

EAST BAY HISTORIA



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The annual publication of the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta
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California State University, East Bay

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East Bay Historia is an annual publication of the Department of History at California State University, East Bay and the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. It aims to provide Cal State East Bay students with an opportunity to publish historical works and to give students the experience of being on an editorial board and creating and designing an academic journal. Issues are published at the end of each academic year. All opinions or statements of fact are the sole responsibility of their authors and may not reflect the views of the editorial staff, the Department of History, or California State University, East Bay.

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East Bay Historia's mission is to promote the study of history at Cal State East Bay, give history majors and non-history majors alike opportunities to express their passion for the subject, and to empower students, faculty, and staff who are studying or are interested in history.

Cover image by Natalie Gallegos

This publication uses sans serif fonts and increased line spacing in order to increase accessibility for dyslexic readers.

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Dedicated to those who have struggled in the fight for equality and the preservation of human rights. All systems of oppression are interconnected, as humans are to the environment, as environmental justice is to both social and racial justice.

“Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity and worth of cultures and peoples.”

-Rigoberta Menchu

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Foreword

Conner Bonneau
Editor-in-Chief

To all those pursuing an education, the last few years have brought forth nearly every external challenge and obstacle in the pursuit of knowledge, skills, and a better life. Students today have struggled through the COVID pandemic, violent civil unrest, international conflicts, housing shortages, and economic inflation in the last few years just to be where they are now. Yet, despite it all, each student here today, whether an incoming freshman or a senior on the cusp of graduation, has shown a dogged determination to continue their learning in the face of such adversity. It is from these struggles that the strength of one's character shines through. History is filled with people who have had to overcome struggles and face adversity. Whether it is Black mothers caring for their children in bondage, mental health patients enduring medical abuse, or indigenous communities worldwide facing subjugation and resource exploitation through colonialism, history reveals just how much people can overcome. It is my hope that those who read this year's edition of the *East Bay Historia* will learn about the struggles of the past from our remarkable writers.

This year, I have been privileged with the opportunity to lead a talented and hardworking editorial team of history majors. Every member of this team dedicated their time to meticulously evaluate, revise, and then revise again, each essay in this publication. None of this would have been possible without their hard work in what I can only describe as a labor of love for this project. I appreciate the tireless work of every member of the editorial staff. A special thanks go to my fellow editorial leaders, Elizabeth Samson and Parker Hollowell, who always went the extra mile in their copyediting efforts. Our citation experts, Sean Bongiovanni and Alexander Kashtanoff, poured over every footnote, hunted down missing page numbers in archival sources, and now know *The Chicago Manual of Style* backward and forward. I greatly appreciate Thomas Hedges and Michael Moshiri, who demonstrated incredible diligence in serving on the legal team to ensure our authors could publish the photographs and images that help them tell these stories. Thank you to Anthony Belavitch, our chief financial officer, who took the extra effort to steward the funding for this year's edition. Mya Elliott and Jeremy Burden assisted with the journal's design and captured this volume's essence with the dedication page and epigraph. Finally, Taylor Hillman, Issel Navarrete, and Anthony Stovall made up our marketing and multimedia team and creatively promoted the *Historia* to a broader audience through our departmental Instagram page (@csueb_history). Every member of the editorial board should be proud of their work on this project.

This year's publication covers a wide range of topics brought to life by the talented writers who submitted their research to be published. In this journal, you will read stories about social injustice, resource exploitation, and colonialism. It doesn't surprise me in the least that these themes were prominent amongst the writers and editors because of what we see in contemporary society today. We write about social injustice because we witness it daily through the exploitation of workers, discrimination against immigrants, and police brutality against Black Americans. We write about environmental degradation

because we continually observe how resource exploitation has caused it. We write about colonialism because we still live through its effects on society. The articles in this publication are but a reflection of what we witness happening around us.

Creating this journal takes a village, and I want to thank everyone affiliated with the *East Bay Historia*. All of these essays started as assignments in Cal State East Bay classes, and we thank the faculty who ushered these essays into existence, read earlier drafts, and guided the historical research. For a fourth year, student artists from Professor Josh Funk's digital illustration class at Chico State have produced poignant illustrations that bring each story to life. We are grateful for their beautiful aesthetic contributions. Thank you to the members of the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society, whose support and community have nurtured this publication. Thank you to all the guest speakers in Dr. Alexander's public history course who offered us their wisdom and expertise. Katelyn Turner, Associate Acquisitions Editor at Rowman & Littlefield, and Jürgen Buchaneau and Rebekah Weber from the journal *The Latin Americanist*, offered their insider perspectives on the publishing industry, which helped us sharpen our focus while working on the *Historia*. Librarian Linda Dobb dropped everything to assist our legal team when they had questions regarding intellectual property and copyright restrictions. In addition, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to our funders, the Department of History, and the donors in the Friends of History. Their continued generosity has made the *East Bay Historia* the centerpiece of our department, enriching our experiences as students and giving us real-life experience working on a publication.

Readers, thank you for picking up a copy of the *East Bay Historia*. I sincerely hope you enjoy learning about history from these wonderfully produced narratives.



Illustration by **Keana Lee**, Chico State

The Real Monkeywrench Gang: The Rise and Fall of Earth First!

By Matt Smith

Abstract: The 1990s saw the ancient forests of Northern California become the scene of roiling conflict between logging companies intent on efficiently converting centuries-old redwood trees into lumber and environmentalists equally intent on stopping them. Featuring large, faceless corporations, industry-friendly politicians, and local loggers versus an eclectic crew of dissenters including Earth First! co-founder and “redneck for wilderness” Dave Foreman, labor organizer and feminist leader Judi Bari, curmudgeonly inspirational author Edward Abbey, and the charismatic Northern Spotted Owl, these protests garnered global awareness for Earth First!, the most prominent “radical environmentalist” organization of the day. But were these environmentalists truly “radical”? How did Earth-First! transition from the headlines to footnotes? Why, when the state of the natural environment has objectively gotten worse since the 1990s, do we not see Earth First! or similar “radical” groups operating in the 2020s? This paper examines and answers these questions through the study of this seminal time for the environmental movement- the last decade of the 20th century.

Rising 710 feet above the desert floor on the Arizona-Utah border, the massive Glen Canyon Dam holds back the mighty Colorado River, responsible for bringing electricity to millions of citizens of the American Southwest and creating Lake Powell, the second-

largest reservoir in the United States.¹ Dedicated in 1966, the dam was viewed as a monumental achievement that would bring development to the desert. It did so without too much controversy, at least until a 300-foot-long crack appeared in it on the morning of March 21, 1981. Unfortunately (in the minds of the people watching), it was a fake crack – a long piece of plastic unfurled by five members of Earth First! They were a radical new group of environmental activists committed to a vision of pure conservation of the natural world, which equated the rights of nature with the rights of humans. Rather than strict equality, Earth First! members chose their name because they believed “that in *any* decision, consideration for the health of the Earth must come first.”² This philosophy was about to be introduced to a much wider audience with this stunt, and Earth First! was to see its profile and notoriety rise, especially throughout the 1990s. Anything that rises must surely fall, and Earth First! did that as well, closing out the twentieth century in a diminished state. But why did it rise in the first place? And considering the ever-deteriorating state of the natural environment, why did the influence of Earth First! wane instead of increase?

The first question of why Earth First! came into existence in the first place is somewhat simple to answer and summed up in a statement by Mike Roselle, an Earth First! founder: “We were, frankly, tired of getting our asses kicked...We decided it was time to take a page out of the civil rights playbook and use nonviolent civil disobedience.”³ The second question of why Earth First! is now a diminished force when it seems like it should be more popular than ever is answered by investigating the reaction to their activities by the media and the government and the broader scientific and environmental movement. According to Roselle, “our attempts at nonviolent civil disobedience were met with serious felony charges, expensive civil lawsuits against protesters, and violence from both police and timber workers.”⁴ A wider acceptance of conservationism led to assimilating many of Earth First!’s ideas into more mainstream organizations, somewhat diluting the radicalism they were known for. This paper will investigate the

1 United States Bureau of Reclamation, <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/crsp/gc/>

2 Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York: Harmony Books, 1991), 19.

3 Mike Roselle, *Tree Spiker From Earth First! to Lowbagging: My Struggles in Radical Environmental Action* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2009), 118.

4 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 123.

rise of Earth First! and conclude by examining the internal and external forces that led to the movement becoming a footnote in the history of environmental conservation.

Part I: Activation

On the previously mentioned March morning, the person probably most upset that the giant crack making its way down the face of the Glen Canyon dam was not real was writer and activist Edward Abbey, whose hatred of the dam was no secret to anyone. In his influential 1975 novel *The Monkeywrench Gang*, he described Lake Powell as a “storage pond, silt trap, evaporation tank and garbage dispose-all, a 180-mile-long incipient sewage lagoon.”⁵ Abbey, a longtime rebel against society in general and against development and the destruction of nature in particular, spoke to the crowd of 100 Earth Firsters who had congregated to watch this first “action” take place at the dam. He railed against developers and their “crackpot ideology of growth, profit, and power- growth for the sake of power, power for the sake of growth.”⁶

In his book, *The Monkeywrench Gang*, Abbey tells the story of four guerillas fighting for the environment: river guide “Seldom Seen” Smith, a wealthy surgeon named Doc Sarvis, ex-Green Beret George Hayduke, and Doc’s assistant Bonnie Abzug, – who sabotage bulldozers and other mechanized tools of development that they see destroying the natural beauty of their home. The fictional group’s idea of “monkeywrenching” translates to this type of sabotage and instantly attractive some of the more active, and some would say extreme, members of the burgeoning environmentalism movement. One of those most influenced by these ideas was Dave Foreman, a man who had once toiled for change within the system but now as a founder of Earth First!, was one of the people on top of the dam unfurling the fake plastic crack.

In his autobiography, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, Dave Foreman details the rise of environmentalism and many other social movements of the late 1960s and follows its path into “legitimacy” in the 1970s. Working for The Wilderness Society, a major conservation group, Foreman “discovered that com-

5 Edward Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (New York: Rosetta Books, 2011).

6 *The Cracking of Glen Canyon Dam with Edward Abbey and Earth First!*, produced by Christopher Mcleod, Glenn Switke, and Randy Hayes (1982).

promise seemed to work best. A suit and tie gained access to regional heads of the US Forest Service and members of Congress.”⁷ It just so happened that the environment was much on people’s minds in the 1970s. Because many issues regarding Alaska had come due after the discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay in 1968, groups like The Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and Foreman’s Wilderness Society all stepped forward to protect what was seen as one of the last vestiges of virgin wilderness left in the United States.⁸ Unfortunately, due to the “compromise first” nature of environmental politics at the time, these major conservancy groups decided not to fight a new Forestry Service program called RARE II. The program would add thousands of miles of roads throughout wilderness lands in the lower forty-eight states to preserve much of what was important in Alaska. A disgusted Foreman noted, “conservation groups have been especially co-opted by the Carter presidency: for the one sweet plum of Alaskan National Monuments, they have failed to sue over the illegal RARE II process- the single greatest act of wilderness destruction in American history.”⁹

This perceived co-option of the mainstream environmental conservation movement drove Foreman, Roselle, and others to abandon the path of compromise and form Earth First! in 1980. According to Foreman, he was also pushed towards more radical environmentalism in 1979, when a rancher who Foreman thought was a friend threatened his life. Those with ranching interests feared the wilderness designations that could come with the loss of the Forestry Service’s RARE II program, which Foreman had voiced his opposition to.¹⁰ This, along with watching county commissioners in Moab, Utah send bulldozers into prospective wilderness land so it could be claimed by ranchers and other local interests- the “Sagebrush Rebellion”- with a complete lack of consequences from the federal government, convinced Foreman that a tougher, more uncompromising “ecocentric” stance would be required for change.¹¹ Roselle remembered some of the first examples of “no compromise” values that the founders sketched out as bullet points upon the founding of Earth First!: *No strip mines, period. No nukes, period. No logging in roadless areas, period.* This was also when the Earth First! logo of a clenched green fist encircled by the

7 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 12.

8 Keith Makoto Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 104.

9 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 119.

10 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 112.

11 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 16.

words "Earth First!" was designed (although a secondary logo of a crossed stone hammer and pipe wrench was often used).¹²

Though Earth First! had a somewhat official founding, it did not have an organized structure or leadership. The members considered themselves part of a movement, not an organization. To be an Earth Firster, all anyone had to do was show up and commit.¹³ Throughout the early 1980s, the small founding core of Earth First! traveled around the United States, screening a short film that had been made of their action at the Glen Canyon Dam and that also featured a rare interview with Edward Abbey. In 1983, "we traveled 9000 miles in 8 weeks and visited 36 cities from New England to Florida, from Portland to Los Angeles, and many stops in between...several more Earth First! groups were formed in our wake," according to Roselle.¹⁴

Foreman, as the public face of Earth First!, was seen as the de facto leader of the organization. In 1985 he published a book entitled *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*—a collection of articles from the journal *Earth First!* that entailed how-to instructions regarding ecological sabotage, or "ecotage." One of the most notorious of the techniques outlined by Foreman was that of "spiking" trees, which describes driving large metal spikes into trees that are to be harvested in order to destroy chainsaws and sawmill equipment.¹⁵

Mike Roselle was no stranger to spiking trees, and in 1985, he and a group of Earth Firsters snuck into an old-growth grove of Douglas Fir that was scheduled to be logged in a place called Pyramid Creek in Oregon, where they spiked trees all night long.¹⁶ This act was soon featured on the local news, and in a sign of things to come, the story was picked up and became popular across the country. Though nobody had yet been hurt, and the spikes were indeed not *meant* to hurt anyone, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a story about Pyramid Creek entitled "War in the Woods Turns Violent."¹⁷ This was one of the first openly negative articles linking Earth First! with violence in the mainstream media, yet the coverage itself also invited the public to ask *why* these trees were being spiked? Roselle appeared on many media outlets during this time to explain tree spiking

12 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 50.

13 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 122.

14 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 68.

15 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 151.

16 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 122.

17 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 122.

and why it was necessary, basically becoming the face of tree spiking and forever linking Earth First! with the practice. Earth First! analyzed the feedback they were getting from these media appearances and decided that while Americans generally did not like tree spiking, they also did not like the clearing of old-growth forests. In their estimation, "Earth First! didn't have to be popular to be effective."¹⁸

This mindset backfired on May 8, 1987, when a bandsaw operator at the Louisiana-Pacific lumber mill in Cloverdale, California, had his jaw broken and lost several teeth when the saw he was operating struck an eleven-inch spike embedded in a log, and the blade exploded.¹⁹ The backlash against Earth First! was immediate and severe: Louisiana-Pacific publicly blamed Earth First!, calling them "environmental terrorists" and offered a \$20,000 reward for any information regarding the culprit while newspapers across the country finally were able to link "radical" environmentalists with real violence.²⁰ Oregon Congressman Bob Smith said spiking trees was "the radical environmentalist's version of razor blades in Halloween candy," and Montana Congressman Ron Marlenee called for timber workers to "spike an Earth Firster" during a 1989 election rally.²¹

Ironically, there were several pieces of evidence that seem to prove that Earth First! did not actually carry out this particular tree-spiking incident. The police suspected a local man who was angry about damage to his property that was near the logging site; the tree was a small one and not a tree that activists were concerned about saving. It seemed as though the spike was hammered into the log *after* it had been cut down, which would have been pointless if done by Earth First!²² Nevertheless, due to their previous publicity regarding this practice, especially by Mike Roselle, this incident easily attached itself to Earth First! with consequences beyond bad publicity. In 1988, US senators from Oregon and Idaho attached a rider to a massive drug bill making tree spiking a federal felony.²³

While this change in the law led to a certain amount of fear amongst radical environmentalists, it, more importantly, led to a schism within the environmentalist community between

18 Roselle, *Tree Spiker*, 124.

19 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 149.

20 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 149.

21 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 223.

22 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 153.

23 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 223.

those who condoned tree spiking and those who condemned it. Even Dave Foreman, who published actual manuals on how to spike trees most effectively, said, "I admit that I have come to question the utility of tree spiking because of the Cloverdale incident and its aftermath. It is time for advocates of monkeywrenching to reconsider this tactic. We need to determine if tree spiking is effective, safe, and ethical."²⁴ Many people within the environmental movement began to consider the "eco-centric" focus of Earth First! to be simplistic and unrealistic, and as Earth First! rose to global prominence, they also experienced a period of internal struggles and the beginning of a long decline in popularity and power.

Part II: Disunification

One of the main points of contention within the movement during the late 1980s was the rise of social justice issues and their place in the environmental movement. For a long time, radical environmental advocates had advocated an "eco-centric" way of thinking about the world that put the environment at the very center in terms of importance; human activities were seen as a cancer that could only destroy nature's perfection. "There is a cloud on my horizon. A small, dark cloud no bigger than my hand. Its name is Progress," Edward Abbey wrote in *Desert Solitaire*, summing up his distrust and hate of industrial society.²⁵ In his mind, there was "society," and then there was "nature," and the two were incompatible. Others within the larger environmental movement questioned this way of thinking, like enviro-anarchist author Murray Bookchin and a relatively new Earth Firster named Judi Bari, who introduced feminism and ideas of social justice for workers to the movement. These thinkers, and others like them, saw a more nuanced scene when they looked at the natural world. "The very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human," Murray Bookchin explains, "indeed, like it or not, nearly every environmental issue is also a social issue."²⁶

Bookchin thought that the only way for people to survive

24 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 150.

25 Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), 28.

26 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto, CA: Cheshire Books, 2005), 12.

and thrive in the future was for there to be a coming together between government, society, and nature. As long as injustice and inequality reigned between humans, how could it be expected to be otherwise when humans dealt with the natural world? In the mind of Bookchin, society's ills were caused by the uneven distribution of power among people, and environmental problems were caused by the unequal distribution of power among species. As an anarchist, Bookchin despised hierarchies, and he saw conservation issues through this lens. This way of thinking was at odds with the traditional founders of Earth First! like Dave Foreman, who, rather than work within the bounds of society, proclaimed, "Society has lobotomized us. We must break out of society's freeze on our passions, we must become animals again."²⁷ Foreman and other "eco-centrists" saw human society and the natural world as separate and incompatible, with no link other than the destruction wrought on the latter by the former. The only way to deal with it was to strictly limit human activities. Bookchin derided what he saw as Earth First!'s simplistic, black-and-white view of the world, calling Earth Firsters "barely disguised racists, survivalists, macho Daniel Boones, and outright social reactionaries" who would lead the movement towards xenophobia and misanthropy.²⁸

Earth First! proceeded to play into the hands of Bookchin's claims of misanthropy, further damaging its reputation amongst the general public and giving ammunition to its enemies in government and industry. During an interview, Dave Foreman said the United States aid program to feed starving people in Ethiopia was "counterproductive" as it was just delaying the inevitable, and nature should just "find its own balance." In the same interview, he also said that immigration to the United States should be restricted since immigrants would compete for precious resources Americans need.²⁹ Another anonymous Earth Firster, going by the name Miss Ann Thropy, wrote an article for the journal *Earth First!* saying that if radical environmentalists had the chance to design a disease, they would make something like AIDS to "bring [the] human population back to ecological sanity" and that AIDS was potentially a good thing because it "had the potential to end industrialism, which is the main force behind the environmental crisis."³⁰ Statements like these did much to turn public opinion against Earth First! and

27 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 5.

28 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 196.

29 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 196.

30 Miss Ann Thropy, "Population and AIDS," *Earth First!* May 1, 1987, 32.

caused even more internal division than the fracture over tree spiking. Unfortunately for Dave Foreman, some of the people with low opinions of Earth First! worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and they were in a position to do something to make their feelings known.

Part III: Reaction

In 1989, the FBI had inserted an undercover agent named Michael Fain into an Arizona Earth First! group that was planning on severing power lines to four different nuclear power plants throughout the West. The Bureau spent over a year gathering evidence against the group, including more than 1,000 hours of wiretap recordings. The FBI had become interested in Earth First! due to mounting political pressure from various groups representing the regions affected by radical environmentalist actions; one of these groups, The Mountain States Legal Foundation, was created specifically to destroy groups like Earth First!, who they compared to foreign enemies. "Loggers these days are essentially walking point in Vietnam again," said the president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation,³¹ drastically exaggerating the dangers posed by even the most radical environmentalists. Nevertheless, statements like these, as well as the incendiary statements made by Foreman and other leaders of Earth First! put a target on their backs big enough for the FBI to invest a lot of time and resources into making an example of them. The case in Arizona seemed like the best way to get Dave Foreman, who, in the words of US Attorney Roger Dokken was "...the worst...the financier, the leader, sort of the guru to get all this stuff going."³²

Foreman would have probably been proud to be called these things, but they were not very accurate, and his connection to the case in Arizona was tenuous at best. The government claimed that Foreman had met Mark Davis, an Arizona Earth First! member, and had given him a few hundred dollars to help finance "terrorist" actions like blowing up a power plant, but they could not prove it even with a deep undercover agent and hours of recordings. Instead, the FBI recordings revealed what was really going on; the whole operation was aimed at "getting"

31 Michael A. Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers: The Eco-Guerillas of Earth First! Say They're Saving the Planet: The Government Calls Them Criminal Saboteurs," *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1990.

32 Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers."

Dave Foreman and putting him in federal prison for a long time, even though the FBI themselves did not think he was much of a threat. Michael Fain, the undercover FBI agent, accidentally recorded himself speaking about the case with other agents: "...this (Dave Foreman) isn't the guy we need to pop, I mean, in terms of actual perpetrator. This is the guy we need to pop to send a message. And that's all we're really doin'..."³³ Incredibly, Fain did not realize he was recording himself, made obvious by his next line: "We don't need that on tape. Hoo boy."³⁴

Along with the almost complete lack of evidence the federal government was able to muster against Dave Foreman, this recording helped force the US Attorney's office to offer Foreman a plea deal. The deal allowed him to avoid going to prison and eventually have his single count of felony conspiracy reduced to a misdemeanor.³⁵ This was a far cry from the original five felony counts related to sabotaging a nuclear facility that the federal government was hoping to convict Foreman of. The other members of the Arizona Earth First! group that were in the process of sabotaging the base of an energy transmission tower when they were arrested were convicted of various crimes, and Mike Davis, the leader of the group, did six years in prison.³⁶ Even though the federal government failed to exact the retribution on Foreman, the display of sheer might the government was able to bring to bear against the Arizona group induced fear and outrage among those in the radical movement.

Although he had effectively won his case against the government with the pro bono help of famed defense attorney Gerry Spence, the stress this incurred, along with the ongoing internal struggles at Earth First! between the old guard and the new social-justice wing began to make Foreman question if he was in the right place anymore.³⁷ His controversial statements about letting Ethiopians starve and limiting immigration were out of sync with the newer members of Earth First!, many of whom looked at the environment as an extension or even a construct of human society, linking society's ills to those plaguing nature. Finding this incompatibility too much to bear, Foreman left Earth First! in 1990, nearly a decade after co-founding it. He had a few parting shots on his way out:

33 Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers."

34 Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers."

35 Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers."

36 Lerner, "The FBI vs. The Monkeywrenchers."

37 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 216.

“...those most interested in conservation biology and big wilderness, myself included, will promote their ideas under a name other than Earth First! as that name becomes muddied by haphazard vandalism, kiddie stunts like flag burnings and shopping mall puke-ins, Yip-pie-style actions, and class struggle slogans.”³⁸

Regardless of what Foreman thought of the next generation of Earth Firsters, they would continue to do what they thought was both ethically right and necessary for the survival of the natural world. A woman named Judi Bari would be a key figure in what was to become the most infamous chapter in the history of Earth First!

Judi Bari was a working-class single mother who, after long years of activism for women’s rights and against Vietnam, joined Earth First! in Mendocino County because she was concerned about the massive amount of redwood logging depleting the ancient forests. As a hardcore feminist, she was aware of a “macho, beer drinking eco-dude” reputation that lingered around Earth First!, but since it was a decentralized group with no real hierarchy, she was free to combine “the more feminine elements of collectivism and non-violence with the spunk and outrageousness of Earth First!” in her own Northern California group.³⁹ Bari perceived that there was a “big man goes into the wilderness to save big trees” mentality within Earth First! that had encouraged small groups of people (sometimes including women) to perpetrate daring acts of ecological sabotage, “ecotage,” like tree spiking and monkeywrenching heavy logging equipment. However, she was thinking on a larger scale to save the redwoods she loved.⁴⁰

Though Bari appreciated individual acts of resistance, such as tree sitting and blockading logging trucks, she realized that Earth First! had not considered long-term partnerships or strategies that might be more effective ways of conserving nature. She, therefore, leaned on her own experience as an organizer and labor unionist to start building a coalition with sympathetic timber workers against the large corporations that owned the logging companies.⁴¹ Bari’s new, community-based approach

38 Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 219-20.

39 Judi Bari, “*The Feminization of Earth First!*” May 1992, accessed April 29, 2022, <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/barifemef.html>.

40 Bari, “*The Feminization of Earth First!*”

41 Bari, “*The Feminization of Earth First!*”

did indeed help grow the movement in Northern California redwood country, but as more and more women joined the organization, the level of threats and actual violence against the non-violent protesters of Earth First! began to rise. There were instances of pro-logging demonstrators physically assaulting Earth First! protesters in front of police completely without consequences, including a fifty-year-old woman who was knocked unconscious at a demonstration.⁴² Misogynistic threats and violence came as no surprise to Bari: "Because it is the hatred of the feminine, which is the hatred of life, that has helped bring about the destruction of the planet."⁴³

The destruction that Bari and her local Earth First! group, now called Ecotopia Earth First!, were most interested in stopping was the clear-cutting of ancient redwoods in Mendocino County, and she had organized something called Redwood Summer to call attention to this issue. The Redwood Summer of 1990 was almost a festival of radical environmentalism, featuring music, lectures, and direct actions like road blockades and tree sitting. It was all aimed at curtailing the logging operations headed by Louisiana Pacific Lumber and a company called Maxxam, Inc., that had recently decided to double the rate of logging in Northern California to pay off debts to Wall Street junk bond traders.⁴⁴ One of the major differences in this protest was that it focused on private companies on land they owned rather than entities like the US Forest Service on public lands, which made Bari's technique of reaching out to timber workers particularly innovative. Bari became the most prominent member of Earth First! to reach out to opponents in a spirit of non-violence and decry the use of tree spikes, saying, "Earth First! has been so successful in working and strategizing with timber workers that the alienation caused by tree spiking, not to mention the danger, be it real or imagined, is harming our efforts to save this planet."⁴⁵ Despite her attempts to appease opponents, Bari became the target of violence herself.

On May 24, 1990, Bari and Ecotopia Earth First! activist Darryl Cherney loaded up Bari's car in Oakland with musical instruments and gear for a performance they were going to put on in Santa Cruz to publicize Redwood Summer. As Bari drove the city streets, a pipe bomb that had been concealed beneath

42 Bari, "The Feminization of Earth First!"

43 Bari, "The Feminization of Earth First!"

44 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 226.

45 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 226.

the driver's seat exploded, gravely wounding Bari and dealing minor wounds to Cherney.⁴⁶ Suspiciously, several FBI agents were on the scene within an hour. Since Bari and Cherney were members of a "domestic terrorist" organization, the FBI took charge of the investigation from Oakland PD and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, which would normally have had jurisdiction. The FBI quickly moved to charge Bari and Cherney with transporting a bomb, even though there was no evidence of this and Bari had recently reported many death threats being made against her, all of which the FBI ignored.⁴⁷ In the hospital with a destroyed pelvis and facing permanent disability, Bari could do nothing as she was slandered as a terrorist in the media by the authorities over the next several weeks. However, eventually the charges against her and Cherney would be dropped for lack of evidence. Unfortunately, neither the FBI nor any other agency conducted an actual investigation of the bombing of Bari and Cherney, so the perpetrator is theoretically still at large today.

Part IV: Disintegration

Redwood Summer continued without Bari, and attracted thousands of protestors and significant media attention from around the globe, much of it due to the coverage of the bombing which had made Earth First! into a household name for many Americans. Yet familiarity with Earth First! did not mean most people agreed with their tactics. Bari stressed that more had to be done to convince society to change its thinking so that wilderness became a priority. Earth First! had to be more than a conservation movement; it also had to become a "social change movement."⁴⁸ This kind of talk was precisely what old-school Earth Firsters like Dave Foreman *did not* want to hear, writing in what he called a "Dear John" letter to the journal *Earth First!* that he was "uneasy with much in the current [Earth First!] movement," especially "an effort to transform an ecological group into a Leftist group. We are bio-centrists, not humanists."⁴⁹ So it was that Earth First! entered the 1990s a splintered and divided group, unsure of its direction and philosophy and having lost its foremost spokesperson in founder Dave Foreman. Where the federal government, police, and

46 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 229.

47 Bari, "The Feminization of Earth First!"

48 Bari, "The Feminization of Earth First!"

49 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 231.

private logging interests had failed to bring about the end of Earth First!, internal division and different understandings of ecology itself led to radical environmentalists evolving into new forms, in many ways turning their backs on the direct action techniques of the past, and embracing scientific thinking about "biodiversity." This new, more objectively scientific way of looking at forest health led to a further diminishment of the kinds of direct action that Earth First! had become famous for.

Scientists who had been studying the Northern Spotted Owl began to understand that the old-growth forests that these owls required for habitat acted differently than newer, younger forests; they provided a home for many more species than a young forest, something that came to be known as "biodiversity."⁵⁰ These scientists began to understand that, in most cases, biodiversity required more than a mere "island" of protected land; it required connected lands for migration and maintaining a proper mix of species for a healthy forest. In some cases, they realized it might even be better to have a series of smaller parks that allowed species to travel naturally from one place to another in their range rather than one large park that species may have to leave because of insufficient biodiversity. Many environmentalists began to see the wisdom in working on a larger, regional scale to preserve land rather than focusing on a single precious "island" of preserved land. This mindset required different tools than "monkeywrenching" and civil disobedience. Another major issue that reduced the instances of old-style Earth First! "ecotage" tactics was that many new fights over logging took place on private lands. Since private property laws are much more stringent than laws concerning public lands, it was much harder to effect change with "ecotage" strategies. Logging companies were able to disrupt radical operations before they even got started.⁵¹

Even Dave Foreman had moved away from his original tenets of "ecotage" and direct action (although he never disavowed these actions). After leaving Earth First!, Foreman joined a group called the Wildlands Project, a group that did not involve itself with direct action but rather concentrated on large-scale land management and working with government and landholders to preserve huge tracts.⁵² Based on the scientific understanding of biodiversity that first began to come to

50 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 242.

51 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 255.

52 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 258.

light with the study of the Northern Spotted Owl, the Wildlands Project planned “networks” of park systems that would stretch thousands of miles, requiring the cooperation of many agencies and governments. In the case of a mega-park network envisioned by Foreman and the Wildlands Project, a large tract of land would run from Yellowstone to the Yukon. The lands would be “subject to the jurisdiction of at least three states, two provinces, two territories, two central governments, international treaties, several Native peoples’ governments, multinational corporations and many local governments.”⁵³ With these goals and under these conditions, there is no way that the old-style Earth First! tactics of ecotage and monkeywrenching would have the slightest effect other than bringing bad publicity. Bad publicity still hounded anyone associated with “radical environmentalism,” even years after it was no longer on the scene.

In 1998, the Congressional House of Representatives Subcommittee on Crime convened to hear about “Acts of Ecoterrorism by Radical Environmental Organizations,” which included the old story about the one time someone incurred an injury from tree spiking, the aforementioned 1987 case in Cloverdale. Incredibly, Congressman Frank Riggs, who represented Cloverdale, lied during the Subcommittee hearing, saying the victim died when he actually broke his jaw and lost some teeth (and himself blamed the lumber company for shoddy equipment, not Earth First! for spiking the tree, which they did not do, anyway).⁵⁴ While these committee hearings continued in much the same, biased way, they did not have any real effect on radical environmentalism in the late 1990s because it had more or less disappeared years prior.

Judi Bari, who had taken on the unofficial mantle of Earth First! spokesperson after Dave Foreman left, and who had decried tree spiking and committed Earth First! to non-violence, passed away from breast cancer in 1997. With her passing, Foreman himself changed the focus of his environmentalism from direct action to that of a much wider scope with groups like the Wildlands Project. Though Bari had been the victim of life-threatening violence and both she and Foreman had been targets of a federal frame job, neither of these factors played a role in their decisions to move away from radicalism. As shown

53 Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 259.

54 Acts of Ecoterrorism by Radical Environmental Organizations Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime on the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives One Hundred Fifth Congress Second Session, June 9, 1998, accessed 19 April 2022, http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/judiciary/hju59927.000/hju59927_0.htm.

here, the reasons “monkeywrenching” ethos of Earth First! faded away at the end of the twentieth century had more to do with internal schisms within the organization and the greater understanding of “biodiversity” as a conservation concept. The internal divisions within Earth First! centered on issues like tree spiking, feminism, humanism, and social justice within the organization, as well as cooperation with timber workers. The organization’s inability to reconcile these divisions within itself led to fragmentation. In contrast, the broader understanding of species’ needs, like those of the Northern Spotted Owl, led to conservation’s scope widening, and it simply outgrew the possibilities of “monkeywrenching.”

Not many people today would recognize the name Earth First! (although it still exists as a loose organization), but the “monkeywrenching” they carried out brought attention to things many people today care about deeply. This includes things like “old-growth” forests and the preservation of wild animals, like the famed Spotted Owl, which became the “poster animal” of the anti-logging movement of the 1990s. On a deeper level, even people that disagreed with many of Earth First!’s tactics may have agreed with the group’s fundamental belief that wild animals and lands they call home have a *right* to exist free from the spoiling hand of humanity; a belief that is widely held today.⁵⁵ Much like other social movements that had their genesis in the cultural maelstrom of the 1960s, environmentalists went through a radical period when they were demonized and persecuted but came out the other side as a legitimate force for positive change in the eyes of much of society.

55 Cary Funk and Brian Kennedy, “For Earth Day: How Americans See Climate Change and the Environment in 7 Charts,” *Pew Research Center* (April 21, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/21/how-americans-see-climate-change-and-the-environment-in-7-charts/>



Illustration by **Julia Ambriz**, Chico State

Rethinking Colonial Stereotypes:

The Term Igorot and Filipino Identity from Pre-Colonization to the Present

By Kendra Rocco

Abstract: The Filipino people have a complex history that began long before the arrival of would-be Spanish colonizers in 1521. Nevertheless, colonial stereotypes reducing indigenous minorities to “uncivilized” and “primitive” persist in historical narratives and terminology. A case in point, the term “Igorot,” created by Spaniards to describe natives residing in the Cordillera mountains, equates all natives as the same and thus denies their diversity, complexity, and agency. Yet, it continues to shape historical narratives. This paper challenges this phenomenon by arguing that the colonizers of the Philippines did not grant Filipinos independence, as historical narratives frequently assert. Instead, it explores ways in which natives retained their independence through active resistance to colonial authorities. It further reclaims Filipino history by examining internal conflicts and cooperation among the people of the Cordillera Mountains, as well as their relations with natives residing below the mountains across precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras. the environmental movement- the last decade of the 20th century.

*Where are all the Igorots?
–Asia Jackson¹*

¹ Asia Jackson, “Actually, There Is No ‘Filipino Culture’: Random musings from an Indigenous Filipino,” Substack, last modified October 12, 2021, <https://asiajackson.substack.com/p/actually-there-is-no-filipino-culture?s=r>.

Asia Jackson was born in America and visited the Igorot Cultural museum on her first trip to the Philippines when she was four. At the Igorot Cultural museum, Jackson asked her mother, “where are all the Igorots?” By four years old, Jackson had already internalized the colonial image and stereotypes applied to Igorots, an indigenous minority group residing in the Cordillera mountains of the Philippines. The colonial image of Igorots was constructed by the Spanish and American colonial administrators and portrayed Igorots as primitive, uncivilized savages. The colonial image of Igorots has lingered in the prominent historical narrative of Philippine history, which has resulted in the continued stereotyping and discrimination of Igorots in the present.

For Jackson and many other Igorots, these colonial stereotypes caused identity struggles. As a mixed person with Black, Asian, and indigenous Igorot ancestry, Jackson struggled to accept and claim all facets of her identity. Jackson reveals that it was not until she was a sophomore in high school that she felt like she could claim her Igorot identity. Jackson explained that one day “my brother got irritated and cut me off, saying ‘WHY do you keep saying *them*? You’re also Igorot,’ and that one sentence flipped a switch in my brain. It’s like he gave me permission to be Igorot.”²

The word “Igorot” is a term used to refer to the natives of the Cordillera Mountain region in the northern Philippines. The Igorot people are an indigenous minority group of the northern Philippine island of Luzon. The Cordillera Mountain region is divided into six provinces: Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, and Apayao. This area is composed of different ethnolinguistic groups: Bontoc, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Inseg, Itneg, Kalanguya, Kalinga, Kankanay, and Karao.³ Geographically, Igorots are separated from the rest of the Philippines by the Cordillera Mountain range.

Because Spanish authors primarily wrote most of the documents left behind, most research is conducted from the lens of the Spanish perspective, which further perpetuates these colonial stereotypes in academia and contemporary

2 Jackson, “Actually, There Is No “Filipino Culture.”

3 William Henry Scott, *Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1974), 3.

public understanding. Consequently, the term Igorot has been historically embedded with colonial stereotypes that apply negative connotations of primitiveness and uncivilization. Despite these lingering colonial misconceptions, Igorot and Philippine history started before Spanish and American colonizers entered the island. The Spanish first arrived in the Philippines in 1521 when Ferdinand Magellan and his crew came on orders from the Spanish King Charles V to claim territory for the Spanish Crown's glory, convert inhabitants to Catholic Church, and secure the gold found in the mountains. The Spaniards retained colonial authority over the archipelago for over 300 years. The Igorot people retained their independence and territory throughout the Spanish occupation of the Philippines. However, after the Spanish-American War in 1898, the colonial authority shifted from Spanish to American control under the terms of the Treaty of Paris.

Historical research on the Philippines often focuses on the colonial periods of Spanish missions and American military intervention, which consequently obscures the stories of native Filipinos from the historical narrative. Some historians concentrate on the motives of the Spanish and American militaries, but other scholars highlight the local conflicts, like the Philippine Revolution, as a catalyst for the Spanish-American war. Furthermore, since documents authored by native Filipinos are few in number and in their native languages, there are not many historians of the pre-colonial Philippines. Even further silenced from the historical narrative are the voices of indigenous minorities, like Igorots of the Cordillera Mountain region of the Northern Philippines. The historical research on the field of the Philippines can be split into two spheres. The first sphere consists of earlier scholars who consider themselves outsiders to the community and conducted research in an attempt to record Philippine history. The second sphere consists of later historians who usually claim the Filipino identity and work to reclaim Philippine history. This latter branch of scholars influences my historical research and methods. As a second-generation, American-born and raised mixed American and Filipino daughter, this research is personal to me. My historical questions are motivated by my desire to reconnect with my ancestry and culture, learn about my history, and make it accessible to others. For this reason, these prior historians have influenced me, and I intend to extend

this historical discussion by examining the recent experiences of Igorots through social media, online cultural organizations, interviews, and recent books produced by Igorots.

This paper will argue that Igorot was not a derogatory term until after the Spaniards constructed the colonial image of Igorots. The central argument is that the Spanish and subsequent American colonial administrations used the term Igorot to perpetuate stereotypes of indigenous inferiority regarding natives to justify colonial projects; the colonial lens regarding Igorots has lingered in the contemporary understanding of Igorot identity and culture. This paper will justify this argument first by demonstrating how the history of Igorots existed before Spanish and American colonizers entered the islands. Second, it rethinks the colonial image of Igorots as uncivilized, primitive, savages, or extinct as portrayed by the Spanish and American colonial authorities.

What is the Origin of the Term Igorot?

The term Igorot is derived from native languages and the relationship of early contact between the Spaniards and natives, and has consequently become associated with connotations of otherness. Spelled initially as "Ygolot," the word evolved into "Igorrote," and has now become the contemporary "Igorot" as a product of the convergence of Spanish and indigenous languages.⁴ The prefix *i-* means "people of" or "dweller in" and is commonly used in many Philippine dialects today.⁵ The root word *golot* translates to "mountain" or "mountain chain."⁶ The prominent historian of indigenous Philippines, William Henry Scott, acknowledged that "the word, 'Igorot,' therefore, appears to be perfectly indigenous in origin, and it is in this form that it early appears in Spanish records."⁷ Similarly, the term Bontoc has similar origins in contact between Igorots and Ilocanos. The word Igorot is an umbrella term encompass-

4 Alonso Martin Quirante, "Expedition to the Mines of the Igorrotes," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898, Volume XX, 1621-1624 Explorations By Early Navigators, Descriptions Of The Islands And Their Peoples, Their History And Records Of The Catholic Missions, As Related In Contemporaneous Books And Manuscripts, Showing The Political, Economic, Commercial And Religious Conditions Of Those Islands From Their Earliest Relations With European Nations To The Close Of The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008), 263.

5 William Henry Scott, "The Word Igorot," *Philippine Studies* 10, no. 2 (April 1962): 235.

6 Scott, "The Word Igorot," 235.

7 Scott, "The Word Igorot," 235-236.

ing all ethnolinguistic groups of the Mountain Province. One of these smaller subject territories is the Bontoc, a distinctive ethnic-linguistic group and one of the villages in the Mountain Province of Igorot territory in the Cordillera Mountains. As a Bontoc herself, author Carmencita Cawed records Bontoc folklore and how the Bontoc got their name. In her book *The Culture of the Bontoc Igorot*, she conveys this information from the perspective of her community by relying on the knowledge of fellow natives, friends, and relatives. She documents that the origin of the Bontoc folklore asserts that “when the world was very young, there lived a mother and her two sons in the small valley of Cholya.”⁸ The mother instructed the sons to hunt for food, but the lands were too flat, and the animals were too fast. And so, they came back empty-handed and prayed to their god Lumawig. Lumawig instructed the sons to build a dam of stones in the river, which Lumawig turned into the mountains. Soon the people of this land populated the territory and had a flourishing society. Cawed records the earliest contact of the Bontoc with the lowland and coastal dwelling Ilocano inhabitants preserved in the Bontoc folklore:

The people of Cholya traveled into the lands of the Ilocanos. They bartered meat and rice for tobacco and salt. These lowland people would inquire of the land where they came from. The Igorot people, not knowing and understanding the dialect of the Ilocanos, would make gestures outlining big mountains, small houses, and a great flowing river. In their excitement, the Ilocanos said, *wen, wen, bondok, bondok* referring to mountains. And Igorots, not knowing what Ilocanos meant, nodded and said happily, *wen, wen, Bontok, Bontok*. And that is how this village came to be known later as Bontoc.⁹

It is important to note that the origins of the terms Igorot and Bontoc emerged from indigenous language, contacts, economic relationships, and history. These terms existed before the Spanish and Americans ever entered the Philippine archipelago, yet most research about the Philippines starts with the Spanish missions. Despite the prominence of early Spanish di-

8 Carmencita Cawed, *The Culture of the Bontoc Igorot* (Baguio: MCS Enterprises, Inc., 1972), 56-58.

9 Cawed, *The Culture of the Bontoc Igorot*, 58.

aries and documents in the Philippines, these are not the first sources of Filipino history. The Philippine islands were already populated, and the natives had their own accounts independent from colonization. Cawed's monograph contributes to deconstructing the colonization of this narrative by recovering the indigenous perspective, voices, and folklore. Her work is crucial to understanding the term Igorot because it clarifies the origin of the terminology and credits the natives as the creators of these terms.

The term Igorot is inherently embedded with connotations of displacement and otherness. The etymology of the word Igorot emphasizes the dynamics of the otherness of Igorots as distinct and separate from the native Ilocano Filipinos in the lowlands and the foreign Spanish conquistadors and missionaries. Deidre McKay asserts that "people of the Ilocos lowlands used the term to describe uplanders coming down to trade. This history means that Igorot really only applies outside one's home region."¹⁰ As a result, the Igorot name and identity are inherently defined by their geographic dislocation and outsiders' perceptions of otherness. McKay records the experiences of Igorot individuals as reported on the moderated online forum igorots@onelist.com, sponsored by the Igorot Global Organization (IGO). IGO is an institution that now includes representatives from all the ethnic groups of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) under the regional ethnic identity "Igorot." On this forum, one Igorot person currently residing in the United States reveals how the etymology of the term Igorot has affected the way Igorots identify themselves:

It doesn't mean much to say you are an igorot when you are still in the golod. It means something when you're somewhere else and the people name you based on where you came from. (The same is true in a situation like this: You are from Banaue. So while you are in Banaue, you are just another person. But when you go somewhere else, then the name i-Banaue gains meaning.) In short, the answer is 'igorot' when the question is, 'ay into nan nagapuam?' [where did you come from?

¹⁰ Deidre McKay, "Rethinking Indigenous Place: Igorot Identity and Locality in the Philippines," *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 17, no. 3 (2006): 7.

Ilokano] Usually, the person who asks such a question is a non-kailian [village-mate].¹¹

This individual's experience highlights the inherent displacement and otherness embedded in the historical usage of the term Igorot. Although Igorot is of indigenous origin, it is an umbrella term created to identify oneself outside of their home in one of the six regions of the Cordillera mountain range. Consequently, the term Igorot itself obfuscates the identities and histories of these natives. Today, it is difficult for researchers to find Igorot documents and sources in archives because Igorots do not call themselves or identify themselves as Igorots unless they are outside their territory. For this reason, preserving the Igorot identity has challenged what terms are appropriate to refer to them either by themselves or by foreign contacts. In addition, the lack of written documentation by the natives has resulted in the erasure of indigenous voices by the prominence of records left behind by Spanish and American colonial authors. As a result, the colonial biases of the Spanish and Americans have been preserved in these historical sources, which make up the primary resources available to researchers today, and cemented into the historical narrative and understanding of Igorots.

How Did the Spanish Colonial Bias Affect the Term Igorot?

The Spanish entered the Philippine archipelago in 1521. Soon after, the Spaniards contacted the inhabitants of the lowland and coastal regions of the Philippine islands. The Igorot people successfully resisted Spanish colonization during the 333 years that Spain occupied the Philippines. The Spanish could never establish control of Igorot territory in the Cordillera Mountains. To understand how the Spanish colonial bias impacted the meanings of the term Igorot, we must first understand how the Spanish perspective and motives affected the islands.

Historian William Henry Scott is significant because he aims to record and collect the stories of Cordillera history, folklore, anthropology, and chronology from the perspective of the in-

11 Posted to igorots@onelist.com by TF and cited in McKay, "Rethinking Indigenous Place," 7.

digenous peoples. Scott's monograph *History on the Cordillera: Collected Writings on Mountain Province History* became the second volume of the Cordillera Word Project 1975. Sinai Hamada, the author of the preface, claims that "*History on the Cordillera* is barely written, without slant or commentary."¹² This monograph is significant because it gives researchers access to understanding the Igorots' history independent of the Spanish lens. From this point of view, I attempt to dissect how the Spanish colonial bias has influenced the contemporary understanding of Igorots.

The Spanish economic interests in the famous Igorot gold-mines fueled their motives to gain control of the Cordillera territories. Scott reveals that "In 1618 Spain joined the disastrous Thirty Years' War and needed additional funds, so King Phillip III sent orders to the Philippines to exploit the Igorots gold mines."¹³ Scott translates and records quotes from Captain Garcia de Aldana in his May 20, 1620, official report, which has been preserved in the Archives of the Indies of Spain.¹⁴ Captain Garcia de Aldana claims, "They [Igorots] are real brutes since they always go around cutting off heads and taking whomever they can capture to make them slaves. They can easily be conquered because their land and their method of fighting are already known, simply by doing what your lordship ordered me—that is, by depriving them of their food, salt, fodder, etc."¹⁵ This reveals Spanish perspectives regarding the supposed primitiveness of Igorots as simple people who could be conquered easily.

In addition, the Spanish intentionally portrayed Igorots as primitive to justify their religious missions and attempts to gain control over the gold mines in Igorot territory. The Rector¹⁶ of the College of Santo Tomas asserted, "it appears that God created those mines of the Igorots for the good of this whole land, not just for the evil use these barbarians make of them to buy carabaos, pigs, and drinks to celebrate their drunken feasts."¹⁷ This single sentence from the Rector of the College of San-

12 Sinai C. Hamada, "Preface," in *History on the Cordillera: Collected Writings on Mountain Province History*, by William Henry Scott (Baguio: Baguio Printing and Publishing Co., 1975), iv-v.

13 Scott, *History on the Cordillera*, 77.

14 Scott, *History on the Cordillera*, 78.

15 Scott, *History on the Cordillera*, 78.

16 Refers to a Spanish missionary and head of a university or school.

17 Scott, *History on the Cordillera*, 6.

to Tomas captures both the Spanish economic interests in the Islands and the rhetoric they employed to justify their cause. The Rector was concerned with the gold mines in the Cordillera Mountains, which were in possession of Igorots.

This patronizing colonial bias held by the Spanish resonates throughout the diaries of Captain and Sargento-mayor Alonso Martin Quirante, who was on orders made by the governor and captain-general, Don Alonso Faxardo de Tenca, to penetrate and claim the gold mines of the Igorot people. In 1624, Captain Quirante recorded the chronology of events and reports of Igorot people in his "Expedition to the Mines of the Igorotes." Captain Quirante documented an interaction between his troops and the Igorot people:

Next day, Monday, February twenty-six, about one o'clock, I reached the new mines called Galan by their natives, located about three leguas from Rio Frio. As the Ygolotes[Igorots] had learned of our approach or had seen us about to set fire to some houses—about two hundred which they had located in various places about the said mines and hill—they sought shelter without leaving anything except some small heaps of metal which they were digging in order to work.¹⁸

Captain Quirante's account portrays the Igorot as very timid and easily intimidated. He claims that the Igorot dropped everything when they saw the Spanish and immediately sought shelter and safety. Captain Quirante's account is similar to Captain Garcia de Aldana's and further perpetuates the stereotype that the Igorots are simple and primitive people that could easily be conquered. Captain Quirante's colonial bias also discredits the self-determinism of Igorots and reduces their actions to the chance and luck of geography. As a result, the term's meaning became circumscribed by the Spanish colonial perspective, which still lingers in the historical narrative and contemporary experiences of Igorots. Consequently, colonial perceptions of otherness filtered by the Spanish lens stereotypes heightened otherness and division between the Ilocanos of the lowlands and the Igorots of the mountains.

The Philippines is an archipelago composed of more than

18 Quirante, "Expedition to the Mines of the Igorotes," 266-267.

7,100 islands. Prior to colonization, the archipelago was home to multitudes of small, diverse, independent communities with distinctive ethnic characteristics, cultures, traditions, languages, politics, and collective identities. Because the word Igorot is used as an umbrella term to refer to all the indigenous ethnolinguistic communities residing in the Cordillera Mountain region, this perpetuates the misconception that Igorots are monolithic. However, natives of the Cordillera mountains are just as diverse and possess distinctive languages and cultures. However, as the Spaniards began colonizing the islands, the natives of the coastal lowlands were conquered first, but the Spanish never conquered the natives of the Cordillera Mountains. As a result, "lowland religious conversion and intimacy with colonial administrators mean that today, most Filipinos see only the peoples of the uplands such as the Igorots as 'tribal' or indigenous."¹⁹

How Did the American Colonial Administration Further Perpetuate Stereotypes?

In 1898, after the end of the Spanish-American War, the colonial authority of the Philippines exchanged hands from the Spanish to the Americans, as outlined in the Treaty of Paris. In a Marysville, California newspaper in 1900, an article details how President William McKinley instructed the American colonial administration in the Philippines on handling indigenous minority groups. President McKinley declared that "in dealing with the uncivilized tribes of the Islands, the commission should adopt the same course followed by the Congress in permitting the tribes of our North American Indians to maintain their tribal organization and government, and under which many of these tribes are now living in peace and contentment, surrounded by a civilization to which they are unable or unwilling to conform."²⁰

President McKinley was the leader of the American nation and empire, so his words and actions undoubtedly affected the attitudes of the vast American population. The United States and President McKinley headed the colonial project in the Phil-

19 McKay, "Rethinking Indigenous Place," 7.

20 Alfred C. Newell, "Marysville Daily Appeal 20 October 1900 — California Digital Newspaper Collection," 1904, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=MDA19001020.2.26&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>.

ippines after Spain. Hence, the Americans inherited the colonial bias from the Spanish perspective. However, this is not to diminish Americans' independent actions or biases. President McKinley used the words "uncivilized" and "tribal," further perpetuating stereotypes of primitiveness. Moreover, President McKinley argued that the Igorots and other indigenous minority groups in the Philippines were "unable or unwilling to conform" to civilization, so McKinley advised that the Americans should treat indigenous Filipinos how American settlers treated the First Peoples of the Americas.²¹

This quote from President McKinley was published under the "Hopeful Reports" section in the *Marysville Daily Appeal* newspaper, highlighting how the American public perceived the Igorots as works in progress. The "Hopeful Reports" title of this heading demonstrates how newspapers replicated and spread colonial bias. It also illuminates the implicit bias held by Americans that the conditions and statuses of the Igorot were less than satisfactory and needed improvement. The word "hopeful" emphasizes the American's attitudes toward the white man's burden and the need for the United States to intervene in the Philippines benevolently. This framing of the American colonial project in the Philippines as "hopeful" shows how the United States justified its military intervention in the archipelago.

These negative stereotypes the American people held regarding the Igorot materialized in human zoos and exhibits, perpetuating the colonial images of Igorots as barbaric. In April 1904, the United States hosted the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, also known as the World's Fair. One of the most popular attractions at the 1904 World's Fair was the Philippine Exposition. The brochure advertised that attendees could see "40 different tribes, 6 Philippine villages, 70,000 exhibits, 130 buildings, 725 native soldiers" (Figure 1).²² On the right side of the cover of the brochure for the World's Fair is the face of an Igorot man wearing a feathered headdress called a "dalisdis."²³ The face of the Igorot man is juxtaposed with the Filipino soldier on the left standing in full Western attire. Also on the left side of the brochure is a Philippine coat of arms from the American period. The Philippine coat of arms is composed

21 Newell, "Marysville Daily Appeal," 4.

22 Newell, *Brochure for the "Philippine Exposition."*

23 Newell, *Brochure for the "Philippine Exposition."*

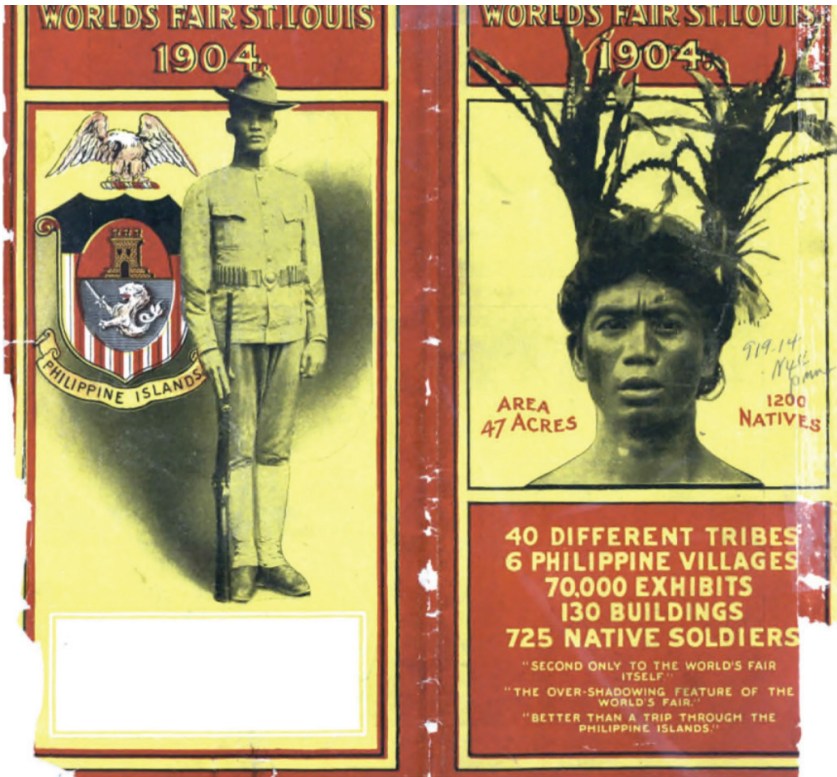


Figure 1: Brochure for the "Philippine Exposition" at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. Photo Courtesy of the University of Michigan Library, Alfred C. Newell, *Brochure for the "Philippine Exposition" at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904*, <https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/translation-memory/item/9370>.

of an eagle as the crest, a shield bearing the castle of Spain on top, and a sea lion beneath it surmounted on a background of alternating red-and-white stripes representing the original thirteen colonies of the United States.²⁴

The most popular exhibit at the Philippine Exposition was the Igorot Village, which displayed Igorots eating dogs and performing other tribal activities. Notably, the Igorots at the Philippine Exposition were paid to perform, and some voluntarily came to St. Louis to participate. In reality, the Philippine

24 Newell, *Brochure for the "Philippine Exposition."*

Exposition was a theatrical human zoo. For the United States, it awarded them credibility and valor for saving the “barbaric” Igorots by bringing civilization to the lands of the Philippines. By cementing the colonial image of Igorots in the public understanding of Americans, the United States demonstrated that the Filipinos were unfit for self-government, which justified the American military’s intervention in the Philippines. The Igorots and other Filipinos who participated in the Philippine Exposition benefited economically, which is crucial to deconstructing the narrative that Igorots were not passive victims; instead, they were active agents in shaping their narrative.²⁵

The United States also capitalized off the barbaric stereotypes applied to Igorots by reproducing the colonial image of Igorots at Coney Island in 1905. The Igorots suffered at the hands of American doctor Truman Hunt who went to the Philippines during the Spanish-American War of 1898 and became the lieutenant governor of Bontoc, one of the Igorot territories in the Cordillera Mountains. In 1904, Hunt was the manager of the Igorot Village at the St. Louis World’s Fair. As it was one of the most popular exhibits that attracted the attention of large crowds of American consumers, the following year, Hunt was inspired to recreate the St. Louis’ Igorot Village at Coney Island.²⁶

How Has the Colonial Image of Igorots Lingered?

After forty-eight years of American colonial intervention, on July 4, 1946, the United States formally recognized the Philippines as an independent republic in the Tydings-McDuffie Law, also referred to as the Philippine Independence Act. Although the Philippines had become an independent republic, the colonial images and stereotypes continue to affect the experiences of Igorots. The contemporary understanding of Philippine history, especially for Indigenous minorities like the Igorot, has been silenced and overshadowed by barbaric and uncivilized Filipino characters in the Spanish and American colonial nar-

25 *Igorots of Luna Park from the Philippines 1905*, photograph, in Linda Qui, “Tribal Headhunters on Coney Island? Author Revisits Disturbing American Tale,” National Geographic, October 28, 2014, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/141027-human-zoo-book-philippines-headhunters-coney-island>.

26 Claire Prentice, *The Lost Tribe of Coney Island: Headhunters, Luna Park, and the Man Who Pulled Off the Spectacle of the Century* (Boston: New Harvest, 2014).

ratives. Spain and the United States had economic and commercial interests in the Philippines, which motivated them to construct these disparaging narratives of the Igorots.

The lack of historical knowledge about the Igorot resonates with and is shared among Igorots today who are trying to understand their community's history. In a case study of Igorot students attaining higher education in neighboring Ilocano Provinces, many Igorot students reported experiencing discrimination from their classmates because of persistent colonial stereotypes. These students reported being harassed by their peers with questions like: "If you are an Igorot, why are you wearing clothes?" "Why are you not dark, with thick lips and kinky hair?" "Is it true that Igorots have tails?" or "Do you ever get to see modern things where you live?"²⁷ Even in Philippine Universities, these colonial legacies continue to impact the lives of Igorots.

Deconstructing the Colonial Narrative

The Igorot peoples of the Cordilleras are alive today; they are diverse and have their own complex culture and society. Throughout the Spanish colonial era, the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera Mountains retained their independence through active military resistance to colonial authorities and cooperation with Filipino natives outside of the Cordillera Mountains. The documented peace pacts between the Igorots and Ilocanos from 1820 show how the Igorot and Ilocanos worked together to defend themselves against the Spanish.²⁸ Examination of the peace pacts the Igorot participated in reveals that the Igorot and Ilocano had a long history of conflict and cooperation before the arrival of the Spanish. Carmencita Cawed revealed the customs, rituals, and traditions of Igorot culture of head-hunting and the use of peace pacts.²⁹ Similarly, Pit-a-pit, an Igorot, exemplified the agency of Igorots during World War II when both the Americans and the Japanese occupied the island. Reverend Walter C. Clapp took Pit-a-pit to study

27 Digna Adonis and Jen Couch, "'The Trails to Get There': Experiences of Attaining Higher Education for Igorot Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines," *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 57, no. 2 (2017): 205.

28 John Flameygh and William Henry Scott, "An Ilocano-Igorot Peace Pact of 1820," *Philippine Studies* 26, no. 3 (1978): 285-295.

29 Carmencita Cawed, "Head-hunting, Tribal Wars, and Peace Pacts" in *The Culture of the Bontoc Igorot*, 23-28.

in a Canadian mission school, and when Pit-a-pit graduated, he returned to his homeland and became the governor of the Mountain Province in the Cordillera Mountains. To protect his community, Pit-a-pit proclaimed loyalty to the Japanese so that the Igorots could have access to vital resources.³⁰

Therefore, "Igorot" must be reconsidered and redefined to reflect the historical agency and self-determination of the natives of the Cordillera mountains and align with how the Cordillera natives identify themselves. In 1958, Representative Luis Hora of the Third District of the Mountain Province explained why he introduced House Bill No. 1441, which sought to prohibit using the term Igorot. He argued:

The misnomer, "Igorot" and "Moro", were inventions of ruthless Spaniards in mockery against our tribes which they failed to subjugate or conquer in their insatiable lust and greed for colonialism. . . The word, "Igorot", as coined and applied by the Spaniards means a "savage, headhunting and backward tribe" of Luzon... (These people) are further described as of probable Malayan-Negrito stock since they share with the Negritos such features as dark skins, flat noses, thick lips, etc., and such cultural traits as the use of the bow, a non-Malayan weapon. This description, which was invented purposely to degrade our people, has no connection with ethnic classification of our tribes . . . The same is true of our so-called Christian brothers in the lowlands -the Spaniards called them "Indios" as being possessed of a lower mentality and not fit for higher education. And to correct all these injustices heaped against our honor at a time when we were helpless and prostrate is certainly the duty of this generation.³¹

The term that should be used to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera Mountain Region is contested as a result of this dark history of exploitation and discrimination.

The Igorot natives of the Cordillera Mountain region actively confront and dismantle these colonial stereotypes by proudly

30 Alison Marshall, "Hilary Pit-a-pit Clapp (1894-1945): From "Wild" Igorot Filipino Boy to Christianized Doctor," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 36, no. 2 (2016): 167-188.

31 William Henry Scott, "The Word Igorot," *Philippine Studies* 10, no. 2 (April 1962): 1.

reclaiming the Igorot identity. Today there are a lot of individuals, social media groups, and organizations like BIBAK, an international organization dedicated to preserving and raising awareness of Igorot culture, that are deconstructing the colonial stereotypes and reclaiming the term Igorot. One way that Igorot people work to raise awareness and dispel colonial stereotypes by claiming the Igorot identity with the term Igorotak.

On social media platforms, many individuals actively join community groups and digital forums committed to dispelling misconceptions about Igorot culture, recovering Igorot history, and displaying pride in their ancestry. Social media users bring attention to Igorot history and culture by using #igorotak to contribute to collective forums on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. The suffix "ak" in igorotak changes the meaning to "I am Igorot." For example, "Being Igorot" is one of many community pages on Facebook dedicated to raising awareness about Igorot culture, and it interacts with about 119 thousand followers. In a post from June 14, 2018, "Being Igorot" defines Igorotak as "an Igorot term for 'I am an Igorot.'"³²

In addition, the *Northern Dispatch* is an online news media outlet that aims to report events and issues from the people's perspective in Northern Luzon, the main island of the Philippines, where the Cordillera Mountain Region is located. The *Northern Dispatch* explains that "aspiring grassroots journalists and young writers in Northern Luzon saw the need to amplify the repressed voices of the indigenous peoples' communities and the marginalized sectors in the region. Thus emerged the Cordillera News and Features, which started issuing news packets and holding media workshops."³³

The *Northern Dispatch* published an opinion article by Ferdinand Anno, a professor of and former president at the Union Theological Seminary-Philippines, on the term "'Igorotak' and the Igorot inter-national consciousness."³⁴ Anno discussed his opinion of the Philippine National Commission on Indigenous

32 The UC Files, "Igorotak (Misconceptions)," *Facebook*, posted by Being Igorot, June 14, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/BeingIgorot/photos/a.253129005227131/300570797149618/?type=3>.

33 "Since 1989 Our Story," *Northern Dispatch*, <https://nordis.net/about/>.

34 Ferdinand Anno, "'Igorotak' and the Igorot inter-national consciousness," *Northern Dispatch*, August 15, 2021, <https://nordis.net/2021/08/15/article/opinion/igorotak-and-the-igorot-inter-national-consciousness/>.

Peoples Whole-of-Nation approach in suppressing dissent in the country at the expense of its total betrayal of the genuine interest of the country's indigenous peoples. He argues:

First off, the "Igorot" tag was there since the Spanish colonial era. It was a Hispanic tag popular among the colonized populations of northern Luzon. Mainly an exonym, the Igorot tag was meant to discriminate against those in the Cordillera region who resisted colonization. It was intended by colonialists to drive a wedge between the colonized lowlanders and the "savages" of the mountains. Through time, however, the Igorot has evolved into an endonym, a self-ascription. "Igorotak" shirts are proudly worn these days by Cordillerans, including the non-indigenous residents of Baguio and the Cordillera region; it is now a decolonizing name for the national communities of Cordillera.³⁵

Therefore it is vital that the voices of Igorot people and other indigenous groups in the Philippines are heard to appropriately address these communities' concerns and prevent colonial stereotyping or erasure from historical narratives.

Thus these efforts to redefine the colonial terms, images, and stereotypes of Igorots and create a culture of respect and understanding are ongoing. Asia Jackson's experience exemplifies both how destructive lingering colonial stereotypes have been to the Igorot identity and also the fruitful efforts of Igorot organizations committed to reconstructing the historical narrative. Asia Jackson was four years old when she asked her mother where all the Igorots were when she visited the Museum of Igorot Culture and Arts. By the time Asia Jackson was a sophomore in high school, she was able to internally deconstruct the colonial stereotypes of Igorots that had been ingrained in her since before she was a child and started to claim her Igorot identity.³⁶ Therefore, it is important that these efforts to deconstruct colonial stereotypes continue so that Igorot and Philippine history can be recovered and accessible to all Filipinos.

35 Anno, "'Igorotak' and the Igorot inter-national consciousness."

36 Jackson, "Actually, There Is No "Filipino Culture."



Illustration by **Emily Jackson**, Chico State

From Cold War to Culture War: American Modern Dance from 1954-1991

By Britney Brown

Abstract: The Cold War established the role of government in modern American art, which was solidified with the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965. US Cold War diplomacy embraced modern art as a champion for American values of individualism and freedom of expression. This support was a key element of Cold War cultural diplomacy, and as a result, modern American dance flourished at home and abroad. However, as the Cold War ended, public funding for modern art became embroiled in another kind of culture war at home. From 1989 to 1991, the NEA was the center of a domestic culture war that challenged the US government's previous claims that modern American art was the epitome of freedom of expression. With an examination of the Lewitzky Dance Company's lawsuit against the NEA's new "obscenity clause," this essay explores the changing role of government in its support of modern American art.

The US federal government's relationship with modern dance is in dire straits. The United States has no consensus over the degree of federal arts patronage, and as a result, it is fragile.¹ When considering the cultural value of art in a given society, governing bodies often play a significant role in the public's appreciation of the cultural sig-

1 Kevin V. Mulcahy, "Cultural Patronage in the United States," *International Journal of Arts Management* 2, no. 1 (1999): 57.

nificance of art; however, in the United States, that is not the case.² The tumultuous relationship between modern dance and the federal government was forged during the Eisenhower presidency when modern dance became an ideal export of American values during the Cold War. As American modern dance became an asset to the cultural diplomacy efforts of the State Department, it established itself as a reputable American art form at home. In 1965, with the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts, the government strengthened its commitment to modern dance and the greater arts community by declaring that the government should protect artists' freedom of expression. Unfortunately, as the Cold War era (1945-1989) ended, public funding of modern and postmodern art became embroiled in a culture war that tarnished the relationship between the arts and federal patronage. The basis of the following analysis is rooted in the desire to understand the inconsistent relationship between modern dance and federal arts patronage from 1954-1991.

Why was the US government's support of modern dance and the arts in general not maintained after the Cold War? Recent historiographic analyses have explored the relationship between art and the US government during the Cold War era, yet several issues have been underrepresented in that research: how the US government's Cold War interest in the arts shaped the foundation of American modern dance, how that interest shifted as the Soviet Union collapsed, and how the modern dance community responded to that shift. Many dance historians have explored dance's role in Cold War cultural diplomacy. Still, research lacks consideration of how the relationship between dance and government changed over the course of the twentieth century. Similarly, scholars have analyzed the role of government in the arts, but most do not focus on dance. The following research explores the roots of the feeble relationship between the US government and modern dance to account for the lack of government support integral to upholding the cultural value of the arts. This analysis argues that despite American modern dance being a valuable cultural export and reliable asset to Cold War cultural diplomacy, the end of the Cold War negatively impacted the US government's relationship with modern dance. The fragility of federal arts patronage in the United States was little more than diplomatic propaganda.

2 Mulcahy, "Cultural Patronage in the United States," 57.

Act 1 - The Love Affair: The US Government and American Modern Dance

During the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, federal arts patronage and legislation developed a new relationship between the arts and government. The early to mid-Cold War era incorporated performing and visual arts into the sphere of American cultural values through federal funding.³ Dance, specifically modern dance, emerged as an institution within the arts community and, consequently, American culture with unprecedented force. Dance historians often call the '60s and '70s the "dance boom."⁴ Modern dance mattered to American society because the State Department utilized it as a weapon in the culture war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The consumer culture of the '50s and '60s was linked to Cold War ideology that packaged commodities as symbols of freedom and individual choice. Along with other forms of modern art, exporting modern dance to the world became a valuable cultural commodity.⁵ Exporting cultural experiences became a keystone in Cold War-era cultural diplomacy, which was one way the United States sought to establish itself as a dominant power on the world stage.

In addition to utilizing specific modern dance pieces to elevate America's international cultural image, the State Department also embraced the modern dance genre as symbolic of American culture. Modern art became a showpiece of American culture, where the freedom to choose how to make art, as well as the content of the art, was entirely up to the artist.⁶ For modern dance, both the choreographic process and the choreography itself epitomized individualism and freedom. Modern dance is essentially a divergence from classical ballet's more restrictive dance form. Modern choreographers began experimenting with movement outside the quintessential narrative-driven choreography of ballets and instead explored the dancing body and its abilities as the primary impetus for choreography. The State Department embraced modernism to advertise that America's artists enjoyed the highest degrees of

3 Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 1.

4 Clare Croft, *Dancers and Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 15.

5 Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, & American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 11.

6 Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 28.

freedom of expression.

American modern dance became ubiquitous with a fresh, cunning, and innovative reinterpretation of the art form, which posed a formidable competitor to Moscow's beloved Bolshoi Ballet. Ballet has long been deeply entrenched in Russian culture and served as a consistent representative of Russia's esteemed cultural achievements throughout the Soviet Union.⁷ To counter the Soviet Union's renowned ballet companies, the State Department endorsed modern dance. American modern dance not only represented an innovative approach to the older ballet form but was also deeply symbolic of American freedom. American choreographers had the artistic autonomy to push the boundaries of what dance could be, whereas Soviet choreographers were restricted to classical ballet's choreographic and stylistic parameters. Consequently, American modern dance became a proud asset to the State Department's cultural diplomacy initiatives of the early Cold War era.

Federal funding for American modern dance began with the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA), which launched American modern dance worldwide. Contracted by the State Department in 1954 as a result of the Eisenhower Emergency Fund, ANTA's primary purpose was to approve proposals for international dance company tours.⁸ The United States Information Agency (USIA) also played a role in deciding which companies most appropriately represented American culture and which ones were too avant-garde.⁹ Consequently, the onset of the relationship between modern dance and federal arts patronage was informed by the larger goals of Cold War cultural exports. For example, the Martha Graham company was one of the first successful dance exports that represented American artists' ingenuity and divergence from the conventional ballet form; this company served as an ideal representative of the ideological value modern dance possessed for the State Department.¹⁰ In addition to the Martha Graham Dance Company, the State Department –along with ANTA– continued to fund dance companies' international tours throughout the rest of the 1950s. In turn, the budding relationship between modern dance and the federal government was mutually ben-

7 Christina Ezrahi, *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 2.

8 Naima Prevots, *Dance for Exports*, 22 and 37.

9 Naima Prevots, *Dance for Exports*, 40.

10 Lucy Victoria Phillips, "The Strange Commodity of Cultural Exchange: Martha Graham and the State Department on Tour" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013), 25.

official to both parties: the State Department gained a valuable cultural export, while dance found its place in American culture as an ideological Cold War weapon.

During the 1950s, modern American dance became a successful cultural export that gained praise from its international audiences for its artistic accomplishments. Modern dance proved to be an asset to Cold War cultural diplomacy until 1965 when the relationship between modern dance and the State Department was limited. The State Department and ANTA only provided funding for international touring to individual dance companies that were approved as ideal representatives of the State Department's cultural diplomacy goals. Additionally, dance companies had little to no say in where they toured. Depending on places where communist sympathies were growing at any given time, the State Department strategically instructed ANTA on where to send dance companies. For example, in 1954, France's recent loss to the communist Viet Minh forces in Vietnam spurred concern over the likelihood that the rest of the region would fall to communism as well. As a result of the growing concern to halt the spread of communism in the region, the Martha Graham Dance Company was sent to Southeast Asia, despite Graham insisting in her 1955 petition to ANTA that she would much rather go to Europe.¹¹ Until the founding of the National Endowment of the Arts, the relationship between modern dance and the State Department was restricted to funding dance tours that were heavily curated representatives of American societal values of freedom and individualism. While iconic modern dance leaders did gain access to global recognition through limited federal arts funding, the relationship expanded significantly after 1965 through federal arts patronage that supported the doctrine of artistic freedom of expression.

Act 2 – Marriage: US Government and Arts Tie the Knot

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was established in 1965 and marked a profound cultural moment for the dance world in the United States. The NEA greatly expanded the terms and conditions of the relationship between the entire art world and the federal government. Public arts funding moved away from the State Department and into its own home

¹¹ Naima Prevots, *Dance for Exports*, 44.

as a newly formed, independently run, yet still federally funded agency. Through the NEA, the arts gained access to more extensive funding opportunities, and the arts were still seen as assets to the Cold War cultural diplomacy. Therefore, modern art, including modern dance, in America gained national recognition and support as they were helpful as weapons of Cold War diplomacy. The following examination of the Kennedy and Johnson administration's commitments to the doctrine of artistic freedom of expression exemplifies the link between federal arts patronage and Cold War diplomacy.

John F. Kennedy continued to build upon America's new-found interest in the arts as a Cold War weapon by emphasizing that the arts were tokens of a free society and that financially supporting artistic enterprises was an American duty.¹² In a 1962 *Look* magazine article, Kennedy explained, "above all, we are coming to understand that the arts incarnate the creativity of a free society."¹³ Later that year, in a speech at the National Cultural Center, Kennedy declared that the distinction between a dictatorship and a free democratic society is a country's commitment to the arts. Through Cold War rhetoric that celebrated freedom, Kennedy married support of the arts and the duty of an elevated and advanced free society. His sentiment towards the arts mirrors the ideological driving force of the Cold War era.

Following Kennedy's assassination, his successor Lyndon B. Johnson helped make Kennedy's vision for the arts come to life by signing the National Foundation for the Arts into law on September 29, 1965. The National Foundation for the Arts Act and the subsequent founding of the National Endowment of the Arts were landmark acts of legislation because they were the first arts policies that created an independent arts council. Unlike Eisenhower's Emergency Fund, the NEA's primary responsibility was to award grants to artists that let them express their creativity unencumbered by fears of government control or influence. The act itself declared that the arts and humanities belonged to the people and were the federal government's responsibility to support and celebrate. The National Foundation for the Arts Act and the NEA solidified the connection between the US government and the arts, and further entrenched

12 Donna M. Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: The United States Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 35.

13 John F. Kennedy, Magazine Article "Arts in America," *Look*, December 18, 1962, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/236800>.

Cold War ideological values in American society.

A vital constituent of the National Foundation for the Arts Act was its commitment to artists' freedom of expression. The NEA legislation supported American artists without censoring how or what they made their art about, which echoed Kennedy's sentiment that a truly "free society" would not simply support artists financially but support their freedom of expression. In other words, defending artists' freedom to create uninhibited works of art was the true marker of a free society. The NEA legislation outlines its primary goal: "to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry, but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent."¹⁴ This was a clear congressional commitment to supporting "freedom of thought" within the arts and humanities. Spurred by Cold War ideology, the National Foundation for the Arts Act of 1965 ushered in a new era of federal arts patronage that required Congress to appropriate funds to the NEA, without controlling what American artists received grants and endowments.

The National Foundation for the Arts Act of 1965, and its crucial clause of supporting artistic freedom of thought, found bipartisan support by working broadly under Johnson's 1964 Great Society legislation.¹⁵ Lobbying efforts in 1964 convinced members of both parties of the importance of protecting and funding artists' freedom of expression through federal arts legislation. Congress packaged and approved federal arts patronage because unhindered artistic autonomy constituted a core American value: individualism.¹⁶ While the NEA shared bipartisan support due to the Cold War ideologies that permeated the American political sphere during the mid-twentieth century, bipartisan support for the arts dwindled in the post-Cold War era. Given that the NEA was ensnared in a partisan culture war in 1989, a topic we will discuss at length in the next section, it is shocking that government patronage of artistic freedom of expression shared bipartisan support during Johnson's presidency.

As Cold War tensions eased between the United States and

14 "National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-209)," National Endowment for the Humanities, <https://www.neh.gov/about/history/national-foundation-arts-and-humanities-act-1965-pl-89-209>.

15 Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse*, 77.

16 Barnhisel, *The Cold War Modernist*, 44.

the Soviet Union, the value of modern dance in American society also diminished. During the Cold War era, the American dance community and the government maintained a mutually beneficial relationship, yet as the necessity to export American ideals diminished, American dance suffered financial setbacks and receded from the public sphere of American cultural values. Throughout the 1970s and '80s, modern dance became less valuable to the State Department and, by the '80s, received less funding from the NEA. The debates surrounding the 1989 NEA reauthorization are continuing evidence of just how closely linked federal art patronage was to Cold War cultural diplomacy. Moreover, it demonstrates the fragile relationship between art and the federal government in America. The following section examines how the events surrounding the 1989 NEA appropriation of funds threatened to sever the connection between arts and the federal government altogether.

Act 3 – The Divorce: Trouble at Home for the Arts

From 1989 to 1991, the NEA became the center of a culture war that exposed the weak relationship between the US government and the arts—for American modern dance specifically, the 1989-1991 congressional attacks on the NEA marked the disappointing end to a short relationship with consistent government patronage. In 1989, Congress restricted the terms and conditions of NEA grant recipients to impede artists' freedom of expression. This was a devastating blow to artists because it restricted how they could make art to qualify for funding. In response, the arts community fought back through the power of judicial review, and they ultimately maintained their rights to freedom of expression. The following historical account of the culture war surrounding the 1989 NEA appropriation of funds represents the government's lack of commitment to American artists' right to freedom of expression in the post-Cold War era.

In 1987 Andres Serrano created his work *Piss Christ*, a photograph of a crucifix submerged in Serrano's urine. According to an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, *Piss Christ* criticized the commercialization of Christianity that cheapened religious teachings.¹⁷ Later that same year, Serrano received a visual arts award, which included an NEA-funded tour to Los Angeles, Pittsburg, and Richmond. This art exhibit tour, which included

17 Allan Parachini, "Serrano Answers Congressional Critics," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1989, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-08-02-ca-488-story.html>.

Piss Christ, was the spark that lit the NEA ablaze. In Richmond, Virginia, *Piss Christ* enraged local citizen Philip L. Smith who wrote a letter to the local newspaper expressing his discontent by stating, "it is disquieting to have the tax-supported arbiters of our culture justifying the desecration of a symbol so precious to so many of our citizens."¹⁸ Word of the controversy surrounding *Piss Christ* spread throughout the evangelical community until it finally reached local Reverend Donald Wildmon. He was willing to put the full weight of his political lobbying power behind the issue of state-subsidized art that defiled Christianity.¹⁹ Reverend Donald Wildmon was a fundamentalist preacher and executive director of the American Family Association (AFA), a powerful religious and conservative political interest group that was a leading activist against the NEA during the late 1980s.²⁰ The AFA sent out letters to its 400,000 supporters condemning *Piss Christ* and calling on the AFA's supporters to fight back against "anti-Christian bias and bigotry."²¹ The AFA also sent letters protesting *Piss Christ* to every member of Congress.

Conservatives in Congress began a firestorm of verbal protests against federally funded art in Congress. Congressional speeches and letters called for the end of the extreme misuse of taxpayer dollars by calling art such as *Piss Christ* "trash" and a "perversion" of the NEA's founding principles.²² The Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina even went so far as to state in writing that Serrano was not an artist but a "jerk" for defiling Christianity with his art.²³ The letters from congress members opposing the NEA's use of funds affirmed the beginning of a cultural attack on the arts. In the Spring of 1989, the NEA and its use of public funds became a political chess piece for conservatives to uphold their commitment to the Christian voter base and the working class.²⁴ The conservatives and the religious right drew a line in the sand at the intersection of Christianity and taxes, to launch the largest attack the NEA has endured since its inception.

Only twenty-five years after the establishment of the NEA,

18 Joseph Wesley Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis: The National Endowment for the Arts Versus America* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2003), 69.

19 Richard Bolton, *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Arts* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 27.

20 Joseph Wesley Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 70.

21 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 27.

22 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 28-30.

23 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 30.

24 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 141.

the federal government's commitment to arts deteriorated rapidly and risks being demolished altogether. In the spring of 1989, the religious right weaponized another artist's work to draw more negative attention to the NEA and the federal government's overall role in the arts support. On June 12, 1989, the Washington Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C. canceled the touring exhibit *The Perfect Moments* by Robert Mapplethorpe.²⁵ The exhibition included 150 photographs, many of which were not controversial, but a few included nudes and depictions of homosexual activity. The Corcoran Gallery canceled its exhibit because organizers feared the negative publicity it had already generated. As it turns out, the cancellation did anything but prevent outrage on Capitol Hill.²⁶ The AFA issued a scathing press release on July 25, 1989, condemning the NEA for funding Serrano's and Mapplethorpe's art. The press release read:

In the past few weeks Americans have discovered that their tax dollars are being used to sponsor photographic exhibits that are extremely offensive, demeaning, and pornographic. First, we discovered that our tax dollars went to support Andres Serrano who was given a \$15,000 prize for photographing a crucifix of Christ submerged in a vase filled with Serrano's urine and named "Piss Christ."

Now we learn that the homosexual photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe have been funded at taxpayers' expense through the National Endowment for the Arts, an agency of the federal government....

The exhibit of photos by Mapplethorpe, a homosexual who died of AIDS earlier this year, contains homoerotic photos that are nothing less than taxpayer funded homosexual pornography. Mr. Mapplethorpe's taxpayer funded work included a photograph of a man crouched over, his penis on a block, named "Mr. 10 1/2."²⁷

The press release stoked the flames of the brewing con-

25 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 107.

26 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 37.

27 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 71.

flict and perfectly crystallized the ideological boundaries of the culture war. From explicitly mentioning Mapplethorpe's sexual orientation, and that he died of AIDS, to never letting readers forget that the NEA's source of funding came from taxpayer wallets, the AFA's press release was packed full of the rhetoric that was catnip to the religious right's voter base. By mentioning that Mapplethorpe was gay and died of AIDS, the press release weaponized his sexual orientation and the residual stigma surrounding the AIDS epidemic. Since many denominations of Christianity believe that homosexuality is a sin, it is appropriate to infer that, by stating Mapplethorpe's sexual orientation and claiming that his artwork is "homoerotic," readers would be outraged by the press release. The AFA press release goes on to demand that the federal government ceases funding the NEA, not only because it should not support pornography but also because they argued the foundation was elitist and did not fund carpenters or other construction "artists." Overall, the press release represents the core arguments the religious right used against the NEA to prevent Christian values from being erased from American society.

As pressure from religious groups such as the AFA and conservative members of Congress mounted, the NEA faced immense scrutiny in Congress over the next year. On the same day as the AFA press release, Congress passed an appropriations bill that cut NEA funding. This was the first funding cut the NEA endured from 1989-1991 and would not be its last.²⁸ The very next day, the vocally fervent anti-NEA republican North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms introduced Amendment 420, known as the "Helms Amendment" of 1989, to the house floor:

None of the fund authorized to be appropriated pursuant this Act may be used to promote, disseminate, or produce (1) obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts and (2) material which denigrates the objects of beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religious; or (3) materials which denigrate, debase, or revile a person, group, or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age, or national origin.²⁹

28 Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 79.

29 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 73-74.

The house eventually rejected the Helms Amendment of 1989 in the appropriations bill.³⁰ Nonetheless, its existence was significant because this was the first time an Amendment attempted to restrict the conditions under which artists received grants. Moreover, the 1989 Helms Amendment laid the ground-work for Congress's increased role in determining how the NEA could use funds. The attack on the NEA's appropriation of funds is a clear divorce from the bipartisan support received by the National Foundation for the Arts Act of 1965.

The Helms Amendment foreshadowed the passing of Public Law 101-121, which tightened its grip on the NEA and the whole of the American art world. The congressional debates surrounding the appropriation of funds ended in October 1989 when congress passed Public Law 101-121, which altered the guidelines required for artists to receive grants. Public Law 101-121 required that:

"None of the funds authorized to be appropriated for the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities may be used to promote, disseminate, or produce materials which in the judgment of the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities may be considered obscene, including but not limited to, depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts and which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."³¹

Public Law 101-121's interpretation of the term obscene derived from the precedent set by the 1973 Supreme Court landmark decision in *Miller v. California* that determined that art is obscene if "(1) an average person, applying community standards, finds appealing to prurient interest; depict or describe sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and (3) taken as a whole, lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."³² NEA chairman John Frohnmayer responded to the law by promptly including the law in the November 1989

30 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 102.

31 Public Law 101-121, Sec 304, Oct. 23, 1989.

32 Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 81.

NEA General Information and Guidelines for Grant Recipients. As of November 1989, all NEA grant recipients must adhere to the newly instated obscenity clause. More importantly, it said that the Congress would no longer support artists' freedom of expression.

The culture war surrounding the 1989 appropriation of funds and the passing of Public-Law 101-121 show a fundamental shift in the federal government's commitment to arts patronage in the United States. Since federal support for the freedom of artistic expression was an instrument of the Cold War, federal arts patronage became vulnerable to attack and restrictions when the Cold War waned. In the post-Cold War era, the shifting role and value that the arts played in American society was still to be determined. What was evident from how artists organized in response to the new grant recipient guidelines was that despite the government's unreliable commitment to arts patronage, artists were not going to give up their protected right to freedom of expression.

Act 4 – The Custody Hearing: The Battle for Freedom of Expression

By the spring of 1990, arts advocacy groups organized responses to Public Law 101-121 by centralizing their protests around the sanctity of free speech and the condemnation of censorship.³³ The situation became more tense when the arts community soon realized that chairman Frohnmayer would not defend artists against Public Law 101-121 and instead promptly enforced the new NEA guidelines by refusing grants to arts exhibits with homosexual content.³⁴ While Frohnmayer was not necessarily in support of implementing the obscenity clause, he refused to award grants to artists considered obscene under Public Law 101-121. The arts community felt passionately betrayed by Frohnmayer's passive response to Congress and adherence to Public Law 101-121.³⁵

In 1990, after multiple grants had been denied or revoked based on the obscenity clause, artists coordinated a response to protest censorship by refusing NEA grants altogether. Of the fifteen arts organizations that refused their entire NEA grant in

33 Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 83 and 87.

34 Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 107.

35 Bolton, *Culture Wars*, 135.

protest of the obscenity clause, three organizations – Lewitzky Dance Company, New School for Social Research, and the Newport Harbor Art Museum – filed suits against the NEA. In the coming months, the Helm’s inspired NEA obscenity clause would be challenged in court, and center stage in the battle was Bella Lewitzky and her acclaimed Los Angeles-based modern dance company. The case filed by Bella Lewitzky Dance Company against the NEA was one of many complaints filed against the NEA in the early ‘90s. The case against the NEA illuminates the severe government divergence from its Cold War-era commitment to protecting artists’ right to freedom of expression.

In January 1990, NEA awarded the Lewitzky Dance Company a \$72,000 grant, which included the new obscenity clause. Lewitzky protested the new clause by returning her grant to the NEA with the obscenity clause crossed out. The NEA then canceled the entire sum of the grant and all future funding to the Lewitzky Dance Company.³⁶ Shortly after, Lewitzky then filed suit against the NEA. Lewitzky’s refusal to accept the sizable NEA grant, and file a lawsuit against the NEA, was a courageous undertaking that represents the profound dedication the American arts community once had. This soon allowed her to preserve the company’s First Amendment rights in the wake of the increasing restrictions on government patronage.

Moreover, the court case *Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. Frohnmayer* is also a definitive moment in the history of the US government’s relationship with the arts, because it highlights just how fragile the relationship was between the two. The lawsuit against the NEA divorced the US government from the arts community by sending a clear message of expendability to American artists. After the government weaponized the arts to benefit Cold War cultural diplomacy, Bella Lewitzky refused to allow the NEA to become a pawn in the domestic culture wars. In 1989, Congress turned its back on the founding doctrine of the right to freedom of expression by rejecting the fundamental principles of individualism and freedom of expression that founded the NEA in the first place and were so instrumental to Cold War cultural diplomacy.

At the height of the NEA crisis, Bella Lewitzky sought to preserve artists’ rights that the government once celebrated. By joining fifteen other artists in refusing almost half a mil-

36 *Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. Frohnmayer*, 754 F. Supp. 774 (C.D. Cal. 1991).

lion dollars worth of grants, the art community protested what came to be known as the loyalty oath.³⁷ Bella Lewitzky, who was no stranger to government backlash against the arts, announced on June 15, 1990, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, which was the very same place she refused to testify to the House of Un-American Activities Committee in 1951.³⁸ At the press conference, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that Lewitzky drew a parallel between Senator Joseph McCarthy's and Senator Jesse Helms' desire to "take down artists and art."³⁹ Yet more importantly, her primary motivation for her protest against the NEA was evident when she stated, "I decided that I could not, in good moral conscience, accept the fact that trampling on the rights of the First Amendment was good or even legal."⁴⁰ Lewitzky was also quoted by *Backstage*, a performing arts magazine, stating that she intended to center the lawsuit's focus on the constitution by declaring, "this lawsuit is not about obscenity, it's about the Constitution. The NEA has taken on the role of art censor, and that's precisely the wrong role for the government. We hope with our lawsuit to help in returning the NEA to its rightful place as a supporter of the arts."⁴¹ In congruence, Michael Hudson, the vice president and general counsel from the civil liberties law group The People for the American Way, emphasized that the suit's focus was constitutional when he stated, "the NEA's requirements are plainly unconstitutional. Ms. Lewitzky and her dancers and choreographers cannot be required to forfeit their constitutional rights as a condition of accepting a federal grant."⁴² Therefore, the goal of the suit against the Endowment was to test the constitutionality of the obscenity clause, and to further draw the judicial system into the increasingly tumultuous relationship between Congress and the arts. The lawsuit sought to protect the arts from any future congressional oversight that infringed upon the First Amendment rights of artists.

The Lewitzky Foundation jointly filed with the Newport Har-

37 Zeigler, *Arts in Crisis*, 114.

38 David B. Green, "1916: A Dance Who Defied the Red-Baiters Is Born," *Haaretz*, January 13, 2015, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2015-01-13/ty-article/.premium/1916-a-dancer-who-defied-the-red-baiters-is-born/0000017f-dbbf-db5a-a57f-dbff68010000>.

39 Allan Parachini, "Choreographer Rejects \$72,000 Grant Arts: Bella Lewitzky says she will also file suit against the agency seeking a court decision against the no obscenity pledge," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1990, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-06-15-ca-401-story.html>.

40 Parachini, "Choreographer Rejects \$72,000."

41 Thomas Walsh, "Latest Suit Against NEA Cites Constitutional Violations," *Backstage*, July 27, 1990, 1.

42 Walsh, "Latest Suit Against NEA," 1.

bor Art Museum, another institution that had also refused a grant amount of \$100,000, and sued the NEA on two grounds. First, Lewitzky and Newport alleged that the NEA's certification requirement banning obscene artwork was "unconstitutionally vague" and therefore violated the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution,⁴³ and argued that the NEA should not be the one to define and decide what is and is not obscene and that artists could only guess what the NEA meant by "obscene art."⁴⁴ The first argument lends itself to the second key argument in the lawsuit. The the second key argument claimed that the current obscenity clause left artists guessing as to which works of art would be considered obscene. This led d Lewitzky and Newport Art Museum to claim that the vagueness of the obscenity clause violated the First Amendment by creating a "chilling effect" on artistic freedom. This "chilling effect" would, in turn, hinder or impede the artist's freedom of speech.⁴⁵

The "chilling effect" argument is how Lewitzky and Newport used the First Amendment to challenge Public Law 101-121. The case stipulated that since the obscenity clause was unconstitutionally vague, it also hindered artists' freedom of speech by instilling hesitation in how they created art. In other words, the vagueness of the certification process for NEA grant recipients creates a chilling effect on free speech.⁴⁶ The argument follows by declaring that because an artist could potentially feel restricted by the obscenity clause, their First Amendment rights would be violated. Additionally, the obscenity clause could confuse the artists because the government's definition of obscene is too vague. As a result, the vagueness and inherent subjectivity of the term 'obscenity' further restrict the artists' First Amendment rights.

The *Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. Frohnmayer* case, the first case to interpret Public Law 101-121, was pivotal in determining the future role of congressional oversight in American artists' access to federal funding. In January 1991, US District Judge John G. Davies of Los Angeles ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on both counts. On the first count, the court found that the new NEA certification requirement, which included the

43 *Bella Lewitzky*, 754 F. Supp. 774 (C.D. Cal. 1991).

44 *Bella Lewitzky*, 754 F. Supp. 774 (C.D. Cal. 1991).

45 Paul N. Rechenburg, "Losing the Battle on Obscenity, But Can We Win the War: The National Endowment for the Arts' Fight against Funding Obscene Artistic Works," *Missouri Law Review* 57, no. 1 (1992): 305.

46 *Bella Lewitzky*, 754 F. Supp. 774 (C.D. Cal. 1991).

obscenity clause, is unconstitutionally vague because it relies on the NEA to determine what is and is not obscene.⁴⁷ This violates the Fifth Amendment right to due process by not setting clear terms for the people to make lawful or unlawful choices. The court agreed that the NEA's new grant recipient guidelines could not reasonably be obeyed by artists, because the meaning and determination of obscene art was left for the NEA to decide, and that artists are left to speculate whether their art would be considered obscene or not by the NEA. The court ruled that it is not NEA's job to determine obscenity. Moreover, the NEA can change its policy at will, which further compounds the uncertainty artists must navigate when applying for a grant through the Endowment. The courts ruled that the Fifth Amendment rights of artists violated constitutional vagueness that inhibited the artist's due process and led to First Amendment violations.

The *Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. Frohnmayer* court ruling had significant implications concerning constitutional freedom of expression for American artists. The immediate impact of the verdict was that the NEA had to release the previously rejected grants by both Lewitzky and the Newport Museum free of the obscenity pledge. Yet the ruling had broader implications for the overall relationship between the arts and the US government. Lewitzky rejoiced in a press conference covered by *The Los Angeles Times* shortly after the ruling in January 1991, stating, "it is a day for me of gratitude, of rejoicing, of celebrating, that freedom of expression has won in a court in our land."⁴⁸ Lewitzky's lawyer, Eliot Minberg, remarked that "Frohnmayer ought not be the decency Czar" and that the NEA should not be either.⁴⁹ The ruling was the exact type of judicial intervention artists hoped for. Law experts at the time explained that the ruling could help protect the NEA from any future restrictions Congress attempted to impose and that it would help restore the relationship between the arts community and the NEA.⁵⁰

Act 5 – Finale

47 *Bella Lewitzky*, 754 F. Supp. 774 (C.D. Cal. 1991).

48 Allan Parachini, "NEA Pledge on Obscenity Struck Down Constitution: Arts groups and law experts hail the ruling in suits by Bella Lewitzky Dance Company and the Newport Harbor Art Museum," *Los Angeles Times*, January 1991, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1991-01-10-mn-11394-story.html>.

49 Parachini, "NEA Pledge on Obscenity."

50 Parachini, "NEA Pledge on Obscenity."

While the court ruling was an immediate win for the constitutional protections of the arts community, it does reveal the overall tumultuous and uncertain relationship between the US government and the arts community. The 1989 events surrounding the reauthorization of NEA funds, the Serrano and Mapplethorpe controversy, the subsequent passing of the obscenity clause, and the judicial intervention confirm the weak relationship between the arts and government patronage, support and value in America. The "chilling effect" is a distinct rupture in the 1965 founding principles of the NEA and a rejection of the importance of public arts funding that was free of government censorship. For the 1989 conservatives in Congress and their constituents, artistic freedom of expression corroded American "Christian values" and threatened democratic values.

The events covered in this essay help us understand the foundations of the unreliable role the US government played in the arts. The committed relationship between the arts and federal patronage was short lived because it was based on the need for Cold War cultural diplomacy. As Cold War tensions decreased, so too did the government's support for the arts. Moreover, the NEA and arts community were such easy targets for a culture war because both the relationship between the arts community and federal government patronage were defined by Cold War ideology. As Cold War tensions eased in the late '80s and the Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse, it was less necessary to export American culture. Since art was no longer needed as a Cold War weapon, it was left vulnerable to the morality police of the era. This ultimately led to the debates in Congress that scrutinized the post-Cold War era role of government in the arts, and the value of arts in America.

The relationship between the arts and the federal government is a tumultuous love story that ended in a brittle divorce and an ensuing custody battle over who should maintain the right to artistic freedom of expression. The litany of court cases wielded against the NEA from 1990-1991 demonstrates the American artists' determination to preserve the rights previously extended to them in 1965. The government may have changed the terms of the relationship in 1989, but Bella Lewitzky and the art world fought for custody of their right to freedom of expression. They emerged victorious in 1991.

In conclusion, federal arts patronage in the United States was defined by Cold War cultural diplomacy and illuminates

how the US government supports certain individual freedoms when it is beneficial to government interests. During the Cold War, modern dance was used as an advertisement to sell American freedom abroad. Dance is no longer seen as an ambassador for American values as it was during the Cold War. This analysis reveals that art became expendable after it no longer served its purpose as a Cold War weapon. While Bella Lewitzky may have fought to maintain what Congress had given the art community, today, the dance community in the United States is still not as culturally relevant as it was during the Cold War. American modern dance represented freedom for thirty years. Still, that commitment was short-lived and unreliable because it hinged on the US government's commitment to freedom as a strategic diplomatic mission. Since the birth of the United States, ideas about freedom have always been closely linked to the American identity. The story of the rise and fall of modern American dance reveals that the United States' commitment to freedom is nothing more than an exercise in effective advertising.



Illustration by **Neutrix Kustner**, Chico State

The Antebellum Influencer:

The Rise of John C. Frémont and his Impact on the California Genocide, 1842-1890

By Leland Butcher

Abstract: The contemporary description of an “influencer” broadly defines an individual who uses fame and media presence to directly or indirectly sway the minds and opinions of their followers or the general public. This concept, which many would associate with our modern vocabulary, is not without historical precedent. Enter John C. Frémont: explorer and “The Pathfinder” of the American West, Mexican American war hero, one-time senator of California and Republican Presidential candidate, and Civil War general. While his fame and accomplishments are not as universally recognized today as other notable characters from his time, his notoriety during the antebellum period was second to none. This influence, much of which he gained through self-penned accounts and stories of his exploits, simultaneously spurred the manifest destiny expansion westward and an intense prejudice towards the western Native American population. To what extent did Frémont’s media coverage and self-aggrandizement shape how United States citizens viewed California Indians? And how did this bias determine the course the California Genocide waged against western Native Americans in the nineteenth century?

What does a mostly unacknowledged nineteenth-century California Genocide and modern-day social media have in common (I promise this is not a dad joke)? The answer is that both the California Genocide and contemporary social media both have “influencers.”

The term “influencer” is generally associated with individuals who wield substantial followings on some social media platform and utilize their popularity to sway the opinions of large audiences. The idea of an influencer may seem like a modern invention since it is commonly linked with the rise of present-day media platforms. Still, using fame and popularity to manipulate the masses is a tale as old as time.

In the academic study of history, it is ordinarily frowned upon to project modern-day morals, political ideals, and personal beliefs upon past events or individuals. Yet occasionally, parallels between past and present are hard to ignore. Applying a modern idea to a timeworn narrative can shed new light on prominent characters in the story. One such connection can be made with John C. Frémont and the California Genocide. While the concept of social media influencers is a recent creation, mass consumption of information through a social space or hub is a well-established idea. In the case of John C. Frémont, we have a character whose story, if looked at through the proper lens, closely resembles a nineteenth-century version of today’s social media influencers. Looking through this seemingly modern lens reveals an unwitting connection between the life and times of John C. Frémont and the California Genocide.

The name “Frémont” is not one which often comes to mind when most people think about the adventure and reputation of Manifest Destiny and the great push from east to west. Tom Chafin in his book *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* offers a different interpretation: “John Charles Frémont lived a life whose epic breadth, romantic aura, and dramatic bends and curves resembled that of a character invented by, say, Theodore Dreiser, Joseph Conrad – or, better yet, James Fenimore Cooper” (all nineteenth-century novelists).¹ A closer look at Frémont reveals that he even had his own superhero name “The Pathfinder,” referenced in the title of Chafin’s book, which the general public affectionately knew him by. Although supernatural powers did not accompany the title of “Pathfinder,” it did come with a substantial amount of adoration from the citizenry of the United States. Frémont’s exploits cover everything from “new world explorer,” Mexican American war hero, one-time senator of California, Republican

1 Tom Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 7.

presidential candidate, and Civil War general. Mix in a powerful senator for a father-in-law, a few stories of ambushes of Native American communities,² and close calls with his trusty exploring sidekick (the famed explorer Kit Carson), and what you get is a bonafide action hero movie star. Comparisons to Arnold Schwarzenegger crossed with George Washington might be the most appropriate way to describe how people viewed Frémont in his day.

This seemingly fantastical origin story that Frémont built provided him with the kind of fame, fortune, and political clout that most people only dream of. Historian Brendan Lindsay explains, “the Pioneer of every generation was an honorable, heroic, and necessary figure for the advance of Euro-American civilization,” and, as maybe the most famous pioneer of all, Frémont took full advantage of this notion.³ As he was galavanting around the western territories, his accomplishments would not have escaped the watchful eyes and ears of the population back east. Anyone with access to a newspaper would have likely read or heard of his adventures via word of mouth. With published maps, narrations, and scientific reports of his expeditions widely available, they helped guide people making the overland journey to California; it is an almost inescapable fact that he was a household name to nearly every citizen in the country. But what, if any, influence did Frémont have on the citizens of nineteenth-century America? How did his memoirs and first-hand accounts manipulate the beliefs and expectations of Americans regarding Manifest Destiny, and what was his influence, intentional or not, on the feelings of settlers towards California’s Indigenous Peoples? Furthermore, to what extent did this influence contribute to the exploitation, maltreatment, and eventual genocide of the native populations of California in the years following his expeditions in the west? It is hard to imagine that someone as prominent on the national scene as Frémont would not have had a significant impact on societal presuppositions of Native Americans in the United States, much in the same way contemporary influencers shape the hearts and minds of their fans and followers.

2 In this essay I will be using the term “Native American” and “Indigenous People” interchangeably, unless directly referencing the historical past in which actors used a different term. To learn more about the complicated question of terminology, see Brooke Bauer and Elizabeth Ellis, “Indigenous, Native American, or American Indian?: The Limitations of Broad Terms,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 43, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 61-74.

3 Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California’s Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 59.

Through a careful look at the forms of “social media” Frémont had available to him during his heyday, a picture will emerge of the imprint he left on the minds of the masses in Antebellum America. To establish that Frémont curated his image much like influencers do today, a number of historical sources, including the Frémont Family Papers housed in the Bancroft Library, were examined and weighed against modern social media structures. Outside of the Frémont Family Papers, Frémont’s reports on his expeditions acted much like modern podcasts do today, whereas the accounts drawn from newspaper clippings served a similar purpose as a Twitter feed. By establishing the celebrity status of Frémont and tying him to the social media methods utilized in nineteenth-century America, it will become clear that he achieved a level of fame and household recognition which granted him considerable influence over the imagination of his followers. Examining how Frémont portrays Native American actions in his letters, notes, memoirs, and official documents will reveal how the public would have developed their understanding of Indigenous People in the western territories. Furthermore, Frémont’s awe-inspiring depictions and adventurous anecdotes of his western expeditions will show that he provided the fuel needed to ignite the idea of Manifest Destiny. This research affirms the notion that it was American settlers traveling west which brought with them a set of ideals, not something learned along the way or realized once in California, which served as the basis for a peripherally organized campaign of genocide against the Indigenous Peoples they encountered.⁴ The relationship between John C. Frémont and Manifest Destiny, as well as the public’s perception, maltreatment, and dispossession of Native Americans and their lands, were inextricably linked.

It is important to note that the matter of genocide, as it pertains to the Indigenous Peoples in North America, is not one which is solely applicable to the Native Tribes of California but is where this paper directs its primary focus. The genocide being discussed in the following pages references the mass killing, forced relocation, and cultural destruction of Native American communities in California during the mid-nineteenth century. During this time period, the United States had recently acquired Alta California from Mexico after the Mexican-American

4 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 45.

War, along with its nearly 150,000 Native American inhabitants, which at the time represented one of the most diverse and populous Native American regions in North America. However, with the arrival of immigrant settlers during the Gold Rush era, the Native American population declined rapidly due to disease, forced labor, and violent conflicts. It is through these acts, along with the inherently destructive practices of settler colonialism, which Indigenous populations and their cultures found themselves struggling for survival.

The California state government enacted a series of policies, such as the 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians, which legalized the forced removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands, and allowed indentured servitude and even enslavement. As a result of these policies, many Native Americans were forced into labor camps, where they were subjected to horrific conditions and suffered from disease, malnutrition, and abuse. As part of these practices Native American children were taken from their families and forced to attend boarding schools, where they were forbidden from speaking their native language or practicing their cultural traditions. Intending to strip native populations of their land and cultural values, as well as economic, social, and political power, the United States government and independent localities in California effectively exterminated any semblance of life which Indigenous communities experienced before European contact. Add to this the fact that regular army units and local militias engaged in “extermination campaigns” designed to oust local Native communities from their lands, all while seeking reimbursement from the federal government for their efforts, and it’s not hard to see the framework of genocide which has accompanied so many other instances before and after it.⁵

While there is no precise estimate of the number of Native Americans who died as a result of these policies and actions, it is believed that the Native American population in California was reduced to as little as 30,000 by the end of the nineteenth century, representing a staggering loss of life and culture.⁶ The California Genocide remains a tragic and vitally important chapter in American history and a reminder of the devastating

5 Andrew John Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton, *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 15.

6 Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 3.

impact of Euro-American colonialism and the cultural erasure that has spawned as a result of colonial practices. While the North American Indigenous genocide is a topic which can be, and has been, covered at length in books and articles, the goal of this paper is to articulate the presence and influence of John C. Frémont in the way that it was carried out. By examining his contributions it will be clear that Frémont not only actively participated in this catastrophic episode in American history but also utilized his power to influence nineteenth-century immigrants to participate as well.

Rise of a Star

Modern influencers build their fame and celebrity status in many ways. Sports stars use their physical ability to attract large crowds; musicians use their vocal talent to fill arenas; actors mesmerize audiences on the big screen to pack theaters, whereas wealthy entrepreneurs sell visions of luxury. What all influencers have in common is a large audience who prioritize their opinion and who watch and emulate their every move. By reviewing Frémont's accomplishments, it is clear that he held this kind of magnetism to amass a loyal following. As one newspaper article put it when offering a remembrance of his life, "twenty-five or thirty years ago, few men were more distinguished in contemporary American history than John C. Frémont, the Rocky Mountain pioneer."⁷

Frémont's sudden ascent from relative obscurity to legitimate American celebrity began after a fateful romance with his future wife, Jessie Benton, daughter of the powerful Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton. Thomas Benton, an influential figure in his own right, was the first-ever senator to serve five consecutive terms (1821-1851). Benton was a fierce advocate of westward expansion by the United States, a concept later known as "Manifest Destiny," and was one of the key framers of the 1862 Homestead Act. When Frémont and Jessie met, he was a surveyor for the United States Corps of Topographical Engineers, essentially a professional explorer. Even though this seemed to be a match made in heaven, Thomas Benton disapproved of the romance between Frémont and his daughter, as Frémont did not come from a prominent political family.

7 Unknown torn out newspaper excerpt, part 1 - box 3, Frémont Family Papers, circa 1839-1927, BANC MSS C-B 397, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Benton eventually gave his blessing to their marriage. When he did, the benefits of being employed by the US government as a “pathfinder” while having a powerful Senator father-in-law turned out to be a fortuitous affair for both Frémont and Benton. As might be expected, nepotism began almost immediately. Frémont and Jessie were married in 1841. Less than a year later, Frémont was contracted out on his first expedition, prepared by Benton, to map out the Oregon Territory and the Rocky Mountains. It was this first trek west that began Frémont’s surge in popularity.

Frémont’s adventures started in St. Louis, Missouri, where he recruited a twenty-five-man expeditionary force to assist him. Aided by a chance meeting with the famed mountain man Kit Carson, whose interactions with Native Americans would require an entirely separate essay to document, Frémont set off west with instructions to map out a path through the Rockies. Frémont would later note in his journal, “I found the path which I was destined to walk. Through many of the years to come the occupation of my prime of life was to be among Indians in waste places...There were to be no more years wasted in tentative efforts to find a way for myself.”⁸ During this first expedition, Frémont scaled the Rocky Mountains in what is now Wyoming and raised the American flag on what eventually came to be named “Frémont Peak.” Images of this scene were later used as campaign advertisements when Frémont ran for President in 1856. After completing the expedition, Frémont needed to chronicle the experience. Army officers usually wrote such documents to be read by their superior officers, but Frémont had a grander concept. He wanted to create an adventure story for the public.⁹ The title of Frémont’s official report which recounted the experience, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country Lying Between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains on the Line of the Kansas and Great Platte Rivers*, won precisely zero awards for originality and attention-grabbing; however, what the title lacked, the narrative more than made up for it with harrowing accounts of close calls with “savage Indians,” riverboat rafting catastrophes and patriotic flag planting at the peaks of mountains. After finishing his work, Frémont promptly submitted his findings to Senator Benton and the rest of Con-

8 Steve Inskeep, *Imperfect Union: How Jessie and John Frémont Mapped the West, Invented Celebrity, and Helped Cause the Civil War* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2021), 13.

9 Inskeep, *Imperfect Union*, 56.

gress. Although this was essentially a series of daily journal entries, John framed his journey evocatively, saying he began “on the verge of civilization” as the men prepared for the “nomadic life they were about to lead.”¹⁰ The report read like a high-stakes action film with constant uncertainty and dangerous depictions of Frémont’s daily encounters. Government officials did not take long to see the potential in Frémont’s exploits. The account was nearly immediately bound for printing presses and newspapers across the country. Frémont’s first expedition’s resounding success fueled his desire to go off as soon as possible to complete another mission.

During his second undertaking west, Frémont produced a detailed report on the Oregon Trail, diagramed a clear path to California, and established the literary fuel for what would inspire many to start a new life in California. Frémont combined his first and second expeditionary reports into one account. In a masterstroke of pure genius, he named it, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842: And to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44*. Much like his first report, another painfully lousy title was rescued by the content of the pages within. With some prodding from Senator Benton, The House of Representatives and The Senate each ordered ten thousand copies of Frémont’s expeditionary accounts and distributed them to be reprinted and resold to the general public. Frémont had set the collective nation’s imaginations wild with his latest work and planted the seed for what newspaper editor John Sullivan would later call “Manifest Destiny.” One newspaper article articulated as much regarding the feelings inspired by Frémont’s reports:

After reading the following account of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, extracted from the official report of Lieut. Frémont, Made to the Senate of the United States, the mind is involuntarily filled with new and vast ideas...The nineteenth century will be set upon a whole continent peopled by freemen.¹¹

Once private publishing companies got ahold of the loquaciously titled booklet and started adding pictures and maps to

¹⁰ Inskeep, *Imperfect Union*, 57.

¹¹ “South Pass over the Rocky Mountains,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, Volume 3, number 164, 18 October, 1843.

accompany the narrative, there was no looking back. Frémont had used his influence to pour gasoline on the infamous fire that would become westward expansion and Manifest Destiny. From that point forward, "The Pathfinder" was born.

With the spectacle and tension that filled Frémont's first and second expeditions, it was hardly a surprise when he was ushered off to complete a third excursion into the western territories. With each additional adventure, his fame and notoriety grew. After the accolades Frémont had received during his first few trips, the media began to take notice. Newspapers began publishing monthly and sometimes weekly articles with whatever information they could get their hands on, including military dispatches, governmental dictations, and even personal letters. It was not uncommon to see small blurbs on the side columns with seemingly insignificant updates on Frémont's whereabouts and the general disposition of his party. For instance, "a letter was received at Washington on Monday from Capt. Frémont, dated from Bent's Fort, the 2nd of August. The party were all perfectly well."¹² This illustrates that no information was too trivial or insignificant for the citizenry back east who were waiting to hear what was happening in the life of The Pathfinder. This kind of celebrity should not be too hard to comprehend in a modern society where people like Elon Musk and Kim Kardashian get tens of millions of views when they post even the most insignificant thoughts or pictures. At this point in Frémont's life, he can begin to claim his influencer status. The events of his third expedition, the Bear Flag Revolt, and the Mexican-American War would catapult him to mythological proportions. Frémont was preparing for the verified "blue check mark" on his proverbial Twitter account.

Again, with help from Senator Benton, Frémont organized his third and most notable expedition. The journey began in June of 1845 and carried a secondary objective of scouting out the Alta California region ahead of a potential military clash with Mexico. Much like his first expedition, Frémont used St. Louis as the initial hub to gather supplies and recruit capable members for his travel party; however, this time, Frémont's reputation preceded him. By now, the household name that was John C. Frémont, or "The Pathfinder," could hardly set foot in the city without being mobbed by crowds of people. In 1845,

12 Editorial, *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 45, Number 217, 11 September, 1845.

the *Alexandria Gazette* reported on the throngs of fans who showed up while Frémont was recruiting, stating “the number of persons anxious to accompany Lieut. F. may be inferred from the fact that an effort made by him last week to explain the objects and purposes of his expedition at a public meeting proved ineffectual, so great was the crowd.”¹³ Frémont now had his own personal paparazzi. After hiding from the hordes of his admirers, Frémont eventually assembled all necessary supplies and personnel and set off for Alta California. As fate would have it, the United States officially declared war against Mexico in April of 1846 after Frémont had reached California and traveled through the region. By the time Frémont learned about the declaration of war, he had already experienced a few contentious encounters with Mexican military forces. He eventually united with a contingent of local American settlers in what later became known as the Bear Flag Revolt and was influential in expelling Mexican forces from Alta California. Reports of his victory back east solidified his legacy as the “Conqueror of California,” *The Daily Union* reported, “Lieut. Col. Frémont, we may say, has captured an empire, and with gallantry unequaled stormed forts, fought treble his number of Mexicans, and actually chased them out of California before, we may say, the squadron in the Pacific took formal possession of that country.”¹⁴ At the end of the conflict, Frémont emerged as a war hero who helped turn the dream of a transcontinental United States into a reality. His rise to legendary status was cemented into the consciousness of the American people, and he would use this new recognition to catapult himself onto the political scene.

Like many celebrities today, Frémont parlayed his stardom from one area into a separate political career. After the Mexican-American War ended, Frémont was named military governor of California. Just a few years later, he rode his reputation into the first senatorial seat of the state. In 1856, Frémont was approached by the Democratic and the newly formed Republican Party and offered the opportunity to represent each party as their chosen presidential candidate. The fact that Frémont received invitations from both sides of the political aisle speaks volumes about his prestige and reputation. Few others in the

13 Editorial, *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 45, Number 142, 14 June, 1845.

14 “Miscellaneous: Lieut. Col. Frémont,” *The Daily Union*, Volume 2, Number 183, November 27, 1846.

United States at this time could have captured the hearts, minds, and votes across such a broad spectrum. Frémont was genuinely beloved and revered by nearly the entire country. Frémont had finally reached the peak of his influencing powers, a genuine household name. He had conquered the Rockies, braved Native American attacks, mapped the Oregon Trail through the western territories, defeated the Mexican military in Alta California, added military governorship and senator of California to his resume, and got his shot at being the head man in the United States government. Although he lost the presidential election in 1856, at just forty-three, Frémont had shaped the country's collective imagination. The celebrity and prestige of Frémont during this period, along with the years that followed, are undeniable when considering the entire body of his work.

Reports, letters, and memoirs Frémont wrote were sent back for consumption at congressional gatherings and eventually filtered their way into the general public. In these accounts, Frémont paints a vivid picture of the western territories and their inhabitants for his audience, specifically his portrayals of and interactions with Native Americans, which would leave lasting imprints on the minds of settlers intending to brave the roads to California. These are the same settlers who would soon be interacting with Native Peoples in the west and developing the methods they would use to deal with potential conflicts. In reviewing the letters, written accounts, and articles penned by and about Frémont, it is crucial to scrutinize the representations of Native Peoples to develop a sense of how they may have impacted the attitudes of the pilgrims and pioneers heading into the western territories.

Native Depictions

It would be an understatement to say that the Native Peoples of North America were not held in very high esteem by European Americans during the nineteenth century. This was a view that white citizens almost universally shared in the United States at this time. In his book *Murder State*, Brenden Lindsay explains, "Euro-Americans described Indians as aggressors, recalcitrant savages unwilling to see the light of superior culture and religion, or as animals to be killed or run off because they were driven by instincts to commit depredations upon

whites.”¹⁵ So it is no surprise that someone like Frémont would portray the Native populations with which he interacted on his travels in a negative light. Oddly enough, the seemingly friendly contacts and experiences documented by Frémont with local tribes during his expeditions far outweigh the hostile and combative accounts. Rather than portray the contentious stories as the exception to the rule, *Murder State* argues that “magazine and newspaper publishers and editors, poets, artists, and authors, through the printed word and image, helped reinforce the popular perception of Indians as a savage people worthy of disdain, violent treatment, and ultimately murder.”¹⁶ Frémont’s publications unintentionally bolstered the mindset that all Indigenous People must be treated with hostility and aggression.

In one of his less antagonistic interactions, Frémont and his party had come upon a small group of three “Cheyennes, two men and a boy of thirteen” which he depicts as “miserably mounted on wild horses from the Arkansas plains, and had no other weapons than bows and long spears.”¹⁷ In another mention of the same group of Cheyenne warriors, which he ultimately allows to travel with him, he observes one of them trying to catch a wild horse and comments, “the savage maneuvered a little to get the wind of the horses, in which he succeeded; approaching within a hundred yards without being discovered.”¹⁸ In both passages, Frémont is not exactly painting a flattering picture of the otherwise friendly band of travelers. Their condition of being “miserably mounted” on horses and that Frémont considers them “savages” shows that even in the most positive interactions, he still considered the Cheyenne to be inferior and inhuman. This type of rhetoric continues throughout the narrative of Frémont’s first and second expeditionary reports. When meeting another group of what Frémont presumes to be Sioux traders at Fort Platte, they invite him to have a meal with them, to which he reports, “occasionally a savage would stalk in with an invitation to a feast of honor, a dog feast, and deliberately sit down and wait quietly until I would accompany him.”¹⁹ Again, a welcoming invitation to eat

15 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 20.

16 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 30.

17 John Charles Frémont, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country Lying Between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains on the Line of the Kansas and Great Platte Rivers* (Washington, DC: Printed by order of the United States Senate, 1843) 16.

18 Frémont, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country*, 23.

19 Frémont, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country*, 39.

feels like he is being forced to lower himself to associate with “savages.” In regards to the “dog” meal, Frémont notes, “had I been nice in such matters, the prejudices of civilization might have interfered with my tranquility; but fortunately, I am not of delicate nerves.”²⁰ Frémont implies that the “savages” which he has reluctantly joined for dinner are, in fact, not part of what would generally be considered a “civilized” society. These are only a few examples revealing Frémont’s prejudice towards Native Americans in his memoirs.

Of course, not every contact Frémont had with Native Peoples on his travels simply ended with derogatory comments in his notebook. On the occasions when Frémont used military force, the results were overwhelmingly fatal for Native Americans. The worst of all of these examples would be dubbed the “Sacramento River Massacre.” On March 30th, 1846, Frémont and his convoy traveled through the upper Sacramento Valley near present-day Redding, California. While in the area, American settlers approached Frémont and informed him of a large group of Native Americans gathering along the banks of the Sacramento River. Frémont and a force of approximately seventy-five men located the large gathering of Wintu Native Americans who had set up camp near the river’s edge. Frémont and his men surrounded the camp, estimated to hold anywhere from 400 to 4,000 villagers, on three sides before advancing on the gathering. One of Frémont’s men recalled believing that the Wintu were “having a war dance preparatory to attacking settlers.”²¹ Upon seeing they had been surrounded, the Wintu quickly formed a line to defend themselves. In his book, *An American Genocide*, historian Benjamin Madley, describes the scene: “Frémont eschewed diplomacy and instead launched a well planned, preemptive assault of a kind that would later become common in California.”²² What commenced was nothing less than the inaugural act in a genocide that would last the next several decades. Taking into consideration multiple accounts from several different people who participated or witnessed the incident, Frémont’s force was estimated to have “killed as many as 1,000 California Indian men, women, and children in what may have been one of the largest but least known massacres in US history.”²³ Maybe the most telling detail

20 Frémont, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country*, 40.

21 Madley, *An American Genocide*, 45.

22 Madley, *An American Genocide*, 46.

23 Madley, *An American Genocide*, 48.

in this incident is that none of the men in Frémont's war party reported a single casualty or injury. This assault turned out to be an attack on largely unarmed Wintu civilians gathered to catch and process salmon.²⁴ Frémont would later comment on a large amount of salmon seen in the river the next day and that his men were happy to eat much of the fish that the Wintu had already gathered.

Scenes like the one described above were not a one-off in Frémont's travels. On the same trip Frémont documents one of the only hostile attacks against him, which he reports was actually initiated by a group of Klamath warriors. Frémont comments that this night raid by a group of Klamath Indians resulted in the deaths of three of his men and for this indiscretion he was determined to administer his own brand of revenge. Frémont notes, "I threw all other considerations aside and determined to square accounts with these people before I left them."²⁵ He spent the next several days circling Klamath Lake in search of the camps and villages of the Klamath Peoples who had attacked him the night before. Frémont and his men indiscriminately killed any Native American man, woman, or child that they encountered regardless of their tribal affiliation, murdering as many as fourteen people in one exceptionally grisly skirmish. These kinds of attacks were meant to provide a lesson for tribes to think twice before attacking travelers coming through their lands. This message is one that would be passed on for generations, "a story for them to hand down while there are any Tlamaths [sic] on their lake."²⁶ In a cruel twist of fate, the lesson Frémont intended to instill on the Klamath villagers in the area served as a template for future settlers to deal with all Native Californians.

Maybe more important than how Frémont presents his Native encounters is the fear and uneasiness he expresses in his daily journal entries when on the trail. Over and over again, Frémont provides descriptions of the constant vigilance he and his party must have to avoid being caught off guard or attacked by Native tribes along his journey. Although not once ambushed or faced with a hostile encounter on his first few expeditions, Frémont relays in his entries repeatedly the con-

24 Madley, *An American Genocide*, 48.

25 Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, 310.

26 Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, 311.

stant false alarms raised by him and his cohort regarding native attacks. One instance from Frémont's first trip broadcasts the constant danger he and his men believed they were in: "A man who was a short distance in the rear came spurring up with great haste, shouting Indians! Indians! He had been near enough to see and count them, according to his report, and had made out 27."²⁷ Later in the passage, after Kit Carson went to scout the situation, it is revealed that the "27 Indians" instead turned out to be a small herd of antelope. This kind of fear and uneasiness displayed by Frémont and his party is commonplace in his memoirs. The fact that Frémont not once fires his gun in anger or self defense makes no difference in how he presents the dangers of the trail. Frémont's cartographer, a German immigrant named Charles Preuss, expresses in his journal the exhaustion with constant false alarms raised almost daily: "There was a galloping in of scouts and horsemen from every side, a hurrying to and fro in noisy confusion; rifles were taken from their cover; bullet pouches examined: in short there was a cry of "Indians," heard again. I had become so much accustomed to these alarms, that now they made but little impression on me."²⁸ This passage speaks volumes to the exaggerated nature of the danger associated with Native Peoples, encountered or not, along the westward trails.

Rounding out the unfavorable depictions of Native Americans furnished by Frémont is the trend of media outlets publishing his accounts in dedicated columns. Researching newspaper clippings from the mid-1840s shows a trend which portrays Frémont as constantly engaged in hostile interactions with Native Peoples. The *Alexandria Gazette* reports, "Frémont left Monterey to bring his men to the beautiful valley which he had explored on his previous expedition... after their toilsome and perouls [*sic*] march of three thousand miles among savage tribes, and through wilderness and desert countries."²⁹ It is apparent that even if the general population had never picked up a copy of one of Frémont's reports on his expeditions, they would still be predisposed to the idea of the "perouls march... among savage tribes" required to get to California. Another

27 Frémont, *A Report on an Exploration of the Country*, 13.

28 Charles Preuss and Erwin G. Gudde, *Exploring with Frémont: The Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. Frémont on His First, Second, and Fourth Expeditions to the Far West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 25.

29 "From the Washington Union. Operations of Captain Frémont in Upper California. Letter from Senator Benton to the President." *Alexandria Gazette*, Volume 47, Number 273, 16 November, 1846.

passage that does as much to boost Frémont's reputation as it does to disparage Native Americans describes Frémont attempting to battle Mexican Army General Castro in California during the Mexican-American War:

Thus his passage was barred in front by impassable snows and mountains—hemmed in by savage Indians who were thinning the ranks of his little party—menaced by a general at the head of ten fold forces of all arms—Capitan Frémont determined to turn on his pursuers, and fight them instantly without regard to numbers, and seek safety for his party and the American settlers by overturning the Mexican Government in California.³⁰

Again, another passage paints the Native Peoples of California as “savage Indians” who are “thinning the ranks” of Frémont's men. These are only a few examples of the kinds of portrayals which became typical of both Frémont and his social media outlets in the news. Maybe the most overt reference to Native American aggression comes from the *Weekly Reveille*: “As Mr. Frémont passed the Pawnee Indians, the Great Pawnees conspired to scalp and massacre him and his band.”³¹ Although this, like most other reports concerning Native Americans, turned out to be a false alarm, it does not change its impact on people reading the passage in 1845.

With Frémont's fame and notoriety well established and passages such as the ones above circulating in the news, his memoirs, and his government documents, it makes sense that nineteenth-century American society internalized depictions of Native Americans as hostile and less than human. This way of thinking opens the door to types of trends necessary to facilitate genocide. While Frémont may not have set out with the purpose of indoctrinating a generation with the psychological blueprints to commit genocide, he was nonetheless involved in a case of genocide by his actions and their consequences.³²

The Seeds of Genocide

30 “From the St. Louis Reveille,” *Juliet Signal*, Volume 4, Number 25, December 01, 1846.

31 *Weekly Reveille*, Feb 17, 1845, Frémont Family Papers, circa 1839-1927, BANC MSS C-B 397, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

32 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 11.

Frémont would establish a hierarchy of Native Peoples during his travels, a scale which began with the Cherokees at the top and fell to the tribes of the West's Great Basin; he regarded Indigenous People as "humanity in its lowest form."³³ This hierarchical view of humanity could be seen in his descriptions of, and interactions with, "savages" on the Oregon Trail and in the west. In most cases, emigrants traveling to California had previously lived where Native Peoples no longer existed. They had spent their lives in an environment where they never interacted with Indigenous People and therefore fabricated images of them that had been filtered through a third party. In *Murder State*, Lindsay explains, "they knew Indians only through the memories of parents or grandparents or other relatives, or through stories told or printed of the frontier as it had been before or currently stood. These imagined experiences of Indians are powerful. Thousands of Americans going west hated and feared Indians without ever seeing or interacting with an Indian."³⁴ This indoctrination was made possible through the confluence of the prejudice and influence of figures like John C. Frémont. Frémont's fame and notoriety in the nineteenth century reached beyond the heights of nearly any celebrity influencer that exists today. His status as an American hero meant that his words and opinions carried considerably more weight, and it was this almost mythical prestige that the American public gravitated toward and admired. Utilizing the social media outlets available to him, Frémont shaped the perception of Native Americans into an image that instilled fear and intolerance into the minds of his audience. The resulting prejudice steered the course of westward expansion and the subsequent cruelty associated with Euro-American and Native-American interactions in California.

The later half of the nineteenth-century revealed just how far the people and the government of the United States had bought into the idea of their superiority and dominance over the Indigenous populations of North America. Gary C. Anderson notes in, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime That Should Haunt America*, "by the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870 the rejection of fair treatment of Indians led to what is probably the most brutal ethnic conflict in America, in Minnesota, Texas,

33 Chafin, *Pathfinder*, 33.

34 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 11.

and California; on the northern Great Plains; and in the deserts of the Southwest—distant lands in which people frequently defied the moral restraints that their government sought to impose upon them.”³⁵ These “moral restraints” are significantly easier to ignore when they are also being brushed off by one of the most prominent figures of the era. The violent examples provided by Frémont with his clashes at American River and Klamath Lake served as a future model for interactions with Native Americans; shoot first, ask questions later. When the intellectual ramifications of his writings are coupled with the physical displays of violence, the synergy combined produces an effect greater than the sum of the two ideas. This force propelled nineteenth-century settler society down a path of fear, hatred, and bigotry. The archetype for these feelings, equipped by Frémont, legitimized the “notion that Indians were blood-thirsty savages to be feared, to be killed as they lay asleep, even, before they might wake and do murder. Given these perceptions of Indians, not eliminating such a threat would have dire consequences.”³⁶ Frémont was well aware of the prevailing thoughts and attitudes toward Native Americans, and he gave his audience what they wanted. Perpetuation and validation are part and parcel of the influencer’s arsenal, and Frémont was as skilled as anyone at playing to the crowd. While Frémont undoubtedly contributed to the negative Native American sentiments of the nineteenth century with his literature and behavior, his most far-reaching impact may have come from the results of his expeditions and their effects on westward expansion.

Frémont added to the psychological impact of his writing with a healthy dose of geopolitical fallout, which changed the imagined boundaries of the United States and directly affected the plight of Native Peoples. The American River Massacre of the Wintu People and Klamath Lake raids on Klamath villages pale in comparison to what ultimately materialized as a result of his explorations. As noted earlier, Frémont’s father-in-law, Senator Benton, was a major proponent of westward expansion. By the end of Bentons fifth and final term in the Senate, he had succeeded in pushing through a piece of legislation known as the Homestead Act. This legislation was directly

35 Gary C. Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime That Should Haunt America* (Norma, OK: University Of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 22.

36 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 59.

responsible for disposing of Native American lands on a scale that is difficult to imagine. Over 160 million acres of land west of the Mississippi River was given to hundreds of thousands of immigrants over the bill's lifetime. Most land grants handed out to homesteaders were done to the detriment of Native Peoples. These concessions the United States government granted ultimately deprived thousands of Native Americans of their traditional hunting grounds and migrant territories. Bereft of their homelands, these same Native Americans were persecuted at the hands of the settlers and the government for encroaching upon the very terrain which their ancestors had inhabited for centuries. Settlers, expressing their own versions of "settler sovereignty," came to view access to the land as an entitlement.³⁷ This "entitlement" was to undo everything sacred to Native Peoples in all corners of the new transcontinental America. The Homestead Act was made possible from the mapping and research contributions facilitated by Frémont in his reports and accounts of the western territories. The idea of free labor, westward expansion, and Manifest Destiny was built on the back of Frémont's work and his imaginative depictions of the western frontier. The process of Manifest Destiny "was fraught with... a lust for land that challenged all sense of order, creating what became an agonizingly long process that led to the disenfranchisement of natives people" and in California turned into an out-and-out genocide.³⁸

Conclusion

Hundreds, if not thousands, of people had made the overland trek to California before Frémont, but none had established themselves as the inspirational leader of a generation. Frémont fanned the flames of westward expansion with his stories of adventure while subconsciously validating the prejudicial feelings of a nation towards Native Peoples. Even though there was very little evidence to support the idea of unprovoked hostilities between emigrants and Native Americans, sensationalized accounts of "violence and savagery" spread by word of mouth or in print were vivid in the minds of settlers traveling west.³⁹ While not all these accounts were provided solely by

37 Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian*, 20.

38 Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian*, 21.

39 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 24.

Frémont, few were as impactful and far-reaching. Frémont did not conceive the notion of Native Peoples being less than human. Still, the biases and prejudices developed due to his expeditions impacted the hearts and minds of Americans heading west. Frémont's images and narrative portrayals in his writings and actions legitimized the fear and angst of thousands of settlers. Frémont's accounts created a blueprint for how to deal with Native Peoples while traveling west which was subsequently carried by immigrants to California. It was from this blueprint that the California Genocide was born. "The people of the United States were not empty vessels to be filled with fear and hatred of Indians encountered as they headed west in the middle of the nineteenth century on the overland trails or after reaching California. These emigrants already brimmed over with terror and hatred of Indians, a hatred born of their culture."⁴⁰ It is precisely this culture that Frémont bears considerable responsibility for shaping and perpetuating, which is due, in no small part, to his wide-reaching status as a bonafide American Influencer.

40 Lindsay, *Murder State*, 35.



*Illustration by **Natalie Gallegos**, Chico State*

The Everlasting Love

& Experience of Enslaved Mothers in the Antebellum South

By Sara Isabel Andrade

Abstract: In an effort to excavate the neglected history of enslaved mothers in the Antebellum South, this essay navigates the complex realms of enslaved motherhood and its integral role in the development of Black matrifocality. The everlasting love, resistance and sacrifice of enslaved mothers has for so long been overlooked, yet the value they hold is priceless. Through the journey of Ashley's Sack we learn of the fortitude one enslaved mother held but as we continue to dive deeper, we discover there is an entire world of enslaved mothers with journeys identical to Rose's. An in depth analysis of first-hand oral history accounts, examined alongside the research of fellow historians and a collection of my own archival research brings to light a once-muted painting, rich with texture and depth as the experiences of enslaved mothers are brought out of the darkness from which they lived from so long.

Dedicated to the enslaved mothers whose resilient love empowers us, may they continue to guide us.

Ashley's Sack, a mid-1800s cotton sack on display at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, features an embroidered text depicting the maternal sacrifice of one enslaved mother at the time of the sale of her nine-year-old daughter Ashley. This parting gift from Rose to Ashley was once filled

with a handful of pecans, a tattered dress, a braid of Rose's hair, and her "love always." Rose's motherly love and sacrifice was passed down from generation to generation in this small, embroidered sack and until recently had been overlooked as enslaved experiences have historically been dehumanized. Family heirlooms often hold grand stories of maternal fortitude that we are often left feeling the need to uphold. A deeply rooted sense of maternal devotion lingers within our soul as we learn of the connection this tangible inheritance holds to our familial roots. Lamentably, enslaved mothers living in the Antebellum South did not often have the opportunity to pass down heirlooms because of the separations that occurred during enslavement. The result is an unwritten, silenced history that leaves the descendants of those ancestors with very little to trace back to their family lineage. The relationships enslaved mothers built with their children have become lost in American history, leaving an immense gap in the understanding of enslaved mothers and their relationships with their children.

During one of the darkest periods of American history, enslaved mothers established a deeply rooted and resilient love for their children. This idea has been overlooked for the last four centuries, yet it holds immense value in understanding the love, sacrifice, and devotion enslaved mothers bore for their kin. When these experiences are dehumanized, which is often the case with enslaved histories, we fail to grasp the depth and complexity of the bonds between enslaved mother and child and how this laid the foundation for Black matrilocality today.¹ This essay seeks to dive deep within the realms of enslaved motherhood to excavate the neglected history surrounding the experience of what it meant to be a mother during enslavement. Through the work of historians, first-hand oral history accounts, and my own archival research, a once-muted painting becomes vivid with color, and rich texture as the experiences endured by enslaved mothers are brought to light out of the darkness. Through their everlasting love, resistance against parenting under the regimes of slavery, and the deeply rooted sacrifice made in the effort to safeguard their kin, the relation-

1 Due to the nature of this essay I chose to replace my original word choice of matriarchy with matrilocality. A term originally coined by anthropologist Raymond T. Smith in 1956 through his study of African-Caribbean families where Smith defined matrilocality as the property of the nuclear family where women in their role as mothers are the focus, rather than agents of their own governance. See Raymond T. Smith, *The Negro Family in British Guiana: Family Structure and Social Status in the Villages* (London: Routledge, 1956).

ship enslaved mothers built with their children played an integral role in the development of Black matrifocality.

One of the first significant ways the relationships between enslaved mothers and their children shaped Black matrifocality was through the love enslaved mothers held for their kin. We can see this pattern heavily reflected in the groundbreaking work of historian Tiya Miles in her latest book, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake*, which explores the historical realms of salvation and a mother's love that prevailed through generations of silenced, enslaved women in the Antebellum South through the story of Ashley's Sack. Miles paints a vivid picture of the experiences enslaved mothers endured as they strived to fulfill their maternal roles. Utilizing the maternal relationship between Rose and Ashley, Miles emphasizes that despite the atrocities of enslavement, enslaved mothers were bonded to their children and willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary to maintain maternal control of their wombs. These deeply traumatic experiences in turn have shaped the development of Black matrifocality today. Miles describes Ashley's Sack as a "telling example of refusal from the collective experience of enslaved Black women, who practiced love and preserved life when all hope seemed lost. Even when she relinquished her daughter to the slave trade against her will, Rose insisted on love. Despite and during their separation, Rose's value of love prevailed."² Miles examines the collective experience of enslaved mothers and children with a strong focus on their indestructible love and states, "Rose's kit was, by all evidences, one of a kind, but she shared with other women in her condition a vision for survival that required both material and emotional resources....Rose then sealed those items, rendering them sacred, with the force of a mother's enduring love."³ While never rendering the material needs of the sack unnecessary, Miles instead uses the sack to drive home the emotional importance that bound Ashley tightly to her mother and eternally within the deeply embedded layers of her deep seeded love. Understanding the way she fit into the world around her, Rose filled Ashley's Sack with her everlasting love and resisted back against her oppressors. Rose's deeply rooted and everlasting love for Ashley in turn became the

2 Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* (New York: Random House, 2021), 4.

3 Miles, *All That She Carried*, 20.

eternal soul tie of their resistance to the perils of enslavement. Although Ashley's Sack remains a material relic of an enslaved mothers resistance, the everlasting love Rose bound between its threads will forever hold the maternal sacrifice she made for Ashley.

Ashley was one of the thousands of enslaved children separated from their parents in the Antebellum South. Their experiences have come to life within the pages of Southern Christian newspapers. In a current, ongoing project run by Villanova University historian Judith Giesberg seeks to document the extensive separation of enslaved families and the relentless efforts to reunite separated enslaved family members after the Civil War. Her online database, Last Seen: Finding Family after Slavery, houses over 4,500 reunification ads of previously enslaved children looking for their mothers. Poignant and eye-opening, these long-lost tales of motherly love from Reconstruction-era newspapers allow us to view enslavement and understand the relationship between enslaved mothers and their children. Laden with emotionally driven phrases, the pleas for help of previously enslaved children rattle the core of any who read them, leaving them wanting to know more, to understand more. Although historians have used the ads in the past to prove the existence of enslaved children separated from their mothers, my hope is to provide a deeper, texturized linguistic examination in connection to the everlasting love between an enslaved mother and her child. To do so, examining the ads offers us deeper insight into matrifocality, familial ties, and sibling relationships. From the beginning, the reader is flooded by the emotion-evoking cries for help. From phrases such as "I wish to inquire for my kin people"⁴ to "I was taken from my people"⁵ and "I wish to find my mother,"⁶ we can feel the love these children, now adults, have for their long lost mothers. Although they spent most of their time together navigating the realms of chattel enslavement, enslaved mothers and children established a deeply rooted love. Looking back through this collection of reunification ads, we can see how Black matrifocality

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- 4 "Sophie Evans searching for her mother and siblings," *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, (New Orleans, LA 1882), Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, <https://informationwanted.org/items/show/1710>
 - 5 "Sebbia McColoach (formerly Sebbia Young) looking for her mother Milly Ann and siblings Rosetta, Ownia, and Charles Young," *Southwestern Christian Advocate* (New Orleans, LA 1879), Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, <https://informationwanted.org/items/show/1321>
 - 6 "Maria Roaman searching for her mother Fannie Roaman," *The Appeal* (Chicago, IL 1892), Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, <https://informationwanted.org/items/show/2231>

has been shaped through the family ties of enslavement. Further emphasizing that even through the unsettling atrocities of enslavement, love prevailed and bonded a mother to her child even more than anyone could have ever imagined.

Not only did children search for their mothers, but they also searched for the siblings they were enslaved with. Multiple ads voiced the desire to search for lost siblings. I noted a heavy repetition of phrases such as “I wish to find information about my mother and sisters”⁷ and “I wish to inquire through your valuable paper for my dear brother,”⁸ which further depicts how deeply rooted an enslaved mother’s love was despite the cruelties of enslavement. Many of these reunification ads speak on the length of separation, another factor I found to drive home just how dedicated these family members were to reuniting with their long-lost loved ones. Many had been searching for anywhere between fifteen and fifty years in the hopes of rebuilding their family under freedom. The Last Seen project reaffirms the mere existence of these reunification ads and the depths so many went through to reunite with their kin. Adding texture to an extraordinarily vivid painting of the bond between an enslaved mother and her children.

The deep seeded love of enslaved motherhood brought about the great weapon of resistance, a tactic not only used to liberate enslaved mothers from their oppressors but to also push back against the dehumanizing lens placed on them. As we now turn our attention to the second major effect that shaped Black matrifocality, we segway our research to an enslaved mother’s resistance as she parents under the cruel realities of enslavement. In the article “Conceived in Violence: Enslaved Mothers and Children Born of Rape in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana,” historian Andrea Livesey, explores how enslaved mothers navigated motherhood when their child had been born out of rape, an unfortunate yet extremely often occurrence for many enslaved women who were sold and bought to be used as sex slaves for their masters. Livesey peels back a deeper layer when exploring the relationships between enslaved mothers

7 “W. M. Steward searching for his mother Mary Burans and his siblings,” *Southwestern Christian Advocate* (New Orleans, LA 1879), Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, <https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4612>.

8 “James Kinea Comfort searching for his brother David Smith,” *Southwestern Christian Advocate* (New Orleans, LA 1879), Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, <https://informationwanted.org/items/show/4579>.

and their children born out of rape. Historical evidence proves these relationships remained as strong as ever despite the violence that initiated them. Livesey explains, “the historical records brought to life through this work highlights the way that sexual violence permeated and shaped enslaved family life, but also the remarkable capacity of enslaved women to adapt, survive – and love – regardless of their personal and collective trauma.”⁹ Livesey uses her article to further emphasize how sexual violence permeated the environment and as a result shaped the lives and experiences of enslaved women and Black matrilineality in return. Highlighting how, despite these griefs, enslaved mothers adapted and chose to survive through the love they bore for their children. Furthermore, Livesey explains, “the sustained effort by enslaved women to maintain maternal influence over her child is significant...through embracing the child born of the rape, the enslaved mother defiantly rejected a victim status. The way that enslaved mothers fought to maintain the bond with their children demonstrates the continued importance of family, even when ideas of family had to be reconfigured to fit in with the harsh realities of enslaved life.”¹⁰ Enslaved mothers resisted the reigns of enslavement by rejecting their status as rape victims, and instead embraced their children born from trauma. By examining the bleak realities of rearing a child through enslavement, Livesey unearths strategies of resistance and brings forth a newfound texture to the painting we are deeply dedicated to better understanding.

We now direct our attention to the pioneering work of historian Deborah Gray White as we focus on her groundbreaking book *Ar'n't I a Woman?* This revolutionary monograph brings to light what White has coined to be “matter out of place” as she paints the vivid details embedded in the heroic struggles enslaved women faced in the Antebellum South. Her work holds an exceptional focus on the resistance many enslaved mothers took up against the regimes of slavery, protecting their wombs and kin at all costs. White believed that “pairing the psychological resistance with the enslaved woman’s means of survival has helped us analyze many patterns that emerged after slavery,”¹¹ further driving home our main idea that the

9 Andrea Livesey, “Conceived in Violence: Enslaved Mothers and Children Born of Rape in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana” *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 2 (2017): 373.

10 Livesey, “Conceived in Violence,” 386.

11 Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 10.

resistance enslaved mothers' held against the regimes of slavery shaped Black matrilocality within the family dynamic we see presently. Through her in depth analysis of the experience of enslaved mothers, White not only brings to light the power of resistance, but ties its roots to Black matrilocality today. Further stating that by being "salvaged by sustained psychological and physical resistance to white exploitation and terror... we practiced an alternative style of womanhood. A womanhood that persevered in hardship but revered overt resistance...celebrated heroism but accepted frailty. A womanhood that could answer a confident and assertive 'yes' to the persistent question: 'Ar'n't I a woman?'"¹² Emphasizing just how integral and crucial an enslaved woman's resistance was to her fortitude as she navigated what it meant to be an enslaved mother under realms of chattel enslavement. White unearths what it truly meant to be an enslaved woman in the Antebellum South as she unveils a previously unwritten aspect of American history; emphasizing and proving time and time again that an enslaved mother's love and resistance are the driving components that have shaped Black matrilocality.

As we have previously observed the love and resistance that shaped the experience enslaved mothers shared as they navigated parenting under the regimes of slavery, we now turn our attention to the last and final component of Black matrilocality: the sacrifice of an enslaved mother. Harriet Jacobs, a woman of great fortitude and sacrifice, endured the unbearable and inhumane realms of enslavement and escaped to tell her story. Born into enslavement in 1813, Jacobs suffered immense sexual abuse by her owners as they held the livelihood of her children over her head as leverage, forcing Jacobs to obey their every order. That is until she managed to escape to her grandmother's farm, where she hid for seven years before she could escape by boat to Philadelphia. Following her escape, she published her autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, under the alias Linda Brent. Jacobs recounts not only her experience under the regimes of slavery but also the tribulations and sexual abuse that enslaved women faced while attempting to practice motherhood and protect their children from the cruel realities of what it meant to rear a child under the reigns of enslavement. Jacobs uses her narrative to reclaim enslaved women's experiences

12 White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 190.

and sacrifices, stating, "slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own."¹³ Emphasizing that aside from the dehumanizing realities of chattel enslavement, enslaved women also endured the mental and physical torture of extreme sexual abuse from their owners, which played a significant role in how they viewed and raised their children. Jacobs proclaims, "I had a woman's pride, and a mother's love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them."¹⁴ She then recounts the sacrifices she endured to reach the light, declaring, "every trial I endured, every sacrifice I made for their sakes, drew them closer to my heart, and gave me fresh courage to beat back the dark waves that rolled and rolled over me in a seemingly endless night of storms."¹⁵ She emphasized that no matter what she may have needed to endure and sacrifice for the sake of her children, she would. Jacobs, amongst many other enslaved mothers, fought tirelessly to be free alongside their children and stopped at nothing to make it happen. Jacobs truly believed that "whatever slavery might do to me, it could not shackle my children. If I fell a sacrifice, my little ones were saved. It was well for me that my simple heart believed all that had been promised for their welfare. It is always better to trust than to doubt."¹⁶ Although the dehumanizing and cruel realities of slavery were undoubtedly real and apparent, so was an enslaved mother's deeply rooted sacrifice and love for her children. It is crucial to our understanding of the development of Black matrilocality to understand the experiences and sacrifices that came from enslaved motherhood.

As we return to Ashley's Sack and her mother's love, we reflect on how these key components have shaped Black matrilocality. By examining the voices of enslaved mothers and their children through first-hand accounts, reunification ads, and the work of historians, we watch as love, resistance, and sacrifice all come together to paint the experiences endured by enslaved mothers. Through examining Tiya Miles' work in *All That She Carried* and Judith Giesberg's database *Last Seen*, we

13 Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (Boston: Thayer & Eldridge, 1861), 119.

14 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 130.

15 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 137.

16 Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 166.

learn that the everlasting love of an enslaved mother is what allowed them to embrace their children as symbols of their fortitude and survival. We then turned our attention to the work of historians Andrea Livesey and Deborah White, who hone in on the incredible resistance of parenting under the regimes of slavery that enslaved mothers used to establish such a deep everlasting love that remained rooted in their children. Turning finally to the groundbreaking narrative of Harriet Jacobs, who brought to light the sacrifice made by enslaved mothers as they endured the mental and physical torture of extreme sexual abuse from their owners, which played a major role in how they viewed and raised their children. Each playing a key and crucial role in the development of Black matrilocality and how it has shaped who we are as a society and people. As we analyzed one of American history's darkest periods, we watched enslaved mothers establish a deeply rooted and resilient love for their children. An idea that has been widely overlooked for so long, yet one that holds immense value to our understanding of the everlasting love enslaved mothers bore for their kin. Without it, we fail to grasp the depth and complexity of the bond between an enslaved mother and her child and how it has shaped the foundation of Black matrilocality. After reading this essay, my hope is that my readers gain a deeper understanding of what it meant to be a mother under the regimes of chattel slavery. A deeper understanding of how the resistance could cost an enslaved woman her life, but it did not matter if it meant safeguarding her child.



Illustration by Sarah Zhang, Chico State

The Power of Dependence:

How the British Empire Relied on Colonial North America's Resources

By Sam Balderas

Abstract: This essay looks at one major question: how much control did the North American colonies have over Britain? For centuries, North America was exploited and used by the British Empire for its resources and was host to the cruelty of slavery. While Britain may have been the driver behind many of these decisions, North America supplied the fuel. The Royal Navy needed access to North American forests to create fleets and dominate the Atlantic. Without North American plantations, the Crown never would have made millions off sugar or the slave trade. Additionally, the British needed North American resources to pay their extensive war debts. In many ways, the British relied on its colonies for survival, which not many researchers discuss. It is that dependence that is at the center of this essay.

Since European arrival in the Americas, the accepted narrative has been that England drove the course of North American history. More analysis needs to be spent on the reverse: how did North America influence the course of the British Empire? North America was prime real estate for any hopeful empire. Massive forests provided the perfect materials for the construction of warships and the expansion of the Royal Navy. The reliance on the burgeoning West Indies slave trade produced raw goods like sugar, facilitating the colonial economy built on trade and taxes. Control of this continent

could make or break the authority of the European powers. Britain would enjoy political and economic domination throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by maintaining its place in North America. This essay will explore the possible ways North American colonization and trade of its many resources influenced the position of the British Empire on the world stage.

Leadup to a Colonial Empire

The material and economic realities of waging war required the British Empire to grow to keep its ability to wield international influence. A notable example of this necessity is the Hundred Years' War, which was a war fought between France and England from 1337 to 1453 over King Edward III's claim to the French Throne.¹ He pressed this claim by attempting to conquer Aquitaine.² What followed was over 100 years of intermittent fighting. The cost of the war was high, as not only did it take men away from the workforce, but it also cost money for all the weapons, equipment, and transportation. The English armada needed 1,500 boats to carry their army to Agincourt, with over 20,000 sailors involved in the campaign.³ The largest expedition of the war involved 32,000 combatants, with smaller expeditions still involving over 15,000 men.⁴ All of these soldiers needed to be fed, clothed, and equipped, which also required countless workers to have access to both money and resources to make these products.⁵ The consequences of this war would not just disappear once it was over, either. By 1449, four years before the war's end, England's debt exploded at £30,000.⁶ Much of that debt would have to be paid off through taxes, land revenues, and victuals taken as payment from various counties and towns under King Edward III's control.⁷ Following the end of the Hundred Years War, England became entrenched in several wars between 1453 and the arrival of colonists to Jamestown in 1607, including the War of the Roses, the An-

1 Kenneth Bruce McFarlane, "War, the Economy and Social Change: England and the Hundred Years War," *Past & Present*, no. 22 (1962): 5.

2 G. Templeman, "Edward III and the Beginnings of the Hundred Years War," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1952): 78.

3 M. M. Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years' War," *Past & Present*, no. 27 (1964): 35.

4 Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years' War," 34.

5 Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years' War," 36.

6 Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years' War," 42.

7 Postan, "The Costs of the Hundred Years' War," 42.

glo-Spanish War, and many more. English debt fluctuated between £24,000 and £33,000 a year during the War of the Roses alone.⁸ England and the more extensive British Empire needed control over new land and resources to maintain these wars and pay their debt. With the establishment of the Jamestown colony in 1607, they would get exactly that.

Plagued with problems in its early years, Jamestown eventually became the prime example of British colonization. Despite skirmishes with native tribes and food shortages to the point of cannibalism, the English settlers finally found their cash crop in tobacco. After ten years of hardship, the colonists were selling tobacco at three shilling per pound by 1619.⁹ Tobacco became the main crop of Virginia, and by the 1640s, one man could produce up to 1,500 pounds of tobacco a year.¹⁰ The duties made off the trade of tobacco were massive. The British made £100,000 off these duties by 1675, with the King making an estimated £1.9 million off Virginia and Maryland tobacco in 1685.¹¹ King Charles II himself was financially invested in the success of the colony, and he made anywhere from £5 to £10 a year from each laborer.¹² As the demand for tobacco grew, the number of available servants declined. With no servants to work the land, Virginia turned to slavery to maintain the flow of tobacco. Once duties on slave trader ships were lowered in the 1660s, Virginia slowly moved towards slave labor.¹³ Though they imported very few enslaved people, only 1,800 between 1670 and 1690, the settlers did not ignore their perceived usefulness. A group of ten enslaved people could produce 20,000 pounds of tobacco worth £100 to £200, all the while their owner paid the bare minimum to keep them alive.¹⁴ The way Jamestown and the new colony of Virginia were run gives us a glimpse at how the rest of the North American colonies operated under the control of the British Empire.

Use of Connecticut Timber by the Royal Navy

8 Anthony Steel, "The Financial Background of the Wars of the Roses," *History* 40, no. 138/139 (1955): 27.

9 Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1975), 108.

10 Morgan, *American Slavery*, 142.

11 Morgan, *American Slavery*, 197.

12 Morgan, *American Slavery*, 271.

13 Morgan, *American Slavery*, 299.

14 Morgan, *American Slavery*, 304.

As more settlements were established in North America, two areas proved to be exceptionally fertile: the West Indies and New England. Both were ripe for different markets that proved vital to the colonial economy. New England had already established itself with the settling of Jamestown, Virginia, and the growing empire was hungry for more. Two of the biggest colonial exports were timber and sugar. Timber was a highly sought-after product in Europe due to its increasing scarcity, and Connecticut became the center of this demand.¹⁵ The trade of these trees, and their protection, became a high priority to the Crown. Connecticut was perfect not only due to its access to extensive forests but also the fact that the rivers of the state provided a faster means of transport, as workers would float the logs downriver, which meant easy shipping out of the colonies.¹⁶ The most sought-after of Connecticut's lumber was that of the White Pine, of which the forests were full.¹⁷ It was so crucial that England passed the White Pine Acts, which reserved all White Pines over twenty-four inches in diameter for the Royal Navy and the Crown.¹⁸ This lumber was used mainly in two large industries: shipbuilding and stave making.¹⁹ Shipbuilding was especially important because it was the colonies' link to the nations on the other side of the Atlantic, as well as trade with the rest of the colonies.²⁰ The Royal Navy also needed their lumber, as the straight and tall White Pines were perfect for the masts of their warships.²¹ These warships would become essential in conflicts like the War of Spanish Succession, where the Royal Navy would play a prominent role in capturing French settlements like Port Royal in Acadia.²² So important was the shipbuilding industry that Connecticut passed "The Act for the Preservation of Ship Timber and Plank," a law which protected their forests from deforestation and kept the shipbuilding industry moving.²³ The future global dominance of the British Royal Navy would take a great deal of money and

15 Strother E. Roberts, *Colonial Ecology, Atlantic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 127.

16 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 127.

17 William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 1st rev. ed., 20th-anniversary ed (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 29.

18 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 128.

19 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 134.

20 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 134.

21 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 141.

22 Alan Taylor and Eric Foner, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (East Rutherford, NJ: Penguin Publishing Group, 2002), 292.

23 Roberts, *Colonial Ecology*, 138.

resources, which the Empire would gain in its expansion into North America. British Imperial wars would incur costs that the British Empire would have to find new means of paying off, making colonial taxes invaluable in this endeavor.

Economic Burdens of War

War incurred significant debt, even for the massive British Empire. For the British, the War of Spanish Succession doubled their national debt to £36 million.²⁴ To pay for this, they increased taxes from 3% of their national income to 9% by 1715.²⁵ The Crown continued to spend around £6 million on their military, three times more than the amount they spent in 1688, with 75% of Britain's annual expenditures going to the military for the rest of the 1700s.²⁶ A 1762 estimate put the cost of maintaining troops in America at nearly £225,000.²⁷ Through the introduction of the British Hovering Act in 1763, which included the stationing of ships outside the North American colonies, the Empire would ensure various import laws, including the Molasses Act, were followed.²⁸ With the Hovering Act, the Crown made an additional £391,000 in its first year as law.²⁹ The Sugar Act and the Stamp Act would also be introduced in the colonies in the 1760s, as the British lawmakers believed the colonies were prosperous enough to handle new taxes.³⁰ Though the costly War of Spanish Succession ended, the next conflict would be Britain's most expensive war to date, requiring more robust ways of securing and managing the resources of the Royal Navy.

The Seven Years' War would cost the British £100 million, with 90,000 troops involved at the height of the war.³¹ From 1740 to 1815, the British Royal Navy also recruited 450,000 men.³² These men had to be equipped and fed to maintain a

24 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 298.

25 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*. 298.

26 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 298.

27 Alvin Rabushka, "British Politics, Imperial Governance, and Colonial Government and Politics, 1763–1775," in *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 730, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sz5w.37>.

28 Rabushka, "British Politics," 736.

29 Rabushka, "British Politics," 736.

30 Rabushka, "British Politics," 739.

31 Justin du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 77.

32 Nicholas Rogers, *The Press Gang: Naval Impressment and Its Opponents in Georgian Britain*

strong fighting force. Though costs were handled through the tax and economy of the colonies, the British also needed to establish ways to move supplies. To ensure their bodily needs were met, Britain established a Victualling Board. This Board, made up of commissioners chosen by the Royal Navy's admirals, was tasked with ensuring all ships in the Navy were stocked with food and drinks.³³ Originally, individual garrisons had to find their own victuals and a way to move them, preventing the Navy from executing its tasks effectively.³⁴ To ensure these vital supplies were delivered in a quicker manner, the Board worked alongside merchants, from whom they bought supplies in bulk to be delivered to ports at which the ships were docked.³⁵ Though the Victualling Board existed for decades, it would see its importance grow as the British Empire expanded. As the Empire grew, victualling agents were dispatched to ports in Barbados, Virginia, New England, and most of their North American colonies.³⁶ With a board tightly controlling the flow of supplies, ensuring each ship's fighting shape, and the Board's wider reach through New World ports, the Royal Navy would become a dominating force in the Atlantic Ocean. To pay for all of this, the British Empire needed a strong economy built on new industries, of which they would find their crown jewel in the West Indies. Barbados, and the massive sugar plantations that dotted its landscape, would become the biggest money maker for their empire.

The Growing Barbados Sugar Empire

North America's other major export, sugar, was the backbone of the West Indies, particularly in Barbados. After struggling to grow tobacco and cotton, the colonists of Barbados discovered the land was perfect for sugar.³⁷ On Barbados, they found that they were able to produce two tons of sugar per acre, which was the best out of all of the West Indies colonies.³⁸ By 1700, the sugar plantations of Barbados were producing

(London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2008), 40.

33 Janet Macdonald, *The British Navy's Victualling Board, 1793-1815*, NED-New edition, Management Competence and Incompetence (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2010), 17.

34 Macdonald, *The British Navy's Victualling Board*, 17.

35 Macdonald, *The British Navy's Victualling Board*, 16.

36 Christian Buchet, *The British Navy, Economy and Society in the Seven Years War*, trans. Anita Higgie and Michael Duffy (Woodbridge, England: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 20.

37 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 209.

38 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 210.

25,000 tons of sugar.³⁹ In 1731, the export of sugar was valued at £320,000, which only accounted for raw sugar, and not rum or other exports like cotton and ginger, which amounted to a total of £420,000.⁴⁰ This trade supplied almost all of England's sugar, and this made Barbados the most profitable of all the English colonies.⁴¹ As sugar required a massive operation with lots of land, equipment, and workers, sugar became the "rich man's crop," as only more extensive operations could survive the competition.⁴² A planter with 200 acres of cane, of which Barbados had fifteen by 1673, could earn £4,500 per year.⁴³ In today's terms, that amounts to £776,184.⁴⁴ By 1750, there were 238 planter families, of which at least seventy were considered the elite Barbadian sugar producers.⁴⁵ These families kept a vested interest in maintaining the wealth of their sugar empire, even if it meant manipulating the British Parliament.

With so much to gain financially in Barbados, the sugar plantations created an elite wealthy class whose wealth provided them with considerable power over Parliament. These wealthy planters teamed up with the London merchants to create a "sugar lobby" to protect them from punishing crown taxes.⁴⁶ The sugar lobby led to the influential planters making over £180,000 and only paying £18,000 in taxes, compared to the £75,000 the Chesapeake tobacco planters had to pay in customs duties.⁴⁷ The sugar lobby convinced Parliament to make many laws protecting their trade, like the 1733 Molasses Act, meant to prevent New English rum makers from getting sugar from the French West Indies.⁴⁸ When Parliament debated the Sugar Duty Act of 1685, Barbados planters led a major campaign against the Act, as new duties would hit colonial sugar, and they claimed this would force the sugar planters out of business.⁴⁹ This argument won, as the Act was not renewed

39 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 210.

40 Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery; An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 144.

41 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 210.

42 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 214.

43 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 136.

44 "Inflation Calculator," accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/money-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.

45 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 145.

46 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 216.

47 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 216.

48 Richard B. Sheridan, "The Molasses Act and the Market Strategy of the British Sugar Planters," *The Journal of Economic History* 17, no. 1 (1957): 62.

49 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 52.

after it ended in 1693.⁵⁰ The lobbyists' attempts to win favorable conditions in Parliament did not end there. Also, in 1685, the Barbados Assembly claimed that planters investing £4,000 were losing £200 a year.⁵¹ This statistic was a lie as many planters investing £4,000 or more, like Barbados' second largest planter Henry Drax, could still make £5,000 even in times of economic hardship.⁵² These exaggerated numbers were one of many tactics the lobbyists used in their quest for greater fortune. Their main competition was the Dutch, who controlled northern Brazil for a time, where the majority of Europe's sugar came from by 1650.⁵³ The planters were at war with not only other nations but other islands and even the merchants at times. Barbados led the way in 1715 by laying heavy duties on sugar from other nations as well as neighboring islands.⁵⁴ Anything that would hurt the flow of foreign sugar to Britain was a boon to Barbados. To maintain their competitive edge, Barbados needed to keep other players in the sugar and rum trade out. To that end, they also required workers, regardless of whether those workers wanted to be there or not.

Sugar Powered by Indentured Servitude and Slavery

Indentured servitude and slavery powered the colonial economic machine in North America, specifically in the West Indies, where the sugar industry was booming and labor was in high demand. Sugar was also a labor-intensive crop. Not only did a planter need mills to crush the cane, but they also needed boiling houses to clarify and evaporate the juice, a curing house to dry the sugar, a distillery to convert molasses into rum, and finally, a warehouse to store all the barrels of sugar and prepare it for shipping.⁵⁵ Most of these processes had to happen within hours of the cane being cut.⁵⁶ With such a large operation, and the amount of money at stake, the planters needed a large and stable workforce to keep the plantations

50 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 52.

51 Richard S. Dunn and Gary B. Nash, *Sugar and Slaves, The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 190.

52 Richard S. Dunn and Gary B. Nash, "Sugar," in *Sugar and Slaves, The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 190, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9780807899823_dunn.11.

53 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 250.

54 Sheridan, "The Molasses Act," 68.

55 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 208.

56 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 208.

moving. Initially, the planters sought free laborers, but it became clear that no one was willing to do the backbreaking work of processing sugar, forcing them to look elsewhere. The planters then turned to indentured servitude. Between 1645 and 1655, over 12,000 Irish, English, and Scottish workers were forced to go to Barbados by the English government.⁵⁷ Though upon their arrival, these indentured servants were quick to run away, easily passing as free on ships out of the colony and establishing themselves on other islands due to the fact they were white.⁵⁸

Politically, England was also increasingly embarrassed at the image of having “white slaves” in the West Indies. Members of Parliament began to oppose sending prisoners to Barbados, forcing the end of this practice in 1655 and prosecuting anyone found recruiting laborers to go to the colonies.⁵⁹ With this newfound opposition to white servitude and a lack of willing laborers, Barbados began looking elsewhere for the needed labor. That is when the growing transatlantic slave trade came into play. Barbados was the easternmost island in the West Indies, which meant it was closer to the supply of enslaved Africans from West Africa and an easy trip for slave traders looking to make money.⁶⁰ As slave traders were able to move their cargo easier due to Barbados’ relative closeness, forcing the supply of enslaved people to go up, and therefore the price of enslaved people to go down from £35 to £20 in 10 years.⁶¹ Between 1663 and 1707, the cost of an enslaved person in the West Indies was less than £20.⁶² These enslaved people were not part of a contract like indentured servants, making them a better investment for plantation owners. For an indentured servant, a contract cost £12 for a four-year contract, and at the end, planters had to pay them “freedom dues.”⁶³ Moreover, indentured servants were not willing to stay in Barbados and continue working.⁶⁴ So while they were initially more expensive, planters saw enslaved Africans as a better long-term in-

57 Jerome S. Handler and Matthew C. Reilly, “Contesting ‘White Slavery’ in the Caribbean: Enslaved Africans and European Indentured Servants in Seventeenth-Century Barbados,” *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 91, no. 1/2 (2017): 34.

58 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 211.

59 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 211.

60 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 212.

61 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 212.

62 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 252.

63 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 212.

64 Handler and Reilly, “Contesting ‘White Slavery’ in the Caribbean,” 40.

vestment, especially considering that children born to enslaved parents also faced bondage. Cheaper labor costs allowed planters to expand their enterprises even more, with Barbados sporting even larger plantations with the help of slavery.⁶⁵ Enslaved laborers of the West Indies allowed the flow of sugar to continue, which ensured that money would continue flowing into British pockets.

Of the 9.5 million enslaved people believed to have been brought to the Americas, 42% of them were sent to the West Indies, with Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands taking 1.48 million enslaved Africans.⁶⁶ Even though enslaved people in the West Indies were considered priceless resources, they still lived in poor conditions. The life expectancy for an enslaved person in mainland North America was much longer than that of an enslaved person in the West Indies, allowing the mainland population to grow much more steadily but also requiring the flow of enslaved people to move faster to the Caribbean.⁶⁷ To ensure the safety of this vital cargo, London merchants and Parliament invested heavily in various forts, castles, and warehouses in Africa to maintain the trade of enslaved people into the West Indies.⁶⁸ So important was the slave trade that King Charles II created the Royal African Company in 1672 to provide as many enslaved people as possible to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean.⁶⁹ With money saved using forced labor, the colonies, and the Crown that controlled them, could enjoy their new source of profit in North America. These profits made their way back to the British Isles through trade.

Trade Networks Build Wealth in America

The trade of goods from North America to Britain meant that money was always moving between the two continents. In 1686, the trade of goods from England to the West Indies generated £111,392, with the mainland colonies generating £100,540.⁷⁰ The Chesapeake wheat planters alone were making

65 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 212.

66 Dunn and Nash, *Sugar and Slaves*, 229.

67 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 324.

68 Dunn and Nash, *Sugar and Slaves*, 231.

69 Dunn and Nash, *Sugar and Slaves*, 232.

70 Nuala Zahedieh, "Making Mercantilism Work: London Merchants and Atlantic Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1999): 147.

£130,000 through trade by 1770, up from £11,000 in 1740.⁷¹ This increase in income came largely from the “consumer revolution” sweeping Britain and North America, as more diverse goods were coming in at cheaper prices, which increased demand.⁷² By 1772, the American colonies were consuming 37% of British imports and accounted for 40% of England’s GDP, making them an increasingly important market to British merchants.⁷³ As more money entered North American markets, it also entered the pockets of average colonists. Free colonists were averaging around £13 annually, much better than any of their European counterparts, with Brits making £11 and only 6 in France.⁷⁴

With the rise of the North American colonies, the British gained an invaluable asset in the struggle for power in Europe. The model provided by Jamestown set the course for hundreds of years of colonization. The presence of vast natural resources made the new colonies perfect for the development of industry. Large swaths of forests in Connecticut provided the Royal Navy with a near-endless supply of white pine that they used to build their warships. The many waterways of the colony made it easier to move lumber, making their shipbuilding industry one of the most efficient in the colonies. North America’s strong economic performance helped sustain the British military for years through massive trade networks and taxes. Though it became costlier to wage war, as we see with the Seven Years’ War, their new wealth allowed the British to expand their areas of operation and keep their men better supplied. Finally, with the rise of the sugar plantations in Barbados, they would discover the wonders of slavery over indentured or free servitude. This led to lower prices for planters and, in turn, expanded of the slave trade. With enslaved labor keeping the sugar industry afloat, the British needed to ensure the safety of the slave trade to the West Indies if they wished to maintain their new sugar enterprise. These factors made North America the most important region in the world for the economic, military, and political dominance of the eighteenth-century British Empire. Without the help of the colonies, the British Empire, as we now know it to be, would not have existed.

71 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 306.

72 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 310.

73 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 311.

74 Taylor and Foner, *American Colonies*, 307.



*Illustration by **Jasmyn Wilson**, Chico State*

Safe Spaces for Black Faces:

Personal Reflections on African Americans and the Outdoors in California

By Edward Hill Jr.

Abstract: This paper explores how African Americans have defined their place in the outdoors beyond the typical stories of cultivation, manipulation, violence, and trauma. Instead, it elevates the contributions made by Blacks in the late and early nineteenth century that contributed to National Park systems in California. By exploring primary sources, including written correspondences from park supervisors, documents from commanding officers stationed in the park, and newspaper articles from neighboring communities in 1903, I will discuss Blacks' contributions to the outdoors and the potential for establishing new connections to these historically white-framed spaces. The secondary sources I engage with lift up the beauty and freedom these men saw in the unfiltered scenery of the Sierras while still traversing the racist policies. In sharing my own story and journey with the outdoors, I show that Black people can also find joy, peace, serenity, and themselves in the wilderness.

The summer of 2014 was the first time I stepped foot into one of California's most famous National Parks. This was also the first time I strapped on a backpack for eight to ten hours a day for seven days while I hiked with five other people along the High Sierra Camp Loop in Yosemite National Park. These campsites are located in the High Sierras with cabins and sites for tents where backpackers can rest for the night. With necessities in place, like bathrooms, showers, and kitchens there were moments it felt a lot closer to home

in Oakland. Yet as we traversed ancient slabs of granite and through groves of trees that have sheltered many before us, there was one thing that came to mind, where are the rest of the Black folks? How was it that it was only me out here exploring the beauty of this park? That question has inspired me to research the history of Black contributions to California National Parks.

My curiosity about the lack of Black people in this beautiful space led me to Shelton Johnson, a current Black Yosemite Park Ranger. Johnson has taken it upon himself to help preserve the story of these forgotten men, creating oral histories through reenactments at the park framed around the experience of The Buffalo Soldiers. The Army Reorganization Act of 1866 established the troops, and after almost forty years of helping the United States expand west, these men found themselves with a military assignment many sought. Even while the US found new ways to limit the mobility of freely enslaved people through the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, Black fathers, brothers, and uncles bravely faced these conditions by carving out their place in the history of westward expansion and the outdoors.

While there is plenty of reason for Black people within the US to believe these spaces are not for us, I aim to challenge that narrative and present a new perspective that creates space for redefining the Black experience in the outdoors, which encourages uplifting this narrative, increasing the need for representation, and serves as a safe place for Black faces. This research challenges the narrative that Black people have a perceived lack of interest in the outdoors.¹ Instead, recast the narrative and centers it on the experiences of the first Black Park Rangers (the Buffalo Soldiers). To highlight these men's role in cultivating, creating, and managing two of California's most iconic National Parks: Yosemite and Sequoia. Lastly, I will share my personal journey and field notes I took while exploring Yosemite National Park, which will forever connect my story to the history of this beautiful space.

While searching for primary sources, I realized I would have to dig in many different places to find information about

1 Nikki Brueggeman, "Why Black People Don't Go Camping," *An Injustice!*, August 10, 2020, <https://aninjusticemag.com/why-black-people-dont-go-camping-a564dd47e5a8>

the Buffalo Soldiers in California's National Parks. Except for newspaper articles, pictures on the NPS website, and a few letters from one of the most prominent Black Military Leaders of the time, Charles Young, accessing primary sources was a challenge. Fortunately, I found a handful of secondary sources that gave me a sneak peek into what some scholars have found about the Buffalo Soldiers and their short stints of time as Park Rangers. In his book *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment: The Military Career of Charles Young*, historian Brian G. Shellum highlights the story of Charles Young, the third Black graduate of West Point Military Academy, who, in 1903, became the first Black Park Superintendent (Sequoia, Kings Canyon National Park). The National Parks Service online archives also contain information about the Buffalo Soldiers and their time in the Presidio in San Francisco, Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Park. While reading a study on the history of the Buffalo Soldiers conducted and published by the NPS, I found secondary sources that led me to bits and pieces of their story. In the book *Nature's Army: When Soldiers Fought for Yosemite*, Harvey Meyerson shows how the creation of national identity sparked an interest in creating National parks within the United States. The historical context in which these parks were made ultimately influenced who would become the ideal park visitor.

The last two secondary sources I found extremely valuable during my research are both by Yosemite Park Ranger Shelton Johnson. The first is the non-published article titled "Invisible Men: Buffalo Soldiers of the Sierra Nevada," in which Johnson frames the story of the Buffalo Soldiers story in Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks as a forgotten narrative. Johnson claims that historians have intentionally or passively misrepresented or left out the stories of Black men and women. According to Johnson, "People don't just fall out of stories as if they were the unfortunate victims of an accident. The holes in the foundations of history are there by design. What is not so obvious is the intent of the designer."² Historical silencing occurs when a part of the narrative is omitted or changed so that it does not reflect multiple perspectives. Unfortunately, this racially motivated behavior happened frequently to Black and Native people during the march westward. Another source

2 Shelton Johnson, "Invisible Men: Buffalo Soldiers of the Sierra Nevada," NPS History, n.d., 6. Accessed May 8, 2022, <http://npshistory.com/publications/yose/invisible-men.pdf>.

by Johnson, *Gloryland: A Novel* allowed me access to primary sources about the Buffalo Soldiers in Yosemite. This work of historical fiction relies on actual patrol reports of Buffalo Soldiers to help chronicle the life of a Black boy, born on the day the enslaved were emancipated, who became a Buffalo Soldier and found himself in Yosemite National Park as a part of his duty.³

Although much of my research focuses on when the soldiers were in the parks and what they were able to accomplish, with assistance from Dr. Linda Ivey, a professor of history at Cal State East Bay, I realized that by exploring what environmental historians have said about the relationship between African Americans and the outdoors, I would better understand how to frame this conversation to an academic audience. To better understand this argument, I read the book *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* by the cultural geographer Carolyn Finney. In this book, she looks at the historical issues the Black community faces from a cultural and social standpoint that negatively impact the participation of African Americans while continuing to perpetuate stereotypes. In addition, Denise D. Meringolo's book *Museum, Monuments, and National Parks: Towards a New Genealogy of Public History* also provided me with context to understanding the creation of California's National Parks.

Tuolumne Meadows: Hiking into Glen Aulin

Our packs were way heavier than they should have been. We were carrying around 100 pounds of stuff in total! We had to carry our lunch and snack items for seven days. I carried our two-person REI tent, sleeping mats, and the smaller BEAR box in my backpack. The first day we hiked in from the parking lot in Tuolumne Meadows was stunning. We got lost within the first two miles following Donna but found the trail not after too long. The formations of rock piles to indicate the path and the clearly defined trails established by the thousands of feet of humans and animals that have walked the same route made me feel small. The five-mile hike to our first High Sierra Camp stop ended with the sound of one of my favorite natural wonders ... a waterfall. Each day consisted of six to eight hours of hiking for the next seven days.⁴

3 Shelton Johnson, *Gloryland: A Novel* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2010).

4 Edward Hill Jr., "Field Notes," Yosemite, 2014.

In the summer of 1866, a year after the Civil War ended, the United States Congress passed the Army Reorganization Act, enabling Black men, formerly enslaved and free to join the Army during times of peace. This allowed once-enslaved people to choose to fight to defend the country that previously enslaved them. This Act created six new all-Black Troops, including two cavalry units, the 9th and 10th, and four infantry units, the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st. In 1869, these Black infantry units were consolidated to form the 24th and 25th, respectively. Over the next three decades, on several occasions, these men traversed the middle plains and frontier by foot, horseback, and bicycle. Buffalo soldiers were tasked with removing Native peoples from their lands and protecting white settlers who were selling illegal goods as a part of expanding westward, making their work on behalf of the US government complicated.

While not entirely clear, the term “Buffalo Soldier” comes from their time fighting against Indigenous people. The buffalo hide robe they wore to protect them from the freezing temperatures or the curly texture of the Black soldier’s hair earned them that moniker. It was also said that the fierce fighting style the Black men exhibited during battle could have also been the reason for the name, but there is no definitive answer to the origin. The Buffalo Soldiers fought in the American Indian Wars, the Spanish American War, and Philippine-American War. The Buffalo Soldiers first stepped into Yosemite National Park during this period through the Presidio in San Francisco.

According to Meyerson, “During the 1890s, many of the cavalrymen based at the Presidio of San Francisco alternated their time in the field between protecting nature at Yosemite National Park and protecting Indians.”⁵ So while waiting to fight abroad, there were still times when these men were called upon to do the dirty deeds of the US government. At the same time, this was not their primary function. The National Parks shows how the complicated history of one group of people who escaped the bondage of a legal system of enslavement was now positioned (by the US government) to do the same to another group. While I did not come across any mention of the

5 Harvey Meyerson, *Nature’s Army: When Soldiers Fought for Yosemite* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020), 5197, Kindle edition.

relationship between Native peoples and the Buffalo Soldiers during these endeavors, one can imagine the complex nature of their interactions.

The first sign of the Buffalo Soldiers in Yosemite was in 1899, only for a brief time. This trip by horse was taken many times over the next ten years from San Francisco to Wawona (Yosemite) and down to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, yet the mentions of the Black soldiers came up a lot less frequently. Johnson's discovery of a primary source that collaborates their time in the park is one small piece of evidence that proves their time there, along with two potential images of soldiers standing around each other and another image of soldiers on horseback. It is important to remember at this time, the literacy rate for Black soldiers was not very high, but that's what people like Army Chaplain Allen Allensworth were tasked with addressing, which contributed to the scarcity of written correspondences from Black soldiers. Johnson's findings are so important because so much of the story would be lost without his work.

From records in this office I find that the park was under the control of Lieut. W. H. McMasters, Twenty-fourth Regiment of Infantry, with a detachment of 25 men of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, he being relieved June 21, 1899, by Lieut. William Forse, Third Artillery, with a similar detachment of that regiment.⁶

Johnson, a present-day Black Park Ranger in Yosemite National Park, was inspired by a single photograph and took it upon himself to learn the history of the Buffalo Soldiers. This interest led him to uncover the history of what the Buffalo Soldiers did while in the park, and he eventually led historical reenactments of the men for park visitors. By having this one thread of information about the troops being in the park, the history of the Buffalo Soldiers is etched in military reports. Still, it has yet to be incorporated into a much larger conversation centered on the unconditional inclusion of stories that do not fit the mainstream narrative.

⁶ Johnson, "Invisible Men," 11.

(8 miles) May Lake Camp 9,270 ft

We practiced pitching our tent a couple of times before leaving for the trip to be prepared to put it up quickly in some random weather, so getting situated the first night went well. Dinner was prepared for us by the site staff, who was responsible for taking care of some of our basic needs while at the High Sierra Campsite. Our Hike to May Lake was our first full day of hiking. The 8-mile hike to the campsite from Glen Aulin started at 9 am that day. One of the most impressive aspects of this site is the high granite peaks that tower thousands of feet above the 9,270 ft above the campsite and reflect like a mirror off the lake if there is no wind. A 3-minute walk within the campgrounds gave us some of the most beautiful views of the entire trip. With Clouds Rest and Half Dome in the background, I knew this trip had something special in store for us.⁷

On October 31, 1902, after eighteen months of fighting in the Philippines, Troop I of the 9th US Cavalry (Buffalo Soldiers) stepped foot in the Presidio in San Francisco, which would mark the start of a truly historic year for this troop. During their time in the Bay Area, these men became a part of the small but growing Black community in San Francisco and Oakland, where they attended church and where Charles Young met Ada Mills, who later became his wife.⁸

In May of 1903, Teddy Roosevelt traveled down to Yosemite, where he met John Muir and camped while considering what to do with this space. Throughout his presidency, Teddy Roosevelt protected “148,000,000 acres of forest reserves throughout his presidency, and the number of national parks doubled.”⁹ On May 12th, 1903, Teddy Roosevelt arrived in San Francisco, along his Presidential Tour, where he was escorted by Captain Young and the 9th Cavalry, out of the Presidio, through the city, down Market Street, and ultimately to Yosemite National Park. During the Spanish-American Wars, the Buffalo Soldiers fought alongside the Rough Riders and came to the aid of Teddy Roosevelt while in battle. Historian Brian Shellum explains, “many of these veterans of Cuba still served with the unit. Roosevelt

7 Edward Hill Jr., “Field Notes,” Yosemite, 2014.

8 Shellum, *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment*, 156.

9 National Park Service, “John Muir- Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site,” National Parks Service, last updated November 10, 2014, <https://www.nps.gov/thri/johnmuir.htm#:~:text=In%20March%20of%201903%20Muir,natural%20beauty%20of%20the%20region.>

had firsthand knowledge of their bravery in combat and ability as professional soldiers.”¹⁰ This reunion allowed the Buffalo Soldiers to participate in this historical moment while acting as the president’s guard. entrusting Black men to protect him for the first time in this fashion, and one of the first moments recorded on film.

According to Shellum, On May 15th, 1903, “Troop I and M, Ninth Cavalry, were ordered by the War Department to proceed overland, mounted, from San Francisco to Sequoia National Park, Tulare County, California, a distance of 285 miles, for Park guard duty under the Department of Interior.”¹¹ This trip was no small feat as eighty-three Black troops had to ensure that there was enough food not just for the horses and mules who pulled the wagons along but for the soldiers as well. Eighteen days later, Captain Young and his troop arrived in the small town of Visalia, where they were greeted with a warm welcome by the diverse community they entered. Young was the 3rd Black graduate from West Point, and it would be almost another fifty years before another person achieved this status. His attention to detail and the responsibility afforded to him because of his character and body of work ultimately earned him the title of the first Black National Park Superintendent in 1903.

Shifting the narrative of who can claim outdoor space has significant implications regarding how these places are managed and marketed. This shift would require dismantling old ideas and incorporating histories that encompass more comprehensive accounts beyond stories of enslavement. Instead, a complete story of people who have persevered despite blatant attempts to dehumanize and dissuade them from participating in their roles as full citizens. In *Black Spaces, White Faces*, Carolyn Finney reminds her readers of counter-narratives, stating, “Our collective imagination is challenged by an American narrative of Freedom, Individualism, and honor that does not stand up well to competing narratives that consider, for example, slavery and the removal of Native Americans from their lands.”¹² The narrative surrounding the outdoors centers on wealthy white men who created these spaces for their en-

10 Brian G. Shellum, *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment: The Military Career of Charles Young* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 140.

11 Shellum, *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment*, 141.

12 Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 74.

joyment. Lifting up the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers challenges old tired narratives that cater to the status quo.

Finney provides what she sees as some barriers prohibiting Blacks from entering these spaces long before they even leave their homes. Two of the most complex reasons she gives for the lack of Black visitors to National Parks and recreation areas is that the Black people she interviewed “were afraid of the unknown (primarily wildlife) and white people.”¹³ Historically Black people have suffered immense violence and intimidation at the hands of white people, with much of it happening outdoors in fields, forests, and on trees in the case of lynching and even in their own homes. At the same time, the dangers of being out from the comfort of what you know already present challenges in itself; being outdoors with white people creates another layer of anxiety, coupled with the reality that you never know what wild animals you will encounter.

According to Finney, “environment was defined in one of two ways: as something distant, outside their purview, and largely white or as something local, close to home, and reflecting their own experience.”¹⁴ The challenge that Black people face when engaging with the environment is that the fundamental ideas of the movement are framed within the experiences and practices of the dominant white society, which places a low value on anyone not white. This frame does not include the perspectives or expertise of Black and Native peoples, despite their natural relationships with nature, which are not transactional dependent. Historians need to do more to uncover and disseminate the narratives of Black people positively contributing to national history. It will show how influential and essential Black bodies have been and will always be to the progress of this country. Even with the ultimate sacrifice of their lives, these soldiers still contended with racist ideals, policies, and regular citizens who took it upon themselves to participate in state-sanctioned violence toward Black people.

Sun Rise: (8 miles) Sun Rise Camp 9,400 ft

The hike from May Lake to Sun Rise was one of the most

13 Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*, 106.

14 Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*, 91.

eventful days yet. Breakfast consisted of eggs, potatoes, bacon, and toast, and by this time, we knew the importance of filling up on food early in the day. Within a couple of hours of starting our hike for the day, we got lost, getting mixed up due to two parking lots that led to two very different directions in the park. There were seven of us hiking together, and we knew sticking together was the best plan. No one was hurt or needed anything, so we stuck it out, eventually flagging down an Israeli family visiting the park in an RV. They, without hesitation, gave us a ride down to Tenaya Lake, where we found the trailhead. Once we found the correct trail, we hiked for a mile for hours, essentially straight uphill, over uneven stairs and switchbacks that made you feel like your heart would jump out of your chest. The Sunsets were as beautiful and majestic as the Sun Rises at this camp. You found the trailheads for the John Muir and Pacific Crest Trail trailheads from this site.¹⁵

While the Buffalo Soldiers may have worn the uniform gracefully and with honor, it did not shield them from the racist policies of the Jim Crow and segregation era. Despite these challenges, they still needed to expand the perceived capabilities of their race and place within the growing society. Like most systems created and restructured after the Civil War, the US Army and the soon-to-be National Park Service would be no different in that they reflected the values and ideals. So while the Black Troops in the 9th Cavalry had to navigate the social landscape of the west, they also had to deal with harassment from their white military counterparts. In his book *Nature's Army*, Harvey Meyerson explains, "the Old Army reflected American prejudices and preferences more than it did not. But the point is that a large number of officers held views comparable to those who governed at Yosemite, and their values came from institutionalized character virtues that opened the eyes of soldiers to widespread manipulation of the ideals they served."¹⁶ This is important to consider, given that the earlier visit left little record of the Buffalo Soldiers' time in the park, which was then led by a white captain and most likely recorded by a white soldier. While this may not have been entirely intentional, it paved the way for historical silencing to frame the experience in a way that gave credit to only a few. Fortunately, others recorded the historic visits from the Black soldiers during the early 1900s.

15 Edward Hill Jr., "Field Notes," Yosemite, 2014.

16 Meyerson, *Nature's Army*, 5210, Kindle edition.

The *Daily Visalia Delta* published an article in June of 1903 that reported on the arrival of the Buffalo Soldiers into town. The description of the men and their leader gives the impression that the reporter thought highly of Captain Charles Young and gave some insight into how the average person viewed and interacted with these accomplished soldiers. Along with mentioning the troop's journey with President Teddy Roosevelt earlier in the year, the reporter notes Captain Young's standing in the Army as the only Black captain multiple times as if they needed to make sure the distinction was clear.

Captain Young is highly educated, and although he enjoys the distinction of being the only colored captain in America, he speaks as if the honor could be attained by any man who studies to make his purpose successful. In answer to a question about the preservation of game, Captain Young said "you can put it down as coming from me as an officer in command of these troops that the game in the Giant Forest will be protected." "I Understand," he continued, "that the laws are well posted and they must be obeyed while I am guarding the park."¹⁷

What made this exchange significant to me was the tone in which Captain Young conducts himself in this interview. His confidence in his ability to get the job done and his faith in his men was evident. The other aspect of this exchange that is important to note is the reporter's reaction when Young dismissed the notion that there was something special about him that led to his position. While his approach to this conversation may have underplayed the significance of his achievements, he was well aware of his responsibilities as the first Black Captain in the Army and the first Black Superintendent of a National Park.

While the Black troops were maintaining the parks at this time, some of the men responsible for pushing for the preservation of these spaces did not view these soldiers with the amount of respect the newspapers did. John Muir, the creator

17 "Troops from Presidio Arrive Enroute for Sequoia Park to Do Guard Duty," *Daily Visalia Delta*, June 3, 1903, 1, <https://visaliatimesdelta.newspapers.com/image/529531129/?terms=buffalo%20soldiers&match=1>.

of the Sierra Club, one of the oldest environmental groups focused on maintaining, preserving, and exploring these beautiful spaces, shared some of the same racist views of Blacks and Natives that framed policies and social ideas. In Carolyn Merchant's article "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History," she takes a critical eye to the ideals that John Muir had of Black and Native people, showing that he thought Natives were dirty and unclean, although he felt that "Nothing truly wild is unclean."¹⁸ Given that Natives lived off of and with the land, meaning their clothing, shelter, and way of living reflected a simpler lifestyle that did not require all the bells and whistles that were prevalent in white, wealthy homes. Muir's bigoted views of everyone not white negatively impacted his organization's ability to see people of color as members of society who should be included in the framing of these spaces.

Muir reports, "the Negroes are easy-going and merry, making a great deal of noise and doing little work. One energetic white man, working with a will, would easily pick as much cotton as half a dozen Sambos and Sallies."¹⁹ John Muir's vision for Yosemite depended on the Buffalo Soldiers' work, yet that did not stop him from projecting racist stereotypes. According to the Sierra Club's website, they were part of establishing one of the oldest and most recognizable conservation organizations to date, with over one million members and thirteen chapters in California.²⁰ Recently, the organization has begun to address the racist ideas its founders had while advocating for creating and preserving such vast and diverse areas of land. Muir's impact on the soldier's story may not be noted in great detail, but his time with them in the parks changed his perspective.

Lake Merced (10 miles) Merced Lake Camp 7,150 ft

Our fourth day of hiking was a tamed hike compared to what we faced on our Sun Rise High Sierra Camp journey, although it would be our longest hike at 10 miles. More than the wild animals (almost), I feared that my responsibilities would change drastically if someone got hurt, being the only male on the trip. The odds of us getting through this without

18 Carolyn Merchant, "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History," *Environmental History* 8, no. 3 (January 2003): 383.

19 John Muir cited in Merchant, "Shades of Darkness," *Environmental History* 8, no. 3 (January 2003): 387.

20 Sierra Club, "About Us" Sierra Club, accessed March 4, 2023. <https://www.sierraclub.org/>.

real injuries were unlikely because four of the seven people on the trip were older than 55. Within two hours of starting our journey that day, Andrea fell while descending on some switchbacks and broke her ankle within two hours of starting our journey that day! By this point, we depended on the "road apples" on the path because horse and mule parties carried items between the sites to replenish camp supplies. We were more aware of the rolling thunderstorms you heard before the sky opened up as they traveled across the park. So once we found help and the rangers packed Andrea up on a mule to evacuate her, we knew we had to get to the campsite before the storm caught us. The terrain changed dramatically throughout the day, with us spending a significant portion of our hike walking among granite boulders and pathways you don't want to be caught on during a bolt of lightning.

When we reached the Lake Merced High Sierra Camp Site, Donna and two other women on the trip stayed back with Andrea while help was on its way, so we knew they were out there in the storm. After pitching our tent and making our way to the mess hall, the three of them had made it safely through the elements and to the campsite, they deserved a grand reception, but all we had were jolly rancher candies to give them. We spent two nights at this site in preparation for the highest elevation climb in one day in front of us. This was the second campsite with a visible waterfall within walking distance, so I spent a good portion of my time sitting peacefully, pondering my journey ahead. The site was beautiful, with the lake surrounded by dramatic granite peaks on one side and a river that flowed through granite boulders. By the second day, I could barely contain myself. I was keeping a secret that I needed to get off my chest. So I told Donna, "I will propose to Emily at Vogelsang. I've been carrying the ring in a box hidden in a roll of duct tape in the bottom of my backpacking bag the whole time."²¹

In the summer of 1903 and 1904, Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National park were transformed by four troops of Black soldiers from the US Army's 9th Cavalry. Captain Charles Young led Troops I and M down to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park in the summer of 1903, while Troop K and L of the 9th were led by a white soldier "Major John Bigelow Jr."²² and were stationed in Yosemite in the summer of 1904. While their paths diverged near Madera, California, their duties and responsibilities remained the same in the parks.

²¹ Edward Hill Jr., "Field Notes," Yosemite, 2014.

²² Meyerson, *Nature's Army*, 5693, Kindle Edition.

Regarding Captain Charles Young's time in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, I found significant information about this period. During Young's Career, he developed close relationships with two of the most prolific Black voices and leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B Dubois. Throughout their friendships, the men wrote each other letters and visited Young in San Francisco and the parks. Their friendship spans decades, and W.E.B Dubois paid the ultimate respect to his friend by delivering Young's eulogy at his funeral.

While in the parks, Young and his troop built roads and trails and helped rid the area of sheep that were destroying the region's natural landscape and indigenous plants. One of the most impressive feats during his time as Park Superintendent was building five miles of road in the park. Only six miles of road had been completed during the previous three seasons, showing Young had a way of getting the most out of his men when building and maintaining park infrastructures. Captain Young fell in love with the park's beauty and understood the importance of preserving its integrity.

A journey through this park and the Sierra Forest Reserve to the Mount Whitney country will convince even the least thoughtful man of the needfulness of preserving these mountains just as they are, with their clothing of trees, shrubs, rocks, and vines, and of their importance to the valley's below as reservoirs for storage of water for agricultural and domestic purposes. In this, then, lies the necessity of forest preservation.²³

Captain Young's time of service in the park with 123 other Black men was short, but he and his men left an impression on a critical time in the Black experience. While many families were seeking refuge away from traditional enslavement states, the injustices that flowed with Jim Crow Laws and the acts of violence committed against Black people. Some Buffalo Soldiers were exploring the western wilderness without the constant fear of violent, racist, white supremacists taking their lives.

²³ Capt. Charles Young, 9th Cavalry, Sequoia National Park, 1903, quoted in Johnson, "Invisible Men," 6.

These men shared a similar existence, cultivating the land and helping the US create an image for themselves that would be shared worldwide. It is a reminder that Black people have had many diverse experiences while trying to attain their version of freedom within the boundaries of the US. Local communities and leaders applauded the work of the Buffalo Soldiers led by Captain Young. One community presented him with a gift that he immediately turned down, saying, "they could do so if they felt the same way twenty years hence."²⁴ It was not until 2004 that a tree was named in honor of Captain Young; that same season, a tree was also dedicated to Booker T. Washington.

While most of the accomplishments of Captain Young's troop attracted less controversy, the creation of the first trail up Mt. Whitney was the one area that saw conflict. Much of the information I have found around the creation of the first trail up to Mt. Whitey is commonly told as 1904, yet there was a celebration that happened in 1903 that took place after men from the 9th calvary completed the trail, as recorded by a local newspaper, says Ward Eldredge, in his book *In the summer of 1903: Colonel Charles Young and the Buffalo Soldiers in Sequoia National Park*.²⁵ Without the *Visalia Delta* newspaper reports, it is easy to see how this story could have easily been forgotten and, with it, the Buffalo Soldiers' rightful place in the park's history.

Major John Bigelow, a white soldier who led Troop K and L of the 9th and was also stationed in Yosemite, and his experiences are critical to my understanding of these Black soldiers' time and their accomplishments. Two of the most significant contributions that occurred in Yosemite happened in 1904 when the soldiers constructed the "first arboretum and botanical garden in a national park."²⁶ This was huge in that it also means that the Black Soldiers were a part of building this historic place in the park, further connecting themselves to the American story of the conservation of national parks. Unfortunately, Major Bigelow is often the only one credited for creating this massive project, and the men who helped him are usually not mentioned. This is a prime example of how historians can quickly and effectively silence a part of a history when it does

24 Shellum, *Black Officer in a Buffalo Soldier Regiment*, 149.

25 Ward Eldredge, *In the Summer of 1903: Colonel Charles Young and the Buffalo Soldiers in Sequoia National Park* (Three Rivers, CA: Sequoia Natural History Association, 2005), 13.

26 Meyerson, *Nature's Army*, 5701, Kindle edition.

not fit their overall narrative. The arboretum and botanical gardens deteriorated over time and no longer exist.

The fact that there was no effort to rebuild or reestablish the arboretum and botanical gardens signals a missed opportunity to help Black communities see a reflection of themselves in the outdoors. In *Museums, Monuments, And National Parks*, Denise Meringolo explains the importance of preserving historic sites for historians and the public. According to Meringolo, "Park Service historians' access to historic landscapes and artifacts provided them with a unique insight that could both enhance traditional scholarship and provide consumers with a more accurate picture of the past."²⁷ Allowing this historic site to lay in ruins denies visitors the full and diverse story of the creation of these sites of national importance.

The second crucial aspect of Major Bigelow's time in the park is that the arboretum and botanical garden created "the first marked nature trail in the national park system, with log seats and neatly painted signposts identifying plants by their Latin species names."²⁸ This project, accomplished during the summer of 1904, would also put the Buffalo Soldiers squarely in the middle of the story as they were with Bigelow while all this was happening. Granted, some civilians were contracted out to help. Still, it can not be overstated enough that these historical moments are intimately connected with the story of Black people navigating a changing world around them. The historical silencing of these contributions by Black men during the late nineteenth century profoundly affected how the history of the park is told and represented today. By uplifting these stories, historians can change how Black people's experiences in the outdoors are communicated and studied.

Vogelsang(8.4 miles) Vogelsang Camp 10,300 ft

It felt good to be leaving Lake Merced. It meant relief was close, and I could finally exhale. The hike away from the Campsite was a beautiful, lush forest with towering trees and green brush with ferns and flowers popping up left and right. Babbling creeks and waterfalls littered our walk out into the higher country. It wasn't the 8.4 miles that were

27 Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 134.

28 Meyerson, *Nature's Army*, 5701, Kindle edition.

tough. It was the 2,000ft in elevation we had to climb. The weather the past few days always involved rain, thunder, and lightning, and today was no different. The switchbacks tested my legs, lungs, and sanity throughout the climb, yet my heart knew what was in store. When we climbed to the top of Vogelsang, we could see multiple storms coming in, one in front of us and another behind, reminding us we needed to descend the peak quickly and pitch our tents. Within 20 minutes of settling into our campsite at Vogelsang, a storm slid over the tops of the surrounding granite peaks and poured rain and hail upon us, the winds shook our tent, and the temperature dropped. We were safe and snuggled up in our Marmot two-person tent, and I fell asleep for 30 minutes. After what had to be a stress-induced nap, the time had come, after fumbling in my sleeping bag, with the ring box in hand, I asked Emily: "Will you Marry Me."²⁹

One of the common reasons Black people do not visit National Parks or enjoy local recreation areas is due to the lack of representation of Black people. Not just from within the parks themselves but even with how the films and popular culture perpetuate images of the types of people who enjoy the outdoors. In some cases, it seems as if all media outlets are continuing to limit the way not only Black people see themselves, but white people, too. Finney says in her book, "there is a paucity of imagery that highlights black folks creatively and positively interacting with their natural environment, be it hiking or working in an urban Garden."³⁰ In 2020, only 6.7% of the National Park Service employees identified as Black.³¹ Hiring more people of color could help visitors better imagine themselves occupying and enjoying the National Parks.

According to Finney, "while outside places white men (and to a lesser degree white women) in diverse outdoors settings around the world, African Americans are limited to landscapes that suggest a fixed identity- at once familiar, common, and narrowly defined."³² From basketball courts, football fields, and street corners, some images of Black people in their communities serve as absolute representations of the African American experience in the United States. This idea makes it extremely difficult to navigate outside of these assumed roles due to bias-

29 Edward Hill, "Field Notes," Yosemite, 2014.

30 Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*, 87.

31 "By the Numbers," National Park Service, accessed March 24, 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/by-the-numbers.htm>.

32 Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*, 78.

es based on racist ideals and policies meant to limit the physical movement and monetary gains of Black people. It leaves these communities with limited resources and options for obtaining a better way of living for themselves and generations to come.

This is where the opportunity for new frames of thought around the outdoors and the relationships Black people share with these recreational spaces can be explored further. This line of research and work can potentially change the Black community's health by encouraging them to leave the confines of their sometimes underfunded communities and venture into the wild. To explore and enjoy the serenity that exists within our national parks. The type of immersive educational experiences needed to accomplish the reframing of this narrative are doable and within reach. Unfortunately, many sources with the soldiers are scattered around and not readily available online. So it means that scholars have to piece together little by little the story of these four units of men and corroborate between sources to connect the dots.

Cheese Burger (7 miles) Tuolumne Meadows Lodge 8,600 ft

The Hike to the car from Vogelsang was less eventful than the other connecting sites, but that was relieving. On our last morning in the park, we trekked down the mountain with ease as a newly engaged couple; while that was one of the most critical aspects of the journey, one thing became clear to me. My time in the park filled my heart with joy, and even as we were hiking to our car, it became clear that returning was a must. Despite the physical toll hiking takes on your body, my mind was clear and sharp, and my heart was full of joy from the sounds, smells, and aspects of nature I engaged with during our journey.

Two years later, when I returned to Yosemite for another backpacking trip, the familiar call of a bird settled me into this new journey and brought me back to a familiar place.³³

A common joke in popular culture, one that my friends and I also perpetuate, is that Black people do not enjoy the outdoors and that hiking and camping are the last things you will find them doing. Writer and oral historian Nikki Brueggeman ex-

33 Edward Hill Jr., "Field Notes," Yosemite, 2014.

plains, “Black people do not have a natural aversion to camping or the great outdoors; we have a natural aversion to racism and abuse. We don’t go camping because we hate mosquitoes, need heated rooms, or hate campfires, we don’t go camping because the industry has not been welcoming.”³⁴ Growing up, I held tightly to ideas like the ones Finney describe when she said, “defining black identity becomes less about expanding our possibilities and more about not being perceived as trying to white by doing ‘white’ activities.”³⁵ But with time and a lot of life experience, I realized that the story of the Buffalo Soldiers and their time as National Park stewards served to disrupt the false narrative that the outdoors is for white people. There is no denying the negative impact historical trauma like lynching and enslavement has on the millions of Black people, who learned generationally of the struggles that their relatives endured. The Black community within the US has the potential to reframe their relationships with the outdoors and heal from the known and unknown trauma that is holding them back from taking up space where they rightfully belong. Black people’s relationships with the earth and nature exceed the pain and exploitation of their bodies and communities by racist policies and people.

I plan to continue this research to tell a more diverse story of the experience of Black people in the outdoors in California. As I dive deeper into the narratives, I plan to continue venturing into the park further to expand my knowledge and comfort with the outdoors. By sharing these experiences with my two kids under six years old, I am informing the next generation of their place in the wilderness and that they should never hesitate to take up space outdoors. My main takeaway from this research is that “we” are more than the sum of their narrative. Black populations must see the National Parks and other outdoor areas as safe spaces for black faces. By shining a light on stories like this and making them readily available to youth, we can encourage the younger generation to follow in their footsteps.

34 Brueggeman, “Why Black People Don’t Go Camping.”

35 Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*, 86.



Illustration by Kai Fukuda, Chico State

Ecocide of West Papua

under Colonial Rule of the Dutch and Indonesian Governments

By Mya Elliott

Abstract: This paper investigates the ecological and cultural destruction of the indigenous people of West Papua, who the Dutch had first colonized and then transferred to Indonesia, a country that once had been a Dutch Colony as well. Colonization is not distant from our past; it slowly evolves, which this paper highlights. The international community has continuously ignored the abuses indigenous communities face and the decline of these populations. Each section of this paper goes through different periods that cover the colonization, decolonization, and recolonization of West Papua, truly recognizing that the fight for sovereignty has persisted throughout the centuries.

Ecocide refers to criminal activities that destroy ecosystems, typically for economic prospects and capitalistic ventures. All systems of oppression are interconnected, as humans are to the environment, as environmental justice is to social and racial justice. For centuries people living in the global north (North America, Europe, and Australia) have increased their economic prosperity, often at the expense of those in the global south (Latin America, Asia, and Africa). When the global north ignores the historical and tangible evidence of climate change and ecological damage, the global south suffers. BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) communities struggle with substantially higher rates of natural disasters, drought, famine, and disease, often forcing them off

their land.¹ Globally, BIPOC communities' have never received proper acknowledgment of the environmental disruptions they regularly experience. The lack of coverage about BIPOC ecocide, whether in the news or scholarly outlets, has allowed decades of abuse and oppression to persist.

The current focus on studies of marginalized communities touches upon human rights violations and possible genocidal acts. Yet, many of these studies lack an environmental lens which can also be helpful when discussing the cultural destruction of a community. West Papua, the western peninsula of the island of New Guinea, has a long history of colonization, human rights abuses, and population decline to the people within this region. Even before European exploration began, West Papua and other neighboring islands brought about sporadic trade and migration due to the rich natural resources. Trade, amongst other elements of their society and land, were suddenly exploited and expanded into industries. Once Europe came into contact with West Papua and other adjacent islands, extreme interest was shown in the area's natural abundance of resources. To understand the current human rights abuses the people of West Papua are experiencing under the control of the Indonesian government, we must consider how Dutch colonial rule impacted the political systems within the region of West Papua and the ongoing systems of oppression there. Understanding the issues of West Papua will allow individuals to grasp how important it is to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

The Arrival of Europeans: Earliest Records of Colonization

The arrival of Europeans, such as the Dutch, Portuguese, and English, brought about economic change, leading to a decline in trade between these neighboring islands. In the seventeenth century, the Spanish and Portuguese were the first European explorers to search between Australia and New Guinea; however, it was not until near the end of the century they determined the two territories were separate from each other. Before Europeans arrived, West Papua and many adjacent

¹ Indigenous communities account for less than five percent of the world's population yet, they manage and support around 80% of the world's biodiversity. They play a critical role in the protection and conservation for all ecosystems and species; see Gleb Raygorodetsky, "Indigenous Peoples Defend Earth's Biodiversity- but They're in Danger," *National Geographic*, November 16, 2018, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/can-indigenous-land-stewardship-protect-biodiversity->.

islands had trading systems dating as far back as 2,000 to 2,500 years ago, which allowed them to trade with larger nation-states such as China, Persia, and Turkey. Common trading commodities included sea cucumbers, indigenous spices, enslaved people, and bird-of-paradise pelts; usually, only people of high status could obtain such items. When trade in the region of West Papua began to pick up its pace, the Dutch began a conquest to monopolize the trade in Eastern Indonesia and smaller islands like Maluku off the western coast of New Guinea.² The Netherlands established the East India Trade company in 1602, formally known as the Dutch Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), which put many islands connected to the Maluku spice trade under the authority of the Dutch.

Trade was controlled heavily in parts such as Java and western New Guinea. According to Moore, slavery was essential to Melanesian and trade-labor society.³ Historically, numerous societies have enslaved humans for payment, gifts, or punishments. The local barter system within the island regions maintained a traditional *sosolot* exchange network.⁴ As the Dutch concentrated production of agriculture and trade to a specific few islands, it altered the region's ecosystems. Thousands of trees were destroyed to halt the trading systems of spice, which accounts for some of the earliest acts of ecocide. This attempt to control an entire agricultural system completely transformed the traditional trading systems. The Dutch control of agricultural trade also allowed them to monopolize human trade. The enslavement of individuals was once a necessity to the indigenous trade society, then became a crucial aspect of the newly advancing European economy. The Dutch interest in human trade seemed to be driven by the racist and hierarchical beliefs many of these powerful white nations had normalized in their societies. According to Moore, enslaved people from west New Guinea had a high property value for the few centuries slavery was "legally" permitted, "the first Dutch attempt to control the human trade from New Guinea was a treaty signed at Onin in 1678 which fixed the price of slaves and regulated

2 The ferocious Dutch quest for monopoly caused migrations out of eastern Indonesia into west New Guinea waters, which forced earlier Melanesian inhabitants to other surrounding islands or onto the New Guinea mainland; see Clive Moore, *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 64-65.

3 Slavery in Malayan and Melanesian worlds stretch meaning to include far more flexible states of bondage, which may indeed be transitory; see Moore, *New Guinea*, 67.

4 *Sosolot* trading relationships contain elements of ceremonial exchange, trade in goods and humans acted as the link between cultural spheres; see Moore, *New Guinea*, 69.

their supply to VOC bases.”⁵ Not long after the Dutch gained a monopoly on the spice trade, the industry faded out once they had destroyed large numbers of territories, ecosystems, and populations.⁶ New ideas in the mid-seventeenth century led to further conquest for precious metals and increased exploitation of west New Guinea after having multiple failed voyages further east to Torres Strait. The Dutch continuously failed in many of the industries they planned on dominating. That continuous failure led to a halt in exploring west New Guinea and other surrounding islands, thus strengthening their interest and involvement in human trade networks with those regions.

The Dutch attempted to remain a dominant power in the age of European empires by being involved in human trade. The Dutch never truly had an interest in the land and islands surrounding New Guinea; they simply wanted to keep other European powers out of their territories.⁷ Their monopoly on human trade within this region was made possible through newer weaponry that most indigenous communities had yet to obtain. The Dutch found the indigenous inhabitants to be barbarous being that many of the Dutch explorers and government officials who had ventured over to the region of west New Guinea to purchase more slaves, often experienced interactions that escalated to situations of violence. Moore explains that “in 1664, the governor of Banda described the coastal people of the Onin Peninsula as ‘pirates, murderers and villains, crafty, suspicious and only faithful to those they feared.’”⁸ The Dutch observed that the coastal people of Onin feared specific islands and regions that had controlled much of the *sosolot* exchange that had flourished before European intervention. The Dutch and other governments made multiple treaties, such as Tidore, which ultimately fixed the price of traded commodi-

5 Moore, *New Guinea*, 68.

6 The two main trading bases in the Dutch spice monopoly were the territories of Ambon and Banda. In the 1610s and 1620s the voc enforced their control on Banda with devastating consequences, only 1,000 survived out of a population of 15,000; the rest were starved, killed, or forced out to other surrounding islands. Many of the adjacent communities suffered a similar fate every once in a while, they came into contact with the Dutch; see Moore, *New Guinea*, 82-83.

7 Characterized during a period of large-scale exploration, Dutch settlement in West New Guinea usually came closely connected with the increased activity of the English and Germans. A plan during the early twentieth century to explore and map the interior region for the first time was halted due to the beginning of World War 1. For more information, see Jan Pouwer, “The Colonisation, Decolonisation and Recolonisation of West New Guinea,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 161-162.

8 Moore, *New Guinea*, 85.

ties like enslaved humans and timber.⁹ After the beginning of the eighteenth century, very little progress was made by the Dutch, and the VOC ultimately lost a great deal of its power. They wanted to maintain a monopoly on trade in the eastern waters but usually focused on a few islands. By 1784 the Dutch monopoly over the East Indies had finally been broken after the ending of a war between the Netherlands and Britain with the Treaty of Paris.¹⁰ It was a constant battle between the Dutch and the British, who often allied with surrounding island nations to gain full access to New Guinea and the passages around it for trading routes. A peace treaty in 1815 restored all previous colonial power the Dutch had in their possession. In 1824 the Treaty of London between the Netherlands and Great Britain gave free trading rights within the archipelago to the British.¹¹ The Dutch maintained the right to levy taxes within the region but now had to allow other companies to trade there.

Origins of a Global Trade System: Beginnings of Capitalism within the Region

The turn of the century led to new commodities that had increased the interest of the Europeans within this region; both the Dutch and the British established new settlements that strengthened the whaling trade for oil and other commodities like pearls. Mercantilism had gone by the wayside and was no longer the driving factor in the nineteenth-century economy. Instead, European's economic philosophy shifted toward ideas about free trade and laissez-faire processes. As industrialization and modernization accelerated, the global market grew immensely and incentivized European governments to exhaust trading systems and ecosystems until no more capital could be exploited. Ecocide has come in multiple different forms throughout the history of western New Guinea, since the first contact with modernized European nations the region was tar-

9 In 1667, the VOC had acknowledged Tidore's jurisdiction over Onin and surrounding areas, which meant that the Sultanate was responsible for dealing with the marauding pirates. The commercial commodity of wood and bark had decreased in the world market so there was less of an incentive for Tidore to exert power over outside territories, leaving the Dutch and other European powers to combat disturbances themselves. Moore, *New Guinea*, 85.

10 Moore, *New Guinea*, 89.

11 After the British seizure of the Dutch East Indies territory in 1811, the British were able to establish a number of trading routes between British colonies and east Australia. Both parties had what was said to be a different set of interests so the colonies were returned; multiple parties were able to exploit the region and gain their own profits from what was once an indigenous trade route; see Moore, *New Guinea*, 93.

geted as During the 1860's, Europeans were able to develop a sophisticated understanding of Islander customs which became a crucial aspect in their commercial success.¹² During this period, the Dutch were able to maintain control over regions like Tidore that had thrived during the spice trade. Commodities that were once were eventually phased out due to the lack of interest and incentive of the global market.

During the end of the nineteenth century, numerous expeditions occurred due to the desire to establish government and trading bases. The Dutch investigated the possibility of building military bases along the northern coast in convenience of traveling shipments. That first excursion to Hollandia was not until 1850, and it was the first actual move the Dutch had made to gain further control over the region of West Papua. Hollandia was a government base established sixty years later, now it is the capital of Indonesia's Papua Province known as Jayapura.¹³ It was often a power struggle between the British and the Dutch. The Dutch feared the British gaining more control over the area surrounding West Papua and trade. By the beginning of the twentieth century, no clear boundaries had been established towards the middle of New Guinea; only boundaries were made clear towards the coasts, as the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Germany had land holdings on the island. Further exploration and expansion into the region began from 1907 to 1915. The first long-term European settlers happened to be Christian missionaries.¹⁴ Dutch anthropologist Jan Pouver describes "...an initiative of Captain H. Colijn, who was later to become a Dutch Prime minister, and was the first time that many of the regions were explored and mapped... However, the exploration programme was suspended soon after World War I broke out."¹⁵ The Dutch were at the end of their colonial rule, and since little progress had been made in West Papua, the immigration of Dutch citizens was, in a way, their last power play.

12 Moore, *New Guinea*, 129.

13 Moore, *New Guinea*, 97.

14 It was 1898 by the time the Netherlands had finally established its first government center on the mainland of New Guinea, permanently. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were still only five mission stations in west New Guinea: Mansinam, Kwawe and Andai at Dorei Bay, along with Roon and Windessi. In 1905 no more than 260 converts in west New Guinea had been recorded as a large majority of these communities were Moslems with belief systems of their own, giving homage to their land. For more information, see Moore, *New Guinea*, 123-124.

15 Pouver, "The Colonisation, Decolonisation and Recolonisation of West New Guinea," 161- 162.

Period of Inattentiveness: Failed Migration Plans

The interwar period allowed for more expansion and exploration of missionaries and less government influence. The *Journal of Pacific History* published the earliest ethnographic data from west New Guinea, which offers accounts from explorations of the earlier twentieth century; there is a noticeable theme of Dutch colonization and this idea of providing “assistance” for these undeveloped societies even when the native inhabitants look healthy and are thriving without European influence.¹⁶ Transmigration of citizens from their nation is how the Dutch strategically acted to maintain their control over the region. The first to come along were small groups of missionaries; however, there was a much larger group interested in settling within the territory of west New Guinea. Dutch-American politician scientist Arend Lijphart describes “the foundations for the completely unrealistic Eurasian plans to establish a fatherland in New Guinea were laid in the period between the two world wars when a number of Eurasian attempted to emigrate to New Guinea.”¹⁷ The 1930s had hit many larger nations with the effects of the Great Depression, making it harder for people to find work, thus generating interest in migration into the territory for most groups of people having Dutch citizenship.

What was once a battle between nations for territory had now become a battle of classes within the Netherlands as to who had priority in emigrating to a Dutch colony; the constant back and forth led to no actual action being taken, leaving west New Guinea to another period of inattentiveness. The Dutch found no real economic purpose for the region but kept it in use in a tactical sense. Eventually, more and more nations became interested in the area due to the abundance of natural resources and lack of corporate influence. The pressures from the Japanese powers were too much for the Netherlands. After World War II, a temporary Japanese invasion led to Surkano

16 A.C. de Kock’s first recorded encounters with the indigenous inhabitants of west New Guinea provided much insight of the appearance and lifestyles of the one’s living inland. The Dutch interactions with the indigenous people are an obvious attempt of getting the indigenous communities as well as their lands resources to be apart of the global market. It is quite obvious indigenous communities are extremely resourceful contact of the Europeans only worsened their living conditions; see Jan A. Godschalk, “A.C. de Kock’s Encounter with the ‘Goliath Pygmies’: The First Ethnographic Data from the Mek Culture Area in the Eastern Highlands of Irian Jaya,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 219–28.

17 Eurasian refers to a person of both European and Asian descent. Arend Lijphart, *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 69.

claiming independence for multiple islands in the East Indies, including Indonesia, in 1949. The Netherlands was able to reclaim its power in west New Guinea to bring the people of West Papua to independence; however, they still relinquished control of many territories within the Dutch East Indies to Indonesia.¹⁸ The Indonesians occupied West Papua for twenty years with no formal agreement. During the 1950's, the Indonesian and Dutch governments debated as to who would gain the rights to West Papua, even going so far as to involve the United Nations and the United States. The United States supported Indonesia to promote democratic reforms and national stability. U.S. support also made sense because numerous American firms had a commercial interest in the region, and Indonesia was willing to allow the companies to continue to exploit West Papua. Arend Lijphart, a historian specializing in Dutch colonization during the interwar period, often argued that the anxieties arising from the Cold War incentivized these outside actors to side with Indonesia during the transfer agreement.

Indonesia: A New Colonial Power in West Papua

On August 15th, 1962, both the Indonesian and Dutch governments signed the New York Agreement NYA, and the new province of Indonesia was known as Irian Barat. In 1969 the Indonesian government held an Act of Free Choice to allow the indigenous West Papuans to vote for their independence or to be under the control of the Indonesian government.¹⁹ The most valuable sources I found for this section include films and government documents to understand the impacts of colonial influence. There is a few sources available that offer an indigenous voice and perspective; however, the documentary film titled *Arrows Against the Wind* directed by Liz Groome, offers an extraordinary perspective of the lifestyles of two tribes that

18 In terms of political development, the eastern part of the island was about 10 years behind the western part and fifty years behind advanced developing countries, where widespread political consciousness had awoken after the First World. Indonesia's fight for independence deeply struck the communities within West Papua to want a similar future for themselves; see Kees Lagerberg, *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 92.

19 Indonesia led a wonderful theatrical performance as they had forced many Papuans to rehearse the singing, dancing, voting, and cheering that took place after the Act of Free Choice. It was said that 1,025 tribal leaders had been rounded up and forced to vote for independence or Indonesian rule, being held accountable for thousands of others who most likely would choose their freedom over anything else. For more information, see Evan Luard, *A History of the United Nations: Volume 2: The Age of Decolonization, 1955-1965* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 165-166.

are considered to be some of the last groups of people to come into contact with the modern world so late in history. Released in 1993, *Arrows Against the Wind* shows how people's lives in the innermost regions of West Papua had only been affected to a considerable extent by the very end of the twentieth century. It focuses on two main tribes – the Dani and the Asmat – going through a transformative period. Less than a decade before the film was released, these communities were considered to be living within the stone age. Indonesia's modernized society overtook the Dani and Asmat socially, economically, and politically. *Arrows Against the Wind* explains, "the Dani tribes number around 200,000 people...the Dani have retained their land and their traditional culture has remained essentially intact."²⁰

Rural communities within West Papua live entirely different lives from urban Papuans, many having to assimilate into the cultural and social norms under Indonesian occupation. *Arrows Against the Wind* provides a perspective of life before colonial influence, specifically in their cultures and routines. The other documentary film, *Forgotten Colonization* by Damien Faure, offers a view of the outcome of Indonesian occupation in the twenty-first century after industries had entirely taken over West Papua, destroying the land and resources of the rural Papuans. Although there is only a decade difference in the films' release dates, they connect very well. At the end of the Groome film, the narrator mentions that the two tribes have little understanding of the extent of the seriousness of the Indonesian government moving further inland, which ultimately led to the displacement and murder of large numbers of the tribe members. *Forgotten Colonization* offers insight into the aftermath of the displacement of those larger populations of the indigenous Papuans; in the twenty-first century, we see these communities struggling for survival as they are not even offered asylum in Papua New Guinea. *Forgotten Colonization* explains, "the disappearance of the forest is also catastrophic for the refugees as their principal food source is the sago palm tree. A few years ago, this tree was easily found in the camps. Today, you need to walk several hours across the jungle to find a few rare sago palm trees standing."²¹ Sago pulp is the primary source of West Papuans' nutrients. The indigenous in-

20 Tracey Groome, *Arrows Against the Wind* (Vancouver, BC: Face to Face Media, 1993), 8:35-8:50.

21 Damien Faure, *Forgotten Colonization* (AAA Production, 2010), 9:55-10:00.

habitants were once considered to have the most sophisticated agriculture system in the world during the twentieth century, now living with the everyday issue as to where their next meal may be coming from. This region flourished when the people lived in harmony and in accordance with the land, now experiencing immense levels of environmental degradation.²² There is a constant cry for help as the indigenous Papuans struggle daily to acquire basic living needs such as food and clean water. To stay in control over a region, the Dutch and Indonesian governments have used similar tactics of ecological destruction to degrade the indigenous peoples of West Papua. Ecocide is used to completely break down the inhabitants' spirits, making it easier for capitalist nations like Indonesia to exploit land where people cannot fight because they are barely surviving.

Continuing Effects of Ecocide: Ecological Exploitation

Environmental change disproportionately affects marginalized communities. When large multinational corporations do business in places like West Papua, their stakeholders care more about profits than people, and the most vulnerable get exploited. For instance, the company Freeport McMoRan. In 1995, this Texas-based company was considered the world's largest mining company, and has been exploiting several regions for the last few decades. Freeport has been known for funding the displacement of local peoples within the region while also mining "... 78,000 tonnes of ore/day...all of this mine waste and tailing into rivers surrounding freeport, making water toxic and thick with slit, smothering and killing all plant life along the previously fertile river banks."²³ Freeport McMoRan is one of many companies exploiting the land and people of West Papua.

The ecological exploitation of West Papua is nothing new

22 West Papua's environment is experiencing an influx in logging and mining in petroleum and other precious metals. The influx of transmigration has created another incentive for the Indonesian government to create more land for Indonesian workers who are willing to work for these companies that continue to fund these programs. 500,000 people from Dawa had migrated to West Papua just after 1999. For more information, see *Ecuador, Nigeria, West Papua Indigenous Communities, Environmental Degradation, and International Human Rights Standards* (Washington, DC.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2011), 22-23.

23 "History of West Papua," Free West Papua, accessed November 14, 2021, <https://www.freewestpapua.org/info/history-of-west-papua/>.

and the people of this world have completely turned a blind eye away from the true effects of environmental degradation. It began early as the region could produce tropical crops that Europeans could not grow in their territories. As societies changed and different desires for other commodities arose, West Papua has seen a significant increase in the misuse of their land and resources, especially in the last century. The Indonesian government has continued implementing the same ideals and tactics used under Dutch colonial rule. Understanding colonialism is essential to understanding present-day ecocidal destruction within the region and how it has immensely affected indigenous populations. Dutch colonizers have been replaced with powerful corporations, and governments continuing to fund projects that remove inhabitants from their land and destroy the region's ecology, especially in BIPOC communities. The people of West Papua desperately need independence from the Indonesian government as they are close to extinction. It is time to raise the indigenous voices of West Papua and other countries in the global south to effect lasting change to those struggling with ecocide.



*Illustration by **May Saechao**, Chico State*

Chinese Immigration and Alienation in America:

The Chinese Exclusion Act and Angel Island, 1882-1940

By Christine Nguyen

Abstract: This paper will address the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Angel Island Immigration Station. Anglo-Americans enforced this national legislation targeted at the Chinese to limit Chinese immigration in America. The first half of the paper intends to explain the historiography of this national legislation by utilizing six historians' works. These six historians discovered various nuances that contributed to the official American immigration narrative. This anti-Chinese legislation eventually led to the development of Angel Island, which aimed to exclude and not admit ordinary Chinese individuals. The paper's second half focuses on the Chinese detainees' experiences and voices while at Angel Island. These personal accounts raised awareness of the oppression they faced as a non-dominant racial minority population. Ultimately, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Angel Island changed American immigration history.

*When we bade farewell to our village home,
We were in tears because of survival's desperation.
When we arrived in the American territory,
We stared in vain at the vast ocean.
Our ship docked
And we were transferred to a solitary island.
Ten li from the city,
My feet stand on this lonely hill.
The muk uk is three stories high,
Built as firmly as the Great Wall.*

*Room after room are but jails,
And the North Gate firmly locked.*

*Here —
Several hundred of my countrymen are like fish caught in a net;
Half a thousand Yellow Race are like birds trapped in a mesh.
As we lift our heads and look a far,
The barbarian reed popes add all the more to our anguish and grief.
As we cock our ears and try to listen,
The horses' neighing further worsens our solitude and sorrow.¹*

Imagine landing by ship in America in the twentieth century, watching people stare at you, and then quickly getting transferred to a remote island because of your distinctive physical features, including your skin tone and dark almond-shaped eyes. This is what it meant to be Chinese and a detainee. During the nineteenth century, numerous Chinese individuals became discontent with China's imperial power, which had crumbled to the point that the country was not functioning well. China fought with Britain over opium and faced social reformation, like high taxes, that negatively affected the Chinese population. Shortly, several Chinese individuals flocked to the United States to escape poverty and search for employment opportunities, such as railroad work and gold mining, for a better life than they had in China.

Anglo-Americans had concerns about the influx of Chinese individuals arriving in the United States. They viewed the racial group as a menace to their society due to cultural differences, economic competition, and other factors. It led to continuous othering and condemnation against the Chinese population as distinctly other than their own. To address the surge of Chinese individuals, Anglo-Americans enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This national legislation restricted the number of Chinese individuals, particularly Chinese laborers, who could obtain legal status, work, or enter the United States. Soon, the enforcement of this anti-Chinese legislation influenced the development of Angel Island.

From 1910 to 1940, Anglo-Americans established Angel Is-

¹ Poem written by a detained individual, who remained silent and struggled to get heard; see Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 168.

land and operated it as an immigration station in San Francisco. Establishing Angel Island had the primary purpose of enforcing immigration laws and regulations, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and making decisions to inspect, accept, or deport specific immigrants before allowing them entry into the United States. The United States immigration policies centered on race, gender, and class, predominantly excluding minorities, like Chinese people, who were perceived as a national and racial threat to America. Angel Island became a place where cultures collided over what defined American identity. This complicated history gives insight into how Chinese immigration intersected with nation-building and race. This paper will address how former Chinese detainees experienced challenges at Angel Island because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This paper argues that Angel Island was a microcosm of the oppressive restrictions and conditions Chinese people faced throughout the United States. This oppression caused them to face racial discrimination, denial of their human rights to access resources, and fears that Anglo-Americans would uncover their true identities as non-native United States citizens.

New Paradigm on Angel Island

Several scholars remarkably mention little about the lives of Chinese detainees during the twentieth century. It is crucial that scholars shift their discussion from the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the experiences of Chinese detainees that were quartered at Angel Island to understand the complicated relationship between Anglo-Americans and Chinese. Chinese detainees' experiences and voices help reconstruct the challenging politics and racist immigration policies. Anglo-Americans long silenced or eliminated Chinese detainees' perspectives to downplay racial exclusion and discrimination. In essence, Anglo-Americans refused to acknowledge the realities of oppressive systems and aimed to maintain a fabricated historical account of America as if nothing morally wrong ever happened. By perpetuating this misleading narrative, they ignored the injustices and inequalities that marginalized Chinese people encountered.

Memory and history create an intertwined connection to understand how Chinese detainees' accounts provide a complete picture of Angel Island. Anglo-Americans have deliberate-

ly kept the story of Angel Island out of the public eye to avoid appearing villainous or evil. One could argue that Anglo-Americans wanted to uphold romanticized visions of America as a pure white nation. To construct a more sympathetic narrative, they sought to erase any negative aspects of US immigration history, such as racism. Although, today's mainstream US history has not frequently mentioned the history of Angel Island. Still, this provides a unique angle and depth on how Angel Island and the anti-Chinese legislation affected Chinese detainees. The first-hand accounts contained significant themes, including identity and assimilation, indicating the Chinese were second-class citizens.

History as a field of study has changed over time, prompting people to rethink the US immigration narrative. Scholars have recovered and collected the memories of the Chinese detainees rather than letting these histories die. Recounting detainees' historical trauma, namely the loss of language and cultural ties, can enable Chinese individuals to reclaim connections to the past. Reliving that trauma can be uncomfortable and bring back memories of discrimination, shame, pain, guilt, and loneliness. Most Chinese detainees shared similar intrusive memories of Angel Island. Some individuals deliberately tried to forget their memories, while others may have recalled their stay differently. Unpacking all the inaccuracies about Angel Island reveals the long and complex history of US immigration. Isolating this history allows us to see whose narratives get told and perpetuated in different spaces. Considering Chinese detainees as part of a collective unit helps preserve their voices and experiences and brings to light how the policies of Angel Island and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 affected their community. Remembering the Chinese individuals within the historical context of racist immigration policies reorients how historians discuss Angel Island and larger immigration narratives. Now, scholars can analyze the narratives of former Angel Island Chinese detainees to give victims a greater sense of ownership and control over their history. By not distorting the horrifying truth, historians can help empower Chinese individuals to address the historical trauma and heal from past injustices. This paper attempts to keep the memories of Chinese detainees alive rather than avoiding discussing this historical event.

Historians' Perspectives on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

Before delving into Angel Island as a product of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, it is essential to examine what historians have researched, and unpack the contested knowledge of the anti-Chinese legislation through various interpretations and analyses. These works include Erika Lee's *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*, Diana Ahmad's *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West*, Beth Lew-Williams' *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America*, Kenneth Marcus and Yong Chen's "Inside and Outside Chinatown: Chinese Elites in Exclusion Era California," and Wendy Jorae's "The Limits of Dress: Chinese American Childhood, Fashion, and Race in the Exclusion Era." All six historians' works examined how race, nation-building, immigration, exclusion, identity, assimilation, and resistance contribute to the broad overview of this anti-Chinese legislation.

In *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*, Erika Lee examines how the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 shaped Anglo-Americans to perceive Chinese as secondary races. She mentions that "Chinese exclusion [...] would become the foundation of American gatekeeping ideology: racializing Chinese immigrants as permanently [...] inferior."² Lee added: "whiteness was defined most clearly in opposition to Asian-ness or yellow-ness."³ Anglo-Americans regarded the Chinese as unworthy of entry into the United States because of the Chinese distinctive skin color. They divided themselves from the Chinese into racial categories; simultaneously, Anglo-Americans feared their culture would vanish if Chinese immigrants kept coming to America. Anglo-Americans implemented the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to prevent and limit Chinese from coming to the United States. For example, Lee reconstructs how the Anglo-Americans publicized their racial hatred for the Chinese. As Lee states, "stereotypes of Chinese as vice-ridden, diseased, and unassimilable surfaced in local newspapers."⁴ Anglo-Americans utilized local newspapers

2 Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 20.

3 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 31.

4 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 157.

to mobilize their people to eradicate the Chinese in America, fostering solidarity and inspiring a collective identity for how to run their society, despite not recognizing Chinese as United States citizens. The enacted Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 became a barrier because of the racial identity or cultural origin of the Chinese.

Other historians have concentrated on continuing racial discrimination toward the Chinese throughout nineteenth century. In *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America*, Beth Lew-Williams investigates how the mainstream US narratives often overlooked anti-Chinese violence. She explains how anti-Chinese violence should not appear in isolation but within the context of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. As the Chinese population grew, Anglo-Americans saw the cultural group as a "racial threat to nineteenth-century America."⁵ Anglo-Americans reinforced their white supremacy to justify their superiority over other races. They did not recognize Chinese individuals as authentically American. She examines how Anglo-Americans deliberately used anti-Chinese violence as a force to change their society. Specifically, Lew-Williams used local newspapers to prove her point about anti-Chinese violence. Every day anti-Chinese violence persisted in the United States, which "empowered by the example of others, local communities believed they could do what they wanted with their Chinese neighbors,"⁶ Lew-Williams writes. Anglo-Americans justified anti-Chinese violence to assert their demands, notably the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. They despised the Chinese individuals and believed that separating themselves from the racial group would better their lives. Anglo-Americans alienated the cultural group, denying them a sense of national belonging in the United States. Ultimately, Lew-Williams called attention to the anti-Chinese violence to have a complete picture of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Furthermore, Diana Ahmad's *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* reaffirms the Anglo-Americans' view of the Chinese people. As Ahmad mentions, "Anglo-Americans found the Chinese to be "a race who have a distinct civilization, religion, habits, and

5 Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 5.

6 Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 126.

languages of their own; a race who are alike incapable and unworthy of assimilation with [theirs].”⁷ Anglo-Americans did not always accept some Chinese cultural differences. On the other hand, she takes a different approach than previous historians to the motivations behind this national legislation beyond racial prejudice to bar the Chinese. The opium epidemic brought devastation to the lives of Anglo-Americans during the nineteenth century, prompting them to take drastic measures to clean up their country. Anglo-Americans began to dread that the Chinese smuggled opium into their nation.⁸ To address their concerns about the Chinese population and the opium epidemic, Anglo-Americans passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, framing themselves as the victims of the crisis. Ahmad consulted newspapers on the anti-Chinese sentiment written by Anglo-Americans. For instance, medical professionals spoke out about the dangers of opium to newspaper outlets, as the widespread opium addiction in America resulted in several deaths and detrimental health complications, including kidney and heart problems.⁹ Anglo-Americans successfully spread panic and blamed the Chinese for the opium epidemic. Therefore, the opium epidemic and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 laid the foundation for understanding the anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States.

Over time, other historians shifted to the counter-historical narrative regarding the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 by focusing on the experiences of the Chinese who lived during the Exclusion Era. Historians Kenneth Marcus and Yong Chen’s “Inside and Outside Chinatown: Chinese Elites in Exclusion Era California” examines the experiences of selected Chinese elites who lived in the United States. Both historians discovered that American society did not entirely isolate the Chinese elites. Instead, Chinese elites transcended racial barriers and acculturated into American society. They used scholarly journals and monographs to debunk misconceptions about how the Chinese could not integrate into American society. Among the Chinese elites, Chinese Christian missionaries sought to eliminate anti-Chinese legislation. In particular, Marcus and Chen reveal Reverend Ng Poon Chew as an ambitious and fervent supporter of the Chinese becoming Americanized. To fight anti-Chinese

7 Diana L. Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 49.

8 Ahmad, *The Opium Debate*, 3.

9 Ahmad, *The Opium Debate*, 43.

sentiment, Ng taught Christianity to the Chinese and encouraged them to deviate from their cultural roots by learning English, wearing American fashion, and much more.¹⁰ Reverend Chew aided the Chinese in overcoming racial discrimination to feel accepted in the United States. Meanwhile, Chinese herbalist doctors had contact with Anglo-Americans because their less potent medicines became well-known throughout the Exclusion Era. Chinese herbalist businesses attracted potential Anglo-American and non-white patients.¹¹ Several Anglo-Americans became interested in herbal medicine, sought treatment from herbalists, and promoted the herbalist businesses in their communities. Regardless of the outgoing hostility toward the Chinese, Anglo-Americans respected Chinese herbalists. Chinese herbalists maintained their cultural ties to China and did not have to change themselves to fit into American society. With this, Marcus and Chen analyzed the accounts of the Chinese Christian missionaries and herbalists to demonstrate how they resisted Anglo-American oppression and challenged the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

In contrast, historian Wendy Jorae's "The Limits of Dress: Chinese American Childhood, Fashion, and Race in the Exclusion Era" reveals the changes and consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that shaped the identities of the Chinese. She offers a unique perspective on why and how the Chinese experienced an identity crisis throughout the Exclusion Era. She retraced the structural barriers against the Chinese that did not allow them to become a part of American society. Anglo-Americans reconstructed national identity by using racial identity as a basis and implemented anti-Chinese legislation, consistently rejecting the Chinese for their cultural and racial identity. Some Chinese individuals did not want to face further racial prejudice, so they decided to conform to American culture; they wore American fashion, hoping to experience less harassment from Anglo-Americans.¹² Chinese distanced themselves from their culture and changed to survive, live more comfortably, and blend into American society easier. Interestingly, Jorae recovers the experiences of the Chinese who decided to confront the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Chinese had the

10 Kenneth H. Marcus and Yong Chen, "Inside and Outside Chinatown: Chinese Elites in Exclusion Era California," *Pacific Historical Review* 80, no. 3 (2011): 388.

11 Marcus and Chen, "Inside and Outside Chinatown," 379.

12 Wendy R. Jorae, "The Limits of Dress: Chinese American Childhood, Fashion, and Race in the Exclusion Era," *Western Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2010): 461.

resilience to withstand their oppressors. She specifically discussed how some Chinese embraced their cultural heritage to cope with racial discrimination while living in the United States. Chinese had pride in their cultural heritage, with which they defied American identity by speaking their Chinese language, wearing traditional hairstyles, and dressing in cultural attire.¹³ Regardless of the rising anti-Chinese sentiment, they did not let the ostracism of Anglo-Americans change them. They found the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the assimilationist narrative problematic; they took action to forcefully feel included in American society despite Anglo-Americans' disapproval. Nonetheless, Jorae's article deviated from the official historical narrative and encompassed a more comprehensive overview of the national legislation.

Examination of the Memories of Former Chinese Angel Island Detainees

After examining the work of historians on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the study of the memories and experiences of former Angel Island detainees provides a deeper understanding of the effects of the exclusionary policies and attitudes towards them in America. Many Chinese detainees felt racially discriminated against by the United States immigration officials during their stay at Angel Island. For example, a former detainee, Jann Mon Fong arrived in March 1931 and spent twenty days in detention. He recalled how the United States immigration official discriminated against Chinese detainees. Fong mentioned that "[Chinese detainees] went from being treated like a herd of cattle to being treated like hapless birds confined to a cage, ready for slaughter. We were subject to yet another physical examination the next day, and the procedure, targeting our entire race, was particularly humiliating."¹⁴ He felt that Chinese detainees had unfair treatment, with Anglo-American immigration officials treating them as subhumans and regarding it unnecessary to conduct intensive physical body examinations. The physical examination infuriated the Chinese as different ethnic detainees did not undergo the same mistreatment. Often, Anglo-Americans labeled the Chinese as carriers

¹³ Wendy R. Jorae, "The Limits of Dress," 465.

¹⁴ Judy Yung, *The Chinese Exclusion Act and Angel Island: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018), 121.

of diseases and sought to distance themselves. Chinese detainees began to feel uncomfortable, humiliated, targeted, violated, and traumatized by the US health protocols or policies. They found this body inspection as a pretext to discriminate against them and bar them from coming into the United States. However, they consented to the physical body examination as they strongly desired to land in the United States to change their lives for a better future. Fong's experience revealed how United States immigration officials held Chinese individuals at Angel Island for an extended time while conducting lengthy health evaluations and discriminatory practices that unfairly treated this disadvantaged group. Thus, Anglo-Americans who supported enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 played a crucial role at Angel Island, which Chinese detainees did not get acknowledged due to their race.

Likewise, the Chinese detainees felt pain and shame about their discriminatory experiences. One of the anonymous Chinese detainees recalled:

I was distressed that we Chinese are detained in those wooden building.
It is actually racial barriers that cause difficulties on Yingtai Island.
Even while they are tyrannical, they still claim to be humanitarian.
I should regret my taking risks of coming in the first place.¹⁵

This first-hand account represents how many Chinese detainees endured racial inequalities in a stressful environment, where Anglo-Americans shoved detainees into a building without thinking about how they felt. Racial tensions came to an all-time high between the Chinese and Anglo-Americans because the US government's pressure to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 drove the growing bigotry toward the racial minority group. Anglo-Americans continued not accommodating or advising the Chinese to adapt to a new space like Angel Island. Bear in mind that Anglo-Americans treated this racial group like prisoners, causing the Chinese to realize that they could not escape reality. They felt restricted by these unjust immigration policies since they lacked individual freedom

15 Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island*, 124.

or total control over their lives. Consequently, this anonymous first-hand account depicted how racial prejudice affected the lives of Chinese detainees, as Anglo-Americans intended to oppress and exclude them at all costs in America.

Another example, other Chinese detainees remembered the anti-Chinese sentiment. In the text, one of the unknown Chinese detainees explained:

I wandered across the world, and endured much hardship;
Now I dwell in a wooden building, and suffer coercion and abuse.
Compatriots should know that our race is despised;
Let it be others who labor like oxen and horses.¹⁶

This perspective reflected how Chinese detainees disliked Anglo-Americans, as immigration officials treated their lives as less valuable, akin to that of an animal, and had an indifferent attitude towards them. Chinese detainees did not receive sympathy for the racial discrimination against them and felt invalidated for their experience at Angel Island. No one could understand the racial prejudice against them, and Chinese detainees would never understand Anglo-Americans' biases. They became disgusted with how Anglo-Americans treated them differently daily based on their racial identity. This racial group could never live a normal life in the United States because Anglo-Americans considered them an undesirable race and did not stand a chance to achieve equality. They could not erase their racial and ethnic identities assigned at birth. They endured racial discrimination while feeling oppressed, hopeless, and powerless, which caused a power struggle to semi-coexist with Anglo-Americans. In the end, Chinese detainees' accounts revealed how they learned about systematic racism and its impact on them in the United States.

Moreover, Chinese detainees frequently harbored grievances at Anglo-American immigration officials for denying their human rights on this isolated island. For instance, a former detainee, Tet Yee, arrived there on September 6, 1932, and

¹⁶ Charles Egan, *Voices of Angel Island: Inscriptions and Immigrant Poetry, 1910-1945* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2020), 173.

stayed for six months. He vividly remembered how he handled his grievances at Angel Island. He confronted United States immigration officials to provide necessities for Chinese detainees, which he said: "Other detainees — Germans, Italians, Japanese — all had toilet paper and soap, but not the Chinese. They had to get their supply from San Francisco."¹⁷ They expressed the inconveniences they endured despite having no power at the detention facility. After the Chinese detainees' perseverance in expressing their complaints, United States immigration officials decided to comply with their demands. Yee's memories of Angel Island depicted how Anglo-Americans did not take the Chinese complaints seriously until the Chinese voiced their concerns multiple times. The United States immigration officials did not care for the Chinese detainees enough to provide necessities. They may have viewed the Chinese detainees as undeserving of assistance, leading them to save money or prioritize other areas of expense that they deemed more important. Nevertheless, the Chinese had grievances about inequalities and unfairness because Anglo-Americans treated them as inferior.

Another detainee, Xie Chuang, had a similar experience and recalled his second stint at Angel Island from May 1931 to May 1932. Most Chinese detainees often held grudges against US immigration officials. They united against mistreatment by creating a self-governing association to address their grievances to United States immigration officials. For instance, Chuang described how he and other Chinese detainees organized food riots to negotiate with US immigration officials to secure better food. To plan successful food riots, Chuang mentioned how he and other Chinese detainees threw plates, knives, and forks at the guards in the dining hall.¹⁸ The guards got taken by surprise and fled in fear, leaving behind a chaotic scene of debris and cutlery scattered around.¹⁹ The food riot intended to intimidate the United States immigration officials about what the Chinese detainees could do to cause havoc while they desired equal treatment. Chuang's account revealed how Chinese detainees became determined to confront their grievances. Hence, Chinese detainees stood up for themselves for recognition at the detention facility since Anglo-Americans denied their basic hu-

17 Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island*, 288.

18 "Xie Chuang - Imprisonment at Angel Island," *Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*, <https://www.immigrant-voices.aiisf.org/stories-by-author/930-imprisonment-at-angel-island/>.

19 "Xie Chuang - Imprisonment at Angel Island," *Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*, <https://www.immigrant-voices.aiisf.org/stories-by-author/930-imprisonment-at-angel-island/>.

man needs (e.g., toilet paper and better food quality).

In addition, Chinese detainees experienced struggles in concealing their real identities from Anglo-American immigration officials. Specifically, a former detainee, Helen Hong Wong described her personal experience. She arrived at Angel Island in October 1928 and remained there until January 1929 under a fraudulent identity as a "paper daughter."²⁰ She discussed her difficulties answering tough questions during the interrogation with the United States immigration officials. In the text, she mentioned that the United States immigration officials "were very strict then and [I] had not prepared for the interrogation. They asked all kinds of questions, about the type of stove we used in the village, the tiles on the floor, even how many steps in the stairs. I had lived in Hong Kong all those years and didn't remember anything about the village. They asked where is the kitchen and your lineage going back generations. How could anyone remember all that?"²¹ Wong became overwhelmed by the numerous detailed and complex questions, which caused her to struggle and feel shocked. This method of questioning turned into a standard tactic for US immigration officers to confirm or verify the identities of Chinese detainees, as Anglo-Americans became aware of how the minority group frequently used fraudulent identification papers to claim their United States citizenship.²² They had to determine whether the Chinese detainees had lied or told the truth about their personal and social backgrounds in their testimonies. They could not reveal or disclose their true identities and jeopardize their futures. They did not want their lives to take a negative turn after making sacrifices to come to America in search of a faster path to success and opportunities. So, they had to maintain secrecy to avoid getting caught lying about their socioeconomic status and citizenship by the Anglo-Americans; if not, they could not land admission or entry to the United States.

Ja Kew Yuen, a former detainee, also remembered facing similar challenges concerning the interrogation process. He ar-

20 Paper daughter became an approach for Chinese women to purchase documentation to enter the United States illegally by claiming false United States citizenship, familial ties with native-born American citizens, or exempted status (like a merchant).

21 "Helen Hong Wong - Reminiscences of a Gold Mountain Woman," *Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*, <https://www.immigrant-voices.aiisf.org/stories-by-author/747-reminisces-of-a-gold-mountain-woman/>.

22 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 240.

rived at Angel Island in 1939 as a "paper son."²³ He described how he felt nervous about the United States immigration officials discovering his true identity. In the text, Yuen used a coaching book to prepare for his interview, in which he said: "It talked about family relationships, the village and the living quarters in China. If you memorized all the answers, you should've been able to pass the interrogation. But it was very tricky, especially if they didn't ask the essential questions, but something else like [...] Who were in the photos? So if the immigration people wanted to trip you up, it was quite easy. There was no way to prepare for it all."²⁴ He relied on coaching papers to avoid the feeling of exclusion due to this loophole becoming one of the few ways for those who desired to enter the United States without obstacles. He brainwashed himself into impersonating someone else to abandon his old identity to deceive the authorities. If he had not studied these coaching papers, Anglo-Americans perhaps would have held him longer at the island and pressured him to give up his true identity. Yuen's account depicted how Chinese detainees found a way to ease their worries by studying coaching papers to not struggle in the interview process. If the Chinese detainees struggled during the interviews, United States immigration officials would deny their admission unless they suspected them of lying. Eventually, this racial group realized that life in America had become more difficult than expected to live their whole life as a lie.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Anglo-Americans no longer supported Chinese immigration, and anti-Chinese sentiment rose across the United States. Historians Erika Lee, Beth Lew-Williams, Diana Ahmad, Kenneth Marcus, Yong Chen, and Wendy Jorae have looked at the historiography by grasping the concept of race, nation-building, immigration, exclusion, assimilation, resistance, and identity. Six historians established a distinct written framework, as their works contradict one another and have massive differences in contested knowledge of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. At the same time, these works laid the foundation for examining and analyzing Anglo-American and

23 The paper son system follows the same methods as the paper daughter system, but for Chinese men.

24 Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island*, 326.

Chinese perspectives that contributed to this national legislation. Anglo-Americans enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 as a prominent act to exclude the Chinese from American society in the nineteenth century. This federal legislation had an influential impact, instilling structural racism primarily against Chinese opportunities to enter America.

Anglo-Americans have long tried to remove detainees' perspectives of Angel Island and erase the agency of Chinese detainees. Over the years, scholars have deliberately retraced forgotten Chinese experiences into the United States' national immigrant narrative in the hopes that people could embrace the country's past to conceptualize the complex nature of the US immigration history in terms of social and racial disparities. Before, academic scholars neglected the stories of former Chinese Angel Island detainees as a central scholarship to navigate deeper into the intricacies of this immigration detention facility. Currently, they are focusing on Chinese detainees to counter-narratives of US immigration about how Angel Island had supposedly served Chinese individuals' pathway to freedom and hope. But in reality, they faced different forms of oppression, including racism, classism, and immigration status in the twentieth century. In tandem, scholars still need to revisit the narrative of Angel Island, as some have yet to enable people to understand the perspectives of Chinese detainees. People should become aware of how Chinese detainees lived and how they understood themselves in the past. Above all, people must give this racial group as much voice and agency.

Memories function in history when accessing how former Chinese detainees drew on their memories and the dynamic or unique stories about their stay at Angel Island. These include their experiences with racial discrimination, grievances regarding access to resources, and secrecy surrounding their real identities, deepening a better understanding of the impact of the anti-Chinese legislation in America during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Frequently, Chinese detainees assumed that nobody could understand what they lived through: their never-ending struggles to tolerate brutal living conditions or rise against the unequal treatment by Anglo Americans. They all had various ways of remembering and processing their emotions and the vivid memories that haunted and traumatized them. The never-ending agony, physical examinations, and harrowing interviews resurfaced old wounds while

others attempted to heal from trauma. Anglo-Americans had a negative mindset toward Chinese individuals and set out to hate them without guilt. This history is relevant to telling people about the power dynamics between the Anglo-Americans and the Chinese. Anglo-Americans alienated the Chinese as a non-dominant racial minority, which in turn, Chinese received fewer acceptances and privileges in American society. Even if the Chinese tried to assimilate or fit into the white American identity or culture, Anglo-Americans still had hostility towards them for several decades. Despite the failure of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to ban the Chinese, they attempted to resist oppression and refused to let race define their entire identity.

In the case of former Chinese detainees, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 proved the nature and extent of the harm towards them as a marginalized group by their race and class. Anglo-Americans established fear of the Chinese without hesitation, which drove them to project animosity and made anti-Chinese sentiment acceptable throughout the United States. After Anglo-Americans imposed restrictions on Chinese immigration, Chinese individuals began to question the morality of the national policy. For several years in US immigration history, this neglected unpleasant truth made Chinese detainees uncomfortable and uncertain about their futures. Following Angel Island, the unwanted long-lasting memories still lingered in the minds of former Chinese detainees. Yet some forced themselves to pretend that part of their life did not happen to move forward. They may find it more convenient to avoid thinking about the past entirely. Others could not speak publicly about their time there without feeling shame about their past. In a sense, some detainees could not escape the past; even the closure of Angel Island did not bring them joy. Despite the past, these Chinese detainees' insights and voices deserve attention and recognition to create a more accurate history and prevent future generations from repeating the same mistakes. In this case, people must learn the ideological motivations of Anglo-Americans for rewriting the United States' immigration history and disregarding Chinese individuals in the United States. Not only that, but also, people need to listen, acknowledge, and remember the stories of these former Angel Island Chinese detainees by recognizing contested histories or spaces at work to push for ongoing meaningful dialogue in the mainstream curriculum. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and

Angel Island had long-term implications, which marginalized and vilified the Chinese people in America for several decades.



Illustration by **Koda Dowdle**, Chico State

Where Did the Mongols Go?: How Chinggis Khan's Legacy Was Erased Via a Racialized and Colonizing Discourse

By Maria Kaj

Abstract: This article explores why historians have repeatedly characterized the thirteenth-century Mongols as savage barbarians, despite their legacy as a world power that promoted cultural exchange and advanced law, art, and science along the Silk Road. It analyzes the contrasts between what Chinggis Khan and his descendants did versus how popular narratives described them. Contemporary ideas developed by scholars of Ethnic Studies and American history demonstrate the racialized and colonizing discourse at work. Ultimately, the essay shows a historical discourse portrays the Mongols as uncivilized, defines them by their atrocities, criticizes their nomadic lifestyle, and minimizes them on historical maps.

How can these two differing and contradictory images of the Mongols be reconciled? Were they bloodthirsty murderers, rapists, and destroyers who simply sought booty from civilizations they conquered? ...Or, after the initial invasions, did they seek to stabilize the areas they ruled? Did they contribute to peace by unifying such countries as China...Did the unity the Mongols imposed on much of Asia have salutary effects on culture?

— Morris Rossabi, *The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction*¹

1 Morris Rossabi, *The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

The Mongol Empire was the largest empire in human history, an empire which facilitated the exchange of trade, artworks, and innovation to cultures across the Asian steppes. Despite this, many historical portrayals describe Chinggis Khan (Westernized as “Genghis Khan”) and his descendants as bloodthirsty savages, warriors from the womb who left only destruction in their wake.² While Julius Caesar is often lauded for his bold leadership, and even the Ottoman leader Suleiman is graced by Western historians with the honorific “Magnificent,” Chinggis is described as illiterate and cruel. Chinggis established a writing script and new legal code, but historians emphasize that he ravaged cities and worshiped horses and water. His grandson Khubilai (Westernized “Kubilai”) built palaces, revised the tax system, and patronized artisans, but he is often dismissed as a corpulent hedonist, and his palace, Xanadu, treated as a mythical place. The *Pax Mongolica* brought porcelain to Iran, and gunpowder, printing, and paper across Asia to Europe, but—the historians frown—what about those 30,000 deaths at Bukhara or the destruction of the library in Baghdad?

These contrasts may seem confusing. Yet scholars of Ethnic Studies or American history are likely to see parallels between depictions of this centuries-old culture and narratives of the United States. The white supremacist lens through which the history of the Mongols has been filtered is easier to understand to those familiar with settler colonialism and inter-ethnic dynamics.³ This essay will address how race theory can shed light on the colonizing discourse, which helps explain these two versions of the Mongols and will show how a society that promoted commerce, law, religious tolerance, and artistic patronage has been routinely distorted in four ways: 1) characterized as primitive; 2) defined chiefly by its atrocities; 3) criticized for being nomadic; and 4) ultimately minimized on the historical map.

Plunder Wealth and Embrace Beauties

Reducing the impact of the Khan conquests is no small feat since the Mongols were no small blip of an empire. At their largest (Figure 1), they stretched from the Pacific to Austria, from Siberia to the Indian Ocean. In 1206, when forty-three-year-old Temujin was

2 Variations in spelling of Mongol names occur (Chinggis, Cingis, Jinghiz, Genghis). My translation source is Rossabi because his choices balance words that convey the flavor of the classical Mongolian script while using Romanized letter combinations digestible for those familiar with English.

3 Works on race theory in this essay include: Dean Saranillo, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai'i Statehood* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018) and Candace Fujikane, “Mapping Wonder in the Māui Mo'olelo on the Mo'ō'aina: Growing Aloha' Aina Through Indigenous and Settler Affinity Activism,” *Marvels & Tales* 30, no. 1 (2016), 45-69. I am also indebted to Dr. Michael Schulze-Oechtering Castañeda's History 600 class at Cal State East Bay for exposing me to these ideas.

Where Did the Mongols Go?

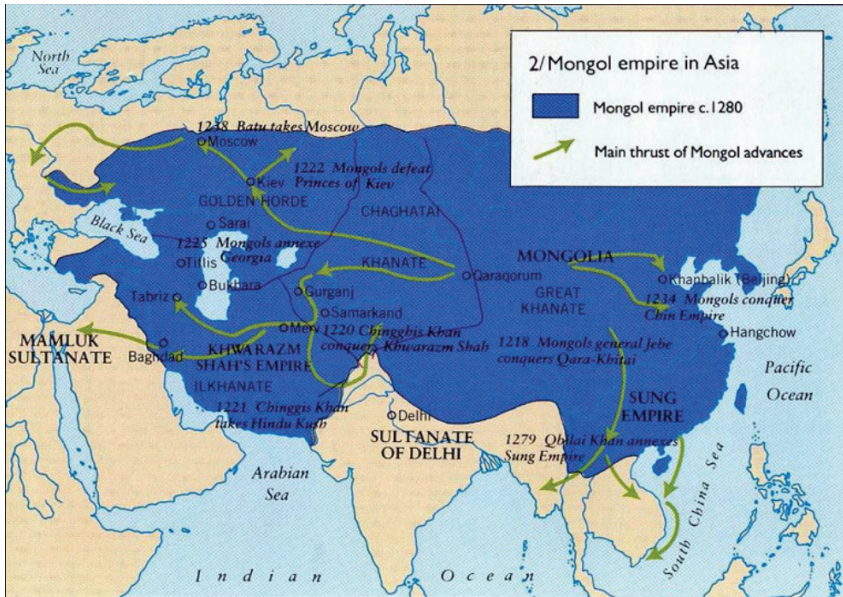


Figure 1: Extent of the Mongol Empire at 1280, <https://worldcivilizationsbcad.weebly.com/mongol-empire.html>

named Chinggis Khan (“Fierce Ruler”), he and his offspring ruled this vast terrain as four massive territories. Each of these divisions—the Yuan Khanate (China), the Il-Khanate (Asia Minor), the Chaghadai (Eastern steppes), and the Golden Horde (Western steppes/ Russia)—remained under Mongol control well into the next century. Another grandson launched the Mughal dynasty in India. In the end, the last of Chinggis’ line ruled in Bukhara until the Red Army invaded in 1920, after nearly 700 years of Mongol reign, one of the longest dynasties in history.⁴

Across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Mongols wielded a formidable military capability, though they also put down roots. They built cities, created bureaucracies of record keepers and tax collectors, and invested in science and mathematics. The decades of peace that followed their conquests, called the *Pax Mongolica*, fostered trade along the Silk Road. As a result, Persian palaces received prized Chinese porcelains, still displayed today in Middle Eastern museums.⁵ Arab astronomers worked in the Maragha (Iranian) observa-

4 Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Crown, 2005), 9.

5 Morris Rossabi, *The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 102.



Figure 2: Movie poster for *The Conqueror*. Directed by Dick Powell and Oscar Millard. RKO Radio Pictures, 1956.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Conqueror_\(1956\)_film_poster.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Conqueror_(1956)_film_poster.jpg)

tory at Hulegu Khan's direction.⁶ Emissaries from the pope traveled unmolested across Eastern Asia and China, requesting help with the Crusades. Although their Christian demands for aid were rebuffed, the pope's messengers returned with information about cutting-edge technology: paper, the block printing press, and gunpowder. Such devices would transform Europe.

However, many students of history might find this description of the Mongol empire unrecognizable. A more familiar view is the cinematic version, such as in the 1956 movie, *The Conqueror* with John Wayne and Susan Hayward (Figure 2). Wayne, in skin-darkening and "almond-eye" makeup, pulls a white-gowned Hayward to him while barking, "I am Temujin...Barbarian...I fight! love! I conquer...like a Barbarian!" Hayward plays Temujin's wife Borte, who in real life was from a neighboring tribe, but her skin and eyes are not altered, a not-so-subtle suggestion that "dark" Wayne has kidnapped "white" Hayward.

This approach to depicting the empire is still being used in *Game of Khans*, a video game from 2022, where mustachioed warriors compete to "plunder wealth" and "embrace beauties" and to see who can out-drink, out-fight, and out-ravage their opponents.⁷ Above all, they can "return with glory," with glory being defined as a buxom maiden screaming for help. This latter aspect manages to be racist, sexist, and illogical all at once, as scantily-clad light-skinned women are thrown on horseback by dark-skinned brutes galloping through the snow.

While video games rely on examples of hyper-masculinity for their appeal, descriptions of Mongols as inhuman are just as plentiful in mass-produced histories. For instance, in the *Time-Life* series on world history, the opening paragraphs in the chapter on "The Mongol Hordes" portray the empire as one of wall-to-wall violence:

30,000 defenders slaughtered... palaces razed...resplendent capitals of Islam... totally destroyed... the most opulent city in Russia, reduced to ashes...[the world] reeled under an onslaught of unprecedented ferocity ... [from this] detestable nation of Satan. 'Piercing the solid rocks of the Caucasus, they poured forth liked devils from the Hell of Tartarus. They swarmed locust-like over the face of the earth...'⁸

The book's cover portrays a Mongol warrior in a menacing pose, his brown face further obscured in shadow. Negative dismissals of the Khans continue with the sons and grandsons of Chinggis. Succes-

6 Rossabi, *The Mongols*, 104.

7 The "return with glory" view for *Game of Khans*, a role-playing game currently owned by Clicktouch Co. Ltd, can be seen on <https://apkamp.com/com.dc.gok.google.by.scrolling.through.the.game.advertisements>.

8 *The Mongol Conquests: TimeFrame AD 1200-1300* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1989), 9.

sor Ogedei was brought down by “debauchery.”⁹ Grandson Hulegu is “the butcher of Baghdad.”¹⁰ Even Khubilai, whose palaces at Shangdu and the capital city of Dadu caused chronicler Marco Polo to declare them “the greatest cities he had ever seen,” is ultimately just another barbarian. After defeating the Song dynasty armies to unite and rule China for decades, Khubilai’s reign is brushed aside as “a disaster.”¹¹

While the *Time-Life* books were written in the 1980s, current mass market histories still play the same tune of Mongolian savagery. In a 2021 best-selling history on the Middle Ages, *Power and Thrones*, author Dan Jones calls out the Mongols for their “gross bloodlust” as well as their “predilection for fighting...and holding lavish, drunken banquets.”¹² While Jones grudgingly admits that they succeeded in promoting trade and freedom of religion, he defines them as single-minded: “To predators, everything looks like prey, and there was still plenty for the Mongol generals to feed on.”¹³ To be sure, the Mongols were ruthless in conquering cities and killed many soldiers and civilians in their military campaigns. Yet similar campaigns on behalf of, say, the Romans are described differently. To the same author, for example, the Roman’s “overwhelming armed force” accompanied “state-of-the-art social, cultural, and legal systems that Romans considered to be virtuous.”¹⁴ Both empires acquired territory with merciless force; both created legal codes and promoted artisans. Yet, only one empire is linked with the idea of virtue.

The question is, “why?” Why are the Mongols pictured as fiends emerging from hell? One answer is to look at who is telling the stories, to expose what contemporary experts refer to as “the parochialism of the academy.”¹⁵ For example, the books in the *Time-Life* source list were published in London, and its “consultants” on Asia are from Cambridge, Oxford, and London University. As Edward Said put it in his classic book *Orientalism*: “European culture [gains] in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient,” distilling Asia down to “Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality.”¹⁶

But there is more to this portrayal than mere racism. Name-calling by White historians has also been applied to the civilizations of China, India, and Arabia. The Mongols are defined as barbarians, no matter

9 *The Mongol Conquests*, 24.

10 Dan Jones, *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Viking, 2021), 337.

11 *The Mongol Conquests*, 27-8

12 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 344, 323.

13 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 321.

14 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 17.

15 George Lipsitz, “Race as a Relational Theory: A Roundtable Discussion,” in *Relational Formations of Race: Theory, Method, and Practice*, eds., Ramón A. Gutiérrez, Daniel Hosang, and Natalia Molina (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 31.

16 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Vintage Books ebooks, 1994), 3-4.

how many palaces they built or languages they invented.¹⁷ Money collected to maintain their government is labeled booty rather than taxes, “the extraction of wealth at the point of sword.”¹⁸ Despite giving religious exemptions to priests and distributing alms to the poor, the Mongols have always been reduced to those who “plunder wealth” and kidnap maidens.¹⁹

Studies of racism and settler colonialism in the United States may shed additional light on this question. In his book *Unsustained Empires*, Dean Saranillo explains how local scholars used the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair to establish a racial hierarchy for visitors. At the “White City,” international cultural displays were ranked by University of Chicago sociologists along the Midway, organized according to a “sliding scale of humanity.” One end grouped together the “savage races,” such as Africa, indigenous North Americans, and Hawaiians, while the other end exhibited the “Teutonic” tribes. This hierarchy was “a contrived racial order where primitives, Orientals, ethnic whites, and whites were seen along a linear march from barbarism to civilization in ascending order.”²⁰

Saranillo, whose book focuses on racism in Hawaii, further recounts how the 1893 Cyclorama exhibit of Kilauea prominently featured the Hawaiian volcano goddess Pelé. Audiences were intended to make comparisons between Pelé and the recently overthrown Queen Lili’uokalani, seeing “the pacification and domestication of an irrational and belligerent Native woman by white masculine science.”²¹ If such a linear display were historical, the designers would likely place the savage Mongol “hordes” among the barbarians at the far end. However, to do so, Chinggis Khan cannot be seen as an emperor, law-giver, and promoter of trade. Like the transformation of Lili’uokalani into Pelé, Chinggis Khan must become a bloodthirsty villain in the shadows to be put in his proper place.

The Wrath of Khan

Beyond representing Mongols as merely primitive, the second way that historians skew the Mongol legacy is by fixating on their military atrocities. Mongol histories rarely start with Chinggis’ rise from poverty or the unification of the tribes, but instead with gruesome statistics from their invasions: 30,000 soldiers killed in Bukhara; 1,400,000 civilians massacred in Herat; nine sacks full of ears; pyramids of skulls,

17 For example, Kenneth Harl’s entire lecture series is called *Barbarian Empires of the Steppes*.

18 Jo Ann Cavallo, “Marco Polo on the Mongol State: Taxation, Predation, and Monopolization,” *Libertarian Papers* no. 7 (2015), 158.

19 Rossabi, *The Mongols*, 30, 49.

20 Dean Itsuji Saranillo, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai’i Statehood* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 42.

21 Saranillo, *Unsustainable Empire*, 58.

etc. The violence is labeled wasteful and unprecedented.²² This reductionist view, however, glosses over important details.

While Mongols did attack and raze cities, their goal was neither massacre nor wholesale destruction. As with other empires, the Khan's aim was to accumulate wealth and administer cities brought under their rule; it was not in their best interests to eliminate people. They *did* conquer cities, burn buildings, and kill civilians. They also left alone populations that agreed to their demands for tribute and used tax assessors. Khan invaders allowed civilians to evacuate at times, though they executed those who did not leave or who tried to hide valuables. Opposing forces used captives for public sport; when captured by Persian or Indian troops, Mongol soldiers might be dragged behind horses, fed to dogs, or crushed by elephants for public entertainment.²³ But the Mongols did not torture or maim, and severe treatment was for populations that resisted or rebelled. They did not attack those who submitted.²⁴

Moreover, atrocities are a by-product of war and are standard among those who see themselves atop the cultural pyramid. For instance, when the Venetians sacked Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, they pulled down the horses atop the Hippodrome and remounted them proudly atop their own Basilica of St. Mark's. The Romans not only invented crucifixion but would execute men *en masse*, like the 6000 crucified after the Spartacus uprising.²⁵ In World War II, the Nazis bombed London; the Allied Air Force, in turn, carpet-bombed Dresden into rubble. World armies have a horrific legacy of swallowing cities and normalizing atrocities as part of their conquests, especially when the fight is the "good fight."

Scholars have also pointed out that Mongol casualties were often exaggerated. Frequently, the numbers of dead listed are several times the estimated population of cities at the time. Jack Weatherford, in *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, notes that often the casualty numbers were (a) physically impossible given the time frames and (b) reflected so many civilians—hundreds at a time—that potential victims could easily have run away or overwhelmed individual soldiers.²⁶ Or in other cases, the details are provided not for accuracy but for characterization. For instance, chronicles mention that

22 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 324.

23 Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 114.

24 While some populations complained bitterly of the "yoke" of the Khans (especially the Russian princes), the idea of subjugation was more philosophical than practical. Many suggest the Mongol Empire's acceptance of all religions, use of local administrators, and assessment of tax/tribute standards would seem like little change for the majority of conquered populations. See Timothy May, *The Mongol Empire: The Edinburgh History of the Islamic Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 76-91 and Kenneth W. Harl, "Pax Mongolica and Cultural Exchange: Lecture 32," *The Barbarian Empires of the Steppes* (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses, 2014).

25 *Empires Ascendant: TimeFrame 400 BC-AD 200* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1989), 71.

26 Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 118.

a Mongol warrior queen whose son died in battle decrees that everything living—even the dogs and cats—be executed. This is intended to illustrate the rage of a grieving mother and to enhance the propaganda encouraged by the Mongols themselves to hasten submission of other cities.²⁷

Exaggerations of destruction were not limited to casualties, either. One often repeated story focuses on the sack of Baghdad and the burning of the libraries. This example may provide clues to a dynamic that goes beyond portraying Mongols as primitive. Baghdad in 1258 was the “Mother of Cities,” the center of Islam and the site of the Abbasid caliphate.²⁸ For centuries it had been a center of innovation for science and medicine, earning the ninth-century designation of “House of Wisdom,” as well as being famed as a place of superb art and architecture. Baghdad also gave birth to both algebra and Scheherazade. Still, by the eleventh century, the city had been racked by repeated “violence and upheaval,” and the centers for development in Muslim science had been moved elsewhere around the Mediterranean.²⁹

When Hulegu Khan, Chinggis’ grandson, approached Baghdad in the winter of 1257, he first sent envoys with a list of demands and grievances to the Caliph. The Caliph waived the demands away as preposterous, but Hulegu’s army was large, and he had acquired gunpowder from the East. Following a month of laying siege, Hulegu’s army broke through. The Mongols ordered people to surrender weapons and evacuate, but many still refused to comply, and the invaders executed those who stayed.³⁰ A three-week campaign of looting and slaughter did occur, at the end of which, even a mostly positive portrait of the Mongols concludes: “Decades later, [Baghdad] was still mostly a ruin.”³¹

Many accounts of the destruction of the Baghdad further reference a detail mentioned by a sixteenth-century biographer, Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali:

They threw the books of the Baghdadi colleges into the Euphrates . . . so many that they became a bridge on which the riders and footmen passed, and the color of the river changed

27 Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 114.

28 Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 180.

29 Violet Moller, *The Map of Knowledge: A Thousand-Year History of How Classical Ideas Were Lost and Found* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2020), 82-93.

30 Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 183. However, Weatherford is among the few also to mention that Hulegu’s mother and his two wives were Christian, and that it was Christian troops, particularly from Armenia, who performed much of the looting and slaughter, burning down mosques especially.

31 Ian Frazier, “Invaders: Destroying Baghdad,” *The New Yorker*, April 25, 2005, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/04/25/invaders-3>.

| into black from their multitude.³²

This reference to “rivers of ink” repeatedly surfaces when historians write about the siege of Baghdad.³³ However, some scholars argue that this was another fabrication. Michal Biran, for example, specifically examined claims about the libraries’ destruction, which allegedly “ushered in the decline of Islamic civilization and the rise of the west,” and found that several of the key details were wrong.³⁴ For example, Al-Nahrawali named the wrong river. Similar library-destruction stories accuse Mongols of building mangers with the books when they never used mangers to feed their horses.

Furthermore, a Mongol inventory completed shortly after the invasion showed that many books were confiscated by the army rather than thrown into the water. The historian Violet Moller reaffirms that Hulegu’s armies ransacked the libraries to gather, not destroy, scientific books on astronomy and alchemy.³⁵ Biran argues that by taking the books, the Il-Khanate, later formed by Hulegu, re-established the libraries’ collection within a few decades until it surpassed the pre-conquered inventory.

So why the false emphasis on destroying all books? Why must the Mongols look worse than any other culture in the violent history of empires? While it is tempting to add the desecration of knowledge as one more piece of evidence for placing the Khans at the far end of the racial hierarchy, the “rivers of ink” story may serve other purposes. Biran believes that the “anachronistic” accounts, written centuries after the actual event, serve Islamic scholars by lamenting the decline of Islam. For Anglo-European historians, there may be other factors at work, in particular when the narrative is about two groups in central Asia fighting each other.³⁶

The 1258 invasion of Baghdad was an inter-ethnic conflict of great interest to European Christians. When the Mongols lined up against the Abbasid army, they attacked the heart of the “heathen” world that had dogged Christians since the rise of Islam. Yet, while Hulegu Khan was placing his siege engines in Persia, Louis IX of France had just finished fighting Muslims in Egypt as part of the Seventh Crusade. For two hundred years, the Catholic Church had been drumming up

32 Michal Biran, “Libraries, Books, and Transmission of Knowledge in Ilkhanid Baghdad,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62, no. 2-3 (2019), 470.

33 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 116.

34 Biran, “Libraries, Books, and Transmission of Knowledge in Ilkhanid Baghdad,” 465.

35 Moller, *The Map of Knowledge*, 83.

36 A small, often-overlooked note is that during the battle, as military buildings and mosques were destroyed, the Christian churches were left standing. Hulegu Khan’s wife was a Nestorian Christian, so he wanted the churches spared. However, it doesn’t support the “savage” narrative to point out that the Mongols in Baghdad allied with Christians, which may be why it’s rarely included. Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, 183.

its own holy war, calling aristocrats from across Western Europe to journey thousands of miles across land and sea (in heavy armor) to invade the Middle East. Under the guise of orders from the pope, knights were stripping Arabian cities of wealth—Damascus, Acre, and Aleppo. Had they been Mongols, it might have been called plunder rather than faith and zeal.

Compared with the Crusades, the Khan army was not attempting a holy war against a faraway enemy but simply approaching a city within their sphere of influence. To bend a seemingly logical contest between two formidable Asian armies requires the story to emphasize the savagery of the attack, characterizing it as something far worse than anything happening between Christians and Muslims off on the banks of the Red Sea. Thus, one reason for highlighting the cruelty during the sack of Baghdad was to deflect attention away from the sack of Jerusalem.

Refusing to Settle

Even beyond false claims of library books destroyed or exaggerated casualty numbers, a third way that historians dismiss Mongol culture as backward is in emphasizing their inferiority as nomads. Despite acknowledging the tactical advantage of the horse-archer armies, historians traditionally label the mobile culture a primitive one:

Compared with the Chinese, the Mongols were certainly barbarous. Whereas the Song and the Jin built cities of palaces and prospered from an agriculture-based economy, the Mongols were tent-dwelling nomads whose primitive lifestyle was dictated by harsh climatic conditions. The greater part of their lives was spent on horseback.³⁷

Horse-centered cultures dominated the broad steppes of Asia for centuries. The Khan armies were descendants of a dozen other groups—the Xiong Nu, Gok Turks, Huns, Scythians, Pecheneges, Seljuk Turks—all of which had successfully battled against Muslims, Greeks, Romans, and Chinese for a thousand years.³⁸ Still, scholars from sedentary cultures centered around urban or agricultural environments found it hard to conceive of a successful nomadic empire.

Another problem with the categorization of Mongols as solely nomads is that they *did* build. First, as archaeologists have noted, medieval Asian nomads constructed permanent corralling and transfer

37 *The Mongol Conquests*, 11.

38 Kenneth W. Harl's *The Barbarian Empires of the Steppes* (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses, 2014) provides the accounts of how these nomadic tribes achieved military and commercial success, starting with their domestication of horses.

facilities to support the exchange of trade and animals.³⁹ Moreover, Baghdad and Bukhara were both rebuilt after they were invaded. Ogedei constructed a capital at Kharakhorum, while Khubilai built a new capital of Dadu (Great Capital). This new Chinese capital housed an impressive palace, later to become the Forbidden City in the modern city of Beijing. Further, Khubilai rebuilt Shangdu, which Marco Polo called “a vast palace of marble cunningly worked... so well kept & adorned that it is a most noble thing of great delight.”⁴⁰

However, this new Shangdu was perhaps too otherworldly for scholars to comprehend. English poet Samuel Coleridge called it Xanadu and stamped the “stately pleasure-dome” as one conceived in a dream. Xanadu is also the name given to the mansion built in *Citizen Kane*, described in the movie as one of the most marvelous places ever built. Yet the Xanadu of Orson Welles or Samuel Coleridge is just a myth, impossible to imagine as a palace built by the Mongols, who have been so carefully defined as mere nomads.

The Diminishing Map

This view of nomadic culture may be the rationale that explains a final type of distortion as historians manipulate the legacy of the Mongols on historical timeline maps. This last instance of a colonizing filter shows how objective standards can be harnessed to create a subjective portrait. In timeline maps, different cultures are compared to establish a sense of their relative influence. On the long end of the scale is time, which typically runs from the “dawn” of Sumeria or Egypt (3000-4000 BCE) to “today” (2000 CE). The other axis lists geographical locations. A 2017 map created by Schofield & Sims displays the diversity of cultures in rows for the Americas, Africa, and Asia, included alongside Europe.⁴¹ Like other maps of this type, the Roman Empire sprawls across time and space (Figure 3).

The purpose of such maps is to regulate events and to apply a scientific approach to organizing history. Yet, the map is less than scientific in proportion. According to this modern map drawn by European scholars—Schofield & Sims is in Manchester, UK—the Mongols are hardly represented (Figure 4). In the 1200-1400 period, the Khan empire is drawn as multiple disconnected circles, each very small. This

39 Joshua Wright, “A Possible Archaeological Case of the Taxation of Medieval Eurasian Nomads,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 58 (2015), 267-292.

40 Marco Polo, “Marco Polo, The Description of the World,” in Morris Rossabi ed., *The Mongols and Global History* (New York: Norton & Company, 2011), 128-129.

41 “World History Timeline,” (London: Schofield & Sims, 2017). The 2017 version is at least more inclusive than those which included “history” according to the Bible or only showed cultures within the longitude of the Mediterranean. For a version that includes Biblical events (and mermaids), see Sebastian Adams, “Adams Chronological Chart or Map of History Fold-out,” (United States: MasterBooks, 1990) or at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adams_Synchro-logical_Chart_or_Map_of_History

Where Did the Mongols Go?

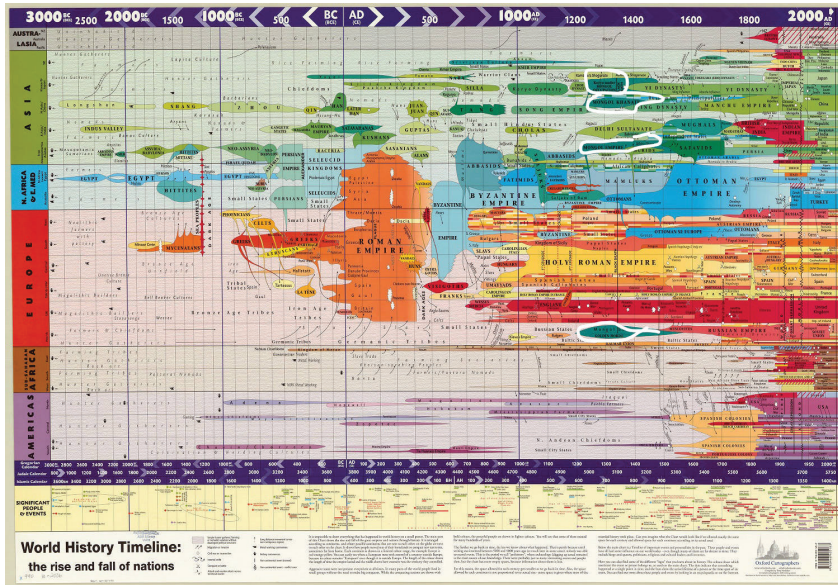


Figure 3: “World History Timeline,” Schofield & Sons, 2017. White circles (added by the author) reflect Mongol States.

misrepresentation is further enhanced when Russia is placed next to Africa rather than Asia, which strands the green Khan circles far from their other connected Asian territories. Thus, while the map purports to be regulating time and space, neither the dates nor the relative space is correctly proportioned.⁴²

Not only is the Mongol Empire itself fractured, but the spaces it occupied—Asia, Russia, China—take up significantly less room than their actual geographic size. The fact that mapmakers still allot Europe a disproportionately large size reflects the traditional Eurocentric view that more things “happened” in Europe. Yet it seems absurd, for instance, that the thirteenth-century Holy Roman Empire, which covered one-third of Europe, appears much bigger on the timeline map than the Mongol territories, which enclosed nearly the entire continent of Asia.

The arrangement seems to “prove” the valueless state of the Mongol empire by making it disproportionate and separating groups that should be joined with separate circles.⁴³ Contiguous territories are

42 The map also gives more space to events of more recent occurrences.

43 This is not suggesting that the mapmakers schemed to distort the Mongol Empire on purpose. Rather, the structures they used to place white cultures as most important—which appear rational—also created choices which irrationally denigrated other groups, like the Khans.

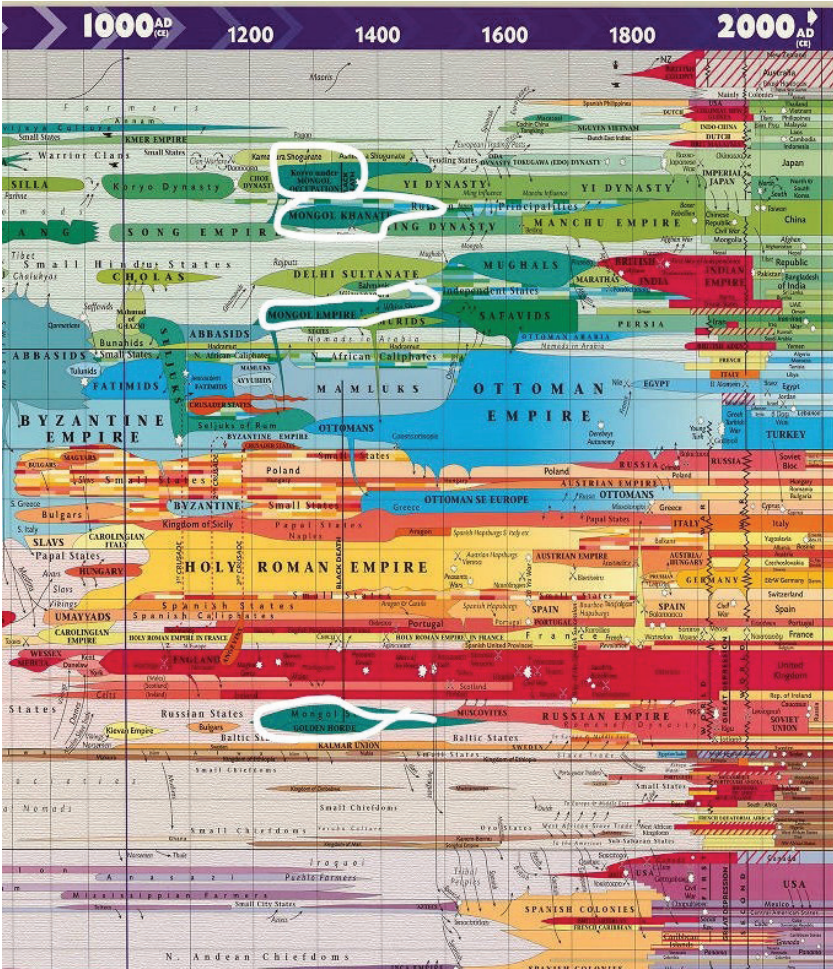


Figure 4: Close up of 13th-21st centuries. White circles (added by the author) reflect Mongol States. "World History Timeline," Schofield & Sons, 2017.

deliberately split—Africa is literally divided. Yet, the scientific designer of the map can claim that these are not choices but rather the “result” of how the empire must be depicted once the map allots space to Europe, Asia, or Russia. Cartography scholar Candace Fujikane also reflects on how maps can be used to justify a white supremacist mindset. In an analysis of maps used in Hawaii, Fujikane notes that “under the conditions of a settler colonial capitalist economy, the state engages in the structural operations of subdivision, of producing *terra nullius*, ‘land belonging to no one,’ eviscerating the land of history

and its meaning.⁴⁴ Fujikane was talking about a chart used by Maui developers who wanted to argue that “unused” land had no value and ought to be cultivated with shopping centers, corporate plantations, or tourist sites. The argument attempted to ignore that the land was “in use” by indigenous Hawaiians as part of an ecosystem that supported their culture, even though it was supposedly vacant. Yet Fujikane could just as easily have been referring to the steppes of Asia, also characterized as vast and valueless and often referred to as a place that has more animals than people. Or, in this case, a population of non-white nomads, neither deemed colonizers nor settlers, whose accomplishments are thus downgraded.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Narratives of the Mongol Empire have undergone something of a renaissance recently, for a few reasons. First, the fall of the Soviet Union and the creation of independent republics in Eastern Asia opened up opportunities for archaeological and archival research where the empire was concentrated. Also, China began supporting a wave of research. Lastly, interest by European and American scholars in shedding racist approaches to their work has helped rehabilitate Chinggis Khan’s reputation. In decades to come, textbooks may provide more balanced viewpoints of the Mongol legacy.

The interest from China, though, has had a downside. A recent exhibit of artifacts from Inner Mongolia planned for a museum display in Nantes became embroiled in controversy when the Chinese government demanded that the exhibition not refer to “Genghis Khan” or the “Mongol Empire” and to label the Mongol artifacts as Chinese.⁴⁶ Instead, the museum decided to display other artifacts from Ulaanbaatar in order to keep the original references, and the fight over who owns the empire will likely continue. Moreover, information about the empire available to the average history buff still carries the stamp of bias. Although many biographies now describe a multi-faceted portrait of Chinggis as a military genius and expansionist emperor, he is also routinely referred to as a “warlord” or having a “fighting gene.”⁴⁷

44 Candace Fujikane, “Mapping Wonder in the Māui Mo’olelo on the Mo’o’āina: Growing Aloha’āina Through Indigenous and Settler Affinity Activism,” *Marvels & Tales*. Vol. 30: (2016), 47.

45 Another American scholar, Daniel Hosang, coins the term “racial innocence” when talking about how people deny the existence of racism by pointing to other factors, such as when white parents argue that school integration is impossible because children are too young to be bused over long distances. Daniel Martinez Hosang, “The Changing Valence of White Racial Innocence: Black-Brown Unity in the 1970s Los Angeles School Desegregation Struggles,” in *Black and Brown in Los Angeles: Beyond Conflict and Coalition*, edited by Josh Kun and Laura Pulido, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 3.

46 Agence France-Presse, “China insists Museum Not Use the Words ‘Genghis Khan,’” *The Guardian*, October 13, 2020.

47 Spencer Mizen, “Genghis Khan: The Mongol Warlord Who Almost Conquered the World,” *History Extra*, 2023, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/geng->

This idea was furthered by a study in 2003 that estimated 8% of men in Asia might share a Y-chromosome haplogroup which carried a unique signature traceable to the Asian steppes.⁴⁸ Suddenly, dozens of articles sprang up claiming that this showed how Chinggis was “prolific” or “fecund” and personally fathered so many children across all of Asia that 16 million men could now claim direct ancestry with the randy conqueror.⁴⁹ Other scientists later pointed out that DNA science was not quite that precise and that having similar haplogroups might have localized the origins down to a tribe or localized region, but not necessarily an individual. Still, calculations immediately proceeded based on the legends of Chinggis many concubines and how many maidens he might have kidnapped.

Thus, the distortions applied to the Mongol empire have ranged from manipulations of their territory on maps to obsessions with only certain aspects of their culture. They are portrayed as savage, illiterate killers, and wanderers whose territory was fractured. It seems appropriate to close this essay with a quote from an eyewitness to the invasion of Bukhara: “They came, they saw, they sapped, they burned, they slew, they plundered and they departed.”⁵⁰ Even the historians who see the Mongols as facilitating cultural exchange open their books with that quote. Hence, the historians’ enduring Mongol metaphor is not one of emperors and rulers, but of locusts. The view of the Khan legacy is not primarily how they encouraged trade across the Silk Road during the *Pax Mongolica* or how they valued mathematics and artisans. The idea of a peaceful Mongol emperor watching dancers perform or querying an Arab astronomer, seems absurd on its face. Defined as uncivilized and bloodthirsty nomads who refused to settle, the Mongols have always been perceived as destructive forces who dissipated into the wind, ultimately “departing” off the face of the timeline map itself.

[his-khan-mongol-warlord -conquered-world-china-medieval/](https://www.cri-genetics.com/blog/curious-research-information-are-most-asian-men-descended-from-genghis-khan/).

48 CRI Genetics, “Curious Research Information: Are Most Asian Men Descended from Genghis Khan?”, CRI Genetics Blog, 2023, accessed March 9, 2023, <https://www.cri-genetics.com/blog/curious-research-information-are-most-asian-men-descended-from-genghis-khan>.

49 Nicholas Wade, “A Prolific Genghis Khan, It Seems, Helped Populate the World,” *The New York Times*, February 11, 2003.

50 Jones, *Powers and Thrones*, 311; Rossabi, *The Mongols*, 28; Rossabi, “Introduction,” in *The Mongols and Global History*, 1.



*Illustration by **Ava Matthews**, Chico State*

Neoliberalism:

An Abridged History of Economic Policy and Epidemiology

By Steven Garcia

Abstract: This essay analyzes how the spread of infectious diseases has become inextricably linked to neoliberal policies that have contributed to globalization. Neoliberal policies supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank remove regulations to incentivize global trade. Those policies can foster the rapid spread of zoonotic diseases (infections spread between animals and humans). By examining three epidemiological transitions, this paper uses historical examples to illustrate the importance of creating economic policies that help distribute health and safety more equitably.

We often think of global health systems and economic policy as separate spheres; however, through the exploration of anthropological studies, we have come to find the spread of infectious diseases has become inextricably linked to neoliberal economic policies tied to globalization.¹ The neoliberal systems in place inherently protect and serve the interests of constituencies that run the global financial system. Namely the former colonial powers.

1 Neoliberalism refers to free market economic policies that encourages developing nations to drop barriers to trade with developed nations. Outwardly, the policy is deeply rooted in the capitalist creed of competition, yet in execution, this approach primarily attempts to shift the balance of power towards the dominant economic class in control of capital. Globalization refers to the intensification of worldwide social relations such that local happenings are shaped by global events and foreign commodities are made widely available to the public.

Neoliberalism helps developed countries achieve, maintain, and extend their control over the global economy. These global socioeconomic policies, put forth by the world's economic leaders, create wealth disparity between nations and disproportionately expose disadvantaged populations to a high risk of infection and disease. This relationship reveals an unpaid toll in the capitalist system in which first-world countries owe a debt to third-world countries. This debt has grown and gone unpaid for centuries. Now, the third-world lenders are ready to collect.

The current pandemic era, beginning in 2019, presents the perfect opportunity to uncover the underlying anthropogenic causes that have accelerated the spread of infectious diseases across the globe. Ultimately, as the world faces new global challenges, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the looming threat of climate change, there is a shift in the understanding that global disasters are not happening to us but rather because of us. Thus, we must consider the implications of human activity and behaviors as they impact the planet's natural systems and determine who is responsible for global environmental degradation.

To correct ongoing environmental inequalities and health disparities, we must look at two *separate* systems: global health and economics. In doing so, we will cross-examine the expansion of capitalism through neoliberal policy, as framed against the three major epidemiological transitions recognized by physical and biological anthropologist George Armelagos in his 1998 article, "The Viral Superhighway," published in *The Sciences*.² This framing shows the correlation between the prevailing historical economic theory and worldwide disease prevalence (to various degrees, respective to geographic location). Armelagos believed:

Throughout history, human populations have undergone shifts in their relations with disease—shifts, we noted, that are always linked to major changes in how people interact with the environment. Barnes and I, along with James Lin, a master's student at Johns Hopkins University

2 The term "epidemiological transition" was first coined by Abdel Omran in 1977. The theory was significant in the world of medicine for providing an explanatory model for the decline in infectious disease and increased prevalence of chronic, non-communicable diseases, such as cancer and heart disease, in the period following WWII. See George Armelagos, "The Viral Super Highway," *The Sciences* 38 (January 1, 1998).

School of Hygiene and Public Health, have since developed a new theory: that there have been not one but three major epidemiological transitions; that each one has been sparked by human activities; and that we are living through the third one right now.³

According to Armelagos, the first transition began roughly 10,000 years ago when “many groups began to abandon their nomadic lifestyle.”⁴ During this period, the primary mode of production was subsistence. This shift to sedentism caused one of the first waves of the agricultural revolution and urbanization, bringing more people to live in close proximity to each other. It also brought a change to economic structures – a step closer to the capitalist mode of production. Under an economic lens, this advancement led us to the society we know today. However, employing an epidemiological lens complicates this narrative and has lasting implications for today’s global health.⁵ For example, intensifying urbanization increased population size, density, and duration of settlements, which amplified the spread of diseases from one person to another. Armelagos explains when “people were crowded together, a new pathogen could quickly start an epidemic. Larger populations also enabled diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox and smallpox to persist in an endemic form—always present, afflicting part of the population while sparing those with acquired immunity.”⁶ Urbanization also required increased exposure to domesticated livestock, and agriculture needed to meet the increased demand for food to feed the growing population. This increased exposure factors into the increased transfer of zoonotic diseases, or disease transfer from animals to humans. It also signals the first shift away from a subsistence mode of production to a capitalist one.⁷ The shift in the mode of production creates a positive feedback loop that ever-increases human reliance on agricultural production and capitalism while increasing our

3 Armelagos, “The Viral Super Highway,” 26.

4 Armelagos, “The Viral Super Highway,” 26.

5 Robert G. Wallace, Marius Gilbert, Rodrick Wallace, Claudia Pittiglio, Raffaele Mattioli, Richard Kock, “Did Ebola Emerge in West Africa by a Policy-Driven Phase Change in Agroecology? Ebola’s Social Context,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 46, no. 11 (November 1, 2014), 2535, <https://doi.org/10.1068/a4712com>

6 Armelagos, “The Viral Super Highway,” 27.

7 In the capitalist mode of production, assets such as large factories and farms are privately owned and controlled by the capitalist class. Wages are exchanged for labor, allowing capital gains to accrue for private owners (profit). The distinguishing feature of capitalist mode is the separation of laborers from the means of production – the capital, property, and materials needed for production.

exposure to new diseases. The contemporary capitalist mode of production disproportionately benefits the capitalist class. It creates a de facto social hierarchy in which the capitalist mode and its benefactors profit off the labor of the working classes.

It is pertinent to the history of globalization and neoliberalism that we examine how these policies rose to prominence and, in turn, set us on our current path to increased virulence. We must first trace the origins of the birth of capitalism under the guiding principles of influential economists like Adam Smith.⁸ In his 1776 book, *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith claimed that humans were primarily self-serving economic agents, seeking the fulfillment of their own self-interests and viewed “the market as a self-regulating mechanism tending toward equilibrium of supply and demand.”⁹ John Stewart Mill expands on Smith’s work in his 1836 essay, “On the definition of Political Economy; and on the method of investigation proper to it.”¹⁰ In this essay, Mill develops the term “Homo-Economicus,” which portrays market participants as those “who inevitably [do] that by which he may obtain the greatest amount of necessaries, conveniences, and luxuries, with the smallest quantity of labor and physical self-denial with which they can be obtained.”¹¹ Motivations like these profoundly influenced the evolution of capitalism. This dominant school of economics gripped Great Britain at the end of the eighteenth century and quickly overtook the United States, leading to the industrial revolution in 1850. Even prominent nineteenth-century philosopher Karl Marx recognized this in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), where he predicted the rise of the newly emerging capitalist system.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery...
It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt

8 Adam Smith (1723-1790) who wrote *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) was a Scottish philosopher regarded as one the first modern economists, an advocated for laissez faire economics, and the “father of capitalism.”

9 Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2020), 54.

10 John Stuart Mill, “On the definition of Political Economy; and on the method of investigation proper to it,” in *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy* (Luton, United Kingdom: Andrews, 2011), 102-136.

11 Richard C. Wilson, “What Is Homo Economicus?” Investopedia, accessed March 11, 2023. <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/homo-economicus.asp>

the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.¹²

Marx disavowed the capitalists' emphasis on private ownership, which inherently created inequality, structural violence, and classes within society, thus creating class conflict in the struggle for wealth. Marx offered an alternative through socialism and communism in which class conflict could be avoided by relinquishing property and the government equitably distributing wealth to its population. The Marxist economic philosophy that took root in Eastern Europe in the early 1900s directly conflicted with capitalism and was fueled by anti-capitalist rhetoric. While Marxism collapsed before the turn of the twenty-first century, the historiography of its rise and fall shows a concerted effort by the capitalist class to suppress the movement because it challenged the supremacy of capitalism. In tracing the rise of capitalism and its global proliferation as the new world order, we find that this was no smooth transition but rather a contentious one predicated by a basic tenet of capitalism – the need for continuous expansion – leading capitalist societies to engage in the practice of colonialism, then imperialism, and ultimately neoliberalism. The dawn of imperialism coincides with the end of the first epidemiological transition into the second, under which these practices will be further examined.

The second epidemiological transition –roughly between 1850 and 1970– signaled an inflection point in our battle with infectious disease and brought with it the advancement and modernization of medicine as well as an interest in public health that greatly impacted human longevity. Until this point, humanity survived its run-ins with disease, such as waves of exposure to the bubonic plague pandemic between 1347 and 1352. Also known as “the Black Death,” it claimed upwards of 100 million lives across Eurasia and North Africa, in which “by 1430, Europe’s population was lower than it had been in 1290 and would not recover the pre-pandemic level until the 16th century.”¹³ Similarly our struggle with smallpox epidemics over the past 3,000 years that has claimed hundreds of millions of

12 Jeffrey D. Sachs, “Twentieth-Century Political Economy: A Brief History of Global Capitalism,” *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 90-101.

13 John Firth, “The History of Plague – Part 1. The Three Great Pandemics,” October 2, 2019, <https://web.archive.org/web/20191002022050/https://jmvh.org/article/the-history-of-plague-part-1-the-three-great-pandemics/>.

lives.¹⁴ The discovery of inoculation practices by Edward Jenner in 1790 that safeguarded against smallpox mortality rates and improvements in methods of vaccination, which gained medical approval in the 1860s, proved no small victory for global health.¹⁵ This breakthrough significantly reduced the mortality rate of infectious disease and created a discernible shift in disease prevalence from contagious disease to increased rates of chronic, non-communicable diseases, such as heart disease and cancers. In the grand scheme, vaccination presents a simple singular solution to a relatively simple problem. On a larger scale, however, when we consider the complications brought about by funding for global health systems and organizations, we again see how economics influence medicine and transform health into a socioeconomic problem.¹⁶ We should question the implications of the Global North's funding of health institutions and consider how to rectify the inequities of the healthcare system.

Following the epidemiological timeline into the 1900s, power struggles through the industrial revolution created governmental and economic superpowers in the Global North. Burgeoning industrial American, European, and Chinese marketplaces led to a disparity in world dominance between Global North and South.¹⁷ Subjugation across international borders further complicated the socioeconomic and sociocultural issue, thus giving rise to the United States' imperialistic economic policy.¹⁸ The first World War (1914-1918) dramatically weakened the British Empire's economy and ability to provide for its population, let alone its dependencies. This ultimately led to disillusionment among British citizens and subjects towards colonization. In the aftermath of World War II (1939-1945), Great Britain's global collection of settlements that it had been acquiring since the sixteenth century sought to establish its own independence.¹⁹

14 Catherine Thèves, Eric Crubézy, and Philippe Biagini, "History of Smallpox and Its Spread in Human Populations," *Microbiology Spectrum* 4, no. 4 (July 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1128/microbiolspec.PoH-0004-2014>.

15 "Smallpox and the Long Road to Eradication," *Science History Institute*, November 12, 2019, <https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/smallpox-and-the-long-road-to-eradication>.

16 Institutions, such as the World Health Organization, draw funding from assessed contributions as well as voluntary contributions from intergovernmental organizations and the private sector, among other sources. See "How WHO Is Funded," *World Health Organization*, accessed March 12, 2023, <https://www.who.int/about/funding>.

17 The superpowers of the Global North, largely located in North America and Western Europe subjugated countries in Latin America and Africa.

18 After the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii and claimed Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines as territories.

19 Great Britain's colonies - The Bermuda's, Honduras, Antigua, Barbados, and Nova Scotia. Jamaica, what became northwestern Canada, Sierra Leone, and the Cape of South Africa. "British Empire | History, Countries, Map, Size, & Facts | Britannica," Britannica, accessed

As Imperialist policy fell away, the vacuum created by Europe's ousting in the economic structure of these newly liberated countries also created an opportunity to expand capitalism in an indirect form of colonialism – neoliberalism. In July 1944, at the Bretton Woods convention, the world's capitalist superpowers convened alongside other member governments to create world institutions.²⁰ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was formed to administer an international monetary system, and the World Bank (WB) to provide loans for Europe in their post-war reconstruction.²¹ However, under neoliberal policies, these institutions began to write self-serving policies that systematically widened the wealth disparity between the industrialized world and the developing nations rather than attempt to close it. In this way, world banking was commercialized for the benefit of the capitalist class. Countries that went to the IMF for the purpose for which it was created, to seek loans to improve their countries' health and welfare systems, received what amounted to predatory-interest loans that they could never repay. This leads one to question where the authority of the IMF comes from. Although these institutions were created and operated by the United Nations, voting rights in the IMF and WB are distributed in proportion to the respective country's economy. Therefore, North American and European countries control roughly 20% of the IMF and WB. Meanwhile, "in order to make any changes in the IMF, you need 80% of the votes."²² This means that wealthy countries maintain a controlling stake in these institutions. Key examples of this policy in practice are the economies of Jamaica, following its independence from Great Britain in 1962, and in Mexico during the 1980s when the collapse in oil prices bankrupted the Mexican government.

The problems Jamaica faced in 1973, shortly after achieving independence, are outlined by former prime minister Michael Manley in the documentary *Life and Debt* (2001). Faced with a

March 13, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire>. Sachs, "Twentieth-Century Political Economy," 96.

20 Forty-four nations in total were present at the Bretton Woods conference, see Department of State of the United States of America, *Proceedings and Documents of the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, July 1-22, 1944*, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1948), 5, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/proceedings-documents-united-nations-monetary-financial-conference-bretton-woods-new-hampshire-july-1-22-1944-430/volume-i-7570>.

21 Steger, *Globalization*, 53.

22 *Life and Debt*, directed by Stephanie Black (New Yorker Films, 2021), 01:01:50, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C-mind-mhs-y19qbNvqv1.

financial bind in the wake of imperialism, Jamaica “didn’t have the economic strength... to make it on their own,”²³ so they sought loans to finance their critical infrastructure, education, health, and agricultural systems. As Manley noted, the loans they received “are based on a short time frame, at full interest rate, and then they impose upon you tremendous restrictions.”²⁴ He later remarked on the cyclical nature of the agreement in which, at the end of the loan period, the country would be right back where it started, in an even worse financial bind. The “tremendous restrictions” he refers to are the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP’s) that the IMF forced countries to concede to. These programs, directly related to neoliberal policy, focused on the privatization of government-owned companies and deregulation of markets allowing foreign investors to enter, which consequently resulted in the devaluing of the local currency, cutting of social welfare budgets, and the weakening the labor unions.²⁵ In the film, Dr. Michael Witter, Professor of Economics at the University of West Indies, weighs in on the SAPs, noting how the devaluation of their currency shifts ownership – indirectly “through the mechanism of debt.”²⁶ While their reliance on imported foreign goods increases, their ability to export their own goods decreases; thus, they lose autonomy in their own economy. Unfortunately for countries like Jamaica, there is unrest in the culture, as the people cannot fulfill even their basic needs and are economically indebted to corporations. Locals are tired, frustrated, impoverished, and desperate. Through no fault of their own, they cannot continue their way of life. IMF policymakers have made that impossible for them, paving the way for further globalization.

Similar practices took place near the US-Mexico border in Tijuana. The subject of the 2006 documentary *Maquilápolis* details how neoliberal policies enacted in the 1980s under US foreign policy allowed large multinational corporations to harm their economy and environment. Mexican companies hired laborers to turn raw materials into finished goods, and then the goods were exported duty-free to the United States.²⁷ Like the situation in Jamaica, the Mexican government, desperate for cash, opened its borders to neoliberalism by agreeing to the IMF’s Structural Adjustment Programs. In doing so, many

23 *Life and Debt*, 0:10:00.

24 *Life and Debt*, 0:12:50.

25 Steger, *Globalization*, 56.

26 *Life and Debt*, 0:15:20.

27 *Maquilapolis* (Films on Demand, 2006), <https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wiID=103871&xtid=49801>.

large multinational corporations flooded into the lucrative trade environment. As many investment bankers might point out, this brought new jobs to the area. However, corporate interests pursued profit from assembly and production and did not care about the country's long-term development. For example, the construction and operation of the Sanyo electronics assembly plant resulted in chemical run-off, allowing harmful byproducts to contaminate local air, water, and food supplies and poisoning the surrounding community and its people, most of whom worked at the plant. Following the 1994 shutdown of the lead recycling plant, Metales y Derivados, many residents were exposed to lead-based contaminants and other toxins that leached from the facility into the ground, such as sulfuric acid, cadmium, and plastic.²⁸ They reported various ailments, including respiratory illness, hives, and sores on their arms and legs, as well as the arms and legs of their children. Pregnant women saw an increase in congenital disabilities, including anencephaly, in which babies are born without parts of their brain and skull, which pointed to the contamination and degradation of the community outside of the workplace.²⁹

Environmental disasters like these, common to the area, create a disproportionate spread of disease in developing regions such as Mexico, the Caribbean, Oceania, and areas of the Global South. Finally, the film details advocacy work by a local women's committee called the Chilpancingo Collective for Environmental Justice. The collective gained international media attention in 2004 for yielding positive change in their community when the Mexican government and US Environmental Protection Agency signed an accord for the cleanup of the abandoned Metales y Derivados site.³⁰ Such collective action illustrates the ability of small minority groups to stand up to large corporations. Still, ultimately, the fact that there is even a need for such advocacy groups highlights the more significant problems in the system. Firstly, these environmental atrocities should not even be taking place; secondly, the responsibility of safeguarding the community should not fall solely on the shoulders of citizens.

As shown in the examples and countless other instances, neoliberal policies are created to serve the capitalist mode of production, predominantly those in the global North. This cre-

28 *Maquilapolis*, 0:27:50

29 *Maquilapolis*, 0:26:53

30 *Maquilapolis*, 0:55:55

ates an imbalance in the global economy, disrupts the traditional land management and sociocultural systems of smaller countries, and leaves their governments unable to address the basic needs of their people – especially regarding their health care. Finally, we begin to see how the new global economic policy – neoliberalism – created by the Global North leads to the systematic displacement of smaller economies in developing nations, destroying their governments’ financial autonomy and thus their ability to care for their populations. This forces people into substandard living situations that expose them to various infections and diseases and, ultimately, implicates proponents of neoliberalism in the disproportionate spread of disease worldwide. Increases in globalization such as these signal a shift in the world’s social organization and the end of the second epidemiological transition.

Armelagos’ third epidemiological transition brings us to the current era (1970 – present), where we see the myriad of issues facing society today. Neoliberal policies are at work in several ways: the deforestation of land for natural materials, the intensification of agroecological impact to meet increased consumer demand, the destruction of natural habitats, and the ever-increasing contributions of the industrial world to climate change and global warming. These impacts add up to create an undeniable prophecy of apocalyptic proportions. While Armelagos wrote this article in 1998, we eerily see many of these changes taking place now. It is important to, once again, note that the changes to the natural environment are almost wholly catalyzed by anthropogenic causes that have been expanding largely since the industrial revolution. The “natural” disasters and introduction of novel viruses are, in fact, a response to these epidemiological transitions, driven by the world economy and amplified by globalization and neoliberal policies.

One specific area of interest is the increased spread of zoonotic disease at the root of recent emerging infectious diseases giving rise to pandemic responses. A key example of this: the imperialist practice of exploitation of migrant labor in the Congo in the 1930s to complete the CFCO railway. This pursuit of this mining railway created the conditions for a cesspool of HIV-1/AIDS to spawn and disseminate. This spread is documented in *The Origin of Aids*, in which epidemiologist Jacques Pepin pinpoints the cross-species transmission into humans from pathogens that had previously only existed in Chimpanzees.³¹ While

31 Jacques Pépin, *The Origins of AIDS* (Cambridge: University Press, 2021), 59.

these factors created the conditions for a large-scale epidemic, the increased prevalence of transportation through globalization in the 1980s allowed for more extraordinary transmission and, thus, elevation, of the disease to pandemic status. As Armelagos points out, “radically improved methods of transportation have given rise to new ways of contracting and spreading disease.”³²

More recently, the emergence and prevalence of Covid-19, resulting from poorly regulated wildlife trade and cross-species contamination, led to the zoonotic transmission of the virus into humans.³³ A study by evolutionary biologist Michael Worobey³⁴ linked Sars-Cov-2 (Covid) to its place of origin in a wet market for animal trade in Wuhan, China, in November and December 2019.³⁵ Within the market, animals susceptible to Covid-19, such as raccoon dogs and red foxes, were held in cages stacked on top of one another. It was in cages such as these that the highest concentrations of virus-positive environmental samples were found. Fellow researcher in the study, Edward Holmes, who had been to the very market in 2014, remarked, “this is the kind of place that has the ingredients for cross-species transmission of dangerous pathogens.”³⁶ Interactions with wild animals, such as those in the Congo and China, raise questions about how a globalized society protects itself from the rapid spread of infection and disease in a world full of rapid transportation. This is especially pertinent as interactions with wild animals, such as bats in Southeast Asia, are becoming increasingly prevalent. Neoliberal policies encourage and incentivize nations worldwide to penetrate further into nonhuman habitats, disrupt natural ecologies, and replace them with monocultural cash crops to supply consumer demand. As these mono-crop agricultural practices take hold worldwide, habitat destruction becomes commonplace as animals are displaced from their natural environment, leading to further human interaction. Such is the case in both West Africa and Guinea, where over a third of the country’s land is ex-

32 Armelagos, “The Viral Super Highway,” 27.

33 Michael Worobey et al., “The Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan Was the Early Epicenter of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Science* 377, no. 6609 (August 26, 2022): 951-59, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb8715>.

34 Michael Worobey, Research Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Arizona, has spent his career discovering the origins of epidemics and pandemics, such as HIV and the Spanish flu.

35 Worobey et al., “The Huanan Seafood.”

36 Michaelleen Doucleff, “Newly Published Evidence Points to Wuhan Seafood Market as Pandemic Origin Point,” NPR, July 22, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandso-da/2022/03/03/1083751272/striking-new-evidence-points>.

propriated by multinational corporations.³⁷ There much of the traditional agroforestry is cleared away to make way for the production of palm oil, coffee, and cacao, among other cash crops. Frugivore bats, known carriers of Ebola, flock to these palm oil plantations for food and shelter.³⁸ It should come as no surprise that there is a link between the primary picking season when farm workers pick oil palm and concurrent upticks in the Ebola outbreak. The spread of infectious diseases, such as Ebola and Coronavirus (Covid), is directly tied to practices that change the natural ecology, including these animals' habitats and migratory patterns. Therefore neoliberal policies that exploit workers into dangerous work environments such as these increase the likelihood that disease will reach epidemic/pandemic level.

Who else shares culpability? The evidence presented argues that the lion's share goes to the policymakers of the Global North. Much of the blame falls on corporations whose business practices value capitalist financial gain regardless of environmental impact. Some of that culpability also indirectly falls on consumers worldwide who take for granted transcontinental delivery services, combustion engines, instant messaging, and fully stocked grocery stores. The dissociation that comes with the outsourcing of harmful aspects of consumerism doesn't mean they aren't happening. The "out of sight, out of mind" mentality is a metaphor for the larger global system that enriches privileged countries while exploiting the hard work of the people in developing countries. This short-sighted, short-changing across sociocultural boundaries hurts everyone in the long run. As we see the harmful effects of neoliberal policies that impact disadvantaged nations due to the rise in globalization, those harmful effects eventually feed back into affluent countries through the increased spread of infectious diseases. Ultimately, it falls back on policymakers to push for meaningful changes to global policies that force corporations to shift away from neoliberalism towards a more equitable system that is in equilibrium with the planet's ecology. As journalist George Monbiot states, "our power comes from acting as citizens - demanding political change - not acting as consumers."³⁹

Looking deeper at these transitions, we see a theme

37 Wallace et al., 2535.

38 Wallace et al., 2535.

39 George Monbiot, "We Cannot Change the World by Changing Our Buying Habits," *The Guardian*, November 6, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2009/nov/06/green-consumerism>.

emerge: an increasing intensification of ecological disruptions to the natural world in pursuit of profit. Disparities in world financial markets have created imbalances in power that force developing nations to sacrifice in the name of the neoliberal agenda. This has far-reaching implications for the natural world: the more disruptive the behavior, the more dire the planet's response. Therefore, as the evidence presented has shown, the world economy has become inextricably linked to world health. The proliferation of inequitable financial practices has increased the rate of human exposure to disease in the developing world and, subsequently, due to globalization, an increase in disease transportation which, in the current epidemiological era, leads to a pandemic response. This should produce eye-opening results for the world's collective conscience and help us move towards a more equitable system, not only because it is right but because it is necessary to slow down the spread of disease that affects everyone on the planet, regardless of one's socioeconomic status.



Illustration by **Erica Noblet**, Chico State

The Evolution of Mental Asylums to Institutions

in Post-World War II America and the Historians that Changed the Field

By Taylor Hillman

Abstract: Mental asylums in America have largely been ignored by the greater American public and the medical field, leaving millions of patients abused by the system that was supposed to be treating them. By using the extensive research done by historians, psychologists, and sociologists, this paper explores the complete transformation of the mental health care system in America after World War II, which eradicated asylums and brought ushered institutions focused on researching and treating mental illness. This paper analyzes the change in treatments, how medical data was collected, and how normalizing mental health drove change in the 1990s. These changes helped make mental healthcare more accessible.

As the tides of war changed in favor of the Allies, the glimmering hope of ending the largest war in our world's history was in America's hands. The end of the war meant that many men could return home to their families, but for others, it was the beginning of their longest battle yet. After 1945, there was a tremendous boom in mental health issues among American men. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and various personality disorders occurred from the immense trauma these men endured, requiring extensive treatment. From the moment World War II

ended, how American society addressed mental health began to change. The treatments, protocols, government assistance, and the training of doctors and nurses all transformed, and decades later, scholars and practitioners unearthed what happened during this transformation. Historians, sociologists, and psychologists used their disciplinary methods to patch together a narrative that traced this rapid and controversial shift in American mental health systems. Despite many setbacks, such as medical professionals omitting abusive situations in medical facilities, history always finds a way of being told. Historians have devoted their lives to revealing the truth by patchworking the history of mental health in America, whether it was patterns of mistreatment or the evolution of a more effective treatment.

The Patchwork Begins

When historians went to record early information about mental asylums, they found that medical professionals focused on documenting numbers and patient percentages, which became a challenge to contextualize the early history of mental asylums.¹ Gerald Grob, a leading historian in this field, indicates that early research focused on how many patients were admitted to a given facility, what care they received, and what the hospital's inpatient and outpatient costs were.² The documentation, primarily made by doctors, was vague and imprecise. Researching the root causes of mental illnesses or the treatment's effectiveness was not important to doctors at this time. Instead, the treatment administered by doctors and nurses focused on keeping patients medicated or sedated to free them from agitating behaviors. Such treatment methods were not documented at the time, and historians only learned about the procedures in the 1980s and beyond when patients were interviewed about their experiences in asylums by documentarians and historians.³ In "Rediscovering Asylums," Gerald Grob describes that while researching early mental health, he was "pleased that those in policy decisions do turn to the

1 Gerald N. Grob, *From Asylum to Community: Mental Health Policy in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 119.

2 Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 195.

3 Gerald N. Grob, *The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (New York: Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1994), 47.

past. What troubles [Grob] and other historians, however, is the quality of historical data used in legitimating or opposing particular policies.”⁴ Many doctors or providers did not keep accurate data, which has made the job of historians significantly more complicated as they pressed forward with documenting the history of mental asylums in America.

1950s-1960s: The Transformation from Asylums to Institutions

The early history of mental asylums being “lost” was a challenge that dedicated historians were determined to fix. Many people with mental health conditions were veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, so documenting mental illness would be important for understanding how PTSD, depression, and other disorders became prevalent among veterans.⁵ Yet, documentation was varied and not detailed, so historians had to find patients and nurses who could recount their experiences in these facilities. Scholars such as historian Gerald Grob, sociologist David Mechanic, and psychologist William Spaulding worked for decades to fit pieces of this narrative together. For years, it was a mystery how patients were actually treated while the public thought they were given top care. Sadly, patients would tell researchers that they were verbally or physically abused, malnourished, tortured, or left for dead by care providers.⁶ These allegations were brought to light in the 1950s and 1960s, which ushered in a new revolution in mental health care. This was also the revolution from these facilities being called asylums to institutions. The term asylum was a phrase that indicated abuse, imprisonment, and the dark shadow of how the medical field treated mentally ill people. With this new shift in medical practices to care and treat mental illness, rather than simply sedate and lock up patients, they became institutions dedicated to bettering the lives of people. This also led to new medications and therapies being introduced that were beneficial to patients. Before this revolution,

4 Gerald N. Grob, “Rediscovering Asylums: The Unhistorical History of the Mental Hospital,” *The Hastings Center Report* 7, no. 4 (1977): 33.

5 William D. Spaulding, Mary E. Sullivan, Jeffrey S. Poland, and A. Jocelyn Ritchie, “State Psychiatric Institutions and the Left-Behinds of Mental Health Reform,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 3 (2010): 328.

6 Grob, “Rediscovering Asylums,” 36.

electrocutation, partial lobotomies, hysterectomies, and other invasive procedures were considered the norm. It was not until the 1960s that it was exposed how ineffective they were in treating mental illness and would exacerbate their illnesses.⁷ Diligent historians helped expose inhumane treatments by discovering records essential to uncovering the truth. Researchers like Grob, Spaulding, and Mechanic were starting a revolution in the mental health service community. This documentation helped structuralize mental institutions and implement laws on how mental health patients could acquire treatment and care.

Historical discoveries helped improve treatments in American facilities. Mental health professionals who were passionate about revitalizing the system worked to keep journals, documentaries, and books in circulation so that the historical context of institutions and asylums would not be lost to time again.⁸ When historians and experts in the field began to keep a close eye on records, changes in laws and policies emerged. Medical personnel kept detailed notes from daily hospital records that explained processes being done and what events were occurring. These notes made research easier for psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, surgeons, and many other professionals as it was organized and easily accessible. This allowed more research and trials to treat mental illness and protocols for how care facilities should be run to allow patients a greater chance of recovery or coping. Researchers hoped that focusing on this topic would establish a timeline of care and analyze this data for policy changes or proof of treatment.⁹ This would also show the gradual change in how “the history of care and treatment of mental illness resembles a seemingly endless journey between two extremes - confinement in a mental hospital versus living in the community,”¹⁰ which allowed easier access for other historians to build their research on. Having documentation of how effective these two extremes meet patient needs would answer treating mental health. This timeline was crucial for historians to follow as they continued to learn and add to this narrative which progressed the need for proper care and documentation.

7 Spaulding et al., “State Psychiatric Institutions,” 329.

8 Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 292.

9 David Mechanic and David A. Rochefort, “Deinstitutionalization: An Appraisal of Reform,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 16, no. 1 (1990): 327.

10 Grob, “Rediscovering Asylums,” 41.

1970s-1980s: Mental Institutions Get to Work

The final evolution of how historians researched and documented institutions revolved around the mass attention that mental health received from the 1970s until the 1990s. Historians took great caution to detail mental health issues during this time as it was the massive shift of taking care of veterans with PTSD to patients who were suffering from mental distress.¹¹ Although data shows most people afflicted with mental illness were veterans of war, a significant portion were ordinary everyday people. At this time, mental institutions were being defunded and closed, mainly because “the establishment of community care alternatives was highly inadequate, leaving many severely and persistently mentally ill people without essential services. Problems of care were exacerbated by the contraction of welfare programs in the 1980s, which resulted in serious neglect and homelessness.”¹² Analyzing and documenting this meant historians could see precisely when mental illness skyrocketed and how it corresponded with the moment when services were not available or were defunded. Even as recent as the 2010s, mental institutions were underfunded.¹³ The data shows that not having these facilities or treatments has created a system of mentally ill people at risk. The information researchers have gathered since the 1970s shows the importance of facilities operated fairly and funded by the government. The research done by historians of this field shows “historical forces that led to the transinstitutionalization of the mentally ill from almshouses to the state mental hospitals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have now been revered in the aftermath of recent deinstitutionalization policies.”¹⁴ Policies that have been implemented to deinstitutionalize mental facilities are due to the hard work of researchers and the constant recording of facts and events, in addition to their diligence for the truth and helping those suffering from mental health issues. Historians have shown that the history of institutions is most beneficial when trained professionals can share data, research, and notes to treat the patient.¹⁵

11 Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 29.

12 Mechanic and Rochefort, “Deinstitutionalization,” 303.

13 Spaulding et al., “State Psychiatric Institutions,” 334.

14 Joseph P. Morrissey and Howard H. Goldman, “Care and Treatment of the Mentally Ill in the United States: Historical Developments and Reforms,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 484, no. 1 (1986): 15.

15 Morrissey and Goldman, “Care and Treatment,” 14.

1980s-1990s: Normalizing and Accessibility

The importance of historical research on mental health and institutions in America comes down to the outcome of destigmatizing mental illness. The general public's knowledge of mental illness before the 1980s and '90s was minimal or found in movies and TV.¹⁶ Due to this, many blamed the mentally ill for their conditions. This came with the new wave of people correlating heavy drug use and alcoholism with mental instability, making those who suffered a pariah in their communities. Historians who focused on the research of mental institutions prioritize publishing their findings to humanize people with mental illness. There was a flux in journals and books about the commonality of depression, anxiety, and mental illnesses in the 1990s, which garnered a better understanding of treating mental conditions to the broader public.¹⁷ Although somewhat villainized, the theory of institutionalizing someone for depression or anxiety has been exceedingly unpopular for a few decades. Still, the popularity of therapy has skyrocketed due to this research. The research provided evidence that therapy immensely helped depression and suicide rates.¹⁸ Historians had a larger purpose at hand now and generated more consumable media for Americans to understand how mental health and institutions worked. Documentaries became more popular, and mental health topics and the reality of asylums became a hot topic for many medical historians. Some considered the interest in mental health history a fad as interest dipped in the 2000s.¹⁹ However, historians kept publishing their findings on the benefits of mental institutions, which became a staple for medical journals.

Conclusion

Since the mid-1940s, mental asylums, later transformed into institutions, were under-documented until historians and researchers passionately spent years ensuring the history would be available to the public. Understanding the history of

16 Mechanic and Rochefort, "Deinstitutionalization," 310.

17 Grob, "Rediscovering Asylums," 40.

18 Morrissey and Goldman, "Care and Treatment," 23.

19 Grob, *From Asylum to Community*, 249.

mental health facilities in America is integral to properly caring for patients. This would not be possible without historians looking into the dirty secrets of asylums and those who distributed the abuse in the system. The research consisted of numerical data, interviews, hospital notes, and more to create the timeline of abusive care that would allow policies to be changed. Historians have followed the history from the everyday use of electrification and lobotomizing of patients to the medicating and providing therapy that has dramatically improved the quality of life for mentally ill people. The research conducted over the last six decades has helped to substantially improve the laws passed to fund facilities and destigmatize mental illness in America. Without extreme dedication and perseverance through incompetence, historians have preserved and documented the evolution of mental institutions that can be readily available to anyone who wants to understand the dark history of mental facilities in America.

Author Biographies

Sara Isabel Andrade is a junior at Cal State East Bay, majoring in history with a concentration in social justice and citizenship. She has been a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society since 2023. Andrade aims to become an elementary school teacher, specifically a fourth-grade teacher. In her free time, Andrade enjoys listening to and singing jazz. She has been a jazz singer for the last ten years, and as she has grown older, she has found that her personal and historical interests have begun to merge. Everything from jazz as an art to the historical context in which jazz emerged fascinates her. In this volume of the *East Bay Historia*, Andrade published an essay about the experiences of enslaved mothers in the Antebellum South. Writing and conducting the research for this paper was very special to her and it was inspired by the work of historian Tiya Miles and the life of every enslaved mother.

Sam Balderas transferred to Cal State East Bay from Merritt College and is a second-semester history major with a concentration in Sustainability and Modernization. Balderas is interested in the history of Mexico and broader North and South American history. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, Balderas hopes to find employment in a research field or

museum. Since 2023, Balderas has served as Historian for the Department of History's Phi Alpha Theta honors society chapter.

Britney Brown is a first-generation college student who earned two bachelor's degrees from UC Irvine in Philosophy and Dance in 2013. After working as a freelance professional modern dancer across California and Germany, she returned to the Bay Area to earn her teaching credential from Cal State East Bay. She is in her fourth year of teaching social studies at Castro Valley High School. In 2020, Brown returned to Cal State East Bay as a graduate student in the history department. Her current interests and research focused on decolonizing the high school history curriculum, which she is putting into practice by serving on the curriculum planning committee responsible for creating and implementing the Ethnic Studies course at Castro Valley High School. An active member of Cal State East Bay, Britney is a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society and was a recipient of the David M. Campbell scholarship.

Leland Butcher, a native of Fremont, California, is a fourth-semester graduate student in the Department of History at Cal State East Bay and is looking forward to graduating in Fall 2023. He received an associate's degree from Chabot College and then transferred to Sacramento State, where he earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice before finding employment with the City of Hayward. When not working on his master's degree, Butcher coaches football and teaches at James Logan High School in Union City. Upon completing the graduate program, he hopes to use his master's degree in history to pursue a teaching career at the Community College level. Butcher has been a member of the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta since 2023.

Mya Elliott is a third-year student at Cal State East Bay, majoring in history with a concentration in sustainability and modernization. She is interested in investigating historically oppressed communities and how they ended up in their

position. In the future, she would like to have a career where she can advocate and educate communities about their local environments and food systems. Elliott has been a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society since 2023.

Steven Garcia is in his final semester at Cal State East Bay, working towards a bachelor's degree in liberal studies with a concentration in early childhood education. He has always had a fascination with history, and the broad nature of liberal studies has allowed him to explore a great variety of topics. In 2023, Garcia joined the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society.

Edward Hill Jr. is a southern gentleman who grew up in Berkeley in the '90s. He graduated from Cal State East Bay in 2021 with a bachelor's in liberal studies and a minor in history. He is in his fourth and final semester of the Department of History's master's program. When not spending time with his family, he can be found hiking local trails or backpacking in the Sierras, specifically in Yosemite. He has received several awards and recognitions for his dedication to the historical craft: in 2023, he became a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society; in 2022, he received the 2022 Dee Andrews award for outstanding paper at the annual Wanda Washington Student Conference; and in 2021, he earned the David M. Campbell scholarship in history. Hill Jr., currently works for Oakland Unified School District where he teaches 10th and 11th graders at Skyline High School. In their Community Health and Education pathway

Taylor Hillman is a history major with a concentration in sustainability and modernization at Cal State East Bay. She is passionate about mental health and interested in how the social stigma surrounding mental health has changed throughout American history. This interest led her to write about the history of mental institutions in this volume of the East Bay History. After she graduates, Hillman plans on becoming a history teacher to educate the next generation that history is

much more than our founding fathers. History comprises all backgrounds, cultures, and societies, and Hillman contends that we must protect every story to understand where we are today.

Maria Kaj is a writer, instructor, former finance manager, and fledgling historian. Her 2022 book *Women at the Olympics: The Struggle for Equality, 1896-2021*, addresses the challenges women overcame in competing in the games and prompted her to write more history, both on her blog at kajmeister.com and in academic venues. She is currently working on a master's thesis at Cal State East Bay concerning financial and accounting practices in cultures of the Middle Ages. As an active member of the Department of History, Kaj received the 2022 Dee Andrews award for outstanding paper at the annual Wanda Washington Student Conference and, in 2023, became a member of the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society.

Christine Nguyen is in her final semester at Cal State East Bay, working towards a bachelor's in history with a minor in anthropology. Last year, she served as a part of the East Bay Historia's design team and published her first article about Native American code talkers. In this journal volume, Nguyen published her thesis capstone project about Chinese internment at Angel Island. She hopes to use her skill set as a historian and her passion for history to inspire future students to share their voices and actively shape their future by understanding the past.

Kendra Rocco, a recent 2022 graduate, received her bachelor's degree in history with a concentration in social justice and citizenship while minoring in women's studies. Her research revolves around the Philippines' pre-colonial history and indigenous cultures, inspired by her Filipino immigrant mother and family. Her studies are motivated by her desire to reconnect with her cultural heritage and her passion for teaching. Education has made a difference in her life, and she

is excited to become a teacher and work with students. Rocco was one of the founding members of the Alpha Rho Theta chapter of Phi Alpha Theta.

Matt Smith is an avid outdoorsman and historian who has tried to combine these passions in his academic studies. A lifelong Californian and resident of the Bay Area, he has a specific interest in the history of those places- if there's a historical marker on the road, he's pulling over! After a long hiatus collecting life experiences, Smith completed his bachelor's degree in history from Cal State East Bay in 2022 and is pursuing a career in teaching, hoping to impart some of the lessons he's learned along the way.

Artist Biographies

Julia Ambriz is a twenty-five-year-old mother of two, wife, and senior at Chico State, majoring in studio art with an emphasis in photography. While already having her own small photography business, she also enjoys digital media, such as graphic design and digital illustration. As someone from a small town, she tends to have her art focus on the things that people from larger areas overlook: small-town sports, agriculture, and small businesses. In the future, Ambriz wants to further her photography career while also continuing her digital media interests and expressing her art's importance.

Koda Dowdle, originally from Idaho, is a Chico State sophomore majoring in computer animation with a minor in digital media. Dowdle has been doing digital art since their freshman year of high school. Their other interests include horseback riding, weightlifting, and music. When not in school, they enjoy spending time at their local horse barn back in Idaho. After graduation, they hope to become a freelance creator, working on everything from portraits to animated music videos. In this year's edition of *East Bay Historia*, Koda drew a piece representing the view of the Mongol empire through the eyes of tainted history and how it has distorted what we know about them.

Kai Fukuda is a Chico State student majoring in art with a concentration in digital art. In college, he is gaining new skills and techniques to succeed. In his illustration for the essay about the ecocide of West Papua, he combined natives and their conflicts against colonial rule with the color and facial expressions in his drawing.

Natalie Gallegos, originally from San Diego, is a senior at Chico State majoring in computer animation with a minor in studio art, emphasizing digital media. When not in school, Gallegos enjoys reading, listening to music, and catching up with any previous drawings or paintings that she may have started. After graduation, she hopes to continue into a career in animation or illustration career. For this year's edition of the East Bay Historia, Gallegos wanted to portray the intense emotion of a mother's bond with her children and how difficult and painful it would have been to have a child taken away, especially during the slave trade.

Emily Jackson is a Chico State senior pursuing a degree in art studio with an emphasis in digital media. She will graduate in the spring of 2023. Jackson's goal is to pursue a career in the animation industry as an illustrator, concept artist, or character designer. Her work focuses on storytelling and has fantasy, slice-of-life, and supernatural elements. Emily was drawn to this essay about modern dance during the Cold War because of her eight years of childhood dance experience.

Neutrix Kustner is an online artist and character designer attending Chico State interested in history and animation. They like to portray a story and sense of character in each piece using lines and simple color schemes. They specialize in more fantastical and monstrous pieces but do enjoy drawing people at every opportunity.

Keana Lee is a sophomore at Chico State who is native to San Francisco. She is majoring in computer animation with a minor

in digital illustration. Outside school, Lee enjoys music, comic books, and playing games with friends. After learning all she can from Chico State, she hopes to continue into a career at a film or game studio. For this collaboration, she has portrayed the rise and fall of the environmental group Earth First! by highlighting the group's internal conflicts.

Ava Matthews originally attended Chico State to study anthropology but is currently pursuing a degree in animation. Their illustrative work is inspired by music, nature, and their cat. They illustrated the essay about neoliberalism and epidemiology for this volume of the *East Bay Historia*.

Erica Noblet has been drawing for over a decade and dedicates much time and energy to her craft. While working hard to get her bachelor of fine art degree at Chico State, she also does freelance work on the side. Erica specializes in comic work, digital illustrations, and even 2D animation and hopes to share some of the knowledge she has learned throughout the years with her peers and friends. In her free time, you can find her playing video games or story-building with her own characters.

May Saechao is a student artist who attends Chico State and specializes in character art and illustration. Majoring in art studio with a digital media focus, Saechao aims to see growth in both her works and herself as an artist. She hopes to land a fulfilling illustration or character art career after graduation.

Jasmyn Wilson is a senior at Chico State majoring in art studio with an emphasis on digital art. The driving force behind her illustrations is finding comfort in the mundane. In this way, it embodies the feeling of being in the moment and appreciating the world around you. As an African American woman, the essay "Safe Spaces for Black Faces" resonated with her on a personal level. Her childhood lacked National Park visits and camping because those spaces are not traditionally for black faces. As she got older, she was able to go camping with friends and hopes to visit Yosemite one day.

Sarah Zhang is a senior at Chico State majoring in interior architecture and minoring in art studio. She enjoys making art through drawing and printmaking. She plans to become an interior designer and design spaces and experiences throughout her professional career to unite people, build communities, and promote sustainability.

