

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

March 19-25, 2021

MONTEREY PENINSULA MAKEOVERS - Part 12



europeans came
like pissants at a picnic
devoured each crumb

Photo courtesy of
Protect Juristac website at
www.protectjuristac.org

WOULD THOMAS JEFFERSON SIGN THE “SAVE JURISTAC” PETITION?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SAVING Juristac is the Amah Mutsun tribal band’s goal, and you can help them reach it by signing the petition to persuade the County of Santa Clara to reject application for a gravel mining operation on now-privately owned land west of Gilroy.

If they fail, the hillside paradise could become an open pit.

Join me in signing this petition?

It stands to serve a small slice of social justice pie to the survivors of California’s tragic genocide of indigenous people, among whose survivors the Amah Mutsun tribal band is Ohlone-Costanoan.

This Wikipedia passage from “California Indian Reservations and Cessions” tells how the original Californians’ lands were taken legally under the federal doctrine of supremacy that justified taking non-whites’ land, culture, dignity and life:

“Larisa Miller documented how the Northern California Indian Association (NCIA) petitioned President Roosevelt in 1903 to buy federal lands for thousands of homeless Indians across the state because ‘title and ownership to this beautiful land have never been extinguished.’

Their campaign led to the rediscovery of the 18 Treaties that were signed by 134 bands of Californians and the removal of the senate's order of secrecy on January 18, 1905.”

The petition now accepting signatures states:

Dear County of Santa Clara Officials,

We respectfully urge you to protect and preserve Mutsun cultural heritage by rejecting the proposed Sargent Quarry Project.

The land threatened by the quarry, known as Juristac in the Mutsun language, is of immense cultural, historical, environmental and spiritual importance to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Juristac is not an appropriate location for a sand and gravel quarry under any circumstances.

We call on you to uphold the indigenous rights of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to maintain and protect their religious and cultural sites as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Environmental Justice And Native Americans

I discovered “Saving Juristac” by attending a Zoom project co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula’s Environmental Justice Group and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Santa Cruz County on Sunday, March 7.

For details, contact environmentaljustice@uucmp.org and www.uucmp.org .

We watched a narrated slide program about Juristac and learned about the gravel mine that would desecrate these most-sacred grounds, and we shared ways we can oppose the proposal to build such an operation.

We learned about the history of the Amah Mutsun band of the Ohlone-Costanoan tribes that were the original inhabitants of the area from the San Francisco Bay area south to Monterey, Salinas and Big Sur.

Being involved in the online discussions during the Zoom presentation was so inspiring and thought-provoking that I researched the United States Bureau of American Ethnology’s annual reports to the Smithsonian Institution on various Native American (First Nation) subjects.

Wow!

Legal Basis For Justified Injustice Against Indigenous People

I discovered that in their 18th annual, two-volume report, they published a complete list of all United States’ takings (called cessions), treaties and reservations prior to 1896 (six years after the last Indian properties were seized by the U.S. and the people were relegated to reservations unless they joined forces with the federals, escaped or became renegades). The report was compiled by a man named Charles C. Royce and featured a 122-page introduction

by Cyrus Thomas that documented legal claims for the actions the United States had based its actions on, with focus on the U.S. Supreme Court’s racist discovery doctrine decision of 1823.

This encapsulation is from Wikipedia:

“The discovery doctrine, also called doctrine of discovery, is a concept of public international law expounded by the United States Supreme Court in a series of decisions, most notably Johnson v. M'Intosh in 1823. Chief Justice John Marshall explained and applied the way that colonial powers laid claim to lands belonging to foreign sovereign nations during the Age of Discovery. Under it, title to lands lay with the government whose subjects travelled to and occupied a territory whose inhabitants were not subjects of a European Christian monarch.”

Thomas' statement set the tone for the unjust justification:

"Its extent afforded an ample field for the ambition and enterprise of all, and the character, low culture-status, and religious beliefs of the aborigines afforded an apology for considering them a people over whom the superior genius of Europe might rightfully claim an ascendancy. The sovereigns of the Old World therefore found no difficulty in convincing themselves that they made ample compensation to the natives by bestowing on them the benefits of civilization and Christianity in exchange for control over them and their country."

This Christian White Supremacy doctrine has been used to justify dispossession of aboriginal land in favor of modern colonial/imperial governments. The 1823 decision was the result of collusive lawsuits where land speculators worked together to make claims to achieve a desired result.

What In The Name Of God?

In other words – my own – “It’s OK to force the California Indians to cede their land because they’re heathens; therefore, we will force them to serve as slave labor in building missions in which they’ll be baptized if they survive!”

The historic decision has come under increased scrutiny by modern legal theorists.

What Would Thomas Jefferson Do?

America’s third president, a slaveholder, wrote, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . .”

Would Jefferson sign the Save Juristac petition that seeks to right the wrong done by the cession of the Amah Mutsun’s sacred tribal land through wrongful racism that viewed non-white, non-Christians as savages and heathens? Their lives will be explored next week.

Sign the petition and learn more about Juristac and the Amah Mutsun people at www.protectjuristac.org

Meanwhile, Monterey/San Benito County Continuum of Care (CoC) is rewriting “Lead Me Home: Regional 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.” The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSO) has engaged Focus Strategies to facilitate the process. Next session, “Regional Governance,” is Fri., March 19, 1:30 p. m. at Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89606099956>

Meeting ID: 896 0609 9956

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CREDITS:

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