southernmost group of Blackfeet Indians, located in western Montana (other branches are in Canada). The Pikuni, which means “poorly dressed”, occupy a reservation, established in 1855, straddling the border with Canada. The term “Blackfoot” comes from their reputation for dyeing their moccasins black.

The Blackfoot people were known for their beautiful craftwork—their tepees, clothing, weapons, and riding equipment were of exceptional design. Their war-bonnets, one of which appears on the flag, were unique in that the feathers stood straight up. Examples of Blackfoot art can be found in the Museum of the Plains Indian, located in the Blackfoot capital of Browning, Montana.

The flag’s field is medium blue and bears at the left end a ceremonial lance or coup stick with 28 white-and-black eagle feathers (sample flag provided by Elmer’s Flag & Banner, Portland, Oregon). To the right of center is a ring of 38 white-and-black eagle feathers surrounding a map in white of the reservation. On this map are a war-bonnet and the tribal names “THE BLACKFOOT NATION” and “PIKUNI” in black.
CADDYO

The modern Caddo Nation of Oklahoma descended from many different tribes that once inhabited Louisiana, southern Arkansas, and coastal Texas as far west as the Brazos River (ENAT, 33-34). These included the tribes of the Hasinai Confederacy, the Nachitoches Confederacy, and the Kadohadacho Confederacy (from which the name “Caddo” is derived).

Today the more than 1,200 Caddo, along with the Western Delaware and Wichita Nations, share small parcels of tribal lands around Fort Cobb and Fort El Reno, Oklahoma. Over their lands flies the orange flag bearing their tribal seal. On the flag the seal is separated from the orange field by a medium blue ring bearing “: CADDYO NATION :” in black at the top. This blue ring recalls the spirit’s journey through life and beyond. The current flag replaces a previous version with a light buff field and the tribal name on the seal as “: CADDYO INDIAN NATION IN OKLAHOMA.".

The seal of the Caddo Nation depicts three women in 19th-century Caddo dress performing the traditional “Turkey Dance”. This dance is still performed today (“Flag of the Caddo Nation”, Caddo Nation, 1997), by women and children of the tribe who sing while they dance, accompanied by the men who sing and play the drums. The Turkey Dance fosters a sense of confidence and well-being, releases mental stress, and promotes exceptional physical endurance since it can last as long as a full day.

The three dancing women wear dresses of green (left), red-orange and white (center), and lavender with a white apron (right). The background of the tribal seal shows five Caddo men, in outline, playing music for the
Turkey Dance. At the base of the seal, a small round design in yellow, red, green, and white symbolizes the door to the world beyond and recalls the four stages of life and the four primary directions of the compass.

The flag was designed by Billie Hoff, a member of the Caddo tribe, and has been manufactured commercially by the Homer Miller Company of Oklahoma City. 📈

[Thanks to LaRue Parker of the Caddo National Council for supplying information on this flag.]
The Catawbas, or “People of the River”, are an ancient people that has lived in the border regions between the Carolinas for centuries. The federal government revoked their recognition in 1962 and restored it in the mid-1990s. The Catawba are known for their beautiful pottery, which serves as the principal device on the tribal seal and flag.

The seal of the Catawba nation dates from 1974-75 when the Executive Director of the Catawba needed official stationery. Wanda George Warren, a high school student, designed an appropriate seal for the tribe in her commercial art class. She contacted leaders and tribal elders for ideas on symbolism, and offered several designs, one of which was selected. That seal (with slight artistic modifications in 1994) has been in use ever since (survey response, Dewey L. Adams, Catawba Indian Nation).

A pale orange pot centered on the circular seal represents Catawba pottery. On it is an image of Chief Haigler, first chief of the Catawba nation, in burnt orange. Behind the pot runs the Catawba River in blue and the lands of the Catawba in green. Ringing the central device is an orange band with “GREAT SEAL OF THE CATAWBA INDIAN NATION” in black. Beyond this is a yellow serrated “sunburst” ring, backed by a burnt-orange field. The entire seal is ringed by a narrow black band.

When used as a flag, the seal is on a burnt-orange field recalling terracotta pottery. The Catawba people thus bring the symbol of their past—the pottery—into the newest symbol of their sovereignty—the flag.
A historic flag associated with the Catawba is the banner of the "Catawba Rangers", who fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Of blue silk with a light blue silk fringe, it had two scrolls—the upper bearing "OUR BATTLE CRY", the lower bearing "LIBERTY OR DEATH", both in gold lettering. Between the scrolls were an old-style gun, two crossed swords, and a red star in the center flanked by gold letters 'S' on one side, 'C' on the other. Below this was a wreath held together by a hand pointing upward to the star. On the reverse, the top scroll bore "CATAWBA RANGERS" and the center bore a Palmetto Palm, symbol of South Carolina, with a snake stretched, ready to strike from the grass beneath. A ring of red stars and gold "beads" circled the central emblem (*Confederate Veteran*, 170, undated excerpt).
The modern Cherokee nation has more enrolled members than any other in the United States. The term Cherokee was probably given to them by their neighbors, the Creeks, who called them Tecloki, meaning “people of a different speech”. They called themselves Ani Yun Wiy or “Real People” (ENAT, 43-48).

The Cherokee people are now located in two distinct regions reflecting their history under the United States. Most are in Oklahoma, while the small Eastern Band of Cherokee [see Cherokee—Eastern Band] remains in North Carolina and Tennessee, their traditional homeland.

In 1830, when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act which displaced all Indians in the Southeast to what is now Oklahoma, the Cherokee were an advanced nation living in towns and cities, having a written constitution, and printing newspapers in their own language. The great Cherokee chief, Sequoya, had invented the script which became the first Indian language in written form. While some feared the Cherokee would actually take steps to become a truly independent nation on the western boundaries of the United States, the primary motivation for their removal was to obtain Cherokee lands in Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Alabama.

The eviction of the Cherokee people and their relocation to Oklahoma has become known as the “Trail of Tears”. The Federal government’s treatment of the Cherokee and other tribes in the 1830s bore bitter fruit thirty years later when all five of the “Civilized Tribes” (the Cherokee, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Muscogee or Creek, and the Seminole) allied with the Confederate States of America and fought in the Civil War against the Union.

The western Cherokee, based in Oklahoma, use an orange flag (sample flag provided by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma,
Tahlequah, Oklahoma) bearing the tribal seal (Annin & Co.). In the seal's center is a single seven-pointed star, each point divided in half, one side yellow, the other orange. This star recalls the seven original clans of the Cherokee people. Around it is an oak wreath in orange and green, the oak symbolizing the sacred eternal fire kindled from its wood. The star and wreath lie on a gray circle. Ringing this central circle is an orange band bearing “SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION” in both English and Cherokee script. In Cherokee, it is pronounced ḫa la gi yi A ye hli, meaning “The Cherokee Nation” (from a postcard, Seal of the Cherokee Nation). At the base of the orange ring is “SEPT. 6, 1839”, the date of the constitution of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. The seal is edged in green.

Beyond the seal is a ring of seven yellow seven-pointed stars, for the seven original clans. These stars also recall the seven holidays in the Cherokee life cycle and the seven sacred rites of the native Cherokee religion. The stars are oriented so that each has one point aiming toward the central seal. Edging the entire flag is a border of green and black diagonal stripes similar to the rope-like border frequently found around a seal. The flag was designed by Stanley John (Cherokee Advocate, Aug. 1978), a full-blooded Navajo and husband of a member of the Cherokee nation. It was approved by the Tribal Council on 9 October 1978 and officially raised over tribal headquarters on 30 September 1979 (Cherokee Advocate, Sept. 1979).

A resolution of the Cherokee Council on 9 September 1989 added a single black seven-pointed star to the upper right corner (Cherokee Council Resolution #73-89). This star is a constant reminder of the Cherokee who lost their lives during the terrible ordeal recalled each year in Tahlequah, the “Trail of Tears”.
The earliest documented Cherokee flag is that of the Cherokee Brigade. This flag was presented to Principal Chief John Ross on 7 October 1861, by the Confederate Indian Commissioner, Albert Pike. A similar flag has been attributed to the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles, possibly pointing to the base design as a de facto national flag for the Cherokee Nation (Devereaux D. Cannon Jr., The Flags of the Confederacy, An Illustrated History [Memphis, Tennessee: St. Luke’s Press & Broadfoot Publishing, 1988], 64). The Cherokee Brigade flag was based on the first Confederate national flag of three horizontal stripes of red-white-red and a blue canton (rectangle in the upper left) bearing a ring of eleven white stars. The Cherokee added a large red star in the center of the ring and surrounded it with four smaller red stars. The five additional stars stood for the five “Civilized Tribes”, while the large one represented the Cherokees. “CHEROKEE BRAVES” appears in red on the white stripe.

The Cherokee are also reported to have a flag bearing seven red seven-pointed stars (FBUS, 254-255). This flag, called a “peace flag”, was used in ceremonies marking the Cherokee national holiday on 7 September 1968. The Cherokee Peace Flag is symbolic in both color and design. The red stars stand for victory and success, while the white background represents peace and happiness. The seven points of each star recall the seven clans of the Cherokee people. The stars are arranged in the pattern of the constellation Yonegwa (Ursa Major, the Big Dipper). According to Cherokee history, the peace flag was carried by the Cherokee along the “Trail of Tears”. Before that journey began, the Cherokee War Flag was buried with a hatchet. The “War Flag” is of unknown design.

[Special thanks to NAVA member Devereaux Cannon for detailed
The Eastern Band of Cherokee lives along the border of North Carolina and Tennessee. With a population over 7,000, the Eastern Band of Cherokee is the largest federally-recognized Native American tribe in the eastern United States. They use the same seal as their Oklahoma cousins [see Cherokee] with minor artistic modifications. This is the sole instance where two bands of the same tribe employ the identical symbol, though separated by hundreds of miles and governed by different executive and legislative branches. It unifies the Cherokee people symbolically, if not geographically.

The flag places the tribal seal, edged in green, on a white (or buff) background. While the Cherokee in Oklahoma use a central star with each point divided half-orange, half-yellow, the Eastern Band uses a solid yellow star with a double edging of black outlines. The star and wreath lie on a light blue circle, rather than gray, with a band around it which is red rather than orange.

[Thanks to NAVA member Glenn Nolan for a copy of the flag.]
The Cheyenne and Arapaho of Oklahoma unite two of the most famous tribes in the American West. Both nations are actually the southern branches of their respective tribes [see Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne]. The Southern Cheyenne, now officially just the Cheyenne, are survivors of the Sand Creek Massacre (ENAT, 48-53). Today, the Arapaho and Cheyenne share tribal trust lands in western Oklahoma where they earn income from farming and from leasing mineral rights.

The flag of the Cheyenne and Arapaho is a slightly modified version of the old flag of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho. An outline of the state of Oklahoma fills the center of a light blue field. Across this outline is a lance bearing two sets of fourteen white-and-black eagle feathers standing for the fourteen members of the old tribal council. In the center is the seal of the two tribes. It bears a tepee with three crosses in white above and beside it (the cross is often used as a star in Indian symbolism). Ringing this is a band bearing fourteen stars, again for the tribal council members. Except for the crosses, all items appear in black against a background of peach, apricot, or light beige, the color probably recalling the rawhide used on Cheyenne and Arapaho shields.

Behind the shield are traditional emblems of war and peace used by many Native Americans. The arrow, traditionally a symbol of war, points downward, meaning the Cheyenne and Arapaho are at peace. The pipe, not only a symbol of peace, is also very important in the ceremonies of many tribes. These symbols cross, forming an “X”.
Arching over the entire device is “CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBE” in black; below is “OF OKLAHOMA”, also in black. The flag was altered to reflect both the name change of the Cheyenne and the makeup of the Tribal Council. The word “SOUTHERN” was removed and a row of eight white stars was added across the top of the map of Oklahoma to show the new council’s structure.

A variant of the flag was created for the Flag Plaza in Oklahoma City (Homer Miller Co., Oklahoma City, OK). The background is white, not blue. The official seal has two arrows for the two tribes, rather than one; the feathers are gold and white rather than black and white. ☪
CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX

The Sioux Nation is divided into four major groups, the Tetons, Santee, Yankton, and Yanktonai. The Cheyenne River Sioux are part of the Teton branch which comprises seven bands—the Oglala, Brulé, Hunkpapa, Miniconjou, Oohenonpa, Sans Arc or Itapzico, and Sihasapa (ENAT, 222-228). All seven of these bands refer to themselves as Lakota, “allies”.

The Lakota of the Cheyenne River Sioux fly a white flag bearing a large tribal seal that stretches across nearly the entire length of the flag. The central element is a rainbow in red over yellow over blue, representing the Cheyenne River Sioux people themselves. Atop the rainbow curve six blue thunderclouds, for the region above the world where the thunderbirds, who control the four winds, live.

The white-and-black eagle feathers hanging from the rainbow represent the spotted eagle, the protector of all Lakota. Two fused peace pipes symbolize unity: one for the Lakota, the other for all other Indian nations. Two yellow hoops represent the Sacred Hoop that shall not be broken. In many Native American cultures, the Sacred Hoop symbolizes life on earth, and breaking the Sacred Hoop dooms the planet. The Sacred Calf Pipe Bundle in red represents Wakan Tanka, the Great Mystery (Letter, Arlene Thompson, 27 Nov. 1994). The flag contains the six colors sacred to the Lakota: red, white, yellow, and black for the races of man, blue for the heavens, and green for the Mother Earth.

The Cheyenne River Sioux are known as the “Keepers of the Most Sacred Calf Pipe”, a gift to all the Lakota from the “White Buffalo Calf
Maiden”. The white buffalo is a sacred omen to the Sioux—portending great times for Native Peoples. A white buffalo calf born in Minnesota in 1994 brought joy and excitement to the Indians of the upper Plains.

[Thanks to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Headquarters for the sample flag.]
The Chickasaw Nation, one of the five “civilized” nations of Oklahoma, was constituted on 4 March 1856, after its forced removal from the banks of the Mississippi (ENAT, 53-54). Its constitution was adopted 16 August 1867 and its tribal seal designed in 1907 (FBUS, 255-256). The original capital, Tishomingo, was named for the last great war chief of the Chickasaw. An image of Tishomingo dominates the tribal seal and the flag.

The Chickasaw flag is indigo and bears a full-color representation of the seal of the nation (sample flag provided by the Chickasaw Nation, Tishomingo, Oklahoma). The orange (or gold) and light purple bands encircling the seal symbolize the purity and honor of the Chickasaw people. The warrior, besides depicting the beloved Tishomingo, stands for all Chickasaw (The Great Seal of the Chickasaw Nation, undated, unsigned letter from The Chickasaw Nation Headquarters).

Chief Tishomingo carries two arrows, which stand for the two historical divisions of the Chickasaw, the forest dwellers and the town dwellers. The chief wears four head feathers, representing the four prime directions of the compass. The bow, traditionally made of hickory, symbolizes the hunting prowess of the Chickasaw warrior and his willingness to defend his people. The quiver, made of deerskin and decorated with white fur, reinforces the same ideals. Stretching across Chief Tishomingo’s shoulder is a warrior’s mantle, traditionally made of swan feathers. His deerskin shield symbolizes the protection Chickasaw warriors offer their people. The deerskin
The river in the background recalls the Mississippi, a Chickasaw word meaning "without source". The foliage represents the flora found along the Mississippi, the ancient homeland of the Chickasaw.

Although the Chickasaw have lived in Oklahoma for almost 150 years, their hearts still lie along the banks of the Mississippi. Their tribal seal and therefore their flag recall their days in the east, a time when their heritage blossomed, their history, pride, and glory achieved its zenith, a time that they will not forget.

(The Confederate States of America apparently created flags for each of its allies in the five Civilized Nations; unfortunately the design presented to the Chickasaw nation is not known.)
CHIRAKAWA & WARM SPRINGS BANDS OF APACHE OF THE FORT SILL RESERVATION

Geronimo! No other name in all Native American history as readily brings to mind heroism, bravery, and devotion as does Geronimo's. He was a chief of the Chirakawa (Chiracahua) band of Apache living on the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona in 1881 when an Apache medicine man, Nakaidoklini, was killed by a detachment of U.S. cavalry. The medicine man had been preaching a new native religion that claimed dead warriors would return and drive the white man from Arizona. The soldiers had been sent to arrest Nakaidoklini for his preachings, but fighting broke out and he was killed.

The Chirakawa, the Warm Springs, and other Apaches fled the reservation. Under Geronimo's leadership they conducted raids throughout Arizona until a cessation of hostilities brought them back in 1884. Shortly after, another dispute broke out when the military banned the use of the Apache ceremonial alcoholic drink tiswin. Again Geronimo and several followers fled the reservation and escaped into Mexico. The U.S. Army relentlessly pursued Geronimo and his outnumbered band. By 1886, Geronimo and his warriors surrendered, suffering from exhaustion and starvation (Letter, Junie Gooley, 15 Feb. 95).

After Geronimo's death in Oklahoma in 1909, his followers received permission to return to the San Carlos Reservation, which most did in 1914. Those who stayed behind, the Chirakawa & Warm Springs Bands of Apache, are still called Chief Geronimo's Apaches and now reside near Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
The flag of the Fort Sill Apache nation salutes their great leader of the past and recalls the lands the Chirakawa and Warm Springs once called home. On a yellow field, the seal (Annin & Co.) bears an image of Geronimo in black, holding a rifle and surrounded by natural elements, not of Oklahoma but of southern Arizona, including a large green Saguaro cactus. The outer white ring, edged in red, bears the official name “FORT SILL APACHE” above and their new home “OKLAHOMA” below, all in red, with black symbols separating the two phrases.
The Choctaw of Oklahoma were the first of the five "Civilized Tribes" to accept expulsion from their native lands, in what is now the southern halves of the states of Mississippi and Alabama, and move to Oklahoma (ENAT, 61-63). Along the "Trail of Tears"—the long march from the southeast to Oklahoma—the Choctaw lost almost a quarter of their people to disease, starvation, and attacks by whites.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861 the Choctaw, along with most tribes forced into Indian Territory, sided with the Confederacy. During this alliance the Choctaw became the first United States tribe to adopt a flag. That flag is documented (FBUS, 256-258) as a light blue flag bearing a red circle edged in white in the center. Within the red circle are a peace pipe, a bow, and three arrows representing the three subdivisions of the Choctaw Nation. These subdivisions are named for three chiefs: Apuckshenubbee, Pushamataha, and Mosholatubbee ("The Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation", The Oklahoma Chronicles, XXXIII:4, Winter 1955-56, 357-358). That design is the basis of the Choctaw national seal to this day. A replica of this flag is displayed in the Oklahoma Historical Museum in Oklahoma City. It was used only in 1861-1864, but it has continued to inspire flags for the Choctaw in Oklahoma. A variant of this flag exists in the Oklahoma Historical Society (Emblems of Southern Valor, Joseph H. Chute, Louisville, Kentucky: Harmony House, 1990, 108-109).
In the 1970s, Paramount Flag Co. of San Francisco filled an order for Choctaw Nation flags. This reappearance of the Choctaw flag followed exactly the pattern of the first of the earlier flags, but drastically altered the colors. The field became dark red, the ring around the central disk became light blue while the disk changed to a deep yellow, and the bow, arrows, and peace pipe appeared in natural colors.

The current flag (sample flag provided by the Choctaw Nation, Durant, Oklahoma) follows this basic design, but adds more detail. The inner circle remains deep yellow, but the peace pipe and bow and arrows are now white edged in black. The peace pipe shows black smoke coming from it. The light blue ring is edged by two cords, a very narrow inner one and a wider outer one, both in light green. The blue ring bears a legend in black “THE GREAT SEAL OF THE CHOCTAW NATION”. The deep red field has been changed to purple.

This flag seems to have been inspired by the drawing of the Choctaw flag carried by the Choctaw Confederate Troops as depicted in the 1958 sheet from the Oklahoma Historical Society entitled “Fourteen Flags Over Oklahoma” (“Official Seals of the Five Civilized Tribes”, The Oklahoma Chronicles, XVIII:4, Dec., 1940, 430-431). It resembles a flag shown in old postcards depicting the “Flags of the Five Civilized Tribes” based upon gift flags from the State of Alabama. The postcard, however shows the flag as a bluish-purple (“Fourteen Flags Plaza”, Oklahoma Today, Summer 1968, 14-16). This flag is the only other that includes writing around the seal.

The changing colors of the Choctaw flag may be an attempt to replicate a mistaken perception of an earlier flag’s color. Usually only flag manufacturers and scholars are concerned with the impact of light and time upon fabric as the color fastness of the dye is lost. For example, blue dyes tend to transform slowly into a maroon and then into a purple; white will turn yellow; red will fade to purple and eventually to pale blue. It is possible that the variations seen in the Choctaw flag reflect the vagaries of time upon fabric.

[Special thanks to Dr. Whitney Smith, Flag Research Center, for much of the historical documentation on the Choctaw flag.]
CITIZEN BAND OF POTAWATOMI

The Potawatomi name means “People of the Place of the Fire” in Algonquin. It dates back some 400 years to when the Potawatomi first united with the Ojibwe and the Ottawa Nations, on lands in what today is Ontario. When they moved south, they formed the three distinct nations. The Ojibwe moved west to what is now Wisconsin and Minnesota, the Ottawa moved to the area around Lake Huron, and the Potawatomi moved onto the lower peninsula of Michigan (ENAT, 197-198). The Potawatomi took with them the original “Council Fire” that had been used by the three groups when united, and thus became known as the “Keepers of the Fire”.

The Potawatomi Nation now spans an area from Michigan through Oklahoma. The largest band is the Citizen Band in Oklahoma, so called because, after being ejected from Kansas and settling in Oklahoma, they accepted the federal government’s offer of citizenship and allotments of land. The Citizen Band controls only the 4,400-acre “Tribal Historic Area” in Oklahoma; most of the Band live on private property.

The flag of the Citizen Band of the Potawatomi Nation is white with the tribal seal in the center. At the top are a tomahawk and pipe, crossed, signifying skill and strength in war and a strong historical reputation as a peace-loving people. In the center is the great “Council Fire” recalling the Potawatomi name. It symbolizes the warmth, friendship, and wisdom of the “Great Council Fire” (Potawatomi Seal, undated pamphlet). Below the fire are two crossed oak leaves. The
acorns of the red oak were a source of food for the Potawatomi and the leaves were widely used in their beadwork designs. The seal is ringed by “GREAT SEAL OF THE POTAWATOMI INDIANS” and “PEOPLE OF THE PLACE OF THE FIRE”. The seal on the flag is frequently represented solely in red outline.
In southwestern Arizona lies the homeland of the Cocopah, who call themselves Xawitt Kunyavaei, or the “River People”. The Cocopah once shared the Cocopah Reservation with the Yuma and Maricopa tribes, but the Maricopa and Cocopah withdrew, leaving the reservation in the hands of Yuma Indians. The Cocopah, however, still live in and around the town of Somerton, Arizona (TDAI).

The Cocopah flag is white with a full-color image of the tribal seal in the center (Letter, unsigned, dated 17 Nov. 1994). The seal shows a Cocopah warrior spear-fishing in the Colorado River, which was essential to the life of the Cocopah. At the warrior’s feet are several salmon-colored fish and in the background is a stand of corn, both staples of the Cocopah diet. Also in the background are a wikitup, the traditional house, and a ramada, a shelter from the hot desert sun, both in gray. Purple hills, a yellow sun, desert rocks in gray, and plants in green complete the picture. The overall design shows the traditions of this desert-dwelling nation dependent on the Colorado River.
COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES (CRIT)

The Colorado River Indian Reservation stretches along the river border of California and Arizona. The river runs like a spine through the entire length of the reservation of some 278,000 acres—home to 2,400 members of four distinct tribes, the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo. An 1865 act of Congress originally created the reservation for just the Mohave and Chemehuevi. In 1945, the Bureau of Indian Affairs relocated some Hopi and Navajo to the reservation from their homes in northeastern Arizona.

The largest of the four nations on the reservation is the Mohave; their name comes from the term aha-makave meaning “beside the water”. The Chemehuevi, whose name comes from a Mohave term dealing with fish, call themselves the Nu Wu or “people”. They are closely related to the Southern Paiute people of Nevada (ENAT, 95-98). Their traditional homelands stretched along the Colorado River between Nevada and Yuma, Arizona.

The Hopi are from northern Arizona, where their reservation is totally surrounded by that of the Navajo. The Hopi were village dwellers with homes built atop mesas for defense. Hopi and Navajo have now lived on the Colorado River Reservation for some 50 years. Their skills in farming under arid conditions have helped them and the reservation thrive.

Today the four tribes maintain and observe their traditional ways and unique religious and cultural identities but function as one political unit. The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) adopted a flag on 4 January
1979 from a design by tribal member Margie McCabe. The design contest called for a flag that would uphold the tribal traditions and indicate the uniqueness of the four nations living and working together as one. January 4th of each year is now CRIT Flag Day (The Colorado Indian Tribes Museum, undated pamphlet), a celebration and appreciation of the unity of the four peoples.

The flag has three horizontal stripes. The top stripe is light blue upon which is an orange sun, whose rays represent the endless rising and setting of the sun on the land and water of the reservation. The central stripe is tan or light brown, symbolizing the earth from which the tribe reaps its food and builds its dwellings. The bottom stripe is dark blue with two white wavy lines, representing the Colorado River, which gives life to the earth and people of the reservation. Centered on the tan stripe and extending to the sun are four feathers, one for each tribe. The feathers are white, tipped with black. Below them appears the acronym “CRIT” in black.
Spreading across a million acres in northeast Washington is the Colville Reservation—larger than Rhode Island. Home to eleven tribes, it is named for Fort Colville, a British outpost established in the 1820s. *(Who are the Colville Indians?, Colville Tribal Museum, Grand Coulee, Washington).* It was created in 1872 and fully populated by the 1880s.

The first tribes were the Nespelem, San Poil, Okanogan, and Lake nations. They were soon joined by others—the Wenatchee, Entiat, Chelan, Methow, Moses-Columbia, and Palouse—making up the original ten bands. Arriving later was Chief Joseph’s Band of the Nez Percé, following his people’s unsuccessful attempt to flee to Canada. Because of the large number of bands on the reservation, the federal government started referring to all eleven tribes simply as the Colville Indians (“What is the History of the Native People of this Region?” in Grand Coulee Dam Area Visitors Guide, *The Star Newspaper*, Grand Coulee, Washington). Today those individuals whose ancestry is rooted in multiple bands simply call themselves “Colville”.

The flag representing the Colville Indians is a complex and elaborate banner-like design. A handmade copy of the flag flies over the entrance to the Colville Confederated Tribe’s Museum in Grand Coulee, Washington. It has a red background. Close to the top edge of the flag is a yellow band bordered above by a green stripe and below by a blue stripe. On the yellow band appears “COLVILLE CONFEDERATED TRIBES” in blue. Below the band a yellow disk recalls the tribal
shield used by warriors. This, too, has narrow borders, the inner blue and the outer green. In the center of the disk is a map of the reservation in black. Below this disk and overlapping its lower portion is a wolf, facing left and standing upon a green grassy mound. The wolf, baying at the moon, is shown in natural colors. On the flag at the museum, the wolf is made from actual fur, possibly wolf or coyote. This use of appliquéd fur appears unique among Native American flags, and is quite possibly the only such flag in existence.

Below the wolf runs a yellow band with a geometric pattern in blue, green, and black. Flanking the disk and wolf appear two lances in yellow. The lance on the left bears five large white-and-black eagle feathers extending leftward. The lance on the right bears six similar feathers, extending rightward. On each feather is the name of one of the bands on the reservation, in all capital letters. Thus on the left feathers, starting at the top, are the Moses-Columbia, the Palouse, the Okanogan, the Entiat, the Chelan, and the Methow; on the right feathers are Nez Percé, Wenatchee, Nespelem, Colville, San Poil, and Lake. (This addition of the names and the real fur are likely peculiar to the handmade flag and not found on regular copies of the flag.)

The flag's design was altered for commercial manufacture in 1996, with one major addition and many subtle changes. The major addition is a broad light blue stripe crossing slightly above the base of the flag but not reaching either edge. It contains a number of complex geometrical elements in green, red, and black on yellow. This new stripe may signify the bridge at Grand Coulee Dam, the major entrance from the south and a gateway for tourism, a major economic boon to the town of Grand Coulee and the entire reservation.

The yellow stripe across the top of the flag is now equal in length to the new “bridge” stripe; its green and blue edges have been replaced by band of light blue over light green just below it; the lettering on that stripe is now red. The wolf is now white, yellow, and black; the grass has a black base; the blue and green throughout have been changed to light blue and light green. The feathers with the names of the individual tribes have been enlarged and the names of the tribes are now printed in light blue, edged in white.
THE Comanche, the “Lords of the Plains”, once dominated an area that included much of present-day Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, and northern Mexico. The fiercest of fighters and among the last tribes to submit to reservations (ENAT, 68-71), they were excellent horsemen, keeping large herds and introducing the horse to neighboring tribes after acquiring it from the Spanish. Today the Comanche Nation is centered on Lawton, Oklahoma, where the modern Comanche engage in farming and earn income from leasing mineral rights.

The flag of the Comanche Nation celebrates its historical status as the dominant tribe of the south-central United States. The field is divided vertically, with blue at the left, red at the right. (Two versions of the flag exist and one is double-sided, with blue on the left on both sides.)

The seal of the Comanche Nation also appears with the blue portion always to the left. According to the Public Information Office of the Comanche Tribe, the flag may date to 1991. The seal is a Comanche battle shield divided roughly in half (seal provided by The Comanche News, newsletter of the Comanche Nation, Lawton, Oklahoma). The left portion is blue; the right portion is yellow and bears the image of a Comanche warrior on horseback in red to represent the name given to all Native Americans by the European settlers—the “red man” (Jamesena Stops, Editor, The Comanche News). The undulating border between the halves represents a snake moving backwards. According to their legends, the Comanche were once known
as the “Snakes”. The blue represents loyalty, while the yellow recalls the brightness of the sun and a state of happiness.

The blue and red colors are derived from a British wool trade blanket, the wrap preferred by the Comanche when riding the Plains over a century ago. The blanket recalls the Comanche’s life without boundaries, a time when they were the true rulers of the Plains. A critical element in many Comanche ceremonies, the blanket also boasts of the prowess of the Comanche as horsemen. Four feathers appear on the shield when it is used as the seal of the Comanche Nation. As with many other tribes, they recall the sacred number four.


A version of the flag with a variant seal flies at the Flag Plaza in Oklahoma City. A yellow circle replaces the serrated edge of the shield. Across the top of the circle, in black, is “COMANCHE NATION”, while in slightly smaller letters below is “LORDS OF THE SOUTHERN PLAINS”. The seal is divided equally in half, blue to the left and red (not yellow) to the right. The Indian on horseback is shown in yellow and greatly enlarged to provide more detail. ✨
While Native tribes had lived in the Pacific Northwest for several millennia, by the mid-19th century pressure from settlers arriving over the Oregon Trail led to unbearable friction. In 1856, the federal government removed more than 20 Indian bands from their homelands and relocated them to 69,000 acres on the Grand Ronde Reservation on the Oregon coast. Although many Natives, despite their semi-nomadic traditions, became homesteaders, the Government later declared that their lands could not be used for farming or tree-growing. As a result, many sold their land for as little as US$1.10 per acre and moved away. By 1901, the Grand Ronde Reservation had dwindled to 440 acres.

The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which decreased federal control of Indian affairs and increased Indian self-govern ment and responsibility, allowed the tribe to purchase land for subsistence and farming sites, raising tribal acreage to 977 by 1936. However, eighteen years later a new federal law terminated the mantle of federal protection for the tribe. The Grande Ronde increasingly became a landless people in their own land—in 1975 their territory had been reduced to a 5-acre cemetery plot. In 1983 Congress reinstated federal recognition and today (according to The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon) the reservation owns 10,300 acres.

The tribe's flag resulted from a contest held after the Grande Ronde regained federal recognition; the winner received US$50. Although the seal appears prominently on tribal publications and letterheads, the flag has not yet been adopted by tribal council resolution.
A black-and-white seal, centered on a white field, combines historic, geographic, and spiritual aspects of the Grand Ronde Confederated Tribes. A unifying black outer ring encircles the main image of the seal. The multiple compass points immediately inside the ring allude to the 23 different bands and tribes, drawn from all over the Oregon Country, that form the Confederation. The five main tribes—Umpqua, Molalla, Rogue River, Kalapuya, Shasta—are honored by the five white-and-black eagle feathers hanging below the outer ring.

Inside the compass points is a wider black ring with “THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES” above and “OF GRAND RONDE” below, in white. In the center of the seal, according to the tribes, “is Spirit Mountain where our people went on their Vision Quests, or to seek their Tomanawis, or ‘spirit’”. The mountain holds deep symbolic and spiritual significance for a people emerging from a difficult 150-year odyssey during which their fate often hung in precarious balance. The Grand Ronde have named their new casino “Spirit Mountain”.

[Thanks to Jackie Whisler, Administrative Assistant at Grand Ronde tribal headquarters.]
A white flag with the tribal seal in maroon or wine red flies over the Mill Casino and over the headquarters of the 650-strong Coquille Indian Nation of Coos Bay, in southwest Oregon. (Don Macnaughtan, *Lost and Found Heritage: Recovering American Indian Tradition at the Coquille Tribal Library*, Bandon, Oregon, New Zealand Libraries, Vol. 48, #1, 11-14; March 1995.)

The Coquille have lived in the same general vicinity for more than 6,000 years. In the 19th century they were ravaged by malaria, smallpox, and an invasion of gold miners in the 1850s that reduced their population from 8,000 to a few hundred scattered survivors. Although declared extinct in 1954, the Coquille were granted federal recognition in 1989. Since then, they have re-emerged as a vital and thriving community and an economic asset to the Coos Bay region of Oregon, becoming a major employer in an area devastated by a decline in the timber industry.

The flag of this now-thriving nation dates from the early 1980s, according to the Dene-Miluk Cultural Center Library. *Dene* is the traditional name employed by the Athapaskan people; the Navajo, for example, continue to call themselves *Dene* or “the people”; *Miluk* is the traditional name for the Coos Bay Indians, the immediate ancestors of the Coquille; and both the Coos Bay and Coquille still employ *Dene* for themselves.

The maroon seal, on a white background, celebrates the history and culture of the Coquille people. In the center is an Oregon Coast "plank house", the traditional style of native housing in southwestern Oregon.
Behind the house is *Umnat L QwLai*, “Grandmother Rock”, a sacred tribal site at the mouth of the Bandon River. While the rock itself was destroyed by the federal government in the 19th century, the site remains sacred and the rock remains on the seal. A conifer tree to the left of the rock and others behind the house recall the forest and the timber industry which have long been elements in Coquille life. Behind the seal, protruding from the top is a Coquille fishing spear. Fishing has been vital to the Coquille’s existence for millennia.

Surrounding the seal are two distinct elements. The first is “COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE”. The second, a distinctive arrangement of large and small triangles, represents the tattoo markings which the people of the southwestern coast of Oregon used to measure the strings of dentalium—the local shell money of the ancient native population.

[Thanks to Don Macnaughtan, former tribal librarian at the Dene-Miluk Cultural Center Library, for the information contained in this section.]
In their own language, the Crow tribe of southeastern Montana are *Absaroka*, the "bird people". The name "Crow" came from a crude translation of the term (ENAT, 76-78). The flag of the Crow tribe is light blue with the tribal seal in the center. The seal bears many symbols, starting at the bottom with the peace pipe traditionally offered as a first placating step in any significant petition of the Crow people—an offer not to be refused by mortals.

Above the pipe is the "Sacred Medicine Bundle" [see Cheyenne River Sioux]. This bundle contains sacred seeds of tobacco, the only significant crop of the Crow. These particular seeds are believed to be the original and supernatural blessing of the Crow that led them to their present home (Lloyd Old Coyote, *Crow Tribal Emblem*, undated pamphlet). Above is a "sweat lodge", a place for purifying both mind and body—a practice frequently employed by the Crow before a major undertaking. The symmetrical tepee represents the values of a good home and the home of the Crow (ibid.).

Behind the tepee are three mountain ranges, the Wolf, Big Horn, and Pryor Mountains. The rays of the sun represent twelve of the original thirteen clans of the Crow. The thirteenth, the "Greasy Mouth" clan, commonly referred to as "the sun worshipers", is represented by the sun itself (Frederick Turnback, Director of Procurement, Crow Nation, letter dated 15 Nov. 1994).
On each side is a war bonnet, the one to left being larger. One represents the clan chiefs on the mother’s side; the other the clan chiefs on the father’s side. Both sets of chiefs lend guidance, inspiration, and protection to all tribal members.

The flag differs slightly from the flag reported in 1975 (FBUS, 257-258). The new flag has a heavy black border separating the seal from the field. The old seal had a single white star at its base, four lodge poles (which represented the four seasons and four winds in Lloyd Old Coyote’s design), and the “Big Dipper” constellation (which symbolized the “carrier of messages”), all of which are omitted in the new seal.
The Crow Creek Reservation, located along the north shore of the Big Bend stretch of the Missouri River in South Dakota, was established in 1889 as a result of the Treaty of 1868. The flag of the Crow Creek Sioux is white (photograph provided by the United Sioux Tribes, Pierre, South Dakota), with the tribal seal in the center. The seal is a blue disk, upon which three tepees in white with black accents meet at the center, representing the three districts that form the reservation.

Circling this central disk is a golden yellow ring bearing, in black, “CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE” above and “1868”, the treaty year, below. Outside the gold ring are the names of the three districts, first in Dakota, then, bracketed, in English. Toward the left is “KAHMI TANKA” [BIG BEND], toward the right is “KANGI OKUTE” [CROW CREEK], and at the base is “CUNKICAKSE” [FORT THOMPSON]—the reservation’s capital. Separating the three district names are blue swatches, as if white lozenges were placed over a blue circle to form an outer ring. When used as a seal alone, the district names appear in white directly upon the blue circle and the name at the top of the gold ring is prefixed by “SEAL OF”.

Tepees are used on the seal and flag of the Crow Creek Sioux as a unifying symbol of the Sioux peoples. Almost all Sioux flags and seals use the tepee, evoking the history of the Sioux as the dominant nation of the northern Plains, a nation which followed the buffalo and lived in dwellings made from its hide. The tepee is a symbol of home—the
reservations of the various Sioux nations are their modern homes, even to those who have left for cities. The tepee is also a symbol of welcome, especially when depicted with open flaps—as are the tepees on the seal and flag of the Crow Creek [see Rosebud Sioux, Yankton Sioux].
The Delaware are named for the river that flows through their old homelands of Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The river was named for Lord De La Warr, the colonial governor of Virginia who never saw the colony or river bearing his name. In the Algonquin-based tongue of the Delaware, they are the Lenni Lenape, “the True Men”. The Delaware had three major divisions, the Munsee (Wolf clan), the Unami (Turtle clan), and the Unalactigo (Turkey clan) (ENAT, 78-80). These main groups were further divided into many different bands. Over time they lost lands in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, and Texas. By 1835, they had been pushed out of Texas into what is now Kansas and later into Oklahoma.

Outside of Oklahoma, Delaware people now live in Wisconsin, Colorado, Idaho, and Ontario. In Oklahoma, the Delaware are divided into western and eastern groups [see Lenni Lenape (or Eastern Delaware)]. The Western Delaware use a light blue flag. “DELAWARE TRIBE OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA” forms an arch of black letters across the top of the flag. Across the bottom, again in black letters, is “ANADARKO, OKLAHOMA”, the Delaware’s capital, home to the Area Office of all Western Oklahoma Tribes and the American Indian Hall of Fame.

A Tulamokom is centered on the flag (Tulamokom, undated pamphlet). This design, which represents a turtle, one of the three main clans of the Delaware, serves as the tribal logo (Annin & Co.). Tulamokom, “Grandfather turtle”, represents the grandfathers of the Delaware, their parents, and the current generation of Delaware (ibid.).
The upper portion of Tulamokom’s body is blue for the sky and represents tomorrow. The red bottom portion of the turtle is for yesterday and surrounds the moon of last night. The red also tells of the Delaware’s past; of the blood of ancestors spilled on the very lands they walk upon today. The sun at the center—divided into yellow and brown—is for the promise of a new tomorrow. Tulamokom, the embodiment of past and future, was designed by Delaware Jim Van Deman, a great-great-grandson of Black Beaver, the famous Lenni Lenape chief. 🧧
The ancient homelands of the Shawnee Nation covered an area that today incorporates the states of Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The Shawnee people were nomadic, and some attribute to their constant movement their merging of distinctive Native American beliefs, ceremonies, crafts, and lifestyles as they interacted with other tribes and bands.

The Shawnee gave Native Americans one of their greatest leaders, Tecumseh. A man of compassion and wisdom, Tecumseh was a brilliant military strategist. He sided with the British against the Americans in the War of 1812 in the hope of securing a true nation for the Indians west of the Appalachians. Under the leadership of Tecumseh the fort at Detroit fell to the British. But when an advancing American army forced the British to flee to Canada, the Americans’ superiority in numbers and weaponry sealed the fate of Tecumseh’s forces and led to his death in 1813.

Today the Eastern Shawnee have a historic tribal area of just over 1,000 acres in Oklahoma. Despite the small size of their landholdings, the Shawnee continue to prosper through a mix of old and new ways.

The flag of the Eastern Shawnee is red, bearing their tribal emblem in the center (Annin & Co.). This emblem is encircled by “EASTERN SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA” in black. The emblem consists of a light blue disk representing a warrior’s shield. Across the center of the shield appears an Indian spear. Above it is a black panther, a rare variation of the now nearly-extinct Florida
panther or cougar, which once roamed the old lands of the Shawnee. The panther was respected for its ingenuity and ferocity. On the seal it also represents the great Tecumseh, whose name in Shawnee means "panther". Below the spear is a swan—a graceful, majestic bird epitomizing tranquillity, peace, and beauty. These two animal totems represent attributes desired by the Shawnee people.

Four eagle feathers hang from the round shield, denoting the prime directions of the compass. This use of four feathers is a recent modification to the flag. The flag formerly bore five feathers, one for each of the five ancient clans of the Shawnee when they lived around the Ohio River. 🦅
The Flandreau Santee is the smallest of the Sioux tribes in South Dakota, with a population below 300 and land holdings of 3,200 acres (AID, 43), yet Santes lent their names to the states of North and South Dakota. Sioux nations to their west were known as Nakota or Lakota, but the Santee called themselves Dakota.

The Santee comprise four bands, the Sisseton, the Wahpeton, the Wahpekute, and the Mdewakanton. The first two bands live on the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota and the Devil's Lake Reservation in North Dakota [see Sisseton & Wahpeton Sioux]. The last two bands are scattered on several small reservations in Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota. One of these small reservations is the colony outside the town of Flandreau, South Dakota (Presenting the Flandreau Santee Sioux, undated pamphlet, United Sioux Tribes, Pierre, South Dakota).

The Flandreau Santee, a mix of Wahpekute and Mdewakanton, derive their name from the Dakota Isanyati, a shortening of Mde Insanti, the Dakota name for the Mille Lacs region of Minnesota, the historic Santee homeland. Isanyati thus essentially means “people of the Mille Lacs region”.

The Flandreau Santee settled in their current location after the “Minnesota Wars” of 1862 and adopted the lifestyle of their surrounding white neighbors. Until 1994, the Flandreau Santee Sioux flag was dark blue with a white circle in the center. Arching across the top of this
circle was "FLANDREAU" in black; across the bottom was "SANTEE". The circle was crossed by a pair of peace pipes representing the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute bands. From each pipe hung two feathers for a total of four—the mystical number in Native American symbolism and the number of bands comprising the Santee nation.

The peace pipes on the flag had special significance. The Santee mined the sacred red stone used to carve the heads of the peace pipes employed by many tribes throughout North America. Santee miners still take this sacred rock from a quarry now protected by the federal government as Pipestone National Monument in southwestern Minnesota [see Iowa Nation of Oklahoma]. The Santee also carve elaborate pipe heads and make handsome peace pipes for sale.

In 1994 the tribe adopted a dramatically different flag, perhaps influenced by the tribe's entry into the gaming industry. The new flag is white, edged with light blue. Near the center is a disk with light blue edging and divided vertically, orange to the left, red to the right; the two colors may recall the two bands that make up the Flandreau Santee. Overlaying this disk is the head of a bald eagle, the powerful messenger between the "Great Father" and man, and the creature atop the hierarchy of totems in Native American beliefs. The stylized eagle's head is shown in brown and white, edged in light blue.

Emanating from the disk to the right are five sun rays of orange, yellow, red, yellow, and orange. A brown peace pipe crossing behind the disk bears two feathers, again perhaps referring to the Wahpekute and Mdewakanton bands. Along the upper edge of the pipe in the upper left corner is "APRIL 24, 1936", the date the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe adopted its constitution. On the other side of the disk, along the top of the pipe, is "WAKPA IPAKSUN", the Wahpekute band's name in its native tongue. Arching along the top of the disk is "MDE AKANTON", the name of the Mdewakanton band in Dakota. Arching behind the head of the eagle is "FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE, FLANDREAU, SOUTH DAKOTA". All lettering on the flag is black.
FLATHEAD OF THE SALISH & KOOTENAI

The Flathead Reservation covers almost 620,000 acres of western Montana. This land is home to two separate tribes functioning as a single unit, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (GAI, 193). A small contingent of the Kalispel Nation and some Spokane, both Salish tribes, also live there.

The Salish were called “Flatheads” by the whites, due to their appearance and connection to the Coastal Salish who actually tied padded boards to their foreheads to shape their heads. However, they now call themselves by their original name. The Kootenai live both in the United States and Canada, where their name is spelled “Kootenay” (ENAT, 113-114). After countless generations as fishermen, the Kootenai obtained horses around 1700 and transformed themselves into a tribe of the Plains, pursuing the buffalo and using tepees.

Today, these two tribes celebrate their former Plains lifestyle on their flag (sample provided by the Office of Property & Supply, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe, Pablo, Montana). Centered on the red background is a blue disk bearing a tan tepee decorated with bear prints and a buffalo in dark blue. These two emblems reflect hunting and fishing—buffalo as a major game animal and the bear as a skilled fisherman. Behind the tepee in blue stand the Rocky Mountains, which transverse the land of the Salish and Kootenai, and above them is a yellow sun. The sky and the mountain snow are light blue.

Crossed behind the central disk, which symbolizes an Indian shield, are a traditional bow and arrow, the hunting weapons of the Plains
Indians. From the bow and shield hang seven white-and black eagle feathers, representing the seven members of the Flathead Council. The bow and arrow are tan and dark blue. Above the disk is “FLATHEAD” and below is “NATION” in yellow; on either side are “SALISH” and “KOOTENAI” in dark blue. In recognition of the difficulty that writing causes on a flag viewed from the reverse, two versions of the flag of the Flathead nation exist: the formal flag is double-sided, with the writing appearing properly on both sides; the common flag is single-sided.
South of Phoenix, Arizona, lies the 372,000-acre Gila River Reservation, one of two central Arizona homes to the Pima and Maricopa Indian nations. The other, north of Phoenix, is the Salt River Reservation. The Gila River community dates to 1939 and has more than 12,000 people; its main source of revenue is agriculture.

The Pima name is derived from a native phrase *pi nyi match* which means “I don’t know”, the response Pima gave when questioned by early Spanish explorers. Their own name is *Akimel O’Odham* (*Ah kee melt o o tam*), which means “River People” (ENAT, 186-187). The Pima are divided into two distinct groups, the Upper Pima and Lower Pima. The Upper Pima are treated here; the Lower Pima are residents of the Mexican State of Sonora.

The Gila River community has adopted a flag; only three copies are known. One hangs in the office of the community’s governor, another in the office of the lieutenant governor, and the third is in Tribal Headquarters in Sacaton, Arizona.

The flag has a white field with a simplified outline map of Arizona in a brownish-copper color (Arizona is the “Copper State”). On the map is a white native shield bearing seven stylized black feathers, one for each of the seven districts that make up the reservation. Arching above the shield in black is “GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY”; below is “PIMA MARICOPA”. Overlapping the shield is a reservation map in beige, with black lines indicating the seven districts and the Gila River. Both maps are shown with a heavy black edging (“Symbols of the Pima & Maricopa Indian Nations”, *NAVA News*, Nov./Dec. 1990, 8).
Above the reservation map, yet within the shield, is a small black stick figure known as “The Man in the Maze”. This figure is a recurring character in Pima art and is usually depicted at the top of a circular maze in Pima baskets, cloth work, and other art of the region. The “Man in the Maze”, shown complete with his traditional maze, is the basis of the seal of the other Pima & Maricopa community in Arizona [see Salt River Pima & Maricopa].

In a unique historical flag note, a Pima, Ira Hayes, was one of the six U.S. servicemen who raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in World War II, thus creating one of the great icons of modern flag usage.
HO-CHUNK (OR WINNEBAGO)

The Ho-Chunk's present name means "sacred language" or "master language", a term based upon Hocak Wazijaci, the name of their language, a Siouan-based tongue unique in the Great Lakes region. For a long time their name for themselves was Hochungara, "the people of the big speech". Earlier, they were saddled with many different names, several unflattering. Centuries ago the neighboring Sac and Fox tribes called them "Winnebago", meaning "people of the filthy waters". Another poor translation of Hocangara was "fish eaters", but "Winnebago" endured. The return to their native language for the tribe's name is part of a larger effort to revive and save the Hocak Wazijaci language.

Wisconsin has been the home of the Ho-Chunk for centuries, their traditional lands being the Door Peninsula separating Green Bay from Lake Michigan. (A branch of the tribe still calling themselves Winnebagos is located in Nebraska, but has no flag.)

The Ho-Chunk flag was adopted in 1992 (Tribal Flag, undated pamphlet). It is white with a green border, and bears an ornate horizontal stripe across the middle and the tribal seal in the center. The flag's five basic colors—red, white, green, blue, and black—represent specific animals in the kinship system in which each clan is associated with a particular animal and hopes to gain the admirable qualities of that animal. Each color also has special meanings in sacred tribal stories which are recalled by their use in the flag.
The seal, adopted in 1984 (ibid.), is white with black edges. It includes two of the most important animals in Native American beliefs, the thunderbird and the bear. The thunderbird, depicted as a brown eagle, represents the six upper clans from which all Ho-Chunk chiefs must come; it carries a pipe for the peace enforced by the upper clans—the pipe has yellow feathers and a red pipe head. Below it is the bear, in black, representing the six lower clans and the “Chief of the Earth” in Ho-Chunk belief. In the Ho-Chunk society the members of the Bear clan maintain order, providing the soldiers and the police. A brown war club separates the thunderbird from the bear. This design was common among the many tribes in the western reaches of the Great Lakes.

These images overlay a green outline map of Wisconsin within a ring with the legend “THE GREAT SEAL OF THE HO-CHUNK NATION” arching across the top. 🌿
INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

With 107 federally-recognized tribes either totally or partly within its borders, California has five times as many tribal entities as any other state (AID, 39-41). However, most of these tribes are extremely small and the area they control is limited. The largest of the tribes totally within California are the Hoopa Valley and the Karuk nations with just over 2,000 enrolled members each (ibid.). In area, the Hoopa Valley reservation is the largest with 93,000 acres.

Because of their small size and their broad distribution across California's vast area, the native peoples coordinate their interests, concerns, and needs through the Inter-Tribal Council of California. Based in the state capital, Sacramento (REAL, 88), it acts as a voice for all California tribes in their relationship with the state's government.

The Inter-Tribal Council's flag is golden-yellow, recalling the state's nickname, the "Golden State". Across the top of the flag in red letters is "INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA, INC." and below, centered on the remaining portion of the flag, the corporate logo appears in full color.

The logo is a complex image. Facing a barely visible rising yellow sun is an Indian with upraised arms overlaying (or transforming into) a stylized bird. He has black hair, brown skin, and ochre breechcloth and sandals. His wrists have white bands, possibly affixed to the bird. The bird has wings and tail of black, white, and ochre. Its beak, rising above the Indian's head, is ochre with a black tip. The sun
appears to be rising over a brown hill against a white circle. The white circle is framed by a rainbow with stripes of red (outermost), orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple (innermost). 

[Thanks to NAVA member Jim Ferrigan for obtaining information about this flag.]
INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF NEVADA (ITCN)

Nevada is home to four major nations, the Goshute, Paiute, Shoshone, and Washoe (NAA, 257-259). They are dispersed throughout the state in 18 reservations and colonies (AID, 41-42) that range in area from 20 to 477,000 acres and in population from 6 to 1,000 residents (ibid., 41).

Based in the town of Sparks, the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN) is an organization of these tribes and colonies. It was formed under Nevada law as a non-profit corporation in February 1966 to provide administrative economies of scale and to give the small Nevada tribes a single large community voice. The ITCN’s Executive Board comprises the chairmen of the eighteen tribal units within the state.

The ITCN flag is orange with the organization’s emblem in the center: a blue map of Nevada, edged in white with a yellow circle in its center. On the circle in black is “ITC” for Inter-Tribal Council. Behind the state map is a pair of crossed tomahawks in natural colors, from each hangs a single feather. Arching over the top of the emblem “inter-tribal council”, while below is “of nevada”, all in blue lower-case letters.
IOWA OF OKLAHOMA

The Iowas, pronounced “I-O-Ways”, get their name from the Sioux ayuhwa, meaning “sleepy ones”. According to legend and tribal history, the Iowas once lived in the lower Great Lakes region and were one nation with the Otoes, Missourias, and Winnebagos. The Winnebagos stayed behind when the other three tribes followed the buffalo herds to the mouth of the Iowa River. Later, the Otoes and Missourias split off from the Iowas and headed west, while the Iowa remained in the area where the Iowa River meets the Mississippi (ENAT, 102-103).

Even before the white man appeared, the Iowas were forced to move north because of pressure from other tribes. By 1700, the Iowas lived in southwestern Minnesota near the site of Pipestone National Monument—a major source of catlinite, the soft, carvable red stone used for pipe tips for calumets. Trade in this precious material extended from the quarry region to both coasts even as early as the Iowa’s arrival. With the influx of whites, the Iowas moved south to what is now Kansas and Nebraska. Some Iowas remain in those two states today. In 1883, the bulk of the Iowa nation was moved to Oklahoma.

The flag of the Iowas that reside in Oklahoma is red and bears the tribal seal in the center (Annin & Co.). On top of the seal in black is “IOWAS OF OKLAHOMA”. Within the white seal are two symbols common to many Native American peoples: the headdress, which appears in light blue, red, white, and black, and the peace pipe, in black with a yellow streamer. Below these two images is an old plow
in black, recalling the agricultural basis of tribal life in Oklahoma. The circular seal represents an Indian shield; from it hang four white-and-black eagle feathers which allude to the four cardinal directions. Behind the shield and extending slightly from either side is a ceremonial lance decorated with yellow streamers.

The flag uses the four primary colors in Native American art: black, yellow, red, and white. These colors are said to represent the four races of man and the four directions of the compass [see Miccosukee].
IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY

Of all Native American flag symbols, none has a longer history of representing its people than does Hiawatha’s Belt of the Iroquois Confederacy—over 400 years. Six nations make up the famous Confederacy, located in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada.

Formed around 1570, the Confederacy, or Iroquois League, originally comprised five tribes, from east to west: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. In the early 1700s a sixth tribe, the Tuscarora, migrated from North Carolina to the border regions between New York and Pennsylvania and united with the original five tribes in 1722.

Known among themselves as the Hodinoshone, or “People of the Long House”, the Iroquois League dominated its neighbors, drawing strength from its unity (ENAT, 103-107). From earliest times, this unity was symbolized by a wampum belt fashioned in a pattern that has become known as “Hiawatha’s Belt”. (Wampum are beads made from whelk and clam shells strung on twine made from plant fiber and sinew. Either as individual strands or as fashioned into belts, wampum was valued highly and given as gifts or exchanged ceremonially.) Each tribe in the Confederacy had a unique wampum belt. For example, the Tuscarora belt was white and bore four stripes of the blue-purple shells (Map of Iroquois Lands, n.d.).

Hiawatha’s Belt depicted five figures (AIDD, plate 18). In the center was what to some is a heart, to others is a great or sacred tree under
which the Iroquois met in council. On either side of the central device were two differently-sized squares or rectangles, connected to one other and to the central device by a narrow band. The belt records the native interpretation of the League's formation.

The five devices symbolize the five original tribes: the Seneca, “keepers of the western door”; the Cayuga, “people of the marsh” and “keepers of the Great Pipe”; the Onondaga, “name bearers” who kept the wampum belt that contained the history of the Iroquois; the Oneida, “stone people” symbolized by the Great Tree; and lastly the Mohawk, “keepers of the eastern door”.

In the last thirty years, the unity of the Iroquois nations has grown stronger. Several confrontations between Iroquois and the governments of Quebec and New York have increased Iroquois self-awareness, leading to the re-emergence of “Hiawatha's Belt” as a symbol of the Iroquois. Thus in modern times, what was once a wampum belt has been reborn as a flag. Seen in both Canada and the United States, the blue or purple flag bearing the symbol of the unity of the five nations has become a rallying symbol for Iroquois of all tribes (Karoniaktajeh [Louis Hall], “Ganienkeh”, The Flag Bulletin, XVI:4, July/Aug. 1977, cover & 108-111).

[Thanks to Lisa Sita, senior instructor in anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, for the explanation of wampum.]
JAMESTOWN S’KLALLAM

One of the smallest tribes with a flag is the Klallam of the 11-acre Jamestown Reservation in western Washington, with 216 members in 1995 (Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs). In their own language, S’Klallam means “Strong People”.

The Jamestown S’Klallam’s tribal seal serves as a major element of their flag. Like many other Pacific Northwest coastal tribes, their seal uses a traditional artistic motif. It features stylized representations of an eagle intertwined with a salmon, all on a gray circle.

According to Annette White of the Jamestown S’Klallam, the eagle symbolizes “strength, power, freedom, and an enduring vision of the past and future that surveys his domain and is one with the Earth”. The salmon stands for “life, continuance, perpetual adaptation, and the pulse of the Earth”. Both elements appear in black and gray with red-ochre highlights.

The seal appears on the left side of the flag’s dark blue background. A narrow red band, positioned just below the mid-point, extends the full length of the banner. On the right, above the red band, appears “JAMESTOWN S’KLALLAM TRIBE” and below the band is “The Strong People”, all in white Roman letters. Only one copy of the flag is known.
Kalispel (or Pend d'Oreille)

The Kalispel are inland members of the Salish people. Their 4,500-acre reservation outside Usk, in the northeastern corner of Washington, is home to some 215 members (NAA, 285; REAI, 34). Their name means “camas”, the Salish word for a local plant whose roots served many northwestern Indians as a food source. They have also been called the Pend d’Oreille, French for “earring”. Pend Oreille [sic] is the name of the county in which they live and of the Idaho lake at the center of their traditional homelands.

The Kalispel flag depicts a tableau of their Pacific Northwest homeland as seen at night. At the bottom a dark blue stripe less than one quarter the width of the flag recalls the fields and valleys of eastern Washington. Above that, a light blue stripe, up to about the center of the flag, depicts a lake or river and may actually stand for the Pend Orielle River or Lake Pend Orielle, the main waterways of their former lands.

In the top half of the flag are dark blue hills topped by dark coniferous forests against a light blue sky. Centered in the top half, a bright golden circle for the moon bears a camas plant with light blue flowers. On the “water” stripe two fishermen in a canoe appear in dark blue, and two white stripes represent “sparkles” of white moonlight.
KAW (OR KANZA)

The Kaw Nation of Oklahoma gave its name to the Kansas River and thus to the state of Kansas (ENAT, 108-109). *Kaw* means “People of the Wind”; *Kanza* means “People of the South Wind”. The Kaw people of today still call themselves the people of the wind.

In 1873 the federal government moved the Kaw people from their homelands in Nebraska and Kansas to a small reservation in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). The Kaw live there today, next to their kinsmen, the Osage. In 1887 the tribe divided the reservation into privately held parcels, with the tribe retaining only a 20-acre “Historic Trust Area”.

The Kaw Nation’s flag is white, with the tribal seal in the center (Letter, JoAnn O’Bregon, Kaw Executive Council, 11 Nov. 1994). The seal bears a full-color representation of two Kaw warriors on horseback on the Great Plains, their traditional homeland. One of the warriors, with hands outstretched, holds a medicine bundle and prays to the “Great Spirit”. The other holds an upright lance. The seal sometimes depicts three warriors, not two. Arching over the top of the seal is “SOVEREIGN NATION OF THE KAW”, and below, “KANZA”, all in black.

A Kaw was elected to the highest office ever held by a Native American. From 1929 to 1933, Charles Curtis, a Kaw, served as vice president of the United States under President Herbert Hoover. Earlier, he had been credited with helping to pass the Citizenship Act of 1924, which granted U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans.
Kialegee Creek

The modern Creek Confederacy unites the four parts of their nation now found in Oklahoma, far from their original lands in Alabama: the large and well-known Muskogee and three smaller groups, the Alabama-Coastward, the Thlopthlocco, and the Kialegee (ENAT, 74-76). (The Kialegee actually constitute what is officially called a “tribal town” as opposed to the more broad-based tribe.) [see Thlopthlocco Creek]

Over the Kialegee Tribal Town flies a blue flag that recalls their past and the Creek culture—especially their long tradition of town dwelling. The flag is blue, like the flag of Oklahoma, with the seal of the tribal town in the center (Homer Miller Co., Oklahoma City).

Dominating the light blue circle are a pair of crossed sticks—the Creek claim to have invented the sport and played it for centuries. The lacrosse sticks divide the seal into four quadrants, four being a number sacred to many native peoples. In the upper quadrant is a black Christian cross for the faith of the modern Creek people. The right quadrant bears a bald eagle in natural colors. The left quadrant contains a traditional tool for grinding corn, the staple of the Creek throughout their history. The lower quadrant has an ancient ceremonial lodge as found in Creek towns. (Such lodges had clay walls and bark-covered, cone-shaped roofs as high as 25 feet. They served as a place for religious rituals and as shelters for the elderly and homeless [ibid.].) The lodge is shown in natural colors, atop a green hillock.

Surrounding this entire seal is a yellow ring, with the official name "KIALEGEE TRIBAL TOWN" around the top and "ESTB. 1939", the year it was founded, below, all in blue letters. ☀
The Kickapoo's history (ENAT, 109-110) begins in what is now Wisconsin, although their legends and prayer sticks indicate they may have once inhabited parts of Michigan. They are closely related to the Sac and Fox people who lived in the same general area. In 1769 they joined six neighboring tribes in a war against the Illinois Indians and moved into lands in what is now Illinois and Indiana. By 1832, with the influx of white settlers and the defeat of many tribes in the Black Hawk War, the Kickapoo were forced into Missouri. Later still, they were pushed into Kansas and finally, after branching into two groups, the Kickapoo settled in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and Mexico. A small band of Kickapoo is still in northeast Kansas.

The many moves of the Kickapoo nation seem to have been foretold by their own name. Kickapoo is a corruption of the phrase *Ki-we-ga-paw*, meaning "He moves about, standing now here, now there".

The flag of the Kickapoo Nation of Oklahoma sets the tribal seal in black upon a cream or buff field. The seal (Annin & Co.) contains a tribal meeting house on an oval shield, behind which appears a Kickapoo arrow. From the shield hang three white-and-black eagle feathers recalling the subgroups of the Kickapoo people. A band surrounding bears the legend "GREAT SEAL OF THE KICKAPOO NATION" across the top and "OKLAHOMA" below, all in black.

While the flag's field has been described as "cream", it may be "buff" as produced by certain flag manufacturers in the United States and as used in the flag of the Navajo. Or it may actually be white,
the most common background color in Native American flags, but faded over time by chemical reactions in the aging fabric [see Choctaw].

In early 1996, the State of Oklahoma dedicated a flag plaza to the Native peoples currently living within its boundaries. Thirty-six flagpoles bear thirty-five flags—the pole for the Kickapoo is bare. Their religious beliefs frown upon the display of such symbols, even though they have a flag in their tribal offices [see Tolowa].
KIOWA

The historic tribal area of the Kiowa, established in 1867, covers 234,000 acres in south-western Oklahoma. This last homeland for the Kiowa came after a long history of migrations dating to the early 1600s. The Kiowa originated in western Montana and over the centuries worked their way east and then south (ENAT, 110-112). The tribal name comes from the Kiowa word K'äi-gwû meaning “Main People”.

The pale blue flag of the Kiowa bears the tribal logo in the center (Letter, Charlotte Redbird, Tribal Administrative Secretary, 15 Feb. 1995). The logo shows a Kiowa warrior of the Plains surrounded by a ring of ten white-and-black eagle feathers representing the ten Kiowa Medicine Bundles (seal provided by the Kiowa Tribal Headquarters).

The ten feathers also recall the Principal Dogs, or “Ten Bravest” warrior society (Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, pamphlet, n.d.). When the Principal Dogs went into battle, the leader stood next to a lance bearing his sash of leadership and encouraged the rest of the tribe onward. From that spot, the head Principal Dog fought and protected his sacred sash. He could not desert his position until replaced by another of the “Ten Bravest”. This use of the Principal Dog’s sash flying from the head of a lance is one of the earliest uses of flag-like objects, or vexilloids, by a Native American people.

At the base of the logo is a small circle, divided green on the left and yellow on the right, with a silhouette of a buffalo head in black.

The warrior rides an Appaloosa, a breed developed by the Salish tribe of Idaho and Montana in the traditional homeland of the Kiowa.
This horse has a painted lightning bolt on his front left leg, suggesting the voice of thunder heard each spring. (This bolt is also represented on the Great Drum of the Ohoma Society. There it is held in the talons of an eagle.) The warrior wears a Spanish officer's red cape, a red headband, and a bone breastplate. These, as well as the sky-blue circle that acts as a backdrop for the warrior, are part of the Koitsenko warrior tradition.

The warrior holds a shield depicting the Rainy Mountain of Oklahoma, a burial ground sacred to the Kiowa and considered the "end of the Great Tribal Journey". The recurring circular patterns in the sky, the feathers, and the small shield at the base of the logo recall the sun and the moon. These two celestial bodies are important in Kiowa ceremonial dance rituals such as the Skaw-Tow or Sundance, the Feather or Ghost Dance, and the peyote religious service of the Native American Church. The entire logo is encircled by "KIOWA TRIBE" above and "OF OKLAHOMA" below, both in black. 🌪️
LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE (OR CHIPPEWA)

Commonly called "Chippewa" in the United States and Ojibway in Canada, the Ojibwe of Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and Ontario prefer to call themselves Anishinabe, meaning "first men". They accept "Ojibwe", but intensely dislike "Chippewa", even though some bands include it in their official name for recognition by the wider world. Ojibwe (or Ojibway) is an Algonquin phrase that refers to a unique style of puckered seam on the moccasins of the Anishinabe. Chippewa is considered a poor attempt by early French explorers to say Ojibwe (ENAT, 57-60).

The Ojibwe are one of the largest tribes in the United States, third only to the Cherokee and Navajo, according to most surveys. The Ojibwe, however, so widely intermingled with the white man that by the middle of this century it was thought that a pure-blooded Ojibwe no longer existed.

Rather than flying a single flag for the Ojibwe Nation in the United States, each band decides whether it wants a flag and what the design should be. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe live on the 28,000-acre Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota, whose flag is white and bears the tribal seal in the center (flag provided by Advertising Flag Co.).

The seal has a red ring, with "LEECH LAKE RESERVATION" in black, around a white central disk. Within it a yellow equilateral triangle points upwards, its corners touching the ring. Outside the triangle are (at left) symbols of nature—pine trees and a soaring eagle; (at right) symbols of education—a diploma and a mortarboard; and (below) symbols of justice and law—scales of justice. Within the triangle
appear a peace pipe and two crossed brown feathers representing the Ojibwe people. The yellow triangle recalls the birchbark wigwams, the traditional dwellings of the Ojibwe, and unifies the other symbols to show that the Ojibwe people have a home on the Leech Lake reservation where they can prosper under the rule of law, through education, and in harmony with nature.
LENNI LENAPE (OR EASTERN DELAWARE)

The Lenni Lenape, or Delaware Indians, are divided into two distinct tribes in western and eastern Oklahoma. The Western Delaware are based in the town of Anadarko [see Delaware of Western Oklahoma]. The Eastern Delaware, in the northeastern corner of Oklahoma, still use the Algonquin name *Lenni Lenape* which means “true men”. Its three main divisions are the Unalactigo, the Unami, and the Munsee.

The flag of the Lenni Lenape is white with the tribal seal in red, white, and black (Annin & Co.). Near the center of the seal is a traditional Delaware mask divided red on the left and black on the right. Mask-making is common among aboriginal peoples on all continents and was widely practiced by the Native peoples of America.

This mask represents *Mesingw*, the “Masked Spirit” of traditional Lenape legend (*The Indians of the Delaware Valley* exhibit, Mercer Museum, Doylestown, PA). *Mesingw* is the guardian of forest creatures, the main source of food to all eastern tribes, much as the buffalo was to the nations of the Plains. In front of the mask appear a peace pipe and fire starter.

Surrounding these central images, placed at the four points of the compass, are symbols relevant to the Lenni Lenape. At the north is a Christian cross, representing the current religion of the people. At the east is a turkey claw for the Unalactigo; at the south is a turtle for the Unami; at the west is a wolf paw print for the Munsee.

Around the seal are “SEAL OF THE DELAWARE TRIBE” above and “LENNI LENAPE” below, all in black. Separating these emblems
from the wording are a series of bars or sticks bearing various designs. These sticks may represent the Walum Olum, “red score”, a pictograph carved on wood and used to record the Lenni Lenape’s legends, history, and migrations (ENAT, 78-80).
LOWER BRULÉ SIOUX

The Kul Wicasa, or Lower Brulé, form part of the Sicangu Band of the Teton Sioux. Their lands were one of six reservations established by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 [see Rosebud Sioux, Standing Rock Sioux, Oglala Sioux, Crow Creek Sioux, and Cheyenne River Sioux]. The Lower Brulé reservation originally encompassed some 446,500 acres, but has been reduced to 139,000 acres (NAA, 284).

Approximately 95% of the Kul Wicasa live around the community of Lower Brulé on the southern shore of the Missouri River. The Lower Brulé became administratively distinct in 1971 when the Crow Creek Reservation separated from it. They had been a single administrative unit since 1883 (Presenting the Lower Brulé Sioux, Pierre, n.d.).

The flag of the Lower Brulé is sky-blue with the tribal seal in the center. As on most Sioux tribal flags, the tepee occupies a key place in the seal: for the Lower Brulé a black and white tepee with red trim appears on an outstretched buffalo hide of light tan. This device appears on a sky-blue background. Both symbols recall the great days of the Sioux people as the masters of the northern plains, living in tepees and following the enormous herds of buffalo. A sky-blue band, edged in red on both sides, rings the seal, with “LOWER BRULÉ SIOUX TRIBE” across the top and “LOWER BRULÉ, SOUTH DAKOTA” across the bottom, all in red.

[Thanks to the staff at the United Sioux Tribes for a photo of the flag of the Lower Brulé Sioux.]
In the early 1800s the Klallam were approximately 10,000 strong. Their many villages dotted the Strait of Juan de Fuca along the northern coast of present-day Washington, neighboring the Makah in the west and the Skokomish of Puget Sound in the east. Like other Coast Salish of the Olympic Peninsula, the Klallam—whose name in their native language means “Strong People”—lived up to their nickname “Fish-Eaters” by skillfully securing life-sustaining catches of salmon, herring, trout, sturgeon, and other fish. Unlike the southern tribes along the Pacific Northwest Coast, the Klallam did not hunt whales, but were content to obtain valuable meat, bones, and oil from whales stranded in shallows or beached by storms (Indians of the Northwest, Petra Press, Michael Friedman Publishing Group, 1997, p. 15, 19).

In the 1840s, the Klallam were decimated by epidemics of smallpox, flu, and tuberculosis. Today, they occupy three reservations with a total tribal enrollment of about 1,700 people—some 640 are Elwha Klallam. The 572-acre Lower Elwha reservation is six miles west of Port Angeles at the mouth of the Elwha River, about midpoint along the northern shoreline of the Olympic Peninsula [see Jamestown S’Klallam].

The Lower Elwha flag was created in 1995 by 25-year-old Alfred Charles, who responded to an invitation for tribal members to design a flag, starting from elements already present on the tribal seal such as the thunderbird and killer whales. Mr. Charles simplified and sharpened these elements, maintaining their traditional artistic style and placing them on a white background.
The circular seal is bordered by a heavy black ring inside which curves across the top “ELWHA KLALLAM TRIBE” in black; beneath them appears, in black and spelled in international phonetics, the translation into the Klallam language. In the center is a thunderbird—its body is black with white highlights; its neck and upper tail are white with black borders and accents, the lower four feathers of its tail are black with white highlights while the lowest two feathers are red, bordered in black. The wings of the bird are red, bordered in black, showing black and white elements. Crossed lightning bolts behind the thunderbird are yellow with black borders. Two killer whales face each other below the thunderbird. Their heads are black with white teeth and eyes, the upper bodies are red with black highlights. The whales’ lower bodies each have a yellow “Y” shape with its open ends directed toward the head and enclosing a white dot. The tails are black, with a red disk and six white accents. The upper fins are yellow, bordered in black, and contain three black dots; the lower fins are solid black.

The entire symbolism of the flag reflects the Elwha Klallam’s ancient fishing tradition—from the light blue background evoking water, to the thunderbird by whose spirit the earth is watered and the harvest from sea and field is gathered, to the respectful regard for the whale as protector rather than prey:

“The thunderbird represents the protection of our people. The lightning bolts it is throwing come from a story about the thunderbird flying up a river and throwing lightning bolts at the water to ensure a good fish harvest. The black fish are killer whales. They are the protectors of our people when traveling by canoe or water.”

The flag of the Lower Elwha Klallam thus remains faithful to the mythology as well as to the historic and artistic tradition of its people. 

[Thanks to Barbara Anne Lawrence, Cultural Resources Specialist in the Lower Elwha Tribal Office, for information about the Elwha Klallam and its flag.]
LUMMI

Located in northwest Washington State is the Lummi Reservation, home to the Coastal Salish Lummi people. They share this 7,678-acre homeland with the Nooksack Nation, another branch of the Coastal Salish (NAA, 285). The Lummi number about 1,000 and have lived there for hundreds of years, developing—along with their Salish cousins—a culture rich in art and design that recalls their sophisticated heritage of coastal seamanship (ENAT, 164-166). Their flag reflects a tradition among the Coastal Salish nations to unite their distinctive art with their long association with the fishing industry (Letter, Cu-Se-Ma-At [Cathy Ballew], 16 June 1995) [see Quinault, Upper Skagit].

The white flag has “LUMMI NATION” across the top and “TREATY OF 1855” across the bottom, all in black. The violations of that treaty, signed by most tribes in what today is the state of Washington, led to the long Yakima Wars. The black-edged oval seal of the Lummi people, centered on the flag, depicts an eagle in traditional Salish style in black, white, yellow, and red (seal provided by Squoi Quoi, Lummi newspaper). Central to many Native American cultures, these colors recall the four cardinal directions and are frequently associated with the four races of mankind [see Miccosukee].

A closer examination of the eagle, a symbol of strength and freedom, reveals a compelling reference to the traditional fishing lifestyle of the Lummi. Its upward-pointing wings form two Salish-style orcas, or killer whales, for centuries an important food source for the Lummi and an equally important focus of their tribal fishing heritage.

©
Makah

The westernmost tribal lands in the continental United States belong to a people speaking a dialect of the Wakashan language, the Makah (ENAT, 121-122). Although different from their Coastal Salish or Haida neighbors, the Makah share many elements of culture, art, and living conditions with them, and include some in the Makah flag.

The flag is white with a red and white thunderbird with black accents in the center. The depiction of the thunderbird recalls the artistic style of Pacific Northwest Coast Indians. The Makah, like many of their neighbors in western Washington, carved totem poles [see Upper Skagit, Lummi].

The thunderbird, one of the most powerful of creatures in Native lore, holds a black whale in its talons. The whale recalls the Makah heritage as expert whalers, unlike many northwestern tribes who used only beached whales, the Makah actively hunted them. In October 1997, they were granted the right to resume an annual gray whale hunt.

To either side of the thunderbird is a black and white serpent with red tongue. Arching over the central device in red is “MAKAH INDIAN NATION”; beneath it in black are the names of the five villages of the Makah Nation: “DIA’HT, WA’ATCH, OSETT, TSOO-YESS, BA’ADAH” (Letter, Leonard “Bud” Denney, 24 March 1997). The flag dates to the 1960s.

[Thanks to the Makah Tribal Secretary, based in the Makah capital of Neah Bay, Washington.]
The "Three Affiliated Tribes" of the Mandan, the Hidatsa, and the Arikara nations live on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in northwestern North Dakota.

The Mandan were among the earliest residents of the Great Plains, having migrated there during the 1400s (ENAT, 123-125). They were firmly rooted around the Missouri River when Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery wintered with them in 1804-05. The Mandan lived in permanent villages of earthen lodges, engaged in agriculture, and took to the plains in annual buffalo hunts to supplement their diet. The Hidatsa, northern neighbors of the Mandan, also lived along the banks of the Missouri River in what is now North Dakota. Like the Mandan, they were essentially farmers and lived in permanent villages (ENAT, 92-93). The Arikara (or Rees), southern neighbors of the Mandan, derive their name from their custom of wearing two upright bones in their hair. Arikara means "horns" (ENAT, 23-29).

The Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation use a white flag with the seal of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation in the center. That seal is oval, oriented horizontally (seal provided by the Tribal Headquarters of the Three Affiliated Tribes). On a light blue background appears a map of the reservation in natural colors, including the bright blue Lake Sakakawea.

A bald eagle, also in natural colors, flies over the reservation map, holding a ceremonial tribal lance bedecked in eagle feathers. Circling the seal is a white band bearing the three tribal names "MANDAN,
HIDATSA, & ARIKARA NATION” above, their combined designation “THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES” below, and at the sides “MAY 15” and “1936”, the date on which the three tribes achieved self-governance, all in black.
MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT

The Pequot Indians have lived in southern New England for centuries. They frequently fought the neighboring Niantics and Narragansets for control of territory, and in turn received a fitting name. *Pequot* or *Pequod* means "Destroyers" (ENAT, 184-185); Herman Melville named Ahab's ship *The Pequod* in his novel *Moby-Dick*. The Pequot fought the British in 1630s in the Pequot War, with disastrous consequences. Massacred and enslaved, the few remaining members were freed in 1655 and settled near Mystic, Connecticut, just south of the present-day Foxwoods Reservation of the Mashantucket Pequot.

Their flag is white with the round seal in the center. The seal depicts a prominent knoll with a lone black tree silhouetted against a green-blue sky. The knoll and tree represent Mashantucket, the "much-wooded land" where the Pequot once hunted and where they kept their identity alive for hundreds of years. A white fox stands in front of the tree—in their native language, the Pequot are known as "the Fox People". The combination of fox and tree recalls the name of the reservation—Foxwoods. On the black knoll beneath the tree is a glyph—the sign of Robin Cassasinnamon, the Mashantucket Pequot's first leader after the massacre at Mystic Fort in 1637 (*The Mashantucket Pequot*, pamphlet, n.d.).

Today, with earnings from their Foxwoods casino complex, the Mashantucket Pequot may well be the most commercially successful Indian nation in the United States. In 1994 the Pequot generously donated US$10 million to the Smithsonian Institution for the planned
National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, DC. This was the largest contribution ever received for that project ("How a Decimated Tribe Turned to Casino Profits", The Times, Trenton, NJ, 19 March 1995).
The Menominee of Wisconsin, a tribe terminated by the federal government in the 1950s and restored in the 1970s, control about 222,000 acres (AID, 44). Their name derives from the Algonquin term manomin, “good berry”. The English understood it to mean “Wild Rice Men”, from their harvesting of the wild rice growing in the lakes of the region.

Today the Menominee celebrate their lands and culture on their tribal flag, which bears the circular seal of the Menominee Nation on a white background (seal provided by the Menominee Nation, Tribal Headquarters). The seal depicts a red thunderbird, one of the paramount creatures in Native American lore. The thunderbird is often drawn as an eagle, but the Menominee use a more traditional design. A white upward-pointing arrow splits its tail as a symbol of the bright future facing the Menominee people.

Two other images are placed on the seal in black, one over each of the thunderbird’s shoulders. To the left appears a map of the reservation; on the map is a pine forest. To the right is a cross-section of a log. Both the pine forest and the log symbolize the timber industry that sustains the Menominee way of life.

In a white ring around the outside of the seal are “GREAT SEAL OF THE” above, and “MENOMINEE NATION” below. The seal is edged with a narrow red band to separate it from the white field of the flag.
Miami

The Miami originally lived along the southern Great Lakes in the region comprising today’s Indiana and Ohio. By 1840 they had been pushed west of the Mississippi River into what today is Kansas. After these lands were confiscated by the federal government, the Miami were moved to a small parcel of land in modern-day Oklahoma. While their lands were allotted to individual tribal members in 1887, the Miami still maintain a sense of identity.

The Miami name may have come from the Ojibwe word meaning “people of the peninsula”, referring to their original Midwestern homeland. Another possibility is the Miami’s own word for “pigeon”. The Miami originally referred to themselves as Tightwees, which means “cry of the crane”.

The flag of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma is white with the tribal seal in the center (Letter, Barbara Nichols, Assistant Librarian, Miami Tribe, 14 November 1994). The seal is dark blue and bears the name of the tribe in red stylized letters that simultaneously form two tepees (seal provided by the Miami Tribal Headquarters). Above this tepee motif is the Miami word mamaque, “together”, below is pebkokia, “peace”; both appear in gold. Circling the blue disk is a black band bearing, in gold letters, “THE GREAT SEAL OF THE MIAMI OF OKLAHOMA”. ☑
The Miccosukee are a south Florida tribe closely related to their neighbors, the Seminole. They officially number under 150 and control some 75,000 acres (AID, 44). The Miccosukee reservation lies just west of Miami and borders the upper reaches of the Everglades, the huge swamp which served them for many years as a source of food, clothing, and shelter, and as a refuge from federal forces during the long Seminole Wars. The Miccosukee have never signed a peace treaty with the United States and never renounced their claims to much of southern Florida.

The flag of the Miccosukee is one of the few well-known Native American tribal flags (FBUS, 257-259). It has four horizontal stripes, white over black over red over yellow. As with many other Native American tribal flags with four elements, the symbolism of the four stripes points to the four major directions, white for south, black for north, red for west, and yellow for east. Many tribes also see these four colors as standing for the races of man. As such these colors are imbued with a magical essence in the eyes of many Native Americans. In the television special “The War Against the Indian” (Discovery Channel, 5 February 1995), actor Graham Greene, an Oneida, explained the four colors: yellow is for the Asian, with whom the seas are associated; black for the African who protects the air; white for the European, the keeper of the fire; and red is for the Indian who safeguards the earth.
The seal of the Miccosukee Nation, which does not appear on the flag, bears a *chickee*, the traditional dwelling of the tribes of the Everglades. Both the Miccosukee flag and seal bear a strong similarity to those of their cousins and fellow Everglades dwellers, the Seminole [see Seminole of Florida].
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

The Mille Lacs Reservation, located about 100 miles north of Minneapolis, is home to the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe (Chippewa) nation [see Leech Lake Band of the Ojibwe]. The Mille Lacs Ojibwe pioneered a potent aspect of their claim to nationhood. All vehicles registered on their reservation display license plates of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe, not of the state of Minnesota. This demonstrates that the land and the people of this small reservation are outside the purview of the government of Minnesota and answer solely to the United States. A few other tribes, such as the Comanche, the Spokane, and the Colville, have subsequently adopted their own license plates, but the Mille Lacs Ojibwe appear to have been among the first.

This small band also possesses a flag, with at least two copies known (one is at the Mille Lacs Ojibwe Tribal Headquarters). The flag is blue, with a blue disk in the center ringed in white. On the white appears "MILLE LACS BAND" in black at the top and "OF OJIBWE" at the bottom. The blue disk contains a white silhouette map of Minnesota and approximately centered on that map is a smaller blue disk, for the Mille Lacs, or "thousand lakes" of the reservation. (Minnesota itself is known as "the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes".) Crossing the horizontal axis of the larger blue disk is a brown peace pipe. Above the pipe an orange sun rises over the waters of the lake, radiating three rays upwards and symbolizing a new life and beginning for the band. Below the peace pipe, in green, is a wild rice plant, the source of sustenance for the Ojibwe and a symbol of life and independence.
MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW

When the Choctaw were forcibly evicted from their traditional homelands in Alabama and Mississippi in the 1830s, some remained hiding in the woodlands and swamps of southern Mississippi. Today, descendants of those Choctaw who refused to leave form the federally-recognized Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Indians. In 1945 the federal government accepted the constitution of the Mississippi Choctaw. They also run their own school system, operate industrial sites and resorts, and maintain autonomous law-enforcement units.

In December 1994, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians adopted the flag which flies outside the tribal office and the casino ("MBCI Tribal Flag Now Official", Choctaw Community News, Dec. [1994, p.16]). Its colors reflect Choctaw political ties over the last 500 years. The red, white, and blue vertical stripes refer to the Mississippi state flag, the colors of the United States, and the flag of France (a long-time ally of the Choctaw before their land came under British and American control). The red and yellow derive from the red and gold of Spain, recalling the early contact with the Spanish through the explorations of Hernando De Soto in 1540.

The seal of the Mississippi Choctaw symbolizes their progress and survival in the face of adversity. Within a blue circle surrounded by a yellow band, a drum and drumsticks invoke the voice of the people. The hickory stickball (lacrosse) sticks recognize the Choctaw's claim to invention of lacrosse and signify the strong will of the Choctaw to survive and prosper. On the band the legend appears in black, separated by red stars: "MISSISSIPPI BAND * OF * CHOCTAW INDIANS * 1945". 🌍
MODOC OF OKLAHOMA

The descendants of the survivors of the 1872-1873 Modoc War are the only tribe in Oklahoma that traces its history to California. The war began when the United States government forced the Modoc from their homes in northern California onto a reservation in Oregon along with their neighbors, the Klamath. After their defeat, the Modoc were exiled to the Quapaw Reservation in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). In 1909 the government allowed 51 Modoc to return to the Klamath reservation in Oregon (ENAT, 137-139); the rest remained in Oklahoma. Today, the Modoc in Oklahoma use a flag that closely associates them with their new homeland.

The Modoc flag is medium blue, as is Oklahoma’s, with “MODOC” across the top and “OKLAHOMA” across the bottom, all in yellow. Centered between these two words appears the seal of the Modoc Nation.

That seal is edged in white, recalling the “Circle of Life”—a common element in tribal flags — thicker above and thinner below. From the seal hang ten feathers (white-and-black, with tufts of yellow and red—the four primary colors in Native art) for the ten clans of the Modoc people. The central device of the seal is an eagle in natural colors flying in a light blue sky over a dark blue ocean. A patch of brown and gold coastline on the left symbolizes the historic homeland of the Modoc in northern California and southern Oregon.

The seal resulted from a sketch by Chief Bill G. Follis, Chairman of the Modoc Tribe since 1972, and has become the Modoc emblem. 

[Thanks to Jimi Abernathy of the Modoc Tribe for information about the flag and seal.]
Mohawk

The Mohawk called themselves the “People of the Place of the Flint”. Within the Iroquois League, they were the “Keepers of the Eastern Door” because of their geographic location [see Iroquois Confederacy]. Today’s Mohawk Nation spans the border between the United States and Canada. In the United States, the Mohawk are mostly on the St. Regis Reservation, just south of the Quebec-New York border; these St. Regis Mohawks are part of the Akwesasne Band.

In 1974, about 200 St. Regis Mohawks seized a 612-acre parcel of land at Eagle Bay on Moss Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, claiming original title to it. They called this land Kanienkah, which means “Land of the Flint”. The dispute was settled in 1977 when the State of New York awarded the Mohawk land along Schuyler and Altoona Lakes in Clinton County.

From the Kanienkah uprising came a flag used by Mohawk in Canada and the United States and on all Mohawk lands. It was originally described by its designer, Karoniaktjah (Louis Hall), Secretary of the Ganienkeh Council Fire: “The field of the flag is red, a warm color and one highly favored by Native Americans. The yellow disk in the center symbolizes the sun with its rays reaching the edge. The Indian head [Mohawk warrior] in the center wears a single feather, indicating oneness or unity of purpose in our drive to national and racial survival. The face is represented in brown and orange, the hair and feather in black with highlights of blue. The flag is a symbol of the unity of purpose toward economic, political, and spiritual sovereignty.
by Native Indians, such as are enjoyed by all the peoples of the world.” (Karoniaktajeh, “Ganienkeh”, *The Flag Bulletin*, XVI:4, July/Aug. 1977, cover & 108-111).

The Kanienkah flag has become common at protests throughout the lands of the entire Iroquois League. The ideals of the flag have been exemplified by other actions taken by the Mohawk. The Mohawk Nation issues its people passports, which, surprisingly, have been accepted by many border officials. This level of international acceptance of nationhood is unparalleled in other tribes, and may reflect heightened awareness stemming from wide use of the Mohawk flag. ☩
One of the latest tribes to achieve federal recognition, the Mohegan Nation (improperly pronounced Mohican) spans many centuries of interaction with the white man. Mohegan means “wolf people”. The tribe is most famous for its fictional extinction at the hand of James Fenimore Cooper in *The Last of the Mohicans* (ENAT, 142-143). The tribe did not die out. In fact, it continued to thrive in Lower New England long after Cooper’s romantic novelization. Now, with the opening of a casino, it has adopted a new flag.

The Mohegan flag is white with a royal blue border around the outer edge. In the center is the new tribal seal with “THE MOHEGAN TRIBE” arching over the seal and “MUNDU WIGO” below, all in black. *Mundu Wigo*, a favorite expression of Ms. Fidelia Fielding, one of the last fluent speakers of the Mohegan tongue, means “The Creator is good” (*What Our Symbol Means*, unattributed clipping).

The seal is a black circle ringed in red. Within it is a complex figure based upon an ancient Mohegan motif. A red dot in the center is circled by thirteen smaller white dots. These are enclosed in a white narrow border forming a square. Attached to each side of the square is a royal blue semicircle edged in white. From each corner of the square a diagonal white line aims outward, its end separating into two curves.

The four semicircular domes point to each of the four sacred directions, represent the back of “Grandfather Turtle upon whom the earth was formed”, and recall the shape of the old wigwam dwellings
of the Mohegan people. The four diagonal lines are four sacred trees and represent a "branching out towards future generations" (ibid.).

The thirteen white dots recall the thirteen moons in a lunar year, the thirteen sections on a turtle's back, and thirteen generations since Uncas, the great leader of the Mohegans (ibid.). The central red dot is the "Sacred Center Circle" of the spiritual life force felt throughout the universe.

A previous, interim flag was adopted in 1994 before the casino was built (Letter, Shirley M. Walsh, Tribal Office Manager, 4 Nov. 1994). It was blue, with the seal of the Mohegan Nation in the center—a blue disk, bearing a white wolf. Behind the wolf, in purple outline, were mountains, while the paws of the wolf rested on tufts of green grass. Circling this disk was a red band bearing in black "MOHEGAN TRIBE" at the top and "THE WOLF PEOPLE" at the bottom.

[Thanks to the Mohegan Tribal HQ, Uncasville, CT for information on the flag and seal.]
MOJAVE

Located where Nevada, Arizona, and California meet, the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation encompasses over 32,000 acres. This is the principal home of the Mojave Nation, which gave its name to the Mojave Desert and the Mojave River. The climate of the Mojave land is one of the harshest in the United States. The Mojave have coped with the temperature extremes and aridity by settling along the bottomlands of the Colorado River, where the soil is enriched by the annual floods from mountain runoff and the sun is partially blocked by the hardy piñón pines that can survive on the river’s moisture.

The Mojave first encountered the Spanish (under Hernando de Alarcón) as early as 1540 (ENAT, 143-144). The Mojave flag was inspired by this early and lengthy contact with the Spanish. It is white with a blue fringe that forms a specific element. On most flags the fringe is simply decorative, while on the Mojave flag the combination of white cloth and blue fringe recalls the blue and white beads the Spanish traded with the Mojave.

Centered on the flag is the circular tribal seal, with peaked yellow scallops around the outer edge signifying the sun, so dominant in the life of a desert people. Within the sun, on a brown ring, is “FORT MOJAVE INDIAN TRIBE” in black. Within the ring a reservation map shows the three states and the Colorado River: California (the Golden State) in yellow, Arizona (the Copper State) in a brownish orange, and Nevada (the Silver State) in blue. The states are labeled in
black: “CALIF.”, “ARIZ.”, and “NEV.” The Colorado River is light blue. At the junction of the three states lies the reservation, in dark brown. At left (on California) is a decorated lance, a bow, and an arrow, all in natural colors. At right, (on Arizona) is the head of a Mojave warrior in natural colors.
MUCKLESHOOT

King County, Washington, which claims Seattle as its biggest city, also contains the Muckleshoot Reservation, the home of the Muckleshoot Indian Nation. Like many of the tribes of western Washington, the Muckleshoot are members of the Coastal Salish who for over a thousand years have made a living from the salmon that filled the rivers. The “fishing wars” of the 1970s led to court intervention and to a significant expansion of Muckleshoot rights, land area, and financial resources. The tribal flag, adopted when the bingo hall and casino opened in 1993, has a turquoise blue field bearing the tribal seal in full color.

The seal is a circular yellow shield, recalling traditional warrior shields and edged by a narrow black ring. From the shield hang five eagle feathers with red tassels. Centered on the shield is Mt. Rainier, the dominant geographic element in the region and sacred to many local tribes. Behind Mt. Rainier is a sunburst of two colors—an inner burst of red and an outer one of orange. The rays of this outer burst shoot up into “MUCKLESHOOT” arching over the mountain in black. Below the mountain is “INDIAN TRIBE” also in black; above the entire shield is “THE GREAT SEAL” in white. Completing the design are two traditional peace pipes in orange-brown, overlapping the seal from either side, with their bowls pointing inward.

According to the tribal office, three copies of the flag have been manufactured. One is displayed in the tribal council chambers, one is in the president’s office, and one flies outdoors. The seal, when used
alone, does not usually depict the sunburst, nor does it have the legend “THE GREAT SEAL”. This simplified seal is also seen in some modified forms, such as on tribal school T-shirts, which modify the seal by replacing “INDIAN TRIBE” with “TRIBAL SCHOOL”.

[Thanks to NAVA member Harry Oswald for the photo of the Muckleshoot flag.]
MUSKOGEE (OR CREEK)

The Muskogee are the largest band of the Creek Indian nation. They were one of the "Five Civilized Tribes" uprooted from their southeastern home by President Andrew Jackson (ENAT, 74-76). In Oklahoma, following initial hardships and deprivation, the Creek nation has thrived. The tribe currently controls a small Tribal Historic Area in Oklahoma.

The Muskogee use a white flag (Retrospect, Creek Communications Department, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, 1983) bearing the latest rendition of the tribal seal (Annin & Co.). This seal dates to the 19th century and has varied with changes in artistic styles. It has always depicted a traditional plow and sheaf of wheat, which appear in full color on the flag and refer to the agricultural base of the tribe since reaching Indian Territory in the 1830s (FBUS, 259). The latest version adds a large billowy red cloud, possibly alluding to the "Dust Bowl" hardships of the 1930s, edged in white on a blue sky.

This flag of the Muskogee Nation is nearly identical to one created by the Alabama Department of History in 1940 for the dedication of the Hall of Flags in Montgomery. At the time, the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma—the Muskogee, the Seminole, the Choctaw, the Cherokee, and the Chickasaw—were without flags, but as former residents of modern Alabama, they were included in the grand opening. To permit the participation of these nations in the ceremonies, special banners were created for the five tribes. Each was white and bore a full-color tribal seal in the center. The continued use of that design may be traced back to that event ("Official Seals of the Five Civilized Tribes", The Oklahoma Chronicles, XVII:4, Oklahoma City, Dec. 1940, pp. 357-359).
Almost 150 years ago the Muskogee (Creek) flew another flag, also presented to them. The Creek nation was given a flag by Miss Alice Leeper, daughter of the Confederate agent to the Creek and other tribes [True Democrat, Little Rock, AR, 29 Aug. 1861]. The Confederate Indian Commissioner, Albert Pike, reported from the Wichita Agency on his mission to the Indians, calling the devices “new and appropriate”, and describing the flag of the Creek as “a crescent and red star in a green union and upright bars of red and white for the Creeks”. (The Confederate States of America apparently created flags for each of its allies in the Five Civilized Nations [see Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Seminole of Oklahoma]).

[Thanks to the Flag Research Center for information concerning the 1940 flags of the “Five Civilized Tribes”.]
The 19,000-acre Nambe Pueblo (NAA, 281) is home to about 400 members (REAI, 30) of the Tiwa nation, one of four tribes of Pueblo Indians along the Rio Grande (ENAT, 206-209). The others are the Keres, Tewa, and Towa.

The Nambe Pueblo flag is the tribal seal on a white background. In the center of the seal is a light brown outline drawing of a kiva, the ceremonial center of pueblo life. Two uprights of a ladder extend from the entrance hole in the roof. The kiva is an image of the actual kiva found on the Pueblo of Nambe. It is surrounded by an ornamental ring representing the “circle of life” and composed of light brown triangles on the exterior and dark brown triangles on the interior, separated by a narrow white border.

To either side of the seal appear stylized corn plants, a major source of sustenance for the pueblo and whose pollen is frequently used in religious rites. The plants are green, their pollen-bearing tips are yellow. Beneath these two corn stalks are three triangles of earth pointing apex-downward. They are light brown and edged in white and dark brown.

“NAMBÉ O-WEEN-GÉ”, meaning “village of Nambe” arches in black over the entire design. The design was proposed by a member of the tribe.

[Thanks to Michelle Mirabel of the Nambe governor’s office for information about the flag.]
The Navajo are the largest tribe in the United States. They constituted over 14% of the Native American population in the 1990 census and number more than 250,000 (NAA, 36-43). They occupy much of the Southwest, spreading across parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. "Navajo" is how the Pueblo Indians referred to the area from which the Navajo came (ENAT, 154-158), while the Spanish called them *Apaches de Navajo*, eventually shortened to Navajo.

The Navajo flag, adopted on 21 May 1968 by the Tribal Council in Window Rock, Arizona, was designed by Jay R. DeGroat, a Navajo student from Mariano Lake. It was chosen from among 140 designs (FBUS, 259-260). The flag incorporates elements from the tribal seal designed by John Claw, Jr. of Many Farms and adopted on 18 January 1952.

The seal bears a ring of 50 arrowheads representing the states of the United States (the original seal had 48; two were added when Alaska and Hawaii became states) and reflects the Navajo Nation protected by the United States. Within this ring of outward-pointing arrowheads are three concentric circles of turquoise, yellow, and red, open at the top. They represent the rainbow and the Navajo *hooghë* (hogan); the opening shows that the Navajo Nation’s sovereignty is never closed. Within the circles are two green corn plants, the sustainer of life for the Navajo, their tips yellow showing pollen, a substance used frequently in Navajo ceremonies. Within the corn are four sacred mountains surrounding a brown horse, red cow, and white sheep—for livestock, a source of wealth for the Navajo. The
mountains are white, turquoise, yellow, and black (clockwise from the top). Above them a yellow sun shines, and arching over all is “GREAT SEAL OF THE NAVAJO NATION” in black (“The Symbols of the Navajo Nation”, NAVA News, May/June 1988, 4).

The Navajo flag is a pale buff color (perhaps representing sand), bearing a map of the Navajo Nation in the center. The original area of the 1868 reservation is dark brown, while the much larger current borders are copper (sample flag provided by the Office of Property & Supply, Navajo Nation, Window Rock, Arizona).

Elements from the seal are added to the flag. Surrounding the map are the four sacred mountains—black above, turquoise below, white to the right, and yellow to the left. These colors form a recurring theme in the legends of the Navajo, beginning with the Navajo creation story. In it the world began as a black island floating in the mist. Above it were four clouds, black, white, blue (meaning turquoise), and yellow (“Mythology of the Navaho” [sic], Hobbies Magazine, Nov. 1956). The story describes the colored clouds as successive worlds and narrates the themes of birth, propagation, flood, escape, and continuing life. Arching over the mountains and map is the rainbow of red, yellow, and blue—with red outermost in reverse sequence from the seal.

Centered on the map is a white disk bearing the corn stalks and domestic animals from the seal, along with symbols of other aspects of the Navajo economy: a traditional wikiyup, oil drilling equipment, forestry, mining, and recreational fishing and hunting. All but the green and yellow corn stalks appear in black outline.

The overall image of the flag recalls an art form closely associated with the Navajo—sand painting. Many of the flag’s details, and the sand-colored background, are frequently found in these temporary art works that initially served as altars in various healing ceremonies, although many traditional Navajo object to their sale.

The orientation of the sacred mountains on the flag differs from the seal. The Navajo consider east (ha'aaah) to be where everything begins and signifies all things good and beautiful, it is the location of the white
mountain. On the seal, east and the white mountain are at the top; on the flag they are to the right.

In 1995 the flag of the Navajo nation became the first Native American tribal flag in space when astronaut Bernard Harris carried it aboard the space shuttle Discovery (“Navajo Flag Flies in Orbit Aboard Shuttle Discovery”, The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, OH, 9 Feb. 1995). Dr. Harris is an African-American physician who lived on the Navajo reservation as a child. He had asked the Navajo for a token to take into space with him and the president chose the flag. Navajo medicine men first blessed the flag by sprinkling corn pollen upon it, and were assured that the Discovery’s flight path conformed to Navajo religious belief and would fly in a clockwise direction. After its space flight, the flag was proudly flown over the Navajo National Capitol in Window Rock, Arizona. ☀️

[Thanks to Peter T. Noyes, Compliance Officer, Navajo Nation, Historic Preservation Department, for relaying important aspects of the flag’s description.]
NEZ PERCÉ

To many, the name Nez Percé immediately recalls Chief Joseph, the brilliant military strategist and leader of the Nez Percé. His statement, “I will fight no more, forever”, was the title of a book and movie about the gallant fight and flight of his people across 1,700 miles through the far west (ENAT, 158-161). They had attempted to escape the squalor and deprivation of an imposed relocation to the Nez Percé Reservation in Idaho and reach sanctuary in Canada.

Today, the Nez Percé, still located on that reservation in north-central Idaho, honors Chief Joseph, who died in 1904 without being allowed to return to his native lands. At the center of the Nez Percé flag is the tribal seal, a black-and-white drawing of a bust of Chief Joseph ringed by “NEZ PERCÉ TRIBE” above and “TREATY OF 1855”, marking the founding of the reservation, below, all in black. The seal appears in the center of a black map of the reservation, edged in golden yellow. On the map are the rivers that cross the reservation, a salmon—a major source of food to the Nez Percé, and a deer—also a traditional food source, all in golden yellow.

Above the seal, edged in red, is a golden silhouette of an eagle, the bird sacred to many Native American people. Below the seal, extending beyond the map, are four white-and-black eagle feathers edged in red. All these images are placed on a red field which recalls the suffering and death of many Nez Percé in their fight for freedom (photo provided by All Nations Flag Co.).
The colors of the central design and the field bring together the four primary Native American colors: white, black, red, and yellow (Letter, Arthur Taylor. Nez Percé Cultural Resources Center, 19 Dec. 1994). They symbolize the races of man and the directions of the compass [see Miccosukee].

The tribal name, literally “pierced noses” in French, alludes to nose pendants some wore when the French first encountered them (ENAT, 158-161). The Nez Percé call themselves Nimipu, meaning the “people”, while neighboring tribes called them Sahaptin, a term which today refers to the native language of the Nez Percé.

The earliest attribution of a standard flag to any Native American (other than the Civil War flags designed for the “five civilized nations” by the Confederacy) was to a Nez Percé. The shaman Smohalla, who founded the Dreamer cult (ANAI, 133) during the 1860s, flew a flag over his house and during ceremonies (J. W. Powell, “The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890”, 14th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, part 2, 1892-1893). Smohalla’s flag was yellow, for the grasslands all around, edged in green for the salt water seas beyond. In the center was a red oval representing Smohalla’s heart, edged in white for the home or place Smohalla dwelled. Together they symbolized “... the center. I live there” (ibid., 126). Across the top was a blue stripe for the sky, centered upon it was a single white star. “... the star is the North Star. That star never changes; it is always in the same place. I keep my heart on that star. I never change.” (ibid. 126). ☪
NORTHERN CHEYENNE

Since separating from the Southern Cheyenne (now simply the Cheyenne), in the 1830s, the Northern Cheyenne stayed along the Upper Platte River; it is still the home of the people who call themselves Tistsistas or “beautiful people”. Their Sioux neighbors named them Cheyenne, meaning “red talkers” or “people of a different speech”, because the Cheyenne language is Algonquin-based, while the Lakota Sioux speak a Siouan dialect.

The Northern Cheyenne homeland is a reservation in southeastern Montana, just east of their Crow neighbors. The Northern Cheyenne use a blue flag bearing the Indian glyph wo'he'hiv, “morning star”, in white (FBUS, 260-261). The symbol has been used for ages by the Cheyenne in their art, decoration, and painted on dancers in the religious ceremony known as the Sun Dance. It consists of a square, set on a corner, with lines the length of its sides emanating perpendicularly from the center of each side.

The wo'he'hiv recalls the great Chief Morning Star (also known as “Dull Knife”), who led his people to their current home after their defeat in the Indian wars of the Plains, and thus symbolizes hope and guidance. The flag was designed in 1964 by Hubert Bearchum during the administration of tribal president John Woodenlegs, who also chose “Wo’hih’hev” as his name for himself (e-mail, Eugene D. Little Coyote, 11 May 1997). If the flag were to employ traditional coloration, the background would be a brownish-red while the star would appear in black (ibid.).
OGLALA SIOUX

The Lakota of the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwest South Dakota (Oglala) have one of the best-known Indian tribal flags. They have also given the Sioux, and the United States, two of the most famous Indian leaders: Chief Red Cloud and Chief Crazy Horse (ENAT, 222-228).

The Oglala flag’s red field symbolizes the blood shed by the Sioux in defense of their lands and the very idea of the “red men”. A circle of eight white tepees, tops pointing outward, represents the eight districts of the reservation: Porcupine, Wakpammi, Medicine Root, Pass Creek, Eagle Nest, White Clay, LaCreek, and Wounded Knee (FBUS, 260-262). When used indoor or in parades, the flag is decorated with a deep-blue fringe to incorporate the colors of the United States into the design.

The flag was first displayed at the Sun Dance ceremonies in 1961 and officially adopted on 9 March 1962. Since then it has taken on a larger role, perhaps because of its age, clear design, and universal symbolism. The Oglala flag is now a common sight at Native American powwows, not just Sioux gatherings, and is often flown as a generic Native American flag.

In the late 1960s or early 1970s, another flag apparently represented the Oglala Sioux (clipping in the collection of the Flag Research Center). That flag has a light background bearing a red warrior’s shield, which depicts what may be a thunderbird. A pair of upward-pointing spears crosses behind the shield to form an “X”. “OGLALA SIOUX” appears above the shield and “NATION” below. (No other references to this flag have been found.)
OLEMITCHA MIWOK

California has the largest population of Native Americans among the fifty states, although most are immigrants from other states and now live in California's urban centers. Many native Californians are associated with the large number of small reservations, often called rancherias, which dot the state.

The Miwok reside in northern California, from the Pacific Ocean to the edge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains (ENAT, 136-137) and are usually divided into three geographic groups. The Valley Miwok (or Sierra Miwok) live farthest inland in the valleys and foothills of the Sierra; the Lake Miwok live around Clear Lake, north of San Francisco; the Coastal (or Olemitcha) Miwok live along the Pacific from Marin County northward. None of these three groups have tribal flags, although the Sierra Miwok and the Coastal Miwok use flags or flag-like objects (vexilloids).

The Sierra Miwok, when preparing for a celebration or religious ritual, hang a string or ribbon from the outside of their ceremonial house. Attached to this string is a series of shells, nuts, feathers, etc., collected by a clan member based upon a specific interpretation of a vision dreamed by the person doing the collecting, by a member of that person's clan, or even by an ancestor. The Sierra Miwok call that string with attachments a "flag".

The Coastal Miwok have more traditional flags, frequently made from cloth and strung from poles, that also result from dream visions.
The designs encompass natural elements that give individuals their own special essence, and represent the individuals, their place in nature, and their relationship with it.

Frequently, the flag dreamed, interpreted, and understood by an individual will continue to symbolize his descendants, perhaps for generations. The entire clan may use the same design, making minor changes to reflect their own parts in nature thus evolving the clan flag over time.

One such flag was received in a dream by the late Tom Smith, a Coastal Miwok from Bodega Bay in Sonoma County. The flag (sketch provided by The Flag Store, Sonoma) was originally white but has evolved into an ecru or pale ochre. Across the top are three stripes. The blue-green stripes represent the water or the sea. The white stripe in the middle denotes the sky. On the white stripe are a black sun, a red moon, and between them six diamonds alternating red and black, representing stars. Throughout the design, black symbolizes the male; red the female.

Below the sea and sky appear two concentric rings—the outer black, the inner red—representing the ceremonial house. It is supported by eight poles, alternating red and black, in the shape of "Y"s pointed outward. In the center, a red ring symbolizes the central fire of a ceremonial house. This design recalls the traditional Miwok house, a round structure whose roof was supported by poles and made of swamp plants, grasses, brush, or palm fronds, depending on local vegetation. To either side four vertical lines, in red and black, decrease in height from the center outward. These denote the four stages of a person's life: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

Across the base of the flag runs a row of six black and red mountains; below are three stripes of red, black, and red. The mountains signify California's coastal range; the red stripes indicate life and the black stripe stands for the individual's path through life. Small white symbols may appear across the entire bottom of the design to mark events in the clan's life and to bring harmony to the flag. Harmony is important in a
Miwok ceremonial flag because the flag represents the individual's place in nature, and the Miwok prefer a harmonious place within nature.

[Thanks to Kathleen Smith, an Olemitcha Miwok and Mr. Smith's granddaughter, for explaining the Coastal Miwok's use of flags and interpreting her clan's particular flag.]
THE ONEIDA

The Oneida, or Onyota'a:ka were among the original members of the Iroquois League [see Iroquois Confederacy]. The traditional lands of the Oneida lay between the Mohawk and the Onondaga (ENAT, 168). Their name means “People of the Boulder” or “People of the Standing Stone”. This refers to a significant rock formation found on Oneida lands.

The Oneida and the Tuscarora were the only members of the League to side with the United States during the Revolutionary War. Today the Oneida continue to seek the restoration of lost lands and an improving way of life for their kinsmen. As part of their self-awareness, the Oneida use their seal on a white flag.

Since the glory days of the Iroquois League, long before the formation of the United States, the symbol of the Oneida people has been a great tree (ibid. 169). That tree, a white pine, was selected by Deganawida, the Peacemaker, because its needles stay green forever (The Oneida Indian Nation Seal, n.d.). His vision of tribes coming together in peace under a “great tree” helped Hiawatha unite the Iroquois nations in the 16th century (ENAT, 104). According to legend, the Peacemaker instructed the Iroquois to “bury their weapons of war under the sacred roots, and never unearth them again to use on each other”.

The seal of the Oneida Nation is red, appearing frequently as a reddish-orange or even orange. It bears the great tree of the Oneida in green in the center and pictured upon it are three clan totems, a wolf, a bear, and a turtle, all in black. The tree is topped by an eagle in
black with outstretched wings. Below the eagle is "Hiawatha's Belt" (AIDD, plate 18), the wampum symbol of the Iroquois League since its creation around 1570, in its original colors of white on blue. Around the seal, on a white band edged in black, appears "ONEIDA INDIAN NATION".
ONEIDA OF WISCONSIN

Following the Revolutionary War, many Oneida in upper New York State sold their lands. In 1838 a group of these Oneida bought land from the Menominee in what is now northern Wisconsin (ENAT, 169). The Oneida of Wisconsin are today the largest concentration of Oneida in the United States.

The Wisconsin Oneida share the symbols utilized by the eastern branch of the tribe in New York [see Oneida]. Both employ the great tree, the wolf, the eagle, the bear, and the wampum belt as symbols in their tribal seals. The seal of the Wisconsin Oneida features the great tree standing atop the “turtle island” representing the earth. From either side of the tree appear the bust of a wolf and the head of a bear, the two clan totems of the Oneida people. The inner circle, a green line, forms the outline of an eagle’s head at the top, above the tree. The eagle, an important creature in Native American beliefs, serves as the contact between the Great Spirit and man. Below the turtle stretches the wampum belt of the Iroquois League [see Iroquois Confederacy].

On the white background of the flag, the seal appears in green outline with a brown wolf and bear head. The wampum belt is depicted in purple, the natural color of the quahog shells that composed it. The Oneida of New York and the Oneida of Wisconsin demonstrate their common ancestry through the unity of their emblems, despite the 1,000 miles that separate them.
OSAGE

The Ni-U-Ko'n-Ska, or “children of the middle waters” as the Osage call themselves, came originally from what is now Ohio. They were members of the same people that today include the Kaw, Omaha, Ponca, and Quapaw tribes. Osage is actually a corruption by the French of the name of the largest band, the Wazhazhe (ENAT, 170-171).

The Osage migrated from Ohio to the area of Missouri and Arkansas and by the early 1800s there were three distinct bands of Osage: the Great Osage, who settled around the Osage River; the Little Osage, who lived near the Missouri River; and the Arkansas Osage, who were part of the Great Osage until they broke off and moved to the region around the Arkansas River. Today, the Osage nation continues to thrive in Osage County, Oklahoma; their capital is the town of Pawhuska.

The flag (provided by the Osage Tribal Museum) is light blue, perhaps referring to the Sky People, one of the two clans into which the Osage were traditionally divided (the other clan was the Earth People). Centered on the flag is the circular tribal seal (Annin & Co.) in yellow with an outer band of gold. The seal depicts a large arrowhead, in light blue, pointing downward. On the arrowhead, also pointing downward, is a prayer fan composed of eagle feathers. The fan and feathers all appear in white with black details; a small red band secures the feathers to the fan holder. A red peace pipe crosses the arrowhead and fan. Above the arrowhead is “SEAL OF” and below it “OSAGE NATION”, both in black.
The Osage have also influenced the state flag of Oklahoma, which bears an "Osage shield"—that of the great Osage chief, Claremont (The Seal of the Osage Nation, flyer, n.d.).
Otoe-Missouria

The Otoe-Missouria were once part of a greater nation around the Great Lakes that comprised what are now the Ho-chunk (Winnebago), the Iowas, and the two current tribal entities, the Otoe and the Missouria. As the ancient great tribe moved ever farther south and west from their original homes, they broke apart, slowly forming the current nations. They were four separate nations by the time the white man arrived.

The final split occurred while the people lived along the banks of the Missouri. The Otoe separated from the Missouria after a quarrel between the chiefs of the combined tribes. The son of the chief of what would become the Otoe supposedly seduced the daughter of the other chief. Because of the son's actions, his tribe was driven away and became known as the Otoe, or "Lechers" (ENAT, 172). Those who remained became the Missouria, or the "People with Dugout Canoes" (ENAT, 136).

In 1829, the Missouria, after repeated attacks by nearby tribes, especially the Osage, rejoined their relatives, the Otoe, forming the Otoe-Missouria of today (ibid.). The 1,250 members (REAL, 11) are currently based in Red Rock, Oklahoma.

The clan totems of the nation—the bear, eagle, beaver, bison, deer, owl, and pigeon—ring a prayer feather at the center of its seal. All appear in natural colors on a white background. A serrated band of inner yellow triangles and outer red triangles rings the totems. Beyond this in black is "SEAL OF THE OTOE MISSOURIA TRIBE".
The wording is highlighted by five thin black lines forming the outer edge of the seal and running behind the words. At the top of the seal are a pair of feather decorations similar to those worn as warrior head-dresses. A member of the tribe designed the seal, which appears on a white flag. Although the flag's legal status is not known, it has become the *de facto* flag of the Otoe-Missouria through common usage.
OTTAWA OF OKLAHOMA

The Ottawa lived along the shore of Georgia Bay in Canada when the French explorer Samuel de Champlain first met them in 1615. A quarter-century later, pressured by the Iroquois [see Iroquois Confederation], the Ottawa moved to Green Bay in present-day Wisconsin, from which they spread into northwestern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Culturally, the Ottawa are Algonquin, the Chippewa and Potawatomi being their closest tribal relatives. Although they lived in villages and planted crops, the Ottawa were best known as traders, traversing the rivers of northeastern America as well as the Great Lakes in their canoes and following the “Moccasin Trail” well into Florida. Their name derives from the Algonquin adawa, meaning to trade or barter (The Ottawa People, Joseph H. Cash and Gerald W. Wolff, Vol. 34, Indian Tribes Series).

Supporting the French in the French and Indian War of 1754-1763, the Ottawa—under Chief Pontiac—organized strong resistance to the British power in the Great Lakes area. During the American Revolutionary War, the Ottawa sided with the British, but were still able to control most of Ohio afterwards. Increasing incursion by white settlers, however, forced the tribe to move steadily westward, first into Kansas and then onto a 12,000-acre tract of land purchased from the United States in the northeastern corner of Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), where they live today, 2000 strong (ibid.).

The seal of the Ottawa, placed on a white background to form the flag, reflects their history. The evergreen tree, which symbolizes the Tree of Life, and grassy knoll in the center recall their origins in the
northeast woodlands. The prominent canoe in the foreground alludes to their trading skills and Algonquian name. Flanking the tree are a war club, a typical weapon used in hand-to-hand combat and hunting, and an otter, since many of the Ottawa Indians of Oklahoma belong to the Otter (Negig) Clan, and recalling the basic religion of the Ottawa—the otter skin or medicine-dance religion (Seal of the Ottawa Tribe, n.d.). The water on which the canoe floats represents the source of all life and is an important sacrament in many Indian religions.

The tree is green with a brown trunk, the knoll is light green, and the sky is light blue. The light brown war club has dark brown lines and crisscrossing; toward its lower end of the war club a black-and-white eagle feather projects to the left, fastened with a dark brown strap. The otter is dark brown with light brown accents, and looks toward the left. The light brown canoe has dark brown trimmings and slats. It floats on medium blue water highlighted with a dark blue wave and light green lily pads. At the right end of the canoe, on the grass knoll, stand a few cattails in dark brown with light brown stems.

Two black rings surround the central seal. Between them “OTTAWA TRIBE” curves above it and “OF OKLAHOMA” curves below, both in black on a white background. On the central disk “UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL” curves to either side of the tree. 🕉

[Thanks to Margie Ross, Program Director at the Ottawa’s headquarters in Miami, OK, and tribal member Claudean Epperson for information on the seal and flag.]
Paiute of Utah

Located in the southwestern corner of the state of Utah, the Paiute Tribe of Utah combines five Paiute bands: the Cedar, Koosharem, Shiwwits, Kanosh, and Indian Peaks Bands. These bands, numbering some 600 individuals, represent only a small portion of the Paiute Nation, which spreads across much of the West to include Arizona, California, Nevada, and Oregon as well as Utah (REAL, 33, 41). Their name has been translated to mean either “Water Utes” or “True Utes” alluding to their past union as one people with that tribe (ENAT, 174-176).

The flag of the Paiute Tribe of Utah is white with the tribal seal in the center in red and white. That seal was adopted by tribal resolution 97-20 on 13 May 1997 and signed into law by Gena Anderson, the tribal chairwoman. The seal already had been used on the floor of the tribal gymnasium and had been incorporated into the tribe’s new headquarters in Cedar City, Utah.

That seal is a ring of two lines. On it an eagle, symbolic of the deity, flies in front of a map of Utah. In the southwestern corner an arrowhead pinpoints the tribe’s location (the Paiute are especially known for their arrowheads). To the left of the eagle are a pair of gourd rattles which represent the Paiute’s Salt song and Bird song. To the right is a hand-held drum which represents the Circle Dance song and the Hand Games song. At the base of the map are three “hand game” sticks. The seal was designed by Paiute tribal member Travis Parashonts at the request of the Paiute Tribal Council.
Hanging from the seal, making it resemble a warrior's shield, are five decorated feathers for the five bands. Arching above the top is the official name “Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah”. Inside the shield, below the “hand game” sticks, is “Federally Recognized April 3, 1980”, showing the paramount importance of that event to the tribe.
Paiute & Washoe of Reno-Sparks

The Reno-Sparks Colony, located in the westernmost corner of Nevada around the cities of Reno and Sparks, is home to 650 members of the Washoe and Paiute tribes, both known for the small numbers of tribal members living in any one location. The Washoe are mostly in central California and Nevada while the Paiute live in Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, and northern Arizona (REAI, 29). (Altogether, the Paiute have 23 reservations, colonies, and rancherias across the west and the Washoe have five separate sites.)

This colony’s flag is white, with an image on the left and lettering on the right. The image places the colony geographically and culturally. It consists of a map of Nevada in blue outline with a single blue star showing the location of the colony. A large Indian headdress with a mass of white-and-black feathers with red quills drapes over the northeastern corner of the map. The band of the headdress is medium blue, like the map and star, and features beadwork designs in black, blue, yellow, and red. Hanging from the headdress are two beadwork designs, the left with blue, yellow, and red beads and the other in yellow and black. In the lettering, “Reno-Sparks” forms a “roof” over “Indian Colony”, all in black.
The Passamaquoddy of Maine were once part of the Abenaki Confederacy, an alliance of Algonquin-speaking tribes in the northeastern part of what is now the United States and the nearby regions of Canada (ENAT, 178). Abenaki means "the people who dwell at the sunrise" or "people of the dawn". Passamaquoddy means "those who pursue the pollack", an important Atlantic food fish. The Confederacy has been reawakened since the relighting of its fires in Restigouche, Quebec, home of the Micmac people (Margaret Dana, letter dated May 15, 1997). The members of the Confederacy are the Abenaki, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot nations.

The current flag of the Passamaquoddy people was adopted—on a 90-day trial basis—in June, 1995 (Passamaquoddy Tribal Council resolution, June 8, 1995). Because that trial period was never followed by other tribal legislation, the flag is considered official.

That new design (called the "scroll") is a white flag bearing the new seal of the Passamaquoddy nation. Around a central red circle, doubly edged in black, are four groups of five stick figures in black, holding hands. Between these figures are the letters N, W, and S, in black, representing compass points, and a black star edged in white and black, representing the eastern location of Passamaquoddy lands. These denote the unity of the Passamaquoddy "with all Native Americans from the North, South, East, and West" (Interpretation of the Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy's Tribal Logo, unsigned, undated letter, Pleasant Point Reservation, ME).
The red “Circle of Life” recalls the “Red Race” (ibid.). Within it are four plants depicted in yellows and greens, representing the eastern woodlands. Black dots form an inner ring with the plants. Curving above the dots is “PASSAMAQUODDY TRIBE” and “PEOPLE OF THE DAWN” below, all in black. Centered on the circle is a scroll and a “dripping feather” representing the 1980 settlement of land claims with the federal government. The scroll depicts a sunrise over the land at Passamaquoddy Bay and the sun’s reflection on its waters, in natural colors. These images affirm the aboriginal rights of the people and a recognition that this bounty was given the Passamaquoddy by the Great Spirit.

A previous, unofficial flag predated the settlement of land claims with the federal government. This dark blue flag had many elements carried over to the current flag, including a large central yellow disk signifying the sun, the compass points and star, and the same words. Its central image, however, was a white pollack skewered by a pair of upward-pointing fishing spears, usually in black and forming a rough ‘X’.

The Passamaquoddy delegate to the Maine legislature uses special automobile license plates bearing the tribal seal. The flag of the Passamaquoddy also flies at sea. Fishing boats belonging to members of the tribe frequently wear the tribal flag when plying the waters off Maine, in the sole known use of a tribal banner as a maritime ensign.
PAWNEE

The Pawnee were among the first United States Indians to encounter Europeans, starting with Francisco de Coronado in 1541. More recently, the Pawnee have migrated from their original homeland in what is now Texas to the Great Plains, ranging from Oklahoma through Nebraska.

Today the Pawnee live in Oklahoma.

The Pawnee name is derived from the Caddoan pariki, "horn", describing their unique hairstyle, an upright curved scalplock (ENAT, 179-181). The Indians of the Plains referred to the Pawnee as "wolves" for their cunning and courage. This term translated into Pawnee as "Men of Men".

The current flag of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, dating from 1977, reflects a long association with the United States (The Flag of the Pawnee Indians—Pawnee Nation, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, unsigned letter, n.d.). It is blue and bears a small stylized representation of a U.S. flag in the upper part of the flag.

The central symbol, a wolf’s head, appears above a crossed tomahawk and peace pipe, all in red. The wolf recalls the tribe's Plains name, while the other images represent peace and war. The wolf, tomahawk, and pipe all have narrow white borders. Below are six white arrowheads for the six wars in which Pawnee have fought in the service of the United States: the Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, both World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The U.S. flag has a ring of thirteen six pointed white stars.
As a whole, the flag means "Pawnee Indians, in peace and war, always courageous and always loyal to America". Unique to the Pawnee flag are the specifics of the pole and finial atop the pole. The main Pawnee flag flown at Tribal Headquarters in Pawnee, Oklahoma, is mounted on an old-style Pawnee lance with a genuine flint spearhead. The shaft of the lance has a special strip of buckskin with intricate beadwork designs along the length of the staff. Attached to the spearhead at the top are four real eagle feathers, representing the four bands of the Pawnee.

(The bald eagle is a protected species in the United States; hunting it is illegal. However, out of respect for the beliefs and customs of the Native Americans, the Interior Department and the National Parks Service collect all bald eagles that die from natural causes, disease, or poaching and give the feathers to the various tribes for use in their ceremonies and customs.)

On Homecoming Days, Armistice Day, Christmas, and occasions of state, the Pawnee attache a sprig of cedar to the staff. Cedar, used in sacred ceremonies, is a token of peace and the prayers of the Pawnee people. The Pawnee consider their flag a sacred symbol—under Pawnee law it must never be desecrated or allowed to touch the ground. ☭
The Penobscot of eastern Maine are one of the two eastern-most Native American peoples. *Penobscot*, an Algonquin word meaning “the rocky place” (ENAT, 183-184), refers to the rocky falls of the Penobscot River—home to the Penobscot for centuries.

The flag of the Penobscot tribal government is white with the tribal seal in black (Letter, Brenda Fields, Tribal Administrator, 16 Feb. 1995). The circular seal shows the bust of a Penobscot warrior, possibly Sockalexis, in profile, surrounded by an ornate border that resembles three tombstones, each forming a cross. On the arm of each cross is the name of a particular virtue—“PURITY”, “FAITH”, and “VALOR”—the three comprising the tribal motto. In a ring around the bust is the name of the tribe in English and in Penobscot “PENOBSCOT INDIAN NATION” and “BUR NUR WURB SKEK”. Behind the warrior is a pine forest.

The three crosses symbolize the Holy Trinity (Interview by Dave Martucci with Wayne Mitchell, Penobscot Tribal Land Use Officer). Each cross also carries a year: under “PURITY” is “1605”, the year English Captain Weymouth kidnapped five Penobscots and took them to England; under “FAITH” is “1687”, the year the first Catholic mission was established on Indian Island; under “VALOR” is “1612”, the year of the war with the Eastern Abenaki. At the base of each of the three crosses, outside the circle, are tree branches representing tribal growth.

Two dates appear in a ring surrounding Sockalexis’ portrait. At the top is “1669”, commemorating the war with the Iroquois, at the bottom is “1749”, marking the treaty of peace with Massachusetts.
that ended King George’s War. The twelve flint fire starters in the ring symbolize the unity of the tribe. The entire seal has a serrated edge, a whole circle to denote the sun.

In addition to the tribal government flag, the Penobscot people have a “tribal flag” which hangs in the Tribal Council Chambers (ibid.), and has been described as multi-colored, bearing a wíkiyup and other symbols. ☛
PEORIA

The Peoria of Oklahoma have a long and complicated history. The Peoria are a band of the Illinois tribe, which was considered one of the westernmost parts of the Algonquin people. By 1833, continued encroachment by the white man forced the Peoria, along with their fellow band of Illinois, the Kaskaskias, to move west to present-day Nebraska and Kansas. There they joined with two Miami bands, the Weas and the Piankashaws. These four bands, later relocated to what is now northeastern Oklahoma, are now known as the Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma (Official Emblem of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, flyer, n.d., Peoria Tribe of Oklahoma).

The flag of the Peoria of Oklahoma reflects this history. The seal of the Peoria Nation appears on a white background. On a red disk, which recalls the trials of the ancestors of the Peoria, is a large arrowhead, colored white on the flag but depicted in natural colors when used as a seal (Annin & Co.). The large arrowhead, pointing downward as a sign of peace, represents the present generation of the Peoria people and their promise to work as individuals and as a tribe to cherish, honor, and preserve the heritage and customs left to them by preceding generations. The two emblems—the disk and the arrowhead—combine to mean that the Peoria will live in peace but will be suppressed by no one.

Four arrows cross the large arrowhead to form two overlapping “X”s: turquoise for the Piankashaws and the native soil; red for the Peorias and the sun; blue for the Weas and the waters; and green for the Kaskaskias and the grass and trees. The colors act as a reminder
that the soil, sun, waters, and plants are gifts of the Great Spirit and
should not be taken for granted. The arrows promise future generations
that the spirit of a united Peoria people cannot be broken and that its
heritage and customs will never be forgotten.

From the red disk hang five white-and-black eagle feathers, one for
each elected member of the Peoria Tribal Business Committee. They
are the chief, second chief, the secretary-treasurer, and the first and
second councilmen. The emblem was designed by tribal member Alice
Giles Burgess and approved by the committee on 29 January 1983.
It was presented to the tribal membership at the annual meeting the
following March. ☞
Living in southern Alabama, the Poarch Creek Indians number over 2,000. Their flag was created in a collaborative effort between John Kemp, Buford Rolin, Katherine Sells, and Creek Chairman Eddie L. Tullis, and may well be the only tribal flag with a “Registered Trademark”(®) symbol on it.

In the poem “Tribal Symbol”, tribal member Larry Jackson describes the flag:

Red stands for the red sticks a fighting man
He would fight to the death for his land
The white in the feather meant a friendly clan
They lived near the rivers and played in the sand
The circle of gold stands for the place we live
With lovely sunset
And the land has so much to give
Green is for the color of the corn and the trees
Corn for life and trees for seed
Direction of travel is shown by the logs
No matter which you take
It must come from the heart
The line of red is blood in the vein,
Throughout all the nations, all is not the same
The feathers are the nations, nations of two
Lifestyles are different but the words are true

Larry Jackson
The tribe’s seal appears on the medium green background of the flag. The seal consists of a black-edged white cross with pointed ends pointing in the four cardinal directions. The Poarch Creek call the bars of this cross “logs”. A yellow ring, edged in black, overlays the cross. In the ring curve “POARCH” above and “INDIANS” below, separated by small red circles. Within the ring, on the center of the horizontal “log”, is “CREEK”. The lettering is red, in a red typeface trade-named “Southern”. A small black @ appears to the right of the lower end of the vertical “log”.

The cross and the ring fit exactly inside an imaginary square, set on its corner, with each side roughly one-third the length of the flag. Red stripes, forming the middle third of the “logs”, recall the red saltire (diagonal cross) of Alabama. The vertical stripes start near the center of the disk, while the horizontal stripes start only at the end of the yellow outer ring.

At the ends of the horizontal “log” hang two feathers. The feather at left is black with a red central element and white accents and has a jagged red trim at the top; it is attached to the horizontal log with three beads of red, white, and red. To the left side of the feather are two black-bordered colored beads—the top one yellow, the bottom one red—attached with thin black ties to the left end of the log. At the bottom of the feather are two more black-bordered beads, attached with ties to the lower tip of the feather; the upper bead is red, and the lower bead is yellow.

The feather at right is also black with white accents but has a white central element and a white jagged trim at the top; it is attached to the horizontal log with three beads of yellow, red, and yellow. To the right and at the bottom of the feather is the same arrangement of beads as on the left feather, but with reversed colors.

According to the Poarch Creek, “the circle symbolizes the Circle of Life; the green background stands for the forest and the green corn from which the Creek gathered their subsistence; the four logs mark the four directions. The white feather represents the white or friendly Creek town and clans, while the red feather denotes the red warrior
towns and clans. The red strips symbolize the blood of the Creek spent in their efforts to maintain their homelands. The red and yellow beads stand for trading with neighbors.”

[Thanks to Daniel McGhee and Lori Findley from the Community Relations Department of the Poarch Creek for the explanation for the symbolism of their tribal flag and the poem.]
QUAPAW

The Quapaw, or Ogahpah, "downstream people", once lived along the west banks of the Mississippi, south of Sioux tribes. The Algonquin and French called them Arkansas, meaning "Bow People of the South Wind", from which the river and the state derive their names. The Quapaw once followed the lifestyle of the Plains Indians and the bison (buffalo) was the essential creature in their world.

The flag, adopted since 1995, places the tribal seal in the center of a field divided dark blue on the left and red on the right. Above the seal in white is "O-GAH-PAH", the tribe's name in the native Siouan tongue. (A former version used a solid field of dark blue and included "QUAPAW TRIBE" below the seal in white.)

The roughly circular seal (Annin & Co.) represents an Indian shield. It bears an American bison in natural colors in the center, standing on a green base under a light blue sky. Ringing the bison is a rough edging, in white/dark red/white, representing rawhide. Hanging from top, bottom, and sides of the shield are four eagle feathers denoting the four compass directions.
The Quileute belong to the Northwest Coast peoples whose advanced and diverse cultural groups predate by several millennia the European exploration of North America. Their tribal lands on the Olympic Peninsula near La Push, Washington, overlook the Pacific Ocean about 40 miles south of Cape Flattery, the state's northwestern tip. A principal aspect of their culture was the killer whale (orca) hunt—a many-day ordeal using mussel-shell-tipped harpoons, spruce-root ropes, and an ocean-going canoe of red cedar.

The Quileute Tribal Council adopted the flag after a contest in the late 1980s, nearly a century after federal recognition in 1889. Its background is light gold or beige. "Quileute Tribe" in heavy black cursive script stretches on a black-bordered red banner across the top of the central design, which is contained in an irregular semi-circle with the light gold (or beige) sky above and the blue ocean below.

A large black canoe dominates the lower part of the ocean. Two angled red stripes mark each end, between them appears "Since 1889" in thin white cursive script. At either end of the canoe a stylized white killer whale is outlined and highlighted in with heavy black borders. In the background are two islands in light brown, with dark brown highlights and green fir trees and grassy moss. Between and above the islands float three black eagles under billowing white clouds. Below the central image is "La Push, Washington" in heavy black cursive script.
Each design element is important to the identity of Quileute people. The ocean provided not only food, but clothing, tools, and spiritual cleansing as well. Of the five men's societies, the strongest was dedicated to the whale. The canoe—the essential means of transportation for all Northwest coast peoples—represents the Quileute's past way of life brings them together as a people in the present. The islands, A-KA-Lat or James Island and Little James Island, lie just offshore of the mouth of the Quileute River. A-KA-Lat, site of the oldest Quileute villages, was also used as a fortress and as a burial site for chiefs. Eagles often fly over A-KA-Lat and nest there.

[Thanks to Ms. Barbara Bocek from the Quileute Historic Preservation Office for the picture and description of the flag and Mr. Allen Black for important details.]
The Quinault people, members of the Coastal Salish, have lived along the Pacific coast of Washington for perhaps thousands of years, enjoying rich hunting, abundant fishing, and a mild climate (NAA, 285).

As with most Coastal Salish, fishing was the Quinault’s primary occupation, using enormous canoes. Explorers Lewis & Clark described the canoes as “upward of fifty feet long, and will carry 8,000 to 10,000 pounds’ weight, of from 20 to 30 persons . . .”. The seal of the Quinault Nation celebrates and commemorates these great canoes. The seal, which appears on the plain white field of the flag, is a light blue ring with “QUINAULT” at the top, “NATION” at the bottom, and “INDIAN” across the center on a light blue bar, all in white.

The upper section of the seal shows a Pacific coastal island scene, with green trees and black-and-white landscape elements. In the lower section, a brown eagle with outstretched wings—symbol of fishing prowess to many Pacific Northwest tribes—flies above a large brown Quinault canoe. The eagle and canoe contrast with an orange setting sun which signifies the home of the Quinault in the westernmost reaches of the continent. Elements in both portions are set on a very light blue background. ©
RED LAKE OJIBWE

The Red Lake Ojibwe nation resides in north central Minnesota on a reservation named for the large lake in its center. That lake—actually two, Upper Red Lake and Lower Red Lake, connected by a very narrow mouth—is the central element of the tribal seal [see Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe].

Placed on a white flag, the circular seal of the Red Lake Ojibwe depicts an accurate image in blue of these lakes and the rivers that feed them. Four blue stars next to the lake may represent reservation towns. Below the lakes is a grove of conifers, the pine forests of northern Minnesota. These elements are surrounded by a ring edged in red on both the inside and outside. Around the top of the ring appear seven totem animals of the Ojibwe, which also reflect the area’s wildlife: the bear, turtle, catfish, otter, eagle, weasel, and kingfisher, all in black. In the lower ring appears “RED LAKE NATION” in red. Two white-and-black eagle feathers hang from the lower left and lower right, turning the seal into an image recalling the warrior shields of the past.
Along South Dakota's southern border lies the sixth most populous reservation in the United States, the Rosebud Reservation, home to more than 9,600 members of various bands of the Lakota people (AIA, 43). It takes its name from Rosebud Creek.

The reservation claims one of the oldest tribal flags of any United States Indian nation, designed in a contest in the early 1960s (James R. Aberg, "Symbols of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe", The Flag Bulletin, XXXVI:2, Mar./Apr. 1997, 64-71). For a long time after the adoption of the design, the flag existed solely on paper because its complex graphics made it too expensive to manufacture.

Eventually, tribal elders approached Julie Peneaux, Secretary of the Rosebud Tribal Office, who sewed as a hobby and agreed to make a flag from the design. Peneaux is still the sole manufacturer of Rosebud Sioux flags, having sewn six (Letter, Julie Peneaux, 11 May 1995).

In an elaborate design, twenty red "roses" in an oval ring represent the twenty Rosebud Sioux communities. Each rose bears a white Sioux tepee in its center, oriented outwards (Explanation of the Design of the Rosebud Sioux Flag, pamphlet, n.d.). The ring of roses, which is slightly wider than tall, encircles a three-layered rainbow-colored diamond, or "god's eye" figure, that stands for the reservation itself. The innermost layer is yellow, the middle blue, and the outer red. A blue cross in the center of the diamond, on white, recalls the pipe of peace and the extension of friendship to all who come to the reservation.
(flag provided by the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Headquarters). The cross is actually a *bule*, two crossed lines representing the number four.

Arching over the diamond is “ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE” in blue, flanked by a pair of white-and-black eagle feathers above a pair of orange peace pipe heads; below it is “ROSEBUD, SOUTH DAKOTA”, also in blue. The feathers signify achievement of goals—an eagle feather was once only worn as a symbol of a great deed; the peace pipes allude to the peaceful relations between the tribe and the United States. Around the outer edge is a red border of small triangles, echoing the traditional tepee with red triangles around the bottom which welcomed visitors seeking food and shelter.

The white field, for purity, represents north, from which the snows come. Red, a ceremonial color for thunder, lightning, and forms of plant and animal life, refers to the sunrise and east. Yellow, for the land of sunshine, a nickname for South Dakota, signifies south. Blue recalls water, wind, the sky, clouds, the moon, the day, and west. Black stands for the night and the mysteries of life. Although orange is without specific significance, it joins the colors red and yellow, thus bringing together the land and the plants and animals that dwell upon it. ☿
Sac & Fox of Iowa

The Sac, or Sauk, an Algonquin word meaning "yellow earth people" and the Fox, or Mesquaki, meaning "red earth people" originated in what is now Illinois and Wisconsin (ENAT, 210-212). Today the two tribes, which have been close allies and friends since joining in 1734 to repulse attacks from an alliance of the Ojibwe and the French (ENAT, 86-87), occupy three distinct reservations in Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

The Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa have a reservation in central Iowa known as the Mesquaki Indian Settlement. This Iowa band possesses a flag of simple design but complex meaning. A simple bicolor of green over red, it signifies that the two nations have come together as one people (sketch and explanation provided by the Sac & Fox Tribal Headquarters).

Green symbolizes life, peace, and spring, and represents the "peace chief", one of the three members of the tribal authority. Red stands for death, war, autumn—a time when much of life fades away, and the "war chief". Traditionally, when war was imminent, tribal peace pipes would have their traditional white feathers replaced by red feathers. (The third member, the shaman or "ceremonial chief" is not represented.)
SAC & FOX OF OKLAHOMA

The seal of the largest of the three Sac and Fox bands [see Sac & Fox of Iowa] honors two noted members: the athlete Jim Thorpe and the great Chief Black Sparrow Hawk. The circular seal (provided by the Sac & Fox Tribal Library) bears a black and white depiction of a sparrow hawk with a shield on its chest. The colors refer to the two social classes of the tribe, the Oskoła and the Kisko‘a (Letter, Juanita Goodreau, Library Assistant, 6 Jan. 1995). The shield contains symbols of the four countries with which the Sac & Fox had alliances: Spain, France, Britain, and the United States.

Above the hawk emblem, five Olympic rings recall the great Sac athlete Jim Thorpe, considered one of the finest athletes of all time. A black ribbon arches overhead between the tips of the hawk’s wings. On it appears MA KAI TAI ME SHE KIAKIAK, “Black Sparrow Hawk”, in white (The Sac & Fox Emblem, pamphlet, n.d.). A red band encircling the seal reads “SAC & FOX” above, and “NATION” below, in white. The seal is centered on a white field to form the flag.

Chief Black Sparrow Hawk, or simply Black Hawk, opposed the forced eviction of his Sac people from their lands straddling the Mississippi River at the village of Saukenuk, now Rock Island. In 1832, aided by the shaman Winnebago Prophet, Black Hawk rallied various tribes to his cause. He led this alliance in a desperate but ultimately losing war against the whites; he is now honored as a man of principle and honesty who knew what was right for his people. Jim
Thorpe in his own life had to overcome adversity to achieve greatness, had it taken away from him, yet continued on, never giving up. The two men represent great ideals for the Sac & Fox and the seal and flag pay tribute to them.
On the northern border of the city of Scottsdale, Arizona, the Salt River Reservation is home to 5,000 members of the Pima and Maricopa tribes (AID, 41). The Salt River Community and its larger companion to the south of Phoenix, the Gila River Community, were once administered as a single unit. In 1961, the two communities split and function now as separate entities.

The Salt River Pima and Maricopa have two flags—one de jure, with the true seal of the community and one de facto, with a simplified version. The true community seal can be seen throughout the reservation; the tribal headquarters displays a large replica of the seal at its main entrance. On a white ring are “GREAT SEAL” at the top and “SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY” along the bottom, all in black. Black upward-pointing arrows separate these phrases (seal provided by the Salt River Tribal Headquarters).

Within the ring is a depiction of the “man in the maze”, a recurring symbol in Pima art of man’s journey through life. His life begins at the center of the maze and ends when he reaches the top. As he overcomes obstacles represented by the maze he becomes stronger and wiser. The man and the maze walls are black on a yellow background. This image also appears on the flag of the counterpart reservation [see Gila River Pima & Maricopa].

The flag of the Salt River Community is royal blue with a variant of the seal in the center. In this simplified seal, “SALT RIVER” and “ARIZONA” appear on a yellow disk, surrounding a stylized symmetrical
maze image in black, without the "man in the maze". Simplification was likely done for economic reasons since the actual seal would be very expensive to reproduce accurately. 

[Thanks to NAVA member Harry Oswald for the photo of the flag.]
SAN CARLOS APACHE

The largest of the Apache reservations, covering some 1,900,000 acres, is the San Carlos Reservation east of Phoenix, Arizona. The great Chief Cochise was taken there, along with his followers, after his surrender in 1873 (GAI, 122-123). Geronimo led his followers away from this reservation when they broke for freedom from the oppression of the U.S. military in 1881 and 1884 [see Chirakawa & Warm Springs Bands of Apache of the Fort Sill Reservation].

The Apache bands on the reservation include the Aravaipa, Chirikawa, Coyotero, Mimbreno, Mogollon, Piñaleno, San Carlos, and Tonto (ibid. 123). Their reservation was created in 1871 and reduced five separate times to accommodate white miners seeking copper and silver, and Mormons whose need for water led to the reduction around the Gila Valley.

The San Carlos Apache place their tribal seal on a white background to create a tribal flag. The seal celebrates the natural beauty of the lands of the San Carlos Apache and the major economic resources of its residents. The seal is circular, surrounded by a serrated black edge and a red ring. An inner white ring with an orange border shows "APACHE TRIBE" and "SAN CARLOS RESERVATION", separated by five-pointed stars, all in black. Central to the seal is a geographic tableau of the reservation showing the mountains, a lake, and two plants of the reservation—the piñón pine and the saguaro cactus—all in natural colors. Below this scene is a Hereford steer's head, signifying the importance of cattle ranching to the Apache. Next to the head are mining symbols, a pick and shovel on one side, and a piece of peridotite ore on the other.
A second version of this flag hangs in the "Gallery of Nations" at the Indian Center Museum, part of the Mid-America All-Indian Center in Wichita, Kansas. This version, supplied to the museum by the San Carlos Apache Nation, bears a red outline map of the reservation behind the seal, as on another Apache flag [see White Mountain Apache]. A red border around the flag separates four colored bars, one on each edge of the flag—the left bar is yellow, the top is white, the bottom is dark green, and the right is black.
SANTA CLARA PUEBLO

Four tribes constitute the eastern Pueblo Indians along the Rio Grande River in central New Mexico: the Keres [see Nambe, Zia], the Tiwa, Tewa, and Towa (ENAT, 206-209). (The western Pueblo are the Hopi and the Zuni.) The 2,500 residents of the nearly 50,000 acres of the Santa Clara Pueblo belong to the Tano-Tewa, or Tewa tribe.

Flying over the Pueblo of Santa Clara is a flag designed by a former governor of the pueblo, Mr. Edwin Tafoya. He presented the design as a gift to his tribe. On a white background light blue “step” designs appear in each corner and centered on each edge. The corner designs have four steps, the edge designs have two. These patterns recall the pueblo architecture and adobe structures of the Indian nations of New Mexico.

Santa Clara is famous for pottery with distinctive black and white coloring. At the flag’s center is a wedding vase in black bearing a white outline of a bear claw, symbolizing strength and protection. A “water serpent” image, common to Santa Clara pottery, surrounds the wedding vase in black. Curving around the serpent and vase in black appears “SANTA CLARA” above and “PUEBLO” below.

As manufactured locally, the flag is nearly square (approximately 1.2 long by 1 tall), rather than the rectangular proportions common in commercially-manufactured flags.
The Santee Sioux provided the Dakotas with their names. While other Sioux refer to themselves as Lakota or Nakota, the Santee call themselves Dakota. All three terms mean "allies" (ENAT, 222-228). The Santee in Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota are part of a group located in several reservations in

The flag of the Santee Sioux of Nebraska is reported to be dark blue with the seal in full color. The seal features a bald eagle in brown and white with outspread wings and facing left, in a position reminiscent of the arms of the United States (The Smithsonian Museum of the Native American, Resource Room, New York). The eagle clasps a black arrow in its talons and appears above a red peace pipe. On the chest of the eagle is a yellow shield in the shape of a downward-pointing arrowhead with the bust of a Sioux chief in full headdress, facing right. Arching above the eagle is "SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE", below it is "OF NEBRASKA", both in blue. All elements appear on a white disk recalling the shields of the warriors of the Sioux Nation.
SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF OJIBWE (OR CHIPPEWA)

In northeastern Michigan, based on 293 acres of reservation land, is the Sault Ste. Marie Ojibwe (or Chippewa), the largest of the Michigan tribes with a tribal enrollment of over 24,000.

The Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa flag has a black background, which is unusual for any flag. It bears a colorful seal replete with symbolism. The seal is divided into quarters, each of a different color, representing a compass direction and bearing an animal symbolizing a particular clan. At the center of the seal is a stylized turtle on whose shell are a crane and an ash-tree branch. The tribe describes its flag's symbolism (*Wabun-Anong*, pamphlet, June 1982) in this way:

A teal-blue body of a turtle, completely circular and edged in aquamarine, forms the center of the seal.

"TURTLE represents to our people the Mother Earth we stand upon, sustaining us with constancy and generosity and is the central part of the symbol... We are cared for by our Earth Mother with her blessings of food, clothing, shelter, and medicine... We give thanks to Earth Mother, the direction below us... Turtle emerged from the water with Earth on its back, providing a living place for human beings and all creatures between sky and water. Turtle is medium of communication, the emissary of beings of this world and time and beings of another world and dimension of time. Turtle symbolizes thought given and thought received and represents clarity of communication between beings. Aqua-green symbolizes plant life and growing things."
On the back of the turtle a black crane with white body and wing accents prepares to take flight toward the west, and to its left is a mountain-ash branch in black.

"CRANE represents our people’s eloquence of leadership and direction. The voice of the Crane is unique and infrequent. When Crane speaks, all listen. Crane is the spokesperson for the clans. MOUNTAIN ASH TREE is the sacred tree of the Anishinabek ["our People"] . . . able to survive in places where other trees cannot. Its leaves, berries, and bark are used for medicines. The Mountain Ash is used as an example for strength, durability, and strong character."

Radiating from the central turtle are four arc sections (quarters) separated by aquamarine lines. The quarter to the east is yellow with a black rabbit with white highlights and bordered in red.

"EAST, the direction of the rising sun, is thought of as a Grandfather personifying the winds and natural phenomena of that direction. East is the direction of the physical body. It symbolizes all that is new in the creation, like all newborn creatures, including man. Like the rising sun, a new day is brought to light. So it is with all things. Knowledge is brought to consciousness and like the circling of the sun, the seasons change. East is the time of change. It is the spring, the time of change from blackness to beauty. It is the sun breaking over the horizon.

"RABBIT represents Manabozho, a messenger of Kitche Manitou [Great Spirit]; an intermediary on earth among different species of beings; and an advocate for the Anishinabek, to whom he imparted the gift of knowledge. From the east leading to the west is a YELLOW PATH. It is said by our elders that this is the path of life, the path of the Great Warrior, the Sun. We give thanks to our eastern Grandfather."
The quarter to the south is red with a black eagle with white accents.

"SOUTH, a continuation of our circle of life, is the direction of maturing life, like young men and women. It is the time of year we call summer, the time we call mid-day, and the time of day the eagle soars. South is the direction of full understanding.

"EAGLE receives from Kitche Manitou the gifts of strong wings, keen sight, and proud bearing. Eagle symbolizes courage and pre-knowledge. His sphere is the mountains and the heights. RED symbolizes earth and fire. We give thanks to our southern Grandfather."

The quarter to the west is black with a black deer with white highlights and edged in yellow.

"WEST, the direction of the setting sun, is the time of gradual change as from daylight to darkness, from life to death. It is evening, the change of life in midagedness. It is change like the leaves or the hair on our heads from natural colors to the likes of natural frost. West is the time of full maturity. It is the time of insight. West is the direction of the emotional part of ourselves.

"DEER receives from Kitche Manitou the gift of grace. Deer symbolizes to our people love. BLACK symbolizes change from this life. We give thanks to our western Grandfather."

The quarter to the north is white with a black bear standing upright with white highlights and edged in red.

"NORTH is the time of our elders, our old people. It is a time of wisdom, so much like the answers found in our dreams. It represents the night, as a time called midnight, and a time called winter when things are as unpredictable as our dreams. North is representative of those things that are positive, a time of snow and purity."
“BEAR received from Kitche Manitou the gifts of courage and strength. Bear is representative of all medicine powers in creation. Claws dig medicine roots. Bear passes knowledge on through dreams, visions. WHITE symbolizes spirituality. We give thanks to our northern Grandfather.”

Enclosing the seal are three thin rings—the inner green, the middle yellow, and the outer red.

“RAINBOW is the beautiful bridge to the spirit world and the colors of the universe. Red is symbolic of earth and fire. Yellow is the path the sun crosses through the day. Blue is symbolic of sky and waters. From wherever we stand upon our Earth Mother we have companionship of these four directions . . . The direction above recognizes the daytime and nighttime skies of our creation. This is where we look to acknowledge the Great spirit, the Creator. The Creator gives us everything we know . . . Therefore, our greatest acknowledgment is to the Creator of all the universe. We give a grateful thanks.”

A new logo recently adopted by the tribe features the crane taking flight toward the east and carrying a mountain-ash branch in its beak. The image is surrounded by a ring outside which curve to the upper left “Sault Ste. Marie Tribe” and toward the lower right “of Chippewa Indians”, separated by two turtles. The entire logo is usually represented in black or gold. ♦

[Thanks to Jessica Jeffreys at the tribal headquarters in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, for the pamphlet with the flag’s description.]
SEMINOLE OF FLORIDA

The Seminole Nation consists of three bands based in Florida (NAA, 251) and one large group forcibly removed to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) during the early 1800s [see Seminole of Oklahoma]. The Seminole, whose name means “runaway”, are actually a composite tribe made up of members of many nations that fled the onslaught of the white man from their lands in Georgia and surrounding states. These Indians were supplemented by escaped black slaves granted sanctuary by the Seminole, a practice which brought about the Seminole Wars.

Those Seminole who remained in Florida continued to fight the government of the United States from their strongholds in the Everglades. An infamous episode of the 1830s involved a flag of truce carried by their leader Osceola. General Thomas Jessup tricked Osceola with an offer of peace talks and imprisoned him instead. A peace treaty between the United States and the Seminole of Florida was not signed until 1934. The three bands of Seminole located in Florida today are the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Seminole Nation of Florida, and the Oklewaha Band of Seminole Indians.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida adopted a flag after a contest in August, 1966, to symbolize their sovereignty over the lands they have occupied for almost 300 years. It placed the tribal seal on a dark blue field, backed by a cross of small red, white, and blue chevrons forming an “X” and recalling the state flag of Florida, a red “X” on a white background (FBUS, 261-263).
That 1966 flag has been replaced by the current flag, designed by Chief Jim Billie (NAVA News, Sept./Oct. 1993, 3). The flag is similar in design to the flag of the Miccosukee, neighbors of the Seminole's Big Cypress Reservation in south-central Florida. Both flags have four horizontal stripes of white, black, red, and yellow [see Miccosukee]. The Seminole of Florida add their tribal seal, which is very similar to the Miccosukee seal, to those stripes.

Centered on the seal is a chickee in black and red, the traditional dwelling of the Seminole built on palmetto stilt, with a campfire below it. Above the chickee in black reads “TRIBAL COUNCIL”. Surrounding the center, and separated by a black ring, is a band reading “SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA” above and “IN GOD WE TRUST” below, separated by small black dots, all in black. (The former seal also depicted the chickee, as well as a warrior in a canoe and a palmetto.)

The new flag flies prominently outside the Seminole bingo parlor and casino along U.S. Route 441 near Fort Lauderdale. A row of at least two dozen flags, alternating United States and Seminole, runs the length of the parking lot. Also in the Okalee Indian Village, the smaller of the two main Seminole reservations, is the capitol of the Seminole Tribe. In front of an eight-story office tower, three poles fly the United States flag in the place of honor, the flag of the Seminole, and the flag of Florida. It is unusual for a sovereign Indian nation to display the local state flag; most tribes simply ignore the flag of the surrounding state.

With the new flag of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Indians of southeastern Florida have one unified design to confirm their sovereignty on lands they have occupied for almost 300 years.
SEMINOLE OF OKLAHOMA

The majority of the Seminole were removed from Florida in the 1830s and resettled in Indian Territory [see Seminole of Florida]. However, the Seminole of Oklahoma retain their traditional ties to the lands of their ancestors and their symbols recall those homelands. The flag of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is white with the tribal seal in the center (Letter, Dena Brady, Acting Executive Secretary, 15 Feb. 1995). The seal (Annin & Co.) has a braided border in yellow and black around a white ring with "THE GREAT SEMINOLE NATION" above and "OF OKLAHOMA" below, all in black.

Inside a narrow yellow ring is a typical scene from the life of the Seminole in Florida's Everglades: a warrior in a dugout canoe paddles toward a village and the lush green forest. All elements appear in natural colors (Official Seals of the Five Civilized Tribes, The Oklahoma Chronicles, XVII:4, Dec. 1940, 357-359). The seal echoes the old seal of the Seminole of Florida [see Seminole of Florida].

This flag may have been inspired by the design created for the Seminole Nation by the Alabama Department of History in 1940 when the Seminole people, as former residents of Alabama, were included in the opening of the Alabama Hall of Flags.

This was not the first flag of the Seminole nation. During the U.S. Civil War, the Confederacy presented flags to members of the "Five Civilized Tribes" allied against the Union. Miss Alice Leeper, daughter of the Confederate agent to the Indian Territory, presented a flag to the Seminole [True Democrat, Little Rock, AR, 29 Aug. 1861; The Looking
Glass, March 1991]. The flag was “a crescent and red star in a green union . . .” with “bars of red and white” . . . “for the Seminole, with the exception of diagonal bars” (comparing to the vertical bars of the flag presented to the Creek Nation) [see Muskogee].

[The seal is currently being updated with slight enhancements (Letter, D. Brady). The new seal has not yet been received by the Executive Directorate of the Seminole Nation, but it will likely result in a modification to the flag.] ☑
Originally called Sen Uh Kuh, or the “Great Hill People”, the name “Seneca” derived from the similarity in sound to the Latin name familiar to European ears. The Seneca, the most powerful of the tribes in the Iroquois League, served as the “guardians of the western door” [see Iroquois Confederacy]. The Iroquois viewed their confederacy as one huge long house, their traditional dwelling (ENAT, 215-216). It fell to the Seneca to protect the western gateway to the heart of Iroquois land.

The three state-recognized Seneca reservations in western New York—the Cattaraugus, the Oil Springs, and the Allegany—all fly the same flag. It is white with the seal of the tribe in blue, white, and red (flag provided by Advertising Flag Co.). The seal contains maps of the three reservations in blue across the center. Above and below the maps are silhouettes in blue of eight animals—Deer, Heron, Hawk, Snipe, Bear, Wolf, Beaver, and Turde—the totems, or emblems, associated with particular Seneca clans (ENAT, 216). For the Seneca, the clan is a group of families descended from a common ancestor. Around the outer white ring, which is banded by thin blue lines inside and out, appears “SENECA NATION of INDIANS” at the top and “Keepers of the Western Door” along the bottom, all in red.
The Seneca-Cayuga are descendants of those members of the two westernmost nations of the Iroquois League that were removed to Oklahoma. The Seneca are still an important tribe in New York [see Seneca]. The Cayuga originally lived in the Finger Lakes region of western New York; while still in New York they no longer hold any tribal lands there.

Of the five original members of the Iroquois League, the Cayuga Nation controlled the smallest territory (ENAT, 40-41). During the American Revolution, most Cayugas sided with the British, their longtime ally. After the American victory, many Cayuga migrated to Ontario where today they live on the Oshweken reserve [see Iroquois Confederacy].

The Seneca-Cayuga of Oklahoma use a light blue flag. Centered on this flag is a large white disk with “SENECA-CAYUGA TRIBE” in black across the top, and “OF OKLAHOMA” below that, all in black. At the center of the disk is the “great tree”, a symbol sacred to all Iroquois (Annin & Co.). Surrounding this is a bear claw necklace, a symbol of strength and power. Ringing the necklace are thirteen animal shapes in black outline, yellow, or tan. These totems, representing certain admirable and desirable traits, symbolize thirteen tribal clans. Counter-clockwise from the upper left are: Wolf, Squirrel, Hawk, Eel, Heron, Beaver, Bear, Hare, Porcupine, Snake, Snipe, Turtle, and Deer. These represent all eight New York Seneca clans and five Cayuga clans.
The Lake Traverse Reservation, a distinctive triangle in the northeast corner of South Dakota and southeast corner of North Dakota, is home to the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of the Santee Sioux.

Like nearly all flags of Dakota branches, the Sisseton and Wahpeton flag features the tepee as a significant design element. As the rulers of the northern Plains, the Sioux constantly traveled, following the vast buffalo herds and using the tepee as a nomadic shelter. While the tepee is a unifying symbol among the various Sioux, the Sisseton did not begin to use the tepee until being forced westward and the Wahpeton never used the tepee at all. They relied instead on a bark-covered sipi tonka as a summer house and a domed earthen lodge for their winter dwelling (http://swcc.cc.sd.us/culture2.html).

The tribe’s light blue flag bears the triangular map of the reservation in dark blue. On it, seven red tepees, accented in white, represent the seven districts of the reservation. On the “official” flags displayed in the tribal offices, each district is named. Arching over the reservation map, in white, is “SISSETON and WAHPETON” and below is “SIOUX TRIBE”.

©
SOUTHERN UTE

The Ute Nation, for whom Utah is named, today occupies three reservations spreading across Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico (ENAT, 244-245). The Southern Ute Reservation in Colorado is home mainly to two bands, the Mouache and the Capote.

The flag of the Southern Ute tribe is light blue with “SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE” in white across the top of the flag (photo provided by The Southern Ute Executive Office). Centered below is the tribal seal which represents the “circle of life”; several elements within it represent different facets of Southern Ute life. The seal’s edge is a rope-like braid of light blue and white. Immediately within the circle is “GREAT SEAL OF THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE” above, and “IGNACIO, COLO.” below, all in red.

Centered in the seal is the profile of a Ute chief standing for the entire tribe, facing left, in red, orange, black, blue, and white—the colors of the rainbow and of nature. Surrounding the chief’s profile are the natural resources of the reservation and cultural icons of the Ute people, all in natural colors. Directly below the profile is a peace pipe from which hang two feathers. The pipe indicates that the Ute are a peace-loving people, while the two feathers represent the “Great Spirit” and the “healing power” that comes from a single peaceful people. Below the pipe are two leafed branches that recall the green things of the earth and the harmony people share with nature.

Below the pipe and branches is a small Colorado state flag. The inclusion of the Colorado emblem is unique—no other native flag or
seal depicts a state flag, and only a few include any state symbols on their seals or flags. (Many tribes purposely exclude the state flag in parades and similar events.) To the left of the profile are a gas well and two grazing sheep; to the right are a tractor and a grazing steer. Together these symbolize the main pursuits of the Ute tribe—agriculture, ranching, and mining. Above the profile a mountain range recalls the Ute homeland, with an elk and bear, animals that share the land with the Ute. The sun watches over the tribe while the river stands for the six rivers that cross the reservation. All symbols appear in natural colors.

[Information concerning the flag and seal of the Southern Ute Tribe (Letter, Eugene Naranjo, 2 Feb. 1995) comes from two Ute tribal artists, Ben Watts and Russell Box, Sr. The Executive Office believes that the flag and seal were adopted in 1970 or 1971 when a contest was held to choose a name for the Piño Nuche Lodge and Restaurant, one of the major businesses on the reservation.] ☞
The Spokane Reservation, in western Washington, is home to the Spokane, an inland Salish-speaking people related to the Flathead, Coeur d'Alene, and similar tribes (ENAT, 252).

The flag of the Spokane Tribe is the banner from the tribe's 1981 centennial (photos supplied by Jim White). The flag has a yellow-orange field bordered in red. In the upper center of the flag is a multi-colored oval shield, hanging from it are two white-and-black eagle feathers. In the shield's center, the phrase “100 YEARS” appears on a blue background, the number in yellow and the word in black. This inner oval is ringed by white, red, and tan bands. The white band is serrated; the outermost band is tan and bears “SPOKANE TRIBE” above and six black dots below.

“CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION”, in red, overlaps the bottom of the tan border, underlined by red arrows pointing outward. To the left and right of the feathers, in black, are “1881” and “1981”. Across the bottom of the flag, overlapping the feathers' tips, is “CENTURY OF SURVIVAL” in green. Although the banner dates from the 1981 celebration, the Spokane continue flying it as their official tribal flag. This appears to be the sole instance among tribal flags where a celebration banner evolved into a flag. ❈

[Thanks to NAVA member Jim White, who examined the flag outside the tribal headquarters in Wellpinit, Washington in 1996.]
STANDING ROCK SIOUX

The Standing Rock Sioux Reservation is one of nine Sioux reservations spreading from northern Nebraska to North Dakota. The reservation centers on the town of Fort Yates, North Dakota, and straddles the border between the two Dakotas. It was created in 1873 out of land set aside under the treaty of 1868 as the "Great Sioux Reservation" and is home to the Yanktonai and Hunkpapa bands of the Teton Sioux.

According to legend, the Standing Rock was the Arikara wife of a Dakota warrior, who with her child had been turned to stone. The stone was considered wakan, or holy, by the Sioux people. They transported it whenever they moved, carrying it on a lavishly decorated travois pulled by a specially adorned horse. When the Sioux settled on the current reservation, they placed the Standing Rock on a brick pedestal outside the reservation agency's office where it remains to this day ("Symbols of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation", NAVA News, May/June 1989, 6).

The flag of the Standing Rock Sioux is medium blue with the tribal seal in the center (provided by Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Headquarters). The seal's outer ring is white, edged by two narrow red bands, and bears, in red, "STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE" above and "JULY 1873" below.

The seal contains a circle of eight white tepees reminiscent of the Oglala Sioux flag [see Oglala Sioux], representing the eight districts of the reservation, all on a red background. The ring of outward-pointing
tepees encloses a yellow disk depicting the Standing Rock in white on its red pedestal. Around the disk are the names of the eight districts in red, starting with the Fort Yates district at the top.

[According to Chairman Charles Murphy, only one copy of the flag exists. It cost over US$500 and is kept in the tribal headquarters in Fort Yates.]
SUQUAMISH

Seattle, the largest city in the Pacific Northwest, is named for Chief Seattle of the Suquamish Indian nation. Born about 1790 (DAI, 370), during the Indian Wars of 1855 and 1858 Chief Seattle remained on good terms with the white settlers—in 1890, the centennial of his birth, the city erected a monument over his grave.

His own Suquamish people also remember their great chief. Residents of the Port Madison Reservation (NAA, 285) on the western shores of Puget Sound across from Seattle, they display his image on their flag. Made on the reservation, the flag is divided in half vertically—the left half is black, the right half is red. A large yellow oval—oriented lengthwise—bears a portrait of Chief Seattle in black. A white band surrounds the oval, with “TREATY OF POINT ELLIOTT—1855” which Chief Seattle signed, across the top and “CHIEF SEATTLE” below, all in black. Across the bottom of the flag is “SUQUAMISH TRIBE” in white.

The colors of the field and seal constitute the four primary colors of native art and belief—red, white, yellow, and black. As with many other tribes, the colors recall many aspects of life—the four directions, the four races of man, the four seasons, the four natural elements, and the four ages of a man’s life [see Miccosukee]. The Suquamish combine these four colors (which unite them with other native peoples) with imagery unique to them (which shows their distinct place in history) to create meaning in their flag.

[Thanks to Scott Crowell of the Suquamish Nation for information about the flag.]
SWINOMISH

The Coast Salish Swinomish Tribal Community is located on the eastern shore of Puget Sound in northwestern Washington. Members of the Community descended from the Swinomish, Kikialius, Samish, and Lower Skagit tribes, who lived in the Skagit River valley and on the coastline and islands around the river’s mouth. All spoke the Coast Salish language. According to tradition, the Swinomish tribe originated “when a chief’s son wandered from camp with his dog and suffered many hardships. Through purification of the spirit, he obtained great powers that enabled him to convert his dog into a beautiful princess, who became the wife and mother of the people whom he created by sowing rocks on the earth.”

During the 1840s and 1850s the smallpox, measles, and tuberculosis brought by whites killed most of the Indian population. Armed conflict led to the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, known by the Coast Salish as the Mukilteo Treaty. Implemented over the twenty years it took for U.S. Senate ratification, it led to the scattering of many Indians around Puget Sound in search of employment.

The flag of the Swinomish Tribal Community reflects two central cultural themes which members have retained across generations—fishing and ceremonial traditions. Fishing remains a central tribal activity and provides an important focus of cultural association. Salmon barbecues, races, and games are held on holidays and other major cultural events. The Swinomish often caught sockeye salmon with a distinctive fishing spear. Spiritual meaning permeates all aspects of
Swinomish culture, forming a central theme of everyday life. The Swinomish celebrate the Seowyn religious and ceremonial traditions, which frequently use drums.

The Swinomish flag places a drum, a spear, and writing on a yellow background. An eight-sided white drum edged in black, placed near the upper left, bears a leaping salmon. Depicted in the distinctive Pacific Northwest Coast style, the salmon is white and black with red elements in the tail, eye, and on the body. Eight red decorative symbols surround the salmon around the drum’s edge. Behind the drum, a horizontal black fishing spear with white sections carries a red rope with white accents. “SWINOMISH TRIBAL COMMUNITY” appears in black, in three lines, to the right of the drum, under the spear.

The combination of ceremonial and animate symbols, the drum and the fish, alludes to the mythology and legends passed through generations of Swinomish—according to which the Indian and all living things had a common language and helped one another in their struggle through life. The flag uses the four traditional colors of American Indian design—red, white, black, and yellow—which carry significant multiple meanings [see Miccosukee].

[Thanks to Mr. Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Tribal Chairman, for providing the creation story along with most of the information in this section from the tribal publication Portrait of a Homeland.]
THLOPTHLOCCO CREEK

One of the four members of the Oklahoma Creek Confederacy is the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town based in Okemah, Oklahoma. Like their neighbors, the Kialegee, the Thlopthlocco are headed by a tribal town king, the only two instances of a monarchical title being applied to the head of a native nation within the United States (REAI, 31-32) [see Kialegee Creek].

The flag of the Thlopthlocco is dark red and bears a white circle in the center edged in black—the seal of the Tribal Town. The central element of the Thlopthlocco’s seal is a crossed pair of lacrosse sticks, between them a black dot represents a lacrosse ball. These allude to the Creek’s claim to inventing the sport hundreds of years ago.

Below the lacrosse sticks is a campfire which signifies the Sacred Fire from which villagers would take coals back to their homes to rekindle their own hearth fires. This ritual occurred at the end of the Green Corn Ceremony, or Busk—from the Creek word boskita meaning “to fast” (ENAT, 74-76). The Green Corn Ceremony was the most important of all the rituals among the Creek people, an annual rite of purification and renewal. The Sacred Fire in the seal of Thlopthlocco thus represents the beginnings of a new life for the Creek in Oklahoma after being evicted from their traditional homelands of Georgia and Alabama.

“THLOPTHLOCCO” curves at the top of the seal and “CREEK
TRIBAL TOWN” curves below, all in black. Hanging from the seal, turning it into a warrior’s shield, are four white-and-black feathers, representing the sacred number four with its multiple meanings. Across the bottom of the flag in white is “OKEMAH, OK” and “EST. 1834”, the date of the Thlopthlocco’s reorganization in Indian Territory.
TOHONO O’ODHAM

The land of the Tohono O’odham or “Desert People” (TDAI) covers 2.75 million acres in southern Arizona (NAA, 275). The tribe was once known as the Papago, a term derived from the Pima phrase Papahvio-otam or “Bean People”. In the thousand years that the Tohono O’odham have lived in the Sonora Desert they have become experts at survival; finding a wealth of food in the form of cacti, gourds, beans, squash, and other hardy plants (ENAT, 176-178).

The flag of the Tohono O’odham reflects their reservation’s topography and flora in a simple, effective way. The flag is a bicolor of yellow over purple (flag provided by The Turquoise Turtle, Sells, Arizona), representing the sun breaking over a distant mesa grown purple by the shadows of its own walls. The colors also recall the brilliant flowers of the Saguaro cactus, a food source for the Hohokam, ancestors of the Tohono O’odham. Crossing this field (on the front of the flag only) is a red staff from which hang eleven black feathers with white tips, for the eleven districts of the huge reservation.

Above the flag flies a swallow-tailed streamer, with “TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION” in red. This use of a streamer appears unique among native tribal flags, although it is frequently omitted in popular use.

Flags for the Tohono O’odham nation are made on the reservation and come in a range of sizes. The local flag-making shop has found the flag so popular that a backlog of orders keeps it busy. This instance of local pride expressed through a tribal flag has brought a small economic improvement to a severely under-employed people.
Tolowa

The Tolowa are located in northern California and share many of the customs, traits, and beliefs of the Miwok and other tribes. Religious ceremonies are significant tribal events and in some instances take place only among members of the tribe.

For this reason, the Tolowa based in Fort Dick have a flag that is considered a religious relic and is thus used only in Tolowa ceremonies (Letter, unsigned, 29 Dec. 1994). It is not available for public view or dissemination, so it is not depicted here [see Kickapoo of Oklahoma]. This use of the Tolowa flag parallels another Miwok flag practice [see Olemitcha Miwok], which also restricts flags to ceremonial usage.

Ms. Andrea Bowen designed the flag. Its “deerskin” field bears black elements pertaining to the Tolowa people. The background color of the flag is likely buff, tan, or brown color since the local mule deer, is a light brown.
The modern Tonkawa nation are descendants of at least twenty scattered bands from today's eastern and central Texas. They called themselves Tiska Waticsh, "the most human of people". The neighboring Wacos called one of the principal bands the Tonkawa (AIÁ, 87-88). Since 1884 the Tonkawa have lived in northern Oklahoma near the Ponca (ENAT, 239-240) and today number around 1,300 (REAI, 32).

The Tonkawa's flag is royal blue. It bears the seal of the Tonkawa in the center and has "TONKAWA TRIBE" written in white across the top and "OKLAHOMA", also in white, across the bottom (Homer Miller Co., Oklahoma City, OK).

The seal recalls the "circle of life" and is divided in half—white above and red below. A stylized "Peyote Spirit Bird", which has served in several formats as the logo of the Tonkawa, points upward in the center. The bird is divided in half; vertically, pink to the left, blue to the right. Behind it runs a peace pipe with a brown mouthpiece, black pipe head, brown stem, and blue, yellow, and red beadwork adorning the length of the stem. Behind this bird's head rises a yellow sun with ten yellow rays. Above this is a thin red crescent moon with points facing downward. (The old seal from before the 1990s consisted of just this moon and the divided bird.)

A red hill looms behind the bird. The red earth refers to Oklahoma's name, which is Muskogee for "Land of the Red People". Surrounding the seal is a narrow white band, edged in black. Across the top is "SEAL OF THE TONKAWA TRIBE", below is "APRIL 21, 1938". The date is separated from the tribe's name by six black stars on either side.
TONTO APACHE

The Apache are made up of groups distinguished by their slightly differing dialects (ENAT, 13-16). The Tonto are actually two of these groups, the Northern Tonto and the Southern Tonto. *Tonto* is Spanish for “fool”, a derisive term applied by Europeans not only to some Apache, but also to Mojave, Yavapai, and Yuma (DAI, 420). The Tonto Apache live on their traditional lands near the White Mountains of Arizona, based in the town of Payson.

The Tonto Apache use a white flag with the tribal seal in the center. The seal places a white cross, edged in black, on a light blue disk. The cross is a representation of a star. (In the art of many native peoples, the star appears in this way, with four squared points.) A white ring, edged in black inside and light blue outside, surrounds the central disk. On it, “TONTO APACHE TRIBE” arches over the top and “of Payson, Arizona” curves below, both in red.

The star bears four feathers—one in the center, one in the uppermost “point”, and one each in the two side “points”. The lower “point” is empty. Next to each feather appears a streak of stylized lightning as depicted in Apache art, in black (center), yellow (top), white (left), and blue (right). These four colors recur in the art of southwestern tribes, reflecting not only the nearby mountains but also the four “clouds” or worlds through which man passed to get to this world [see Navajo for a more detailed explanation]. From each feather hang four colored streamers, of blue, red, green, and yellow (center); yellow, green, blue, and red (top); red, green, yellow, and blue (left); and green, yellow, blue, and red (right).
The colors of the seal of the Tonto Apache have additional, sacred meanings: Black for death and west; White for life, north, and snow; Blue for the sky and south; Yellow for the sun and east; Green for the Earth; and Red for fire and heat.

[Thanks to NAVA member Harry Oswald for providing information gathered at the tribal headquarters of the Tonto Apache in Payson, Arizona.]
TUNICA-BILOXI

The Tunica and Biloxi Indians have lived on their reservation near Marksville, Louisiana, for over two centuries, during which the tribes, though speaking completely different languages, have intermarried extensively.

Traders and entrepreneurs of the first order, the Tunica once exercised influence over a wide territory encompassing present-day Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, and even Florida, where the Spanish under De Soto encountered them in 1541. But under severe pressure from diseases, famine, and warfare, the Tunica steadily moved southward, following the Mississippi River.

The Biloxi were a tribe on the Mississippi Gulf Coast at present-day Biloxi, Mississippi. They were the first people the French colonizers encountered in 1669. The Biloxi, like the Tunica, formed a strong alliance with the French, which brought them important economic and political benefits.

Through their commercial skills and adaptability the Tunica accumulated unprecedented quantities of European artifacts, primarily from the French with whom they established close political and military ties, but also from the Spanish. The discovery in the mid-1960s of the “Tunica Treasure”, called the greatest archeological find in the Lower Mississippi Valley, led to a struggle which not only triggered the largest return of American Indian grave goods ever but laid the foundation of a new federal law, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. (The Act declares that grave goods and other
objects which are held by museums, federal and state agencies, and which are identifiable as to a particular tribe, must be returned to that tribe.)


The flag was developed by the tribe in 1992. Its background is white. At the center-left are “TUNICA BILOXI TRIBE OF LOUISIANA” above and “Cherishing Our Past, Building For Our Future” below, all in black. At the right appears the head of an eagle, in white with black detail and a yellow beak. The forked-eye eagle design reproduces a well-known artistic motif from the Mississippian Period (700 A.D-1800 A.D.), widely used on conch shells, copper, and pottery. The eagle overlaps a white-bordered red disk symbolizing the sun, and a black-rayed design around the disk, separated by a white ring, alludes to the known but unseen power behind the sun. Three white eagle feathers with black trim and red dots edged in black hang below the disk.

The feathers recall an ancient Tunica-Biloxi myth in which a tribal priest wished to send a prayer to the sun, but didn’t know how to get it there. He called upon his friend the bear, who said—for in those days men and animals could understand one another plainly—that he could carry it only to the top of the tallest tree. Fortunately, the bear knew someone able to deliver the prayer all the way to the sun: Brother Eagle. And the eagle, according to the legend, circled ever higher and higher until he reached the sun—a beautiful woman. She said to the eagle, “Wait, give me one of your feathers, I will kiss it with my hot breath, and then you carry it back to the Tunica-Biloxi as a sign that I have chosen them as my people.” And that is why, to this day, the top of an eagle’s feather is still scorched black from the kiss of the sun. And that is also why the sun is symbolized on the feathers of the Tunica-Biloxi flag by the red dot on each feather. The flag is displayed
in front of the Tunica-Biloxi Museum, the tribal headquarters, and in the tribal council chambers. 

[Thanks to Dr. William Day, Director of the Tunica-Biloxi Museum that houses the Tunica Treasure and serves as a shrine to tribal ancestors, and to Earl Barbry, Jr., Assistant Director of the Museum and son of the famed Earl J. Barbry, Sr., Chairman of the Tunica-Biloxi since 1978, whose leadership and success in improving tribal fortunes have earned him praise as “the strongest Indian leader of the century”.]
The Uintah and Ouray reservation, originally established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861, stretches over a land trust of over one million acres in the northeastern corner of Utah. Bordered to the north by the Uintah Mountains that reach as high as 13,000 feet, the land is home to about 3,200 Northern Utes.

In what the Utes call weetus ("long-ago Ute history"), twelve different bands roamed throughout Utah and Colorado as well as over northern Wyoming and New Mexico. The Spanish, who arrived around 1600 in search of gold, named them "Yutah," from which derive both "Ute" and Utah. By 1867, the six Utah Ute bands had been forced onto the Uintah reservation. They became known as the Uintah Utes, or Uintah Noochew, Noochew ("the People") being their name for themselves (Uintah & Ouray Ute Indian Tribe, a special information handout compiled by the Ute Bulletin, Vol. 30, No. 14, 26 Mar. 1996). In 1881-82 three of the six Colorado Ute bands were also relocated to the Uintah reservation (the other three bands are now known as the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes).

The flag representing these Northern Ute bands is faithful to their history and their Creation story. Ferdanan Manning, Jr. designed it in 1980; it was formally adopted by tribal council resolution. Northern Ute graphic artist Robert Colorow updated it in 1991 and defined its colors: yellow as "Spanish yellow," orange as "international orange," blue as "blue-bird," and red as "brick red"; all other color references are his.
On a white background, the flag features a centered seal enclosed by a red band with thin black partitions or rays. A dark brown eagle with gold-brown highlights on its outstretched wings dominates the seal. The powerful eagle is the messenger of the Creator in Ute mythology, protectively enclosing within its wingspan the Northern Utes. The three main Ute bands are represented by upper bodies of three figures silhouetted in white against the chest of the eagle. The center figure wears a neckerchief, faintly outlined in black; the others wear a feather on the back of the head.

The eagle's wings span a blue sky and a yellow sun, edged in black, shining over the Ute lands below, just as Sinawaf, the Creator, placed the Ute high in the mountains to be closer to him. The yellow legs of the eagle—tipped by black talons with white accents—grasp a peace pipe with red bowl and stem and an amber midsection with spice-brown oval end-sections. From a black arc that connects the end-sections hang twelve feathers, symbolizing the twelve original Ute bands. At the top, the feathers are separated by a five-sided design composed of a upper rectangular orange section and an irregular yellow pentagonal lower section. The top half of each feather is white and is separated from the black bottom half by two bands: the top orange, the bottom red. Every feather is split down the middle by a black-edged white rachis (shaft).

Above the peace pipe is a typical Ute decorative design: two black triangles with a black-edged yellow border enclose a blue middle portion, in the center appears a black diamond with a black-edged yellow border; on either side of the central diamond are two slightly elongated diamonds, the upper portion is orange and the bottom is rust brown.

The lower half of the seal is white. A dark brown elk-skin tepee, just inside the eagle's wing on the left, has black framework pole, dark brown ventilation and entrance flaps. Dominating the white background on either side of the central silhouettes stand two mountain peaks outlined in brown, symbolizing the “Peak to Peak to Peak” definition of the original Uintah Valley reservation boundaries.

[Thanks to Mr. Larry Cesspooch, Director of Public Relations for the Northern Ute at the Fort Duchesne tribal headquarters, for supplying documentation on the history, legends, and flag of his nation.]
**UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND OF CHEROKEE**

The Keetoowah Cherokee are a political entity separate from the Cherokee Nation although both are based in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The Keetoowah are recognized federally as a separate tribe, as is common among tribes that have geographically separated branches, but it is unique to have separate recognition for bands of the same tribe in the same location.

The tribal seal was originally adopted in 1968 and modified in 1991. The tribal flag places the seal on a white background, signifying that the Keetoowah people are at peace. The current chief, John Ross, explains the seal of the Keetoowah as three circles surrounding a central blue disk (seal provided by the United Keetoowah Band). The outer circle contains nineteen black seven-pointed stars on green. The middle circle has "UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND" above, and the same in Cherokee script below, in black on orange. The inner circle contains eleven black seven-pointed stars on yellow. The central light blue disk features a seven-pointed star, with its points divided red-yellow and surrounded by a green oak-branch wreath. Around the central seal in the field are four black seven-pointed stars. These four stars recall the cardinal directions, a recurring theme in native flags and seals, although these stars are oriented to the northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest.

Chief Ross explained that the thirty black stars within the rings stand for the extinguished campfires of the original Keetoowah villages in their homelands of North Carolina and Georgia. They act as a reminder of
the Keeroowah's ties to their original lands. The three circles stand for the colorful history of the Keetoowah. The seven-pointed central star, as used by many Cherokee bands, stands for the seven original clans of the Cherokee, while the oak branches symbolize strength [see Cherokee of Oklahoma, Chickamauga Cherokee].
The United Sioux Tribes, based in Pierre, South Dakota, is a development corporation with eleven member tribes. Formed in May, 1970, to "promote the general welfare, health, economic development, educational opportunities, and provide assistance" to its members, it can speak as a single voice when there is agreement on a subject.

The current members, all from South Dakota, are: Cheyenne River Sioux, Crow Creek Sioux, Devil's Lake Sioux (ND), Flandreau Santee Sioux, Lower Brulé Sioux, Oglala Sioux of the Pine Ridge Reservation, Rosebud Sioux, Santee Sioux (NE), Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux, Standing Rock Sioux, and Yankton Sioux (Presenting the United Sioux Tribes, pamphlet, n.d., Pierre).

The flag of the United Sioux Tribes is white with the corporate logo in the center and "UNITED SIOUX TRIBES" in black across the lower part (photo provided by the United Sioux Tribes). The logo is a ring of eleven white, stylized tepees, topped in red. It resembles the well-known Oglala Sioux flag [see Oglala Sioux]. The tepees point outwards, their bases resting on an inner black ring which contains a white disk with a symbol composed of a black circle and four red triangles (representing arrowheads) pointing outwards. The four arrowheads refer to the four compass directions, the four seasons, the four natural elements, and the four races of man. When used on stationery, the black ring on the flag is usually altered to light blue. The color difference in the flag's manufacture is a cost-saving device. The logo on the current flag is slightly out of date—it has
ten tepees instead of eleven—the Santee Sioux of Nebraska having recently joined. The flag will be updated to reflect this addition.

[Thanks to Kandace Kritz, Executive Assistant of the United Sioux Tribe, for information on the United Sioux Tribes and on other Sioux tribal flags. Her assistance allowed the complete documentation of every Sioux tribe in South Dakota.]
The United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) was founded in 1969 as “The United Southeastern Tribes” in Cherokee, North Carolina, by four southeastern tribes—the Eastern Band of Cherokee, Mississippi Band of Choctaw, and the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes of Florida. These leaders believed that by uniting as an inter-tribal council they could more effectively deal with a variety of common tribal issues as well as with the federal government.

That belief—reflected in the motto “BECAUSE THERE IS STRENGTH IN UNITY” shown in quotes and in black on the flag—was borne out over the next decade as membership steadily increased. Its name changed in 1978 to “United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.”, to reflect the geographical expansion of its membership from Maine to southern Florida to eastern Texas. Based in Nashville, Tennessee, USET includes 23 federally-recognized tribes, representing a population of more than 50,000. USET provides a forum for exchanging ideas and information among member tribes as well as a vehicle for obtaining grants from federal, state, and private-sector sources.

The USET flag, adopted in 1997 primarily for use during processions at USET meetings, incorporates the original “Strength in Unity” idea in several ways, from the red border of the flag, to the motto, to the two red concentric rings enclosing the seal, to the circular array of 23 black peace pipes with bowls pointed inward to the red central dot. Unity consistently has been the central tenet of the organization.
The seal was created in the earliest days of the association. It was much like its present-day version in that it consisted of a two-ringed circle. Within the outer circle was the original name, “UNITED SOUTHEASTERN TRIBES, INC.” above and “Established 1969” below. Within the inner circle were four peace pipes standing for the four founding tribes. This early logo appears to have been printed entirely in gold. In 1978, along with the name change, the colors of the seal were modified to show the two circle rings in red and most everything else in black. The first letter of each word in the organizational name appears in red to highlight the acronym by which it has become known best (USET). 🇺🇸
The small reservation of the Upper Skagit people is located on the upper reaches of the eastern shore of Puget Sound in Washington. The Upper Skagit people are one of several Coastal Salish tribes (ENAT, 37-38) who have lived for thousands of years as fishermen and hunters. They supplemented the salmon, essential to their traditional lifestyle, with deer and other animals of the dense forests.

Pacific Northwest cultures developed a distinctive carving style seen on totem poles, on masks, in embroidery, and in various other art forms. Their totem poles celebrated family history and honored family members with many animal figures. The eagle symbolizes the Upper Skagit people since both are skilled fishermen who support their families through their prowess.

The flag of the Upper Skagit people depicts a highly stylized eagle in the dramatic style of the totem pole artists. This use of Pacific Northwest artwork appears to be unique to native tribal flags, and uses a motif dating back thousands of years [see Cover].

The eagle appears in black, filling most of the red background. Two very large eyes dominate its upper third. From the eyes, its black triangular beak pokes down between two rows of teeth. Below this level, in the widest part of the drawing, the eagle’s body aims pair of wings downward. At the center of the lowest level three small rectangular shapes form the tail, and on either side are the sharp talons of the eagle’s claws.
WARM SPRINGS, WASCO, & NORTHERN PAIUTE

Located in north-central Oregon, just south of Mount Hood, is the Warm Springs Reservation, home to eight bands from three separate tribes that function as a unit. The Warm Springs Indians lend their name to the reservation and are made up of four bands—the Taíhn (Tygh), Wyam, Tenino, and Docksps. The Wasco are from The Dalles, Dog River, and Ki-gal-twal-la bands. The remaining tribe is a band of the Northern Paiute (GAI, 183). The 3,000 residents of the reservation engage in farming and logging through a modern industrial corporation. They also maintain the Kah-Nee-Ta vacation resort in the hilly, northern part of the reservation. The flag of the “Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation” flies prominently at this modern resort complex.

The banner-like flag is light blue (sample flag provided by Elmer’s Flag & Banner, Portland, Oregon) with a yellow ribbon across the top with “THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE” and a similar ribbon across the bottom with “WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION OF OREGON”, both in red. Between the ribbons are two flying eagles in brown and white, approaching the center from either side. They recall the most sacred of all animals to the Native American as well as the abundance of wildlife on the reservation. A central yellow disk forms a traditional shield, with seven eagle feathers hanging below to symbolize the protection and safety that the three tribes find within their sovereign boundaries. The shield contains a map of the reservation in red outline with a depiction of Mount Hood in dark green with a white snowcap. Three brown tepees below the mountain and three yellow stars on a blue sky above it represent the three tribes and their lands’ proximity to magnificent Mount Hood, the highest peak in Oregon.
The Washoe likely originated among the coastal tribes of California and either migrated or were forced to move east to areas surrounding Lake Tahoe on the Nevada-California border. Today the Washoe of California and Nevada occupy a series of small "colonies" in Nevada and reside off these reservations in both states. A single Tribal Council based in Gardnersville, Nevada, governs the colonies under a single flag.

The flag is dark blue with the seal of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California in gold and blue in the center (seal provided by the Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California). The seal depicts the geography, flora, and fauna of the lands of the Washoe. With a backdrop of mountains, the foreground is filled with three main sources of sustenance for the ancient Washoe—the piñón pine or dagum, the trout or atabei, and the deer or mumdaywe. Around the upper rim of the seal is "SEAL OF THE WASHOE TRIBE OF NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA". At the lower rim are two crossed eagle feathers for the two states the Washoe nation today call home. An inner ring is filled with a geometric pattern of triangles and diamonds.
Officially called the White Earth Band of Chippewa, this band in northern Minnesota is one of the few that use the term Chippewa, most others preferring Ojibwe. Their reservation was established by treaty in 1867.

The elaborate flag of the White Earth flies proudly outside their casino and their tribal center (Letter, Barb Nelson, Public Relations Officer, 17 Jan. 1995). The flag has many elements on a white field (photo provided by the White Earth Band of Chippewa). At top and bottom are narrow stripes in blue, the traditional color for the sky and for water. The left and right sides have serrated borders in red, the color of the people themselves. In the center a yellow disk represents the sun. Overlying the sun is a white bust of the bald eagle, Migizi, the most revered animal in the Ojibwe culture. Arching above the sun and eagle is “WHITE EARTH”, below is “TREATY OF 1867”.

Beneath the disk is a red peace pipe, a symbol of Ojibwe spirituality. For the Ojibwe, smoking tobacco signifies respect and honor for Mother Earth; the pipe carrier is a very important member of the traditional community. A stylized floral design in green and pink flanks the central disk on either side. This design—perhaps a morning glory or a similar vining plant—recalls the traditional beadwork with which the Ojibwe decorate their clothing and other works.
THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE

The White Mountain Reservation—sometimes still referred to as the Fort Apache Reservation—is the second-largest Apache reservation in the country. Located east of Phoenix, Arizona, it encompasses 1,665,000 acres and includes vast pine forests, mountains, and high desert. These environments are honored in the seal of the White Mountain Apaches.

The flag is white, placing the tribal seal on a red outline map of the reservation (photo provided by All The King’s Flags, the Phoenix, Arizona, manufacturer of the flag sometime after 1990). Within the seal a rainbow rises against a pale blue sky over a landscape and an elk stands by a river near a wikiyup. In the distance are snow-capped mountains while nearer, at the base of the seal, is a pine forest.

An earthen Apache vase in the foreground is flanked by two feathers of red and yellow and a pair of lightning bolts in yellow near the outer edge of the seal.

Surrounding this very elaborate central area is a black ring, with “* WHITE MOUNTAIN * APACHE TRIBE * ” below in white and “GREAT * SEAL” above in yellow. Four colored stars of eight points separate the parts of the tribal inscription. The stars are white at the top, black on the right, yellow on the left, and purple (sometimes shown as red) at the base. As on many tribal flags [see Miccosukee], the colors red, white, yellow, and black play a major symbolic role and the stars refer to the cardinal directions.
WICHITA

Located in west-central Oklahoma is the Historic Trust Area of the Wichita Nation, which gave its name to Wichita, Kansas. They share 68,000 acres with the Western Delaware and Caddo Nations (NAA, 284). Officially called “The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes”, the Wichita united with the Kichai, Tawakoni, and Waco tribes in the late 1800s (ENAT, 249-250).

The flag of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes is royal blue with the tribal seal in white and blue in the center (seal provided by the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes). The central element is a white disk symbolizing the circle of life and the moon, both powerful icons in traditional Native American lore. On the disk is a line drawing of a Wichita warrior holding in his left hand an ear of corn, the staple of the Wichita diet, and in his right hand a warrior’s staff. Beneath the warrior, overlapping the disk, is a grass house, the traditional dwelling of the Wichita from their days on the Plains. Arching over the disk, in white, is “Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.”
Wyandotte

Wyandotte, sometimes appearing as Wyandot, Wendot, or Guyandot, is thought to mean "islanders" or "peninsula dwellers". The Wyandotte call themselves the "Keepers of the Council Fire". They originally lived in what is now Ontario, between Lakes Huron and Ontario. In Canada, the Wyandottes are known as Huron (ENAT, 99-101). Those Wyandotte who moved south into the United States settled in the Great Lakes and upper New York regions. However, by 1842 they had sold their lands east of the Mississippi River and settled in what now is Wyandotte County, Kansas [see Wyandot]. Most were later relocated to northeastern Oklahoma as today's Wyandotte Nation.

The tribal flag is white with "WYANDOTTE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA" arching across the top in black. In the center is a turtle, an earth symbol alluding to the creation story. Above the turtle are four green sprigs of willow to represent "Lasting Life". The turtle holds a peace pipe and a war club in red, for peace and war respectively. The turtle's oval shell is black while its flippers, tail, and head are brown. Centered on the shell is a white jagged-edged oval of twelve points, for the twelve clans of Wyandottes (Annin & Co.).

On the turtle's back, in red and white, is a "sacred meeting fire", the traditional method of tribal governance that involves sitting around the meeting fire and discussing tribal matters; these fires were known as the "Council Fires" and burned constantly in the old villages of the Huron. One ancient Huron ceremony was the Dance of Fire (Letter, unsigned, n.d., Wyandotte Business Committee), which entailed
carrying smoldering coals or heated rocks in the dancers' mouths and plunging their arms into boiling water. The aim of the Dance of Fire was to call upon the Oki, or Spirit, to cure the sick.
A reservation was granted to the Yakama (formerly Yakima) in a treaty signed in 1855 by Governor Isaac Stevens of the Washington Territory and representatives of the Cayuse, Umatilla, Wallawalla, Nez Percé, and Yakama tribes. Some Paiutes and a few members of other tribes also live on the Yakima Reservation in south-central Washington. The tribe recently changed the spelling of its name to reflect a more accurate pronunciation in its native language—its seal and flag are expected to follow suit.

The Yakama Nation, about 6,300 strong (AID, 39), has a flag (sample flag provided by Elmer's Flag & Banner, Portland, Oregon) showing a silhouette map of the reservation in white, edged in dark blue against a sky-blue background. Within the map is a depiction of Mount Rainier, the impressive mountain, sacred to the Yakama, which rises just beyond the reservation. An eagle in full color soars above the mountain. The sacred eagle symbolizes the Yakama's ability to survive by fishing for salmon in the waters of the Columbia River.

Above the eagle an eight-pointed “morning star” in gold symbolizes guidance and leadership. Radiating from Mount Rainier are fourteen gold stars and fourteen eagle feathers honoring the bands of the Yakama Nation. The feathers represent the fourteen chiefs who signed the treaty of 1855, while the fourteen stars represent the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Indian Nations. Below Mount Rainier, in blue, is “YAKIMA INDIAN NATION” and “TREATY OF
1855” (the new spelling may soon be added when the existing stock of flags is exhausted—the revised flag is depicted here).

For the 1855 Treaty’s centennial in 1955, members of the “Old Toppenish Long House” adopted a flag to represent the people of the Yakama Reservation (“As Long As The River Flows”, Akwesasne Notes, III:4, May, 1971). That flag, clearly a predecessor to the current one, used most of the same symbols but did not include the reservation map or the writing.
YANKTON SIOUX

The Yankton Sioux’s reservation is in South Dakota bordering Nebraska on the Missouri River. While in their native dialect they are Nakota, other Sioux groups call themselves Lakota or Dakota. All three terms mean “allies”. Officially, the Yankton Sioux Tribe is called Ihanktonowin Dakota Kyate.

The Yankton Sioux, or Nakota people, adopted a unique tribal symbol on 24 September 1975. With minor alterations this symbol serves as a seal, logo, and flag. The flag is red and bears various designs in yellow (photo provided by The Flag Research Center). It was designed by Gladys L. Moore, a Yankton Sioux. On the left side, reaching from the bottom to top, is a stylized peace pipe. Its tip just touches the top center of the flag at an angle. The angular section recalls the figure of a Nakota tepee (Yankton Sioux Official Tribal Insignia—The Design, flyer, n.d.). On the right side are two yellow stripes; the upper one comes in from the right and ends in a curved tip, the lower one starts at the center of the flag, goes toward the right and also has a curved tip. These elements form stylized letters, “Y” in yellow and “S” in red, standing for “Yankton Sioux”.

Crossing the yellow portions of the flag approximately one-third from the bottom is an undulating red line. This symbolizes a “prayer” to bind the home in love and safety, with red the symbol of life. Red was traditionally painted around the lower parts of tepees to indicate that visitors would be welcomed, or to identify a tepee as one of several in which a feast would be held. Red thus projects an image of life and
friendliness. To the Sioux, yellow signifies happiness in the home and suggests a happy, friendly tepee in the sun.

When printed as a logo or seal, three legends are added to the flag design. Above the first yellow bar is added a yellow stripe with "YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE"; across the center of the right end a second yellow bar appears with "Land of the Friendly People of the Seven Council Fires"; toward the base of the right end a short yellow bar reads "1858". All these inscriptions are in black. On the flag, the writing appears directly on the flag's red background without the extra yellow bars.
Yavapai of Fort McDowell

Located just north of Phoenix, Arizona, is the Fort McDowell Reservation, home to three different tribes: the Apache, the Mojave, and the Yavapai (REAI, 1). The Yavapai, known as the “People of the Sun” (DAI, 455), originally inhabited an area of central Arizona stretching eastward from the Colorado River and north of the Gila River (ENAT, 256). The Yavapai also have two smaller reservations: the Yavapai-Prescott Reservation (REAI, 3) and the Camp Verde Reservation, both to the north (REAI, 1).

Although Apache and Mojave people share the reservation with them, only the Yavapai of Fort McDowell have a flag. That flag is light blue and bears the tribal seal in the center. Only one is known, stored at the local veterans’ hall. It is made of silk, beautifully embroidered, and obviously intended for use in parades or ceremonies. Unlike many native nations engaging in the gaming industry, the Yavapai do not fly their tribal flag outside their casino.

The seal on the flag, however, is quite visible throughout the reservation—such as on the sides of the reservation’s police cars. The seal depicts the Arizona landscape in shades of blue and green, with the Rio Verde River shown in blue crossing the land. Rising out of the mountains in the background are five rays of the sun in yellow. The foreground is dominated by a Saguaro cactus on the right and four arrowheads at the base of the seal. These arrowheads, possibly evoking the sacred number four, appear in white, blue, gold, and red.
The entire landscape is backdrop to a head of a bald eagle in natural colors, a bird sacred to many native peoples (and the national symbol of the United States).

A gold band surrounds the seal, separated from the landscape of the seal by a wavy black line and from the light blue background of the flag by a narrow black ring. On the gold band appears “FORT McDOWELL YAVAPA! RESERVATION” across the top and “ARIZONA” below, all in black.

[Thanks to NAVA member Harry Oswald for his photograph of the flag of the Fort McDowell Yavapai.]
Yosemite Miwok

No official flag is known for the most inland bands of the Miwok people, the residents of three small rancherias near Yosemite National Park in central California. The three rancherias are the Jackson (pop. 21), Shingle Springs (pop. 18), and Tuolumne (pop. 135) (AID, 39-41).

Yosemite Miwok also live beyond the three rancherias. A member of their tribe, Frank Jordan, an itinerant repairman of antique bathtubs, has designed and proposed a flag.

That flag is red and bears a bust of a Miwok warrior in profile facing left. The warrior appears in shades of brown, white, and black and wears white-and-black feathers. Above the warrior's head is "Yosemite", below is "MIWOK", both in white edged in black [See Olemitcha Miwok]. ♦

[Thanks to NAVA member Jim Ferrigan for a sample Yosemite Miwok flag.]
Zia Pueblo of the Keres

Pueblo means "village" in Spanish, but for Native Americans it describes villages with a specific type of architecture: the multi-family, multi-story structures built by certain tribes in the southwestern United States. Six main nations are considered "Pueblo Indians": the Hopi of Arizona, the Zuñi of the New Mexico-Arizona border regions, and the four tribes along the Rio Grande River in New Mexico—the Tiwa, Tewa, Towa, and Keres (ENAT, 206-209).

The Pueblo of Zia is part of the Keres Nation. This pueblo has been occupied continuously since about 1250 A.D. (Welcome to the Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Zia, pamphlet, n.d.). The current Zia Pueblo Reservation comprises about 118,000 acres (AID, 42) approximately 35 miles northwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. From this pueblo came New Mexico's very recognizable state emblem, the Zia sun symbol.

Dr. Harry Mera, designer of New Mexico's flag, was a physician and an anthropologist at the Museum of Anthropology in Santa Fe. His design was inspired by a pot on display in the museum (Leslie Linthicum, "Native Sun", article from an unidentified magazine, n.d.). That pot, made by an anonymous Zia potter in the late 1800s, featured a circle of white ringed in red with three rays emanating from each of the four cardinal directions. In the center were two triangular eyes and a rectangular mouth in black. Mera simplified the design into the red ring with four rays that forms the striking symbol of New Mexico today. In 1925, New Mexico adopted Mera's burgundy sun on a field of gold as its state flag.
To the Zia people the sun design is an ancient symbol. It reflects tribal philosophy with its wealth of pantheistic spiritualism teaching the basic harmony of all things in the universe (*The Zia Sun Symbol*, State of New Mexico, pamphlet, n.d.). To the Zia, four is a sacred number, as it is to many other Native American peoples. It recalls the four directions, the four seasons, the phases of the day (sunrise, noon, evening, and night), and the four stages of life (childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age). Four also signifies the number most often used by the “Giver of all Good Gifts”. The Zia believe that man has four sacred obligations—to develop a strong body, a clear mind, a pure spirit, and a devotion to the well-being of his people.

To celebrate their link with the prime symbol of the state in which they live, the Zia have adopted a white flag featuring the red Zia sun symbol exactly as it appears on the state flag (Letter, Stanley Pino, Governor, Pueblo of Zia, 21 Mar. 1995). Above the Zia sun arches the black inscription “PUEBLO OF ZIA” and a black border surrounds the flag (drawing provided by the Office of the Governor, Pueblo of Zia). The combination of red, white, and black recall the work of that anonymous potter of over a century ago. ☞
ZUNI

Today the Zuñi of New Mexico occupy a reservation of 410,000 acres (NAA, 36-43) bordering Arizona. Traditionally they lived in seven pueblos along the banks of the Zuñi River. As with other Pueblo Indians, the people built multi-story houses accessed by a series of interconnecting roof/patios and ladders. The Zuñi differed from other Pueblo Indians in that their pueblos were made of stone and covered with plaster (ENAT, 261-263) rather than of adobe, a sun-dried brick.

Although agriculture remains the primary occupation of the Zuñi, an increasing number devote themselves to the arts of silver smithing and stone-cutting. The Zuñi, who number more than 7,000 (AID, 42), are one of the leading southwestern tribes in the production of silver and turquoise jewelry (GAI, 114-115). They also craft fetishes, small carvings of animals that offer protection and knowledge. They celebrate this art on their tribal seal, which, when placed on a white field serves as the tribal flag (unsigned letter, 15 Feb. 1995).

The seal (provided by the Zuñi Tribal Headquarters) is a gray circle topped by an elongated Kachina dancer with a rainbow arching between his chest and waist. Such dancers are involved in the rituals of the Indians of the Southwest, especially the Navajo, the Hopi, and the Zuñi. Kachinas come in many visages, each bringing special meaning and powers. These dancers perform many different ceremonies, including those to bless a family's home, to seek a good harvest or to give thanks for one, to implore the Great Spirit for rain, and
to heal the sick. While Kachina dancing is a very popular tourist attraction for many tribes, it retains its importance as a religious ritual.

The center of the seal shows a bowl bearing several fetishes and a necklace of fine Zuñi silver work and turquoise. These items are below a pair of flat-topped mesas common to the lands of the Zuñi. At the base of the seal are six dark blue four-pointed stars for the six members of the tribal council. The bottom border is a common stepped-design motif of southwestern Indians in red and recalls the shape of the traditional pueblo [see Santa Clara Pueblo]. “GREAT SEAL OF THE ZUÑI TRIBE” appears above the central disk, while within it the phrase is repeated on an orange band in Zuñi.
TRIBES WITHOUT
FEDERAL RECOGNITION
ABENAKI—ST. FRANCIS-SOKOKI BAND

Once spread across upper New England and Quebec, the Abenaki Confederacy included the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot of Maine, the Micmac and Malecite of Maine and New Brunswick, and the Pennacook of Vermont (ENAT, 3-4). Today, the Abenaki are concentrated in Quebec; one band is in Vermont.

The St. Francis-Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation, sometimes referred to as the Western Abenaki, lives in the town of Swanton in northern Vermont. Sokoki is the native word for the Western Abenaki. Their original name, the Wabanaki, meant "those who live at the sunrise" or "the Easterners".

On 24 July 1991 the Abenaki nation adopted a tribal flag. The flag has a dark green field recalling the Green Mountains and Vermont’s “green image” with the tribal seal in the center. The brown “shield” of the seal represents deer or beaver hide. It features three symbols, with a red sun at the top. Below it a pair of blue waves denotes the rivers and Lake Champlain. A green grassy patch bears two deciduous and three conifer trees which stand for the lush woodlands of western Vermont. White edging surrounds the symbols and the seal itself.

The tribe has been recognized by other Abenaki bands in Quebec as true Abenaki, and the State of Vermont extended recognition in 1976. However, that recognition was rescinded in 1977 hunters and fishermen protested the tribe’s special hunting and fishing rights. The tribe is currently pursuing federal recognition, adopting its flag as part
of that process. A large painting of the tribal flag appears over the main entrance of the Tribal Office in Swanton.

[Thanks to Sokoki Band member Peter Flood for information on the tribe and its flag.]
In 1991 the Chickamauga Cherokee of the Sac River and White River Bands ended their union with the Northern Cherokee Band and took their traditional name, "Chickamauga Nation" [see Cherokee]. Arkansas and Missouri have recognized them, federal recognition is pending.

These two southern bands formerly used a seal that bore a seven-pointed star, the unifying symbol of the Cherokee people, with a single feather used as a prayer fan (Sac River & White River Bands of the Chickamauga Cherokee Nation of Arkansas and Missouri, undated pamphlet). The new seal, which appears on a white field to form the tribal flag, adds many elements to the old seal. The circles formed by the seal represent the enclosed, dependent moon, a symbol of life of all creatures of heaven and earth.

Most of the writing is in the Cherokee script devised by the great chief, Sequoyah. At the top is the phrase pronounced Hunetlanuhi Toheuwa, meaning "Great Spirits" (sample seal provided by the Chickamauga Cherokee Tribal Headquarters). These are the names of the Supreme Being of the Native and Christian faiths in the Cherokee language. Its location symbolizes God's position over all things. The tribal name on the seal appears in red (but not on the flag), for the "blood of life given by our mothers and shed for us by our warrior fathers".

Two dates appear in the base: 1755, when the Chickamauga came into existence and began their migration to the Ozark Mountains, and 1983, when the tribe achieved state recognition. The names of the two bands, again in the Cherokee script, ring the bottom of the outer
circle. Sacred symbols appear within two yellow lightning bolts. The left bolt contains Living Sourwood, a plant used in the eternal fire, in Eagle Dancer wands, and in traditional tribal medicine. On the right bolt is the Uktenna, a serpent with red and blue antlers. This mythical animal has two colored antlers to symbolize the balanced duality of the sexes. It also recalls the duality of war and peace and of animals and plants among living things.

The inner red circle symbolizes the sun, source of all energy. It also signifies the heat of the “Grandfather Fires” and the red flesh of all animal life. The seven-pointed gold star represents the seven original clans of the Cherokee people and symbolizes the Morning Star, the beacon to guide the scattered Chickamauga back to their rich origins.

Above the red circle appears “CHICKAMAUGA-CHEROKEE NATION”, with “of ARK.” and “& MO.” at either side. The crossed blow-gun dart and Cherokee holy pipe emphasize the Chickamauga’s cultural heritage in both war and peace. The large central golden eagle feather is the feather of the Chickamauga Nation. It is placed upright in supplication to the supreme being. It further symbolizes the tribe’s “right dealings, honesty to all creation, and the duty they have to God”. In actual use, this feather serves as a prayer fan, and its seven spots recall the seven sacred rites and the seven holidays of the Cherokee life cycle.

Below the prayer fan is the council fire, evoking the tribe’s central focus and expressing the Native religion. Below the star is the “Pure Rock”, a crystal that serves as a traditional tribal holy object. The crystal is associated with Ushikah, the election and balancing of the head chief once every seven years. According to the Chickamauga designer, Richard Craken, also known as Star Buck, “seeing this seal and knowing its meanings completes the whole in the mind which is the Spiritual realm of our Creator, God”. Craken designed the seal and flag based upon an 1895 seal. The current flag and seal were adopted and reaffirmed at the tribe’s general council meeting in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in 1990. ☛
HAWAIIANS

Although the Hawaiians, being of Polynesian ancestry, are not “Native Americans” in the traditional sense, they are a people native to lands within the current borders of the United States. Furthermore, they are struggling for many of the same rights as are mainland aboriginal peoples and have endured similar indignities and fates.

In fact, of all native peoples within the United States, the Hawaiians have the longest tradition of using flags. In 1793, Captain George Vancouver presented a British Union Jack to Kamehameha I, the great king who united the Hawaiian Islands under his rule (FBUS, 130-134). (Because the British Union then consisted solely of England and Scotland, the flag was without the red ‘X’ or cross of St. Patrick, which was added in 1801.) From 1793 to 1816 the Union Jack, in both its pre- and post-1801 forms, served as an unofficial national flag for the Kingdom of Hawaii.

In 1816 King Kamehameha I designed the flag flown by the first Hawaiian ship to sail to a foreign country (China). That flag bore the British Union in the upper left, and had nine stripes of white, red, and blue signifying the nine islands under the king’s dominion. The flag was altered in 1845 by reducing the stripes to eight, representing the principal islands only. Since then, it has essentially been the sole flag to symbolize the Hawaiian Islands as a kingdom, republic, U.S. territory, and state.
In the 1990s, some native Hawaiians began an effort to preserve the remnants of their heritage. This has included demands for sovereignty similar to that enjoyed by native peoples on the mainland, a call for "reservations" or lands set aside solely for the native Hawaiian people and their culture, and even calls for independence from the United States.

Because the traditional flag of the Hawaiian people continues as the state's flag, it serves poorly as a symbol for those Hawaiians favoring sovereignty rights or independence. At least two groups use distinctive flags of their own design, while others use the state flag inverted, an international symbol of distress. Still other Hawaiians supporting sovereignty or independence movements continue to use the state flag—the symbol created for them by their greatest king, Kamehameha I.

The "Independent and Sovereign Nation-State of Hawaii", a group which seeks to separate from the United States, has promulgated its own constitution for an independent Hawaii and held demonstrations protesting continued "occupation" of Hawaii by the United States. Its flag employs the traditional colors of the Hawaiian people and their native costumes. It is a horizontal tricolor, proportioned 1-2-1, of white over yellow over black (source: World Wide Web site for Nation of Hawaii). A purple kahili, a feather-covered staff symbolizing royalty, is centered on the wide yellow stripe. The brown-handled kahili is surrounded by a green wreath as a symbol of sovereignty.

The Ka Lahui Hawai'i sovereignty movement employs a blue flag bearing nine fifteen-pointed stars recalling the nine-striped flag of King Kamehameha I. Five of the stars, which vary in size, appear to stand for the Southern Cross or Crux Australis, the constellation on the flags of Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. It serves as a unifying symbol for the peoples of the Pacific (NAVA News, Jan./Feb. 1994, 5).
While the histories of most tribes in the United States today involve forced migration, voluntary migration has added a new tribe to the colorful palette of native peoples of the United States: the Taino people, descendants of the Arawak Indians of Central and South America.

Centuries before Columbus met the Taino people, their ancestors the Arawak had colonized the islands of the Caribbean (ENAT, 20-22). The Taino became the first to trade glass beads with the Europeans, who would use them as a trade item for hundreds of years.

The fierce Caribs, who gave their name to the Caribbean Sea, followed the Arawak from South America and forced the peaceful Arawak from Lesser Antilles northward to the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas, and southern Florida. These isolated Arawak intermixed with native populations in these locales and evolved on the islands of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola, and coastal regions of Florida into a distinct culture of their own; they became the Taino. The modern Taino continue to speak a dialect of the Taino language.

The islands of the Caribbean became a major source of immigration in the second half of the 20th century, part of the Taino population settled in South Florida and the mid-Atlantic states. With sufficient density the Taino have now started to coalesce and form “outposts” of their culture and heritage in their new homes. In November 1993, the first Taino
Tribal Council came to order in New Jersey under the leadership of Chief Peter Guanikeyu Torres, some sixty years after the Taino first came to the area.

The Taino of New Jersey, officially the “Southern Jersey Taino Tribe of Jatibonuco”, are originally from the yucayeke (village) of Jatibonuco (its Taino name) which in current Puerto Rican geography covers the cities of Orocovis, Barranquitas, and Aibonito (Jatibonuco History, http://www.hartford-hwp.com/aino/docs/jersey.html).

The New Jersey Tribe united with its brethren in southern Florida, the Timucua Taino, to form the Inter-Tribal Council of the Taino Nation, based in southern New Jersey. Both the Jatibonuco and the Inter-Tribal Council use the same flag.

That flag is buff or off-white, the color of natural, unbleached cotton that predominates in the native “jíbaro” mountain dress of the tribe (and the background color of the New Jersey state flag). The flag bears the seal of the Taino, which features a hummingbird in blue, black, white, and red seeking nectar from a red hibiscus-like flower known to the Taino as the maga. Circling the hummingbird is the title “The Taino Indigenous Nation of the Caribbean” across the top and “La Nación Indígena Taino del Caribe” in Spanish across the bottom.

The hummingbird, or colibrí, is a sacred symbol for the Taino people (http://www.hartford-hwp.com/aino/docs/bird.html) because it pollinates plants, bringing new life into the world. It symbolizes the rebirth of the Taino people. The most sacred species of the colibrí is the guani, once found throughout the Caribbean islands but now only in Cuba. The bird is greenish-blue—ancient legends say it was once a fly, converted into a bird by the Sun Father. Whatever its origins, the colibrí serves the Taino people as a striking emblem connecting them with their heritage and their Caribbean homeland.

The Jatibonuco Taino have recently altered their name, their flag, and their self-view. They have requested that they simply be referred to as a people (e-mail from Secretary Beverly Carey Torres of the Jatibonuco Taino People, 3 June 1997). The new tribal name on the
flag is “THE NEW JERSEY TAINO JATIBONUCO TRIBE”, appearing in a half-circle above the colibrí logo. The text remains in English on the outer edge, in Spanish (and smaller) on the inner portion. All text now is in royal blue. The colibrí and flower have now been enlarged to reach from nearly the bottom edge to the top. The entire new device occupies about 75% of the length of the new flag.

[Thanks to Chief Torres for information on the Jatibonuco and their symbols.]
MIAMI OF INDIANA

Unlike their cousins in Oklahoma [see Miami], the Miami of Indiana have not received the federal recognition that increasingly brings prosperity and status to many American tribes. The federal government claims that the Miami of Indiana have so integrated into the society of Indiana that their culture has been totally obliterated. The Miami of Indiana disagree (How the West Was Lost, The Discovery Channel, 5 Feb. 1995).

Perhaps because of this ongoing struggle, the Miami of Indiana have rejected the modern flag form and adopted an early Native American flag-like object (vexillloid) as their symbol, and refer to it as their “flag”. It is an actual staff with either twelve eagle feathers or twelve turkey feathers attached, depending on the situation, celebration, or ceremony. It is used on formal occasions to symbolize the tribe in place of a flag.

This usage may be similar to the old traditions of the Kiowa and those still employed by certain bands of California Miwok [see Olemitcha Miwok]. The “flag” of the Miami of Indiana may seem unique, but many tribes use both a modern flag—a rectangular piece of cloth—as well as an object similar to the “flag” of the Miami of Indiana. In the “Grand March”, a powwow’s opening parade, tribes often use the flag of the United States, the flag of the host tribe, perhaps the “POW-MIA” flag, and a tribal “traditional flag”, similar to the Miami vexillloid. Some, such as the Comanche, use a “coup stick”; the Miami and others use a spear. The Miami’s “flag” flies, as no other flag could, in the face of those who insist the Miami of Indiana have lost their heritage.
The Micmac live in the northeastern United States and in the Maritime provinces of Canada. They may have been the first Native Americans to have encountered the white man, since their ancient lands included those areas of the American continent explored by intrepid Norsemen nearly a thousand years ago (ANAI, 79-80).

This international nature of the Micmac family influences their use of symbols. Many Micmac in Canada—where one-quarter Indian blood is needed to receive rights and benefits—migrate to the United States, where one-sixteenth is sufficient. Perhaps as a result, many Micmacs within the United States use the official flag of the Canadian Micmac. This flag usage proclaims the unity of the tribe despite its division by an international boundary. (At least two other eastern Native American flags have a similar international usage—the Mohawk and the Iroquois League flags fly in both the U.S. and Canada.)

The Micmac flag has a red field with narrow vertical yellow stripes on each end of the flag. In the center is a large yellow disk about two-thirds the height of the flag. It is edged by a narrow black outline and a wider yellow band. The inner circle is divided diagonally into quarters by narrow black lines. The upper and lower quadrants contain a stylized plant in green, black, and red on yellow, while the left and right quadrants bear traditional native designs of red on yellow on blue, edged in white.
The yellow disk can be seen to represent the sun, which in North America rises first over the Micmac; its division into quarters recalls the moon in its four phases and all the traditional Native American attributes of the number four—the cardinal directions, seasons, races of man, and so on. As with most Canadian flags, the flag has width-length proportions of 1:2, as opposed to the 2:3 or 3:5 proportions common in the United States.
POWHATAN RENAPE

The Powhatan are a branch of the Algonquin-speaking Indians living in the northeast at the time of the colonization of North America. *Powhatan* is an Algonquin word meaning “at the falls”, describing the homeland of these people (ENAT, 198-200). *Renape* means “human beings”.

At their peak, the Powhatan were part of the Powhatan Confederacy based in today’s Virginia. In 1646 they became signatories to the first treaty written in America by England. Those Powhatan Renape who remain today are a small part of the bands that once formed the great confederation.

The Powhatan Renape Nation adopted a flag in 1982, after receiving recognition from the State of New Jersey. The flag was white with the tribal seal in the center. The seal was divided in quarters, the upper left and lower right black, the other two white. Over the horizontal axis was a Powhatan long-house. In front of it and covering the vertical axis was the great Sacred Tree borne on the back of a turtle, a reference to the legend that the earth itself was a turtle with people living upon its back. In the upper-left quarter was a crescent moon, in the other quarters, clockwise, were a blazing sun, a display of native fruits and vegetables, and an overhead view of a turtle’s back. Circling the four quarters was a bright blue ring with a ghost eagle, a bird sacred to most Indians, at the top. A running bear straddled the right side, a Powhatan warrior stretched along the left side and at the base lay a turtle.

About 1990 the nation modified its seal and its flag. The flag’s background remains white; the new seal retains several elements of the original seal while eliminating much of the ancillary design. The main element is a rainbow, forming a nearly complete circle [see Navajo].
Its seven colors run from red at the center to violet at the outer edge; narrow white lines separate the colors. Centered on this rainbow is the "sacred tree" atop the shell of the turtle, and the white ghost eagle rises from the Sacred Tree. The eagle's wings arch upward to encircle a yellow-and-orange sun against a red background.

The symbols have deep and multiple meanings for the Powhatan Renape ("Symbols of the Powhatan Renape Nation", *NAVA News*, Jan./Feb. 1989, 1,6). Chief Roy Crazy Horse explains its symbolism:

"The Powhatan Renape flag is based upon the circle and the number four. The circle symbolizes life, the cycle of life, and the shapes of living things. It is wholeness, completion, the all embracing, the people, the Great Hoop of the Nation, and the universe, all in one. The circle appears in this painting as a rainbow, the sun, the eye of the eagle, and the eyes, nostrils, scales and entire body of the turtle. The number four symbolizes the four seasons, four times of the day, and the four ages of humankind. It manifests here as the four entities which we see—the turtle, the sacred tree, the white eagle and the sun.

"The turtle represents Turtle Island, the ancient native name for the continent now called North America. It also represents the entire earth, for many traditional cultures here and elsewhere in the world refer to the earth as a giant turtle...like riding on the back of a great turtle.

"The sacred tree symbolizes all life, and it grows at the center of the universe. Its condition is a reflection of the health and happiness of all living things in general. The left or right side of the sacred tree mirror each other, yet they are also opposite, but they are one in the oneness of the tree. This principle, which appears throughout this drawing, and everywhere in the outer world, is represented by the number, being both the duality of the one and the unity of the two. Thus multiplying 3 by itself, this sacred tree has nine tiers, or levels of leaves.

"The white eagle is a spirit eagle, a traditional American Indian symbol of sacredness, transformation, and watchfulness for the well being of the coming generations. Some traditional elders say that there was once a great native American leader and spiritual leader named White Eagle, who traveled across this turtle island bringing a message of peace and unity to the people. As with the turtle and the sacred
tree, the white eagle is a universal symbol, representing physical life
taking spirit form and soaring skyward. Here we see the scales of the
turtle, which represent the physical world, evaporating through the
trunk of the sacred tree, which is rooted on this turtle island, to become
the spirit being of the white eagle, whose head is turned sunwise as it
looks towards rebirth.

"The fourth entity is the sun, perhaps the most universally
prominent of all symbols, which in unity with the earth is a giver of
life. Its twelve rays represent the principles of three times four, which
has many applications. Unity is expressed through the children as the
third element. Also, there are legends among the native people here
and elsewhere that tell of twelve clans, twelve nations, etc., that make
up the whole of their kind, and great leaders are often spoken of as
having twelve disciples. The sun is a great leader symbol. Twelve also
plays a role in the turtle’s make up, with its twelve main scales, and the
one in the center, which like the ball if the sun, symbolizes their oneness.

"Thus we have four entities with their opposing, yet mirroring qualities
–earth (turtle), sun, plant (tree), and animal (eagle). Turtle and tree of the
land, eagle and sun of the sky. These four entities also represent the four
elements; turtle–as water, tree–as earth, eagle–as air, and sun–as fire.

"But there is also a fifth entity here, the rainbow, whose seven
spectrum colors represent the principles of three and four together. As
the fifth entity, it serves to unify the four, the duality of dualities, as the
rainbow unifies the duality of earth and sky. Five also manifests in this
painting as the five fingers of the turtle’s hand and the eagle’s wings. The
circle of the rainbow connects all these beings into one ever-flowing life
stream. Universally, the rainbow is a symbol of hope, the future, the
beauty of the world, and the realization of our highest dreams.

"Powhatan Chief Wahunsonakeh once said ‘One must learn how to
live. Not just how to make a living, but how to find a path of beauty in
this life. We begin by knowing who we are.’ By understanding the symbols
of the Powhatan Renape, we can begin to understand who they are.”

[Thanks to Chief Roy Crazy Horse and the Powhatan Renape Nation
of the Rankokas Reservation for information on the seal and flag.]
WYANDOT OF KANSAS

The Wyandot (or Wyandotte), descendants of the Hurons of the Great Lakes and upper New York regions, had by 1842 sold their lands east of the Mississippi River and settled in what is today Wyandotte County, Kansas. Most were later relocated to northeastern Oklahoma, but some remained [see Wyandotte]. These “absentee” Wyandot accepted citizenship under the Citizenship Act of 1924 and organized a tribe that was incorporated in 1959 (http://www.sfo.com/~denglish/wynaks/wyandot2.html).

The Wyandot of Kansas have received state recognition as an authentic Indian nation. They hold their ancestry dear and are currently seeking federal recognition as a branch of the great Wyandot nation.

The flag of the Wyandot of Kansas is probably blue, with the tribal seal in the center and “WYANDOT NATION of Kansas” across the top of the seal in white. The seal depicts a Wyandot tribesman sitting before a campfire beneath a stylized willow tree. The fire recalls how the Huron of old kept fires constantly burning in their camps (ENAT, 100). The outer edge of the seal is white, the tree is green and brown against a light blue sky, the fire and tribesman are in natural colors.
THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

What follows are short descriptions of tribal flags where more extensive information was not available.

1. The Hoopa Valley Nation of California adopted a white flag that bears their tribal seal in 1994 on “Sovereignty Day”, a holiday unique to the Hoopa Valley. The holiday celebrates the sovereign status of all Native Americans within the United States.

2. The Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska adopted a white flag edged with green and bearing the tribal seal in black in the center in 1993. The seal features Chief White Cloud, founder of the tribe and its head from 1860 until his death in 1920. Chief White Cloud, like half the men of his tribe, served as scouts for the Union in the Civil War. Only about half of that number returned from the war to establish the present tribe.

3. The Lower Sioux have a single flag brought out only during powwows.

4. The Minnesota Chippewa have a light blue flag bearing their tribal seal.

5. The Omaha currently use an unofficial flag of blue bearing their tribal logo, but are considering a new official design to fly outside their casino in Nebraska.

6. The Pasqua Yaqui of Arizona have a flag of red, white, and blue.

7. The Prairie Band of Potawatomi of Kansas adopted their sky blue flag bearing their name and seal in 1994.

8. The Sac & Fox of Nebraska use a blue flag bearing their tribal seal and their name in white.

9. The Shoshone & Bannock of Idaho use a brown flag bearing the tribal seal in gold.
GLOSSARY

Federal Recognition A significant distinction for any tribe, federal recognition has enormous emotional, historical, and economic importance to Native tribes. It opens a wide range of benefits and protection under federal legislation, exemption from state statutes, and status as a sovereign domestic nation. Federally-recognized Native entities have a direct government-to-government relationship with the United States, have their own jurisdiction separate from the surrounding territory, and are entitled to share in benefits under Acts of Congress specifically designated for Indian tribes, bands, communities, and Native Alaskan villages and corporations.

Once the federal government formally acknowledges the existence of an Indian community—historically by treaty or Act of Congress, more recently through a rigorous administrative process in the Bureau of Indian Affairs—it enjoys the formal privileges of a sovereign “nation within a nation.” Federal recognition requires that a group of people document not only their descent from a particular tribe or alliance of tribes, but also their continuous existence as a community in which some form of governmental organization had political authority over its members.

Indian Territory Originally defined as all territory of the United States west of the Mississippi River but not within the states of Missouri, Louisiana, and Arkansas—it soon became restricted to the present state of Oklahoma. Many Native peoples from throughout the United States, but especially the southeast, were forcibly moved to this area during the 1800s. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 allowed the government to grant unsettled western prairie lands to Indians in exchange for their ancestral homelands.

Trail of Tears When in the 1830s the Five Civilized Tribes (Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, Cherokee, and Creek) refused to trade their cultivated farms in exchange for strange lands in Indian Territory, some 100,000 of them, many in manacles, were forced to march westward under military coercion. Up to a quarter of them died on what became known as the “Trail of Tears.” Even more reluctant to leave their native lands were the Florida Indians, who fought resettlement for seven years (1835-42) in the second of the Seminole Wars.

Units of Measure The text of this volume expresses measurements in the English system as used in the United States: One acre is 0.405 hectares. One foot is 30.38 centimeters. One mile is 1.61 kilometers.

Vexillology The study of flags, a branch of the social sciences drawing on heraldry, semiotics, history, graphic arts, and political science, derives its name from the Latin vexillum—a Roman cavalry flag. Related terms include vexilloid—a flag-like object, vexilliferous—having a flag, and vexillography—the description of flags.
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This work had many contributors. Among them were:

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Thanks to all, without you this work would not have been possible!

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This work favors completeness of individual entries at the risk of some redundancy between them, so each entry stands alone (with ample cross-referencing). The length of entries varies widely, based on the complexity of the flag and its symbolism and on the amount of information provided by the tribe. We hope that further work can develop more extensive documentation on all flags presented here, such as is given for the Powhatan Renape or Sault Ste. Marie, and we encourage all tribes to help make that possible.

Raven generally follows the Chicago Manual of Style, however, for the sake of clarity and accuracy in the large amount of quoted material contained in this issue—especially descriptions of lettering on flags—I have indulged in a personal preference for the British style of presenting quoted material inside the commas and periods which belong to the surrounding sentence.

The terms “Native”, “Native American”, “American Indian”, and “Indian” have been used virtually interchangeably, reflecting a widespread diversity in their use. Similarly “nation”, “people”, “tribe”, and “community” seem to have overlapping and often indistinguishable meanings. The manner of expressing a group’s name as a singular or plural (e.g., “the Kaw” versus “the Kaws”) can vary in the text without a substantive distinction.

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INDEX OF COMMUNITIES

Throughout U.S. history the names by which communities of Native people are known have changed significantly. This index provides access to the information in this work from a number of different names. Whenever possible, transliterations of names in the Native languages are included (in italics). “See also” references are given when different communities of the same culture use a different name or spelling of a name. “See” references are given when a name is no longer used by the community. Source: Mary B. Davis, ed., Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996).

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