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Cultural Appropriation and Transformation At Burning Man

Humans have never lived in a time like now. Never before have so many people from so many cultures had so much interaction, shared space, shared dialogue.

09/05/2017



http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cultural-appropriation-and-transformation-at-burning_us_59aed1cae4b0bef3378cdb90

Goodbye, Yosemite. Hello, What?

By DANIEL DUANE SEPT. 2, 2017

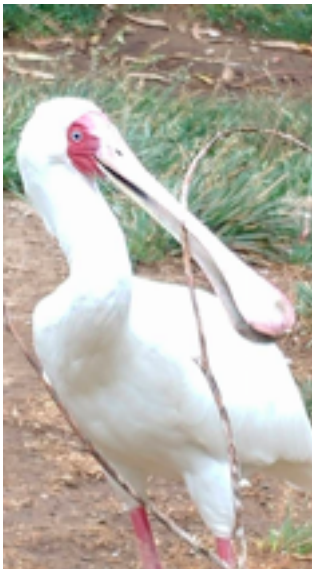
Photos: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/opinion/sunday/goodbye-yosemite-hello-what.html?mcubz=3#story-continues-1>

HOTELS generally don't figure prominently in my imagination, but Yosemite Valley does, and so does the glamorous Ahwahnee Hotel. When my father took me on Yosemite climbing trips in the 1980s, we never stayed at the Ahwahnee — it costs a fortune — but Dad always brought clean dress shirts so that we could hang out in the Ahwahnee's kitschy Indian Room Bar before we slept illegally under the evergreens.

My parents even celebrated their 50th anniversary at the Ahwahnee, so I could be annoyed that the National Park Service recently renamed it the Majestic Yosemite Hotel, an exquisitely vapid choice. For reasons stemming from a contract dispute, the Park Service simultaneously renamed four other sites that have been dear to California families like mine for generations. So I could be outraged: *They're messing with my heritage!*

Instead, I'm thrilled. The whole dumb episode is an opportunity for the National Park Service to dump dozens of place names that are the linguistic equivalents of Confederate statues. Much as those statues honor men willing to kill and die in defense of slavery, names like Ahwahnee falsify and celebrate the slaughter and land theft upon which our national parks were built.

Before Spanish missionaries arrived in the 18th century, there were an estimated 300,000 people in California. Violence and disease helped cut that number in half by the mid-1840s, when the United States military invaded. Then, in 1848, a gold nugget was found in a stream near Sacramento, setting off one of the largest mass migrations in American history.



Between 1846 and 1860, the non-Indian population of California leapt from some 14,000 to more than 300,000. Under Mexican law, native Californians had established rights, but after Anglo-American foreigners invaded sovereign Indian nations, those rights were stripped away. California became an American state in 1850. That same year, lawmakers legalized forcing American Indian children into white custody and barred Indians from voting, giving evidence against whites in criminal cases or serving as jurors. As a result, there are very few instances in which a white person was convicted of a violent crime against a California Indian between 1846 and 1873.

These are all classic steps in the march toward mass murder, with clear echoes in later genocides. In 1851, California's governor, Peter Burnett, said that he expected "a war of extermination" to continue "between the races until the Indian race becomes extinct," and Senator John Weller later said that "the interest of the white man demands their extinction." Toward that end, California spent the equivalent of \$45 million in today's money on two dozen state militia expeditions that murdered at least 1,340 California Indians, according to Benjamin Madley, a historian at U.C.L.A. and the

author of “An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873,” whose work I am heavily indebted to. The Army and its auxiliaries killed a minimum of 1,680 more, and vigilantes murdered at least 6,460. Congress reimbursed California for most of that money, retrospectively endorsing genocidal campaigns.

In 1860 in Humboldt County in Northern California, for example, an estimated 150 Wiyot women, children and elderly men were murdered. According to a newspaper reporter who saw the aftermath, “Lying around were dead bodies of both sexes and all ages from the old man to the infant at the breast. Some had their heads split in twain by axes, others beaten into jelly with clubs, others pierced or cut to pieces with bowie knives.” By 1880, some 20,000 Native Californians remained. “It is not an exaggeration to say that California legislators established a state-sponsored killing machine,” Professor Madley said.

The Miwok of Yosemite lived nearly every chapter of that history. For millenniums, thousands occupied small towns in the valley that at least some of them called Ahwahnee. In the early 19th century, a pandemic greatly reduced their numbers, and survivors fled across the Sierra Nevada to live with the Mono Paiute people.

A man named Tenaya, raised in that Mono-Miwok diaspora, led the return to Yosemite Valley by a polyglot group in the years before the Gold Rush. They apparently called themselves Ahwahneechee and avoided contact with Anglo-Americans until 1851. Then a 500-man-strong state militia called the Mariposa Battalion went looking for a people who seem to have been known to their enemies by a local word that sounded something like “Yosemite” and meant something like “among them are killers.”

The best surviving account of the Mariposa Battalion comes from a member named Lafayette Bunnell. He [describes](#) tracking the Ahwahneechee into that deep glacier-cut valley midwinter and — alone in his group of uninterested killers — swooning over the booming waterfalls and soaring golden granite. Bunnell fascinates me because he was deeply responsive to the natural beauty of Yosemite, captivated by the opportunity to (re)name everything he saw and thoroughly afflicted with commonplace Victorian delusions about the supposed inferiority of nonwhites.

Bunnell finds well-tended homes and food stores and even smoldering hearth fires, but only one person, an elderly woman too frail to run and hide. Bunnell describes her as “a peculiar, living ethnological curiosity” and tells somebody to “bring something for it to eat.”

Sensing that readers might judge him for mistreating a frightened old woman, he reassures them (and himself) that she is not fully human: “This creature exhibited no expression of alarm, and was apparently indifferent to hope or fear, love or hate.” The Mariposa Battalion then looted and burned every Ahwahneechee house and food cache they could find, leaving the Ahwahneechee in a terrifying predicament with snow on the ground and more winter storms ahead.

A few months later, when the Mariposa Battalion rode back into Yosemite Valley, it captured five men, including Tenaya’s three sons. In celebration, the battalion named a nearby rock formation the Three Brothers. Two of the captives were sent to summon Tenaya.

While they were gone, guards deliberately allowed two of the remaining captives to untie themselves as a pretext for shooting them. One escaped, the other did not. Soldiers captured Tenaya and led him to the corpse of his youngest boy. Tenaya erupted with a rage and sorrow that Bunnell's commander apparently found amusing.

The militiamen dragged Tenaya with them as they captured more Ahwahneechee at a summer village by a blue lake surrounded by smooth white stone. Bunnell told the grieving Ahwahneechee leader he was going to name this lake for him. Tenaya looked upset and confused and he replied, "It already has a name; we call it Py-we-ack." Bunnell explained that he'd decided to rename it "because it was upon the shores of the lake that we had found his people, who would never return to it to live."

In other words, Tenaya Lake — a place so important to me that I want my ashes scattered there — is named not in honor of Tenaya but in joyous celebration of the destruction of his people.

By the time the Mariposa Battalion was disbanded later in 1851, it had cost the California government \$259,372.31 and killed at least 73 Native Californians, according to Professor Madley. Bunnell's book, however, published 29 years later when Yosemite tourism was booming, is far less concerned with murder than with how Bunnell learned dozens of Native Californian names for creeks, rivers, waterfalls and cliffs, judged them all irrelevant and replaced them with English names. It is also filled with Bunnell's contempt for anybody who wished to romanticize Indian names "in their desire to cater to the taste of those credulous admirers of the Noble Red Man," adding that "the reality" of Native Californians is "graded low down in the scale of humanity."

Ahwahneechee survivors were back in Yosemite Valley within a year. They rebuilt their homes and, when the first tourist hotels opened in the 1860s, made a living by catching and selling fish, chopping wood and cleaning hotel rooms.

They were also around when John Muir led wildflower walks in the 1870s. Muir has been immensely important to me, and I believe that he was a decent man, but Muir's view of Indians is depressing and painfully devoid of empathy. The Indians he saw on trails struck him as filthy, and he was pretty sure nothing natural is ever filthy, so he concluded that they must not be natural. This was convenient for Muir, because it allowed him to imagine the Sierra Nevada not as a deeply human landscape with centuries of cultural history but as the one thing he craved most, a place of spiritual purity.

Other tourists felt differently and gladly paid Native Californians to pose in photographs. Early concessionaires took notice and sponsored Indian Field Days that, according to Mark David Spence, author of "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks," included Plains-Indian-style tepees bearing zero resemblance to Native Californian shelter, and Native Californians paid to dress up like Plains Indians in "full Indian costume of buckskin dress, moccasin, and head decoration." As Professor Spence told me recently, "That's what happens when race meets capitalism — native peoples are either trapped in or exploiting that process."

By the mid-1920s, when park visitors exceeded 200,000 and Lady Astor complained that Yosemite's accommodations were intolerable, the private Yosemite Park and Curry Company began to build a luxury hotel. I agree with the photographer Ansel Adams that "on entering the Ahwahnee, one is conscious of calm and complete beauty echoing the mood of majesty and peace that is the essential quality of Yosemite." But I also think there is something inescapably sick about a hotel on the site of a torched town copping a little mysto-Indian vibe from the word used by the arsonists' victims for the valley they called home, and deliberately designed with a pan-Indian motif meant to conjure white fantasy while avoiding reference to any particular Native people.

Adams felt nothing of the sort. A man whose photographs defined Yosemite in the national imagination and yet rarely included Yosemite Indians, Adams wrote of the Ahwahnee that "the Indian motif is supreme," adding, "The designs are stylized with tasteful sophistication; decidedly Indian, yet decidedly more than Indian, they epitomize the involved and intricate symbolism of primitive man."

By the time the Ahwahnee Hotel opened, in 1927, park officials saw the nearby village inhabited by actual Indians as an eyesore. Soon they were planning to replace it with a Yosemite Indian Village, which put the federal government in the silly business of deciding what an "Indian village" ought to look like and who qualified as sufficiently "Yosemite Indian" to live there. By the late 1930s, that village amounted to 15 tiny cabins housing 57 people.

Even that arrangement annoyed park officials enough that in 1953 they decreed that only permanent park employees could be residents. Anytime someone moved away, that cabin was demolished to make sure nobody else moved in. The last remnants of the Yosemite Indian Village were destroyed in 1969. The closest thing remaining is a life-size museum display meant



to look like a pre-genocide Ahwahneechee village, without any actual Ahwahneechee, needless to say.

I have a personal favor to ask: Please help us hit 10,000 respondents in the [2017 Global NGO Technology Survey](#).

In its third year, the Global NGO Technology Survey seeks to gain a better understanding of how NGOs and NPOs worldwide use technology to engage their supporters and donors. The data from this survey will form the foundation for the Global NGO Technology Report, which will be released January 29, 2018 in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

If you haven't already, **please volunteer 5 minutes of your time** and complete the 2017 NGO Technology Survey. The survey is anonymous and is available at techreport.ngo.

Please feel free to forward this email. THANK YOU very much,
Brian Cute, CEO, Public Interest Registry

Circle of Blue

“We appreciate there is a level of community concern around fracking in WA, which is why we are commissioning an independent scientific inquiry.” –Stephen Dawson, Western Australia’s Environment Minister, in reference to the state’s decision to halt onshore fracking and evaluate the potential risks. Proponents of the ban fear that fracking could deplete or contaminate groundwater reserves. It will be the fifth Australian state to restrict the drilling technique.

[Reuters](#)

“We appreciate there is a level of community concern around fracking in WA, which is why we are commissioning an independent scientific inquiry.” –Stephen Dawson, Western Australia’s Environment Minister, in reference to the state’s decision to halt onshore fracking and evaluate the potential risks. Proponents of the ban fear that fracking could deplete or contaminate groundwater reserves. It will be the fifth Australian state to restrict the drilling technique.

[Reuters](#)bers

26 Number of mines that former Philippine Environment Secretary Gina Lopez shut down during her 10 months in office. Lopez also issued a ban on open-pit mining. She was replaced in May after lawmakers failed to confirm her to her post, but Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte declared on Tuesday that the open-pit mining ban would be upheld. [Reuters](#)

In context: [Gina Lopez, Philippine Environment Secretary, pursues watershed protection](#).

185 mph Maximum wind speed of Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic. The hurricane, which has been upgraded to a Category 5, is threatening several Caribbean islands and is set to make landfall in Florida over the weekend. [The Washington Post](#)ies, and Reports

A team from Stanford University experimented with water-cooling solar panels and found that the technology could dramatically cut costs on air conditioning. The researchers placed three

cooling panels atop an on-campus building, where the setup proceeded to cool the water up to 5 degrees Celsius below the ambient temperature. Based on those findings, the researchers believe that the cooling panels could cut air conditioning electricity demand by up to 21 percent.

[Science Magazine](#) the Radar

The Metropolitan Water District of Los Angeles, California opened a review of its own ethics office following two possible ethics violations. The water agency is a regional wholesaler that supplies water to 26 cities and other agencies, who in turn serve 19 million people in southern California. [Los Angeles Times](#)

The rising cost of repairing and replacing old water systems is contributing to an affordability problem across the country. Ambiguous state laws do not help the matter either, a report finds. Photo © J. Carl Ganter / Circle of Blu3



"Water Conservation. It's for Life"

"God has given you too much money when you have someone else tend your vegetable garden."

STEVEN GAINES, who has written about excess and eccentricity in the Hamptons, on how professionally planted and tended vegetable gardens are another status symbol on Long Island's East End.

In the beginning, the Great Spirit http://www.legendsofnativeamerica.com/region_southeast/legends/symbolismeaglefeather.php#at_pco=smlrebh-1.0&at_si=59b07de86143e167&at_ab=per-2&at_pos=0&at_tot=8

Today's selection -- from *Cattle Kingdom* by Christopher Knowlton.

Hollywood notwithstanding, there was not much gunfighting in the Old West:

"But it was no accident that [legendary lawman and showman] Wild Bill Hickok chose to carry a sawed-off shotgun to defend himself after [a] shootout ... in Abilene. A shotgun was a much better weapon than a revolver in a gunfight, and it easily surpassed the six-shooter as an aid to law enforcement. The historian Lewis Atherton cited the case of perhaps the most successful law-enforcement officer of the cattle era, Nathaniel K. Boswell, a former drugstore owner who served as a sheriff in the Territory of Wyoming for a decade beginning in 1869, while doubling as deputy U.S. marshal at Laramie. Boswell later be-came a long-serving chief detective for the Wyoming Stock Grow-ers Association.

"His weapon of choice was a Parker or Remington double-barrel shotgun, not a six-shooter. (The pump shotgun was not introduced by Winchester until 1893.) Boswell never engaged in reckless shootouts, choosing instead to conceal himself before apprehending culprits. Consequently, he never failed to make an arrest and never let an arrested man escape. Furthermore, he never received so much as a scratch during his many years of service, earning a deserved reputation for both bravery and resourcefulness. So much for the image of the lawman as a daring gunslinger! This myth, largely invented by the press, later became a staple of the western, both on television and in the movies. Most cattlemen who lived long enough to watch these programs considered them 'highly unrealistic in their use of gun play.'

"In fact, most cowboys did not carry weapons at all. If they did own an expensive six-shooter, it was likely the Colt Single-Action Army, introduced in 1873 and known as 'the Peacemaker.' Its price -- a hundred dollars per pair -- would have been a huge amount of money for a cowboy. The cowboy who did own a revolver usually kept it in his bedroll because a loaded six-shooter worn around the waist was both cumbersome and heavy when riding or walking. And most cowboys knew that wearing a six-shooter in a cattle town was an invitation to gunplay; most preferred to avoid altercations. Cowboys tended to settle a dispute with a fistfight. A revolver was best used to kill snakes, put wounded animals out of their misery, or signal for help. As Leon Clare Metz wrote in *The Encyclopedia of Lawmen, Outlaws, and Gunfighters*, 'The image of the ordinary Western cowboy as a fast and accurate gun-fighter has practically no validity.' ...

"Some cowboys simply disliked guns. Surprisingly few ever saw actual gun violence in the towns that they visited. Indeed, cowboys were highly motivated to stay out of trouble. If caught committing a crime, they faced the most rudimentary and arbitrary forms of criminal justice. The local justice of the peace or the police-court judge handled all minor cases, and these men were, as likely as not, also the local saloonkeepers. District judges, who handled federal and state crimes, from robberies and holdups to rapes and murder, served the larger territories. But these judges had to travel vast distances to dispense justice, and they struggled to convene juries; an offender had no guarantee of a timely trial, let alone a fair one. ...

"Life might be cheap in a cattle town, and the law only erratically enforced, but the towns were hardly deadly if you went about your business and took care to avoid trouble. In fact, no one was killed in Abilene in 1869 or 1870. Ironically, no one died in a cattle-town gun-fight until the arrival of the sheriffs and marshals, who were hired to prevent such murderous acts. Even in Dodge City's worst year, 1878, only five men died in gunfights. The historian Robert Dykstra counted only forty-five homicides in all of the Kansas cattle towns during the cattle era, an annual average of 1.5 homicides. Thirty-nine were from shotguns, and only six from handguns. Of the forty-five victims who suffered bullet wounds, less than a third returned fire. ...



"The eastern readers of dime novels would have been shocked to discover how little gunfighting actually went on in the cattle towns."

Cattle Kingdom: The Hidden History of the Cowboy West

Author: [Christopher Knowlton](#)

Publisher: [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#)

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 ***"People Say Walking on Water is a Miracle, But To Me Walking Peacefully On Earth is the Real Miracle"*** 

-Thick Nhat Hanh

Youth Can Apply Now For

Youth Neighborhood Association Partnership Program Grants

Applicants Encouraged To Attend Grant Workshop Sept. 19

The city of Las Vegas' annual Youth Neighborhood Association Partnership Program (YNAPP) grant application process is open now through Nov. 16, 2017. YNAPP offers grants for up to \$1,000 for youth to create and implement neighborhood-based service learning projects of their own design.

The program requires youth to match the city's grant with cash, volunteer time or in-kind services and goods donated to the project. Projects are required to take place within city limits. Youth are project leaders and work toward ways to make positive changes in their neighborhoods. Youth participants ages 8-18 (from neighborhood associations, social organizations, religious groups, educational institutions, etc.) are eligible to apply for YNAPP funding. Application is made through Zoomgrants.com ; details are available online [here](#) .

Applicants are encouraged to attend the workshop scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 5:30 p.m. in the fifth-floor large conference room at City Hall, located at 495 S. Main St. To register for the workshop, email cboring@lasvegasnevada.gov or call 702-229-2072.

Applications will be reviewed by the YNAPP board, whose members are appointed by the City Council. Applicants will be required to make a 10-minute presentation to the YNAPP board in January. Funding recommendations will be presented to the City Council for final approval in February 2018.

Grand Canyon on the Brink

: Public lands "will tumble away" unless people act, according to Stephen Nash.

Revisions proposed for Colorado River water agreements

By Saul A. Flores, Needles Desert Star

Generally, the city of Needles holds three types of rights in Colorado River water: Present perfect rights, surplus water rights and rights under the lower Colorado River Water Supply Act.

Palo Verde Irrigation District sues Metropolitan Water District over Colorado River water

By John Fleck, Ink Stain

One of California's largest Colorado River farm water districts is suing the state's largest municipal water agency, charging that efforts to move farm water to cities are threatening the viability of agriculture in one of the oldest farming valleys on the river.

NCET Small Business Expo Educational Workshops
Atlantis Casino Resort Spa - Treasures Meeting Room C
Free admission with business card

10:30 - 11:30 am: INTEGRATED MEDIA PACKAGES

More information soon!

11:30 am - 12:30 pm: FREE SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES FROM THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Small businesses and entrepreneurs can greatly benefit from free services and centers of engagement offered at The College of Business at the University of Nevada, Reno. The panel will explore the Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship and its goals to build a community of entrepreneurs around the College, the Nevada Small Business Development Center and its role counseling small businesses statewide and the College of Business Career Center and its role place interns and developing business professionals for the workforce.

Moderator: [Jim McClenahan](#), Director of Corporate Outreach, University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business

Panelists:

[Karen Coe](#), Operations Coordinator, Nevada Small Business Development Center, University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business

[Stallar Lufrano-Jardine](#), Director of Career Services, University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business

[Chris Howard](#), Director of the Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship, University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business

12:30 - 1:30 pm: A LEGAL CHECKUP FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Like an annual exam for your health, or routine maintenance for your vehicle, are you doing regular checkups on the legal aspects your business? In this session, we will discuss key items that business owners should be reviewing and regularly revisiting to ensure you are compliant and proactive in maintaining the legal components of your business.

[Kelly McIntosh](#)

1:30 - 4:30 pm: MARKETING SESSIONS

1:30 - 2:30 pm: Pushing Your Business Towards Growth

"Branding" and "Communications" aren't buzzwords just for the word people, they're for everyone. Learn how to tap into their potential to attract customers and build a sales platform.

Mini-Track - [Ira Gostin](#)

Branding
Communications
Building Your Business

2:30 - 3:30 pm: Tap Into Media

If you've got to wear many hats, "press contact" is a powerful one to add to the rack. Learn how to start conversations and get your stories covered.

Mini-Track - [Frankie Vigil](#)

Writing a Press Release

Identifying and Reaching Out to Media

Recycling Your Press

3:30 - 4:30 pm: Online Reputations

Safeguarding your company's reputation online gets trickier every day. Learn how to respond to online criticism in a constructive manner and how to mitigate risks.

Mini-Track

Yes - You're Online - [Kaitlin Godbey](#)

Brand Management Strategies that Work - [Kaitlin Godbey](#)

Keeping Your Voice Alive - [Jamii Uboldi](#)

**Annette George
and crew on the
bridge at the
Grand Canyon**

**Battle Born Progress
READ Desert
Companion's story
on Nevada's public
lands and the Native
American
communities who
want to keep our
lands protected!**

Voices of the Land

While a Trump administration review of national monuments stokes conflicting passions over public lands, Nevada's native tribes contemplate the bigger picture. Why aren't we listening?
knpr.org

