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NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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Happy Veteran's Day to all those who served and continue to serve. And especially those who gave their lives, God bless you all and your families.

Portrait of Lori Piestewa by  
[Louinda Garity](#)

**LIST OF NATIVE AMERICANS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR American Indian  
Heros Honored for Heroic War..** [californiaindianeducation.org](http://californiaindianeducation.org)

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It has been a beautiful fall here in New England, with the trees glowing red and gold, the air crisp and cool. As we head into winter, I'm remembering what Hopi friends once told me about their Basket Dance, a ceremony held in November when the women of the Basket Society throw gifts to the crowd in the plaza. These gifts can be anything from beautiful baskets to Tupperware. It's a time to throw away all bad thoughts and resentments, and prepare to go inside for the winter with clean hearts.

**NOVEMBER IS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

November is also a time to honor the first people of this country, and to celebrate the resilience and diversity of the many Native American tribes and communities and individuals still very much among us.

**Indian Kids Now and Then**

I have been fortunate to have worked with several Native American communities on films about cultural persistence and revival. As you may know, [\*We Still Live Here\*](#) tells the story of the return of the Wampanoag language, which had disappeared in the 19th century. The people I worked with are descended from the Wampanoags who saved the Pilgrims from starvation nearly 400 years ago, and lived to regret it. At a time of relative harmony, the Wampanoags and the Pilgrims feasted together on what is now called the first Thanksgiving.

For [\*Coming to Light\*](#), my film about photographer Edward S. Curtis, I traveled to reservations throughout the west, finding descendants of people he photographed, hearing their stories, recording their thoughts about the pictures, and filming their lives today. I even found people on Nunivak Island whom Curtis had photographed as children on his last photographic expedition for *The North American Indian*, including Joe Moses, the baby in the photograph above.

[\*Coming to Light\*](#) also celebrates the resilience and diversity of Indian communities photographed by Curtis a century ago. He believed that Native American cultures were disappearing, as did most Americans then, and that there was only a short time left in which to capture "the beautiful in Indian life." At that time, most Native Americans had been forced onto reservations, dispossessed of their lands, their ceremonies banned, their children taken and placed in harsh boarding schools meant to "kill the Indian" in them.

Many tribes kept their ceremonies alive underground. The U.S. government banned the Sundance in 1899, but a number of Plains tribes continued to hold Sundances under the guise of July 4th celebrations. In recent years, many Native people have used Curtis photographs to revive their ceremonies. Jerry Potts, who carves pipes in [\*Coming to Light\*](#), studied this Piegan

pipemaker for his designs. A Navajo medicine man expresses gratitude that he can see his ancestors' designs in Curtis's hand colored photographs of sand paintings

[\*Coming to Light\*](#) is having a bit of a revival itself, with screenings in Cincinnati, Steamboat Springs, Bend OR, Santa Barbara, and Palm Springs. I am very excited about the November 11th screening in Santa Barbara, as I was living there when I made the film. The Museum of Natural History, where the film will be shown in conjunction with a wonderful Curtis exhibit, generously allowed me to film hundreds of original photogravures for [\*Coming to Light\*](#). It will be great to bring the film home again! I hope to see many of my longtime Santa Barbara friends there.

*Curtis photos courtesy of Christopher Cardozo Fine Art, which is now mounting exhibitions across the country including "Edward S. Curtis: One Hundred Masterworks," with many more events leading up to and after the 2018 sesquicentennial of Curtis's birth*

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*Elayne Silversmith to **SYMPOSIUM IN HONOR OF KAY WALKINGSTICK--Seizing the Sky: Redefining American Art** learning is always taking place with the smithsonian ~ and from extraordinary artis, scholars, and ART... now back to learning (we were on break)...*

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Join NARF as we celebrate and remember the heritage of Native Americans veterans who have defended and preserved America's democratic ideals. They have **proudly and courageously served in every major conflict from the Revolutionary War to the Iraq War**. Native Americans have served their country with honor for generations, and we salute them. It is appropriate that National Native American Month is celebrated during November, the same month in which Veterans Day is observed.

**Today, NARF especially remembers and recognizes our American Indian Military Veterans** and honors all Modern Day Warriors and Heroes, past, present, and future. Including:

**Dr. Joe Medicine Crow (Crow)** was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States by President Barack Obama. He added that award to his collection, which includes a Congressional Gold Medal, a Bronze Star, and Legion d'honneur (the highest decoration given in France). During his military service, Medicine Crow completed all four tasks to become a Crow war chief, including touching a living enemy soldier, disarming an enemy, leading a successful war party, and stealing an enemy horse.

**MSgt. Woodrow Wilson Keeble** who was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Bush on March 3, 2008, was a proud member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota.

**Army Spc. Lori Piestewa (Hopi)** was aware of Indian women who served America before her. This 23-year-old soldier became the first service woman killed in action in Iraq, and the first American Indian woman killed in combat. Her death, on March 23, 2003, deeply touched a grateful nation who changed the name of the Phoenix's most prominent mountain to Piestewa Peak.

In the 20th century, five American Indians have been among those to be distinguished by receiving the United States' highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, which is given for military heroism "above and beyond the call of duty." These warriors exhibited extraordinary bravery in the face of the enemy and some made the ultimate sacrifice for their country: Jack C. Montgomery (*Cherokee*), Ernest Childers (*Creek*), Van Barfoot (*Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*), Mitchell Red Cloud Jr. (*Ho-Chunk*), and Charles George (*Eastern Band of Cherokee*).



Yesterday, at NARF, we honored our employees and relatives who have served in the military with a feast, prayers, and songs. Please take a moment today to recognize the veterans in your own lives, whether friends, co-workers, or loved ones. All of our warriors are sacred. Let us remember them on Veterans' Day and every day.

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[Mri Zabarte](#)

**The Comanches had four Code Talkers** during World War I, they were Calvin Atchavit, Gilbert Conwoop, Samuel Tabbytoosevit and George Clark. They were members of the 357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Division. The Comanches also had the first military trained Code Talkers during World War II. Seventeen Nation members helped develop a Code for radio communications used in the European Theater of operations. Fourteen of the Code Talkers landed on Normandy Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944,... [See More](#)

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## **Water wars - How politics beat science in the West**

By Dennis Myers      [dennism@newsreview.com](mailto:dennism@newsreview.com) This article was published on 11.05.15.

**Wallace Stegner (1987):** “*The West is defined, that is, by inadequate rainfall. ... We can’t create water or increase the supply. We can only hold back and redistribute what there is.*”

In the 19th century, as settlers moved West, the gold seekers got most of the attention and publicity. But more of them traveled West for a less exciting reason—to farm. In many cases, it never occurred to them that the land might not be suitable for the purpose. Some reports reached the East about desert lands, but they circulated mostly in educated circles. More common was talk of the fertility of Oregon, California and other places. Besides, farming increased rainfall.

As white settlement moved West, the federal government sent four survey parties to case the joint. Led by Clarence King (1867-78), George Wheeler (1872-79), Ferdinand Hayden (1867-78), and John Wesley Powell (1869-1879), they took scientific approaches to their work.

The experience of Powell in trying to give the public reliable information on the West and water, and Congress’s effort to discredit science, provided an early model that politicians follow to this day. That experience can explain things like today’s climate change debate and also explain contributing factors to today’s Western water shortage.

Though portrayed by John Beal in Disney’s *Ten Who Dared*, John Wesley Powell was not the usual dashing explorer type. Relatively short, he lost a forearm in the Civil War. After the war, he was a natural sciences professor and later became curator of the Illinois Natural History Society Museum. But to a populace that did not usually *see* their heroes, he was dashing enough.

He and the nine men he led launched in four boats onto the Colorado River in Wyoming on May 24, 1869. In Utah, they lost provisions, some instruments, and one of the boats. On August 5, they entered Grand Canyon. Rapids nearly ended the expedition, and the party became divided and demoralized. It split up, three departing to die on the trail. The rest continued with Powell and they reached what is now the site of Lake Mead, where he called a halt.

Two years later, Powell led an 11-person crew on another exploration, this one lasting 17 months. He began writing about the expeditions and became first director of the Smithsonian’s Bureau of Ethnology, then U.S. Geological Survey director from 1881 to 1894. He was now in a position to influence public policy on much of what he and the other scientists in his parties had learned in the West.

*Report of the Exploration of the Columbia River of the West and Its Tributaries* was published in 1875. It was not what the members of Congress who had funded the surveys were expecting. Nor was Powell’s subsequent report, *Lands of the Arid Region of the United States* (1878), which contained an objectionable adjective right in its title.

Senators from Western states already admitted to the union—California, Nevada, Colorado, Oregon—were disbelieving. How could they attract new settlers and businesses to their states if they were described as arid—much less as *deserts*?

Territories—the Dakotas, Montana, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah—had similar concerns.

The arid region, according to Powell’s reports, begins about midway in the Great Plains and extends across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Powell pulled in most of the area



where rainfall was less than 20 inches. He wasn't wrong, but his reality did not fit the image of the West that had been created in the East.

Powell wanted planning that avoided disruption of communities and made the best use of water for the largest number of settlers—not for the large ranches and farm operators.

Allowed to choose from *any* public lands, new arrivals would likely settle along rivers—that is, in flood plains—or on water-hungry land with low productivity at high elevations that would gobble three or four times more water than more fertile land in the valleys, using up water by a few instead of all. The rampant fraud that accompanied the Homestead Act—doghouses built on homesteads by phantom settlers to satisfy the residence requirement in order to obtain the water allotment for larger operations—was another of Powell's targets. He proposed that settlers choose their lands from those designated irrigable, not from any public lands. At one stroke, large monopolies would be dealt a blow and the success rates of families hiked dramatically.

But small farming families do not fund U.S. House campaigns or provide the money for bribery in an era when U.S. senators were appointed by state legislators.

Nevada's U.S. Sen. William Stewart had initially supported Powell, co-sponsoring a study of whether Powell's agency should inventory what public lands were and were not irrigable.

The two men traveled in the Middle Border territories together, and the trip did not irrigate the relationship. They addressed the North Dakota constitutional convention and other groups and became better acquainted with one another's views. Thereafter, Stewart emerged as a fierce critic. Stewart, a mining lawyer with dubious ethics who believed the West was there to be plundered—preferably by his big business cronies—supported irrigation but not necessarily rules and niceties.

Powell, with 20 years of experience in the West to draw on, filed reports filled with terms like *arid* and *desert*, terms that grated on the sensibilities of congressmembers:

“In very low altitudes and latitudes the grasses are so scant as to be of no value; here the true deserts are found. These conditions obtain in southern California, southern Nevada, southern Arizona, and southern New Mexico, where broad reaches of land are naked of vegetation, but in ascending to the higher lands the grass steadily improves. ... In addition to the desert lands mentioned, other large deductions must be made from the area of the pasturage lands. ... If the filling of the streams and the rise of the lake were due to a transient extreme of climate, that extreme would be followed by a return to a mean condition, or perhaps by an oscillation in the opposite direction, and a large share of the fields now productive would be stricken by drought and returned to the desert. ... Near to the mountains the grass lands are fair but they have been overpastured and greatly injured. Out among the Basin Ranges little grass land of value is found. ... Their streams are spent before the summer comes; and only a few springs are perennial. The result is a general desert, dotted by a few oases.”

Powell recommended that Congress withdraw all public lands “of the arid region from 'sale, entry, settlement, or occupation' except those selected as irrigable lands, and to allow titles to irrigable lands to be acquired only through the operation of the homestead laws and the desert-land laws.”

*U.S. Sen. Gideon Moody/1890: “Of course, I have got a great respect for scientifically educated gentlemen, and I am always very much interested in their researches and all that, but ...”*

*U.S. Rep. Mark Amodei/2013: “I recognize that some scientists believe that global warming is caused by failed environmental practices; however ...”*

When congressional hearings were held on the Powell reports, Stewart attended along with a committee he chaired. The hearings were rough for Powell. Wallace Stegner later wrote, “They wanted to know who had defined the ‘arid region,’ and implied that it was a fiction of Powell’s own, designed to get him extra powers.”

U.S. Sen. Gideon Moody of South Dakota, a lawyer from Deadwood, asked about wells as a source of irrigation. Wheeler candidly said all the artesian wells in South Dakota could irrigate only a single county. Bang went Moody’s support for science—and for Powell.

Just as the 20th century tobacco industry and 21st century Republicans, when confronted with unfavorable science, went shopping for different scientists, some of the 19th century legislators decided there must be alternatives to Powell who would tell them what they wanted to hear. There were takers—not many, Powell’s science being sound, but cherry-picking is the name of this game, and enough rent-a-scientists and rivals of Powell could be found. And there was rain-follows-the-plow.

### **JOHN WESLEY POWELL**

According to a pseudo-science of the time, if land was plowed and cultivated, rainfall would increase. We are not making this up. The term was coined by Charles Dana Wilber, who wrote:

“Suppose [a section of farmers] 50 miles, in width, from Manitoba to Texas, could acting in concert, turn over the prairie sod, and after deep plowing and receiving the rain and moisture, present a new surface of green growing crops instead of dry, hard baked earth covered with sparse buffalo grass. No one can question or doubt the inevitable effect of this cooling condensing surface upon the moisture in the atmosphere as it moves over by the Western winds. A reduction of temperature must at once occur, accompanied by the usual phenomena of showers. ... To be more concise, Rain follows the plow.”

In addition, Powell had his rivals, and congressmembers who had ignored them now gave them forums to smear Powell or just to spread a less reliable version of science. Paleontologist/ichthyologist Edward Cope planted nasty stories about Powell in a New York newspaper.

After Powell’s death years later, his geographer colleague William M. Davis would write, “Powell’s large share in promoting a correct knowledge of the arid parts of the United States and their possible utilization will not be realized by readers today unless they recall the time when so much was said about taking the words ‘Great American Desert’ off the map.”

But Stewart and company did not represent all congressional sentiment and in 1888, Congress closed public lands to settlement until Powell’s agency could classify the lands of the West as irrigable or otherwise.

But the West was a big place, and lawmakers like Stewart wanted the classification of lands done yesterday. Powell estimated it would take six to seven years to complete. There were speculators,

rainmakers and others of more serious intent who were not willing to wait. As the years passed, pressure built on members of Congress to throw open the public domain. When they were pressured, they needed someone to blame. Powell was handy.

Just as current lawmakers like Dean Heller and Mark Amodei today attack Barack Obama for using the power Congress gave him to create national monuments, soon legislators were blaming Powell for the moratorium on settling public lands they had enacted. And they found other grounds on which to make a case against him. He believed in small farms, because it appeared that no more than 20 percent of the public lands were irrigable, and he considered it criminal to let people settle on plots “where they cannot maintain themselves.” Nor was he as susceptible to influence as congressmembers. “It is to be borne in mind that this survey is not primarily designed for the benefit of private person,” he wrote. And he considered rain-follows-the-plow nonsense.

But members of Congress were losing their patience and finally they repealed the closure of public lands before Powell’s work was complete. The public domain was thrown open to however anyone wanted to use it.

As “private persons” tried to make irrigation work in the West, the West became littered with failed irrigation projects. One of them was in Nevada, headed by Francis Newlands, a Californian whose political career had stagnated in that state. He turned to Nevada for better luck after marrying money. He lost about a half million of it on his Truckee Irrigation Project, deciding thereafter that the public’s money was needed for desert reclamation—“reclaiming” the desert for agriculture. In 1902, as a U.S. House member from Nevada, he won passage of the Reclamation Act. Even then, Congress was still ignoring science and Powell, who had called for Western farms of 2,500 acres. The Act provided for the kind of farms that might succeed in the wet and fertile East—160 acres (320 for a married couple).

*Leah J. Wilds, Danny A. Gonzales and Glen S. Krutz/1994: “And finally, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation water is among the most inexpensive (at least for irrigated agriculture), highly subsidized, and inefficiently used water in the American West.”*

Some projects, such as construction of Hoover Dam, require government aid because so much capital is needed that private companies cannot accomplish it. But it should have occurred to someone that the reason commercial irrigation projects failed was not that they were underfinanced but that most of them simply didn’t work or make profits, meaning that a government program would face the same problem. It might also have prompted officials to start with model projects and see what worked and what didn’t. Instead, within days of the enactment of the Act, five were announced in five states—including Nevada’s Truckee Carson Irrigation District—then dozens more, and within a decade the program was bankrupt. (The TCID was intended to put more than 200,000 acres into agriculture. It has not yet reached 75,000 but it has destroyed a wildlife refuge, lowered Pyramid Lake’s level 70 feet and its surface area one-fourth, impeded the upstream spawn of the Lahontan trout—making it extinct in the lake—and destroyed the Pyramid tribe’s fishing industry that fed Nevada mining camps.)

The money troubles didn’t slow reclamation down. Congress pumped a loan from the treasury into it, keeping it alive. In 20 years, the loan was unpaid, and most projects were losing money.



As the reclamation projects failed, they drifted along on federal loans, interest exemptions, subsidies, extended payment periods. Eventually, the federal government started building often unnecessary hydroelectric dams to generate revenue to pay for the money-losing reclamation projects. As the projects piled up, the pool of red ink became wider and deeper, which is more than could be said of the water that fed them. Western farmers were being subsidized to grow crops that Eastern farmers were being paid not to grow.

If the West had more rivers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers might have bankrupted the United States of America.

As competition for dam building grew between the two federal dam building agencies, dam building took on a life of its own. (It's not clear why two agencies were allowed to perform the work.) Hundreds of dams went up, and slowly likely sites for dams dwindled. Possible uses for dams—water supply, irrigation, flood control, hydroelectricity—became satisfied.

Yet the dam building went on, not for any particular reason except—dam building itself. It became a bureaucratic perpetual motion machine. Internal federal paperwork later disclosed showed the worthlessness and lack of necessity of dams built.

Worse, dams became part of doing business in Congress—“a kind of currency,” water historian Marc Reisner wrote in 1986. Congress had literally become unable to function without water projects to trade.

Many of these dam projects, because of the massive surfaces of the reservoirs, wasted through evaporation the water they were supposed to conserve.

“Excessive reservoir storage increases consumptive losses in the form of evaporation and seepage,” author John Weisheit wrote. “Over-developing the watershed with numerous diversions and reservoirs also decreases the quality of the water by loading the river water with salt and heavy metals.”

We hear about the evaporation that results from lawn watering but not the evaporation that results from huge storage reservoirs built to keep a failing program alive. In 1962, the Interior Department analyzed and approved four huge water projects—Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge, Curecanti and Navajo—by intentionally excluding from its calculations the terrific wastage of water in evaporation from the surface of their reservoirs.

And to keep getting more welfare for their constituents, the successors of the lawmakers who denied that the West was arid asked for the sympathy of their colleagues on the grounds that the Western farmers were developing land that was—arid.

***Former U.S. commissioner of reclamation Dan Beard/2015: “I mean it costs us \$100 to deliver an acre foot of water and we charge the farmers \$2.”***

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter tried to get the program under control by cutting off money for 19 water projects. Congress erupted in an uproar, with Carter's fellow Democrats leading the charge, though Republicans were still heard from. U.S. Sen. Paul Laxalt of Nevada—who, in his inaugural address as governor, had warned against people “perfectly capable of taking care of themselves surrendering this basic responsibility to the government”—found nothing wrong with

the welfare-laden water projects and accused Carter of waking up each day, looking in the mirror, and asking what he could do to the West.

But enough Democrats stood by Carter to make a veto fight of it—and then Carter caved in.

But however weak his leadership, it was Carter who was on the side of history. Once he pulled the curtain back and the public discovered there was only a voice there, dam building never had its same sacrosanct standing again, and the environmental movement's growing influence together with wildly rising construction costs eventually put an end to the era of dam building. There would still be occasional dams built, but the frenzied annual monsoon of water projects that Congress once disgorged was facing a sharp decline—and some already existing dams would start coming down.

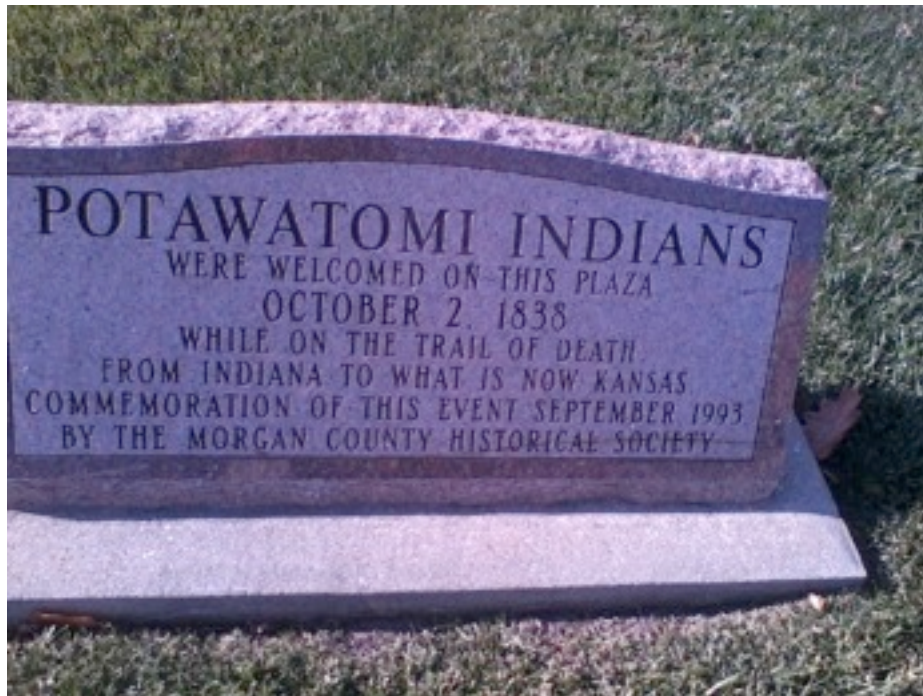
But the anti-scientific techniques that have kept water wastage in the West alive for more than a century have now been turned to use in promoting the continuing deterioration of climate.

A 2013 study from University of Nevada, Reno hydrologist Thomas Myers, published in the Journal of the American Water Resources Association indicates that just one artificial federal lake loses up to 380,000 acre-feet of water each year. Its name? Lake Powell.

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### **Terrace Farming: An Indigenous Model for Food Security**

**Marianela Jarroud, Inter Press Service:** Terrace farming as practiced from time immemorial by native peoples in the Andes Mountains contributes to food security as a strategy of adaptation in an environment where the geography and other conditions make the production of nutritional foods a complex undertaking. [Read the Article](#)



Jacksonville, Illinois

## **US Government Asks Native Hawaiians to Legitimize Occupation With Vote**

**Sonali Kolhatkar, teleSUR:** If Hawaii's current election was truly about independence and sovereignty, then Natives would be voting on whether their islands should remain a US state, or become their own sovereign nation. That democratic choice has never been offered by the federal government and likely never will be. [Read the Article](#)



[N8v Beauties](#)

[November 10, 2013](#) ·

Valor. Honor. Respect.