

Iliff School of Theology Land Acknowledgment
September 13, 2023

Iliff School of Theology, founded in 1892, acknowledges that the space in which we gather today is located in the ancestral home of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute peoples. The people closely associated with the founding of Iliff caused a devastation that we cannot undo or fully rectify; and our intertwined history makes us responsible for and to all Indigenous peoples in our continued occupation of this land. We now acknowledge the enduring relationships that these nations have to their homeland. We acknowledge that our occupancy has historically ignored the relational significance of this land and all of its peoples, both human and nonhuman. Through this acknowledgement, we pledge in our learning community to listen to, learn from, to amplify the wisdom of, and find opportunities to partner with the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute peoples.

In addition to our land acknowledgment, we publicly affirm our commitment to the Lenape peoples with whom we have entered into an ongoing process of accountability and building right relationships. The intertwined histories of Methodism and euroChristian conquest were exemplified by welcoming the gift of an eighteenth-century book of Christian history, bound in the flayed and tanned skin of a murdered Lenape man, and publicly displayed at Iliff as a treasured artifact from 1893 until 1974. We seek to address this horrific legacy through attention and sustained effort to re-shape Iliff's relationship with the Lenape and other indigenous people in our teaching and communal life. We are profoundly grateful to the Lenape peoples for their willingness to engage with Iliff as we wrestle with this painful history and pledge to uphold this relationship in good faith. We pledge to be accountable to all Indigenous peoples and to build relationships grounded in justice, respect, and shared responsibility.

Updated August 5, 2025