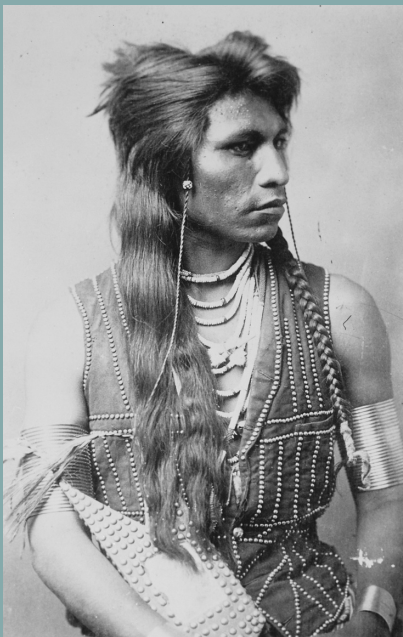


WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE TWO-SPIRIT?

Native American Heritage Month 2020



OSH-TISCH

"Finds them and kills them"

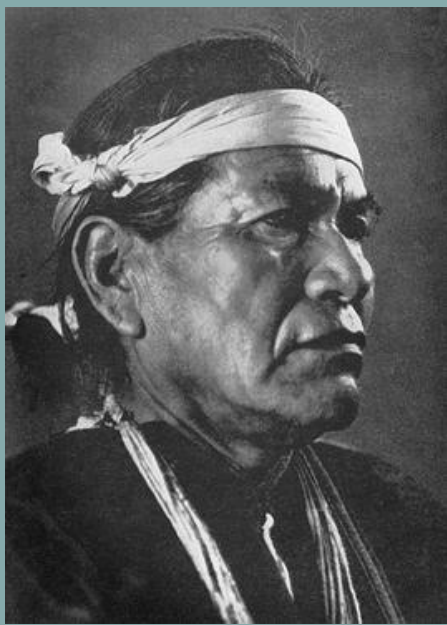
(1854-1929) Osh-Tisch was a male-bodied Crow badé who fought in the Battle of Rosebud in 1876. She was incarcerated by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs along with other badé, forced to cut her hair, wear "masculine" clothing, and do manual labor. The Crow were outraged, saying this abuse went against their nature and saw these attempts to change the badé as a tragedy. They considered their badés valuable members of their community, particularly known for their needlework and cooking.



CHIEF BARCHEEAMPE

Bíawacheeitchish // "Woman Chief"

(1806-1854) Bíawacheeitchish was born to the Gros Ventres tribe before being captured and adopted by the Crow at age 10. Bíawacheeitchish wore women's clothing and was a remarkable warrior, horseman, and marksman. She joined the Council of Chiefs and was a significant leader as the third ranking member. She married four wives. She died in an ambush at the hands of her birth tribe, the Gros Ventres.



HASTIIN TŁ'A

"Sir Left Handed"

(1867-1937) Hastiin Tł'a was one of the first born to the Navajo after their return to their homelands after their forced internment at Bosque Redondo. He was both a weaver (traditional women's craft) and *hataalii* ceremonial singer (traditional male role), which was possible because he was *Nádleehi*, a gender unique to Navajo culture which means "one who is transformed" or "one who changes." Hastiin was instrumental in documenting Navajo religion and making it available to future generations.

What do these leaders have in common?

Osh-Tisch, Bíawacheeitchish, and Hastiin are all **Two-Spirit people**.



This means they were recognized by their tribes as existing outside of the gender binary as it is predominately understood by western culture.



What is Two-Spirit?

AN UMBRELLA TERM

Originally from the Anishinabe language

A Two-Spirit person is a person with First Nations or Native American ancestry who is born with both male and female spirits. It is a term used exclusively by indigenous folx.

Adopted as a catch-all phrase in 1990, Two-Spirit captures the fact that most native tribes on the American continent recognize tribe members who are bi-gendered, are trans, experience same-sex attraction or are gender non-conforming.



Navajo religious weaving (top);
Crow beaded war shirt (middle);
Crow beading (bottom).

SOCIETAL ROLES

Sacred, spiritual, craftspersons, warriors

In some tribes, Two-Spirit folx are thought to have sacred spiritual prowess and are seen as a gift from the Creator.

Historically, many Two-Spirit were healers, cooks, matchmakers, potters, weavers, singers, and artists. Many would adopt orphaned children and care for the elderly in their tribe. Male-bodied Two-Spirits often took on domestic responsibilities, while female-bodied Two-Spirits were often warriors.

TO EACH THEIR OWN

Each tribe had their own term for Two-Spirit folx.

Here's a non-comprehensive list:

A'yai-kik-ahsi, ááwowáakii, ninauh-oskitsi-pahpyaki (**Blackfoot/Niitsitapii**)

Napêw iskwêwisêhot, iskwêw ka napêwayat, ayahkwêw, înahpîkasoht, iskwêhkân, napêhkân (**Cree/Iyiniwok/Ininiwok/Nehiyawok**)

Batée, boté, badé (**Crow/Absaroka**) | Wíŋkte (**Lakota**) | Nádleeh (**Navajo/Diné**)

Ikwekaazo, ininiikaazo (**Ojibwe/Chippewa/Anishinaabeg**) | Lhamana (**Zuni/A'shiwi**)

Wehee'ahiiken Kuuyat (**Tongva**) | Hemaneh (**Cheyenne/Tsistsistas**)

Asgayusd' udant[i/a], ageyusd udant[i/a], nudale ageyha udantedi, nudale asgaya udantedi, sgigi,

uligisdidegi, taliqwo didantvn, utselidv, nudale udanto/udantedi, atsoine, asegi

Udanto/udant[i/a]/udantedi (**Cherokee/Keetoowah/Tsalagi**) | Gatxan** (**Tlingit**)

Tayagigux' (**Aleut**) | Títqattek (**Kutenai**) | Aranaruaq/Angutnguaq (**Kuskokwim**)

Aranu'tiq, anasik, uktasik (**Yup'ik Chugach/Alutiiq/ Yup'ik**) | Tw!inna'ek (**Klamath**)

Tuva'sa, tubasa, waipu sungwe, tangowaip (**Lemhi Shoshone**)

Berdache**, bardache, berdache, bird-ash, bredache, burdash (**Stó:lō/Chinook Jargon**)

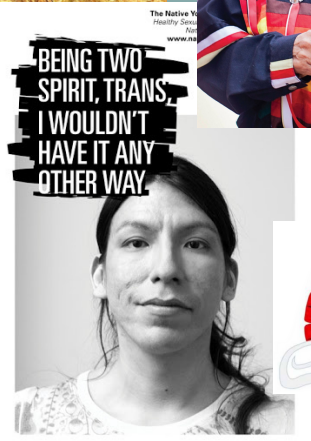
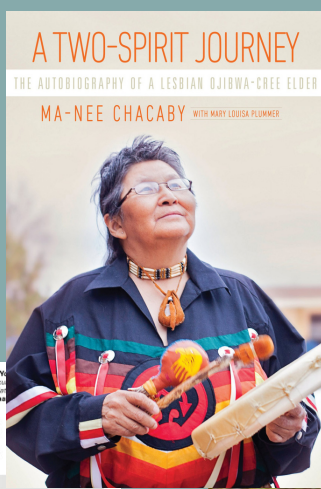
** Some words, like *berdache* and *gatxan*, may have a negative association and should be avoided or used sparingly.

FOR MORE TWO-SPIRIT TERMS VISIT:

[HTTPS://WWW.NCAI.ORG/POLICY-RESEARCH-CENTER/INITIATIVES/PRUDEN-EDMO_TWOSPIRITPEOPLE.PDF](https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/initiatives/pruden-edmo_twospiritpeople.pdf)

Two-Spirits Today

Two-Spirit people consider themselves part of the LGBTQ+ community or part of the Native Out / Indigiqueer movement. Their gender presentation can be widely varied (masculine, feminine, both, or something else) and they use a variety of pronouns. Two-Spirit people continue to learn and fill sacred roles within their communities.



Two-Spirit Camp at Standing Rock (top left); Native Out posters (bottom left); Auto-biography by Ma-Neé Chacaby, Ojibwa-Cree Elder (center top); Geo Neptune, elected official in Maine (center right); Coast Salish Two-Spirit symbol created 2019 (center bottom); Two-Spirits at San Francisco Pride (top right); Two-Spirit children's book (bottom right).

