

Cancel Culture Hits Berkeley

The link to this article was in yesterday's Journal, but it is such an important work to read because of deep questions asked and implications for ALL tribes (to say nothing of an intriguing bibliography), that it is reprinted in full. Comments welcome. sdc

Alfred Kroeber and His Relations with California Indians

The Berkeley faculty has been invited to respond to the proposal to re-name Kroeber the Hall. We have had little time to reflect on this. The re-naming report was prepared hastily and secretly. I was told that it was a 'classified' and 'highly confidential' report that was not to be copied or distributed. Thus, the report was not shared with the anthropology faculty, some of whom knew and/or had taught seminars on the history of anthropology at Berkeley and/or published scholarly articles and monographs about Alfred Kroeber and his legacy.

The process of re-naming Kroeber Hall was skewed, as some of those on the committee were faculty who clearly knew little or nothing about the contributions of Alfred L. Kroeber and even less about Kroeber's lifelong relations with Native Californians who worked closely with him to create one of the largest archives in America on the indigenous languages and cultures of California. The building of Kroeber Hall includes both the department of Anthropology and the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology.

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To negate or 'cancel' Alfred L. Kroeber is to censor and defame one of the most distinguished American anthropologists in America. Most university buildings are named for wealthy benefactors, many of who made their fortunes by extractive capitalist measures. *Kroeber Hall is one of the very few university buildings that are named for a world famous scholar.* In addition to co-founding the first Department of Anthropology and Anthropology Museum in California, Kroeber founded the American Anthropological Association and its President in 1917-19. He was also President of the American Folk Society (1906); Chairman of the Anthropology and

Psychology section of the National Research Council (1921-22), President of the Linguistic Society (1940); Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute in Great Britain, Honorary President of the Academies of Science of Peru and of Denmark; and recipient of many international medals and awards including the Huxley Medal (1945). He was an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and a member American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and many more. Kroeber's contributions are well known across the social sciences and the humanities as well as by the natural sciences.

Kroeber's contributions include multiple books, edited volumes, and more than 500 scholarly articles in the fields of linguistics, ethnology, ethnography, psychology, folklore, biological anthropology and archeology made him the greatest general anthropologist in American anthropology. He was a prolific fieldworker, a theorist of cultural pattern, arts and styles and "an independent and provocative thinker and critic" (Dell Hymes, 1961). Among his major publications are: *The Arapaho*(1902); *The Yokuts Language of South Central California*(1907); *Zuni Kin and Clan*(1916), *Peoples of the Philippines*(1919, 1928), *Anthropology*(1923,1948), *Handbook of the Indians of California*(1925), *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*(1939), and his more theoretical works,*Configuration of Culture Growth*(1944), *The Nature of Culture*(1952),*Style and Civilization*(1957).

Anthropology Against Racism

Kroeber was part of the circle of 'radical' anthropological thinkers in the early 20th century who were students of Franz Boas, the "father" of American anthropology at Columbia University. Boas, a German Jew, had suffered anti-Semitism as an undergraduate in Kiel, Germany that made him particularly sensitive to racism. He brought his experience of racism into his anthropological research of the new European immigrants (from Southern and Eastern Europe) who were seen as inferior races.

Kroeber noted that Boas's studies of intergenerational immigrants demonstrated that the first generation of new immigrants were traumatized by poverty, poor education, overcrowded housing, while their second and third generation were robust, educated and accepted. It was not race but structural violence and race/ethnic bias was the main producer of human misery. Boas had 'several deep facial scars' following dueling events with anti-Semitic students who taunted him. <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1525/aa.1982.84.3.02a00020>

Boas' students, many of them radical feminist women, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Zora Neale Hurston, the author of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and member of the Harlem Renaissance. Franz Boas revolutionized anthropology by breaking out of racist conventional wisdom. (see Charles King's book, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century*) Kroeber was part of this progressive anthropologist movement that was determined to prove that the prominent ideology of *eugenics* was a false science, that IQ tests were nonsense, and that the only truly 'primitive' people were those who believed that Western Culture and white people were superior to other cultures and civilizations. *Above all, they argued that 'race', as it was then understood, was an artificial category, a social construct, based on a 19th century theory of social evolution.* They all engaged a theory of nature and culture as indivisible concepts. How a senior editor of the Daily Cal could refer to Alfred Kroeber as a 'white supremacist' as her takeaway of the Un-

Naming of Kroeber Hall, has done a great injustice unworthy of university scholars. <https://www.dailycal.org/2020/07/16/rename-buildings-to-rectify-racial-injustice/>

Kroeber died in Paris during an international anthropological conference. Theodora Kroeber said that he died in her arms, but the famous French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss said that Kroeber had died in his arms on the podium of the conference. When Levi-Strauss came to Berkeley in 1984 to give a series of lectures http://www.language.berkeley.edu/SA_MP3files/SA1532-2/001_1.mp3 he asked to see the latest issue of the *Kroeber Anthropology Society Journal*, a graduate student journal that Levi-Strauss much admired. He also asked to see and to touch a beautiful Yurok canoe that Kroeber and his colleague T.T. Waterman had donated to the Anthropology Museum.

I am trying to bring us back to a different time to understand what drove two of the greatest anthropologists in the 20th century, both of whom dedicated their lives to the preservation of indigenous cultures, their languages, their mythologies, their art, and their religions. In Levi-Strauss's 'Necrologie' (Obituary) of Kroeber he said: '*Pour Kroeber, l'anthropologie n'était pas une science comme une autre. Elle unissait dans sa démarche les sciences naturelles et les sciences humaines... il constatait que l'anthropologie valait toujours step or lui une sorte de religion.*' (For Kroeber, anthropology was not a science like any other. its approach was to unite natural sciences and the human sciences ... he [Kroeber] noted that anthropology has always been a kind of religion).

The history of California and of the University of California is steeped in the multi-generational traumas experienced by Native Californians. It is a time, once again, for serious reckonings, acknowledgements of past errors, atonement, and reparation toward a new social and political contract. This reckoning and re-naming is happening during a revolutionary moment when the statues and monuments of slavers, Indian killers, colonialists, and racists including Junipero Serra, Juande Onate, Columbus, and Confederate statues (like 'Silent Sam' who until recently graced the gates of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) are being destroyed or removed. The university's goal is to decide which buildings are named for individuals who represent the meanings and values of the university rather than names purchased by wealth alone.

For example, the faculty of the Department of Physics voted overwhelmingly to remove the name of the Le Conte brothers who grew up on a plantation with 200 enslaved individuals and, when the Civil War broke out, who helped the Confederacy manufacture gunpowder and who after the war went on to be dedicated racists. To put Alfred Kroeber in the same category as the Le Conte brothers or Boalt or Barrows is to slander and erase the contributions of an international scholar and founder of modern anthropology.

To cancel AL Kroeber also means the negating and deriding Kroeber's wife, Theodora Kroeber, the author of *Ishi in Two Worlds*, and Kroeber's daughter, Ursula Kroeber Le Guinn, who produced beloved books that were inspired by Kroeber's ethnologies of Native Californians and the tragic story of Ishi that reverberates in her of magical surrealist novels: *Planet of Exile*, *City of Illusions*, *The Word for World Is Forest*, *The Dispossessed*, and finally in 1969 her masterpiece, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. If UC Berkeley erases Kroeber, the legacy of Kroeber

including two brilliant women authors writing in different genres about our Californian indigenous history will also be erased.

UN-Naming: If Kroeber Then Also Phoebe Apperson Hearst

Should the final consensus end with the decision to un-name Kroeber Hall it should logically include the un-naming of Phoebe Hearst whose name adorns the Museum of Anthropology. 'Kroeber Hall' is home to both the Anthropology Department and the Phoebe Hearst Anthropology Museum. Phoebe Hearst was the co-founder and benefactor of both institutions. She recruited Kroeber and paid his modest salary to be the first professor in the (new) Department of Anthropology in Berkeley and also Curator of the Anthropology Museum then located on Mount Parnassus in San Francisco. Phoebe Hearst envisioned the Museum to serve as a location for her huge collections of Egyptian mummies, art and artifacts from her travels in Egypt as well as several hundred sacred objects and ancestral Californian remains that she had acquired or purchased. If Kroeber Hall is un-named so must Phoebe Hearst Museum.

In fact, it makes far more sense to un-name the Phoebe Hearst Museum given the long and continuing investigations, audits, and critiques of the Hearst Museum bearing on the museum's policy of 'non-consent' in returning thousands of indigenous art, artifacts, and ceremonial artifacts and most essentially the native ancestor remains and mortuary objects. The violations and delays of NAGPRA requests are human rights violations that should have no place today in the University of California. Among the faculty appointed to the Berkeley NAGPRA committee and to the Renaming Committee are those who know better, having served in the past as the 'protectors' of the museum's ancestral remains. These remains have at various times been held captive in the basements of the Museum and under the UC tennis courts and in the basement of the Hearst Memorial Gymnasium < <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-jan-13-me-bones13-story.html>>

In September 27, 2018, the California legislature passed Assembly Bill No. 2836, initiated by former governor Jerry Brown and by Governor Gavin Newsom, 'requires all agencies and museums that receive state funding that have possession or control over collections of California Native American human remains or cultural items, as defined, to inventory those remains and items for the identification and repatriation of the items to the appropriate Indian tribes.' We have yet to see it in action. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2836 Response to the 'Cancel Kroeber' Review Committee

The report of the Native American Advisory Council to the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, signed by fourteen faculty members, is riddled with errors and misinformation. The language of the report is accusatorial rather than scholarly. It is poorly written and lacking evidence, footnotes, sources, references, and bibliographies to support what is a blank condemnation of AL Kroeber. The references to the "*horrific* naming of Kroeber Hall"...[which] "*hinders the repair of a damaged relationship* with Native Californians and *all Indigenous people*" and whose name has 'always been objectionable' to Native Americans who now recognize [him] as "objectionable.

Without any evidence, the report concludes that: 'The namesake of Kroeber Hall, Professor Alfred Kroeber, engaged in research practices that are reprehensible. He has come to

symbolize a generation of scholars at Berkeley who failed to consider important ethical implications of their work in anthropology and archaeology. Kroeber and his colleagues engaged in collection of the remains of Native American ancestors, which has always been morally wrong and is now illegal. Kroeber pronounced the Ohlone to be culturally extinct, a declaration that had terrible consequences for these people. Kroeber's treatment of a Native American man we know as Ishi and the handling of his remains was cruel, degrading, and racist.'

These accusations can be easily contested via the Berkeley archives of A.L. Kroeber <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/BancroftNativeAmericanCollections/AnthroCollections> that include his letters, fieldnotes, maps, lectures, and students, that included many women and Native Americans. Cora Du Bois conducted ethnographic research on several Native American groups of northern California and the Pacific Northwest, including the Wintu Indians of northern California. She published *The 1870 Ghost Dance* in 1939, a deep study of a religious movement among Native Americans in the west of the US. On many occasions I took visitors from various California Rancherias who were interested in getting data about 19th century bounty hunters as well as to the Bancroft to read the fieldnotes of Kroeber, TT Waterman, and RF Heizer.

During the long, ugly and violent history of California and its UC universities with respect to Native Californians, AL Kroeber was an ally not an enemy. Beyond his meticulous writings, audio transcriptions, photos, conferences, his co-authoring of books and articles with his Native Californian informants and colleagues Kroeber went to federal court as an expert witness on behalf of a California Indian land rights lawsuit, 'Indians of California, Docket No. 37 on June 23, 1952. Kroeber prepared an updated and detailed map of all the indigenous linguistic groups in California that he had drawn for his Handbook of California (1925). Kroeber, who was very old at this time, responded to a cross-examination three hours a day for ten days in which he supported the land rights of the Indians. He argued that all the land in California, not just particular identified sites of Californian bands and tribes, belonged to Native Californians. His strong testimony helped win the case but it took decades before the tribes received small reparations for the plunder of their lands. (see Omer C. Stewart, Kroeber and the Indian Claims Commission Cases) < <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/kas025-013.pdf>>

As for the accusation that AL Kroeber was involved in excavations of Native California graves, Julian Stewart's 50-page obituary of Kroeber in the 1960 journal *American Anthropologist*, wrote that "Kroeber was never a physical anthropologist, and, although he summarized basic information in his book, *Anthropology*, his publications on the subject were negligible. He had no predisposition to be a field archeologist."

Similarly, Dell Hymes, who joined the Berkeley anthropology department in 1960, wrote a long obituary of Kroeber in *Language*, vol. 37:1 (1961) stating that Kroeber was first and foremost a linguist. 'Half of Kroeber's publications were wholly or in part contributions to linguistics':

Kroeber accepted the position of curator of the anthropology museum during the early years of his position in the University of California, and then located in San Francisco. Of the more than 500 scholarly articles none are based on human remains. Kroeber did not teach archeology and he avoided archeological excavations in California Indian burial sites. His colleague, Theodore McCown, only did excavations of *prehistoric* sites in Palestine. There were complaints that "New

World archeology, including California which *had been neglected by Kroeber*. [See: 'Obituary' of Kroeber in the American Anthropologist by Julian Steward: <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/aa.1961.63.5.02a00100>]

An obituary of Kroeber published in *American Antiquity* (v. 27, 1962) by Professor John Rowe, a senior historian of Anthropology in the Berkeley Department stated that Kroeber did not engage in field archaeology (i.e., digging). On the second page of the article there is a photo of Kroeber (see below) standing by an excavated native burial site at Miller Mound, Colusa County, California in July 1936. The photo was taken by Robert F. Heizer, a young Berkeley archeologist whose research focused on prehistoric and historic Native American peoples of the western United States, particularly in Nevada and California.

Rowe writes that Kroeber's primary interests were in linguistics, ethnology, and folklore and that he considered himself a cultural anthropologist. He wrote: 'As far as I have been able to determine, [Kroeber] *undertook no archaeological field work of his own*, but the department [of anthropology] was carrying on an active program of survey and excavation in California under the direction of John Campbell Merriam, a paleontologist and chair of the Department of Paleontology.'

What was Kroeber doing in this photo? Like Kroeber, I sometimes visited archeological sites, once in Virginia to visit my colleague, the late Prof. James Dietz and a team of 35 Berkeley archaeology students who were busy digging at his site in early colonial southern plantation, *Flower dew Hundred*, where he and his team were excavating the remains of slave quarters and earlier Indian burial sites. <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~vaofp//history/Section%206-16.pdf>. Dietz was an ethical archaeologist and he was more interested in the pot shards and grave stones than in human remains, but the Indian burial mounds and slave graves were of interest to him and he pointed out that the slaves positioned and decorated their graves in accordance with West African traditions. In Fort Burgwin, New Mexico where I taught summer classes in ethnographic methods, I lived side by side with an archaeologist from Southern Methodist University (SMU) who was excavating human remains at the site of Post Creek Pueblo, a 13th century pueblo located on private land owned by the University. This is what archeologists were still doing without concern in the 1970s and 1980s. Until two decades ago the famous School of Anthropology Research (SAR) had a large collection of native ancestor sacred and human remains. I collaborated with one of the Directors at SAR in an attempt to repatriate these possessions and to make the Institute 'friendly' to the surrounding pueblos. The governors of two of the pueblos told me that they would never step foot inside that illegal 'mortuary' (SAR). At that time repatriation was unknown to local wealthy benefactors to the institution.

Only in recent years have these archeological methods and ethics changed. 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone'.

A second complaint about Kroeber was his public opinion that the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, in the Bay Area was close to 'extinction'. It is a terrible and thoughtless word. Most of Kroeber's writings on native tribes in California were based on linguistics as well as ethnologies of religions, cosmologies, arts, weaving, story telling, and rituals. When native languages began to disappear he was not interested in the English speaking or Spanish speaking native Californians.

Kroeber wrote that Western societies were often less ‘civilized’ than these indigenous communities. He wrote about the great migration of white settlers, miners and ranchers who, following the California Gold Rush (1848–1855), remained to populate indigenous communities and territories. In his *Handbook on California Indians*, Kroeber (1925) pronounced the Costanoan Indians, including the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe in the Bay Area, as on the edge of cultural extinction. As one could imagine this declaration was then as and is today a terrible wrong by Kroeber. His judgment influenced the decision of government workers to deny the Muwekma federal recognition status. (see Leventhal et al. 1994:312).

Kroeber’s disastrous opinion was based on the early assimilation of the tribe. During the colonial conquest the Muwekma tribe was largely converted to Catholicism and had adapted Spanish over their native language. They had intermarried with settlers and other tribes. By the time that Kroeber conducted his fieldwork with the Muwekma people in Pleasanton in the early 1900s, their way of life had first been transformed by the Spanish conquest for nearly 130 years. What Kroeber did not anticipate was the strength and resilience of the Bay Area Ohlone who had to constantly adapt to cultural and political upheavals as a consequence of colonization. The Ohlone like other California tribes faced violence and racism, religious persecution, economic exploitation, and institutionalized discrimination. Each wave of colonization brought new forms of devastation to the natural environment, new diseases and health conditions and few available treatments to all of which they had to adapt. However, the Ohlone tribe not only survived these persecutions they have been long since involved in a powerful resistance and revitalization of Ohlone language and culture.

Where Am I Coming From

I am a cultural and medical anthropologist who has conducted most her work in rural Ireland, Brazil, and South Africa studying political and structural violence. For several years I was both founder and director of Berkeley Organs Watch, with funds from George Soros and from the university. Between 1999- 2015 I conducted research on the trafficking in human organs and on autopsies and dissections and removals of organs without consent in forensic institutes, hospitals and clinics in Brazil, US, Israel, South Africa, Turkey, the Philippines and elsewhere. I have published widely on this research and I have served as an expert consultant with the US Department of Justice, Homeland Security, the WHO, the UN, and the EU, and the Vatican on human organ trafficking of the dead and the living.

Based on two summer research in the 1980s Taos, Taos Pueblo, Picuris and Santa Clara Pueblos, I published an article, “The Best of Worlds, The Worst of To Worlds: ‘Reflections on Culture and Fieldwork among Rural Irish and Pueblo Indians’ in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* in which I grappled with the ethics of studying social issues and troubles dealing with alcohol, anomie, and suicide in small and somewhat isolated communities (Scheper-Hughes 1979, UC Press).

In 1985 I chaired an American Anthropological Association panel in Washington, D.C. on “Anthropological Perspectives on the Protection of Native American Burials: Cultural Values and Professional Ethics in the Treatment of the Dead”. This panel was five years before the federal law of NAGPRA was passed. The auditorium was packed and dozens of Native American leaders attended the event and demonstrated with a weeklong hunger strike. One of the

discussants, Prof. William Simmons (now deceased), was a member of our UCB anthropology faculty. He told the story of how he became a cultural anthropologist while getting his degree at Harvard University as an archeologist. Bill, as we called him, had a 'wake up' moment when he was sent out in a truck to pick up some Native American bones at a rural dig site in Massachusetts. He put the skeletal remains in the back of his truck but after a mile or so he turned around after thinking that these bones might have been those of his Native American ancestors. He reburied the bones and became a cultural anthropologist.

In 2007 I was invited to accompany an official NAGPRA team of Tlingit leaders and elders from Sitka Alaska. They spent a week in Berkeley trying to have access to the inventories of several hundreds of precious wooden carvings, robes, headdresses, and human remains. They were denied from seeing almost everything by the Museum staff. The US government sent the Tlingit inventory to me. It was enormous. After days of negotiation the NAGPRA team was only allowed to view several objects while wearing plastic gloves and watched over by the museum staff. I was with them when they prayed over objects. Afterward the eldest member of the NAGPRA group asked me if I had heard the spirits of the carvings who were saying "let us out of here; we are cold down here". The leader of the NAGPRA team, Harold Jacobs, was mute with rage. He literally could not speak for the first few days. They left, as did other Angora projects, empty handed to this day. I have kept in touch with Mr. Jacobs. I had similar experiences with Maidu NAGPRA groups who were not allowed to see the inventories or their tribe's possessions.



Alfred Kroeber and Ishi

Alfred Kroeber and Ishi : A Morality Tale

The "Re-naming Kroeber Committee" argued that A L Kroeber's 'treatment of a Native American man we know as Ishi and the handling of his remains was cruel, degrading, and racist'. They described Ishi (the so-called last of the Yahi Indians) as a captive and a 'specimen'. I will try to respond to that accusation.

Ishi was born during a time of intense conflict (1860 -1865) just after the California Gold Rush that brought thousands of immigrants to the traditional homeland of Yahi Indians at Feather River and Mill Creek. The Yahi were blamed for several murders of white settlers near the

village of Oroville. After the massacre of remaining members of the Yahí tribe, the Yahí were believed to have been ‘exterminated’.

There are dozens of descriptions of this story, Theodora Kroeber’s beautifully written book *Ishi in Two Worlds; Ishi the Last Yahí: a Documentary History*, edited by Robert Heizer and Theodora Kroeber. Orin Sarn’s *Ishi’s Brain: In Search of America’s Last Wild Indian* (WW Norton, 2004), and Douglas Cazaux Sackman’s *Wild Men: Ishi and Kroeber in the Wilderness of Modern America* (Oxford, 2010). Each brings different perspectives and conclusions. My own research in Oroville and many conversations with Art Angle (political leader of Enterprise Rancheria) and the late Mickey Gimmel, Pit River Tribe chairman, introduced me to the deep harms done by the state of California and by the university. A careful study of the Medical History of ISHI (American Archaeology and Ethnology vol. 13, no.5 pp. 175-213) helped me to understand what Ishi had suffered before he died.

In March 1999 I was invited to speak at a California Senate meeting on “Ishi and Reparation at UC Berkeley”. One of our Berkeley archeologists was put on the spot. He was asked how many NAGPRA petitions for the repatriation of indigenous possessions and human remains had been returned to them. The answer was none. It was almost ten years after NAGPRA. The reason for the delay, he said, was the need to catalogue hundreds of unidentified California Indian remains and objects, which were in great disarray. Later many human “specimens” were “drowned” in the basements of the Hearst swimming pool.

In 2000 I was invited to the celebration of the return of Ishi’s brain on Mount Lassen. I have since written four articles and book chapters on Kroeber and Ishi (‘Ishi’s Brain, Ishi’s Ashes: the Anthropology of genocide” (2001) in *Anthropology Today*(UK); a longer version in *Ishi in Three Centuries*, edited by Karl Kroeber and Clifton Kroeber; “Coming to our Senses: Anthropology and Genocide”, in *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, edited by Alexander Hinton (UC Press, 2002) etc.)

Here is a short rendition of the relationship between the man called Ishi and Alfred Kroeber.

Ishi was a child about six years old when he and his four remaining relatives went into seclusion for almost 40 years, hiding out, making themselves as invisible as they could from the bounty hunters and white ranchers who were determined to kill every single member of his remaining Yahí band. As a toddler and young child Ishi stayed close to women and he went with them to collect seeds and reeds. He learned to make baskets. When he was older he spent more time with the men and learned about hunting and fishing and making tools. But their freedom was curtailed by the dreams of gold miners and the greed of the land grabbing settlers.

When Ishi finally stumbled out of Mount Lassen after crossing a difficult terrain and swimming across a river where one of the women of his band had drowned, and others had died of exhaustion, another eaten by coyotes, Ishi was indeed the last of his kin group. He now had nowhere to go and when he left his safe places in deer creek to enter the city of Oroville at dawn where he was caught in a slaughterhouse. Dogs barked at Ishi and a teenager who worked their look to find the thief and found Ishi hiding on the floor in a corner.

'Ishi' spent almost a week in jail while the local sheriff tried to get help from outside. He did not know what to do with Ishi who was extremely traumatized. Crowds of local people came to see the 'wild man' in jail. Ishi was starving and when given a bowl of beans he gobbled them down and asked for more, please. He was given loose tobacco and cigarette papers to make his own. A photographer named John Hogan arrived and was given permission to take hundreds of photos of Ishi standing and sitting down in his tattered clothes. What did people want to see Hogan wondered. A pathetic fugitive or a noble and brave Indian? He tried to pose Ishi in various positions. Ishi was silent and somewhat rigid. He was afraid of the camera. Sheriff Weber brought several local Maidu Indians to speak with the man. It didn't work. He shook his head.

Someone suggested that the sheriff find a man named Sam Batwi, one of two known Maidu/Yahi speakers. When Batwi arrived he was dressed in a suit and had grown a short beard and was wearing a pair of spectacles. When Batwi was brought to the jail Ishi was impressed. But when Batwi started to press the man for answers – Where do you come from? Who are your relatives? Where are they? He pointed to himself and raised one finger saying that he was alone. But was he telling the truth to save his small band? Finally he said a few things. He once had a woman, but she died. He wanted to know if the sheriff would punish him for stealing sheep and taking things from cabins.

Ishi told Batwi that he didn't know if the sheriff who handed him a gun which Ishi refused, wanted to kill him. He did not trust the sheriff and nor did he trust Sam Batwi who was not a proper Maidu/Yahi. Eventually he told Batwi how he had wandered alone through the mountains and how the rushing waters had drowned half of them and how he had dug shallow graves to bury them. He sang a death chant while he once again raised one finger and pointed to himself to show that he was now alone, that there were no others of his to find and no where for him to go.

Sheriff Weber negotiated with the University Of California to take custody of the traumatized man who was now homeless and bereft. When he took Ishi out of the jail to acquaint him to the city, he put handcuffs on Ishi's hands. Ishi asked Batwi if the stainless steelhandcuffs were a present for him, and how to take them off. Finally Professor Kroeber was called and asked to intervene. While Ishi was still in Oroville Kroeber enlisted help from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC. who gave Kroeber permission to bring the man to San Francisco. Kroeber agreed that he would be Ishi's guardian and said that the man would have an 'independent life' while living and working as a custodian in the Anthropology Museum. The agreement was made.

Kroeber sent T.T. (Thomas) Waterman, a Berkeley instructor in linguistics to Orville to bring Ishi back to San Francisco and to the Anthropology Museum where Kroeber had his office and a suit of rooms that he could share with Ishi until they could figure out what to do. Ishi was relieved to be out of jail but the crowds of people overwhelmed him. Waterman and Batwi would accompany him. "Too many *saltu*", white ghosts, Ishi told Batwi as they began the voyage to San Francisco. They traveled by train, ferry, and a trolley car to Kroeber's museum where Ishi was given a room, a comfortable bed, fresh clothing, and lots of food. Kroeber let him sleep before he would try to talk to him the next day.

Kroeber saw and treated Ishi as a ward as well as an informant. Kroeber was expected to take care of Ishi. Kroeber and Waterman took turns keeping company with the man that Kroeber called Ishi (man, in Yana). It was Waterman, the linguist, who wrote the most about Ishi's life before and while he was grappling with a new (and last) life in San Francisco. Ishi recognized Kroeber as the boss. He called Kroeber 'big chief'. He befriended the UC hospital surgeon, Sexton Pope, with whom he spent many days and weekends hunting with arrows in local woods.

Ishi Was Not a Captive

Ishi was taken around the city until he got his own cognitive map of the new world he had entered. He rarely spoke about his last years in Yahi country, and when he did he became very sad. Many people affiliated with Kroeber and Kroeber himself asked Ishi if he wanted to return to his homeland. Ishi said no. On one occasion Kroeber asked Ishi if he would like to go on a camping excursion to Deer Creek, his former home. According to Waterman Ishi became apprehensive and fearful that the excursion might end with them leaving him for good in the foothills where he had spent his early years. Ishi replied with a number of 'rational' objections to this plan. One was that in the hills there were no houses; another was that there were no chairs or beds; a third was that there was very little to eat. He said that he was too old to go back into the wilderness and that there were too many ghosts there. (TT Waterman, 1995, *The Last Wild Tribe of California*, published in *Popular Science Monthly*, March, 1915, pp. 233-244).

Ishi was a very sophisticated man, so much more that can be said here. He was stoic and an extremely disciplined person. He was very sensitive and what some white people referred to as 'well mannered.' He was an intellectual in that he understood exactly why Kroeber and his anthropological friends wanted to record his knowledge of Yahi culture, songs, stories, and cosmology. It was precious and valuable.

To whom else could he give his knowledge and wisdom? He had no kin and he had no children. Kroeber said that Ishi was so more intelligent than his undergraduate students. Ishi demonstrated to museum visitors how the Yahi do a fire starter and how to make bows, arrows, points, a rope snare from hemp fibers, a salmon harpoon, and other crafts that were so essential to his early life.

No one forced Ishi to do these things and he seemed to enjoy being a teacher of his Yahi culture. Still, he kept many secrets that he would take with him. Though he would never give his name, he loved asking children in the streets near he lived what their names were and if they had a nickname. His personal beliefs about the afterworld were also off the record. On one occasion a visitor asked him if he believed in God. 'Sure Mike!', he said with a twinkle in his eye.

If we think of Ishi as what he was, a survivor of genocide we can understand his wishes to stay just where he was, safe and warm. Ishi had suffered enough during the years of his real captivity hiding with his mother (or his aunt) and a younger woman who may have been his wife (the Yahi term he used could mean either) and the others he lost as they tried to cross a river that left him from five to just one. When Kroeber agreed to 'take care' of Ishi without knowing what else he should or could do, he agreed with US Indian Affairs to be Ishi's guardian. Ishi and Kroeber were respectful to each other, but Ishi had other and more intimate friends, his translators, Tom

Waterman and most of all Dr. Pope not to mention the kind Italian grocery man down the way from Parnassus and the Museum.

Before long Ishi became a celebrity of sorts. He went to the movies and to the Opera, neither of which he liked, but he came to really enjoy the trolley cars and the clanging of their bells. He said that didn't mind being a part-time custodian because he really liked the silver dollars that were in his weekly paycheck. Like the Yurok, Ishi was careful and frugal and he kept most of his money in a bank. After a period of overeating Ishi avoided sweet things like sugar donuts and he began to lose weight. He dressed well except for shoes. He had to have 'his feet on the ground'. He enjoyed visiting with the patients who were close by the museum, the University hospital. He liked to sit by each bed. He often sang or seemed to be praying to each of the patients, many of who thought he was a great healer. What he did not like about the museum and the hospital were the surgeries and dissections of the dead.

When Ishi began to get ill, his doctor Saxton Pope was late in diagnosing Ishi's rampant tuberculosis. Ishi accepted his death of TB with grace. He was calm and said that he would soon be together with his dead relatives.

Ishi's Ashes, Ishi's Brain

The final story opened in the spring of 1999 with the long overdue acknowledgement and repatriation of Ishi's brain from the Smithsonian Institution where it was found in a warehouse bobbing in an aquarium. Anthropologists at Berkeley differed in their opinions of what, if anything should be said or done. Some were embarrassed by the initial denials about the facts of the autopsy and removal of Ishi's brain.

In response to a letter sent on May 21, 1997 to UC President Atkinson and Governor Wilson by Art Angle, a Maidu leader from Enterprise Rancheria, Oroville, who had long been searching to locate Ishi's brain, Jay Stowsky, an officer in the Office of Provost and Academic Affairs replied:

“As was reported in the University's first response to your letter, a preliminary search of the University records did not produce any evidence that any part of Ishi's remains were ever preserved for scientific study at the University of California. A more thorough search of the university archives conducted by museum researcher Ira Jacknis, along with a cover letter and further explanation of the report by Dr. Rosemary Joyce, Director of the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology concluded that based on all available historical evidence, the brain of Ishi was removed only for purposes of autopsy and then placed back with the rest of his remains to be cremated at the Laurel Hill cemetery near San Francisco shortly after his death on March 25, 1916. We recognize that this is an issue of utmost importance to the Native community, and we have pursued this investigation carefully so that we could provide you with a definitive answer. As Director Joyce notes, 'it was a tragedy that Ishi's body was subject to autopsy against his wishes. But it appears that there is no historical support for the idea that his brain was maintained as a scientific specimen.'”

At the time that this letter was composed, the Anthropology Museum was still selling reprints of 'The Medical History of Ishi' by Saxton Pope, University of California Publications in *American Archeology and Ethnography* vol. 13, No. 5, pp. 38-44, 8 text figures, May 15, 1920.

I have never read an autopsy quite like this one, a long and at times almost literary rendition of the death and the dead body of a person. It opens: "Often incidental records of human life are the most interesting and illuminating. The factors of health, heredity, predispositions and psychic reactions that are the making of historic events...At the time he arrived [in Oroville] he was undoubtedly in a state of starvation...The photos taken at that time shows how great the privations must have been to bring him to such a state of physical attenuation.. Ishi made the statement [to Dr. Pope] that he was not sick but he had no food." From this one can conclude that the Yahi were living in a situation of 'feast and famine'.

While each organ was measured and returned to his body, the autopsy covered much more territory. It concluded with Ishi's medical funeral: "His body was carried to the undertakers where his body was embalmed...Professor Waterman, M.E. W. Gifford, Mr. Loud of the Museum and I [Saxton Pope] visited the funeral parlor, and we placed in his open coffin his bow, a quiver full of arrows, ten pieces of [silver] Indian money, dried venison, acorn meal, fire sticks, and a small quantity of tobacco. We then accompanied the body to Laurel Hill cemetery near San Francisco where it was cremated. The ashes were placed in a small [Pueblo] pottery on which is read: *Ishi, the last Yahi, died March 25, 1916.*"

As for Ishi's brain the official autopsy lists it on the next to last page with a brief description: "Brain- weighs 1300 grams. It is removed and shows no gross abnormalities with the exception of some increase in fat beneath the pia (the delicate innermost membrane enveloping the brain and spinal cord). The skull is small and rather thick."

It was 'removed by whom and then what?

Art Angle, the Enterprise Rancheria Maidu leader, was certain that Ishi's brain was removed based on his own research about archaeologist's seemingly endless diggings in search of Native remains. Art knew about the end of Ishi's 'captivity' living among the 'anthros'. But he was willing enough to work with Orin Starn, myself and a few other "Anthros". Following the official news release indicating that Ishi's brain had, indeed, been traced to the Smithsonian, a departmental meeting was held and a proposed statement was debated, many times revised, and finally accepted as the collective response of the Department of Anthropology at Berkeley. I was one of three anthropology department members who were asked to write a statement that would be released to the public media. While falling short of the apology to Northern California Indians that a majority of the faculty had signed, the final unanimous statement read:

"The recent recovery of a famous California Indian's brain from a Smithsonian warehouse has led the Department of Anthropology at the University of California Berkeley to revisit and reflect on a troubling chapter of our history. Ishi, whose family and cultural group, the Yahi Indians, were murdered as part of the genocide that characterized the influx of western settlers to California, lived out his last years at the original museum of anthropology at the University of California. He served as an informant to one of our department's founding members, Alfred Kroeber, as well as to other local and visiting anthropologists. The nature of the relationships between Ishi and the anthropologists and linguists who worked with him for some five years at the museum were complex and contradictory. Despite Kroeber's lifelong devotion to California Indians and his friendship with Ishi, he failed in his efforts to honor Ishi's wishes not to be autopsied and he inexplicably arranged for Ishi's brain to be shipped to and to be curated at the

Smithsonian. We acknowledge our department's role in what happened to Ishi, a man who had already lost all that was dear to him. We strongly urge that the process of returning Ishi's brain to appropriate Native American representatives be speedily accomplished. We are considering various ways to pay honor and respect to Ishi's memory. We regard public participation as a necessary component of these discussions and in particular we invite the peoples of Native California to instruct us in how we may better serve the needs of their communities through our research related activities. Perhaps, working together, we can ensure that the next millennium will represent a new era in the relationship between indigenous peoples, anthropologists, and the public."

At the formal Hearings on 'Ishi's Brain and Reparations' at the California state legislature in Sacramento, California on 5 April 1999 I read the letter of the Berkeley Anthropology faculty. I decided to include the original apology (that a few dissenting members of the department, including George Foster, refused to sign) so that the apology could be on the record:

"We are sorry for our department's role, however unintentional, in the final betrayal of Ishi, a man who had already lost all that was dear to him at the hands of Western colonizers and we recognize that the exploitation and betrayal of Native Americans is still commonplace in American society".

Some Indian leaders who were present at the hearings accepted the apology, seeing it as a 'big step' for anthropology and for the University of California. Others dismissed the apology as 'too little and too late'. Obviously, the mistrust between Native Americans and anthropologists founded in the history of genocide (and genocide ignored) requires more than an apology or a scholarly conference to honor Ishi.

The return of Ishi's brain from the Smithsonian to the Pit River tribe on August 8, 2000, and the two-day celebration at Summit Lake on Mt. Lassen of communal feasting and healing dancing, a few weeks after the secret burial, was a first step toward more constructive engagement between anthropologists and the survivors of California's genocides. Not all Native Californians spoke well of Ishi at that event. Some resented the fact that he accepted sanctuary with whites and the 'anthros'. Young people, in particular, were quick to judge Ishi: Why didn't Ishi run away from the Anthro Museum? But their elders were more understanding, putting themselves in his shoes, imagining how they themselves might behave in similar circumstances. They recognized Ishi as a man facing genocide. 'We need to think in a good way now and to find ways to honor our grandfather Ishi.' When I apologized at the celebration of Ishi's remains, one of the elder women from Pit River scolded me for speaking badly of Dr. Kroeber.

We, too, have to think in a good way and to find ways to honor our 'Grandfather', Alfred Kroeber, recognizing that it is not always clear what is required at particularly fraught historical moments. We need to recognize, value, and acknowledge the great cultural, spiritual and historical legacy of California Native Americans, and the perversity of refusing recognition to peoples whose ancestors were exposed to mass deaths at the hands of the Republic and State of California. Genocide is California's original sin'.

Kroeber was a complicated and imperfect person. In his book on *Ishi's Brain*, Orin Starn also tried to put some of Kroeber's 'blind spots' into the historical context, the most disturbing being

his 'silence' about the cost of white conquest and the atrocities against Native Californians. In my article "Ishi's Brain, Ishi's Ashes" I quoted Kroeber's notes in his *Handbook of the Indians of California* explaining why, as an anthropological historian of the past, he avoided "the accounts of the current relations with the whites and of the events that were befalling them after contact" which he dismissed as the "little history of pitiful events". This was a question of Kroeber's lifelong battles between 'science and sentiment'. It had to do with Kroeber's inability to deal with sorrow and mourning. When Kroeber was asked who he did not ask Yurok villagers about the white conquest that had so upended their lives and livelihood, he replied that "he could not stand all the tears".

Another blind spot was exposing Ishi to present his tools and crafts to hundreds of visitors to Anthropology Museum, and at the 1915 Pacific Exhibition. These events, which Ishi did enjoy, nonetheless exposed him to a fatal disease for which he had no immunization: tuberculosis. Kroeber was inadvertently responsible for Ishi's sickness and death. He grieved about this and whether even he himself might have been a carrier of the disease that killed his first wife. When Kroeber left for a sabbatical year in New York City he suspected that Ishi was gravely ill and that this might be his final leave-taking.

When a letter from Dr. Saxton Pope that Ishi was dying confirmed his worst fears, Kroeber sent urgent telegrams demanding timely postings on his friend's deteriorating condition. He also demanded that Ishi's body be treated respectfully and according to the Indian's request to be cremated intact. 'If there is any talk about the interests of science,' Kroeber wrote in a letter to Gifford dated 24 March 1916, 'say for me that science can go to hell.' But with Kroeber away, a standard autopsy was performed on Ishi's body during which his brain was removed 'for science'.

By the time Kroeber returned to Berkeley his anger cooled down considerably. He even arranged for Ishi's brain to be packaged and shipped to the Smithsonian and to the care of Ales Hrdlicka, a physical anthropologist of the 'old school' dedicated to collecting and measuring brain 'specimens' from various orders of primates and human 'exotics'. Why Kroeber made such an about-face I can only speculate. Perhaps he thought that it was too late for 'sentimental' reservations. Ishi was dead and the damage to his body was irreversible. Or perhaps — and to my mind this is the most probable explanation — Kroeber's behavior was a symptom of disordered mourning.

Grief can be expressed in a myriad of inchoate and displaced ways ranging from denial and avoidance, as in the Yahi taboo on speaking the names of the dead, to the insistence that the death and loss experienced is a minor one (see Scheper-Hughes, 1992, on 'death without weeping' in Brazil). Freud's (1957) classic essay on 'mourning and melancholia' certainly comes to mind with respect to Kroeber's own 'swallowed grief' following the deaths of his first wife and then, soon afterwards, of his friend and key informant, Ishi, both from the same disease.

Kroeber did not write the definitive history of Ishi and his people. After Ishi's death, Kroeber generally avoided talking about him. In her biography, Theodora Kroeber writes that the subject of Ishi caused Alfred considerable psychological pain and so was generally avoided in the Kroeber household. Perhaps Kroeber was observing the Yahi custom that forbade naming and speaking of the dead. I like to think so. But many years later Kroeber allowed Theodora to use

him as a key informant on Ishi's last years. And so it was Theodora who told the story that her husband could not bear to write.

For all the work Ishi did in responding to Waterman, Kroeber and Edward Sapir among other anthropologists, the department of Anthropology should have given Ishi an honorary PhD. Gerald Vizenor, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, then director of Berkeley's Native American Studies program, initiated the naming of Ishi Court behind Dwinelle Hall.

Vizenor and I had conversations about there being a beautiful statue of Ishi in that space, another unfinished project.

When Ishi became ill with TB he knew that he was dying and he said goodbye to Kroeber who was leaving for New York: 'You stay, I go.' Ishi said that he would soon return with his relatives by entering a hole in the sky that would take him to his spirit homeland.

After Ishi's death Kroeber suffered a long and serious episode of depression and a psychosomatic illness that his doctors diagnosed as neurasthenia, nervousness and exhaustion. Kroeber called it his 'hegira', a reference to Muhammad's departure from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. During the next few years, Kroeber, then in his 40s, began to question his profession and his life goals. He entered psychoanalysis and began practicing at the Stanford Clinic where Saxton Pope referred patients to him. Kroeber continued to work at the university and the museum but for several years he considered leaving anthropology for his alternative profession, a psychoanalytic therapist. "He weighed and reappraised, and then ultimately returned to anthropology and he resolved the intellectual and personal crises of his hegira". (Theodora Kroeber, 1970: 104-105).

When Kroeber fell mortally ill in Paris during the conference on anthropological horizons, he was about to leave his own horizon, and he died that evening of heart attack. Theodora stayed with his body all night at their hotel until she was sure in the morning that "his spirit had taken leave of his body.. to find its way to the trail which it must journey, to the land of the dead" (T. Kroeber, 1970: 276-86). Theodora sent a telegram conveying the sad news of her husband's death and his cremation in Paris stating that his "ashes will follow by air".

Some of Kroeber's Yurok friends and informants were saddened to hear of Alfred's death. Mary Dornback, a Yurok woman who had helped and hosted Kroeber during his fieldwork along the Klamath River, wrote a remembrance for the California Council of Indian Newsletter in which she expressed her tribe's gratitude for Kroeber's work on behalf of all California Indians for the federal Indian land claims case in the 1950s. She wrote: "Members of the Council *feel they express the conviction of every California Indian* when we say that we will be forever grateful for the Great Spirit, who must have guided Dr. Alfred Louis Kroeber from Hoboken, New Jersey to California where he soon became our friend and in later life our greatest hope for long delayed justice". (Sackman 2010, p.291).



I humbly suggest the re-naming of Kroeber Hall to 'Ishi-Kroeber Hall'. This naming would give acknowledgement to the California genocide and to the complexities of the relations of Native Californians, anthropologists, and to the University of California, Berkeley.

[Nancy Scheper-Hughes](#)
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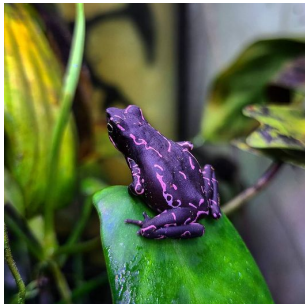
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