

***Journal #5941 from sdc 3.18.25***

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**Sand Mountain Blue Butterfly. Image courtesy of Michael P. Branch.**

## A Prospect from Singing Mountain

## EXCERPTS:

“Damned ancient Mayans. In anticipation of the end of the world on December 21, I put off my Christmas shopping, blew off my writing deadlines, told a few folks what I actually think of them, and ran up a huge whiskey bill on my credit card. But as we enter the new year it has become obvious that prophecies about the apocalypse belong with weather reports, political predictions, and football bets. You know you’re part of a cosmic crapshoot when even the end of the world turns out to be a disappointment. Now we’ll just have to hang tough until the Earth’s impending collision with the planet Nibiru. At least I’ll have ample sour mash and rye while I wait around for a more dependable cataclysm.

“To appreciate Sand Mountain requires vast leaps of imagination.....

“This is the story of the birth of Sand Mountain, which is still being born.....

“Sand Mountain is one of only thirty-five dunes on the planet that knows how to sing.....

“From our perch we discerned no life apart from our own, but there is one secret life that is lived here, and here alone.....

<https://sierranevadaally.org/2024/12/30/a-prospect-from-singing-mountain/>

An earlier version of this essay appeared as “Singing Mountain” in Mike’s book [\*Rants from the Hill: On Packrats, Bobcats, Wildfires, Curmudgeons, a Drunken Mary Kay Lady, and Other Encounters with the Wild in the High Desert\*](#) (Roost Books, 2017).

*It is a beautifully written tome, and for those of us that have spent hours climbing up and then rolling down.....*

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Join Native Organizers Alliance and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe tomorrow at 1:00 PM ET for an important webinar titled "100 Years of Silence and Reclamation of History (Part I)".

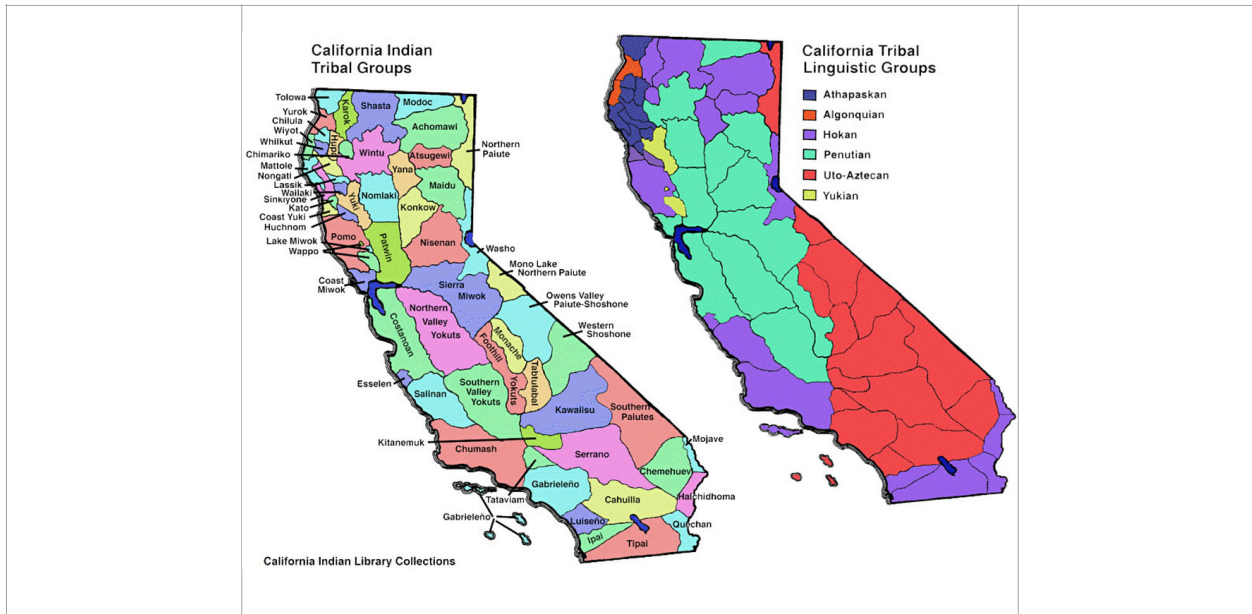
**"100 Years of Silence" is a project spearheaded by Ute community leaders, storytellers, and artists that aims to enhance cultural understanding and encourage community dialogue by breaking the silence around the "Allen Canyon Ute Incarceration of 1923"** where members of the Ute Tribe -- men, women, and children -- were incarcerated in barbed wire cages and removed from their traditional Ute land in the Bears Ears area of southeastern Utah.

[\*\*Join Native Organizers Alliance and Ute community leaders tomorrow, Tuesday, March 18 at 1:00PM ET for "100 Years of Silence and Reclamation of History \(Part I\)". Click here to RSVP for this important webinar >>\*\*](#)

In telling our truths and histories, "100 Years of Silence" seeks to empower Native communities to reclaim agency and promote self-determination, while healing generational trauma.

Miigwech (*thank you*), Jennifer Fairbanks (Ojibwe), Communications Director

From: Norma Tarango <[navigadora@protonmail.com](mailto:navigadora@protonmail.com)>  
**On Bill Maher and Indigenous Lands**



During a monologue a couple of years ago, comedian Bill Maher took both the blue team and the red team of America to task by stating what he called “a new rule”: “You don’t really love America if you hate half the people in it, and also if you hate a lot of the things that everyone always loved about it.”

Behind his “new rule” is the expectation that people living in the United States ought to “love America,” and support “what everyone always loved about it.” Funny, though, that he was not very specific about what things he believes *everyone* always loved about the United States.

He did focus on the right to vote: “If you say you love America, don’t you also have to love the idea of everyone getting to vote?” “Don’t you have to love the peaceful transfer of power?”

Maher continued by saying of both sides of the American political spectrum: “For all the talk about fighting for the soul of America, no one seems to like it very much.”

He added the cynical view of those on the Left who believe that the United States is a “country that started out bad and will always be bad.” A country which was “founded on an unrelenting history of sucking, and unable to change.”

“But we *have* changed,” said Maher. “A lot.” He cited the example of Democrat Cory Bush tweeting out, “This land is stolen land, and Black people still aren’t free.” “And this was on the fourth of July. Really.”

Maher continued: “Not that I give a shit about the fourth of July, I’ve never been a rah, rah, guy. But I am a perspective guy, and that’s what too much of the left has lost, perspective. 72 percent of Black people under thirty are optimistic about their future in America, way more than white people the same age.”

He then offered his view-from-the-ship perspective regarding Indigenous lands: “And as far as the land goes, yes, I guess we could change the name of Captain America to Captain Stolen Land,” said Bill Maher to great laughter and applause, “but honestly, to all the people who start every public event now with one of those land acknowledgments, where they say, ‘I’m standing on land that was stolen from proud Indigenous people of the Chumash tribe,’ I say, ‘either give it back or shut the fu\*k up.’”

Comedians are amazingly insightful and bright. We tend to especially laugh when a comedian, in an irreverent manner, makes us see something that should have been obvious but was hidden from view. Comedy can be used to reveal hidden truths that seem obvious once they’re stated. In response, members of the audience are likely to laughingly think, “God, that’s so true, why have I never noticed that?”

But comedy can also be used to obfuscate and hide truth by using ridicule to shut down uncomfortable questions and voices society doesn’t want to hear. The position “either give it back or be silent about Indigenous lands” seems well-designed to shut down rather than open discussion about the relationship of domination that the U.S. society has with Indigenous nations and peoples and their lands.

Comedians exploit our prejudices, our stereotypes, and our sedimented assumptions. Take the phrase, “stolen land” as a case in point. That phrase seems so obviously true. But what if the word “stolen” is inaccurate? What if Maher’s framing is a skilled effort to silence and shut down those of us who would delve into the very foundation of an imperial American system, what the U.S. Supreme Court has called “the American empire,” that has used two billion acres of Native lands to develop into the country that Maher expects “everyone” to love?

Allow me to explain how this applies to “the golden state”: The geographical area now called “California” consists of roughly one hundred million acres of land. Eighteen so-called treaties with the Native nations of California were written up between 1851-52, but never ratified by the U.S. Senate. Ratification failed because of pressure exerted on the U.S. Senate by California’s congressional representatives. Because they were not ratified pursuant to the terms of the U.S.

Constitution, the so-called 18 “treaties” never went into effect, and what was written in them became null and void.

Accordingly, not one square inch of Native land within the area of those so-called “treaties” was ever ceded, relinquished, or surrendered by those unratified documents. This means that *to this day most of the lands “in” California are still Indian land*. Let’s get the comedy writers on this right away, shall we? Let’s figure out the bit and the punch line! Maybe the joke is on those who fell for a false version of history and assumed that the Native lands in California were “stolen fair and square.”

Perhaps there is a source of humor in the ridiculous superstition that colonizing “boat people,” who sailed across an entire ocean, can simply walk ashore where entire nations and peoples have been living for countless generations, say some “mumbo jumbo” and engage in other ritualized symbology, and then claim on that basis to “take possession” of the lands and waters extending all the way from the mouth of the river where they made landfall to the source of the river. “That’s your claim? Seriously?”

But that is their bizarre claim. Take as an illustration the 1938 book *Creation of Rights of Sovereignty [Domination] Through Symbolic Acts*, by Keller, Lissitzyn, and Mann. They were three PhD students of international law at Columbia University. They studied under Charles Cheney Hyde who taught international law and diplomacy at Columbia from 1925-1945. He served as solicitor of the US Department of State from 1923-25.

The claim of a right of empire and domain is actually the basis of the political and economic system of the American empire on this Turtle Island continent. And it’s based on metaphorical and symbolic acts that many people claim that Native lands are accurately called “stolen” by the “democracy” called the United States.

Maher’s ill-informed laugh line, for example, about lands “stolen” from “proud Indigenous people of the Chumash tribe” elicited laughter from his audience. But a more accurate way of thinking and speaking about this, *from a Native perspective*, is to point out that the Spanish, Mexican, and American political systems *asserted a right of domination* on top of the Chumash Nation and their lands, and on top of all the Native nations of California and the continent.

The word “stolen” was then used as a way to label a perpetual *claim* of a right of domination used against Native nations and peoples. “Stolen” is the word applied to those areas where a *claimed right of domination* over and to Native lands is now ongoing.

If we were to ask a team of comedy writers to produce some great jokes with witty punch lines about the assertion of a claim of a right of domination on top of all the original nations of this

continent, and about the genocide committed against the Native peoples of California, could they rise to the occasion? Would such a focus lend itself to humor?

Clearly, the dominating society is not likely to relinquish or renounce or explicitly acknowledge the *claim of a right of domination* that it uses daily against the Native peoples of California and elsewhere. It's that claim that has been used to economically benefit the American people by serving as the political and economic foundation of the United States.

Saying that the land was "stolen" serves an important hidden purpose: it directs focus away from *the claim of a right of domination* that has been used against the Native peoples of California since representatives of the Spanish crown of domination first arrived in 1542 and 1769.

We as Native people have an opportunity to advance a powerful point: The majority of the land in California still rightfully belongs to the Native nations of California. Why? Because the eighteen treaties of 1851-52 were never ratified, and the Native nations and peoples of California have never ceded, relinquished, or surrendered the millions of acres of land in California that still rightfully belong to the Native peoples. And that's no joke.

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### **From the Sierra Nevada Ally (525 Court Street I-203, Reno 89501**

Today marks President Donald Trump's 57th day of his second term. In that time, he has signed 90 executive orders.

The most recent order, signed Friday, continues his efforts to shrink the size and scope of the federal government and vows to continue "the reduction in the elements of the Federal bureaucracy that the President has determined are unnecessary."

That is, agencies the president deems unnecessary are now "eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law."

The affected agencies include the:

- Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service;
- United States Agency for Global Media;
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution;
- **Institute of Museum and Library Services;**
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness;
- Community Development Financial Institutions Fund; and
- **Minority Business Development Agency**

Leaders of these agencies have until this Friday to "submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget confirming full compliance with this order and explaining which components or functions of the governmental entity, if any, are statutorily required and to what extent."

It's worth noting that the head of the Office of Management and Budget is Russell Vought, a key architect behind Project 2025, the far-right conservative policy framework that calls for the elimination of several key agencies in the federal government, such as the Department of Education and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

What happens next for these federal agencies remains to be seen.

In the meantime, Nevada lawmakers are considering unlocking federal lands for development and legalizing psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in magic mushrooms, for medical-assisted therapy. We'll get into it in this edition of Civics Center

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**Nevada Public Radio: 3 Nevada-focused Indigenous bills headed to US Senate**  
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**The Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program**

The Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program provides \$10,000 in funding for resident-driven groups in small cities and towns to start the Community Heart & Soul model. Grant funding requires a \$10,000 cash match from the participating municipality or a partnering organization.

**[Apply Now](#)**  
**[Seed Grant Application](#)**

- **[Read FAQs](#)**  
[The fiscal sponsor must accept full responsibility for the Seed Grant and use the services of the local group to carry out the Community Heart & Soul program. All applicants must demonstrate municipal support and must be able to receive grant funds or designate a fiscal sponsor to receive funds on their behalf.'](#)
- **[Revitalizing Small US Cities and Towns](#)**  
[The initiative received a Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant in 2021, helping to launch the local effort. In starting a new community development initiative, local leaders wanted to ensure all voices in the community were heard—a significant challenge given the diversity of ethnicities and cultures in town.](#)

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[California Office of the Small Business Advocate \(CalOSBA\)Apply now! \*\*The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund \(PAEPF\), a Grant Program for Nonprofit Live Arts is now OPEN for applications.\*\* This \\$12.5 million grant will reimburse small nonprofit arts organizations for employee payroll expenses—helping to ensure that performers, musicians, technical staff, and more continue to get paid as they bring art to communities statewide. Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund \(PAEPF\) is funded by the State of California and administered by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate \(CalOSBA\). Eligibility criteria apply. <https://www.caforthearts.org/paepf-program>](#)

**First Nation gets village site back from pulp company on B.C.'s Sunshine Coast**  
Tla'amin First Nation say village holds historical and current significance to its people.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nation-village-pulp-company-1.7485828>

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**Trump's Plan for Canada      Video    2:05**

*Hudson's Bay is liquidating.....irony of history.....*

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***A walk in the Past \*(there just wasn't room yesterday)***

**1861 Mar 22** James. W. Nye of New York commissioned Governor of Nevada.

**1923 Mar 17** \$4,000 in grazing fees (\$73, 825.73) from leases to ranchers of tribal land was being distributed to members of the Washo Tribe in Garderville area.

**1926 Mar 18** Whites (who constructed Deby Dam impeding spawn from PL) reacting to rumors of PL members slaughtering tons of trout to harvest spawn, demanded the US attorney or Congress or someone DO SOMETHING!

**1928 Mar 19** A judge in Independence, CA, threw out charges against six Owens Valley men accused of bombing the aqueduct built to carry water out of the Owens Valley to Los Angeles.

**1932 Mar 17** Tribal police and federal narcs raided an alleged Carson City opium den at 425 East 3rd Street that also reportedly served whiskey.

**1938 Mar 21** In the ongoing fight against Senator McCarran's bill to force the PL Tribe to sell part of its reservation to squatters, the tribal council asked President Roosevelt to veto if passed and also appealed to the public.

**1945 Mar 20** Governor Edward Carville had measures sponsored by Sen. Kenneth Johnson (Ormsby) to ratify under white law marriages performed under tribal law on his desk for signature.

He also had an appropriation of \$1500 for state acquisition of Dat So La Lee's renowned woven baskets.

**1950 Mar 16** Federal Grand Jury sitting in Las Vegas recommended to Nevada's members of Congress that the Las Vegas Indian Village be broken up, the land sold off, and the Native residents compensated for the loss of their land. (Ms. Stewart would not be pleased.)

**1971 Mar 18** California Assemblyman Gene Chappie said he did not expect problems in the state for his bill, already approved by the Assembly, to turn Coso Hot Springs over to the Paiute/Shoshone of Inyo County.



## **President Rutherford B. Hayes - First State of the State December 3, 1877**

gold/silver standard; civil service; public debt; taxation; international relations & trade

“The Government of the Samoan Islands has sent an envoy, in the person of its secretary of state, to invite the Government of the United States to recognize and protect their independence, to establish commercial relations with their people, and to assist them in their steps toward regulated and responsible government. The inhabitants of these islands, having made considerable progress in Christian civilization and the development of trade, are doubtful of their ability to maintain peace and independence without the aid of some stronger power. The subject is deemed worthy of respectful attention, and the claims upon our assistance by this distant community will be carefully considered.”

“The report of the Secretary of War shows that the Army has been actively employed during the year, and has rendered very important service in suppressing hostilities in the Indian country and in preserving peace and protecting life and property in the interior as well as along the Mexican border. A long and arduous campaign has been prosecuted, with final complete success, against a portion of the Nez Perce tribe of Indians. A full account of this campaign will be found in the report of the General of the Army. It will be seen that in its course several severe battles were fought, in which a number of gallant officers and men lost their lives. I join with the Secretary of War and the General of the Army in awarding to the officers and men employed in the long and toilsome pursuit and in the final capture of these Indians the honor and praise which are so justly their due.

The very serious riots which occurred in several of the States in July last rendered necessary the employment of a considerable portion of the Army to preserve the peace and maintain order. In the States of West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Illinois these disturbances were so formidable as to defy the local and State authorities, and the National Executive was called upon, in the mode provided by the Constitution and laws, to furnish military aid. I am gratified to be able to state that the troops sent in response to these calls for aid in the suppression of domestic violence were able, by the influence of their presence in the disturbed regions, to preserve the peace and restore order without the use of force. In the discharge of this delicate and important duty both officers and men acted with great prudence and courage, and for their services deserve the thanks of the country.

Disturbances along the Rio Grande in Texas, to which I have already referred, have rendered necessary the constant employment of a military force in that vicinity. A full report of all recent military operations in that quarter has been transmitted to the House of Representatives in answer to a resolution of that body, and it will therefore not be necessary to enter into details. I regret to say that these lawless incursions into our territory by armed bands from the Mexican side of the line, for the purpose of robbery, have been of frequent occurrence, and in spite of the most vigilant efforts of the commander of our forces the marauders have generally succeeded in escaping into Mexico with their plunder. In May last I gave orders for the exercise of the utmost vigilance on the part of our troops for the suppression of these raids and the punishment of the guilty parties, as well as the recapture of property stolen by them. General Ord, commanding in Texas, was directed to invite the cooperation of the Mexican authorities in efforts to this end, and to assure them that I was anxious to avoid giving the least offense to Mexico. At the same time,

he was directed to give notice of my determination to put an end to the invasion of our territory by lawless bands intent upon the plunder of our peaceful citizens, even if the effectual punishment of the outlaws should make the crossing of the border by our troops in their pursuit necessary. It is believed that this policy has had the effect to check somewhat these depredations, and that with a considerable increase of our force upon that frontier and the establishment of several additional military posts along the Rio Grande, so as more effectually to guard that extensive border, peace may be preserved and the lives and property of our citizens in Texas fully protected.

Prior to the 1st day of July last the Army was, in accordance with law, reduced to the maximum of 25,000 enlisted men, being a reduction of 2,500 below the force previously authorized. This reduction was made, as required by law, entirely from the infantry and artillery branches of the service, without any reduction of the cavalry. Under the law as it now stands it is necessary that the cavalry regiments be recruited to 100 men in each company for service on the Mexican and Indian frontiers. The necessary effect of this legislation is to reduce the infantry and artillery arms of the service below the number required for efficiency, and I concur with the Secretary of War in recommending that authority be given to recruit all companies of infantry to at least 50 men and all batteries of artillery to at least 75 men, with the power, in case of emergency, to increase the former to 100 and the latter to 122 men each.

I invite your special attention to the following recommendations of the Secretary of War:

First. That provision be made for supplying to the Army a more abundant and better supply of reading matter.

Second. That early action be taken by Congress looking to a complete revision and republication of the Army Regulations.

Third. That section 1258 of the Revised Statutes, limiting the number of officers on the retired list, be repealed.

Fourth. That the claims arising under the act of July 4, 1864, for supplies taken by the Army during the war, be taken from the offices of the Quartermaster and Commissary Generals and transferred to the Southern Claims Commission, or some other tribunal having more time and better facilities for their prompt investigation and decision than are possessed by these officers.

Fifth. That Congress provide for an annuity fund for the families of deceased soldiers, as recommended by the paymaster-General of the Army.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy shows that we have six squadrons now engaged in the protection of our foreign commerce and other duties pertaining to the naval service. The condition and operations of the Department are also shown. The total expenditures for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1877, were \$16,077,974.54. There are unpaid claims against the Department chargeable to the last year, which are presented to the consideration of Congress by the report of the Secretary. The estimates for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 1878, are \$16,233,234.40, exclusive of the sum of \$2,314,231 submitted for new buildings, repairs, and improvements at the several navy-yards. The appropriations for the present fiscal year,

commencing July 1, 1877, are \$13,592,932.90. The amount drawn from the Treasury from July 1 to November 1, 1877, is \$5,343,037.40, of which there is estimated to be yet available \$1,029,528.30, showing the amount of actual expenditure during the first four months of the present fiscal year to have been \$4,313,509.10.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5027/5027-h/5027-h.htm>

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**[South Dakota: Airman charged in killing of Native American woman who went missing 7 months ago](#)**



An iguana at The Green Planet indoor tropical rainforest in Dubai, UAE, Feb. 20, 2020. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)

Iguanas likely crossed the Pacific millions of years ago on a record-setting rafting trip. New research suggests that millions of years ago, [iguanas pulled off a record-breaking 5,000 mile odyssey](#) on a raft of floating vegetation — further than any other land-dwelling vertebrate has ever traveled on the ocean. Scientists think that’s how iguanas got to the Galapagos Islands off of Ecuador and traveled between islands in the Caribbean.

**Some of Europe’s Oldest-Known Modern Humans Are Distantly Related to Native Americans**

Genome sequencing shows some individuals share family ties with surprising populations, and all boast plenty of Neanderthal relatives.

[https://getpocket.com/explore/item/some-of-europe-s-oldest-known-modern-humans-are-distantly-related-to-native-americans?utm\\_source=firefox-newtab-en-us](https://getpocket.com/explore/item/some-of-europe-s-oldest-known-modern-humans-are-distantly-related-to-native-americans?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us)

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**[Pentagon restores a few webpages honoring servicemembers but still defends DEI purge](#)** (whatever will they do about the Iwo Jima Monument?!!)