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Racism against Native Americans persists

More Geographic Heritage

A debate on the merits of the theory of evolution

Summer camps around the nation are going virtual

Native American Mortars at Donner Summit

from Rushmore to Crazy Horse

Words from Russell Means





[Racism against Native Americans persists](#)

A Rosebud Sioux woman reflects on the ways prejudice pervades Rapid... hcn.org

More Geographic Heritage

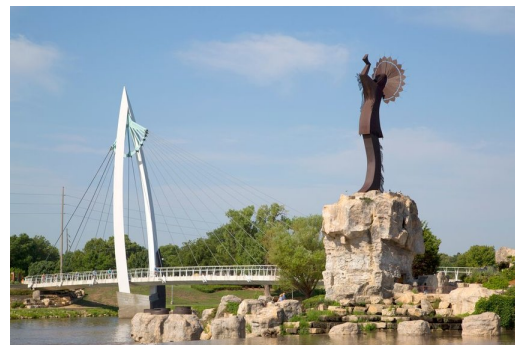


Established [as Mount McKinley State Park in 1917](#), the 4.7-million-acre park was renamed Denali National Park and Preserve in 1980. As [Athabaskan legend](#) has it, a Native American named Yahoo was seeking a spouse, when the wife of the second raven chief offered her daughter. But she came with a warning — the raven chief already wanted to kill Yahoo. The chief started a storm and launched a spear at Yahoo's canoe, but Yahoo changed a giant wave into stone, and the spear ricocheted off of it. He did it a second time with an even bigger wave. When Yahoo awoke, with his new wife by his side, he saw that he had created two mountains, Foraker and Denali — the latter of which is also known as the great one, the highest point in North America at 20,310 feet tall.



Credit: [jose1983](#)/ iStock

In 1540, conquistador Francisco Vázquez de Coronado [led a Spanish army](#) from Mexico City in search of the [Seven Cities of Cibola](#), rumored to be filled with wealth. When they arrived at the villages of **Hopi Mesas**, a smaller group led by García López de Cárdenas and guided by the Hopi split off, hoping to find a river that led to the Gulf of Mexico. After 20 days, they arrived at the Grand Canyon and estimated that the rapids of the Colorado River at the bottom were too intense for ships to sail. Convincing the Spaniards that this area wasn't navigable, the Hopi were able to keep the land to themselves for another 235 years — until Joseph Christmas Ives of the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers reached the canyon by river in about 1857.



Kansas: Keeper of the Plains

Credit: [Prosper106](#)/ Shutterstock

The land where the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers meet in the center of downtown Wichita is sacred ground to the Native American people. To commemorate its status, in 1974, local Kiowa-Comanche artist Blackbear Bosin designed a [five-ton, 44-foot-tall steel sculpture](#) called Keeper of the Plains to keep an eye on the city. In 1999, the city began a [restoration project](#) that gave the sculpture even more stature, and in 2007, it was moved to a more prominent site and raised on a 30-foot pedestal.

New Mexico: Carlsbad Caverns Credit: [Doug Meek](#)/ Shutterstock



An incomprehensible [250 to 280 million years](#)

[ago](#), an inland sea created more than 300 limestone caves in its fossil reef. Native Americans lived in the area 12,000 to 14,000 years ago, and Spanish explorers passed through in the 1500s, but one of the first records of someone entering the Carlsbad Caverns wasn't until 1912, when 16-year-old cowhand Jim White found an entrance. By 1915, photos were being taken; in 1923, one appeared in The New York Times. As a system of more than 119 limestone caves under the Chihuahuan Desert, the site was [named a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 1995.

North Dakota: Fort Union Trading Post Historic Site



Credit: [chamey](#)/ iStock

Sitting near where the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers meet, the Fort Union Trading Post in Williston was [built by Jacob Astor's American Fur Company in 1828](#) at the request of the Assiniboiné nation and soon became one of the most essential places for the Northern Plains Tribes to do business. From its opening to 1867, tribes including Plains Cree, Blackfoot Plains Chippewa, Mandan, and Hidatsa traded buffalo hides and beaver pelts for goods from eigGreatht countries. Each year, they received more than 25,000 buffalo robes and sold more than \$100,000 in goods, turning it into western

American's longest-lasting fur trade post.



Credit: [John Hoffman](#)/ Shutterstock

The 14,115-foot-tall Pikes Peak inspired the “spacious skies” and “purple mountain majesties” we sing about in “America the Beautiful.” In fact, the [song started as a poem](#) written by English literature professor Katharine Lee Bates while she was on a Colorado lecture trip in 1893. She first published the poem on Independence Day 1895 and continued to perfect the words until 1913. The popularity of the song gave [Pikes Peak](#) — acquired by the United States in 1803 during the Louisiana Purchase and named after explorer Lieutenant Zebulon Pike in 1806 — its nickname of “America’s Mountain.”

Montana: Glacier National Park



Credit: [dcphotography42/ Unsplash](#)

When Glacier National Park was established in 1910, there were [more than 100 glaciers](#). Now only [26 named glaciers](#) exist — the rest have melted. Indeed, perhaps nowhere else in the United States are the effects of climate change so blatant as in [this 1,583-square-mile UNESCO World Heritage site](#). While the planet's temperature has gone up 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the last century, the temperature in this area has been increasing at double that rate, leading to faster melting as well as higher chances of wildfire. Along with Waterton Lakes National Park across the border in Canada, the two parks make up Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park — [the first of its kind](#) straddling two countries.



Credit: [RaksyBH/ Shutterstock](#)

In the 1950s, Kansas City's Chester A. Reynolds worried that the country's Western heritage was being lost, so he started taking submissions for a city that wanted to be home to a new institution. He landed on Oklahoma City and incorporated as the [National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in 1955](#). A design contest was held, and the museum opened ten years later in 1965, with a roof silhouette of white peaks, appearing like tents on a prairie. With displays on history, culture and art, the museum features the work like that of painters Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell and sculptor James Earle Fraser. In 2000, it changed its name to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

(But does it tell the stories of former soldiers, both addicted to war/violence, that "couldn't go home again" ...or the fact that it is estimated that 25% of the cowboys after the war were former slaves, again those that "couldn't go home again?". So many stories; so much to do!

*****O

On this day(6.30) in 1860, a debate on the merits of the [theory of evolution](#) took place at Oxford University. It occurred as part of the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* (1859) had just been published seven months earlier, and was hotly contested by scientists and theologians on both sides of the issue. Noted biologist Richard Owen had written a scathing review of the book in the *Edinburgh Review*, and he also coached the Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, in his condemnation of the book. On the pro-Darwin side of the issue were several liberal theologians — including mathematician and priest Baden Powell — as well as scientists Joseph Dalton Hooker and Thomas Henry Huxley. Huxley was such an ardent and vocal supporter of evolutionary theory that he came to be known as "Darwin's bulldog."

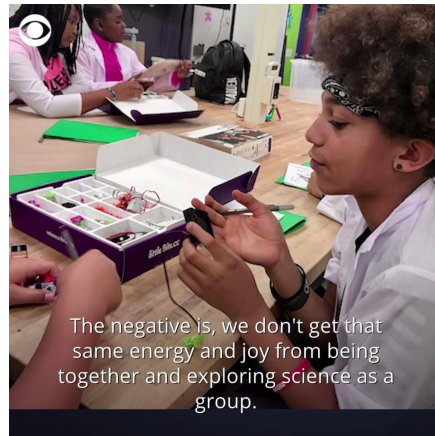
Bishop Wilberforce, one of the most famous orators of the day, was to be one of the speakers on Saturday the 30th. The hall was packed and hundreds lined up outside to hear the discussion, which came to be known as the Wilberforce-Huxley debate (or the Huxley-Wilberforce debate, depending on whose side you were on), even though there were many contributors to the discussion. There is no transcript of the day's events, but one exchange has reached the status of legend. Wilberforce asked Huxley whether he was descended from an ape on his father's side or his mother's, and Huxley retorted that he was not ashamed to have a monkey as an ancestor, but he would be ashamed to descend from someone who used his great gifts to obscure the truth. Most accounts include some version of this story, but according to Hooker, that may have been all that most people heard. In his report to Darwin (who was too ill to attend), Hooker wrote:

"Well, Sam Oxon got up and spouted for half an hour with inimitable spirit, ugliness and emptiness and unfairness ... Huxley answered admirably and turned the tables, but he could not throw his voice over so large an assembly nor command the audience ... he did not allude to Sam's weak points nor put the matter in a form or way that carried the audience. The battle waxed hot. Lady Brewster fainted, the excitement increased as others spoke; my blood boiled, I felt myself a dastard; now I saw my advantage; I swore to myself that I would smite that Amalekite, Sam, hip and thigh if my heart jumped out of my mouth, and I handed my name up to the President as ready to throw down the gauntlet."

Hooker was the closing speaker of the discussion, and he felt that his speech had carried the day (of course, Wilberforce and Huxley each felt the same way about their own speeches). In the end, though each side claimed victory, most accounts chalk it up as a win for the Darwinians.



Summer camps around the nation are going virtual — even programs that help make STEM education more accessible to underrepresented students of color. <https://cbsn.ws/2AHaSiK>



-1:22



Stop #4 - Native American Mortars



At the blinking light in Soda Springs turn and cross the railroad tracks. Turn left into the dirt parking lot and look for the dirt road that is just to the left of the dam. It's easy driving and is the original Lincoln Highway, the first highway across America. When you get to the bridge, go just a bit further and stop at the 20 Mile Museum sign for the Native American mortars on the right. Walk south parallel to Castle Creek. After you get out of the trees head for the large rock in the clearing a hundred yards ahead (above). Climb on top and find a Native American mortar thousands of years old. That's just a warm up.

Keep heading south a few hundred more yards. You'll cross an old road.

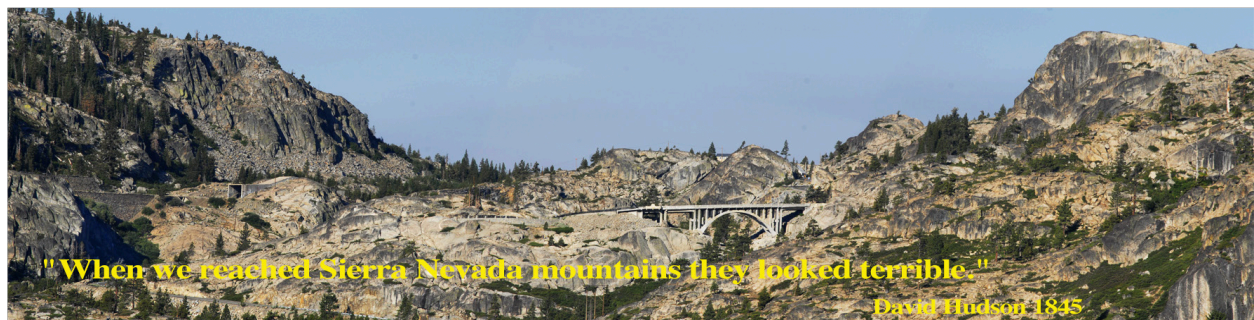
Keep going looking for the rock and the view pictured to the right. On this “gossip” rock there are four mortars and a metate. This rock was a fancy solid granite kitchen appliance a thousand years ago. Native Americans, living here only in summer, ground larvae, insects, nuts, seeds, tubers, and other soft foods in the mortars. Granite is one of the hardest rocks




How long did it take to grind these holes into the rock?

On the opposite end of the rock from the mortars rub your hand around to find a really smooth spot that's about the size of a piece of paper. This is a metate used for grinding seeds into flour and maybe for treating animal skins.

While you are out in the valley look around and note all the large granite boulders lying around. The granite is a hundred million years old but the rocks have only been sitting where they are for ten thousand years or so. These glacial erratics were scraped off mountain peaks by glaciers and when the glaciers melted the rocks were left behind. One early American visitor, seeing all the light colored rocks lying around in the distance, thought they looked like sheep grazing in the valley.



God never made an ugly landscape. All that the sun shines on is beautiful, so long as it is wild.
— John Muir



Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass

Summit Valley Native American Mortars

History

For thousands of years Native Americans from what is now Nevada called Summit Valley their summer home. They came to hunt, fish, gather food, and trade with Native Americans from what is now California. We can see evidence of their presence in the dozens of bedrock mortar sites around the edges of the meadow and some in the interior.

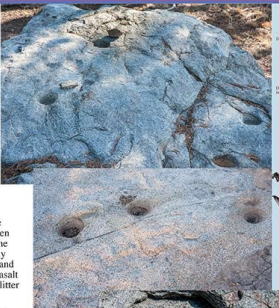


Sierra granite is one of the hardest rocks on earth. As you discover the sites and explore the mortars, imagine the time it must have taken, only grinding during summers, to develop the mortars in the rock. Over the centuries groups of women and girls passed on one generation's wisdom to another in the same places, summer after summer, century after century. In some places there are many mortars in groups and one can imagine busy communal kitchens with many women grinding seeds. In other places there are only single mortars. Why? Were they different clans? Were the single grinding rock users outcasts?


Nearby are thousands of basalt stone chips (two lower pictures to the right) which are not native to the immediate area. We can imagine men and boys knapping rocks into useful tools, atlatl and spear points. The chips are leftovers. The basalt was carried from miles away, possibly from Devil's Peak. At the knapping sites lessons too were imparted and learned summer after summer, generation after generation, and the basalt flakes grew in number. Now they litter areas of open ground.

There are also metates (large grinding surfaces - see the bottom picture with the mano used for grinding on top), cupules (small depressions with perhaps mystical significance - see left), and a few petroglyphs.

The Mairis culture (2000 B.C. or earlier to 600 A.D.) lived all around the valley for thousands of years grinding seeds and hunting. The Kings Beach culture (A.D. 1000-1850) was a fishing culture and occupied only a small portion of the valley much later.

Two sites to find: mortar on top of single rock. SP 19 285 120° 22' 330 150 yards south from here. Low rock with five mortars and a metate 650 yards from here SE at SP 19 148N, 120° 22' 342W (find the east end of the rock for the rectangular metate).



Petroglyphs Nearby

To see Native American petroglyphs, head east on Old 40 to the turn just below the Rainbow Bridge. You will see a 20 Mile Museum sign for the petroglyphs and be able to explore that facet of Native American presence on Donner Summit.

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www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org
photos courtesy of the Donner Summit Historical Society

This 20 Mile Museum sign has been sponsored by Dr. Ernest Mulamud and Olivia Diaz

Click to enlarge

Rushmore to Crazy Horse

Western South Dakota isn't lacking in incredible sights. There are the Badlands and the Needles of the Black Hills, and those are just the starters. But the highlight of any trip to this land of Native American history and odd rock outcroppings is a visit to Mount Rushmore National Memorial where giant carved heads of four former presidents keep vigil.

The majestic sculpture celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2016, though its stony faces remain much the same as they did when its construction was completed in 1941.

Mount Rushmore was the brainchild of South Dakota state historian Doane Robinson who was moved to memorialize and carve iconic historical figures into a mountainside. He wanted to promote tourism to a region of the state that was otherwise mostly ignored and came up with the idea of the massive project in 1923. Robinson's initial plans did not include the political figures admired at the monument today.

Robinson thought a carved tribute featuring Western heroes such as Lewis and Clark, Buffalo Bill Cody, and Lakota leader Chief Red Cloud was the perfect choice for the location. He enlisted the help of renowned American sculptor Gutzon Borglum, who convinced him the monument would be better received if it had a more national focus. They settled on four presidents who they felt best represented the country.

The mountain containing the carving has been known by several different names throughout the years. The Sioux called it Six Grandfathers after the earth, sky, and four cardinal directions. American settlers in the area referred to it as Cougar Mountain, Sugarloaf Mountain,

Slaughterhouse Mountain, or Keystone Cliffs. It wasn't until 1930 that the beloved icon became officially named and recognized as Mount Rushmore.

The mountain was actually named after New York attorney Charles E. Rushmore, who passed through on his way back from a business trip. When he found out the mountain had no official designation, he thought it would be a good idea to name it after him. The wealthy investor eventually got his way.

Borglum wanted to add a secret room behind the monument where important documents and historical memorabilia could be stored. The so-called Hall of Records would be accessed by an 800-foot granite staircase with a giant bronze eagle over the door leading to the secret room.

Only part of the tunnel had been blasted when the funds ran out in 1939. The idea of a Hall of Records dwindled following Borglum's death in 1941 and the official declaration of the monument's completion. It was rejuvenated again in 1998 when the National Park Service finished what was started long ago and installed Mount Rushmore's best-known secret. Items of interest continue to be placed there for future discovery.



Credit: [Tbennert](#)/ Wikimedia Commons

The Lakota Sioux were promised an area that included the Black Hills in perpetuity by the U.S. government in the Treaty of 1868, but forever only lasted until gold was discovered in the 1870s. The land was subsequently taken back by force, adding to the ongoing conflicts of the time between the government and the Plains Indians. In South Dakota specifically, the Battle of Wounded Knee was a grievous defeat for the Native Americans.

The Sioux still consider the Black Hills area as sacred ground. To some, the monument represents the oppression faced by the Native Americans. Visitors to South Dakota can pay homage to the history of the area by also visiting the Crazy Horse Memorial, a still-in-progress sculpture that, once completed, will be the world's largest sculpture at 641 feet long and 563 feet tall.

<https://www.filmsforaction.org/news/revolution-and-american-indians-marxism-is-as-alien-to-my-culture-as-capitalism/>

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## **1989 - American Indian Activist Russell Means testifies at ...**

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