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OUTLAWING AND BECOMING NATIVE IN THE COLONIZATION OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK: A CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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OUTLAWING AND BECOMING NATIVE IN THE COLONIZATION OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK: A CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, Environmental historians have produced research disproving the myth of pristine wilderness. Yet, few environmental historians have focused their research efforts on considering how such a myth may have affected specific environments throughout time. I look at the birth of Yosemite National Park and consider the role pristine wilderness may have had as it influenced the way people interact, live, and manage the land and resources within the park's boundaries. Most importantly, perhaps, I consider the role the wilderness idea played in removing Indigenous people from the valley, and the ecological consequences of that process. This research makes use of the works of prominent anthropologists and archeologists, primary documents such as meeting notes, publications, and superintendent reports from late nineteenth-century Yosemite management, as well as the writings andilkin imagery created by iconic figures that made the wilderness of Yosemite a global phenomenon.

Additionally, while appreciating the value of indigeneity as an ethnicity, some forward-thinking social scientists, both Native American and not, argue that self-nativization in regards to a person's role in their environment, or becoming a local, is necessary to restore our ailing ecosystems. In this regard, this thesis finds the process of self-nativeization, or becoming local, was a natural evolution for new settlers and colonizers in Yosemite in the late nineteenth century due to key environmental factors. Despite the government's repeated attempts to restrict and even make any type of nativization or localization illegal within the park, worldviews belonging to new inhabitants evolved during the process of colonizing Yosemite in the late nineteenth century. This detachment from empire to colonial actor reveals that the wilderness idea was more a product of the American colonial empire rather than a strict belief of individual inhabitants and new settlers of Yosemite.

Introduction:

Yosemite the Landscape and the Place

"Viewed as a social construction, nature as it was conceptualized in each social epoch (Indian, colonial, and capitalist), is not some ultimate truth that was gradually discovered through the scientific process of observation, experiment, and mathematics. Rather it was a relatively changing structure of human representations of "reality." - Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions*

The word ecosystem describes the inputs and outputs, and even networks, of living and nonliving things in any given environment. People participate in the inputs and outputs of the ecosystems we reside in. We are altered by the places we inhabit. No matter how large or small our participation in these systems is, we cannot entirely escape the ecosystem in which we currently reside. Over time, peoples in certain regions develop customs that integrate the landscape, ecosystem, and ecology into their culture. In turn, the landscape, ecosystem, and ecology influence their culture.

Ecosystems play out on the stage of a landscape. A landscape has features, like waterfalls and mountains, and those features play a role in the ecology. Ecology simply describes the relationship between living things. Even in a globalized economy, humans quickly become participants in their respective or local ecosystems, and therefore participate in the ecology of an area.[1]

While humans are biologically a part of any landscape they inhabit, the acceptance and rejection of this concept to the recently-immigrated Euro-Americans or "Whites" has become an entire field of scholarly study. For Euro-Americans, Whites, new settlers, self-identifying Americans and/or colonizers in some circles, scholarship throughout the centuries from Henry

[1] For a more in-depth discussion on how the idea that we are somehow not active participants in our ecosystems is a part of the grand illusion of our current state of capitalism see Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (Stanford University Press, 2007).

Thoreau to Philip Deloria have pointed to a contradiction in identity. In Noble Savagery, Deloria points out the “unfinished” consciousness in American identity, which is at the core of his larger point, that contradiction lies at the heart of what it means to be American.

While appreciating the value of indigeneity and Indigenous peoples' past, forward-thinking social scientists of a multitude of backgrounds both Native American and not argue that self-nativization is both possible and necessary to restore our ailing ecosystems. This research asserts a historical precedent for self-nativization to be found in borderland communities in colonial America. Despite the government's repeated attempts to restrict and even make illegal any type of nativization within a national park, there is evidence that evolution in colonizer worldviews occured in Yosemite in the late nineteenth century. With this we can also see a process of nativization occur in colonizer ecological relationships through an environmental analysis of Yosemite National Park's colonization.

Dan Flores states in his essay *Spirit of Place in the American West* that this process of infusing the land into one's culture, and vice versa, describes a process of becoming native.[2] Pitted against this very notion the Western world has considered humans from a certain evolutionary phase outside of the realm of what can be defined as “natural” since the Enlightenment.[3] In America, when it comes to Indigenous peoples, society places them somewhere in between, as if in an ecological gray zone.[4] We see this play out in historical accounts from the late nineteenth century in which Indigenous people became the subject of intrigue, sympathy, pity, and also glorification, specifically because of their ecological relations

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[2] Dan Flores,"Spirit of Place in the American West," in James Sherow, ed., *A Sense of the American West: An Environmental History Anthology* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998): 31-8.
[3] Carolyn Merchant, *Ecology*, (Humanity Books, 2008), 199-201.
[4] For an example of the difference felt between one prominent colonial settler of the nineteenth century and Indigenous Californians see John Mui, *My First Summer in the Sierra*, (Modern Library, 2003), Page 71 -73; For more on the academic conversation of this topic see Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, (W. W. Norton & Company, 2000).

to their surroundings. They came to be admired for their ability to survive seemingly in tune with nature. However, this reverence was mixed with complete disdain for Indigenous populations as their very existence upset colonizer ideals about what defined wilderness. The developing American National identity during the late nineteenth century was struggling with its pioneer identity which relied on the existence of wilderness.

The term “native” (separate from the identity or ethnicity Native) is wrapped in fine layers of politics of place, ideologies that develop and govern and build fences both imaginary and real. These politics of place are fundamentally an environmental issue as the definition of a place revolves around its environmental features and influences. And, as it turns out, what goes into defining a place need not necessarily be born in the environmental limits of that place. In the case of Yosemite, elements of projection and the imagination heavily color its image and go into the definition of who can, who can not, is and is not, who ought to be, or who should not be, native.

Most Whites in this country are descendants of peoples who fairly recently immigrated and participated in an imperial conquest that involved exterminating the country's indigenous populations on the grounds of savagery and barbarism. This laden history loads the word native, and for many, permanently strips White descendants of their right to ever participate in the organic process of *becoming* native to this land. When a people's legacy is so rooted in a history of genocide and conquest, and that conquest relied on a narrative of superiority over indigenous inhabitants and dominance over the land. Can the descendants of that history ever claim to be *of* this land? And what is it to *be* an American?

Many have turned to National parks as a representation of American values, a sort of embodiment of the American spirit. In the book *National Parks*, Alfred Runte suggests that parks

were a direct result of the industrial revolution. He states, "...civilization allegedly obscured God's truths [...] people seemed happiest in direct proportion to the absence of their creations."[5] Runte also notes the romanticism of the National Park idea, pointing out that Frederick Law Olmstead, a creator of many famous national parks, wrote extensively of their purpose as an escape from urban life, meant to give vitality back to the nation. These perspectives tie environmental features of the country to American identity. However, most would argue that this is not enough to make any person who identifies as American as native to any place, or National Park, in America. Nonetheless, currently many scholars are scared of considering the possible benefits of what identifying as and/or becoming native could do, not just for themselves or any one nation, but for the environment.

The following chapters consider evolutions in ecological thought on the part of Central Sierran residents within and surrounding Yosemite in three chronological phases, which have therefore been divided into three chapters. This work analyzes changes in the ecological relationships from Indigenous populations to Gold Rush and pioneer settlers to state agents and deployed federal troops. The evolution in thought is evidenced by changes over time within Yosemite's ecology, ecosystems, and the culture of the residents residing in the area.

A borderlands community in California, and specifically Yosemite, is the perfect case study for questions regarding self-nativization and denativization, because within all four elements, landscape, ecology, ecosystem, and the process of colonization, its landscape and history are extreme and occurred within a brief time span. The colonization of Yosemite can be considered a cultural and ecological historical moment, where even the most stringent colonial actors could find themselves forced to adapt their environmental worldview to survive. Essentially, if self-nativization could happen in an organic process anywhere, it would be in

[5] Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience,* 4 ed.(Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010)Kindle.

Yosemite between 1851 and 1891. Yet, if self-nativization were to occur in this place and at this time, it would be a remarkable cultural moment, considering both colonizing forces and processes of denativization were so prevalent. Finally, it would be glaringly visible to research due to the role of Yosemite in American culture being more or less iconic.

In terms of extremes, the temporal scale of environmental changes occurring in the Yosemite Valley is also extreme, making ecological effects more visible. Chapter one begins with an overview of the deep evolutionary history of geographic features and hydrology of the park, continuing into the human population of the area of Sierra Nevada. Ultimately, the first chapter focuses on people's ecological ties with the Yosemite ecosystem over a period of 14,000 years. Chapter one concludes with a brief history similar to most of California; the near quietus Indigenous peoples around the Yosemite region faced due to illness from newly introduced Spanish missions. The eventual return of Indigenous peoples to the Yosemite area brought social unrest and environmental stressors, as well as a decrease in the Indigenous populace, which in turn altered their ecological role.

Chapters two and three contrast this temporal scale by focusing on the drastic ecological changes of the colonial era into the twentieth century, which occur on the timescale of centuries, decades, years, weeks, and days. From Chapter one to Chapter two, the biological changes in Yosemite Valley are visible due to the rapid changes in environmental regimes. Chapter two opens with the emigration of two main historical actors to California, James D. Savage and James W. Marshall, whose roles significantly affected the history of California, Indigenous Californians, and Yosemite. The Gold Rush follows and is portrayed mainly through memories of pioneers and those who documented them. A second section introduces the political landscape

at play from 1821 to 1851 and the political ecologies that resulted from empires in contest for the domain of California; Spain, Mexico, and America.

As we reach 1851, with political and cultural history in mind, we may begin to see the invasion of Yosemite Valley as not just the result of a cultural battle between Indigenous peoples and miners, but also as the state's first demonstration of its Indian policy, flexing its ties to the United States Federal Government. Upon draining the Valley of its original inhabitants, the area was repopulated by Euro-Americans, who brought with them a different ecological outlook. The Chapter ends with the reflections of Maria Lebrado (Totuya), the last surviving descendant of the original family band to live in Yosemite. She recalls her time in Yosemite and the pain of being forced to leave. Ecologically, this chapter's environmental transformation was perhaps the largest ecological shift involving humans within Yosemite to date.

Chapter 3 discusses the transition from colonial settler to federal oversight. The state management adopted a top-down approach with the formation of official boundaries establishing the Yosemite region as a State Park in 1864, and the changeover from state management to Federal forces in 1890. Yosemite, a newly won American crown jewel, underwent a process of re-discovery and codification by the elite scientific community of the late nineteenth century. The California State attempted to do the impossible, to correctly interpret congress’s demand of creating a space to be enjoyed for future generations while culture demanded a form of accessible, enjoyable wilderness.

This work concludes that each stage introduced new on-the-ground ecological relationships. Participants in each stage consumed or contributed to the production of knowledge justifying such on-the-ground policy. However, no phase was wholly disconnected from the

previous. Even when some historical actors were unaware of the ecological relationship of those before them, change manifested in the landscape from the ecological shift.

The visual metaphor for this concept that I will repeatedly refer back to is a cubist painting. Referencing Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, or Georges Braque in the very early twentieth century, in a cubist image, the subject is visually abstracted because the subject is portrayed from multiple vantage points. Through a cubist approach, these artists attempted to portray their subjects more truthfully by concerning themselves less with the visual image and more with the complexities of the subjects' existence in space and time. The late Leonard Schlain, surgeon and writer on history, gender, and physics, author of *Art and Physics* described it as "...all the points in space along the path of observation occupy the same location simultaneously".[6] This quote, in the context of the environmental history of Yosemite, points to the fundamental flaw in any regime change: that no regime is capable of completely eradicating all elements of the previous status quo, no matter how hard they try. Glimmers of the past reveal themselves in the land, as though the land itself is intent on remembering.

As mentioned before, it is important to note that Yosemite's environmental history during the late 1800s is similar to the environmental history which occurred throughout colonial California and other bio-regions of California as a whole, sharing many of the same narrative components.[7] In other words, the colonial attempts to de-nativize California were a massive failure. These historical events resulted in drastic ecological changes in such a brief time span to a state of mediterranean climate that was subject to the warming oscillations associated with the

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[6] Leonard Shlain, *Art & Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light*, (Quill/W. Morrow, 1993), 42. Art and Physics overlapped in the West's intellectual revolutions and art such as Cubism and Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Since Schlain, many have followed suit in discussing the various contributions or parallels between cubist thought and scientific thought in the early 20th century.

[7] For additional examples of militia forces aimed at exterminating Indigenous Californians see Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide : The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe,* (Yale University Press, 2016), Kindle.

southern equatorial Pacific.[8] Thus, they have contributed to a long-lasting environmental crisis, in which Yosemite can be viewed as one small case study for California at large.[9]

Robin Kimmerer and northern California forester Frank Lake, also of an Indigeneous background, wrote, "The current American landscape represents the historical legacy of one worldview superimposed on another, the colonial overlaying the indigenous"[10] Looking back to the nineteenth century from the twenty-first, one could argue that this is an accurate but static depiction that does not allow for any evolution in colonizer or indigenous thought. Yet, an evolution in thought occurred due to the nature of Yosemite's placement during the Gold Rush and it becoming a borderland. Cultural histories often reveal the permeability in so-called "borders". This permeability allows cultures to bleed into each other (usually out of pure necessity) at the western frontier's edge. This is the case with the ecological and cultural history of Yosemite National Park. There was no clean break between management regimes, no reset. Multiple cultures influenced various aspects of the ecology and hydrology of the park simultaneously. The consequences of this can still be observed today on the landscape. This is why a cultural and environmental history of the Yosemite National Park should be at the forefront of conversations involving Yosemite's environmental stewardship.

Humans are an integral part of California's ecology and the Sierra Nevada is no exception.[11] Legislators re-defined the landscape as Yosemite National Park in 1864, influenced by Euro-American settlers, and defined the Valley as though it had been untouched by human

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[8] For an explanation of California's climate see Stephen Pyne, "Chapter One," in Neil G. Sugihara, et al, *Fire in California's Ecosystems*, (University of California Press, 2018).
[9] California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, https://www.climateassessment.ca.gov/state/overview/
[10] Robin Kimmerer & Frank Lake, "Maintaining the Mosaic: The Role of Indigenous Burning in Land Management," *Journal of Forestry*, 99 (2001), 36-41. Kindle.
[11] Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild*,(2005), Kindle, 354.

hands.[1213] The boundaries of the park mostly follow the watershed from the glaciers, contributing to the illusion of a natural place, removed from the modern world. The naming and codification, as well, solidified the American government's absorption of the Valley into its empire as though it were absorbing an untouched natural resource. And yet, Yosemite National Park is just as much a product of modernity as the legislation that designated it a National Park. When defined as "wilderness" and "nature", Yosemite loses an ecological dimension. Humans have been intrinsically connected to the Valley's ecological history, so the illusion of a natural and wild Yosemite contributes to the demise of its ecological diversity and even hydrological structure. Thus, it is imperative to challenge our perceptions of "wilderness" and question the definitions and ambiguity of words like "nature", which become misleading descriptors of "natural". The concept of pristine wilderness was challenged by historians throughout the twentieth century.[14] It has also been dismissed by an overwhelming majority of environmental scientists, especially those who focus on California botany and fire science, and of course, by Indigenous scientists whose traditional science and history directly contradict the pristine wilderness concept.

In *The Only World We've Got*, Paul Shepard posed a particularly poignant question for our current evolutionary moment in the history of human existence, "The crucial question of the modern world is, 'How are we to become native to this land?"[15] Here, Shepard joins a choir of Indigenous voices who raise similar calls to action. They seek to address the de-nativization that

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[12] House Bill, House of Representatives, *To establish the Yosemite National Park the State of California,* HR. 8350, 51st Cong., 1st sess., introduced in the House March 18, 1890.
[13] Mark Dowie,"Chapter One," *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), Kindle; Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness : Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-34, Kindle.
[14] For examples of this see works such as Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (Yale University Press, 1967); William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), Paul Sutter, "The World with Us: The State of American Environmental History," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 100, No. 1, (2013), 94-119; Donald Worster, et al., "A Round Table: Environmental History," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (March 1990), 1111-1114.
[15] Paul Shepard, *The Only World We've Got : A Paul Shepard Reader,(*San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996) 5.

has taken place in our modern and globalized world. De-nativization occurred both on the ground through the forces of war and within ourselves as we welcomed or were compelled to accept an increasingly globalized society and capitalism.[16] Peoples identifying with Indigenous cultures have fought tirelessly to maintain their "nativeness" and revive oral traditions, Indigenous science, language, heritage sites, and lifeways. In this manner, the quote above is pertinent since it aligns with what Indigenous scholars have been advocating for, namely, a shift toward localism or reinvestment in becoming native.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, Professor at SUNY college for environmental science and forestry and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, utilizes her cultural heritage in her work. As a botanist specializing in ecological restoration, she expressed dismay in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass* when she learned that her students increasingly believed that humans had no positive role to play in the environment - that humans could only be considered a detrimental force, with no positive contributions or connection to the land which they inhabited. It is clear in not only the book but through her many talks and works as a whole that she finds that a positive human ecological role and connection within our environment is essential. Through the oral tradition known as Sky Woman Falling, which is relayed in her book, she contextualizes the word "native" as "living as if your children's future mattered."[17] In this story, we see the protagonist is a woman who falls to Earth out of the Sky Kingdom. However, it was not quite Earth then; it was only water. The land was created by Sky Woman and her animal saviors and friends. At the end of the story, it is revealed that as Sky Woman fell she managed to grab handfuls of seeds from the Tree of Life, and these were planted and tended and became the flora of the land. Kimmerer explains that to garden the earth was of great importance.

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[16] Carolyn Merchant, *Ecology*, (Humanity Books, 2008), 24.
[17] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, (Milkweed editions, 2013), Kindle, 9.

> "...when Sky Woman arrived here, she did not come alone. She was pregnant. Knowing her grandchildren would inherit the world she left behind, she did not work for flourishing in her time only. It was through her actions of reciprocity, the give and take with the land, that the original immigrant became indigenous."[18]

Sky Woman's gift was her handfuls of seeds and the ability to grow and nurture life in the soil. From these quotes, it would seem that Dr. Shepard and Dr. Kimmerer agree in two ways; that one can become native and that to be native can be an intellectual pursuit. We are all native to somewhere. Rather than assigning our "nativeness" arbitrarily to the place where we were born, or where our ancestors originated, I believe Kimmerer and Shepard would agree that it has much more to do with where we are.

Over time, the ecological destruction, sterilizing and whitewashing narratives, especially those which involve the illusion of pristine wilderness, have wrought ecological damage to Yosemite National Park. Thus, it is through an analysis of place, addressing the question of nativeness, and consideration of the ecological role of peoples from pre-colonization through colonization that we come to understand how colonial efforts to "preserve wilderness" has resulted in ecological damage and relied on a process of de-nativization. However, the process was incomplete, and self-nativization did inevitably occur.

[18] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, (Milkweed editions, 2013), Kindle, 9.

Chapter 1:

Yosemite from Bioregion and Place

Sixty-five million years ago, toward the end of the Cretaceous period, from deep within the Earth, a block of granite broke free, surfaced above the Earth's crust and tilted westward. Today that granite block is known as the Sierra Nevada - 400 miles of unbroken range. Geologists refer to this process as uplift. The Sierra Nevada Mountain Range is unique because it uplifted on a hinge rather than from the center. Imagine a child's depiction of mountains to visualize the difference - they usually display center-uplift. The hinge of the Sierras caused the Western slope to be gradual and the Eastern slope to be extremely steep.

Twenty-five million years ago, the Southwest lowland area tilted upwards as well, creating the U-shape of the Yosemite Valley. This tilt increased the flow rate of streams funneling to lower areas of the San Joaquin Valley in the Central California Valley. These streams carried rocks and mineral-rich waters and cut paths deeper and deeper into Yosemite Valley.

Rock formations come to be in their present state over hundreds of thousands or hundreds of millions of years.[19] These geologic time scales are among the slowest. Climate changes over tens of thousands of years. Climate played a significant role in forming Yosemite's bio-region through a series of glaciers that carved out the Central Valley's length and width at about seven miles long and a half miles wide. Glaciers are masses of ice that move. They were caused by a buildup of snow until the temperatures and pressure of the snow's weight caused them to form solid ice. Gradual warming causes some melt underneath the glacier, allowing it to move and plow. Glaciers emptied the Yosemite Valley of enough stone and earth to reveal the iconic walls

[19] For more information on Yosemite's geologic construction please see Allen F.Glazner, and Greg M.Stock, *Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park / Allen F. Glazner and Greg M. Stock.* (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press Pub., 2010).

of granite we know today, measuring three to four thousand feet from the valley floor. Yosemite's glaciers were formed during a series of ice ages, each leaving its own stylistic mark and moving enormous quantities of rock and substrate. The park's topography, glacial moraines, various hills, and vast piles of rock around the glacier's margins were left in the wake of these monstrous land-carving glaciers.

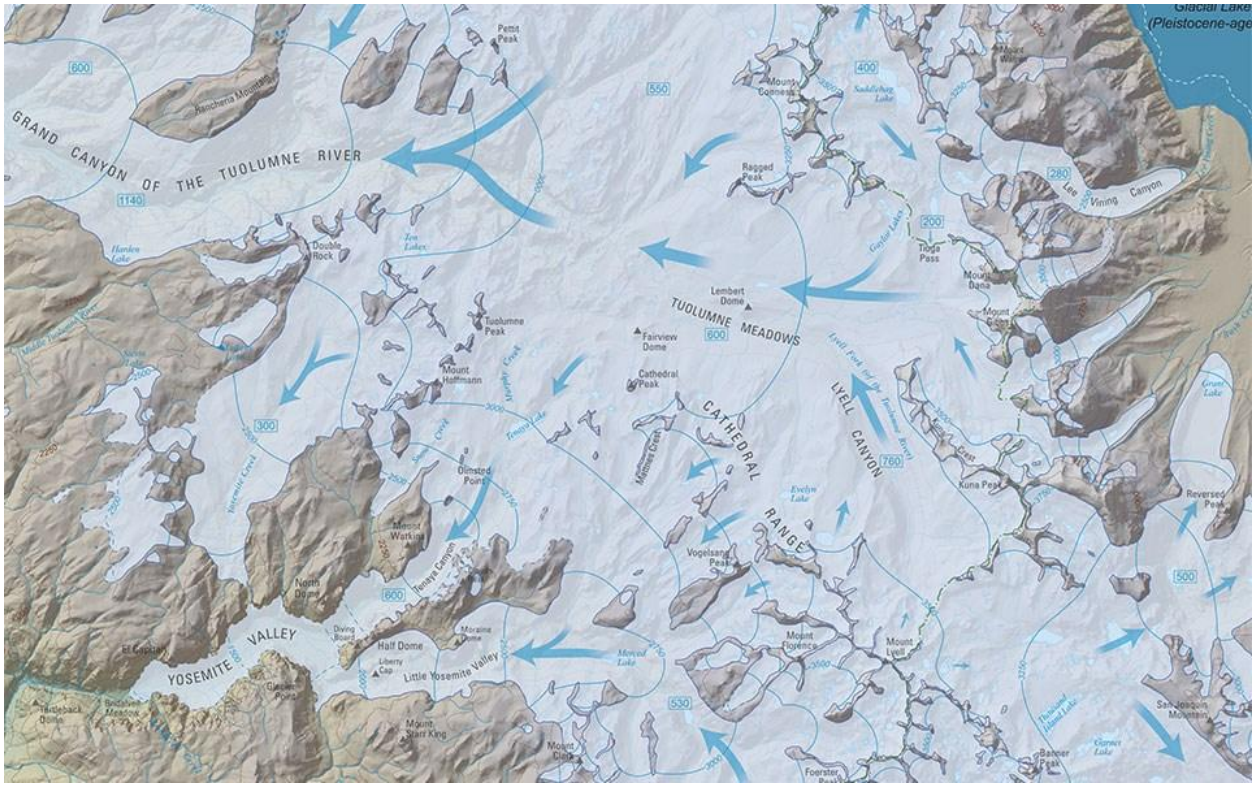

Figure 1: Portion of a map showing glacial extent and direction of flow in Yosemite National Park and vicinity. Download the full map of the extent of the Last Glacial Maximum (Tioga) Glaciation here https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sim3414.

Figure 1. is a map prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Department of the Interior in coordination with the National Park Service shows how the spatial complexity of plant species throughout the Valley is also a result of glaciation. Where biota exists throughout Yosemite is a topic of particular interest to researchers and National Park Services staff in the interpretation division of the park. This vein of research links climate, geologic, and hydrological

history together. The map shows how the most recent of the large Pleistocene glaciations flowed through Yosemite. This map took about 35 years to complete, beginning in the 1980s with the work of the late Clyde Wahrhaftig who worked at USGS and taught at the Department of Geology and Geophysics for most of his life. The resulting contribution explains how thick ice covering nearly all of Tuolumne Meadows (a large portion of Yosemite National Park just East of the main valley) began to warm and advance twice between 27,000 and 15,000 years ago, allowing meltwater to form underneath the Tioga Glacier and the massive wall of ice, nearly 2,000 feet thick in some places, began to move at the rate of an inch a day. This research confirmed John Muir's (a botanist and scientist credited with the discovery of Yosemite's glacial origins in the late nineteenth century) study of similar conclusions around a century earlier.[20] Scientists observe an assortment of markings on the granite surfaces, nunataks, glacial moraines, erratics, and cosmogenic-nuclide-exposure dating throughout the Yosemite National Park can identify which glacial deposits the Tioga Glacier left and their origin, thus tracing its path.[21] Researchers in *Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park* also point out that 100 small glaciers persist in the Sierra Nevada, notably Yosemite's Lyell and Maclure Glaciers. They are not vestiges of the Tioga glaciation; they were actually born in the more recent Little Ice Age. Their yearly melts supply all rivers and creeks through Yosemite with cold, mineral-rich waters. These creeks and rivers are the primary life force of the Valley and what first attracted people to the Valley. However, due to climate change, the 100 glaciers in existence today do not gain the same amount of ice that is lost each year and have significantly reduced in size even over the past 150 years since first written documentation. Still, their waters furnish the area's rich

[20] John Muir was given credit in this article for the discovery, Joseph Le Conte, *On some of the ancient glaciers of the Sierra Nevada,*(American Journal of Science, 1875) 126.
[21]Clyde Wahrhaftig,Greg Stock, Reba McCracken, and Andrew Cyr. 2019. "Extent of the Last Glacial Maximum (Tioga) Glaciation in Yosemite National Park and Vicinity, California." U.S. Geological Survey Publications Warehouse. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geologic Survey. 2019. https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sim3414.

biodiversity and bring us to our next section of living organisms existing in faster-paced time scales.[22]

Compared to climate and geology, organisms evolve incredibly fast. Scientists refer to the speed of genetic or morphological change over time as the evolution of lifeforms. Smaller organisms may evolve quickly because on a molecular level, they are less complex, requiring less time for genetics to adapt to different circumstances such as food shortages or climate change. Less complicated organisms can be observed together en mass and in a variety as the biota of a region or biome. As we consider their characteristics cumulatively, we may describe the evolving characteristics of something like a forest or a meadow as a whole. This evolution would be slower than any individual life form on its own.

Compared to watersheds or mountains, humans can easily disturb the life cycle of biota within the Yosemite Valley, some of which are sensitive to ecological disturbance. Thus, vegetation regeneration has its own timescale to consider. Regeneration occurs at different rates of speed for different plants throughout Yosemite's different elevation zones. From lowest in elevation to highest, these zones are Foothill Wildland Zone, Lower Montane Forest, Upper Montane Forest, Subalpine Forest, to Alpine forest. Regeneration for individuals tends to be more sensitive in alpine regions.

Where biota exists throughout the park is also a result of glaciers. Researchers of the USGS map point out in the map's accompanying pamphlet that vegetation took refuge on nunataks from advancing glaciers, the plateau northeast of Mount Dana, and that this area harbors rare and endemic plant species.[23] Additionally, referring to Muir, they state the Tioga-age

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Further information on refugiums throughout California connect this research to the discipline of phylogeny however, delving too far into that discipline is outside the scope of interpreting features of Yosemite laying out the groundwork of Yosemite as a bio-region.

ice scoured most of the soil, leaving behind bare granite. The placement of groves of Giant Sequoia only outside the Tioga-age ice extent is one example of the spatial complexity of biota; thus, three large groves exist around the park where the Tioga glaciers did not reach. Environmental science researchers track the evolutionary movements and changes in flora and fauna to discover ecological disturbances and shifts over time and use this information to inform policy decisions and education regarding the park.

We also know from similar work in the field of climate science that Giant Sequoia are endemic to California. Indigenous peoples in Northern California used and use these trees for food and medicines, such as the Tule River Indian tribe. However, while the lowland area of Yosemite Valley is actually not best known for Giant Sequoia, it is better known for its supply of Black Oak, an acorn-producing tree, which was extremely significant and valuable to the Southern Sierra Miwuk and other tribes in the Yosemite bioregion. Black Oak thrive in the Lower Montane, due to the moisture, elevation, and mediterranean climate. The Black Oak tree remains a valuable and significant resource to the Southern Sierra Miwuk and other tribes in the Yosemite bioregion.

The Yosemite Field Station has referred to the Sierra Nevada as a sky island for its hydrology, climate, and topography. It is surrounded by lower land and desert, if not near desert-like, conditions. Hydrologically, the Northern and Central Sierra Nevada is like a well-spring feeding more than 75% of Californians. This is due to the run-off from the remaining glaciers, yearly precipitation, and orography.[24] The extreme topography in Yosemite, ranging from 3,000 feet to 13,000 feet, provides a diverse climate for a wide range of organisms to thrive.[25] California's mediterranean climate creates hot summers and cold winters. Animals and

[24] Oragraphy describes the process of cold air being lifted over a mountain range, and the process results in rainfall.
[25] Yosemite Field Station, https://snrs.ucmerced.edu/ecosystem.

humans migrate up and down elevations to find refuge in their desired climate. This allows for a wide array of species to thrive. The World Wildlife Foundation boasts the Sierra Nevada as harboring "…one of the most diverse temperate conifer forests on Earth."[26] These factors make Yosemite home to a suite of sui generis ecological qualities, which have resulted in an expansive list of endemic plant and fauna species. If the definition of "endemic" may be expanded here, the first peoples to live in the Sierra Nevada, and more specifically the region of Yosemite, developed endemic ecological existences to match.

Two important sites of archeological excavation, the Crane Flat and the Mariposa Complex, link protohistoric Yosemite inhabitants to peoples of the Great Basin and Central Valley. Archaeologists base this conclusion on lightweight projectile points linking the Mariposa site to Central Valley and the Great Basin. The lightweight projectile points infer the use of bows and arrows, while the mortars and pestles infer the processing of acorns.[27] Manos, slab milling stones, and numerous types of massive projectile points link Crane Flat further north in the Northern Sierra at the New Don Pedro Reservoir Basin along the Tuolumne River.

In California Archeology, Michael Moratto states that dam and reservoir projects have compromised "hundreds of cultural properties, yet led to archeological findings in every river". Yet, across 41 sites in the New Don Pedro Reservoir Basin, skeletons have been discovered under cairns in a flexed burial, clothes, circular shelters, stone-flaked tools, obsidian, and much more. Moratto claimed these findings to be Miwuk proto and prehistory artifacts up to 5,000 and as recently as 500 years old. Along the Stanislaus River to the South, artifacts are even older, up to 9000 years. All sites contain remnants under 500 years, which Moratto likens to Miwuk

[26] https://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/na0527
[27] Terry L. Jones, Kathryn Klar, and Society for California Archaeology, *California Prehistory : Colonization, Culture, and Complexity.* (AltaMira Press, 2007), Kindle. 309-310

expansion.[28] Kathleen Hull, Professor of Anthropology & Heritage Studies at the University of California at Merced, concluded that findings like these indicate more permanent settlements than traditional hunter-gathering peoples. Miwuk settlement structures show larger roundhouses and communal granaries located at the base of the east and west sides of the Sierra Nevada, with smaller family sites dispersed around them.[29] Often located near major watercourses, these sites were residential with off-site processing locations (such as granaries). Seasonal living accommodations for the summer, spring, and fall would likely have been brush shelters in the mountains, while bark homes were constructed of heavy slabs of bark from old-growth cedar trees that were long-lasting and located at lower elevations.

The data from archeological findings are astounding. In her work *Tending the Wild,* Kat Anderson, a California botanist at the University of California at Davis, points out that early anthropologists mistook seasonal dwellings for nomadism when Indigenous peoples would have been returning to the same sites as their ancestors. Furthermore, social science researchers look at archeological findings over time and use the findings to estimate changing population sizes. With discoveries regarding population sizes and specific tools, researchers in these fields have followed specific groups in space and time, drawing conclusions regarding their culture. Regarding the peoples in the region around Yosemite, it is believed peoples in prehistoric times held territories that were maintained with some degree of ownership to be used by tribal members. This structure allowed the cultivation of plants and food crops harvested throughout the year. Yosemite's subalpine and alpine regions were hunting and gathering grounds of peoples from the Great Basin and California during spring, summer, and fall seasons. Winters at these elevations would have prevented most hunting and gathering. Both groups would have returned

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[28] Michael J. Moratto, *California Archaeology*, (Academic Press, 1984), Kindle, 311-312.
[29] Kat Anderson,. *Tending the Wild : Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources / M. Kat Anderson.* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2005), 61.

to larger encampments at lower elevations on the East or West side of the mountain range during winters.[30] Anthropologist Robert Bettinger of the University of California at Davis, discusses a similar idea in *Orderly Anarchy*. He delves into the anthropological history of pre-Colombian California and argues that Indigenous societies were expertly adapted to California's landscape. Sierra Nevada Indigenous peoples out-competed and prevented agricultural societies from the East and agriculture at large from the south from establishing a foothold. Peoples across California developed a land-management style tailored to the California environment that he refers to as intensive hunter-gathering. He argues that in intensive hunter-gathering, hunting resulted from the introduction of the bow and arrow, while Anderson states that the gathering aspect was the result of a process similar or identical to the empirical method. In Tending the Wild Anderson writes, "Women were the ethnobotanists, testing, selecting, and tending much of the plant world."[31]

Bettinger's intensive hunter-gathering traces settlement patterns and sizes and concludes that the bow and arrow allowed for an excess of food to be caught and resulted in this restructuring of Indigenous populations in favor of small family bands rather than large tribes. People were more mobile in smaller units and could make use of maximum seasonal harvests. This changed the socio-political structure, allowing individuals, couples, families, bands, and tribelets more freedom. Additionally, Bettinger states that smaller bands maximized Indigenous occupancy of California.

In addition to the bow, acorn production allowed for equally significant advances. During the same few hundred years, the bow and acorn meal processing together allowed for the

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[30] Terry L. Jones, Kathryn Klar, and Society for California Archaeology, *California Prehistory : Colonization, Culture, and Complexity.* (AltaMira Press, 2007), Kindle. 179-181.
[31] Kat Anderson,. *Tending the Wild : Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources / M. Kat Anderson.* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2005), 41.

evolution of private property. Men could hunt more efficiently on their own and bring back more than needed. At the same time, women invented technology, which, coupled with their botanical expertise and crop domestication, revolutionized acorn meal production so that it became a staple crop of Indigenous diets fueling the growing population. Cumulatively, this evolutionary adaptation was more suited to the California environment than agriculture alone.

Yosemite Valley Indigenous peoples relied most heavily on acorn production from Black Oak trees. However, Black Oak was their only crop - not by far. They used other trees like Ponderosa Pine, Yellow Pine, Sugar Pine, Cedar, and Sierra Juniper, for foodstuffs, medicine, and cedar bark for housing materials.[32] These Indigenous peoples adapted their diets to include the edible foods around them, then adapted the environment to maximize the production of these resources.

Advancements made by Southern Sierra Miwuk in acorn production and harvesting techniques were a central pillar of their society. For example, the chiefdoms in Yosemite were not as hierarchical as we have tended to think of them in the West. The chief's central role in the community was to maintain resource distribution (mostly of acorn stores) and serve as master of ceremonies. They had no authority to inflict punishment, but they would monitor acorn stores, keep track of what families contributed, and redistribute resources accordingly. Multiple families would share private stores of food. A chief would see that all families could collect their private stores from a shared acorn storage facility.[33]

Because acorn products became the staple of the Southern Sierra Miwuk diet and were a product of women's labor, women's labor became more valuable. While women and men in

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[32] S.A. Barrett and E.W. Gifford, “Miwok Material Culture: Indian Life of the Yosemite Region, (1933) https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/miwok_material_culture/conifers.html

[33] Robert Bettinger, *Orderly Anarchy : Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California*, (University of California Press, 2015), Kindle, 8.

Miwuk society were more equitable than those of Western households during the time, forms of dowry were not uncommon throughout Indigenous California and may have been the practice in the Yosemite bio-region. However, once acorn production gained such a significant role in Indigenous diets throughout California, men might have to pay in some manner, such as labor, for the ability to take a daughter away from her family. Once established as a couple, kinship ties were highly mobile, and couples could move where they desired and with whom. This is the basic concept of ideal free distribution. Mono Indians ascribed to bilateral family bands where newlyweds could live with either spouse's parents. A couple might also choose to camp independently or stay with other relatives. While there was more structure with the Sierra Miwuk, the mobility would have been relatively consistent.[34]

Private property was a central component of intensive hunter-gathering and was perhaps the most important aspect of Indigenous small family bands of intensive hunter-gatherer societies in California.[35] The bow allowed smaller family units to hunt an adequate amount of meat for themselves and others. Excess meat was offered as a gift to nearby residents, essentially buying one's right to private property. People who might steal stored collected foods would be bought off with the opportunity to eat the immediately offered food. Acorns are considered backloaded crops, where the vast majority of the work is done after collection during the intensive processing phase. Meat, however, is frontloaded, where the majority of the work is done in the process of collection.[36] Thus, unproductive members of society would simply take the excess meat rather than steal from acorn stores.

Kat Anderson argues that California Indian peoples do not belong under the traditional label of hunter-gatherer. In various works, most notably *Tending the Wild*, she argues that native

[34] Robert Bettinger, *Orderly Anarchy*, Kindle, 8.
[35] Robert Bettinger, Kindle, 8.
[36] Ibid.

science increased the diversity of the flora throughout the Sierra Nevada and domesticated biota, like grasses and tubers, to meet material needs. These first inhabitants developed in the Sierra Valley what would later be considered a "park-like quality" to the region, adding ecological diversity and genetically modifying grasses to produce some of the finest basketry culture worldwide.[37]

For the last ten to fifteen thousand years, much of the horticulture used by Indigenous communities throughout California required and further developed fire technologies. Cultivation strategies, for example, relied heavily on fire. Fire cultivation practices influenced plant biology at the organism level, population-level, plant community level, and landscape level.[38] Sierra Miwuk would create large tracts of open land through burning, then disperse Indian Hemp seeds, and another burning would be employed to activate rhizome production of crops. These stalks would grow straighter from the burning and make the desired cordage used by Sierra Miwuk for deer nets and feather dresses. The burnings encouraged vigorous plant growth, even prolonging the life of the plants. Frequent burnings also increased forest complexity by making soil surface more permeable and increasing the rate of nutrition cycling. This allowed new species of smaller understory plants to increase the forest's biodiversity. The nutrient cycling that happens through a disturbance like a fire is described well by Jan W. van Wagtendonk in *Fire in California's Ecosystems*, "Rather than [an ecosystem] reaching an equilibrium, an open system attains a

[37]Kat M. Anderson, “Chapter 6: Basketry”, *Tending The Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California’s Natural Resources* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 13; Katherine Hunter, “Indian Basketry In Yosemite Valley: 19th-20th Century: Gertrude “Cosie” Hutchings Mills, Tourists and the National Park Service,” Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings 2018, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska 2018).
[38] Kat Anderson, “The Use of Fire by Native Americans in California,” In *Fire in California's Ecosystems*, edited by Neil G. Sugihara, Jan W. Van WagTenDonk, Kevin E. Shaffer, Joann Fites-Kaufman, Andrea E. Thode (University of California Press, 2006), 418.

steady-state with minimum energy loss. Fire is considered a negative feedback mechanism that prevents the destruction of natural ecosystems by returning some of the energy to the system."[39]

Fire practices can massively shape the landscape and domesticate a variety of plant species.[40]

> Branches, stems, leaves, roots, and rhizomes, if left to grow willy-nilly, end up crooked, brittle, and short and are rejected by weavers. It is no coincidence that in a basket weaver's home, the whorls of basketry material on the shelves are as orderly and regular as neatly coiled rolls of synthetic string, or that long, uniform branch rods are as neatly bundled as stacks of wooden dowels. Nature just doesn't grow that way. On close examination, these materials exhibit features usually not present in the wild: they have no blemishes, no insects, and no side branching. To gather plant parts like these by the ton, weavers had to cultivate.[41]

Tillers, sprouts, and flower stalks are all different plant parts that would be encouraged to grow in ways conducive to basketry through periodic burning and pruning. Rhizomes, roots, and stems would be pruned, harvested periodically through the seasons, or go through levels of soil management and irrigation to meet the needs of the basket weaver. As many as a thousand stems might be used in one small Mono basket, and families had many sizes of baskets for different cooking, gathering, or organizational tasks. Fields would be made and used through various fire practices to encourage specific plant species to grow alongside one another. Deer grass was encouraged in light burnings, which would burn away other plants leaving patches of deer grass behind. By employing these techniques, basket makers in Yosemite Valley influenced a variety of ecosystems in a resource management style that fits the label of proto-agriculture. Anderson,

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[39] Neil Sugihara, Jan Wagtendonk , Joann Fites-Kaufman, "Chapter 4 Fire as an Ecological Process" In *Fire in California's Ecosystems*, edited by Neil G. Sugihara, Jan W. Van WagTenDonk,Kevin E. Shaffer, Joann Fites-Kaufman, Andrea E. Thode (University of California Press, 2006), 60.
[40] Kat Anderson, "The Use of Fire by Native Americans in California," In *Fire in California's Ecosystems*, edited by Neil G. Sugihara, Jan W. Van WagTenDonk, Kevin E. Shaffer, Joann Fites-Kaufman, Andrea E. Thode (University of California Press, 2006), 426-427.
[41] Ibid, 190.

however, would argue that even proto-agriculture is incorrect because the harvested plant parts fit all definitions of the term "crop."

In her chapter on basketry in *Tending the Wild Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources,* Anderson also refers to baskets as mechanical. However, she is careful to point out their great significance as a mode of expression and symbolism in tribal life. The modern-day Half Dome, a central feature of Yosemite Valley, was referred to by the Ahwahnee as Basket Dome and is a part of an oral tradition relayed by Craig Bates, retired Curator of Ethnology for Yosemite National Park Services.

> Long before the Yo-ho-meh-tik' Indians lived in Ah-wah'-nee, the Yosemite Valley, there were many bird and animal people there. One of them went to Mono Lake and married an Indian woman named Teh-sa-ahk'. He started to bring his bride back to Ah-wah'-nee to live. The husband carried a roll of deer skins on his back and held a staff in his hand. Teh-sa-ahk' had a baby cradle in her arms and Chee-keh-leh', the pointed carrying basket, on her back. They came by Tenaya Lake. The old Indians say that you can still see the tracks of Teh-sa-ahk', the Mono woman, along the shore of the lake. At Mono Lake there were no trees, and she thought that all the oak trees and other plants along the trail were beautiful She picked up some acorns and other seeds and threw them in the Chee-keh-leh', or carrying basket, on her back. When the travelers came to where Ah-wy'ee, the Mirror Lake, is now, the new husband quarreled with Teh-sa-ahk'. She wanted him to return with her and live at Mono Lake. He said there were no oaks or other trees there. Said she, "I will take these acorns and seeds along and we can plant trees." But her husband failed to listen to her plea. Finally Teh-sa-ahk' began to cry and ran back along the trail towards her people at Mono Lake. Then the husband became angry. He cut a tree limb and ran after his runaway wife, beating her severely. Teh-sa-ahk' also became angry at her husband and threw Chee-keh-leh', the carrying basket, at him. This basket turned to stone and became Basket Dome. Still running, Teh-sa-ahk' threw the [hooded] baby cradle at her husband. It also turned to stone and became Choo-ko-neh', the Royal Arches. Because of their anger both Teh-sa-ahk' and her husband were turned to stone. The husband became North Dome, which the Indians called To-ko-yee.' The wife became Half Dome, which the Indians call Teh-sa-ahk' even to this day. The Mono women bob their hair and cut it in bangs. Half Dome looks just like the head and shoulders of a Mono woman. Since the quarrel Teh-sa-ahk' has always been sorry. The old Indians say that the tears she has shed formed Ah-wy'-ee, the Mirror Lake. You can still see the marks of these tears where they ran down the face of Teh-sa-ahk', the Mono Indian bride, which the white people call Half Dome[42].

[42] Katherine Hunter,."Indian Basketry In Yosemite Valley: 19th-20th Century: Gertrude "Cosie"Hutchings Mills, Tourists and the National Park Service," Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings 2018, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska 2018) 4-5.

The Mono basket weavers bring what the West traditionally thinks of as separate worldviews together as a creation of mechanical ingenuity and animistic culture into one object. Holding both advanced resource management and a spiritual connection to the resources kept Indigenous peoples of the Yosemite Valley living within their means. It kept them beholden to their surroundings, which fed them and housed them. They saw themselves as a part of their landscape; Mono women bobbed their hair, honoring Half Dome and the Mono Indian bride. These are the kinds of traditions and innovations built from thousands of years of kinship to the land that takes evolutionary empathy to see because they break the molds of our comfort zone, paradigms, and previously-held beliefs.

The absence of agriculture and the presence of animism led early Spanish explorers to believe California Natives were at a lower stage of evolution than themselves and used this to justify their conquest.[43] *The Requeremiento* is one of the most direct forms of evidence in this regard, proclaiming their god as the one true God and describing the Spanish as "…subduers of the barbarous nations…". *The Historical Memoirs of New California* by Francisco Palou shows how religious conquest became an environmental conquest during the introduction of Spanish missions in California. Not only did the Franciscans impose Catholicism, they also introduced an entirely different lifestyle and relationship with the environment, such as the planting of corn which was a typical European monoculture crop and all manner of commodity labor exchange for food and the basic necessities of life.[44] The changes in farming techniques came with much difficulty as Palou noted, for the crops often suffered due to a lack of water from California's hot

https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2091&context=tsaconf

[43] https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text7/requirement.pdf

[44] The introduction of Catholicism was typically described in terms of advancement. See Francisco Palóu, and Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Historical Memoirs of New California, by Fray Francisco Palou, O. F. M., Translated into English from the Manuscript in the Archives of Mexico, Edited by Herbert Eugene Bolton,* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1926).

climate and alkaline soil.[45] Historically, California Native science has been discredited as if the presence of animism prevented empirical thought. While animism was a large part of Indigenous North American existence, it did not replace all scientific processes, just as the Church did not stop the scientific process for Europeans. Indigenous peoples' technologies also developed via their scientific process of trial and error. If we look at Anderson's larger body of work on Indigenous fire technology, there is clear evidence for the scientific method in Indigenous cultures.

While California Indians may not have had a mechanistic worldview, they did have mechanistic science, according to Merchant's analysis of the evolution from an animistic to a mechanistic worldview. Basketry is a prime example of this analysis. Yosemite Natives could weave baskets to perform even such jobs as cooking. Using a watertight basket, the user would place hot coal into the water, and it would boil. Even Fray Francisco Palou wrote, "The greatest mechanical ingenuity displayed by the Indians is in the construction of their baskets and bows and arrows..."[46]

Evading the hunter-gatherer label creates issues for the West on a philosophical level by defying the traditional narrative of cultural evolution. Since the Enlightenment, elite thinkers of Western societies have proposed various versions of the same social evolutionary model - savagery to barbarism to civilization. Each phase contained methods of engaging with natural resources. The phases were generally believed to be progessive and successive, which is also referred to as Unilineal Social Evolution. However, twentieth century researchers have criticized

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[45] Francisco Palóu, and Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Historical Memoirs of New California, by Fray Francisco Palou, O. F. M., Translated into English from the Manuscript in the Archives of Mexico, Edited by Herbert Eugene Bolton,* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1926)144, 180, 181, 195, 216, 308.
[46] Alexander Forbes, *Sabin Americana 1500-1926*. (London: Smith, Elder: 1839), 192.

this theory and it is generally viewed as outdated, its most notable critic being Franz Boaz.[47] This theory was projected onto the landscape by European explorers, Euro-American settlers and researchers of all disciplines, as a form of intellectual colonialism. Since contact, westerners placed Indigenous Californians at a lower tier of evolution, were labeled hunter-gatherers, and believed to have had a limited impact on their environment.

Anderson and archeologists in *California Prehistory* show that California's Indigenous peoples were not nomadic but simply harvested seasonally and returned to the same camps generation after generation.[48] They owned property and domesticated entire landscapes. Nevertheless, visually, all appeared to Euro-Americans and Spanish missionaries to match their preconceived notions of a linear and successive progression in cultural evolution. From another perspective, we can see that Indigenous Californians invented land management and fire regimes invisible to foreign eyes. Today, from an ecological perspective, the tripartite division in human cultural evolution may perhaps be considered the most damaging ecological concept to enter California, damaging the ecology and Indigenous peoples.

Older works on Yosemite's Indigenous peoples should be scrutinized, as they are, in part, informed by the dominating anthropological and sociological evolutionary theories of their time, such as the tripartite division in human cultural evolution.[49] Social evolutionism civilization is associated with agriculturalism, and barbarism is associated with hunter-gatherers, with the assumption being that societies in the latter are not as "evolved" or simply "uncivilized." The works of Thomas Blackburn, Kat Anderson, and Robert Bettinger, build on ideas postulated and

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[47] For a summary of this evolution of thought within the social sciences see Charles King, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century*, (Doubleday, 2019).

[48] Terry L. Jones, Kathryn Klar, and Society for California Archaeology, *California Prehistory : Colonization, Culture, and Complexity.* (AltaMira Press, 2007), Kindle.

[49] For an example of this belief see From Barbarism to Civilization J. W. Powell; For an overview of social evolutionism see alabama universities breakdown of anthropological theories on social evolution https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/social-evolutionism/

developed by earlier anthropologists like David Prescot Barrows (1900), and Clement Meighan (1959), Alexander Forbes (1963). Barrows was perhaps the first to maintain that California tribes had used agriculture pre-contact. Meighan posited that California Natives had developed such efficient ecological adaptations that they had reached a Malthusian equilibrium. This may have been developing as far back as the Archaic period.

There are two dating periods for the Archaic periods that signify a significant increase in population. The Archaic period began with Southern and Coastal Indigenous people occupying California (5500 to 3000 BP). By compiling the numbers from several authorities, we can see when more complex social, political, and economic organizations were most likely happening (3000 to 500 BP).[50] Anderson and Blackburn refer to Forbes' work as a pioneer study for applying an ethnohistorical approach to solving the question of whether or not northern Baja Indians had developed agriculture pre-contact; his study found significant evidence that they had but then did not continue it. From this, we can infer that their environmental regime, be it agricultural, hunter-gatherer, or something in-between like Bettinger's label of intensive hunter-gatherer, was simply invisible to the Spanish eye who first came into contact with these Indigenous peoples.

In the mid-1530s, Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés came to Baja California with his men, marking the beginning of European interaction with California. Spaniards did not arrive in Alta, California until 1542 when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's expedition arrived at modern-day Santa Barbara.[51] Epidemiologists believe these first points of contact were to blame for launching successive waves of plagues among Indigenous people on the shore as they boated out to meet

[50] Michael J. Moratto, *California Archaeology*, (Academic Press, 1984), Kindle, 311-312; Michael A. Glassow,. "Archaic Cultural Development in California," *Revista de Arqueología Americana*, no. 5 (1992): 201–29. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27768316.
[51] See library of congress overview of events, https://www.loc.gov/collections/california-first-person-narratives/articles-and-essays/early-california-history/spanish-california/

the Spanish at their ships and began to trade. The Spanish intention to conquer the West Coast later manifested in minor forays inland and northwards, beginning in Baja, California. Friars, neophytes, and soldiers made treks by foot up the coast and through some semi-arid landscapes in which they were often woefully unprepared to survive.

Nonetheless, between 1769 and 1823, 21 Franciscan missions were constructed from Baja to San Francisco, directed by Junipero Serra, as places of Indigenous integration. These locations became disease super-spreaders, resulting in enormous loss of life. Disease transmission from the coast to central California was inconsistent due to the gradual colonization of Spanish missions and sporadic trading near Russia's Fort Ross. Interior Indigenous communities were affected later than those on the coast. Fleeing neophytes eventually found refuge in places like Yosemite. Some scholars refer to such pocket areas which were not in direct contact with Europeans as "strongholds of the Native lifeways."[52]

People arrived in North America via the Bering Strait and/or possibly by boat to the California Coast.[53] In *Down To Earth,* environmental historian Ted Steinberg postulates that the Bering Strait was an excellent filter for diseases.[54] He states that the conditions of Beringia would have killed most sick paleo-Indians entering North America 12,000 to 14,000 years ago, therefore limiting epidemic diseases that entered North America. Additionally, he claims that the death of the larger animals and megafauna at the Pleistocene also helped since fewer, less domesticated animals resulted in fewer diseases. This, when contrasted with Europe's history of livestock-type animals, presents an interesting theory as to why Indigenous people may have fallen ill in such great numbers when introduced to Europeans and their livestock. Examining

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[52] Kathleen Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence : Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California*, (University of California Press, 2009), 19.
[53] Bathsheba Demuth, Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait, (W.W. Norton & Company: 2019).
[54] Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History,* (Oxford University Press, 2018, 27; Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast*,.

this evolutionary history of the park gives us clues as to why certain cultures made the adaptations they did when moving into the Yosemite bio-region.

In Kathleen Hull's book *Pestilence and Persistence* (2009), she discusses the varying estimates for mortality rates from epidemiologists and bio-archeologists, pointing out that opinions differ on the actual rates of European-introduced diseases. Some higher estimates assume that Indigenous populations in North America were "virgin soil" for deadly diseases, which Ted Steinberg argues. However, as Hull points out, many bio-archaeologists propose that deadly endemic diseases had already existed within Indigenous communities, including hepatitis, tuberculosis, fungal infections, gastrointestinal parasites, congenital abnormalities, and treponemal diseases like syphilis and yaws.[55] Before Europeans introduced diseases, such diseases would possibly lead to stronger immunity when confronting European diseases; however, Hull maintains communities in and around Yosemite suffered apocalyptic mortality rates as high as 90 – 100 percent. Still, it remains possible that these high mortality rates may not have been solely the result of a lack of immunity. Hull remarks on the difficulty in disentangling depopulation from introduced diseases, the physical incursion of non-native peoples, their ideas, and goods. These factors resulted in intergroup aggression, relocation, and starvation. While the Sierran foothills contained strongholds of Indigenous populations with no direct contact with Europeans, the environmental effects of encroaching Spaniards would inadvertently affect the strongholds as well.[56]

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[55] Kathleen Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence : Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California*, (University of California Press, 2009), 9.
[56] Kathleen Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence : Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California*, (University of California Press, 2009), 12.

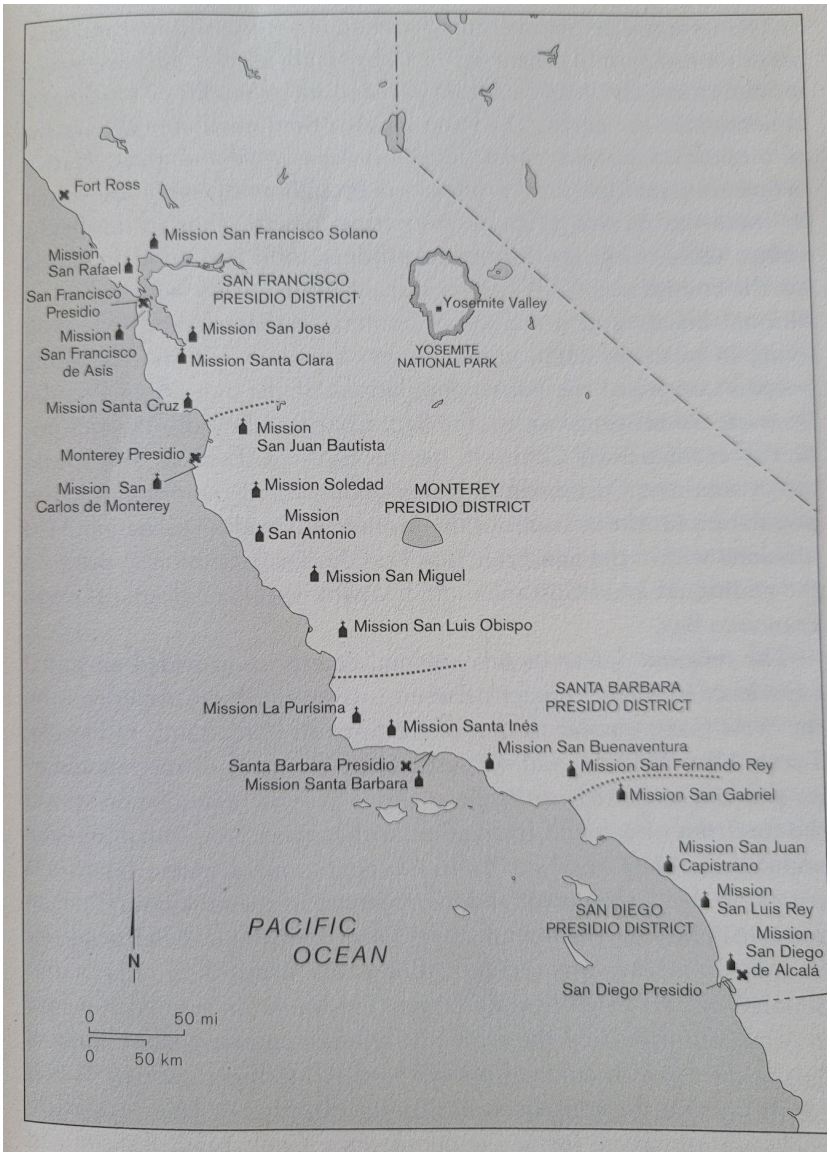

Figure 2: Map of Russian and Spanish colonies in California. Circa 1815. Originally published by Kent Lightfoot in *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants* (2005) and republished in Kathleen Hulls *Pestilence and Persistence* (2009).

In addition to disease, Benjamin Madley states that between 1846 and 1873, eighty percent of all Indigenous persons in California were killed, and that 9,492 to 16,092 were due to massacres led by non-Indians on non-combatants or unarmed combatants.[57] Extreme population loss caused ecological deterioration. Social order was affected by the decline of the local population throughout California, causing the Indigenous people to relocate and reform into new

[57] Bejamin Madley, *An American Genocide : The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 31-33.

conglomerated communities.[58] Throughout California, from the 1700s to 1800s, human environmental needs changed drastically due to their non-presence, the influx of newly introduced animals such as cattle and sheep, and the land and resource requirements of these animals. These shifting land and resource requirements, moving populations of Indigenous peoples, and the influx of new settlers, plants, and animals may have contributed to changes in the social organization prior to extreme population loss from European-introduced disease, exacerbating the effects of such.

[58] Kathleen Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence : Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California*, (University of California Press, 2009), 9.

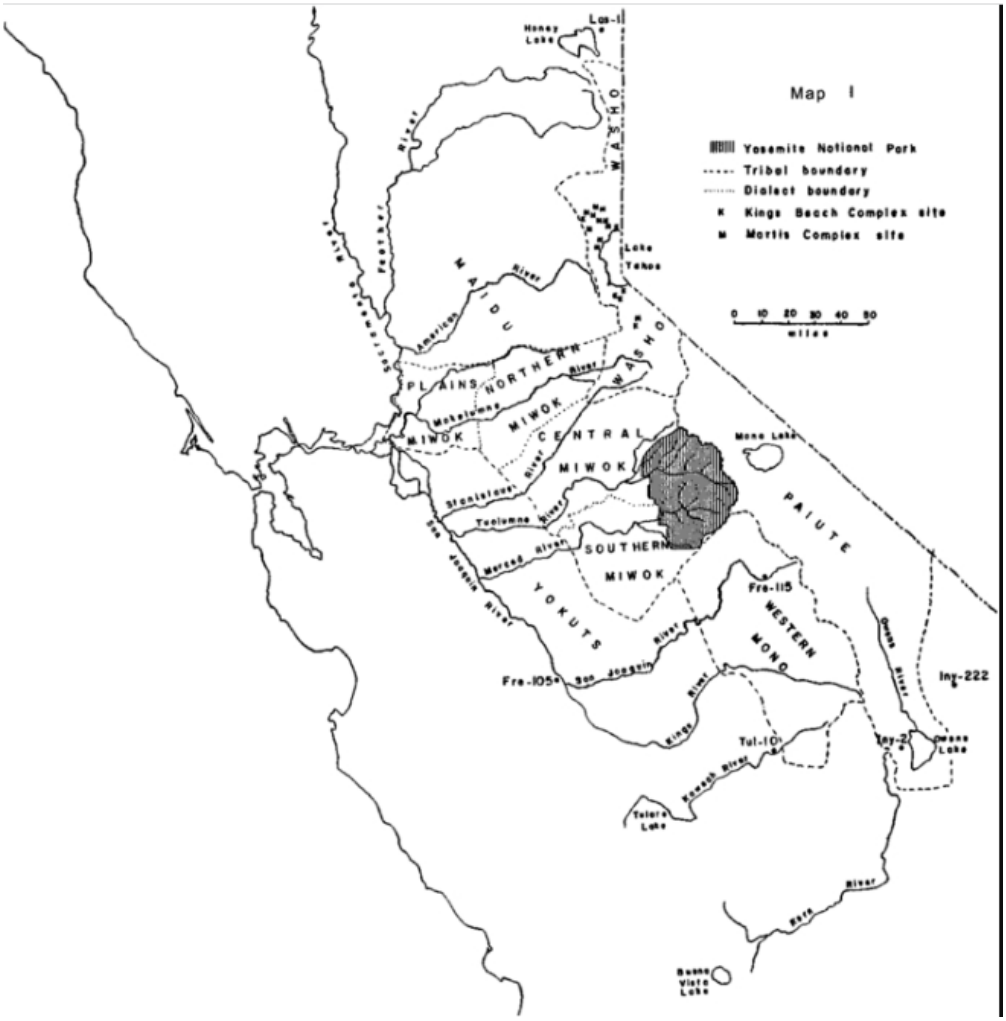

Figure 3: Location of Indigenous peoples in the vicinity of Yosemite National Park show as a gray shape. From James A. Bennyhoff, *An Appraisal of the Archaeological Resources of Yosemite National Park, 1956.*

Once disease overtook the Yosemite region, Yosemite was left uninhabited around 1800. By 1833, Chief Tenaya had gathered people from multiple surrounding communities and re-populated the Central Valley of Yosemite.[59] To these people, Yosemite was not Yosemite at all, but Ahwahnee, roughly translating as gaping mouth. The Indigenous people of Yosemite were the Ahwahneechee (meaning "the people of Ahwahnee"). The Ahwahneechee band was composed of the Miwuk to the west and north of Tuolumne, Paiute to the East, and and Mono to

[59] This information comes from interviews given by Lafayette Bunnell with chief Tenaya and recorded in Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911) 70-71.

the South. This reconstituted band was reviving traditions and occupations after a devastating plague hit the Central Sierra region – a plague that the Ahwahneechee chief, Tenaya, called the black sickness. The disease possibly spread to the Ahwahnee from contact with neophytes fleeing a coastal mission, or a Central Valley Indigenous person's trade or interaction with colonial or inland native groups near such missions.[60]

Archeologists estimate that Chief Tenaya's band consisted of about 200 Miwuk, Mono, and Paiute peoples when they were forcibly removed from 1851 to 1853.[61] This group would have lived primarily in the Central Yosemite Valley, though making use of harvest and hunting in the Tuolumne Meadows and larger Merced Watershed. In March 1851, Tenaya's village, situated in the Central Yosemite Valley, was described as having bark houses, acorn stores, hanging dried horse meat, baskets made of wiregrass and bark roots such as tamarack or cedar, willow or tule. All manner of cultural artifacts were described by the first visiting White chronicler, Lafayette Houghton Bunnell, account of the Tenaya and the Ahwahneechee village. Bunnell estimated four to six hundred bushels of acorns. He observed robes and blankets made of squirrel skins, rabbits, waterfowl; thread from the inner bark of a species of Asclepias, "...by ingeniously suspending a stone to the fiber, and whirling it with great rapidity…"; salt from the eastern slope of the Sierras and the desert lakes.[62] The date of observation is proof that these traditions and cultures survived the black illness which Hull dates between 1780 and 1810.[63]

California's Indigenous peoples, including the Ahwahneechee, faced extreme hardships during the mid-nineteenth century Gold Rush Era. In 1849, tensions rose between Euro-American settlers and the Indigenous communities for three years due to mining or

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[60] Kathleen Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence*, 65.
[61] Moratto, *Archeological Research,* Design, 51-52
[62] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 76-78.
[63] Hull, *Pestilence and Persistence*, 65.

associated industries. This was exacerbated by the fact that the Indigenous peoples had only recently begun to recover after a catastrophic epidemic. Soon, cattle ranchers and other forms of domesticated livestock were upsetting ecosystems that the Natives relied on. In 1851 the Ahwahneechee were forced to defend their rights to the land against a state-funded militia. This militia, known as the Mariposa Battalion, engaged in California's first state and later federally organized campaign to clear Indigenous peoples of the new state's land and free up resources for new settlers.

Conclusion

Forests made of dense mature trees limit understory life due to the lack of sunlight reaching the understory. In Yosemite today, the Valley can feel dark because mature trees tower above in all directions. It is easy to cut a path from any campsite to the nearest stream because almost no vegetation blocks the way. If anything blocks the path, it is likely a huge dead tree that fell long ago. A heavy layer of pine needles covers the floor like a mat built up over the years and, in some areas, decades. These things are the makings of massive, deadly fires, very different from the fires that Indigenous peoples set intentionally to manage resources. These fires, where they happen, can cover thousands of acres. The sheer fuel accumulation builds a fire so hot that it can kill stands of mature trees. Even though most of the trees in the area have evolved to coexist with fire, they cannot withstand the blazing inferno multiple decades' worth of tinder can unleash. In 2020 the Castle fire blazed through Sequoia Kings Canyon National park, just south of Yosemite, decimating 171,000 acres, roughly ⅓ of all of the Sequoia groves of the Sierra Nevada, the only place in the world where they grow naturally. The loss is a national and world heritage tragedy. These fires are not natural disasters. They are man-made through inappropriate preservation.

The anthropological changes in fire regime from European contact and global warming have evolved at a pace too rapid for the evolution of the trees to adapt and protect themselves.[64] The intensity of the 2020 Castle fires were far beyond what Giant Sequoias have adapted to. While Giant Sequoias require fire to make room in the forest's canopy for light to shine down to the seeds and heat for the cones to open and release seeds, the intensity of the Castle fire destroyed the cones and seeds completely.[65] Cumulatively, these findings show why Giant Sequoia are where they are and give some perspective to the ecological heritage of Indigenous peoples in the Yosemite bio-region. The spatial complexity of vegetation like Giant Sequoia are the result of geological and climate history. Likewise, the spatial complexity of vegetation contributes to the anthropological and ecological history of a place. Thus, Yosemite evolves from landscape to place.

[64] For more information on what constitutes a fire regime see the Pacific Southwest Research Stations website on the topic. https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/topics/fire_science/ecosystems/strategies.shtml
For a more complete understanding which includes Indigenous peoples involvement in California fire regimes please follow the link on their site for Traditional uses of fire
https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/topics/fire_science/ecosystems/traditional.shtml

[65] For more on the preliminary report of 2021 of the damages of the castle fire see https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/preliminary-estimates-of-sequoia-mortality-in-the-2020-castle-fire.htm. For more on a giant sequoias evolutionary fire adapted needs for regeneration see
https://fireecology.springeropen.com/articles/10.4996/fireecology.0702002

Chapter 2:
Memory Culture on Ecological Processes, Conquest, Transfer, and Transformation

This chapter departs slightly from the linear chronological framework. Four sections are used here to portray the cultural and environmental complexities which played out during the nineteenth century in and around Yosemite. Section one begins with the Gold Rush and pioneer life that followed. Section two covers the political ecology of conquest and transfer, covering the Mexican American War to California statehood to California's conquest of Yosemite. Section three references the memories of the last Ahwahneechee person of that conquest, and section four covers the colonial actors renaming Ahwahnee as Yosemite.

The nineteenth century was a time of mass migration and globalization. Pioneers served a crucial purpose in colonization and empire-building. They set out in front of any military front line and struggled with new landscapes and natives. They located the desirable resources and built hybridized communities where the peoples found themselves closer than they had anticipated to peoples of different cultures and worldviews. They absorbed the information, culture, and lifeways of each other. Repeatedly, what the pioneers would not accomplish on their own became the work of soldiers emboldened by creeds, edicts, acts, or any form of justifications for an empire's conquering and domination over new lands and peoples.

A worldview can seem abstract to us in the moment, even somewhat invisible. With introspective reflection and distance, we can see how something like mindset, prejudices, and bias governed our actions in a given time frame. For this reason, this chapter makes use not only of primary sources written and printed during the time of the Gold Rush, but also employs sources from the memories of the past from those who experienced it. This form of reckoning, or

memory history, offers recollections that are told some distance from the time of the events. While still holding enough factual truth, these accounts can often offer more detail than sources of immediate experiences, because those recalling the events have had time to analyze and consider extenuating circumstances surrounding the events; perspectives that are often left out of accounts given at the moment. Of course, it is important that the facts and overall informative elements are supported by primary sources of the time as well.

The geographical narrative of the Gold Rush is dominated by conquest, transfer, and transformation. Indigenous land ownership and stewardship transferred through a European and Euro-American invasion and settlement. As governing structures were built, and with the influx of people, Euro-American settlements then transferred to California State jurisdictions. In Chapter three, gubernatorial management and pioneer expulsion play out in Yosemite, culminating in federal repossession of Yosemite, which becomes Yosemite National Park, after California state management is overruled by Congress.

The Gold Rush - Exploitative and Settler Colonial Ecologies

The winter of 1846 in the Sierras is historically significant for its snowfall and frigid temperatures. For many arriving Euro-Americans like the Donner Party, the harsh conditions took a heavy toll on human life. An emigrant from Illinois named James D. Savage arrived in California during this same winter, experiencing some of life's harshest misfortunes - that of having lost his wife and newborn child along the trail.[66] Upon arrival at Fort Sutter on October 28, 1846, Savage enlisted in the California Battalion headed by John Fremont, participating in the march from Monterey to San Luis Obispo during the Mexican-American War between November 17 - December 14, 1846. He was described as a malcontent soldier, however he

[66] William M. Boggs, "Baby Girl Savage", (San Francisco Chronicle,1908)
https://www.geni.com/people/Baby-Girl-Savage/6000000059197257848

remained under Fremont until April of 1847 when the unit disbanded.[67] It was then that he constructed a brush tent (a small, easily packed tent) along the South Fork of the Merced, about 15 miles below Yosemite Valley, and in so doing, became a trader. In the oncoming years, Savage became a key figure in the invasion of Yosemite Valley by the Mariposa Battalion.

James Marshall, the emigrant most credited with the discovery of gold in California, had also participated in the mass movement westward, joining the tens of thousands of hopeful emigrants who piled their belongings onto mules, horses, and wagons and followed the Oregon Trail until reaching the Siskiyou Trail, where he then headed South to Fort Sutter. The concept of open domain, land, and resources beckoned them through prairies, over mountains, along rivers, and into cramped boats and ferries. Despite how much of the land may have appeared open game to these weary travelers, their imagined pristine wilderness was neither wilderness nor pristine. The California to which they arrived had been transformed by human hands for more than ten thousand years, and theirs would be merely the most recent set of hands. Marshall eventually arrived at Fort Sutter where he was employed to operate a sawmill. He sought to make use of the forest that sprawled from the base of the Sierras and pittered out as the temperatures rose in the lower elevation of the San Joaquin Valley. Sometime after, he partnered with John Sutter to run a sawmill in Coloma. It was there that he and his crew discovered gold during the construction of the mill on the morning of January 24, 1848.

Marshall and Savage may have had the most profound impact on Indigenous people in Yosemite aside from the introduction of diseases and plagues. Marshall's gold attracted new

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[67]John Augustus Sutter, John Bidwell, W.F.Swasey, , William Loker,, and H.P. Van Sicklen,. *New Helvetia Diary; a Record of Events Kept by John A. Sutter and His Clerks at New Helvetia, California, from September 9, 1845, to May 25, 1848,* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press in Arrangement with the Society of California Pioneers, 1939). Horace Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger: Early Times in Southern California* (Los Angeles, CA: Yarnell, Caystil & Mathes Printers, 1881), 296–302.

settlers to the region, and Savage brought them into the Valley itself. Savage's actions would define the course of settlement in the Valley and the future of thousands of Indigenous people.

Figure 4: is Ensigns & Thayer's, "Map of the Gold Regions of California, Showing the Routes via Chagres and Panama, Cape Horn" from the Digital Public Library of America. This map was published and distributed as a part of a travel guide as well as an insert in Thomas J. Farnham's popular book, Life, Adventures, and Travels in California in 1851.[68]

[68] Ensigns & Thayer, "Map of the Gold Regions of California, Showing the Routes via Chagres and Panama, and Cape Horn," Digital Public Library of America, https://dp.la/item/ec1f0392ebe9d61292b47259ee08b371.

Marshall's discovery of gold was a watershed moment for the would-be state of California. A trickle of emigrants grew into a torrent. Hundreds of thousands expanded paths and carved routes toward the Mother Lode. Figure 4, was distributed in New York to show the routes taken by sea as well as on land to get to California. The passageway from New York via the Atlantic and Panama is described in detail. Because travel was faster on water, only 24 miles of the route was by land. The advice at the bottom of the map cautions anyone from making the trip alone, suggesting one should travel with at least a party of ten, "...who could place in each other that confidence which the love of God could not destroy,"[69] suggestive of the difficulty that might be encountered on the journey ahead. The column further warned that the ships may be lacking in supplies, and even small miscalculations could result in death. Ships that headed down the East Coast could be so full of passengers that one might not find accommodations. Still, disregarding such warnings and a full range of hazardous conditions, Easterners came, flooding the territory that would become California.[70]

Within a few months, large populations moved to California. "No preparation had been made for such a population; not even the skeleton of a legal organization met the new immigrants."[71] In this quote, Newell Chamberlain sets the stage for the cultural and governmental conflicts that lie ahead for the young state. Chamberlain's *The Call of Gold*, (1936) offers a compilation of experiences from the Gold Rush centered Mariposa County. Established on February 18, 1850 as one of the state's original 27 counties, the broader Mariposa County

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[69] Ensigns & Thayer, "Map of the Gold Regions of California, (1851).
[70] John W. Bingaman, "Chapter three: James D. Savage, Indian Fighter, and Explorer of Yosemite Valley" in *Pathways: A Story of Trails and Men* (Lodi, California: End-kian Publishing Col,1968) https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/pathways/james_savage.html.
[71] Newell D. Chamberlain, *The Call of Gold; True Tales on the Gold Road to Yosemite,* (California: Gazette Press, 1936), 102, Kindle.

encapsulated the modern-day Yosemite Valley National Park,[72] which comprised one-fifth of the total state.

Chamberlain himself moved to Midpines, midway between Yosemite Valley and Merced in 1892. Soon after, he began compiling his work of letters, newspaper articles, and what appeared to be orally-relayed information, as well as other documentation providing views from those in the first wave of settlement.[73] The overall narrative of Chamberlain's history is made up of accounts inherited by the next generation, and the work became a documentation of historical actors' introspections.

Early Recollections of the Mines by James H. Carson (1852), corroborates many observations on trends and themes of division in race and culture made by various parties in Chamberlain's work.[74] Central themes in these historical accounts include the division of peoples and cultures by race and ethnicity, the work that people engaged in on the land, and the quasi-legal structures which formed before and just after California's statehood was established on September 9, 1850.

> "...thousands and thousands of American citizens, as well as large numbers of foreigners, quickly flocked into California, thus placing the original inhabitants in the minority." [75]

New townships were established in Mariposa County as miners fanned out from the initially high-yielding creeks.[76] This encroachment of settlers and exploiters inevitably led to a

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[72] John W. Bingaman, "Chapter three: James D. Savage, Indian Fighter, and Explorer of Yosemite Valley" in *Pathways: A Story of Trails and Men* (Lodi, California: End-kian Publishing Col,1968) https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/pathways/james_savage.html.
[73] Dan Anderson, *About the Author,* "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, accessed via https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/call_of_gold/, Yosemite Online Library.
[74]See James H. Carson, *Early Recollections of the Mines, and a Description of the Great Tulare Valley*, (Tarryton, N.Y: Reprint, 1931).
[75] Newell D. Chamberlain, *The Call of Gold; True Tales on the Gold Road to Yosemite,*. (California: Gazette Press, 1936), 109.
[76] Newell D. Chamberlain, *The Call of Gold*, 225.

clash of cultures and battles over resources. As an example, in Quartzburgh, a Law and Order Committee composed of White men claimed the authority to expel whoever it wanted from the town. Heavily armed Whites expelled "Mexican miners, gamblers and dance hall women…"[77] Chamberlain stated that some of those expelled went on to establish Hornitos, which he described as a "rough" city until quartz veins were discovered. Whites then flooded Hornitos and promptly began to make discriminatory laws that disproportionately affected Mexicans.

Relations with Indigenous peoples were varied and could turn violent quickly. Indigenous peoples adapted to the new economy by digging for gold themselves or doing odd jobs such as ferrying miners and travelers across the river. One account from Chamberlain told of two Natives who were shot dead in the river for trying to steal pack animals. Quasi-legal structures and vigilante justice favored mostly Whites, especially wealthy Whites.

Carson's work was the first published printed book out of Stockton, south of Yosemite in 1852. Carson pointed out racism in the commerce of gold from Whites toward Indigenous miners, stating that there was a separate exchange rate for gold from Indigenous miners. Still, some Indigenous people also took advantage of miners when they could, stealing clothing, camping supplies, or animals. In one conversation on this topic recorded in Lafayette Bunnell's *Discovery of Yosemite*, Chief Tenaya said that young Indigenous people were angered by the encroaching Whites and were simply taking horses as compensation for the loss of their land and resources.

While some came to the Valley to exploit it and leave quickly with their bounty, others came with intentions of settling permanently. Settler emigrants contributed toward building a functional economy and brought Mariposa County into federal systems. Hunters and miners formed a symbiotic relationship, whereby the hunters sold meat and the miners paid in gold.

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[77] Newell D. Chamberlain, *The Call of Gold,* 225.

Weighing scales were fixtures in the shops and saloons. By the summer of 1851, the first post offices were built, as well as California's first mint at Mt. Ophir in Mariposa County. Though the population expansion was responsible for state-building amenities, it brought with it cultural conflicts and intolerance toward Indigenous lifeways and land rights.

Interviews of settlers who lived through the Gold Rush defy the stereotypical images of pioneers. Austin Abbott, Lillian Engler, Charles Leidig, and Elizabeth Jane Hatch Antink were asked to recount the "pioneer times" as the era was referred to throughout the interviews. The subjects were all children of early Gold Rush settlers.[78] They came from different cultural backgrounds, some immigrants and some domestic migrants. All shared dreams of a better life and all settled into blossoming communities. This process involved adapting and struggling with the hardships which came from living in less populated areas with intrusive geographical obstacles like the undeveloped mountainous terrain of the Sierras.

The difference between purely exploitative relationships and settler relationships would be the labor it took to live and build families and communities, and the willingness to adapt and accept diverse and hybridized communities which formed as a result of a massive and abrupt influx of peoples from around the world in a small time frame. Among these interviews, we find a mosaic of fond, nostalgic recollections of lives rich in intercultural experiences. Interest and knowledge of technological advances, impacts on manual labor, reliant industries and activities, effects of population growth, and changes in infrastructure throughout the counties surrounding Yosemite Valley were also reflected in these accounts. Often, the interviewees did not share cultural biases made apparent, or perhaps expected, by the interviewers, however, this is not to say that these interviewees existed outside the settler-colonial process. In fact, the interviewees

[78] The Oral Histories Collection from the Introduction to Oral History, course taught by professor Richard L. Dyer, out of Columbia College, provides interviews of some of the early American settlers of Yosemite Valley and its surrounding counties.

all seemed to acknowledge, at least in part, the role they played in transforming the greater area of Yosemite Valley. At times, the language of the pioneers struck a melancholic tone and even regret.

Abbott, interviewed in 1972, lived near Cedar Ridge in Tuolumne County all his life with his family on the Abbott Ranch. The area is beautifully forested and contains portions of both the Stanislaus National Forest and the alpine section of Yosemite Valley and is nearly bordered in the south by Big Oak Flat Road, which was and still is the primary entrance into the Central Valley. Today, by car it's about a ninety-minute drive from the main visitors center of Yosemite Valley. Strommes, the interviewer, greatly intrigued by gold mining, asked Abbott about the men trying to strike it rich. Abbott's grandfather traveled from New York to Columbia (an area just east of Cedar Ridge) to mine in 1850. The family quickly switched to farming with Austin himself trying his hand as a lumberjack. Abbott's response to Strommes was a rejection of getting rich through mining in preference of ranching,

> "... all of those little fellows, they lived in hopes and died in despair. They never made anything. [...] There was a few really prosperous men. They made a good living, you know? My father was one of them and there were several other men that had good ranches and there was a lot of in-between. Work didn't bother him much. [...] I see guys that each have a quart of whiskey and no groceries for their families."[79]

Abbott was implying that those who worked to build something like a farm, a ranch, or orchard were of a higher caliber than those who would only exploit and leave. He critiqued the ideology that he believed contributed nothing to the land or community and resulted in ruin. Families like the Abbotts seemed to see a difference between his family and the miners. It is something akin to the current day difference between tourists and locals. Abbott seemed interested in recognizing himself and his family as an active part of the environment. He learned

[79] Austin Abbot, Interview, November 28, 1972, http://apps.gocolumbia.edu/oralhistory/search.

about the larger processes at work that changed the environment and working conditions and participated in the growing community. This is perhaps what Deloria, Sutter, or Kimmerer meant in their ideas of becoming native.

Another interviewee, Lillian Engler, was the product of German immigration to Tuolumne County during the Gold Rush. Available evidence offers detailed information about the Engler family line, possibly to their success in brewing for Tuolumne County. Engler's father, John Dambacher, was a quartz miner immigrating from Germany in 1850. On her mother's side, she came from the bronzer-turned-brewer, Joseph Bixel, who immigrated between 1845 and 1852. Her family was involved in various enterprises throughout the Sonora and Columbia area. Bixel first bought a saloon which he turned into a brewery by 1875, and quickly began advertising the capabilities of his brewing machinery for making syrups. Engler explained the brewing process in great detail. Oats were bought from Oakdale. Horses were used in the grinding of the malt. The family had a bottling machine and labels for the different types of brews. People from around the county would come for the yeast to make their bread. The Brewery still operates today, offering gourmet pizza and craft brews and celebrates its heritage through several plaques and social media websites, and is listed as a heritage site for the county.

Though the interviewer expressed little interest in activities outside of the home, Engler herself expressed great pride in being a capable woman who challenged norms of Victorian gentility by doing any manner of work necessary.

> "I've plowed, I've chopped wood. I've done anything you could imagine except run a mowing machine and a shoe on a horse. And I attempted to do that, but I was stopped, or I'da been doing that on this ranch."[80]

[80] Lilian Engler, Interview, July 1975, http://apps.gocolumbia.edu/oralhistory/search.

Female settlers in this region often found themselves with certain freedoms their counterparts in cities did not have. Due to the variety of labor, pioneers wore more practical clothing like pants on occasion and lived more independently. One such woman challenging the status quo included Florence Hutchings, the daughter of James Mason Hutchings who lived in the Central Yosemite Valley. Florence Hutchings was known to chew tobacco and smoke a pipe. These qualities made her no less attractive or feminine to men in the Valley. Charles Leidig claimed her as his sweetheart in his own interview for this same project stating that she was, "...just like a man…", which was the same description given by his family who owned and operated a hotel in the Valley. He noted that she was known to, "...take a blanket, loaf of bread, and horse into the woods and be gone in the woods for a week at a time."

Antinks' sister, Gertrude "Cosie" Hutchings, was included in the writings of Shirley Sargeant, the prolific and legendary Yosemite National Park historian who wrote extensively on the topic of women in the pioneer era Yosemite in her book *Pioneers in Petticoats: Yosemite's Early Women, 1856-1900*. This work includes a biography of Hutchings, the Jill of All Trades, as it were. She was a woman who had spent time working as a train supervisor, telegraph operator, stagecoach driver, and postmistress throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

While some women may have experienced more social mobility, not everyone escaped the barriers imposed by a White patriarchal society. Divisions in race are noted in the naming schemes of maps from these times and most primary accounts. Chamberlain's work showed individual or small groups of White settlers owning various means of resource extraction, timber, water, and gold, and with multiple types of extraction methods for all of these resources. For example, Chinese immigrants also mined but were pushed into less fruitful areas. The Chinese also found income by cleaning and cooking for White camps. This is not to say the majority of

settlers spurned the Chinese. Carson wrote about them in the highest regard, and hoped they would fill California with tea or rice cultivation.[81] In Austin Abbott's interview, he described how the Chinese had to wait for Whites to finish clearing an area before collecting for themselves, using a method of what Abbott referred to as "pocket mining" also known as sluicing. He also praised the Chinese. On the division of labor whereby the Chinese often cooked for White camps, he stated,

> "...they could live off of little to nothing. Chinamen had the patience to work it anyway. A lot of that gravel, they got down in those crevices, you know, and spooned it out and pack it to when there was some water so that they could pan it."[82]

Abbott continued to reflect admirably on the patience and fortitude of the Chinese while also expressing disdain for the exploitative qualities of the mining industry as a whole. Engler, too, recalled Chinese hardships in mining, reporting that their daily earnings would frequently be stolen.

Indigenous people quickly came to find work among Whites, usually performing more physical labor such as mining, tending crops, and all for next to the lowest wage besides slaves. For Savage, Indigenous people were crucial in growing his wealth. He was able to set up additional trading posts at Fresno and Mariposa as the White population continued to grow and as he garnered the exploitable labor of Indigenous workers. He became influential as a go-between for tribes and Whites and was trusted to broker gold and goods between them. Numerous second-hand sources over the last century have exaggerated his rapport with the Indigenous peoples of the Central Sierra Nevada region, referring to him as the White Chief and the Blond King. Lafayette Bunnell, a chronicler of the invasion led by Savage into the Yosemite Valley, described Savage as having employed Indigenous peoples, verified in other sources, and

[81] James H. Carson, *Early Recollections of the Mines,* 69.
[82] Austin Abbot, Interview, November 28, 1972, http://apps.gocolumbia.edu/oralhistory/search.

as having five Indian wives and speaking several local Indigenous languages. Col. Johnston, who worked closely with Savage to plan the Mariposa Battalion, reported that he had a major influence on them, but a kingship to westerners is much more than influence.

Some Whites brought enslaved people from the South. Chamberlain's account discussed a man named Moses Williams, who worked building a quartz mill for the Milner brothers. Williams stated that the brothers had brought six Black slaves from Georgia who did ax work, cutting and hewing timber for the mill. Charles Leidigs, claims that in his school of 27 students there were Black and Native Americans, which would be an argument that within the Yosemite Valley itself, there may have been more tolerance for different ethnicities and cultures.

Antink and Charles Leidig lived in the Central Yosemite Valley. Antink's family operated a stagecoach company called White and Hatch's and an informal hotel, or hotel by necessity it seems from her description. Charles Leidig's father ran several hotels successively in the Valley, first operating Lower Hotel, and then their own called Leidig's. Both of these hotels were torn down when the larger and theoretically more accommodating Stoneman Hotel was built by the Yosemite Commissioners.

Antink did not go into great detail about her daily activities and instead focused on those of her mother, referred to in the interview as Mrs. Hatch. These experiences centered on female maternal bonds and/or overcoming the isolation of living in such a newly re-settled area through the formation of a hybrid culture. According to Antink, Indigenous people in the area often brought Mrs. Hatch bowls of fabrics from which she would make papooses for their babies. Possibly, Mrs. Hatch had a sewing machine and could complete the task faster than their traditional means, but many other explanations lend themselves to the situation. For instance, work could have simply been the participation in ongoing exchanges between the communities.

Another recollection involved someone only referred to as “an old Indian woman” who was said to have nursed one of their family members as a baby. Note that both experiences harken a female bond that must have transcended cultural and racial divides.

A third notable experience involved the Valley's isolationism. Antink mentioned that at times she herself played the role of a doctor to Indigenous peoples, the nearest doctor was seventy-five miles away by horseback. Also, it is mentioned that her residence had all sorts of supplies from San Francisco, including drugs, as means of adequately supplying their makeshift hotel and staging company. The daughter quoted her mother, “I often wondered what would happen to me if any of these papuses [likely a speaking error referring to the ill person] should die, but luckily they all got better.”

Leidig, whose family also operated businesses within the Valley, grew up during the rise of tourism and diversity in Yosemite. He had many encounters with famous visitors and Indigenous peoples that returned. He became a ranger for the Valley and spent his time learning about the ecology and solving what he perceived as ecological problems that took place within the boundaries of the park. However, in this interview, while he recounts experiences with Native Americans he never recounts Indigenous influences in his work or Indigenous persons working in a similar capacity. While locals like the aforementioned new settlers indeed did have valuable cultural exchanges with Indigenous peoples, it seems that Indigenous knowledge was possibly not often recognized above a certain social context.

A cultural filter, or perhaps a sort of glass ceiling, separated what Leidig and most others from this time called “the Indian ways” from their own. Leidig's own cultural filters may have allowed him to befriend and work with Indigenous persons, but it is doubtful that he would allow them to educate him or give him instruction. Certain environmental ideological barriers

patronized Indigenous ways of life and knowledge during this period of colonization and can be traced to practices today. In the interview with Leidig, he includes a story about the needle miner moths infestation near Tenaya lake. These pest insects are non-native, and can leave entire stands of lodgepole pine barren and dead. He stated that he was the first to make a report about them, as they were killing all the lodgepole pine in the forest. His method for clearing their infestation from the trees to start a fire beneath the trees and smoke them out. He says they didn't return for years afterward. Ironically, the interviewer says the problem had resurfaced near Tenaya Lake just recently (the date of the interview being 1954) and that the practice of extermination at the time was to release a pesticide by airplane over the forest. Currently, the practice is to allow needle miner moth infestations to occur with no human intervention.

When the interview subjects were asked to reflect, they also remarked on how the life they lived was no longer accessible. They found remarkable the changes that occurred in the span of their own lives. Engler no longer washed her clothes with a washboard, but in a washing machine, and food was purchased as often as she made it. One aspect most of the interviewees shared was, perhaps a sense of nostalgia toward areas that used to be their homes, similar to the way the Natives experienced and reflected on in interviews before them. Engler reflected on the population growth and changes in the names of stores she used to know,

> "Well, that was quite a town at one time. My mother said that they wanted that to be the common seat at one time; but I don't know if it was left to a vote, or how it was decided that Sonora would be. [...] Yeah, but people have come today and want to know where this one or that one lived, you can't tell them because they don't know the name of the old original place. And you don't know the people that's living there."[83]

When interviewer Strommes asked about comparing the "old days" as compared to the date of the interview in 1972, Abbott stated,

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[83] Lilian Engler, Interview, July 1975, http://apps.gocolumbia.edu/oralhistory/search.

> "Abbott: Well, sometimes I wish it hadn't happened. One day you'd walk and find something all broken up or a hole shot through something, or something stolen, you kind of disgusted when you think about the olden times when you went away and left the house wide open, you never had to worry about anybody hurting you. If they did come in, they got something to eat, they would shut the door and wash the dishes. That was customary. Yeah, but it's not like that no more.
>
> Strommes: Nowadays there is a lot of people moving in. There are subdivisions around.
>
> Abbott: Subdivisions, that's what's done it.
>
> Strommes: And recreational areas.
>
> Abbott: …and recreational areas."[84]

Looking back, we see moments adding up to a place called now. These families settled just after the expulsion of Indigenous people from the area of the Central Yosemite Valley and surrounding counties. Their beginnings, in fact, relied on that series of events. Not all Indigenous peoples were forced to leave or were continuously forced to leave, as many often returned. Some remained, went to school with, worked for, or befriended, borrowed, and bartered with the new settlers. Indigenous culture persisted and adapted alongside the culture of the new settlers. While these new communities began to formalize, they, too, were facing expulsion from the state government who had its own ideas for the purpose of Yosemite as a state park. Abbott's entire world revolved around living off the land, although his way of life was perhaps more exploitative than the people who had come before him, and brought changes he was not fond of seeing himself. The interview reveals him as a man of keen awareness, quiet acceptance, and perhaps amazement, at his and his family's role in the process of Yosemite and the broader Sierra Nevada foothills transformation and colonization.

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[84] Austin Abbot, Interview, November 28, 1972, http://apps.gocolumbia.edu/oralhistory/search.

For the Indigenous peoples of Yosemite Valley during the gold rush and before their expulsion, the world outside the granite walls, just 15 miles downriver, was changing rapidly. These newcomers didn't gather acorns in yearly cycles - they cut down the trees to build square houses and exported neat rectangular-shaped pieces of the tree to foreigners so that they could do the same. The newcomers did not think about the grasses and how they could craft their growth for all manner of useful everyday items. Instead, they trampled through the prairies and let domesticated animals eat them down to the root. The nutrient-rich and life-giving vegetation did not appeal to settler tastes. They brought in food from larger cities nearby like San Francisco or Fresno and planted non-native fruits and vegetables and tubers. Cans of beans, dried meats, and flour were brought in on horseback and by mules. The difference in material cultures must have been bizarre to witness, as material culture can be thought of as a manifestation of differences in their ideals and values.

Conquest and Transfer of California - Spain, Mexico, and America

While Indigenous land rights faced immediate pressures from the influx of settlers during the Gold Rush, a large portion of California had been transformed by Spanish and Mexican occupation and transfers of ownership. Political ecologies of the Spanish and Mexican cattle and livestock industries had been at work degrading California ecosystems and Indigenous lifeways for decades. Politically this played out in a series of transfers between empires. When Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, California became the jurisdiction of The First Mexican Empire. Soon after, the Mexican government secularized the missions and put them

under the control of Californios who gave the land or land grants to the Indigenous people, but much of this land made its way into the ownership of Californios themselves.

While the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Ranchos themselves have been described as slavery, Indigenous peoples located outside these Mexican populated areas did retain some genuine land rights, which was more than Spain had ever offered, and more than the United States was going to offer. As an example, further east, in 1830, Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act which led to the displacing thousands of Indians to lands west of the Mississippi River. This act set a precedent for what the U.S. government considered fair treatment of Indigenous peoples and their land rights regardless of their proximity to populated areas due to the historical trend of the time being westward expansion and manifest destiny. The series of acts that followed this the Indian Removal Act had even been portrayed as a protection of Indigenous peoples due to the fact the government was incentivising "Americans" to move west and claim Indian lands.

Mexican California from the 1830s to the 1850s is generally thought of as the Rancho Period of California, because lands from the formerly Spanish missions became farms and ranchos which raised cattle and sheep. Former missionaries worked them in a codified class system making Indigenous peoples second-class citizens. Generally, this time is thought of as an ecologically devastating era for the broader California.[85] There were no ranchos during this time in the Yosemite bio-region, however, the livestock and cattle culture and industry became omnipresent throughout California due to Spanish and Mexican ecological histories. The grazing

[85] For Indigenous peoples located near Missions in 18th century California, sheep brought by the Spanish were a major cause of starvation, leaving the Indigenous populations little choice but to join Missions. It was these Mission populations which were turned over to the Mexican government in 1821, and sheep took a back seat to the growing numbers of cattle and horses which required larger grazing lands. See John Ryan Fischer, "Chapter Two", *Cattle Colonialism : An Environmental History of the Conquest of California and Hawai'i*, (University of North Carolina Press: 2015).

of these large hoofed mammals eventually spread through Yosemite from independent farmers and plagued many managers of Yosemite into the 1890s.

The multiple contentions for control over California, the overlapping perspectives of who rightfully could lay legal claim to its lands, can also be understood visually by thinking of Yosemite as a cubist painting. Yosemite (Ahwahnee then) was a place lived in, while actively being fought for thousands of miles away by people who did not know it existed. It was included in maps that outlined the invisible borders of California, yet was wholly unknown and unseen. Meanwhile those who could draw Ahwahnee on a map, did not even participate in the legal system that was drawing borders all around them. Cubist works often cannot reconcile the different perspectives brought forward into the frame, and the final image in color is muddy, abstracted to the point of being non-representational. The task of reconciliation remains on the viewer. This is true with history and is the task of historians. We are asked to look back with the understanding that history happened differently for every person. There may not be an ultimate true depiction, but as we collaborate and gather evidence some we find that depictions can be more accurate than others.

After the transfer from Spain to Mexico, the American empire contended for California. On May 13, 1846, American president James Polk declared war with Mexico, aiming to annex Texas and California, and to establish a Mexican-American border at the Rio Grande. On February 2, 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, this transfer became a reality. So, by the time mass immigration/emigration hit California, a war between American and Mexican empires was waged hundreds of miles away that would decide the legal rights of all who moved there. This war ultimately resulted in the transfer of Indigenous lands and loss of land rights with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and then California's

Statehood in 1850. This increased the already heightened tensions that existed during the Gold Rush as a result of the intense multicultural experience that was taking place.

By the Summer of 1850, tensions rose between Indigenous people from Yosemite to Fresno and encroaching settlers. In 1850, an Act for Government and Protection of Indians from Traditional Lands set a precedent in California for the treatment of Indigenous inhabitants for the following decades, begining with state-funded genocide through campaigns of militia fully supported by the California government.[86] The following incursion into Yosemite Valley was one of dozens of such campaigns.

As mentioned before, Lafayette Bunnell was a chronicler who accompanied this militia. He published a book thirty years after the war took place in which he documented a familiarity he had with Chief Tenaya. To date, this is the only known account containing Chief Tenaya's voice. According to Bunnell, he spoke with Chief Tenaya about his tribe, the origins of their name, and their place in the Yosemite Valley.[87] Bunnell's account begins in 1850 with Savage, who was told forcefully by one of his wives that a conversation was evolving among the Ahwahneechee and other mountain tribes. She stated that the Ahwahneechee were plotting, "...to kill or drive all the White men from the country, and plunder them of their property."[88] In an attempt to address this matter, Bunnell writes that Savage brought a chief (of an unknown tribelet) named Jose Juarez to San Francisco so that Juarez would see how numerous the Whites (as he referred to them) were. This was also the celebration of the State entering the Union on October 29, 1850.

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[86] For further information on this act and additional California legal determination of Indigenous people of California please see https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/IB.pdf1
[87] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911), 59,63,64.
[88] Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 3.

Savage hoped to utilize Juarez's status as a chief to impress upon other Indigenous peoples the magnitude of American force. However, this was not the impression Juarez took away from the experience. Some gossip had made its way to Savage, whereupon he became paranoid about a gathering of Indigenous peoples at a location known as Cassady's Bar at Fresno Station in the San Joaquin. He brought Juarez to the place, where he found a gathering of Indians, several of whom were from his wives' tribes and were also friends of his (Pon-wat-chee and Vow-ches-ter). Savage worried that the Indians had gathered for some nefarious purpose – a conspiracy of war against the setters, as his wife had warned.

Savage called for the Indians to smoke a pipe with him, and he proceeded to warn them that the Whites were numerous and strong. He then gave the spotlight to Juarez, anticipating his support, and to Savage's shock and alarm, Juarez announced, "The White tribes will not go to war with the Indians in the mountains. They cannot bring their big ships and big guns to us; we have no cause to fear them. They will not injure us."[89] Juarez continued, boldly declaring a united war on the Whites, claiming the territory as their own. From Bunnell's account, his speech was apparently quite eloquent, despite him being quite drunk. Following his speech, a large circle of Indians proudly formed around him, including the influential Chief Jose Rey and the Chow-chillas. Together, they formed a pact to rid their mountain of the White gold diggers and settlers alike.

Defeated and panic-stricken, Savage quickly returned home to warn the miners and settlers of what had transpired and what was expected to follow. Initially, the miners may have disregarded his warning. Bunnell wrote,

> "It was generally known that mountain men of Savage's class were inclined to adopt the vagaries and superstitions of the Indians with whom they were associated, and therefore

[89] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 6.

> but little attention was given to the trader's warnings. It was believed that he had listened to the blatant palaver of a few vagabond "Digger Indians," and that the threatened hostilities were only a quarrel between Savage and his Indian miners, or with some of his Indian associates."[90]

What intentions the Indigenous people may have had to engage in a whole and organized war with the "White miners" cannot be known for certain, as there simply is not enough evidence from their perspective during the time in which the events transpired. Yet, whatever words or expressions were exchanged that evening, this moment of betrayal fixed Savage on his path of war against the tribes of Yosemite.

Adam Johnston, who participated alongside Savage in Bunnell's Account, documented various events leading up to one of the massacres in Yosemite. As a Bureau of Indians Affairs representative, in 1851, he reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Washington office that a sum of money had been acquired on November 15, 1850 from the Department of the Interior to purchase presents in order to open a dialogue with the Indigenous peoples from the San Joaquin to Central Sierra Nevada region. It was reported that the Indians of the San Joaquin Valley were "...stirring up trouble." There is a possibility that Juarez was speaking to both Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley Indians on that night with Savage at Cassady's Bar.

According to Bunnell, Savage's attempted warnings went unheeded and were followed by several incidents. One of the deadly attacks involved Savage's store in Fresno on December 17, 1850. Johnston also wrote in his report that violent attacks were occurring daily. Some of the attacks correlate to both reports. After aiding in the burial of multiple dead in Fresno, on January 2, 1851 Johnston wrote to the Seat of the government to ask for aid from the State. Johnston's account strongly suggests that the legislative body's primary goal in dealing with the Indigenous

[90] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 9.

Californians was to protect mining in the region. He stated that although there may be a desire for peace, that war was imminent.[91]

According to Bunnell, Johnston tried to assuage the situation by meeting with representatives from the local Indigenous communities, though it is unclear how sincere his efforts may have been or how well they were received. His account clearly indicates he was not optimistic that representatives from the tribes would come, and he referred to them as hostile, stating that they must be severely dealt with. According to Johnston's report, he negotiated submissions from most Indigenous communities who attended and set a date to have a larger council of Indians where he would bring more gifts for Christmas day.[92]

> "I left Fresno with the prospect of at least being able to arrest hostilities until the commissioners (of whose appointment I had then heard) should arrive. [...] I of course conferred with them in such manner as seemed to me best calculated to arrest their designs. My efforts, however, were of no avail, as there was doubtless a general understanding among the various tribes that they should commence a predatory war, at an appointed time, all along the valley of the San Joaquin, if not along the entire base of the Sierra Nevada, from the northern to the southern boundary of the State. As evidence of this, murders and robberies were committed simultaneously at various points."[93]

In late December, an event occurred which left 35 dead. It is unknown whether the incident was a battle between the settlers and natives, a massacre, or an act of vengeance. Whatever happened caused a group of the aggrieved, led by Savage, to pursue a group of what they believed to be the marauding Indians from multiple bands to an undisclosed location in Fresno. There, they engaged in a battle that left two of Savage's men dead. Some faction of this vigilante battalion, again led by Savage, pursued the Indians near the North Fork of the San Joaquin River, where they had camped on a round, rugged mountain covered with a dense

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[91] Letter from Adam Johnston to Hon. L. Lea, Senate Executive Document No. 4, Special Session, 1851, at https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/one_hundred_years_in_yosemite/documents.html#document_4
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

undergrowth of oaks and digger pine. Here, Juarez and another Indian known as Jose Rey, also referred to by Bunnell as a chief though the tribelet is unnamed) were said to have attempted to incite the Whites to attack since they were fortified in a forest-sheltered location and surrounded by allying tribes, the Chow-chilla, Chook-chan-cie, Noot-chu, Ho-nah-chee, Po-toencie, Pohonocheen, Kahweah, and the Ahwahneechee.[94] The number of fighting men or warriors estimated by whoever told the account to Bunnell, most likely Savage, was around 500, whereas the Whites' number was less than 100. And so, the hastily assembled militia waited. The Indians vanished. A small crew scouted out the Indians and found them at an "old Indian village," though it's unclear if it was abandoned or still inhabited by the indigenous people who built it.

Savage's men decided on a surprise attack before dawn. In two separate groups, before daylight set in, they crept.

> The whole transaction had been so quickly and recklessly done that the reserve under Capt. John Boling and Savage had no opportunity to participate in the assault, and but imperfectly witnessed the scattering of the terrified warriors. Kuy-ken-dall, especially, displayed a coolness and valor entitling him to command, though outrun by Chandler in the assault. The fire from the burning village spread so rapidly down the mountainside toward our camp as to endanger its safety. While the whites were saving their camp supplies, the Indians under cover of the smoke escaped. No prisoners were taken; twenty-three were killed; the number wounded was never known.[95]

Later, California governor John McDougal appealed for volunteers for the Mariposa Battalion, a federally financed militia that was activated on January 24, 1851. According to Bunnell, their charge was to subjugate the Indigenous peoples from the East side of the San Joaquin and Tulare Valleys, from the Tuolumne River to Tioga Pass (A passage that goes through

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[94] These are Miwuk bands. Their names are based on the land feature their homes center around. For example Pohoneechee means the Poho people in reference to Poho Meadow. See James A. Bennyhoff, "AN APPRAISAL OF THE. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK", *Reports of the University of California Archeological Survey,* (Department of Anthropology University of California Berkeley, 1956), No. 34, https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/anthpubs/ucb/text/ucas034-001.pdf

[95] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 14.

Yosemite to the East side of the Sierras). The battalion consisted of three Commissioners from the Bureau of Indian Affairs whose charge it was to return with treaties granting the land rights from local tribes and to get them onto newly established reservations. The Commissioners were Colonels Barbour, McKee, and Dr. Woozencroft, and they had come with Col. Neely Johnson and the governor's aid and they arrived to meet Bunnell, Col. Johnston, Savage, and the volunteers.[96]

According to Bunnell, it was Savage's group of vigilantes that made up a good portion of the battalion's 200 volunteers, and Savage was voted in as one of four officers.[97] On March 19th, 1851, a tract between the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers of what is now the Yosemite National Park was written into a treaty as Indigenous hunting and harvesting grounds if they submitted to the U.S. government and moved onto the governments desired reservation. However, this treaty, like many that came after, was never ratified by congress, essentially robbing the Indigenous signitours and their people of their ancestral lands.[98] Across California, from 1851 to 1892, Indigenous peoples were forced to sign an additional seventeen treaties, relinquishing their ancestral lands and agreeing to move to reservations. Yosemite was merely the first in California.

At one of the meetings, two chiefs (again, of undisclosed bands) Vow Chester and Russio, whom Savage had encountered at Cassady's the night Juarez had spoken of a war between the Indians and the Whites, went to the Bureau of Indian Affairs officers and told them:

> "In this deep valley spoken of by Russio, one Indian is more than ten white men. The hiding places are many. They will throw rocks down on the white men, if any should come near them. The other tribes dare not make war upon them, for they are lawless like the grizzlies, and as strong. We are afraid to go to this valley, for there are many witches there."[99]

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[96] "Muster Roll of Volunteers in Indian War," *History of Fresno County, 1881,* in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/one_hundred_years_in_yosemite/documents.html#document_4.
[97] Ibid.
[98] "1851-1852 - Eighteen Unratified Treaties between California Indians and the United States," (2016), US Government Treaties and Reports, California State University, 55.
[99] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911) 38.

With threats of war looming, the Mariposa Battalion marched along the middle fork of the Merced towards the Central Yosemite Valley. An Indian courier was sent to call on the chief of the Ahwahnee, who came to council with Savage, leaving his tribe behind. Tenaya attempted to negotiate for his people to be left alone. Savage made promises regarding what could be gained should the Ahwahneechee surrender and Tenaya replied,

> "My people do not want anything from the 'Great Father' you tell me about. The Great Spirit is our father, and he has always supplied us with all we need. We do not want anything from white men. Our women are able to do our work. Go, then; let us remain in the mountains where we were born; where the ashes of our fathers have been given to the winds. I have said enough!"[100]

After further conversation Tenaya made a deal that if he could go back alone he would return with his tribe. Tenaya, chief of the Yosemite, is described as solemn, contemplative, and resolute. When eventually the militia led by Savage met with Tenaya and his tribe, Savage counted that only 72 Yosemite had come from the village Tenaya explained they were those willing to go. He could not force all his people to go to "the plains" as he referred to the Fresno reservation. He explained that many Paiutes and Monos had stayed with his tribe but were not from his tribe, and they retreated back to Tuolumne and to the Monos.[101]

Angered, Savage proceeded to march his men into the Sierras in the harsh winter, single file through deep snow. In the Central Yosemite Valley, they encountered an elderly woman who had been left behind, or who had chosen to remain behind; it is unclear. It was said by the Ahwahneechee that when she was young the Sierras were but small hills. She was fearless and would not tell Major Savage and his men where her people were hidden, telling him instead to go

[100] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 49.
[101] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 55.

find them on their own. The men of the battalion placed her on a horse and headed her towards the commissioners camp and she died en route.[102]

Continuing their campaign, Savage's men found a village near what is now called Cathedral Rocks. Savage proceeded to set the village on fire in an attempt to starve the remaining people out of the valley. Eventually, most, perhaps all of the Ahwahneechee were captured and brought out of the mountains. In total, it took three raids over the course of two years for the miners and settlers in Mariposa County to feel safe from the threat they perceived from the Native population.

Yosemite's colonial-settler transition began to take hold as years passed after its conquest.[103] White settlers moved in, and a capitalist economy began to form within the walls of Ahwahnee, consisting of hotels, ferries, toll roads, trading posts, and all other amenities needed to supply a small town. The exploitation of land and other resources for profit was the core of this nascent village. People moved in, gathered resources, and distributed them to nearby buyers and suppliers of resources they themselves required. This economy differed from the Ahwahneechee people regarding the utilization of Valley resources. As hunting was supplanted by domesticated animals, the landscape changed in preparation of the completion of the overland railroad.

In 1855, upon hearing of Yosemite's 'discovery', publisher and editor of Hutchings California Magazine, James Hutchings, visited Yosemite to generate content for his publication.

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[102] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, 74.

[103] Mining did not take place within the walls of Yosemite Valley but mining interest brought industry within its borders. In 1854 Bunnell conducted a survey under the direction of Colonel Fremont, with Chief Engineer J.E. Clayton and G.K. Peterson, who were interested in establishing a water supply from the South Fork of the Merced River down to the "dry diggings' '. The project was eventually abandoned at a loss, but it did yield significant information about the valley such as the height of Yosemite Falls and points to the industrial interests which existed in the early pioneer years of the valley. James Hutchings, "The Yo-Ham-i-te Valley," in Hutchings, *California Magazine,* (July 1856), 4; Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911), 272 - 279.

Among his numerous articles about Yosemite he is most notably quoted for his remarks on the beautiful "park-like" quality of the Valley.[104] Today, this quote is often used to point out how emigrants did not and perhaps could not view the land or resources as having evolved in many ways from the practices and stewardship of Indigenous lifeways. Referring to the evolutionary theory described in Chapter 1, emigrants saw Indigenous lifeways as inferior and undeserving of American rights, protections, or government transference of land. Today, it is generally considered that this initial impression of the park-like quality of Yosemite, or Ahwahnee rather, is a tribute to the Ahwahneechee's use of integrated lifeways in the Ecology of the Sierras.

Memories of the last Ahwahneechee and Conquest Through Naming

The move into Yosemite Valley was made possible only through the act of stealing it from its previous inhabitants and engaging in all manners of the conquest of the Valley. Claiming the right to name a place is an act of conquest. A name can carry history, memories, culture, and even worldviews. A name can describe function and appearance. Names and the act of naming played a significant role in transitioning the area from an Indigenous space to a national landmark, and the names within Ahwahnee have transformed through time as the populations have transformed. With more than a little reading against the grain, much can be learned about local and national cultural transformations over time by researching documents from early American settlers and 19th-century scholars.

Regarding the remembrance of names in Yosemite, the name Maria Lebrado is special to those who work in the humanities division of the Yosemite National Park though her Indian name was To-tu-yah, meaning foaming water. From here on, she will be referred to as Totuya.

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[104] John Muir, "The Tuolumne Yosemite in Danger," (November 1907), https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmb/293/; Lafayette Bunnell, "Chapter Three" in *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911).

From the early 1900s through the 1930s, she was the last Ahwahneechee in Ahwahnee, a tribal elder who still spoke her native language and preferred to do things "the Indian way," as she called it. Thus she was referred to as the “Last Survivor" in Mrs. Taylor's *Last Survivor* .[105] Mrs. Taylor was a librarian and naturalist who worked in the Yosemite Museum. She worked with Totuya for a few years until Totuya’s death in 1931 at perhaps 92 years of age. Totuya and Mrs. Taylor grew very close during these years. Totuya referred to her as her white daughter and would walk with her through the park, pointing out places and landmarks, calling them by their traditional names, laughing and crying, and remembering a different time in the park. She was among the tribal members who were violently displaced by the Mariposa Battalion.

Through Mrs. Taylor's documentation, one can almost hear the voice of Totuya as she pointed to what is now referred to as Bridal Veil falls, exclaiming, "Boys, Pohono! Look out boy! Pohono kill boy much!"[106]

> “We stopped. This, she told us, was the western limit of the Indian wigwams, beyond which no Indian dared to build his *utcu* (house), for the evil wind swayed the falls. Indian names reveal the superstitions and imaginings of the Indian mind. When several Indians lost their lives in the stream that forms Pohono, it became bewitched. Anyone pointing his finger at Pohono, said Maria, would at once be killed by its poisonous spray. Bridal Veil stretches a rainbow across the Valley, and beyond it an Indian feared to go lest the evil spirit of Pohono claim him.”[107]

Pohono has been translated as puffing wind, huckleberry patch, and spirit of the evil wind. Its most common translation is puffing wind, describing the puffs of wind that cause the spray from the falls. Not all translations are as literal as puffing wind. Dr. Lafayette Houghton Bunnell's translation of Pohono as huckleberry patch is a bit out of left field. The more

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[105] H. J. Taylor, *Last Survivor,* (University of California Chronicle, 1932), in “Yosemite Library,” Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/the_last_survivor, Yosemite Online Library.
[106] H. J. Taylor, *Last Survivor,* (University of California Chronicle, 1932), in “Yosemite Library,” Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/the_last_survivor, Yosemite Online Library.
[107] Ibid.

context-derived translation, “spirit of evil wind”, comes from Bunnell, who helped remove Totuya and her tribe, and Totuya’s great grandfather Chief of the Ahwahneechee, Tenaya.

James Hutchings was a writer and early White settler of the park post-invasion. He is known for building his cabin and orchards, as well as the lengthy legal battle the California state Yosemite Committee waged to seize his land in order to turn Ahwahnee into a state park. Nonetheless, Warren Baer recommended the Pohono’s current name, Bridal Veil Falls, in the Mariposa Democrat on August 5, 1856.[108]

> To our mind, it resembles a cambric veil, of ample folds, of the finest texture, the purest whiteness, and fringed with silver fleece or silken floss. [...] At night, when our trip recurs to our mind, we muse on its loveliness, until we again hear the noise of its waters in their fall, and see the rainbows that follow its wanderings through the air, in its downward search for the earth and the Valley. We make bold to call it the Bridal Veil; and those who may have the felicity to witness the stream floating in the embrace of the morning breeze will acknowledge the resemblance, and perhaps pardon the liberty we have taken in attempting to apply so poetical a name to this Queen of the Valley. Nearly opposite to the Bridal Veil stands the Monarch of the Vale, the El Capitan of the Yosemite Tribe.[109]

Baer's explanation for the name Bridal Veil depicts a culturally driven narrative, the culture of the Valley's influx of White settlers. We imagine a sort of romance playing out between anthropomorphized features of the Valley, the Pohono and El Capitan. Envisage a passion blossoming between the Valley's anthropomorphized features, the Pohono, and El Capitan. When we compare this story to Totuya's repository of Pohono recollections, we can detect a significant change in viewpoint. Totuya's fear of the location was so profound that it seemed to have a spirit of its own, not imitating human nature but having its own soul.

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[108] Warren Baer, “A Trip to the Yosemite Falls,” *Mariposa Democrat*, August 5, 1856, in “Yosemite Library,” Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/a_trip_to_the_yosemite_falls.html#page_277, Yosemite Online Library.
[109] Ibid.

Baer's naming of Bridal Veil contains no such living inference. It is an attraction existing for his own musing, made metaphoric by his own cultural customs of courtship, that being one of coupling between a hetero-normative woman of purity and a rugged man, with the waterfall representing a fine and pure woman, and the cliff face, with "His stern and prominent front [...] his bleached and rugged visage,"[110] representing a man. To further the analogy, across from the Bridal Veil is the waterfall currently known as Ribbon Falls but previously known as Virgins Tears, as it shows up in older guides by Galen Clark and others. The implications are somewhat obvious. Together these three landmarks make a stunning expression of American and Western culture. Within the history of the renaming of Pohono and its surrounding geologic objects of interest, we are given a chance to look deeper into the differences in worldview, purely from the makings of a name.

The Western priority of anthropomorphism - projecting human-like features onto animals and objects as a manner of expressing Western values - replaced the Indigenous culture of animism, the worldview that animals and objects are alive with spirit. Names held function and historic significance and a source of remembering for Totuya. However, for the Valley's new populace, names were statements and expressions of their shared cultural values. For Totuya, the name held a memory of the Ahwahneechee. This memory was filled with emotion and served as a warning. American pioneers of the Valley held no connection to this story.

Also of interest is that in Western namings, the flowing bodies of water are feminine, while rugged peaks are most commonly masculine. This relationship is best explained through historical actors from this period. For example, the flooding of the Merced River in Yosemite, which was a frequent and frustrating occurrence that male management leaders strove tirelessly

[110]Ibid.

to control for years after the invasion, which metaphorically could imply male coercion of a wild, unruly woman.[111]

The 1889-1890 report from the California State Yosemite Board of Commissioners states, "This work should molest Nature as little as possible, but should protect her works against the too energetic exertion of her own forces."[112] In these reports, year to year, the Merced was commonly referred to with feminine pronouns. The men who tried year after year to control it used a dominating tone, as exemplified above. This speaks to the gendered paternalistic views male society had of female society at this time, which heavily relied on strict gender binaries for structure, as well as the oppression of women in general. This excerpt alludes to men's tendency to refer to bodies of water, rivers, and waterfalls as female, as water is very difficult to control.

Interpreting Ahwahnee

The history of the term Yosemite, which became the prevailing name for the park, including the Valley which Totuya and her people called Ahwahnee, best exemplifies naming as a conquest. In her 2004 piece, *The Assigning of Names is the Beginning of Nation Building*, Delaine Fragnoli, editor, writer, and publisher on California environment and history, described this conquest through naming.[113] In this article, Fragnoli argues that Dr. Bunnell, a chronicler accompanying the Mariposa Battalion, used the name Yosemite to transform the Ahwahnee Valley into an American national monument, a symbol of westward expansion and Indian extinction. Fragnoli points out that Bunnell's writings of the Mariposa Battalion assumed the extinction of the Ahwahnee before they had even been removed, which is signified by his naming the park in

[111] For more on the links between controlling nature and controlling women see Carolyn Merchant, *Ecology*, (Humanity Books, 2008), 201-205.
[112] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite *Biennial Report 1889 - 1890*, (Sacramento, Ca, 1889) 29.
[113] Delaine Fragnoli, "The Assigning of Names is the Beginning of Nation Building." *ATQ (Kingston, R.I. : 1987)* 18, no. 4 (2004): 263.

remembrance of them while they were still living in the park. The name Yosemite was given to the Ahwahneechee by their enemies, often translated as Grizzly Bear, and to killers and those who kill, by Savage. Fragnolli and Mark Spence point out that when translated to grizzly bear, the name Yosemite serves to erase the history of the Ahwahnee and replace it, "...with an atemporal natural history".[114]

The word Yosemite was translated verbally from Indian to Indian interpreter and/or signed and then spelled out phonetically by the White observer, resulting in multiple layers of interpretation. Daniel Anderson, a Yosemite historian who runs an online archive of Yosemite unaffiliated with the National Park Service, writes,

> "Mr. Bunnell, who named the valley, thought *Yosemite* meant "Grizzly Bear." However, this was another mistake in interpretation made by his commander, Major James Savage, who knew the Miwok language but confused Yosemite for *ïhümat.i* or *ïsümat.i,* which means 'grizzly bear.' "
> *"Yohhe'meti* (Southern Miwok) or *Yos. s.e'meti* (Central Miwok) originally referred to the Indian tribe that lived in Yosemite Valley. Yosemite means literally "those who kill" (*Yos,* "to kill," the modifier *e,* "one who," and the plural suffix *-meti*). It was used by the surrounding Miwok tribes. The Yosemite people were referred to as killers by these surrounding tribes, who feared them. The Yosemite tribe, led by Chief Tenaya, were composed of renegades from multiple tribes, including Mono Paiute from the eastern Sierra."[115]

Even Bunnell's own choice of the name went through changes as it was published. Bunnell attempted to name the park Yo-Semite as he and the troops referred to the Ahwahneechee as Yo-Semites.[116] The current reader may be familiar with this rendition of the word as it was spoken by former President Donald Trump live on television when he signed *the Great American Outdoors Act*. According to the 1880 publishing of Bunnell's work The

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[114] Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*. (Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1999), 24.
[115]Anderson, Daniel Anderson, "Origin of the Word Yosemite" (December 2004; last updated July 2011), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/origin_of_word_yosemite.html, Yosemite Online Library.
[116]Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911), 62.

Discovery of Yosemite, his first publisher condensed the word to Yosemite, and Bunnell accepted the revised name. His acceptance of the change is interesting because he was a highly vocal critic of any other forms or transformations of the name from the public. Following the 1851 invasion, additional Americans settled into the Valley, referring to it by its new name, yo hemitee or yo hamitee, as it was known by local Native people.

It was published as Yohamite in 1856 in Hutchings' *California Magazine*, and critiqued later by Bunnell in the reprinting of his *Discovery of the Yosemite.*[117]

In 1888, Hutchings wrote,

> …the significance of "Yo Semite" was not generally known to the battalion; nor was there any uniformity in its general pronunciation, even among the Indians themselves, some calling it Oo-soom-i tee, others Oo-hum-i-tee, Yo-hum-i-tee, Yo-hem-i-tee, and still others Yo-ham-i-tee, while Bullack, the oldest of the Yo Semites now living, calls it Ah Hum-a-tee-all, however, having the same meaning.
>
> [...]
>
> Before fully closing these inquiries, it may not be inappropriate to consider why preference is given here to the construction of the word *Yo Semite* with a capital S on its second syllable. It is this: Dr. Bunnell, to whom the world is indebted for the choice and adoption of this euphonious name, so gave it to the writer, some thirty years ago, and before the present slovenly way of spelling it came into practice. It is true, Dr. Bunnell, in his valuable work, "The Discovery of the Yosemite," has fallen into that habit; but, when asked his reasons for making the change, replied, "I allowed the printer to follow his own way of spelling it. Yours, however, is the correct one, and I must give you credit for keeping up its pure orthography, that being the construction given to it, and agreed upon, at our first camp-fire in Yo Semite in 1851." The Act of Congress making the donation of the valley to the State, so gives it.[118][119]

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[117] Ayres, Thomas Ayres, "A Trip to the Yohamite Valley," *Daily Alta California*, San Francisco, California, August 6, 1856. Accessed via https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/a_trip_to_the_yohamite_valley/

[118] It is unclear if nearby tribes referred to the Valley this way prior to Bunnell's renaming.

[119] James M Hutchings,. *In the Heart of the Sierras; the Yo Semite Valley, Both Historical and Descriptive; and Scenes by the Way. Big Tree Groves ... and Other Objects of Interest; with Tables of Distances and Altitudes, Maps, Etc.* (Oakland, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing House, 1886) in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/in_the_heart_of_the_sierras/04.html, Yosemite Online Library.

This evidence demonstrates the authoritative power in naming. Bunnel was given authority to name the site over Indigenous peoples, local White settlers, and even other White men publishing materials on Yosemite in the same timeframe. Though he was not the first person in Yosemite, he was the first of American social significance to the area, making his name the most valid in the eyes of the growing White population. The acceptance of his name suggestions can be interpreted as a conquest over America's newly seized crown jewel, Yosemite Valley. To Totuya, the Valley was Ahwahnee, a descriptive name, translating to gaping mouth.

Conclusion

Travelers from all over the world poured into a strange new land that could be hostile, without proper preparation or some amount of adaptability, in the California Gold Rush. The extreme work of mining and living in the hills made no distinctions between cultures as newcomers of many different backgrounds toiled side by side, each hoping to strike it rich and create a new life. To survive, newcomers, like the Indigenous people before them, were forced to adapt to the conditions and environment they were in. The Indigenous also adapted to a new environment with the arrival of miners and settlers.

Each colonial power had its own land management regime or ecological worldview. Colonial powers were not monoliths but composed of individuals who could be divided among themselves as well, such as purely exploitative miners or settler colonials in Mariposa. An ecological worldview comprises distinct land and resource stewardship concepts. Abbott discussed this when he critiqued miners who attempted to get rich quickly and leave rather than make a homestead. Those ideas would still be different from the Indigenous ecological worldview about Yosemite features and how to employ them. Yet, both did happen in some

regard simultaneously. In retrospect, we can see an ecological history of multiple worldviews coexisting, even when they were at odds.

This research finds that settlers who carried out the fundamental processes of imperial conquest adapted to their new environments and culturally diverse neighbors. Some racial divides melted in the mud during the first year of the Gold Rush, 1849. However, as gold grew scarcer, social divisions between cultures did resurface for some, and with a vengeance for others. Autobiographical perspectives presented here show that many did not have the prejudices associated with their stereotype of purely exploitative colonial settlers. However, the 'pioneers' belonged to a larger group whose total actions resulted in the colonization of the Sierra Nevada, the takeover and resettlement of Yosemite. The resettlement was not a monolithic culture. As people migrated into the Southern Sierras, melding, meshing, and struggling, along the way they made their own visions of home a reality, and it was more complex than the romantic images depicted by second-hand sources or artists, contemporary or nostalgic.

Cubism brilliantly speaks to the concept of this blending of people and cultures first as they arrived in the Sierra Nevada and again as they resettled Yosemite Valley after its takeover. Cubism, in its aim to bring all perspectives to the same plane, is often described as an attempt at democratizing the different perspectives presented by allowing no individual perspective to dominate the image. In the foreground, all vantage points are brought together and mixed with other vantage points. This concept serves to highlight the manner in which each group contributed to the ecology of Yosemite Valley during the Gold Rush. In return, the Yosemite environment changed the people and their cultures. This process must be likened to, at the very

least, as a form of developing localism, but more accurately as the process of becoming native to a place.[120]

Chapter 3:
A Beautiful Contradiction

In *Tending the Wild,* Kat Anderson writes, "California is a land of superlatives." She was remarking as a botanist on the great diversity of plants, the mediterranean climate, and geological extremes.[121] The interpretations of these Yosemite Valley elements gained the region worldwide prominence and made it an icon of national pride. Ahwahneechee people, militia, settlers, ranchers, federal officials, soldiers, traders, and hoteliers all lived in Yosemite's Central Valley

[120] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, (Milkweed Editions, 2020), 9.; Dan Flores, "Spirit of Place and the Value of Nature In the American West" *A Sense of the American West: An Environmental History Anthology*, (University of New Mexico Press, 1998) 31.

[121] Kat M. Anderson, *Tending The Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 13.

between 1849 and 1901. Yosemite Valley's produce, animals, forest, obstacles, and environmental change processes evolved from an emphasis on cultivation and extraction to a conservational balance between tourism and preservation in the American imagination.

In 1864, the State of California accepted a land grant from the Federal Government that called for the conservation of the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove for the enjoyment of future generations. It was the first time the government set aside land for public use and preservation. California Governor Frederick Low appointed a commission to oversee the grant. The commission faced significant challenges in determining the purpose of the land grant, the commission, and a state land reservation. Other Californians' aspirations for the property clashed with vague, abstract ideals like "preservation" and "enjoyment" of the exquisite landscape. Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, commissioners devised different strategies to build Yosemite into the image of a perfect park. This process often involved dismantling both the Native American and White settlers' notions of land use. To do so, the committee removed non-conforming users, built a tourist infrastructure, and battled the complex landscape features within the Valley itself, all in an attempt to preserve a an imagined static image of the park.

The Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove Land Grant contained a cursory description of Yosemite Valley, stating that the State would define the borders and that the State should accept the grant on the conditions that the premises, "...be held for public use, resort, and recreation; shall be inalienable for all time; but leases not exceeding ten years may be granted for portions of said premises. All incomes derived from leases of privileges to be expended in the preservation and improvement of the property…"[122] This phrasing would prove troublesome for many of the men placed in charge of maintaining this new concept of "the State Park."

[122] John Muir, "Appendix A," *The Yosemite,* (New York: The Century Company, 1912), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/john_muir_writings/the_yosemite/appendix_a.html, Yosemite Library Online.

News of the law's passage reached California on August 9, 1864. On September 28, Governor Frederick Low proclaimed the grant to California and selected eight commissioners. He appointed Frederick Law Olmsted as Director of the Yosemite Valley Commission and nominated Professor Josiah Dwight Whitney as Chief of the California Geological Survey and William Ashburner to serve alongside him, Israel Raymond (the California representative of the Central American Steamship Transit Company of New York), ES. Holden, (an astronomer), Alexander Deering, George W. Coulter, and Clark. Members were likely selected because they helped to draft the act that had been offered to congress.[123] None of the commissioners were originally from California, and it is likely that only one, Clark, had even seen the Valley before working on the creation of the act. The other members, with the exception of Raymond, were from the East. The Commissioners did not live on-site, either. They would manage from afar, meeting mostly in San Francisco a few times throughout the year. Only Clark lived full-time on the premises after being selected as "Guardian of the Park."[124] The Commissioners were essentially foreigners who knew little and/or nothing about the land to which they were entrusted.

The Commission began gathering information on the park by hiring experts to conduct studies on the land's geology and ecology. Olmstead paid geologist and mountaineer Clarence King to make a survey and map of Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove, because it was essential to have a bordered tract of land to present to Congress.[125] King was one of the earlier members of

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[123] Hans Huth, "Chapter 4: The Idea Grows" in *Yosemite: the Story of an Idea,* (Oakland, CA: Sierra Club Bulletin, 1948), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_story_of_an_idea, Yosemite Library Online.

[124] Clark had been one of the new settlers who managed to get into the new paradigm of state management. From events such as the taking of the Valley by the Mariposa Battalion to the transformation of the Valley by white-settlers to the transference of the Valley to the State, we can view this top-down management of the environment, which was gradually created and installed over the second half of the 19th century and which dismantled former environmental management systems, as part of the settler-colonial process.

[125] Olmstead was so enthusiastic to have the survey completed he paid the expenses himself hoping legislature might reimburse him later, however, they never did. Hanz Huth, "Chapter 4,"*Yosemite: The Story of an Idea*, (Sierra Club,

the elite nineteenth-century American scientific community that contributed to those first few decades of new research and re-discovery of the Yosemite region. The few who understood the history of humanity's role in the ecology of the park neither attempted nor succeeded in disseminating such information. Indigenous peoples' historical involvement with the Valley or traditional land management regimes were widely dismissed.

However, Whitney, the head of the California Geological Survey, took some care in documenting and learning the Native names of geological landmarks and places. Whitney cataloged many of the Indigenous names and their meanings.[126] He wrote in *The Yosemite Book* in 1869,

> It were much to be desired that these names could be retained and perpetuated, but it is impossible; they have already almost passed into oblivion. They are so long, so uncertain in their spelling and meaning, that they have never been adopted into general use and never will be. The only one which is current is that of the Valley itself—"Yosemite," and this, it appears, is not the name given to the Valley by the Indians.[127]

This quote shows how some scientists were conscious of their own otherness. Those like Whitney could see themselves as not the first discoverers, but the most recent interpreters, in a period of White scientific re-discovery. This quote, and *The Yosemite Book* can be thought of as cubist artifacts. The work as a whole contains multiple perspectives due to it being created during a monumental shift in Yosemite's history as a cultural place. Like any cubist rendering, it is a two dimensional depiction of a three dimensional place (or object) subject to multidimensional interpretations. This could be said to be true about many printed works, however, the creator himself was not just any person making a printed work. The difference lies

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1948), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_story_of_an_idea.html, Yosemite Online Library.

[126] Josiah Whitney, "Chapter One" in *The Yosemite Book: A Description of the Yosemite Valley and the Adjacent Region of the Sierra Nevada, and of the Big Trees of California, illustrated by maps and photographs* (New York: New York Lithographing, Engraving and Printing Company, 1868), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/the_yosemite_book/chapter_1.html, Yosemite Online Library.

[127] Josiah Whitney, "Chapter One."

in the awareness of the creator of himself. Whitney understood himself as other, a foreign set of eyes, documenting what he considered to be a fleeting moment, which included the Native names of the landscape features like the mountains and streams. Furthermore, and crucially, the moment is not only fleeting but simultaneously subject to an entirely different perspective; that of self proclaimed pioneers and their colonizing gaze. In their claim of first discovery, the names they chose reflected their perspective, which was regarded as the only perspective and therefore they renamed said features. Finally, Whitney's awareness culminates in the creation of an artifact, *The Yosemite Book*. Like a cubist painting, it will influence the interpretations of that moment for the place or object for an unknown number of people within their own moment and perspectives.

The quote discussed earlier by Robin Kimmerer and northern California forester Frank Lake, in which they described colonization as the superimposition of one worldview onto another. The quote very accurately describes the historical moment when nineteenth century scientific elites brought a foreign culture, ideology, and knowledge base into Yosemite. Claiming dominance, firsts, and superiority, they began to marginalize Native Americans and their worldview and it is not inaccurate to say that many sought to completely replace Native Americans' worldview of the Yosemite Valley.[128] Regardless of Whitney's awareness or not, documents such as *The Yosemite Book* can be analyzed as artifacts of intellectual colonization. Additionally, we can analyze works to follow by Joseph Le Conte, John Muir, Whitney, Eadweard Muybridge, and many others during State custody as a part of this imperial process of conquest and land ownership.[129] It is because of the invasion of the Mariposa Battalion, the

[128] Rebecca Solnit, "Glaciers and Gods or Science in the Sierra Nevada," in *Yosemite in Time: Ice Ages, Tree Clocks, Ghost Rivers*, (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2005), 47-63.
[129] See "Yosemite in Spring," New York *Tribune*, May 7, 1872;Eadweard Muybridge, *Photographs in John S. Hittell, Yosemite: Its Wonders and Its Beauties* (1868); Josiah Dwight Whitney, Jr., *The Yosemite Book: a description of the Yosemite Valley and the adjacent region of the Sierra Nevada, and of the big trees of California* (1869); Joseph Le Conte, *American Journal of Science,* (Aug 1875), 126-139.

unratified treaties that followed, the influx of White settlers, and the claim of ownership by the California state that these intellects gained the authority to interpret, catalog, and dictate future generations' knowledge. Scientific discovery was the formal documentation of State and academic power.

In his first biennial report to the governor, Olmsted documented the Commission's first year of work and set the tone for the Commission's role in the coming years, and established how the legislation would be interpreted. He described the Valley in lengthy, detailed paragraphs, and insisted that its beauty was beyond the ability to capture, either in photographs or words: nothing could prepare a visitor for the splendor that awaited within the Yosemite Valley.[130] Olmsted and the other commissioners may have had this incomplete experience themselves as some of the commissioners' first experience of Yosemite Valley was likely through photographs taken by Watkins in 1861 or 1863, (accounts differ on the dates). Whitney was in Yosemite Valley at this time conducting his geological survey and commissioned Watson to take photographs of the park to appear in *The Yosemite Book.*

[130] Frederick Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report 1865,* in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/olmsted/report.html, Yosemite Online Library.

Figure 5: Carleton E. Watkins, *The Yosemite Valley, From the Mariposa Trail*, CA. lithograph,1865-1866, in *The Yosemite Book: A Description of the Yosemite Valley and the Adjacent Region of the Sierra Nevada, and of the Big Trees of California, illustrated by maps and photographs* (New York: New York Lithographing, Engraving and Printing Company, 1868), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/the_yosemite_book/chapter_1.html, Yosemite Online Library. Also see Ralph Anderson, "Carleton E. Watkins, Pioneer Photographer of the Pacific Coast," in *Yosemite Nature Notes* no. 4 April 1953) 32.

Figure 5 is an image by Carleton Watkins, widely regarded as the first prominent photographer of Yosemite Valley. He photographed the Valley in 1961 utilizing a large stereo camera that took 22 inch plate images. In 1868, his photographs of California won him international acclaim. His photographs were widely circulated and have been credited with influencing legislation that resulted in Yosemite becoming a State Park. A photograph is an interpretation, and can therefore be illusory, have an agenda, or simply be misinformed. The perspective in these shots, while beautiful, is limited and not without bias. This image is from

Whitney's *The Yosemite Book, a reference from a guide from 1868*, and like the other photos, in it, there are no people or houses, nor any semblance of human life. Some of the commissioners may have only seen Yosemite through such a narrow lens. The photos allow for Yosemite to be incorrectly thought of as a place of untouched wilderness away from the makings and dealings of man, a pristine wilderness.[131] Pristine wilderness implies Indigenous populations had been incapable of having any measurable impact on the environment or ignores Indigenous histories altogether. The continued existence of Ahwahneechee people in the Valley upsets this ahistorical notion.

Their existence also upset the delicate balance of John Muir's relationship with (what he thought of as) nature, which essentially included anything that was not human or human created. On a larger scale this problem of what he thought the human role in an environment ought to be, was vexed by their existence as well. For example, from Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*:

"We had another visitor from Browns Flat today, an old woman with a basket on her back. [...] Her dress was calico rags, far from clean. In every way she seemed sadly unlike nature's well-dressed animals, though living like them on the bounty of the wilderness. Strange that mankind alone is dirty."[132]

To Muir, the appearance of being dirty meant one could not be considered a part of nature. In Muir's worldview, natural things would always appear to belong to their surroundings. And this was a very literal perception for him, for he writes next, "Had she been clad in fur, or cloth woven of grass or shreddy bark like the juniper and libocedrus mats, she might then have seemed a rightful part of the wilderness: like a good wolf at least, or a bear"[133] Ironically of

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[131] For more information on the effects of ahistorical pristine wilderness narratives on outdoor spaces see Mark D. Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness* (Oxford University Press, 1999); Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: the Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*, (MIT Press, 2011).
[132] John Muir, *My first summer in the Sierra*(Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin company, 1911) 76.
[133] *ibid.*

course her dress was influenced by colonization, and this is of course was Muir's point whether he meant to make it or not. It was his own culture, European culture, which disgusted him. As much as he saw paradise in the Yosemite Valley, he could not see a place for himself or his fellow settlers in it that would not disrupt the place. To Muir, Indigenous people were not dirty because they were ethnically Native, but because they were humans that had adapted to colonization and this made them literally aesthetically out of place. However, in many instances Muir envied their ability to live closer to the "natural" world. "Two things they have that civilized toilers might well envy them,- pure air and pure water."[134]

Donald Worster Points out in his account, *A Passion For Nature,* that culture and biology shaped Muir's ideas, and that culture creates ideas as a reflection of historical moments.[135] The idea we see most clearly is Muir's desire for the existence of a clean, pure, untouched nature. Even though he carries the exact influence he hates, he craves access to this idea of paradise. These are not Muir's ideas alone, but the broader American societal attitude at the time. Alfred Runte states in *National Parks* that the romanticism of the National Park idea was an escape from Urban life, and can be viewed as a direct response to the industrial revolution.[136] In *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, author Mark Spence points out how a sense of America's nationhood drew from this pristine wilderness as a model for American expression:

> "...a new generation of patriotic aesthetics focused their intentions almost entirely on the physical geography of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Vast primeval forests and picturesque Indians might once have distinguished American landscapes from those of Europe, but Americans could now boast of towering mountains, giant trees, and stupendous waterfalls that surpassed everything else in the known world. Moreover, the fact that such natural wonders lay two and three thousand miles from the eastern seaboard, yet within the boundaries of one nation, exemplified the continental scope and power of the United States."[137]

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[134] Ibid, 277.
[135] Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature The Life of John Muir* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
[136] Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience,* 4 ed.(Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010)Kindle.
[137]Mark Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 34.

Olmsted figured that if the American republic was to compete with the monarchy of England and the empires of Europe, then it must protect national landmarks like Yosemite as a matter of civic duty. Naturalists like Olmsted believed that the failure of Americans to appreciate outdoor recreation created feeble minds and enabled savagery. He believed the Valley should be a resort for rejuvenation of the American spirit. Olmstead went so far as to describe the medicinal properties he believed to be contained in the Valley's water: "The water has not been analyzed, but that it possesses highly tonic as well as other medical qualities can be readily seen."[138] Some hyperbolic notions as to the medicinal quality of the water persist today.[139] The combination of these factors made it the duty of the republic to protect Yosemite as a resource, ensuring longer life and keeping people out of insane asylums. When he wrote that the outdoors could increase "capacity for happiness and vigor of their intellect."[140] He espoused his belief that outdoorsmanship ought to be pursued by Americans for the sake of their bodies *and* minds.

The California Board of Commissioners was defined by its ability to open this newly-declared wilderness to the general public. Yosemite had to be made accessible. This accessibility was intended to be extended to the common man and not exclusively the elites, thus uplifting the whole of American society. The glory of nature was considered by Olmsted to far surpass the superficial, man-made "artificial pleasures" such as theaters, parades, and promenades which were created by the ruling class for the "humble toilers." Olmsted envisioned roads that would double as fire barriers between the forested areas and meadows, trails to lead visitors to the most majestic sites, and cabins to be equipped with camping gear among other

[138]Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report 1865.*
[139] Some locals in Yosemite bring empty canisters to one spring in particular claiming it as the cure to all ailments, despite the posted warnings that the water is likely contaminated by animal fecal matter just upstream.
[140] Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report 1865.*

man-made luxuries.[141] The Commission recognized pristine wilderness as the ideal but also admitted that it was not wholly attainable. After all, changes were required if the Valley was to be "...held for public use, resort, and recreation…"[142]

The pristine narrative was not even true by the Commission's standards. Americans who lived and worked in the Valley had filed property claims with the state of California. Two larger cases came when Hutchings and James Lamon petitioned the California legislature, asserting the right to 160 acres each. The Commission felt this would constitute a monopoly on most of the usable 1,100-acre Central Valley floor. Of course, the more significant concern was that other claims would follow suit should these claimants succeed. Lamon included in his letter to the governor in the *Biennial Report 1868 - 1869* that he had settled in the Valley in 1859 by purchasing claims through the Settlers Act of the State of California. He argued that he made improvements on the land, assuming he would be allowed pre-emption or homestead rights to the land. Lamon claimed improvements consisted of houses, a barn, fences, a garden, and orchards of pears, apples, peaches, plums, nectarines, and almonds. Furthermore, he estimated that he had spent ten years and $12,000 improving the properties.[143] In 1869, Whitney wrote in *The Yosemite Book,* "...The whole Valley is already claimed..."[144] His fellow state commissioners had assured Congress that the Valley was empty in order to speed up the passage of the grant even though claims had already been filed.

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[141] Olmsted, *Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report 1865.*
[142] John Muir, "Appendix A," in *The Yosemite,* (New York: The Century Company, 1912, in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/john_muir_writings/the_yosemite/appendix_a.html, Yosemite Online Library.
[143] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1868 - 1869*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 11.
[144] Josiah Whitney, "Chapter One" in *The Yosemite Book: A Description of the Yosemite Valley and the Adjacent Region of the Sierra Nevada, and of the Big Trees of California, Illustrated by Maps and Photographs* (New York: New York Lithographing, Engraving and Printing Company, 1868), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/the_yosemite_book/chapter_1.html,Yosemite Online Library.

Hutchings and Lamon were offered a lease of their plots for ten years, however, both men declined, refusing to acknowledge the board's authority, believing that Congress had passed a bill allotting them 160 acres each.[145] The bill, however, was never passed, and it is unknown whether this was a clerical error or intentional. The bill was reintroduced to Congress and did pass, but failed in the Senate after public appeals and a letter delivered to the governor with the Biennial Report 1868 - 1869 report, which contained 27 signatures, including Galen Clark's.[146]

As the lawsuits continued, the California Board of Commissioners continued interpreting the grant's objectives. These changes came at a slow and expensive pace. Aside from Clark's guardianship in Yosemite Valley, the Commission asserted that little had been accomplished due to their limited powers and being underfunded. In the meantime, volunteers made a wagon road from Big Oak Flat to Yosemite Valley and a riding trail to points above Vernal Falls that were previously only accessible by ladder. Only $2,000 of the $37,000 requested by Olmsted had been appropriated in 1865, with $1,000 going to Clark, who had been designated Guardian of the Park at the time.[147] From 1867 to 1870, no money was appropriated at all.[148] The state spent $60,000 in total throughout the 1860s acquiring land titles from the previous pioneers who had settled in the Valley.[149]

From the reports, it seems that commissioners lacked the necessary attention to detail to effectively supervise numerous tourism-related parties attempting to establish themselves in the

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[145] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1868 - 1869*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 9.
[146] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1868 - 1869*, prepared by Commissioners to Manage Yosemite (Sacramento, Ca:1889), 12.
[147] Galen Clark had been living in Mariposa Grove for some ten years prior to this time, which was also ceded in the same land grant. Thus, it would seem he worked out a rather preferable arrangement, now being paid to live next door in the Yosemite Valley. The *Biennial Report 1872 - 1873* stated that he had been "protecting" the tracts underHutchings and Lamon from "depredations". Indeed, his post in the Valley may have assuaged the situation with Mr. Lamon and Mr. Hutchings to some degree. See *Biennial Report 1868 - 1869*, prepared by Commissioners to Manage Yosemite (Sacramento, Ca, 1889), 10.
[148] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1872 - 1873*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 8.
[149] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1887 - 1888*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 15.

park because the commissioners themselves were located outside of the park. Four hotels had been constructed of hand-cut pine or white cedar by private individuals who lived in the Valley, and were in active use by 1869: Upper Hotel, Lower Hotel, Mountain View House, and La Casa Nevada.[150] Clark operated his own plot in Wawona as a hotel as well. Due to the absence of the Commission in the park itself, there was no real accountability or standards for these enterprises. The Commission was generally displeased with the businesses and even referred to the hotels in the Valley as "downtrodden apologies."

Tourism gradually generated wealth. In 1869 the Union Pacific Railroad was completed. Tourism spiked and continued climbing every year thereafter. Guides to Yosemite or short How-To's in newspapers would often reference the costly experience of admission. Toll trails, roads, and rented horses were usually needed to reach Yosemite until 1874 when the first wagon trails were completed. Tourists had to ride horseback just to get into the Valley and, depending on their entrance route, might travel by foot on tolled trails. The tourists stayed at hotels or camped, hired a guide, and hiked or rode with horses they brought with them or rented from the Mariposa Staging Company. The Commission's reports estimated that visitors spent over a quarter of a million dollars within the Valley during the season of 1873 alone, and they attempted to entice the government for more adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the visitors.[151] Commissioners assured the governor that revenue would increase with the removal of restrictions on travel, such as the tolls on the privately-owned trails. The 1870s Commission was essentially luring the California government into profiting from the market created by the

[150] Carl P. Russell, "Chapter 8: Hotels and Their Keepers" in *One Hundred Years in Yosemite,in The Story of a Great Park and Its Friends,* 2d. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962) in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/one_hundred_years_in_yosemite/hotels.html, Yosemite Online Library.
[151] *Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, Biennial Report 1873 - 1874,* (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 9.

homesteaders, who, ironically, were the individuals the first commissioners sought to protect the Valley from.

Stories of the wondrous sights in the Valley made their way back to hometown newspapers across the country.[152] These articles were often up to five columns long with paragraphs detailing every feature of the Valley. These experiences were made possible by people like Leidig, Hutchings, Antink, and the many others who made up the small tourist town in the Central Valley. The Commission permitted, and to some extent needed, individuals and companies living in the park even if they were not working for the California State government. Toll roads and trails were permitted until the Commission received sufficient funding to fully finance and purchase trails. The pioneer settlement town from the 1850s grew into a tourist town and formed a profitable symbiotic relationship with the Commission.

Multiple perspectives of the Valley existed and overlapped, both contradictory and complementary. Greene wrote in *Yosemite: the Park and its Resources*, "Hutchings, Lamon, and the other settlers in the Valley failed to see how their efforts to commercialize and homestead the land and farm and hunt in the Valley posed any threat to Yosemite's unique beauty and wilderness character."[153] Resource extraction and cultivation were two of Hutchings' ideas for enhancing the area. He regarded the miners in the Sierra Nevada as the nobility of California.[154]

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[152] Examples include: Allen Van Wagner, "SouthWestward," *Chicago Tribune,* Aug 5, 1869, ; Carleton, "A Letter From Carleton," *The Evansville Daily Journal*, Dec 12, 1868 ; *The Pittsfield Sun*, Jan 27, 1870.
[153] National Park Service, *Yosemite: the Park and its Resources; a History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California*, (Denver: National Park Service, 1987), 66-69, in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_resources/, Yosemite Online Library.
[154] James Hutchings, "Our First Families", *Hutchings California Magazine*, April, 1861, in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/Hutchings_california_magazine/58.pdf , Yosemite Online Library.

Olmsted wrote that the accessibility of the park should be constructed, "...within the narrowest limits consistent with the necessary accommodation of visitors," and that care should be taken in, "„,the prevention of all constructions markedly inharmonious with the scenery or which would unnecessarily obscure, distort or detract from the dignity of the scenery."[155] He wrote this leaving everyone else to presume that he was qualified to make the distinction as to what constituted a dignified forest, mountain, or river.

The Merced River cuts through the center of Yosemite Valley, flooding the Valley seasonally. As mentioned in Chapter 1, detritus, rocks, and even boulders flow with the flooding, adding layers to the Valley floor. The flooding of the Merced was met with many failed attempts to levy the flood banks. The Commission and its employees adopted a tone of gendered paternalism in their writings which bring images to the mind of a father failing at controlling his hysterical daughter, "This work should molest Nature as little as possible, but should protect her works against the too energetic exertion of her own forces."[156] The river was considered a force that could be controlled but must be done so gently. The attitude was a bad match for floods of 25,000 cubic gallons per second or more, depending on storm conditions. It soon turned out they could not defend their own construction from the raging torrents. Hutchings wrote of the river's flooding:

> "On Dec. 23, 1867, after a snowfall of about three feet, a heavy down-pour of rain set in, and incessantly continued for ten successive days. . . . Each rivulet became a foaming torrent, and every stream a thundering cataract. The whole meadowland of the Valley was covered by a surging and impetuous flood to an average depth of 9 feet. Bridges were swept away, and everything floatable was carried off. And, supposing that the usual spring flow of water over the Yo Semite Fall would be about 6 thousand gallons per second, as stated by Mr. H. T. Mills, at this particular

[155] Ibid.
[156] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1889 - 1890*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 29.

> time it must have been at least 12 or 14 times that amount, giving some eighty thousand gallons per second."[157]

By the 1880s, an unnamed private civil engineer inspected the river and concluded that dikes would be effective in holding back most of the floods. Money was also needed for repairs of wooden roads, bridges, and buildings that were rotting and falling into decay. He requested $25,000 for the upcoming years of 1885 and 1886 to dredge the river and secure the embankments.[158] The pristine Valley was in danger and could not continue to represent untouched natural splendor without, ironically, a major financial investment and intervention by man on its behalf. James Hutchings became Lake Guardian and began river and lake projects. He attempted to tame the Merced by planting willows at a 40-degree angle along the riverbank, interjecting them with rocky talus to prevent the erosion of meadowlands. This measure did not survive a year.

Clark wrote of yearly flooding as a, "....matter of paramount importance [on] the protection of the banks of the Merced river…"[159] A river unimpeded by dams with no man-made channeling by man has no fixed course or width and over the course of years will writhe like a snake. If the river floods seasonally, it grows wider, cuts deeper, and forms embankments. In the low season, the current eats away at the sides of the embankments until they slide into the river. For people and animals this was a severe safety hazard. Clark described it as, "... a loose deathtrap for man or beast that goes near its edge until it breaks down of its own weight."[160] Clark was also upset about the change of scenery and thought of the erosion process as ugly,

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[157] James Hutchings, "Chapter 29: The Seasons at Yo Semite Valley " in *In the Heart of the Sierras* (Oakland, California: Pacific Press Publishing House, 1888).
[158] For more information on Merced River geology and Yosemite Valley's watersheds see "Yosemite National Park Watershed," US Parks, https://www.us-parks.com/yosemite-national-park/watersheds.html.
[159] Galen Clark, "A Yosemite Plea," in *Yosemite Nature Notes*, Vol, 6, No. 2, (February, 1927), 15, in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_nature_notes/6/6-2.pdf, Yosemite Online LIbrary.
[160] *Ibid.*

"...barren wastes of sand." Lasting solutions for these problems didn't come until 1926 with the building of Exchequer Dam.

Hutchings also remarked on the receding "mirror-like" quality of Mirror Lake. He explained in the *Biennial Report 1887-1888 Report* that Tenaya Creek, the stream that supplies the lake, was filling Mirror Lake with detritus. His solution was to take large blocks of granite - ten to fifteen tons each - and place them in the narrowest neck of the exit channel of Tenaya Creek, "...thereby treasuring up the waters of Mirror Lake, while intermittently the sandy accumulation and storing it on its eastern edge, and at the same time increasing the area of the lake nearly six times."[161] The commission had utilitarian plans for Mirror Lake as well; it would be a source of irrigation for the Valley. To accomplish this, the Commission built a dam to enlarge the lake. They envisioned their newly enlarged and increasingly reflective Mirror Lake might also be used for recreational purposes such as boating and angling. Furthermore, constructing a roadway around it would enable visitors a pleasant afternoon drive.

The Commission insisted that the Yosemite's boundaries be expanded by 198,500 acres to accommodate all of the property that drained into the Valley by the end of the 1880s. They feared sheep trampling along the mountain watershed tributary might cause the water to become muddy, disturbing an aesthetic preference for clear water and cause a build-up of sand. As guardians, commissioners again asserted that it was their duty to ensure the aesthetic beauty of Yosemite Valley would be unmarred by mankind, which required the full funding and complete control over the totality of land that influenced Yosemite, such as its water tributaries. In the *Biennial Report 1887 - 1888,* the commissioners wrote that Yosemite Valley, "...was made by God and will last forever,". They even placed it above such revered destinations as Westminster Abbey, as

[161] *Ibid.*

it was made by the hand of man.[162] In truth, the Commission, its managers, and guardians had no idea what they were undertaking in their quest to take a snapshot of one of the world's most unique hydrological regions and force it to stay in place, as if frozen in a season of time, or as though it were simply a man-made monument that required maintenance. This contributed to making Yosemite more than a park; it served to make it famous. Yosemite was to be a location where visitors could come year after year and view the same vistas they had seen on prior visits, reliving the same experiences, just as one could at Westminster Abbey. Most importantly, it would make Yosemite match the photograph in the book or hanging on the wall.

The second half of the 1880s saw extensive growth for the infrastructure of the Valley by corporate interests, and the Commission argued on behalf of private interests to build appropriate commodities in the park. In 1888 close to 4,000 people visited the Valley, a sizable increase from the 164 visitors in 1864. The Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company had grown over the course of twenty years from an idea into a full-time thirty-horse stable with horses from nearby Coulterville, a large barn, complete with sleeping quarters for the stableman, and a coach house which could accommodate four coaches. Nearly all who visited and wrote of their trips to Yosemite complimented the service of the horses and horse trails as a highlight of the park experience. For a nominal fee, parties could rent a horse and ride up to the tallest waterfall in North America or the tallest rock face in the world, or ride over to the Mariposa Grove and gaze up at the tallest trees in the world. Indeed, the commission boasted the horse service as the world's finest.[163]

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[162] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1889 - 1890*, (Sacramento, Ca: 1889), 20.

[163] Carl Russell, "Chapter 5: Stagecoach Days" in *One Hundred Years in Yosemite* (Berkley and Los Angeles Ca: University of California Press,1947), in "Yosemite Library," Yosemite Online, https://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/one_hundred_years_in_yosemite/stagecoach.html, Yosemite Online LIbrary.

A floral transformation took place within the Valley as well. Without the native fire practices of the California tribes, a vast amount of underbrush had been growing unchecked for about 30 years. Forest fires on the floor of the Valley became regular and fearsome. By this time Clark had become more than tourist or recent settler, he was a local or native with historical contextual knowledge of the ecology of the park. Commissioners too had built up a familiarity with the environments history, both the commissioners and especially Clark, understood these fires to be a product of the change in land management techniques between the Ahwahneechee and themselves, and many visitors from their interactions with the locals did too. Even with this contextual knowledge, the general public may not have been sure of the best course of action. It was a catch twenty-two. If commissioners utilized controlled burns and cleared enough of the new growth and underbrush, they faced public scrutiny. But if they didn't, the Valley would periodically combust into flames, for which they also faced public scrutiny. Their solution was meadow reclamation, which involved clearing fern areas of their dense pine cover, removing underbrush, expanding walkways, and seeding the Valley with what they called "useful" grasses to decrease undergrowth, which would necessitate halting the running stock (livestock trampling the grasses).[164] The following year, Stoneman House was equipped with a firehose fed from Mirror Lake.[165]

The general attitude by commissioners and the army's superintendents after 1890 towards fire was that of control. The attitude towards people starting fires was contempt. However, in superintendent reports at the end of the 20th century the tone changes drastically. This may have had to do with the Yosemite's first appointed rangers Charles A. Leidig and Archie 0. Leonard in

[164] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, Biennial Report 1887 - 1888, prepared by Commissioners to Manage Yosemite (Sacramento, Ca: 1889).
[165] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, Biennial Report 1889 - 1890, prepared by Commissioners to Manage Yosemite (Sacramento, Ca: 1889).

1898. In reports following the hiring of these Yosemite locals came the acknowledgement of fire as a useful and practical tool in the Valley. Due to the fact that Superintendents were nearly always switched yearly, they were most always new to their surroundings and duties as managers of the Yosemite Valley. They lacked the historical ecological context it took to care for the Valley much like the commissioners. It follows that they would have relied heavily on their forest rangers. It is possible that the drastic change in attitude towards fire made in the reports came from the informed local knowledge of the two new rangers. However, by this time, nearly fifty years of extreme ecological change had already occurred.

In 1889, the ideological schism between preservation and tourism manifested itself in a fiery blaze that spread through the Mariposa Grove, a devastation that the Commission was helpless to stop. Many viewed this as physical proof that the Commission was inept.[166] Muir had been campaigning for better protection of Yosemite's ecosystems throughout the 1880s and heavily criticized the management of the Valley. He campaigned through letters to Congress and the Secretary of State to have the Yosemite Valley be taken as national property and made a National Park. He described the Yosemite Valley in a similar tone to Olmsted and many of the commissioners, however, Muir favored preservation *from* mankind, though likely not from himself. All traces of human life or interference were unacceptable for Muir's Yosemite. Muir viewed the timber mills which were used in the Valley to cut wood for houses, boardwalks, hotels, and bridges as affronts to Yosemite or, as he referred to it, the, "...temple lighted from above."[167] The fire of 1889 was the final straw in public opinion. After so many years on the

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[166] Hal Rothman, *Blazing Heritage: A History of Wildland Fire in the National Parks,* : (Oxford University Press, 2007), 18.

[167] John Muir. "Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park," in *The Century Magazine*, (September 1890), https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/features_of_the_proposed_yosemite_national_park/; Stephen Mark, "Seventeen Years to Success," Sierra Club, accessed Dec 14, 2019, https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/life/17_years_to_success_s_mark.aspx.

offense, the Commission found themselves in a defensive position against Muir, Century Magazine, the public, and even the Secretary of State. The Commission had attempted to prove that their methods and vision were superior or at the very least equal to what they referred to as, "...the expert foresting of the Indians".[168] But they lost.

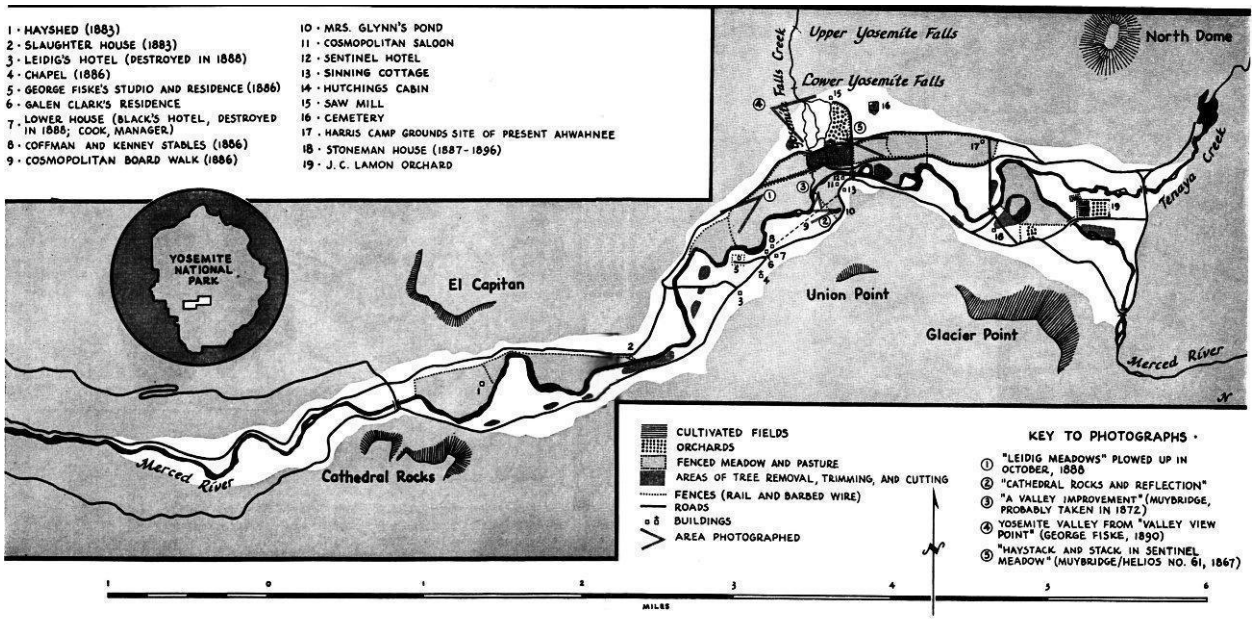

Figure 6: Muir constructed this map outlining what he deemed "excessive landscape management." which appeared in the 1888 petition to Congress to expand Yosemite's borders and investigate the management. See Holway Jones, *John Muir and The Sierra Club: The Battle For Yosemite,* (San Francisco, Sierra Club, 1965).

That same year, the Yosemite, Paiute, and Mono tribes, petitioned President Benjamin Harris and the U.S. Congress, seeking recompense for their dispossession from land that they and their ancestors had cultivated for thousands of years.[169] The petition references the unratified treaty which they had been forced to sign in 1851, described in chapter two, which they argued promised them a tract of land in Yosemite. The petitioners pointed to the depredations of the ax

[168] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1883 - 1884*, (Sacramento, Ca, 1889).
[169] Ed Castillo, "Petition to Congress on Behalf of the Yosemite Indians," in *The Journal of California Anthropology* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1978), 271-277.

and plow, and to acres of unsightly fencing just as Muir had done. However, in the face of Muir, their testimony destroyed the pristine narrative. The petitioners' observations of the Commission's governance and land management were even more penetrating than Muir's. The petitioners' perceived flaws in the system itself,

> "Every once in a while the State Government changes its head men, and every new lot turn away from their homes more and more of the old resident whites, whom we have known so long, and young, strong and hungry looking new faces come in their places. All seem to come only to hunt money. Why the old ones are turned away we do not know, but when they are sent away their houses are torn down, and new ones are built for these new men to live in."[170]

This petition seemed to point fingers at the turnover rate of new settlers, how few managed to stick it out and moved on to better pastures. Even those who thought of themselves as making the best use of the land were only temporary vessels of exploitation. Ed Castillo wrote in The Journal of California Anthropology of the petition to Congress on behalf of the Yosemite Indians that

> "The gradual destruction of its trees, the occupancy of every foot of its territory by bands of grazing horses and cattle, the decimation of the fish in the river, the destruction of every means of support for ourselves and families by the rapacious acts of the whites, in the building of their hotels and operating of their stage lines, which must shortly result in the total exclusion." [171]

This petition harkens back to Bunnell's account of the Indigenous people's attack on the Savage's trading post: "Their real purpose, however, was plunder. They were considered treacherous and dangerous and were very troublesome to the miners generally." When Indigenous peoples aired their frustrations in an 1890 petition, they conveyed a similar point of view. In this petition, however, the Indigenous people did not label the Whites as treacherous to justify expansion, but

[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

asserted a legal basis to reclaim areas granted to them in unratified treaties. Nonetheless, both groups clearly identified the other as problematic.

These sovereign Indian nations, driven out of Yosemite Valley and operating outside of the federal government, were uniquely positioned to spectate on the hypocrisy of preservation as set forth by the American government. They saw the Commission's management and embrace of tourism for what it was; the solidification of capitalism in the Yosemite Valley. The tribes wrote, "White men have come into this Valley to make money."[172]

Despite Muir's influence, the petition by the tribes, and the increasingly critical public opinion of the Commission, the *Biennial Report 1891 - 1892* expanded its tourism agenda to stunning new heights. The report was thick with optimism and pride. "...Every inspiring scene is made accessible."[173] They reported that the Valley contained twenty miles of carriage roads, requiring six bridges over the Merced River and other streams and twelve planked culverts, as well as twenty-four miles of trails for saddle animals. The first telephones were installed in Glacier Point, the Stoneman House, and the stables. The water supply had been enlarged from Stoneman House to Yosemite Falls Hotel, the Guardians Office, and State Stables. Hydrants were set up along the roads.[174] Guard rails were installed at various points of view to ensure the tourists' "perfect safety" in the Yosemite wilderness.

And what more could be done? The Commission dreamt big, perhaps in direct retaliation against the public scrutiny. They sought to rebuild the dilapidated and water-damaged cedar walkway connecting the three hotels and make it double the width, eight feet instead of four, and lift it above ground to make it usable during the floods and protected from further water damage. The buildings, also made of wood, would soon need repair, and there were always new bridge

[172] Ibid.
[173] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1891 - 1892*, (Sacramento, Ca, 1892).
[174] Ibid.

projects, such as reconstructing Folsom Bridge and building an entirely new bridge across Too-lool-A-we-ack Creek. In addition, they wanted to fix, plank, and rail a footpath from Register Rock to Fern Grotto. Vernal Falls, known for its sprays of mist, would be more enjoyable if the rails up and down the base were fully covered so that you could look at the mist without feeling it. They wanted to make the peak of South Dome accessible with steps, "...so that the most timid could safely reach the summit of this remarkable dome—five thousand feet above the Valley." These projects required timber. In the future, the Commission hoped to build with materials more suitable to their environment, but presently wood was considered the most viable option. The cost of building a mill and using Valley timber was compared to the cost of importing all pre-cut wood, and it was decided that the sawmill would pay for itself in a season.[175]

The Yosemite Valley tourist operation had hundreds of workers and animals. These living creatures required their environment to function like a village, complete with pasturage, gardens, a church, its own school district, and a slaughterhouse. The settlement concentrated around tourism, which ran counter to late-nineteenth-century preservation ideas, Muir's standards, and the aspirations of the Paiute, Yosemite, and Mono tribes; instead, the board focused on the land grant's "enjoyment" aspects. The village revolved around tourism, which was fundamentally at odds with the late nineteenth-century ideals of preservation, Muir's ideals, and the ideals of the Paiute, Yosemite, and Mono tribes. The board, however, focused on the "enjoyment" aspect of the land grant. It was the Commission's interpretation that required and allowed the village, therefore people, to maintain the Valley year-round. Villager diets were not

[175] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, Biennial Report 1891 - 1892, prepared by Commissioners to Manage Yosemite (Sacramento, Ca, 1892).

based on the local foods, so hogs and sheep and orchards and hay fields were required. A slaughterhouse was necessary to process the meat. A sawmill was necessary to cut the wood.

As Olmsted predicted, minor depredations repeated by thousands of people created noticeable cumulative impacts. The growing number of campers became a nuisance, and the Commission felt the authority to enforce regulations was necessary as some campers broke the rules of the Valley. Campers littered and accidentally started fires. The Commission reported in 1894 regarding campers leaving their campground, "...uncleanly and in offensive condition..." and by painting inscriptions on sightly rocks.[176] The backlash to the Muir article offered further incentive to the board for the protection of the aesthetic appeal of the Valley and the "sanctity" of nature. The Commission sought to discourage people from camping by providing "first-class" accomodations at the local hotels built specifically for the tourists.

> "Added to this was the desirability of having a house conducted upon the European plan, to which a great many tourists are accustomed, preferring it from motives of economy. The foundation was replaced and made permanently secure, a pleasing effect was given to the building by raising the roof, and its exterior aspect was redeemed from a decided squalor of appearance and made attractive. New closets and baths were constructed, and the sewerage and plumbing were put in first-class order. Lath and plaster were substituted for board or cloth partitions, securing the seclusion most desirable to occupants.."[177]

A total of $275,022.33 was spent on the Valley between 1866 and 1891. By this time, exposure to Yosemite Valley had expanded globally. Photographs were featured in the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and Sequoia seedlings were shipped all over the world from Jardin des Plantes, to Paris, to England and other parts of Europe. Painters and photographers made careers out of their depictions of the wonders of the Valley. The Valley was not only accessible to American visitors, but to the world.[178] The park was an exhibition on the global stage, perceived as a virgin wilderness at risk of losing its purity, and the Commission maintained that this

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[176] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1893 - 1894*, (Sacramento, Ca, 1894).
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.

required the protection of the U.S. Calvary. Many have argued that the troops prevented the destruction of Yosemite from illegal mining, accidental and purposeful fire setting, and general despoliation.[179] Yet, some of these acts had taken place for thousands of years and, in effect, made Yosemite what it was when the first settlers, soldiers, and explorers entered the area and referred to it as a "well-kept park" a "temple" and "God's wonder".[180]

In 1890 the federal government established Yosemite Valley as a National Park. The borders were expanded as suggested by Muir. The park was now in federal possession and set to be managed by federal troops, however the Commission maintained influence. The Commission proposed stationing two companies of Calvary patrols at Wawona, "...to patrol the mountains, expel shepherds and other incendiary visitors who are annually guilty of forest arson in the mountains."[181] The army regularly carried out the suggestions of the Commission. Military labor extended the trail system outside the rim of Yosemite Valley and made modifications to the original paths created by the California Natives connecting Wawona, Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley, and the Sierra uplands.[182] By 1901 the Valley floor contained twenty miles of carriage road and twenty-four miles of saddle trails.[183] All tourist obstacles within Yosemite's main Valley had been removed or transformed into an easily accessible feature or commodity. With the addition of trails and roads, nothing stopped tourism from traveling to favored sites within the park. Yosemite was officially an accessible tourist destination, a haven of unspoiled wilderness

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[179] Hal Rothman, *Blazing Heritage: A History of Wildland Fire in the National Parks,* (Oxford University Press, 2007) 18; Linda Greene, "State Management of the Yosemite Grant: Settlers Claims", *Yosemite: the Park and its Resources* (Denver: National Park Service, 1987) http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_resources/.; Duane Hampton, "Chapter 8:The Extension of the System: Yosemite, Sequoia and General Grant National Parks" in *How the U.S. Cavalry Saved Our National Parks,* (Indiana University Press, 1971). https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/hampton/chap8.htm.
[180] Lafayette H. Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite*, (1892), 12.
[181] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1889 - 1890*, (Sacramento, Ca, 1892).
[182] Linda Greene, "State Management of the Yosemite Grant: Settlers Claims," in *Yosemite: the Park and its Resources* (Denver: National Park Service, 1987). http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/yosemite_resources/state_grant.html#page_292.
[183] Commissioners to Manage Yosemite, *Biennial Report 1903 - 1904* (Sacramento, Ca, 1904).

that had been desecrated by mismanagement and fully taken over by white men eager to profit. The history is rich and complex enough, the Valley walls tall and wide enough, to hold each of the perceptions as true. Complexity is beautiful.

Conclusion

Primarily, my research questions have been, “How can we survive and thrive in our environments?” And, to add to Paul Shepard’s query, “How do we become native to this land?” I ask, “Can we escape the mindset of conquest and get to a sense of belonging to this place?” Yosemite in the nineteenth century shows us a fast-changing environment during the peak of its colonization with high stakes for all stakeholders, multiple cultures fighting for a place and to be *the* locals. If there are answers to these questions to be found, Yosemite during this time frame is a good place to look.

The findings are that when Yosemite is defined as “wilderness” and “natural”, it loses an ecological dimension. The illusion of a natural and wild Yosemite leads to the decline of its ecological diversity and even hydrological structure because humans are intrinsically linked to the Valley's ecological history. Through thousands of years of evolution humans became integral to California's ecology, and the Sierra Nevada is no exception. Thus, the prohibition of people living there and becoming native to the region is, ironically, contrary to the objective of preservation itself.

Additionally, the ecological and cultural history of the colonization of Yosemite reveals a tendency in settlers to adjust their worldviews or evolve their opinions of land and resource management. This comes despite their place in history as colonizers during the colonial peak of

California history. In the nineteenth century, the United States' economy and population rose, as did the need for land and resources. Like James Marshall, James Savage, and the parents and grandparents of Lillian Engler, Antink, Austin Abbott, and Charles Leidig, newly immigrated and American-born citizens saw their needs met by venturing and claiming land and resources further and further West.

The colonial mindset during the nineteenth century was peaking. For modern scientists of the time, the world was unfolding around them. The weather was becoming predictable with the help of worldwide weather infrastructures networking together. Modern technological advancements allowed the mass production of textiles, food, and goods. Advancements in modern engines allowed these products to be shipped all over the world. Imperial conquests and expansion around the world resulted in the founding of colonies built to serve the demands of those empires. Famine became a thing of the past for these empires, which saw their colonial outposts wholly transformed by monocropping to feed their now booming populations in the West. So it should come as no surprise that in 1839, compelled by a sense of nationalism, one newspaper editor named John O'Sullivan wrote of manifest destiny, which asserted with a sense of certainty America's dominion of space from the east to west coast.[184] Later, in 1945, he would speak more about American virtues than nationalism for those who had recently immigrated, asserting that rights, freedom, and self-governance would be the deciding factors in taking Texas and California from Mexico.

He wrote that as sure as Americans would move into these places, they would demand the right to self-sovereignty.[185] We see this play out in the broader Mariposa area in Bunnell's

[184] John L. O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity," *The United States Democratic Review*, Volume 6, No. 23, (1839), 426-430, https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/osulliva.htm.
[185] John O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (July-August 1845): 5-10, https://pdcrodas.webs.ull.es/anglo/OSullivanAnnexation.pdf.

recordings which tie the founding of the state to the invasion of Yosemite. The mass movement Sullivan spoke of undoubtedly carried the nation's political views, technologies, and cultural filters.

Philosophically, the American empire believed itself better than, and more evolved than the Indigenous populations of America. As an example, in 1872 the drive west was portrayed in a painting by John Gast, notoriously titled "American Progress." The image features a white woman with white robes flailing behind her, almost like wings. She hovers in the sky as though flying, leading White American farmers, oxmen, a stagecoach, trains, telephone lines, among other technologies, and settlers west (leftwards in the frame). It is said that the woman is meant to be the personification of the United States - Lady Columbia - carrying a telegraph line and a school book. The mood of the painting shifts from a bright blue sky in the East to a dark and troubled sky in the west. As the woman and new settlers walk into frame, they push out the Native Americans, their horses, and buffalo too. What the womanly figure truly represents is hotly contested, as seen in a responding contemporary revision of the same painting by Klee Benally, Diné (Navajo) musician, traditional dancer, artist, filmmaker, and Indigenous anarchist.

Figure 7: Picturing US History - John Gast, American Progress, 1872 (cuny.edu) John Gast, American Progress, 1872. Chromolithograph published by George A. Crofutt. Source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Figure 8: A still from the gif *The Dark Mark of Manifest Destiny*, by Klee Benally, Natural History Institute, Prescott, Arizona, https://naturalhistoryinstitute.org/gallery/the-dark-mark-of-manifest-destiny-2/.

Figure 9: A still from the gif *The Dark Mark of Manifest Destiny*, by Klee Benally, Natural History Institute, Prescott, Arizona, https://naturalhistoryinstitute.org/gallery/the-dark-mark-of-manifest-destiny-2/.

Benally's work *The Dark Mark of Manifest Destiny*, critiques American Progress, by using the iconic image of a dementor from the Disney feature film series Harry Potter, in a popular moving image format known as a gif.[186] In the gif, the dementor has replaced the White woman and the lighting of the sky has been reversed, the darkness now sweeps in from the east as if heralded by the farmers and settlers, and the entire picture glitches every few moments.[187] For the vast majority of Indigenous people in the North American continent, the drive west by Anglo-Saxons was the kiss of death (echoing the method of eternal destruction of the soul which dementors in the Harry Potter tale fausted upon their victims).

Culturally, settlers brought capitalist and colonial ideals, but in this assessment we can see how they also brought more human empathy and sympathy than can be seen in later years

[186] Klee Benally, "About," http://kleebenally.com.
[187] Klee Benally, *The Dark Mark of Manifest Destiny*, GIF, Natural History Institute, Prescott, Arizona, https://naturalhistoryinstitute.org/gallery/the-dark-mark-of-manifest-destiny-2/.

when the Yosemite Valley became established as a park. Though the ideological clash between worldviews around land stewardship was tremendous, the cultural connection between Native Americans and Whites who became local is noteworthy, with relationships that were more honest and pragmatic than in later years once they became commodified and fabricated by park management. Perhaps this was a necessity as White pioneers found themselves adapting to a foreign landscape. Yosemite was truly at the edge of western society. To survive and even thrive in such a borderland alongside foreigners from all over the world, these settlers and extractivists had to rely on and adjust to whoever was around, making it difficult to maintain cultural homogeneity like in their native homes.[188]

However, even racial tolerance revolved around colonialist ideals. In the aforementioned sources, when racial tolerance is revealed, it often centered around the acceptance of other races due to the merits of their work. James Carson and Abbott described the Chinese as hard-working, and therefore likable and admirable. While little is mentioned of Savage's regard for Indigenous peoples, through his actions we can see a sense of respect for their might. Upon learning of even the possibility of a threat, he reacted strongly, which he wouldn't have done if he considered them weak or incapable. However Leidig and Leonard broke this mold. As Yosemite forest rangers, it seems they offered some locally gained insight to the ecological history of Yosemite to superintendents, vastly changing the mind-set regarding fire in the park.

The assessment offered here of settlers like Leidig as compared to Lafayette Bunnell or James Lamon shows that settlers, as actors of a colonialist project, are not a monolith, and that some colonial environmental worldviews evolved over time. Yet, a majority of settlers moved in and worked the land in the likeness of the agrarian east with the goal of monetizing by utilizing available resources,, establishing and contributing to the overall trend of colonialism. Hutchings

[188] Newell D. Chamberlain, *The Call of Gold; True Tales on the Gold Road to Yosemit*e, (Gazette Press, 1936).

claimed to have bought the rights to and settled on a property in the Valley in 1864, and James Lamon is credited by some to have established the first homestead at the upper end of the Valley in 1859 on 219 acres. In 1861 he filed for another 160 acres for orchards, where he planted 500 fruit-bearing trees. Between Lamon and Hutchings, 700 fruit trees had been planted, multiple acres of fruit and vegetables were sowed, and irrigation ditches dug.[189] In 1856, the "Upper" and "Lower" hotels were established. A settler named Ira Folsom owned a ferry that operated across the Merced River, as well as ladders, which were the only means of traversing to Vernal Falls. Clark's ranch functioned as a hotel as well. Within a decade, tourism became an essential resource for those living within the Valley. Bunnell engaged in mining and trading along the North Fork of the Merced River, which flows down and westward out of the Yosemite Valley and is a tributary of the San Joaquin River.[190] Like Bunnell, men from the Mariposa Battalion mined and supported mining communities through trade. Some Ahwahneechee people, now displaced, also engaged in mining.[191]

Where colonialist culture did evolve, the geographical basis for survival seems to have played a major part. Technology could not entirely collapse the space between homesteads, which allowed vast differences in opinions and views, perhaps allowing for more individual adjustment to their environment. Sometimes a person's role in society was defined over time as a matter of circumstance. Other times, a person's vision for themselves guided their direction. Homesteaders often had to fill in the gaps of the expertise necessary to live without many of the amenities of typical American towns and cities. Early settlers' memories from the taped recordings showed a distinct change in their thinking about their role in the ecology of their

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[189] Linda Greene, "State Management of the Yosemite Grant: Settlers Claims", *Yosemite: the Park and its Resources* (Denver: National Park Service, 1987), .
[190] Lafayette Bunnell, *Discovery of the Yosemite* (reprint of the 4th ed.:Los Angeles: G.W. Gerlicher, 1911), 262.
[191] Ibid.

environment. Women's roles in Yosemite changed to meet the needs of life and family at the edge of American society. However, the rise in women's freedoms in Yosemite at this time, compared to cities, did not solely revolve around family. They were freedoms claimed by empowered women. Lilian Engler was proud of the work she did, she was proud of her mother, doctoring Natives, and of the papuses her mother had learned to sew.

Even the Commission to Manage Yosemite, as a formal actor of the state, was forced to make concessions in their views on environmental stewardship and control. Despite their best efforts, the resulting human-to-landscape relationships contained an amalgam of ideas and praxis from different worldviews, many of which were in direct conflict. This is not to argue that the evolution in thought resulted in abundantly visible praxis of environmental stewardship, but it did exist and can be found in meeting notes, journals, magazines, and printed materials from the time. However, by not ascribing to any one culture, they were simultaneously rejected by all. Many of the Commission's decisions and negotiations led to public and Indigenous disapproval and resulted in the eventual absorption of the park into federal oversight in 1890.

In 1890, legislators influenced by Euro-American settlers re-defined the landscape as Yosemite National Park.[192] The naming solidified the American government's absorption of the Valley into its empire. The park's boundaries mostly follow the watershed from the glaciers, contributing to the illusion of a naturally defined place removed from the modern world. And yet, Yosemite National Park is just as much a product of modernity as the legislation that produced it.

[192] House Bill, House of Representatives, *To establish the Yosemite National Park the State of California,* HR. 8350, 51st Cong., 1st sess., introduced in the House March 18, 1890.

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