



7 ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS FOR CALIFORNIA INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

PREPARED BY:

California Indian Museum and Cultural Center
Based on Those Developed Under
Montana Office of Public Instruction

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #1

There is great diversity among the 150+ tribes of California in their languages, cultures, histories & governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern California.



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CALIFORNIA INDIAN SOCIETIES

Some of the oldest and most stable cultures in the western hemisphere

Conservative Estimation of Pre Contact population was 350,000

Today some scientists say that number was likely in the millions

A number of independent groups populated the area (100-1500 individuals)

Diversity: each group had it's own territory, language, traditions and cultural practices, religion

Before European settlement, some estimate that California had more than 500 "tribal groups" speaking about 300 dialects of at least 100 languages

Tribes operated according to a shared value for natural resources. Tribal leaders managed their production, distribution and exchange.

CALIFORNIA INDIAN SOCIETIES

California was not an “untamed wilderness” It is a native home, native place names, burial sites, sacred sites, medicine, food, cultural materials. We are still here! While many accounts written by European "explorers" characterize land as vacant and indigenous people as savage, these statements should be examined in terms of historical bias. These classifications served to fulfill the elements of the doctrine of discovery, a European laws that facilitated the taking of land from native people.

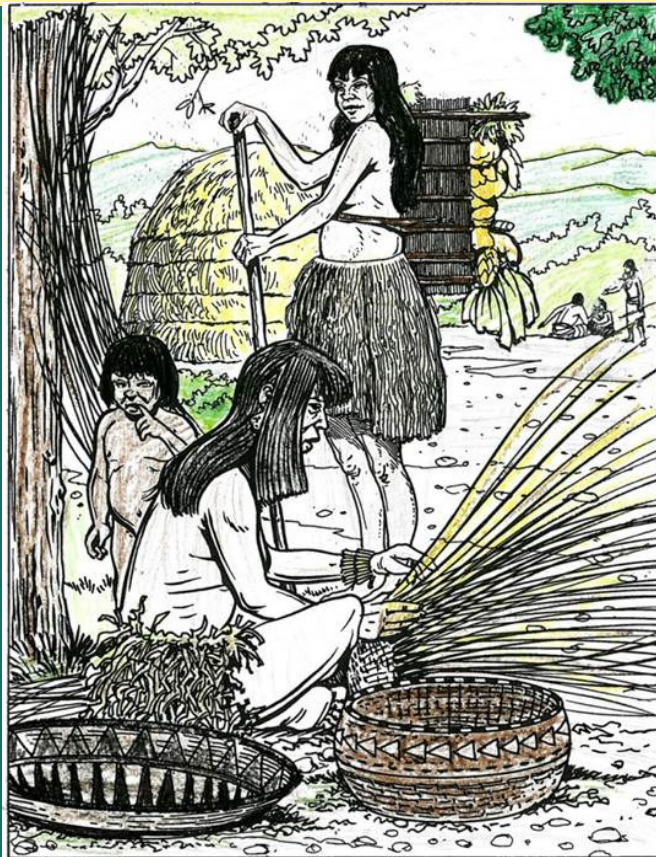
A Time of Resistance: California Indians During the Mission Period 1769-1848. Sara Supahan

Traditionally collective Laws governed the maintenance and care of resources. If groups grew too large to be supported by natural resources, they split off and found new areas so that the communities remained sustainable..



IMAGERY VS. SUBSTANCE

Please examine the visual representations you are using to teach about California Indian cultures. Do the images represent vibrant and resilient communities? Do the images perpetuate stereotypes? Do they demonstrate the continuity of tribal cultures? Are native youth able to take pride in having these images represent their families and communities?





ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #2

There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by many entities, organizations and people. There is a continuum of Indian identity ranging from assimilated to traditional and is unique to each individual. There is no generic American Indian.

#3

DIVERSITY AMONG IDENTITY

Many individuals who are not familiar with various tribal communities associate tribal identity with what they view in main stream media. When they meet native people they often challenge the authenticity of their identity because it is different from what they have seen through a stereotypical lens.



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THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN

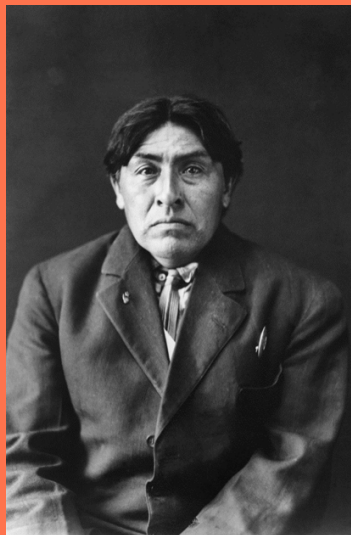


Hollywood has often tried to define American identity in western films... American identity is defined by its relationship to Native Americans. Early American literature was filled with an American fantasy that as settlers arrived they shed their European ancestry for something new, thus American identity began to form as it was compared and contrasted to Native Americans.

Cowboy vs. Indian
Hero vs. Savage
Superior vs. Inferior
Civilized vs. Uncivilized



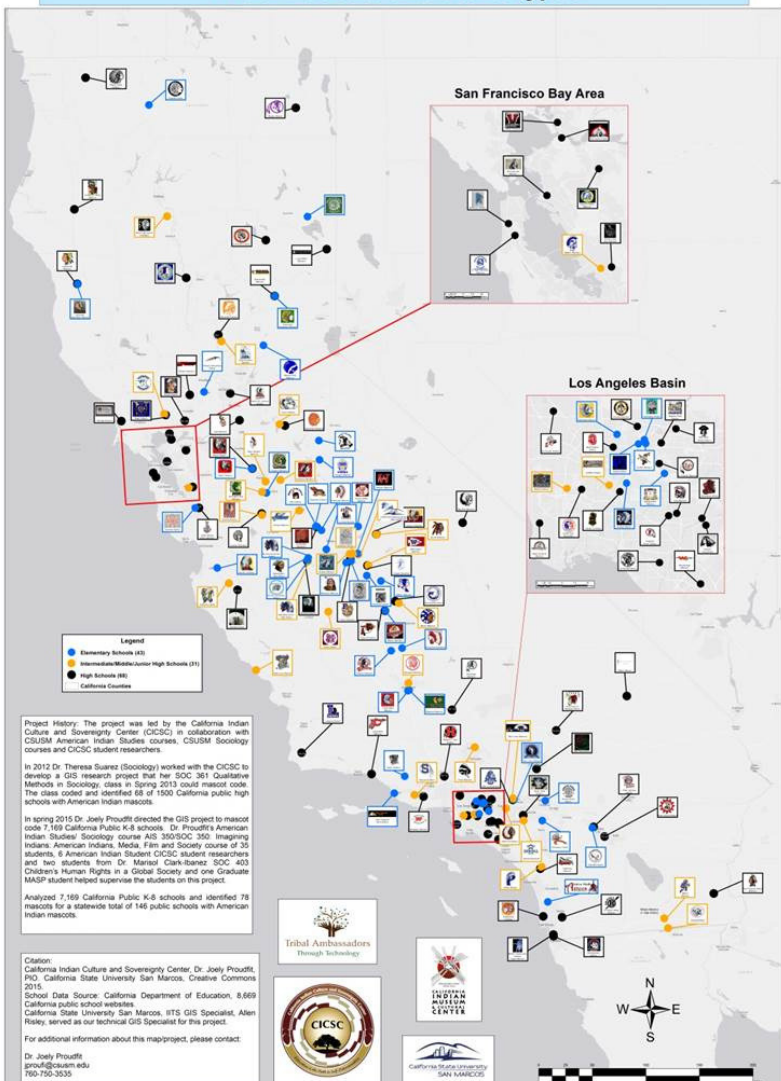
VANISHING RACE



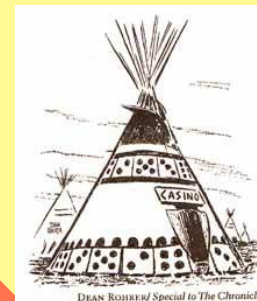
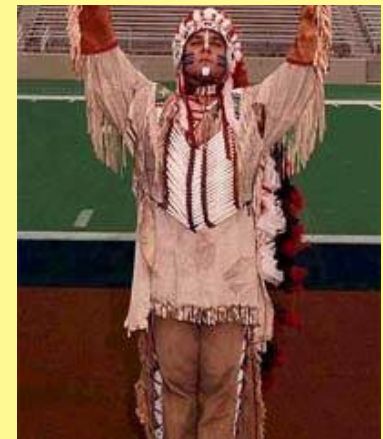
While genocide occurred throughout the United States, the legacy continues as instead of acknowledging the acts members of the society work to justify them. Today history is romanticized in the name of 'progress.' Native Americans were and are labeled as the "vanishing race." The idea that the Indian way of life would inevitably come to an end in order to make room for "progress" appears in history, biographies, art, media, museums, artifacts and human remains collections and more. There were two options for American Indians: Vanish into mainstream or become extinct forever.

CONTEMPORARY STEREOTYPES: MASCOTS AND GREEDY INDIANS

Cultural Appropriation in California Public K-12 Schools: Tribal Mascots and Stereotypes



Contemporary stereotypes stem from a fundamental lack of understanding of history. Native American community member attempts to correct the record or call for change to racism often adopted as the status quo are dismissed. Individuals are characterized as overly sensitive or needing to be too politically correct. Native American educational and/or political success is discussed through a narrative of entitlement.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has their own oral history beginning with their genesis that is as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.



NATIVE TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Native traditional beliefs and practices are very diverse and vary from tribe to tribe and family to family. Recognition of these belief systems is very important to counteract erasure. Teaching tolerance and respect for Native American values and cultural practices is critical to address contemporary issues like repatriation and environmental justice.



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into the Future



ORIGINS AND COSMOLOGY

California history did not begin with the establishment of Missions. It begins with Native People who existed before the Spanish arrived.

Since Time Immemorial.... Since the beginning or as “far back as historic times can be counted”

The name of this river translates to the River that Runs through the Middle of the World. Many native belief systems viewed their ancestral territories as central to their beliefs. Religions are tied to a sacred landscape.



A Time of Resistance: California Indians During the Mission Period 1769-1848. Sara Supahan

BERING STRAIT - FACT OR FICTION?

Nearly every fourth grade text book incorporates the Bering Strait Doctrine into its introduction to California Indian history. This doctrine is contrary to the oral history of many tribes. While oral traditions vary many illustrate that native people existed in their aboriginal homelands since time immemorial.

“An examination of the Bering Strait doctrine suggests that such a journey would have been nearly impossible even if there had been hordes of Paleo-Indians trying to get across the hypothetical land bridge. It appears that not even animals or plants really crossed this mythical connection between Asia and North America. The Bering Strait exists and existed only in the minds of scientists.” -Vine Deloria

The late Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria, Jr., has significantly challenged this theory and refers to it as, “scientific language for I don’t know, but it sounds good and no one will check.” He goes on to say in his book, *Red Earth White Lies: American Indians and the Myth of Scientific Fact*:

INCLUSION OF ORAL HISTORY & CREATION STORIES

In From the Beginning of Time, Indians of Northwest California, A 6th Grade Curriculum Unit, the authors' state, "The ease with which the general population has embraced this theory does cause one to wonder if the land idea, in perhaps even an unconscious way, is an attempt to ease the collective conscience. After all, if you believe this theory, then you can also believe that the European invasion of North America was really just another immigration."

Thus it is important that instructional content include an examination of the oral traditions and creation beliefs of California Indian tribes. Be sure to illustrate to your students that through oral tradition Native Americans have passed on their religious beliefs, histories, traditions, cultural knowledge, community values, etc. to future generations.



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #4

There were many foreign, state and federal policies put into place throughout American history that have impacted California Indian people and shape who they are today. Much of Indian history can be related through several major policy periods.

#3

Examples: Mission Period, The Gold Rush Allotment Period, Boarding School Period, Termination and Self-Determination

POLICIES THAT AFFECTED TRIBES

California Indians are survivors of genocide and colonization aimed at indenture and extermination. Descendants of these survivors experience historical trauma and are triggered by denial and justifications for the extreme violence that was carried out against their people.



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THE GOLD RUSH AND INDIAN PEOPLE

The establishment of the mission system and the origins of the Gold Rush should be taught within the context of genocide and colonization. California Indians are often absent from the historical text concerning the gold rush. Why?

Here are a few highlights of the experiences of California Indians during the Gold Rush:

Forced or Manipulated Mining Labor
Working to pay off food, gear paying for trade goods with an equal weight in gold.
Earning wages in liquor.
From 1848 – 1870s, 10,000+ Indians were indentured, 4000 were children. Boys sold for \$60, girls sold for \$200.

Indian miners were resented by white miners because they were a cheap labor force resulting in blatant hostilities.

Indians constituted more than ½ of the miners in some mines of more than 4000 miners.
Indian women worked in the mines as well.

It was common for many Indians to be sent to work in mines and not return home as they were treated as a disposable source of labor.

Prostitution by Indian women increased as Indian mining earning power decreased. Forced prostitution rampant. A reason why native girls were sold for more than three times the amount of native boys.

EARLY CALIFORNIA LAWS ON CALIFORNIA INDIANS

1850 – 1865 - Act for the Government and Protection of Indians and related amendments:

This law facilitated removal of Indians from their traditional lands, separating at least a generation of children and adults from their families, languages and cultures through a mechanism of indenture.

The law create a market for slavery. There are multiple accounts published in newspapers concerning kidnapping and selling of Indian children.

The law provided for “apprenticing” or indenturing of Indian children and adults to “Whites.” Children were held until an age of “majority.” This age was typically late twenties to early thirties.

The law also punished “vagrant” Indians by hiring them out to the highest bidder at public auction, if no bail/fine was produced by individual.

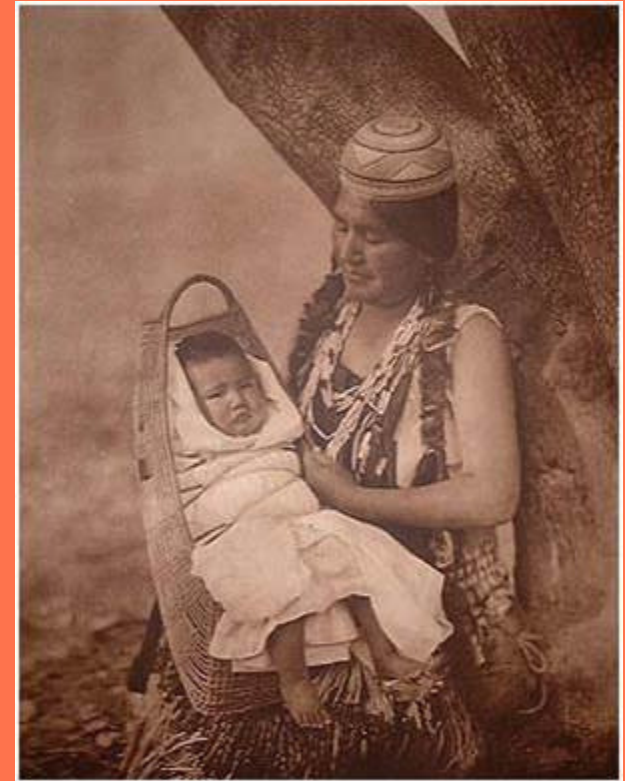
The law prohibited Indians from testifying against whites in court. Thus no witnesses could testify to the violence that occurred in Native villages.

EARLY CALIFORNIA LAWS IMPACTING CALIFORNIA INDIANS

1851 – 1859 - Expeditions against the Indians (California Militias)

Under the state constitution and militia laws, California governors ordered local sheriffs to organize the men to conduct expeditions against the Indians. The Governor called for "extermination."

The California legislature passed 27 laws concerning Expeditions with total claims submitted amounting to \$1,293,179.20. This is the total amount that was paid by the state to private citizens for Indian bounties or scalps. Bounties earned militia members anywhere from 50 cents to \$5.00 per Indian.




ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #5

Reservations are land that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties and was not “given” to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

- I. That both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.
- II. That Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.
- III. That acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.

A reservation system was planned for California, similar to those found in other western states. Federal commissioners were sent to California to negotiate treaties with tribes. State legislatures pressured the federal government to stop the treaties from becoming law because the tribal territories had gold.

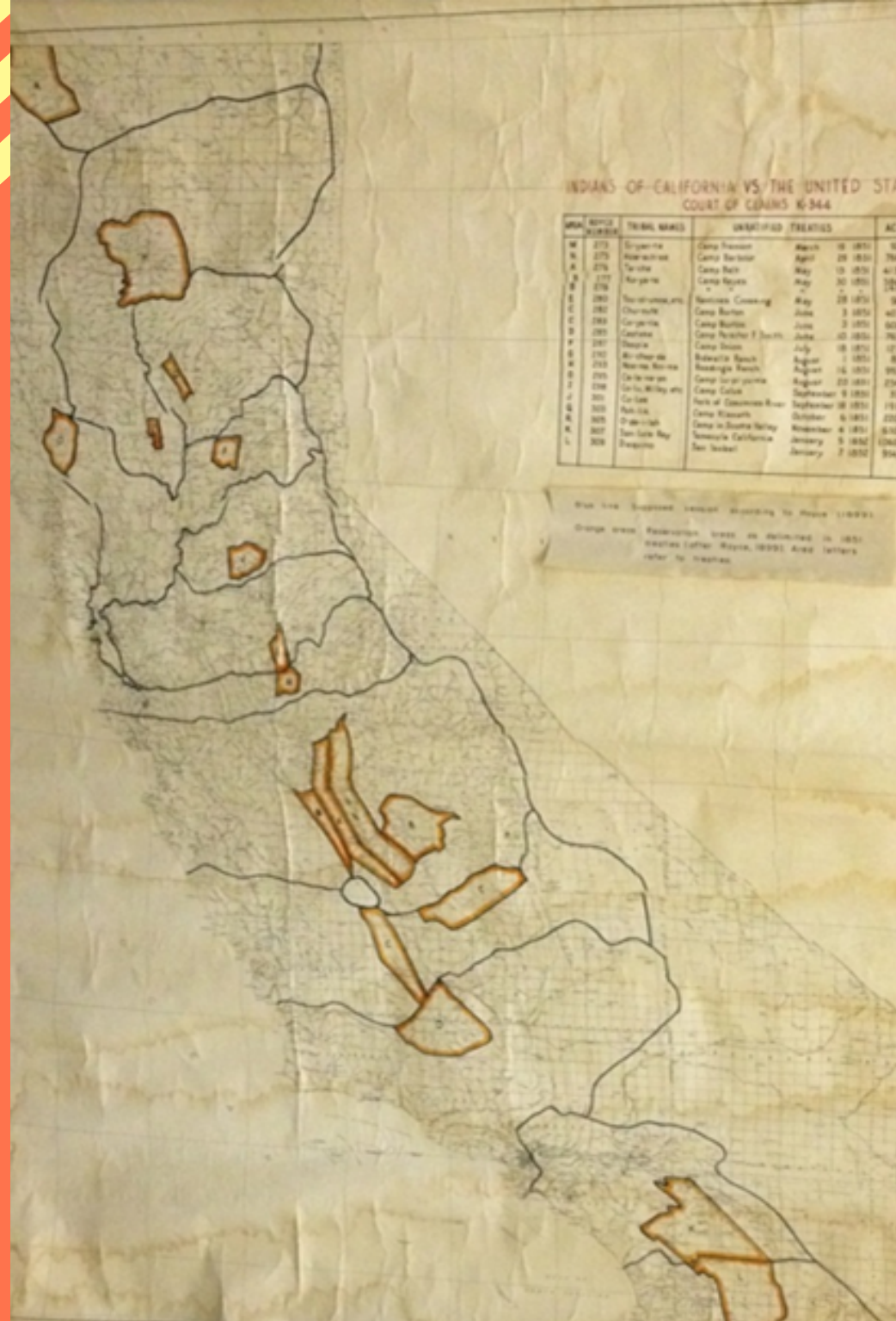


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INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA VS. THE UNITED STATES					
COURT OF CLAIMS K-344					
ORCA	REFUGEE NUMBER	TRIBAL NAME	UNSATISFIED TREATIES		
N	273	Yupikwint	Camp Sherman	March 18 1851	75
N	275	Washewint	Camp Benton	April 29 1851	76
N	276	Taniche	Camp Rich	May 13 1851	41
N	278	Yon-yon	Camp Hayes	May 30 1851	76
N	280	Yon-yon-wint	Namonts Crossing	May 28 1851	76
N	282	Thurawint	Camp Benton	June 3 1851	41
N	283	Gargawint	Camp Benton	June 3 1851	50
N	285	Cawawint	Camp Wawich's 7 South	June 18 1851	76
N	287	Shawint	Camp Sison	July 18 1851	41
N	292	Wichawint	Baldwin's Ranch	August 1 1851	8
N	293	Wichawint	Redding Ranch	August 16 1851	76
N	295	Wichawint	Camp Yon-yon	August 23 1851	76
N	298	Wichawint	Camp Calico	September 3 1851	76
N	301	Wichawint	Fort of Chawawint	September 18 1851	11
N	302	Wichawint	Camp Wawich	October 6 1851	21
N	303	Wichawint	Camp Wawich	October 13 1851	76
N	305	Wichawint	Camp Wawich	November 4 1851	8
N	306	Wichawint	Camp Wawich	December 3 1851	76

UNRATIFIED TREATIES WITH THE CALIFORNIA INDIANS

1851 — Barbour Commissioners (3)
unratified treaties (18) — 139
signatories

7.5 million acres were set aside in
the treaties for California tribes.
The treaties were never ratified and
put under Injunction of Secrecy
until 1905.

Had the U.S. not rejected of these
treaties, they would have set aside
1/3 of the state for California tribes,
today California Indian Country is
less than 1% of the state

Many California tribes were landless
for more than five decades.

The Appropriation Act of 1906 set
aside federal money to buy land for
landless California Indians (82)
Rancherias put in trust.

WHAT ARE THE CONTEMPORARY
IMPACTS ON LOSS OF LANDS?

Economic Development
Political Authority
Language and Cultural Resources
and Revitalization



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #6

History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

#3

HISTORY FROM A CALIFORNIA INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Are we revising history? Native people are often characterized as promoting "revisionist" history as we call for light to be shed on our past. The events and policies that support native perspectives have been documented and recorded but left out of the mainstream discourse or dialogue. This information is part of all of our collective heritage and deserves to be examined.



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EDUCATION AND GENOCIDE

What Are The Eight Stages of Genocide?

By Gregory H. Stanton, President, Genocide Watch

Classification
Symbolization
Dehumanization
Organization
Polarization
Preparation
Extermination
Denial

EDUCATION AND GENOCIDE

Classification - Distinguish people/Savage and Uncivilized

Symbolization-Group markings/Redskins

Dehumanization-Equated with animals and insects/Squaws and Bucks

Polarization – Drive groups apart, broadcast propaganda, laws forbid intermarriage, social interaction. Indenture and other early laws.

Preparation – Victims identified, segregated, forced into camps. Boarding schools, reservations and Assimilation.

Extermination – Mass Killing (collection and study) Militias or “Vanishing Redman”

Denial – Perpetrators of genocide deny that they committed any crimes, often blame what happened on the victims. "Progress of Civilization"

It is important to realize that we are still in this stage.

Why are children and the public more familiar with genocide that

A LEGACY OF HISTORICAL BIAS

HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA.

BY
FRANKLIN TUTHILL.

SAN FRANCISCO:
H. H. BANCROFT & COMPANY.
1895.

the same soil; for, of all wretchedly debased and utterly brutal beings, the Indians of California were the farthest fallen below the average Indian type. They were neither brave nor bold, generous nor spirited. They seem to have possessed none of the noble characteristics that, with a slight coloring of romance, make heroes of the red men of the Atlantic slopes, and win for them our ready sympathy. We hear of no

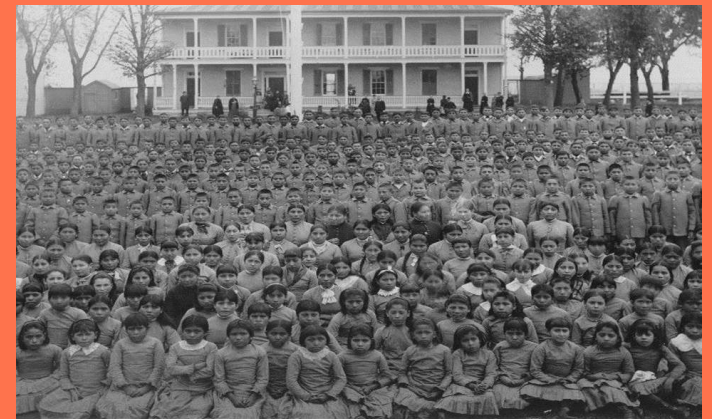
orators among them, no bold braves terribly resenting and contesting to the last the usurpations of the whites. They were "Diggers," filthy and cowardly, succumbing without a blow to the rule of foreign masters. As redeeming them from utter brutality, it is refreshing to see occasional glimpses of humor in them, and a disposition to make fun of the missionary when his back was turned. But under the father's eye they cowered like children on the low benches before the old-time pedagogue wielding the ferule. Perhaps the mild, motherly sort of treatment which priests met them with, disarmed them. Perhaps, if they had been subject to the rough handling that the Indian tribes generally received from English settlers, they might have fired up, and displayed some of the violence and savage fury that make us respect the Indians of the East and the North. Perhaps it was in part because they were treated as children, that they grew into simple, childish ways.

They were as contemptible physically as intellectually, and evinced as little traces of conscience as of a reasoning faculty. To Drake's party they showed a disposition to offer sacrifices, thinking the sea-king's jolly tars to be veritable gods. Venegas thought the Lower Californians to be the most stupid and weak, in both body and mind, of all mortals. But the

“KILL THE INDIAN, AND SAVE THE MAN”

“It is this nature in our red brother that is better dead than alive, and when we agree with the oft-repeated sentiment that the only good Indian is a dead one, we mean this characteristic of the Indian. Carlisle's mission is to kill THIS Indian, as we build up the better man. We give the rising Indian something nobler and higher to think about and do, and he comes out a young man with the ambitions and aspirations of his more favored white brother. We do not like to keep alive the stories of his past, hence deal more with his present and his future.”

-Capt. Richard H. Pratt



MYTHS AND MISSIONS

Here are several myths that are often communicated in historical narratives about the California Mission system:

- California history began with missions.
- California Indians were docile and happily accepted mission life.
- Indians wandered over to or joined the missions.
- California Indians were uncivilized.
- Indians were fascinated by the missionaries and soldiers



THE MISSION PERIOD

Instead of generalizing that the "Spanish built the missions," consider the following:

- the missions were built by California Indians (at the instruction of the Padres)

- the missions were built near Indian populations centers, preferably next to Indian villages and towns, and often missions were relocated within the first year of establishment because Indian communities relocated away from the missions.

- 21 Catholic Missions were built from San Diego to Sonoma (22nd and 23rd missions were also erected but burned down by surrounding tribal communities).

- Religious pretensions aside, the missions functioned as places where Indians were enslaved to provide labor and produce goods for the Spanish presidios and economy

- Mission governance prohibited California Indians from practicing their traditions and ceremonies, however cultural practices continued through efforts of resistance.

- The average lifespan in a mission for a native person was 10 years. By the late 1820's over 100,000 Indians had died. With Spain came epidemics of measles, smallpox, diphtheria, influenza. These diseases often killed entire communities including majority of children in the mission.

SLOW GROWTH

Baptism of native people was important to the Padres. They reported back to the Vatican to show growth and success.

The first mission was San Diego De Alcalá (July 16, 1769). Only 26 baptisms occurred within the first 3 years of the mission

The second mission was San Carlos Borromeo De Carmelo (June 3, 1770). Only 30 baptisms occurred within the first 3 years of the mission

The number of baptisms were too few to support the number needed for “self sufficient” communities according to the settlement strategy of the Spanish Crown (California Mission Timeline, 2012 Pentacle Press)

Padres had to get creative in attempting to increase mission populations. The padres employed measures to show increased baptisms. At some missions the record reflects multiple baptisms of the same Indian. Other missions turned village cemeteries into Catholic cemeteries to pressure Indians to submit.

REVOLT OR RESISTANCE = DEFENSE

Resistance occurred on many levels from confrontation to artistic expressions.

Indians were flogged for practicing their own customs or refusing to labor.

Armed soldiers stood by during the mandatory masses.

Soldiers abused the Indians living in the missions and committed mass rape against Indian women.

Such crimes, combined with the whipping of mission Indians who attended a traditional dance, precipitated the Kumeyaay “revolt” of 1775 at San Diego.



NATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE MISSIONS

"I also had a great uncle. He died in 1856-1857. His father came back, they escaped; they never could keep the mountain people in the mission, because they always managed to escape. They wouldn't plow for them; they wouldn't do any for them at the mission..... But he came home with a collar around his neck..... The collar was made of wood. It went around the neck and it had little steel hooks on the back.."

"There were a lot of things that were done to people. One way they had was to get them through the children. They would take the children up onto the cliff and drop them down the cliff and kill them...

The Crying Rock, Where They Killed the Children, Report by Rosalie Robertson to Rupert Costo in 1970

A Time of Resistance, California Indians During the Mission Period, Sarah Supahan

WHAT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED?

Compare Perspectives

Oh California, 1991

“They [the Indians] had never seen animals like the cattle and sheep that wandered around the mission.... The Indians accepted the new kinds of food and clothing that the priests, or padres offered them. Many Indians joined the missions.”

The Missions of California, A
Legacy of Genocide

“Those missionaries, the priests and the soldiers, they had all kinds of animals they brought here, different kinds of animals, they turned those animals loose on our land.... We had lots of stuff we planted and harvested through the year.... [the animals] started taking out all of the good food we had.... We lost a lot of things... they just pulled them out by the roots..”

FROM A GARDEN TO A WILDERNESS

While explorers often characterized California as vacant and untamed. It was not a wilderness prior to European contact. Native people tended and stewarded the lands. Native people describe pre-contact California as a well cared for garden. The introduction of stock animals from the missions impacted the surrounding communities.



The Spanish also brought hundreds of horses, donkeys, cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. Grazing animals destroyed native plants cultivated for cultural and nutritional uses.



A Time of Resistance: California Indians
During the Mission Period 1769-1848. Sara
Supahan

SANCTITY, SERVITUDE AND SURVIVAL WEBSITE

A professional development and educational website on California Indians and Spanish Missions for K-12 teachers.

The website is a multi media clearinghouse of connected and comprehensive California Indian generated information.

californiamissionsnativehistory.org

The site includes an interactive map, guided tour, storytelling films, overviews of mission history, alternative class project ideas, An Ask the California Indian Experts section and other multi media resources



ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING #7

Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers, separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe.

TRIBES HAVE SOVEREIGN POWERS

Tribes exercise governments separate and apart from the federal, state and local governments that surround them. Tribes work collaboratively with other entities but each tribe is unique in terms of its infrastructure and operations. Tribal resources vary widely.



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TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereignty refers to the supreme power by which an independent state or nation is governed, i.e. the power to make laws and be governed by them, collect taxes, wage war, form treaties etc.

Pursuant to federal case law tribes possess quasi sovereign status over their members and territory, meaning that they have internal rather than external sovereign powers.

Tribal Sovereignty, a limited sovereignty, is the right of tribes to make their own laws and be governed by those laws, subject only to the Plenary Power of Congress.



LEGAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRIBES AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

Marshall Trilogy: U.S. Supreme Court Affirms:

Johnson v. M'Intosh (1823): Ownership of the land is vested in the U.S. pursuant to the Doctrine of Discovery. Tribes have a right to Use and Occupy the Land.

Cherokee Nation v. GA (1831): Tribes are Domestic Dependent Nations (not foreign nations).

Worcester v. GA (1832): Tribes are distinct political societies subject to federal jurisdiction; state may exercise jurisdiction over Indian country only with the permission of Congress.

Tribal Sovereignty, a limited sovereignty, is the right of tribes to make their own laws and be governed by those laws, subject only to the Plenary Power of Congress.

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

From the Federal Perspective a
Working Definition of Sovereignty

The right to make your own laws
and to be governed by those laws.

Tribal Sovereignty may be viewed
as:



Internal Sovereignty Includes:

Right to make laws, enforce laws
and interpret laws

Right to determine membership

External Sovereignty Includes:

Right to enter into treaties with
nations other than the U.S.

TRUST RELATIONSHIP

The federal government owes a responsibility to the tribes.

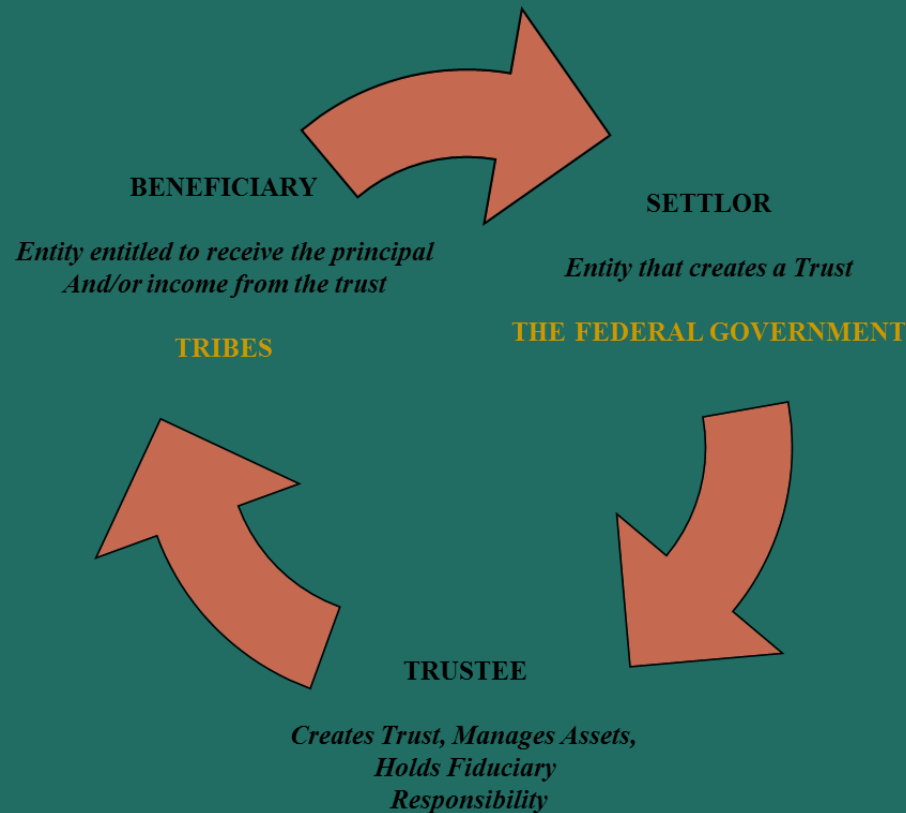
Initially this responsibility was described as the relationship of a “guardian to its ward.”

Now it is called the Trust Relationship

Pursuant to the Trust Relationship, the federal government owes a fiduciary duty to the tribes to protect their interests in the lands and resources held for their benefit.



FEDERAL TRIBAL TRUST RELATIONSHIP





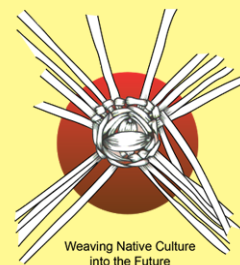
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