

## **Journal #6165 from sdc 1.26.26**

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*Dems allege ethics violations, conflicts of interest in Thacker Pass mine*

*Empowering American Indian voices of the SF Bay Area. For Past, Present & Future Generations*

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## [Dems allege ethics violations, conflicts of interest in Thacker Pass mine](#)

Updated: Jan. 22, 2026 at 8:23 AM PST

By Kevin Sheridan

House Democrats are accusing a Department of the Interior official of ethics violations, conflicts of interest and self-dealing related to the Thacker Pass lithium mine project.

## **Empowering American Indian voices of the SF Bay Area. For Past, Present & Future Generations.**

### [Our Creation Story](#)

Check out Our Initiatives tab to learn more about our [Indigenize SF Project](#) and to participate in [community feedback surveys](#). Check out our [News & Updates](#) pages to learn more about upcoming meetings in San Francisco including housing resource workshops, Board of Supervisors Meetings, and our Cultural District Town Hall Meetings.

### **AICD**

Founded on March 31st, 2020, the American Indian Cultural District (AICD) is the first established Cultural District of its size in the United States dedicated to recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the American Indian legacy, culture, people, and contributions.

### **The Ashbury Heights Home of the American Indian Historical Society June 25, 2021** by [Kerri Young](#)

*This is part of a [series of posts](#) in partnership with the [American Indian Cultural District](#) to promote and document intangible and tangible American Indian cultural heritage in San Francisco.*

Chautauqua House, once the formal headquarters of the AIHS at 1451 Masonic Avenue in the potential Ashbury Heights Historic District. It is one of the many cultural sites throughout the San Francisco Bay Area significant to 20th century urban American Indian heritage and activism.

In the 1960s and 1970s, American Indians entered spheres of activism throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, participating in Red Power and American Indian Movement activities across the San Francisco Bay Area. As grassroots efforts for American Indian self-determination and civil rights grew, many non-Natives became receptive to the concerns and issues raised by American Indians, and some foundations and organizations provided grants to support local work. It was in this environment, and notably in urban cities like San Francisco that embraced and celebrated its growing diversity, that the **American Indian Historical Society (AIHS)** flourished.

The AIHS was founded in 1964 by Rupert Costo (Cahuilla), his wife Jeannette Henry-Costo (Eastern Cherokee), and thirteen other California Indians from different Tribes. Costo served as

president of the organization until its dissolution in 1986. The San Francisco based group sought to improve education, communication, and cultural development among American Indians.

Costo's family was rooted in an intergenerational tradition of leadership and activism, and early in his life Costo was an active member of the California Indian Rights Association, and lobbied in Washington, DC, on behalf of many Tribes. After establishing himself as a civil engineer and Cahuilla spokesman, Costo focused his energies toward integrated education, while Jeannette Henry-Costo, formerly a reporter for the New York Times and Detroit Free Press, was a strong personality who served as AIHS's executive secretary and tirelessly worked as an editor for the society's publications. Married for nearly forty years, the Costos worked as partners in bringing attention to American Indian concerns. In addition to their dedication to AIHS, they wrote and edited several scholarly works on Native American history and culture. Together they worked to reach American Indians and non-Natives with an emphasis on education and equality, and continued rallying for greater improvements even as victories in Indian country occurred over their lifetimes. Rupert passed away in 1989, and Jeannette in 2001.

The San Francisco Planning Commission granted 1451 Masonic for use as the AIHS in March of 1967.

Located initially at the private home of the Costos, the organization sought a site for a national headquarters with space for meetings, a library, and an art museum. Eventually, Henry-Costo along with original AIHS board member Bertha Stewart (Tolowa) found a suitable location in a two-story, nine room Period-Revival style house built in 1900 at 1451 Masonic Avenue, in what is today the potential Ashbury Heights Historic District. Located between the Panhandle and Buena Vista Park, the headquarters was less than half a mile south of the iconic Haight and Ashbury intersection, which at the time of AIHS's founding in 1964 was home to a burgeoning hippie subculture.

AIHS decided on "Chautauqua House" as the name for their newly established headquarters. Chautauqua, a Seneca word roughly meaning "to take fish from the waters," was an homage to the Chautauqua series where lecturers and artists traveled across the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Additionally, AIHS selected the term to symbolize American Indian peoples embracing the diversity of American Indian history, cultures, and education.<sup>1</sup>

*Portrait of Rupert Costo. Joseph Senungetuk, Alaskan Native, recalled how Costo enjoyed tending his twenty-one rose bushes in the front courtyard of the Chautauqua House, and a good cup of freshly ground French roast coffee* Photo courtesy of the University of California, Riverside.

AIHS was entirely volunteer-run. A few months after the Historical Society officially opened at 1451 Masonic, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that members of this activist organization numbered 822, both American Indian and non-Native, with associate membership from 42 universities and colleges throughout the country including Cornell and Harvard.<sup>3</sup> Members challenged textbooks (which largely excluded and whitewashed the experience of American Indians), testified at congressional hearings, created an American Indian-controlled publishing house, coordinated community meetings locally and even country-wide, and lobbied for protection of burial grounds.

“In the beginning, we thought we would be devoted to nice, quiet research,” Henry-Costo told the *San Francisco Chronicle* in September 1967. “But confronted with various issues, we’ve had to fight. We’ve become known as ‘activist’ historians, although we never intended it that way.”<sup>4</sup>

*An excerpt from article “Indian Group Slates Series of Workshops” in the Desert Sun, August 6, 1966 (a year prior to moving into Chautauqua House). AIHS’s program of workshops for educators took place in five areas of California and were the first of its type in the nation.*

Led by Henry-Costo, the AIHS forwarded this activist mission by publishing *Wassaja* (pronounced Washssah-ha) starting in 1973, one of the first national American Indian newspapers with original content. “Wassaja is a signal for self-determination, a signal for the Indian to carry on his own fight for the right to decide his own life today, his own destiny tomorrow,” the Costos said in a lead editorial.<sup>5</sup>

Author Kent Blansett noted how 1451 Masonic was significant to the Red Power Movement of the 1960s, particularly to its educational agenda: “In May of 1969, [Richard] Oakes led a committee meeting to create a seminar with the title ‘The American Indian in an Era of Social Change.’ Members of the committee who gathered at the Chautauqua House on Masonic Avenue (home to the American Indian Historical Society) included educators, other community members, and students from campuses around the Bay Area.”<sup>6</sup> Oakes was a prominent Red Power Movement figure, leading the 1969 Occupation of Alcatraz and the first Native American Studies Department at San Francisco State University, as well as influencing major positive changes in federal Indian policy and leading successful tribal land return efforts.

*A San Francisco Chronicle piece from September 1967 reviewed AIHS’s inaugural exhibition of Native artist Frank Day, noting that his work was “rendered with a combination of ‘naive’ detail and sophisticated compositional devices,” and “qualify him as one of the more engaging ‘primitives’ who have recently come to light.”*

The society also committed to American Indian art and artists by providing a physical gallery space and informative exhibitions of significant California Indian artists such as Frank Day. Said Leatrice Mikkelsen, director of AIHS’s museum: “We hope to show the best of two cultures—Indian culture and what it has received from national and world culture.” Added Henry-Costo, “The talent among American Indians is enormous—they have an affinity with nature, imagination and desire to give of themselves. If we encourage them, i’m sure they will come out of the woods.”

Through its exhibitions and publications, the AIHS sought to inform and promote mutual understanding between American Indians and non-Natives. The AIHS’ philosophy centered on the belief that American Indians could, through their own initiative and innovation, lead the fight in American Indian affairs. While AIHS did not initially see their work as “activist,” the continued cultural existence of an organization for American Indians in the twentieth century was in a way a political declaration, since former governmental policies sought to eliminate and destroy American Indian cultures.

By the early 1980s, many Society members had left the organization, some for personal reasons, while others joined different organizations and continued activist work in other areas. In addition, several of the core early members had passed away and foundation money, central to the regular functioning of the group, began to dry up with the changing tide of the national economy.

The Costos remained committed to their important work but began to slow down with the advancement of their ages. Regularly scheduled publications disappeared, and AIHS formally ceased operating in 1986 with the failing health of Rupert Costo. That year, AIHS sold Chautauqua House. The sale of the property allowed the Costos to endow an academic chair in American Indian Affairs at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), at the time only one of three in the nation. In addition, they donated to UCR their library of 15,000 books, treaties, legal documents, prints, and paintings focused on American Indians.

In one of the final AIHS board meetings in April 1988, Costo said that “the aims of the Society had been met,” and “over the years the Indian tribes had taken up pursuit of similar goals.”

Moving forward, 1451 Masonic appears to qualify as a historic resource, perhaps a city landmark, for its affiliation with the American Indian Historical Society and the organization’s significant role in elevating American Indian voices in the latter half of the 20th century. While the AIHS does not formally exist today, local American Indian organizations like the [American Indian Cultural District](#), the [International Indian Treaty Council](#), and the [American Indian Cultural Center](#) are coming together at one centralized location to build an American Indian Cultural Hub at Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. Together they will create a historical archival system to document urban American Indian heritage in San Francisco. The American Indian Cultural District is also partnering with the [San Francisco Public Library](#) to document local history, archive information, and create an American Indian research database, in addition to creating a space in the library specifically for American Indian resources.

Sources:

1. Rose Delia Soza War Soldier, ““to take positive and effective action”: Rupert Costo and the California based American Indian Historical Society,” (Arizona State University, 2003), 107.

2. Joseph Senungetuk, “Change is in the Words,” Anchorage Daily News, November 12, 1989, E3

3. “Inter-Tribal Cultural Center,” The San Francisco Chronicle, September 10, 1967, 41

4. *ibid*

5. “A National Newspaper for Indians,” *Desert Sun*, (May 7, 1973): C3

6. Kent Blansett, *Journey to Freedom: Richard Oakes, Alcatraz, and the Red Power Movement*, (Yale University Press, 2018), 106

## **Federal judge appears skeptical that Trump has legal authority to proceed with White House ballroom**

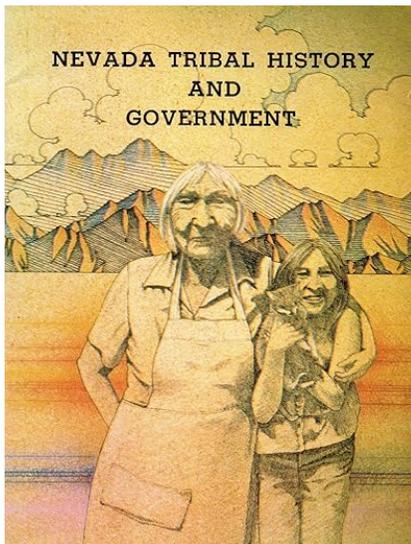
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## **Philadelphia sues after slavery exhibits were taken down from President's House site**

The lawsuit says the National Park Service removed the displays referring to slavery "presumably pursuant to the mandate" of an executive order from President Donald Trump.

[https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/philadelphia-sues-slavery-exhibits-taken-presidents-house-site-rcna255535?utm\\_source=firefox-newtab-en-us](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/philadelphia-sues-slavery-exhibits-taken-presidents-house-site-rcna255535?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us)

Cannot believe this is on Amazon



• Print length 31 pages

**Nevada tribal history and government Unknown Binding – January 1, 1981**  
by [Shayne Del Cohen](#) (Author)

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## [Volunteer opportunities open to support veterans in Nevada](#)



[Nevada Department of Veterans Services seeks nominations for awards recognizing volunteers aiding veterans. Local groups host events and offer services to support veterans. Read more...](#)

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## [Humans: instructions Posted by Amelia \(Amè\)](#)

### [She owned nearly 9% of Hawaii.](#)

She could speak English, but she always refused to do so.  
She chose to live in a grass house instead of a Western-style villa.  
And she made sure her people could never be erased.

Her name was Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani, and she spent her entire life proving that it was possible to hold power in two worlds without abandoning the first.

Ruth was born in 1826, descended from the highest lines of Hawaiian royal blood on both sides of her family. She was ali‘i, Hawaiian nobility, in a way that commanded respect before she ever spoke a word. But she grew up as the world around her was changing rapidly.

During her childhood, the influence of Christian missionaries and Western elites was already transforming the islands. Missionaries and colonizers sought to “save” Hawaiian souls by imposing American and European ways of living, dressing, and thinking. Indigenous religious practices were attacked, hula was frowned upon, and ancestral religion was discouraged.

The kapu system, the ancient religious and social order that had governed Hawaiian life for centuries, had been officially abolished in 1819, before her birth. By the time Ruth reached adulthood, much of the royal family had converted to Christianity.

Much of it, but not Ruth.

Ruth continued to practice the traditional religion, honored native deities, and took part in rituals many now considered “forbidden.” She did so openly, so openly that everyone knew, and yet no one could stop her, because her authority was immense.

Ruth was not only royalty.

She was appointed royal governor of the island of Hawai‘i, one of the most powerful political positions in the kingdom.

And she had one rule that drove Westerners mad: she did not speak English.

She understood English perfectly. She read texts and followed political debates in the language. But she refused to speak it, both in public and in private.

If someone wanted to speak with Princess Ruth, they had to speak Hawaiian.  
If they did not know it, they had to bring a translator.  
It did not matter whether they were missionaries, businessmen, diplomats, or foreign kings.  
Hawaiian, or nothing.

It was the second half of the nineteenth century.  
American and European businessmen were steadily taking control of the islands' wealth, and English was becoming the language of power.  
And there, in her traditional home, sat Princess Ruth, firm in the language of her ancestors.

Because yes, Ruth had wealth.  
She had enough wealth to afford Western-style mansions.  
But she chose to live in a hale pili, a traditional Hawaiian grass house.

Not as a museum attraction, but as a real home.  
She slept there. She received visitors there. She conducted business there.  
When she was told to live like Westerners, she responded by living like her people.

In 1870, Ruth became one of the largest landowners in Hawaii.  
She controlled more than 350,000 acres, about 9% of the entire archipelago.

Immense power.

She could have used it to assimilate, to grow even richer, and to strengthen her position within the Western system.  
Instead, she chose her identity.

Ruth was not naive.  
She saw commercial interests tightening their grip.  
She saw the monarchy weakening under external pressure.  
She understood that within a generation, the kingdom could cease to exist.

So she made a decision that would echo for the next 150 years.

When Ruth died in 1883, she left most of her land, wealth, and influence to her cousin, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop.  
Bernice used that inheritance to create a trust.  
From that trust came the Kamehameha Schools, institutions designed to provide education, opportunity, and cultural connection for Native Hawaiian children and youth.

Today, the Kamehameha Schools are one of the largest private educational institutions in the United States, with programs that center Hawaiian language and culture. They exist because Ruth refused to sell herself, refused to assimilate, and refused to leave her land without understanding the deep value of what she was protecting.

Think about what Ruth did:

she spoke Hawaiian when she was told to speak English;  
she lived in a grass house when she was told to adopt Western ways;  
she honored the ancient religion when she was told to convert;  
she governed through traditional authority when she was asked to “modernize.”

This was not nostalgia.  
It was resistance.

Every time a Western businessman had to bring a translator to speak with her, that was resistance.

Every time she stepped into her hale pili instead of a Western villa, that was resistance.

Every time she refused to explain herself in English, that was resistance.

And then she left her land to Hawaiian children, because she understood this:  
land is identity, education is survival, and to endure, you must teach your children who they are.

Ruth Ke‘elikōlani died in 1883, ten years before the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

She did not live to see the end of her kingdom.

But she lived long enough to create something that would outlast it.

Today, more than 140 years later, the  
Kamehameha Schools thrive.  
Thousands of Hawaiian students graduate from  
them.  
Hawaiian language and cultural programs  
flourish.

Every student who walks through the gates of  
those schools, every person who speaks  
Hawaiian in public, every young person who  
embraces their cultural heritage  
that is Ruth’s legacy.

She refused to disappear.  
And she made sure her people never could.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Today, after overwhelming votes in both the [House](#) and [Senate](#), President Trump signed into law H.R. 6938, a bill funding the Departments of Justice, Interior, Commerce, and Energy, along with the Environmental Protection Agency. This law includes \$23.75 million in funding for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) for Fiscal Year 2026, which began on October 1, 2025. The National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) praised the bill's signature and issued the following statement from Dr. Valerie Grussing, Executive Director for Legislative Affairs and Strategic Partnerships:

**"Ensuring the THPO program is funded is a critical part of fulfilling the federal government's treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations, and NATHPO thanks the overwhelming majority of Members in both chambers of Congress who voted to approve that funding for Fiscal Year 2026 and President Trump for signing it into law. We now look forward to working with the Administration to ensure this funding is made available to THPOs as quickly as possible."**

There are currently 235 National Park Service-approved THPOs across the country, eight of whom were newly approved in the last fiscal year. The average THPO office receives approximately \$100,000 in funding from the federal government, and for many THPOs, that grant represents most if not all their funding for the year.

**Nevada regents approve 12% tuition hike plan statewide**  
Nevada regents approved phased tuition increases to offset expiring state bridge funding and avoid hundreds of layoffs across public colleges.

**In an article about DC Representative Norton, I learned this:**

**She also secured bipartisan wins for district residents. Norton was the driving force behind the passage of a law that allows them to attend any public college or university in the country at in-state tuition rates or be eligible to attend any private university with up to a \$2,500 annual grant.**

**How Do Museums Resist Censorship? Monday, February 23, 2026, 7:30 - 9:30 PM  
Herald Examiner Building in Los Angeles, California**

Co-presented by Zócalo Public Square, Japanese American National Museum (JANM), and The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)

Moderated by **Elizabeth Larison**, Director, Arts and Culture Advocacy Program,  
National Coalition Against Censorship

Museums tell America's story. Exhibit by exhibit, they acquire, study, preserve, and interpret art and artifacts for the public, offering proof to bolster thoughtful interpretations of our national truths. But they haven't always done so freely.

Critics, including from the government, have often tried to impose their own viewpoints, suppressing voices in the process: U.S. Rep. George Anthony Dondero's midcentury McCarthyist strike against modern art as "communistic"; Hamilton County, Ohio's 1990 obscenity charge against Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center and its director for exhibiting a Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective; the National Gallery of Art's decision to cancel its 2018 Chuck Close retrospective exhibition following allegations of the artist's sexual misconduct, in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

Censorship is a worsening challenge, as a March 2025 executive order, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," takes aim at museums, parks, and other institutions in an effort to revise and reshape how America presents its history and culture. What can museums do when the state imposes revisionist history on them? Can curation be a form of self-censorship? Is censorship ever good? And what have museums done to protect their freedom of expression and the separation between art and state?

Zócalo, JANM, and MOCA co-present a discussion at the top of L.A.'s art week: American Alliance of Museums board chair and museum director **Devon Akmon**, JANM president and CEO **Ann Burroughs**, and The Brick director and *MONUMENTS* co-curator **Hamza Walker** will discuss how museums resist the erasure and revision of our history and culture, and what this means for how we document our shared past, present, and future.

We invite our in-person audience to continue the conversation with the speakers and each other at a post-event reception at Downtown L.A. Proper Hotel.

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