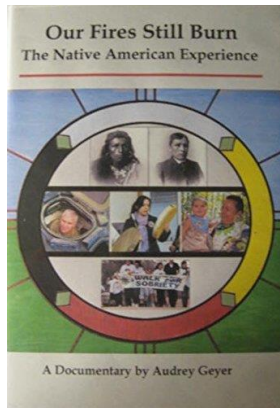


Movie Kit

Our Fires Still Burn



American
Spaces



Year of Release: 2013

Rating: PG-13

Length: 57 min

English level: Medium

Director: Audrey Geyer

Starring: Scott Badenoch, Lee Ruffino, Bunky Echo-Hawk

Themes: Native-American Heritage; Diversity and Inclusion

Please note:

- This movie is available at **no charge for American Spaces using Kanopy streaming videos**, through eLibraryUSA. Kanopy is available only through the American Spaces Staff Resources section of eLibraryUSA (<https://elibraryusa.state.gov/resources.html>). American Spaces may request eLibraryUSA accounts by emailing americanspaces@state.gov.
- Films on Kanopy may NOT be downloaded, so American Spaces should ensure they have the technological capability for a film screening that relies on streaming video.

Warning/General Advisory

Parents cautioned that film may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Synopsis (adapted from Kanopy website)

This exciting and compelling one hour documentary invites viewers into the lives of contemporary Native American role models living in the U.S. Midwest. It dispels the myth that American Indians have disappeared from the American horizon, and reveals how they continue to persist, heal from the past, confront the challenges of today, keep their culture alive, and make great contributions to society.

The stories shared in this documentary are powerful, startling, despairing and inspiring. Native Americans have faced tragedy and suffering in American history. Yet, amidst the suffering and trauma, there is resilience and a profound remembering and healing taking place today, which will also benefit the generations to come. *Our Fires Still Burn* tells the story of how many Native Americans are trying to reclaim their cultural and spiritual identity. This recapturing of Indian languages, traditions and spiritual practices is helping restore pride among Native Americans and having a positive impact in their communities.

Key Vocabulary/Places

- **Indian reservation** – In the United States, areas of land managed by Native American tribes, and under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs rather than the state governments in which they are physically located.
- **Native American tribes** – Groups or nations of indigenous people in the United States. There are 573 Native American tribes in the U.S.; the largest are the Navajo, Cherokee and the Sioux.
- **Indian boarding school** – Schools that were initially established by religious groups and later came under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. They existed from the 1870's through the middle of the 20th century. The schools were established in an effort to assimilate the indigenous tribes into the mainstream American culture. When the students arrived at the boarding school they were given regular clothes to wear and the boys had to have haircuts. In addition to basic academics, the Indian students were taught English and told they were not to speak their native languages. At one of the most well-known boarding schools, Carlisle Indian School, the headmaster's motto was "Kill the Indian, save the man." These boarding schools created resentment and trauma for many Native Americans.
- **Indian casino** – Casinos are facilities where gambling games are played. Since Indian reservations have tribal sovereignty, they are able to open casinos on their land in an effort to generate income for the tribe through the gaming industry.
- **Tepees** – a portable cone-shaped tent used by the American Indians of the Plains and Great Lakes regions of the United States.

Discussion Questions

- What are your impressions of the documentary? What did you learn?
- Were there any characters or stories that stood out to you?
- What is a stereotype? What are some of the stereotypes of American Indians mentioned in the documentary?
- How do the American Indians in *Our Fires Still Burn* respond to these stereotypes?
- In the documentary, several of the American Indians talked about challenges they faced in history and some that they face today. What are some of these challenges?
- Why is it important for Native Americans to retain their language and culture?
- Are there any native or indigenous groups in your communities/countries? What have their experiences been like?
- What are some of the challenges that any ethnic group faces as the group assimilates into a nation's broader culture?
- How can people recognize and be inclusive of diverse groups of people living in our communities and countries?