Native Americans in Kentucky

There has long been a myth that Native Americans never lived in Kentucky. This myth due largely to land speculators, who promoted Kentucky as an empty country to improve land sales. Sadly this myth holds on strong to this day.

Native Americans have lived in Kentucky for more than 14,000 years. The first Native Americans to call Kentucky home were the Paleoindians, who moved into Kentucky around 12,000 B.C.

According to the 2010 Census 31,335 people of Native American decent live in Kentucky, with 10,120 of those being people of full blood status.

The Purpose of this exhibit is to shed some light on the history and culture of Kentucky’s first peoples. It will take you on a journey to highlight their history from the Paleoindian period to the Present day. Due to the sheer amount of information on Native American history and culture this exhibit serves merely as a starting point.

To learn more about the history and culture of the Native Americans of Kentucky these sites are wonderful resources: The Kentucky Native American Heritage Council, The University of Kentucky Anthology Museum, and Wickliffe Mounds State Historic Site. There are also numerous books on the Cherokee, Shawnee and Chickasaw peoples.