



THE  
SACRED  
LAND READER



FOR USE WITH THE FILM IN THE LIGHT OF  
REVERENCE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Sacred Land Reader was edited by Marjorie Beggs and Christopher McLeod and designed by Patricia Koren. Thanks to Adam Fish, Vicki Engel, Roz Dzelzitis, Amy Corbin and Jessica Abbe for assistance with manuscript preparation, research, rights clearance and proof reading.

Funding for the Reader was provided by The Ford Foundation, Grousbeck Family Fund and Nathan Cummings Foundation.

You may download the Reader as a pdf file at [www.sacredland.org/reader.html](http://www.sacredland.org/reader.html). Send your feedback to [slfp@igc.org](mailto:slfp@igc.org). We will expand and update the Reader.

For additional information:

The Sacred Land Film Project  
P.O. Box C-151  
La Honda, CA 94020  
[slfp@igc.org](mailto:slfp@igc.org)  
[www.sacredland.org](http://www.sacredland.org)



A Project of Earth Island Institute

*In the Light of Reverence* is a presentation of the Independent Television Service in association with Native American Public Telecommunications, with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**itvs**



*In the Light of Reverence* is distributed on VHS tape and DVD by:

Bullfrog Films  
Oley PA, 19547  
Tel: 800-543-3764  
[www.bullfrogfilms.com](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com)



©2003 Sacred Land Film Project of Earth Island Institute

## PHOTO CREDITS

### Cover

*Top:* Caleen Sisk-Franco and Florence Jones, Winnemem Wintu—by Sally Carless

*Left:* Headless Pictograph in Grand Gulch, Utah—by Christopher McLeod

*Right:* Journey to the Rocky Mountains—courtesy New-York Historical Society

*Bottom:* Johnson Holy Rock, Lakota—by Will Parrinello

### Table of Contents

Thomas Banyacya, Hopi, at a sacred spring  
—by Christopher McLeod

### Page 6

High Country Prayer Seat in California—by Christopher McLeod

### Page 14

Christopher McLeod Filming—by Cordy Fergus

### Page 16

Hand Prints on Cliff in Grand Gulch, Utah  
—by Christopher McLeod

### Page 28

The San Francisco Peaks—by Christopher McLeod

### Page 54

Southern Utah Pictograph (A.D. 1295)—by Christopher McLeod

### Page 62

Mount Shasta Woodblock—by Frank LaPena

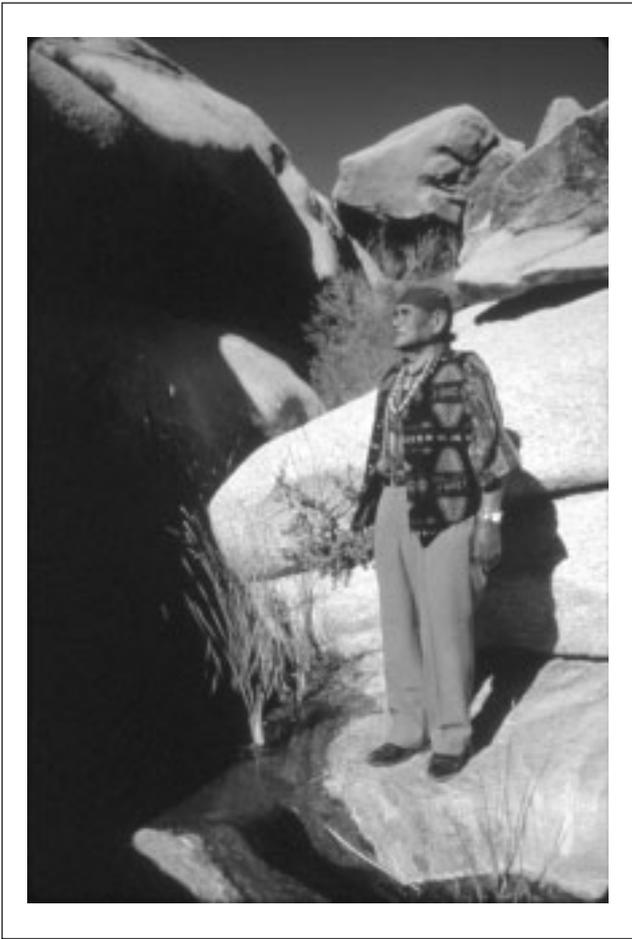
### Page 72

Hopi Ancestral Petroglyphs at Taawa—by Christopher McLeod

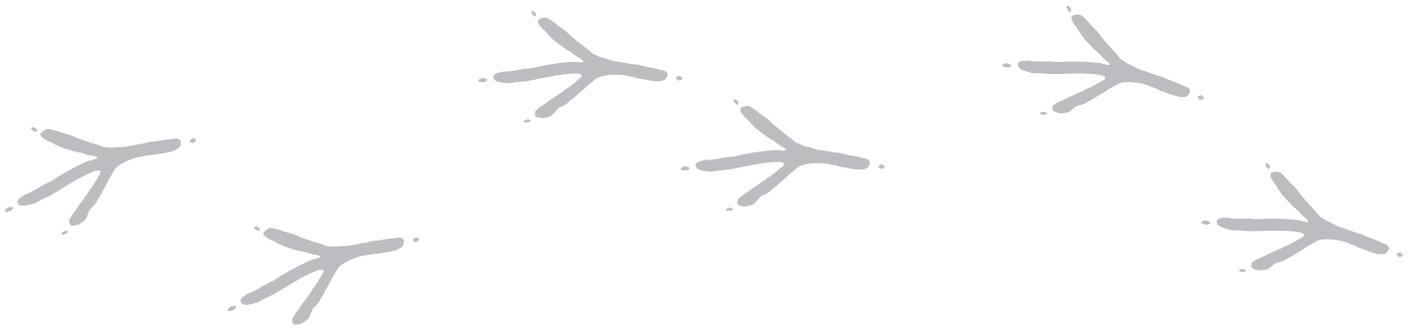
### Page 92

Winnemem Wintu dancers at Mt. Shasta, August 2003—  
by Christopher McLeod

## TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 5 FOREWORD  
When Every Place Is Sacred  
*by Christopher McLeod*
- 15 INTRODUCTION  
Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom  
*by Vine Deloria Jr.*
- 27 Sacred Places of Native America:  
A Primer to Accompany the Film  
*In the Light of Reverence*  
*by Peter Nabokov*
- 53 Managing Hopi Sacred Sites to Protect  
Religious Freedom  
*by Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Kurt E. Dongoske  
and T. J. Ferguson*
- 61 Wintu Sacred Geography  
*by Dorothea Theodoratus and Frank LaPena*
- 71 Freedom, Law, and Prophecy:  
A Brief History of Native American  
Religious Resistance  
*by Lee Irwin*





## FOREWORD

*IN THE LIGHT OF REVERENCE*

# WHEN EVERY PLACE IS SACRED

~by Christopher McLeod

**E**VERY WORKING DAY, bulldozers climb the back of Woodruff Butte in Arizona, quarrying gravel to pave local highways and tearing away rocky sites that Hopis on pilgrimage have been visiting for a thousand years. Woodruff Butte is now private property, and the Hopi have appealed in vain to its owner to stop razing their shrines. In the last 10 years, all eight Hopi shrines on Woodruff Butte have been destroyed.

“When we all visited the property, I was told if they showed me specifically where [a shrine] was on the property, then it would not have religious value to them anymore,” said the butte’s owner, Dale McKinnon. “In other words, they couldn’t show me. And I cannot possibly work around something that I can’t see. So, I guess I did bulldoze it. I couldn’t see it. I didn’t know what to work around.”

We captured the bulldozer

damage and the butte-owner’s comments on film during the production of *In the Light of Reverence*, our documentary film that aired on the PBS series P.O.V. (Point of View) in August 2001 to an audience of 3 million viewers. As we made the film through the 1990s and then worked distributing it for the last three years, our intention has been to capture the intense clash between the first Americans, more than 500 distinct cultures, and

the waves of people who came here from Europe, and to show it as a clash of values, a clash of worldviews and, at its deepest level, a metaphysical clash. At its heart, the clash entails very different views of what constitutes power and the appropriate human relationship to power. The essence of this culture clash is the question: “What is sacred?” Or, stated another way: “What do we as a culture value most deeply?”

Woodruff Butte



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Before we completed the film, I journeyed to the Hopi mesas to show a rough cut to the Hopis who had participated in the making of the film. When my old friend Fermina Banyacya heard Dale McKinnon's statement about bulldozing the Hopi shrines, she began to shake her head.

"What is it with white people?" she whispered. "Seeing is believing, and that's all there is to it. It makes me so mad!"

Though sacred mountains may be visible, it is the invisible realm that holds the key to understanding the sites Native Americans hold most precious. Their songs and stories, visions and prophecies, secret traditions passed down from the ancestors—these are the intangible cultural practices that honor the life force of the land and carry deep emotional power for the communities that inhabit and protect America's sacred places. Yet the American public has little understanding of Native American sacred landscapes, and it was to fill this educational need that we set out to make the film.

Imagine your birthplace, the burial grounds of your family, or your place of worship besieged and bulldozed. What would you do?

Lands sacred to Native Americans are threatened by the relentless push for energy resources, timber, minerals, water, recreational opportunities, luxury homes, archaeological excavations and New Age ceremonies. Protections granted to sacred sites in recent decades are now being overturned, and carefully crafted laws are

being weakened. Yet a consensus is building across America—and around the world—that past injustices should be rectified and the sacred places and religious freedom of indigenous peoples respected.

That's a good first step. But this struggle is not just about native peoples' sacred sites. People everywhere have sacred places they are trying to protect and stay connected to through ceremonies that honor life and celebrate the diversity, power and beauty of the natural world.

*In the Light of Reverence* has proven to be a potent resource for stimulating dialogue and reflection, exploring American history, seeking reconciliation between conflicting cultures, and protecting religious freedom and sacred land. The film is supplemented by an extensive Web site, a *Teacher's Guide*, a DVD, (which includes additional scenes, an extended interview with Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr., interviews with the filmmakers, and an update about other threatened places like Zuni Salt Lake in New Mexico and Quechan Indian Pass in California), and now this *Sacred Land Reader*.

You can participate in this educational process by exploring the following essays, learning more about the issues, and discussing them with your classmates, friends, family and community. If you want to go further and take action, you can join the Sacred Land Defense Team (see details at end of this foreword).

## MAKING THE FILM: LEARNING NEW TRUTHS

TRYING TO TRANSLATE three stories of sacred places and the people who care for them into a coherent film took 10 long years. With funding from the Independent Television Service and Native American Public Telecommunications, co-producer Malinda Maynor (a member of the Lumbee nation), writer Jessica Abbe, editor Will Parrinello and I spent a year editing the 118 hours of footage down to 73 minutes. Distribution funding from the Cummings and Ford

Cameraman John Knoop films petroglyphs in the Southwest



Foundations allowed us to screen the film in many places—from Native American communities to Capitol Hill—and there have been many surprises along the way.

When we started making the film, we envisioned threats to sacred sites that were primarily industrial—mining, logging, mega-ski resorts and more. But we found that native people are equally concerned about rock climbers who scale sacred places and New Age spiritual seekers who sing songs, beat drums, make exotic pilgrimages and hold expensive healing workshops at Indian ceremonial sites. Well-intentioned baby boomers, it appears, are impacting sacred lands, too.

Another surprise had to do with the evolution of federal land management policies. For more than 100 years, the U.S. government repressed and even outlawed native religious ceremonies. The right to practice indigenous religions in the United States actually had to be affirmed by an act of Congress. The repression officially ended in 1978 with passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Given the long history of religious persecution, we were surprised to encounter enlightened government land managers who were struggling to incorporate respect for native traditions into official U.S. policy. Deb Liggett, former superintendent of Devils Tower National Monument, brought rock climbers and Plains Indians together for two years of conversation that has reduced climbing at Devils Tower by 85%. Sharon Heywood, superintendent of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, refused to permit a new ski resort on Mt. Shasta after hearing native peoples' concerns about the potential impact of the proposed development on the mountain's sacred sites.

In Hopi country, there also was good news at



White Vulcan Mine in the San Francisco Peaks

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

the San Francisco Peaks, home of the ancestral *kachina* spirits. The White Vulcan Mine (at left), which was providing pumice to soften stone-washed jeans, was closed following an intense campaign by 13 local tribes and the Sierra Club. Their efforts prompted former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to broker a

federal buy-out of the mine for \$1 million.

Yet, as narrator Peter Coyote says at the film's conclusion: "Protections granted by federal land managers are vulnerable to shifts in the political winds." The ascension of George W. Bush and his corporate colleagues has been a giant step backward in the historic struggle to protect Native American sacred places.

## BUSH'S NEW ASSAULT ON SACRED LANDS

BEFORE A SCREENING of *In the Light of Reverence* at Arizona State University in early 2003, Cal Seciwa (Zuni), the director of A.S.U.'s American Indian Institute, unfurled a canvas banner across a table.

The banner was a prototype for a billboard



protesting the Salt River Project's planned 18,000-acre coal stripmine, which threatens to dry up a desert lake in New Mexico that the Zuni believe is the home of Salt Mother, an important protector spirit.

"We had signed a contract with Clear Channel,

which owns virtually all of the billboards in Phoenix,” said Seciwa, “and we mailed it to them with a check, but the company’s president called and said they couldn’t put this message on a billboard. So now freedom of speech has joined freedom of religion as a casualty of our struggle.”

Cal and I stretched the banner out and taped it to the wall of the screening room at KAET, the local public television station that was hosting our film screening as part of an A.S.U. conference on “Ethics When Cultures Clash.” The station manager walked by, looked quizzically at the banner, stopped, frowned.

“Is there a problem?” Cal asked.

“Yeah, I think there might be,” replied the station manager.

“Kind of proves the point of this conference, doesn’t it?” asked Cal.

After a long pause, the station manager said, “You’re right. Leave it up.”

While liberty hangs by a few strips of duct tape in public television stations and universities across America, it is all but dead in the corporate-government world.

The Zuni battle is one of dozens across the United States in which new permits issued by the Bush administration threaten culturally significant places, or where protections previously granted are being reversed. In many cases, administration officials hired straight from the energy industry are approving new energy extraction projects and overturning established federal policies intended to protect sacred places on public lands. The Department of Interior (DOI) permit approving the new Salt River Project coal mine near Zuni Salt Lake was championed by Steven



*Sign outside the Hopi village of Oraibi (1979)*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Griles, a former mining industry lobbyist, and signed by Rebecca Watson, a long-time advocate for mining interests.

Another troubling case is Indian Pass, in the California desert, where the Clinton administration completed a six-year public process by denying a permit for Glamis Gold’s cyanide heap-leach open-pit mine in an area vital to the Quechan people. The Quechan have used a network of trails and ceremonial sites there for 10,000 years. Soon after

being sworn into office, Interior Secretary Gale Norton re-opened the permit process for the gold mine, and though DOI and Glamis officials met numerous times before Norton’s decision was announced, members of the Quechan Nation read about it in the newspaper. They were not consulted as required by law.

An incensed Senator Barbara Boxer (D, CA) triggered an investigation by DOI’s Inspector General when she wrote, “Secretary Norton worked previously for the Mountain States Legal Foundation, which advocates for mining concerns; Deputy Secretary Steven Griles worked previously for the National Mining Association; Counsel to the Secretary Ann Klee worked for the American Mining Congress and is married to a partner in the law firm (Crowell and Moring) that represents Glamis Gold Ltd.; Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Rebecca Watson worked for the law firm that represents Glamis Gold Ltd. and represented at least one gold mining company; and Timothy McCrum, a member of Secretary Norton’s transition team, represents Glamis Gold Ltd. and did at the time he participated on the transition team.”

On March 12, 2003, Inspector General Earl

Devaney concluded, “No undue influence or conflict of interest affected the decision-making process.” The report documented 30 contacts between the Interior Secretary’s office and Glamis, including nine face-to-face meetings, and none with the Quechan.

Meanwhile, at northern California’s Medicine Lake, a vision questing area of great importance to the Pit River Tribe, Bush administration officials in the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service in November 2002 reversed minimal protections provided just two years earlier, and approved a geothermal power plant within one mile of the lake. Calpine Corp. is drilling exploratory wells, and a humming industrial labyrinth of roads and transmission towers, lit 24 hours a day, is being planned for this remote mountainous area east of Mt. Shasta. The leases were initially signed and then renewed for 10 years without any government-to-government consultation, and no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared.

“Enron and others manipulated an energy crisis and Governor Gray Davis panicked,” says Pit River activist Mickey Gemmill. “Now, California taxpayer money is subsidizing the

desecration of a place of prayer and renewal—and the electricity will go out of state!”

At Black Mesa, in northern Arizona, Peabody Energy said publicly that it intended to stop pumping 3.3 million gallons of groundwater *every day* for its 273-mile-long coal slurry pipeline, but then Peabody applied to the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) for a permit to expand the coal stripmine and *increase* pumping by 32 percent. As word spread through Hopi villages and Navajo homesteads, strong opposition mounted and OSM cancelled public hearings on the proposal. Then, in an attempt to secure an alternative water source, Senator Jon Kyl (R, AZ) tried to attach a rider to an appropriations bill that would have authorized a new pump station on the Colorado River inside Grand Canyon National Park, and a pipeline up Jackass Canyon to Black Mesa to replace the groundwater that is being pumped into the slurryline. A firestorm of protest stopped the rider, but some water transfer scheme will undoubtedly be revived in the future.

Native activists are fighting hard. The Zuni Tribe recently formed a Zuni Salt Lake Coalition and is planning a breach of trust lawsuit against DOI that will require a new EIS to adequately

study the complex hydrology of the area. The Quechan Tribe worked to pass legislation in California to require backfilling and reclamation of open pit mines, as well as another state bill to protect sacred places. The Pit River Tribe and environmental allies have filed a suit challenging the validity of the leases around Medicine Lake and are pressuring the Calvert Social Investment Fund to divest its holdings in Calpine. The grassroots Hopi organization Black Mesa Trust has sued DOI and also gained standing with the California Public Utilities Commission in



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*The late Hopi elder Thomas Banyacya makes an offering in the Great Kiva at Chaco Canyon*

an effort to shut down the air-polluting Mohave Generating Station in southern Nevada, which consumes the coal and water from Black Mesa.

A new Sacred Lands Protection Coalition has linked many native communities and tribal leaders in a broader resistance movement, and the coalition will soon expand to include environmental and religious groups. These efforts led to a series of Congressional Oversight Hearings in 2002 and 2003 on threats to sacred lands. Members of the coalition are also urging Rep. Nick Rahall (D, WV) to rewrite and strengthen his Native American Sacred Lands Act (H.R. 2419) through closer consultation with tribal leaders

and religious practitioners. Meanwhile, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R, CO) has invited the coalition to draft legislation for him to introduce, and in California, both a statewide sacred site protection bill and a coastal zone sacred site bill are moving forward.

Other battles rage on—at the Missouri River, where Army Corps of Engineers dams and reservoirs erode cultural and burial sites; at Mt. Graham in Arizona, where two of seven planned telescopes have been built on the sacred peak; at the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, where oil exploration threatens caribou calving grounds; at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, where a



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

FLORENCE JONES, WINNEMEM WINTU, LEADS FIRE CEREMONY AT MT. SHASTA

*“If you look at the earth, there are certain places that seem to have power, and we don’t know what kind of power it is, except you have a different feeling, you feel energized. That’s why in a lot of the ceremonies you simply go out into the land at a certain place under supervision of a medicine man and open yourself up. And what I think is powerful about these religions is that you can continue to have revelations. All the revelation is telling you is how you and your community, at this time in life, can adjust to the rest of the world. So, it’s not like we designated a place and said, ‘This is going to be sacred.’ It came out of a lot of experience. The idea is not to pretend to own it, not to exploit it, but to respect it. Trying to get people to see that that’s a dimension of religion is really difficult.”*

— VINE DELORIA JR., FROM *IN THE LIGHT OF REVERENCE*

nuclear waste repository is being built; and at Bear Butte in South Dakota, where a proposed rifle range threatens to destroy the silence needed for vision quests, prayer ceremonies and sweat lodges. The attack on sacred places goes on.

## WHICH LENS TO CHOOSE?

AS WE SHOT and edited *In the Light of Reverence*, we struggled with the challenge of how to tell this complex story and simultaneously make a film that would be educational and promote progressive social change. We looked at various themes and considered the best frame of reference:

- Religious freedom
- Protection of biological and cultural diversity
- Environmental justice
- Designation and management of protected areas, parks and wilderness
- Historic preservation
- Indigenous peoples' rights to sovereignty, intellectual property, traditional homelands

A public relations or lobbying campaign usually focuses on a single theme, hones the message and sticks to it. But all of these themes are relevant to the complex issue of Native American sacred lands. Probing the ethical dimensions of sacred lands involves looking through all of these lenses, because each reflects different values, social priorities and responsibilities.

In the end, the documentary medium supplied our answer. Film is driven by conflict. As we edited the film and wrote draft after draft of narration, we realized that raising questions and stimulating dialogue would be far more appropriate than trying to dictate answers. Our focus became the culture clash, the collision of world views.

*The Sacred Land Reader* has the same basic intent as the film, but the written word gives us more room to explore and probe, plus the flexibility to look through a variety of different lenses.

## KEEPING THE SACRED IN SIGHT

WHY *SHOULD* people care about Native America's sacred places?

This struggle goes beyond environmental concerns about preserving biological and cultural diversity, extracting resources like water, coal, gold, and old growth timber, or dumping of toxic waste on Indian lands. It goes beyond the philosophical values we ascribe to religious freedom and environmental justice. It goes to our deepest need for meaning, identity and connection to home, to place, to community and to that elusive presence we call "the sacred."

What can each of us do to protect sacred sites? We can start by looking at the world in a new way, seeing beyond the superficial satisfactions of our consumer culture and reconnecting with what is most important in our own lives. Ask yourself: "What places are sacred to me and to my ancestors? What do I value about the land and the place I call home?"

Most of us consider ourselves to be environmentalists, but now we have to do more: incorporate sacred land into models for sustainable economic development, and reach consensus on



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Cameraman Will Parrinello and soundman Andy Black film Dalton Taylor, Hopi, at the Grand Canyon

which places are so important to the local community that they must be protected or restored, with Native Americans at the table and directing the dialogue. The result will be a big step toward reconciliation with our history, with the earth and with indigenous peoples.

All of creation is sacred, not just a few “sacred places,” and many others besides Native Americans feel this. We need to start living in recognition of this fact so we can protect the places we love, the land that sustains us.

Surely we are a big enough country—both in geography and in spirit—to respect and protect America’s sacred lands.



CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD directs *Earth Island Institute’s Sacred Land Film Project*. He produced the award-winning PBS film on Native American sacred places, *In the Light of Reverence* (2001). He is also a photographer and writer, and has worked with indigenous communities for 25 years. McLeod’s other films include *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?* (1983), *Downwind/Downstream* (1988), *Poison in the Rockies* (1990), *Voices of the Land* (1990) and *The Cracking of Glen Canyon Damn—With Edward Abbey and Earth First!* (1982).



# THE SACRED LAND READER

RESPECT AND PROTECTION start with understanding. *The Sacred Land Reader* compiles some of the last 10 years' best essays exploring the meaning and importance of sacred places:

Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr., wrote "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom" in 1990 as part of a campaign to amend the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

U.C.L.A. anthropologist and film advisor Peter Nabokov's piece, "Sacred Places of Native America," expands directly on our film, *In the Light of Reverence*, puts our three stories in a wider context, and goes more deeply into the three places and cultures profiled in the film.

"Wintu Sacred Geography" was written by Dorothea Theodoratus, an anthropologist and a film advisor, and Frank LaPena, a renowned Wintu artist, to support efforts to protect places of spiritual significance.

The Hopi perspective is explored in "Managing Hopi Sacred Sites to Protect Religious Freedom" by Hopi Cultural Preservation Officer Leigh

Kuwanwisiwma, and archaeologists Kurt E. Dongoske and T J. Ferguson.

This first edition of *The Sacred Land Reader* concludes with "Freedom, Law, and Prophecy: A Brief History of Native American Religious Resistance," by historian Lee Irwin, a chronicle of how the U.S. government and missionaries suppressed Indian religions for 100 years.

We hope you enjoy *The Sacred Land Reader* and will explore our Web site—[www.sacredland.org](http://www.sacredland.org)—to learn more about threatened sacred places and what you can do to help protect them.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** To help support the grassroots struggles mentioned above, we have created a Sacred Land Defense Team. You can join by visiting the Sacred Land Film Project Web site at [www.sacredland.org](http://www.sacredland.org); by e-mailing your contact info to [slfp@igc.org](mailto:slfp@igc.org); or by writing to: Sacred Land Film Project, P.O. Box C-151, La Honda, CA 94020. Learn more about threatened sacred places at [www.sacredland.org/involved.html](http://www.sacredland.org/involved.html).





## INTRODUCTION

# SACRED LANDS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

~ by Vine Deloria Jr.

**S**INCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, Indian tribal Holy Men have gone into the high places, lakes, and isolated sanctuaries to pray, receive guidance from the Spirits, and train younger people in the ceremonies that constitute the spiritual life of the tribal community. In these ceremonies, medicine men represented the whole web of cosmic life in the continuing search for balance and harmony. Through various rituals in which birds, animals, and plants were participants, harmony of life was achieved and maintained.

After the tribes were forcibly removed from their aboriginal homelands and forced to live on restricted smaller reservations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs prohibited many ceremonies and the people were forced to adopt various subterfuges so that ceremonial life could continue. Some tribes conducted their most important ceremonies on national holidays and Christian feast days, explaining to curious whites that they were simply honoring George Washington or celebrating Christmas and Easter. Since many shrines and holy places were isolated and rural parts of the continent were not being exploited or settled, it was easy for small parties of people to go into the mountains or to remote lakes and

buttes to conduct ceremonies without interference from non-Indians. Most Indians did not see any conflict between their old beliefs and the new religions of the white man, and, consequently, a surprising number of people participated in the ancient rituals while maintaining membership in a Christian denomination.

During the last century, the expanding national population and the introduction of



*Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr., speaking after a screening of In the Light of Reverence at the Department of the Interior in Washington in March 2002. He asked, "How are we going to present the sacred to people who have no idea what is sacred?"*

corporate farming and more extensive mining and timber industry activities reduced the isolation of rural America. Pressures to develop public and reservation lands made it increasingly difficult for traditional native people to conduct their religious ceremonies and rituals.

Since many sacred sites were on public lands, religious leaders often were able to work out informal arrangements with federal agencies to allow them access to these places for religious purposes. But as personnel changed in state and federal agencies, a new generation of bureaucrats, fearful of setting precedents, began to restrict Indian access to sacred sites by narrowing the rules and regulations for managing public lands.

In an effort to clarify the status of traditional religious practices and practitioners, Congress in 1978 passed The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, a joint resolution that declared it the policy of Congress to protect and preserve American Indians' inherent right to believe, express, and practice their traditional religions. The resolution identified the problem as one of a "lack of knowledge or the insensitive and inflexible and enforcement of federal policies and regulations." Section 2 of the resolution directed the President to have various federal departments evaluate their policies and procedures and report back to Congress the results of this investigation and any recommendations for legislative action.

Most people assumed that the resolution clarified federal attitudes toward traditional religions, and it began to be cited in litigation involving the construction of dams, roads, and the management of federal lands. Almost unanimously, however, the federal courts ruled that the resolution contained nothing that protected or preserved the right of Indians to



Joe Chasing Horse (Lakota) in the Black Hills

WILL PARRINELLO

practice their religion and conduct ceremonies at sacred sites on public lands. Some courts even hinted darkly that *any* recognition of the tribal practices would be tantamount to establishing a state religion, an interpretation which upon analysis was a dreadful misreading of American history and the

Constitution and may have been an effort to inflame anti-Indian feelings.

## SUPREME COURT RULES: NO CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION

IN 1988, THE SUPREME COURT heard *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, a case that involved access to sacred sites high up in the Chimney Rock area of the Six Rivers National Forest in Northern California. The Forest Service proposed to build a six-mile paved logging road that would have opened the high country to commercial logging, destroying the isolation of the ceremonial sites of three tribes and introducing new processes of environmental degradation. The lower federal courts prohibited construction of the road on the grounds that it would have made religious ceremonial use of the area impossible. Before the Supreme Court could hear the appeal, Congress passed the California Wilderness Act, thereby making the question almost moot (because much of the high country was protected as wilderness and the logging road threat was eliminated). The Supreme Court, nevertheless, insisted on deciding the religious issues and ruled that even the Free Exercise clause did not prevent the government from using its property any way it saw fit.

Most troubling about the Supreme Court's decision was its insistence on analyzing tribal

religions within the same conceptual framework as Western organized religions. Justice O'Connor observed, "A broad range of government activities—from social welfare programs to foreign aid to conservation projects—will always be considered essential to the spiritual well-being of some citizens, often on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs. Others will find the very same activity deeply offensive, and perhaps incompatible with their own search for spiritual fulfillment and with the tenets of their religion."

Thus, ceremonies and rituals performed for thousands of years were treated as if they were personal fads or matters of modern, emotional, personal preference based upon the erroneous assumption that belief and behavior can be separated. Justice Brennan dissented and vigorously attacked this line of reasoning but failed to gather support within the court. Most observers of the Supreme Court were simply confounded at the majority's conclusion, which suggested that destroying a religion did not unduly burden the religion and that no constitutional protections were available to the Indians.

When informed of the meaning of this decision, most people show great sympathy for traditionally religious people. At the same time, those people find it difficult to understand why it is so important that ceremonies be held, that they be conducted only at certain locations, and that they be held under conditions of extreme secrecy and privacy. These problems in understanding highlight the great gulf that exists between traditional Western thinking about religion and the Indian perspective. It is the difference between individual conscience and commitment (Western) and communal tradition (Indian), and

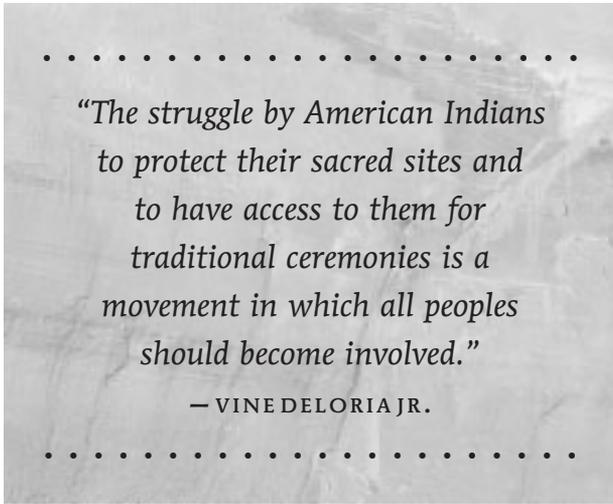
these views can only be reconciled by examining them in a much broader historical and geographical context.

Justice Brennan attempted to make this difference clear when he observed that, "Although few tribal members actually made medicine at the most powerful sites, the entire tribe's welfare hinges on the success of individual practitioners." More than that, however, the "World Renewal" ceremonies conducted by the tribes were done on behalf of the earth and all forms of life. To characterize the ceremonies as if they were a matter of personal, emotional or even communal aesthetic preferences, as was done by Justice

O'Connor, is to miss the point entirely. In effect, the court declares that Indians cannot pray for the planet or for other people and other forms of life in the manner required by their religions.

Two contradictory responses seem to describe the non-Indian attitudes toward

traditional tribal religions: Some people want the medicine men and women to share their religious beliefs in the same manner as priests, rabbis, and ministers, who publicly expound the tenets of their denominations; others feel that Indian ceremonials are remnants of primitive life and should be abandoned. Neither perspective understands that Indian tribes are communities in fundamental ways that other American communities and organizations are not. Tribal communities are wholly defined by family relationships, whereas non-Indian communities are defined primarily by residence or by agreement with sets of intellectual beliefs. Ceremonial and ritual knowledge is possessed by everyone in the Indian community, although only a few people may actually be chosen to perform these acts.



Authorization to perform ceremonies comes from higher spiritual powers and not by certification from an institution or formal organization.

The Indian community passes knowledge along over the generations as a common heritage that is enriched by the experiences of both individuals and groups of people in the ceremonies. Both the ceremony and the people's interpretation of it change as new insights are gained. By contrast, the non-Indian communities establish educational institutions which examine, clarify and sometimes radically change knowledge to fit their needs. Knowledge is the possession of an exclusive group of people—the scholars and the professionals who deeply believe that the rank and file of their communities are not intelligent enough to understand the esoteric truths of their society. Basic truths about the world are not expected to change, regardless of the experiences of any generation, and “leading authorities” are granted infallibility based on their professional status alone.

## DEFINING SACREDNESS

IN A NON-INDIAN context, an individual or group of non-Indians may come to believe in the sacredness of lands based on their experiences or on intensive study of preselected evidence. But this belief becomes the subject of intense criticism and does not, except under unusual circumstances, become an operative principle in the life and behavior of the non-Indian group. The same belief, when seen in an Indian context, is an integral part of the experiences of the people—

past, present, and future. The idea does not become a bone of contention among the people, for even if someone does not have experience or belief in the sacredness of lands, he or she accords tradition the respect that it deserves. Indians who have never visited certain sacred sites nevertheless know of these places from the general community knowledge, and they feel them to be an essential part of their being.

Justice Brennan, in countering the near-demagogic statement by Justice O'Connor, that recognition of the sacredness of certain sites would allow traditional Indian religions to define the use of all public lands, suggested that the burden of proof be placed on traditional people to demonstrate why some sites are central to their practice and other sites, while invoking a sense of reverence, are not as important. This requirement is not unreasonable, but it requires a willingness

on the part of non-Indians and the courts to entertain different ideas which, until the present, have not been part of their experience or understanding. The subject is considerably more complex than most people expect.

If we were to subject the topic of the sacredness of lands to a Western rational analysis, fully recognizing that such an analysis is merely for our convenience in discussion and does not represent the nature of reality, we would probably find four major categories to describe sacredness. Some categories certainly overlap in the sense that different individuals and groups have already sorted out their own beliefs so that they would reject the classification of certain sites in the categories



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*“Tradition tells us that there are, on this earth, some places of inherent sacredness, sites that are Holy in and of themselves.”*

— VINE DELORIA JR.

in which Indians would place them. Nevertheless, it is the principle of respect for the sacred that is important.

The first and most familiar sacred lands are those places to which we attribute a sacredness because the location is a site where, within our own history, regardless of our group, something of great importance took place. Unfortunately, many of these places are related to instances of human violence; Gettysburg National Cemetery is a good example of this kind of sacred land. Abraham Lincoln properly noted that we cannot hallow the battlefield at Gettysburg because others, the men who fought there, had already consecrated it by giving “that last full measure of devotion.” We generally hold these places sacred because there men did what we might one day be required to do—give our lives in a cause we hold dear. Wounded Knee, South Dakota, is such a place for many Indians. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., might be an example of a location with a nonviolent background.

Every society needs these kinds of sacred places. They help to instill a sense of social cohesion in the people and remind them of the passage of the generations that have brought them to the present. A society that cannot remember its past and does not honor it is in peril of losing its soul. Indians, because of our considerably longer tenure on this continent, have many more of these kinds of sacred places than do non-Indians. Many different kinds of ceremonies can and have been held at these locations, and there is both exclusivity and inclusiveness depending upon the occasion and the ceremony. In this classification, the site is all-important, but it is sanctified each time ceremonies are held and prayers offered there.

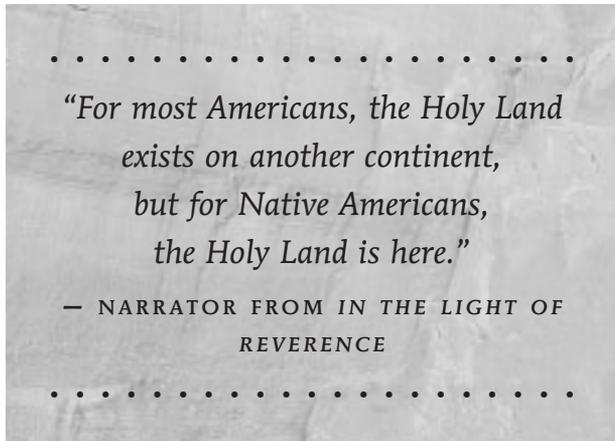
A second classification of sacred lands has a deeper, more profound sense of the sacred. It can be illustrated in Old Testament stories that have become the foundation of two world religions. After the death of Moses, Joshua led the Hebrews across the River Jordan into the Holy Land. On approaching the river with the Ark of the Covenant, the waters of the Jordan “rose up” or parted, and the people, led by the Ark, crossed

over on “dry ground,” which is to say they crossed without difficulty. After crossing, Joshua selected one man from each of the 12 tribes and told him to find a large stone. The 12 stones were then placed together in a monument to mark the spot where the people

had camped after having crossed the river successfully. When asked about this strange behavior, Joshua replied, “That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What mean ye by these stones?’ Then you shall answer them: That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan” (Joshua 4:6-7).

In comparing this sacred site with Gettysburg, we must understand a fundamental difference. Gettysburg is made sacred by the actions of men. It can be described as exquisitely dear to us, but it is not a location where something specifically religious has happened. In the crossing of the River Jordan, the sacred appeared in the lives of human beings; the sacred appeared in an otherwise secular situation. No matter how we might attempt to explain this event in later historical, political, or economic terms, the essence of the event is that the sacred has become a part of our experience.

Some of the sites that traditional religious leaders visit are of a similar nature. Thus Buffalo



Gap in the southeastern edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota marks the location where the buffalo emerged each spring to begin the ceremonial year of the Plains Indians. It may indeed be the starting point of the Great Race, which determined the

primacy between the two-leggeds and four-leggeds at the beginning of this world. Several mountains in New Mexico and Arizona mark places where the Pueblo, Hopi, and Navajo peoples completed their migrations and were told to settle, or where they first established their spiritual relationships with bear, deer, eagle, and the other forms of life who participate in the ceremonials. As we extend the circle geographically, we must include the Apache, Ute, Comanche, Kiowa and other tribes. East of the Mississippi, even though many places have been nearly obliterated, people still have knowledge of these sacred sites.

In the religious world of most tribes, birds, animals, and plants compose the “other peoples” of creation and, depending on the ceremony, various of these peoples participate in human activities. If Jews and Christians see the action of a single deity at sacred places and in churches and synagogues, traditional Indian people see considerably more activity as the whole of creation becomes an active participant in ceremonial life. Since the relationship with the “other peoples” is so fundamental to the human community, most traditional practitioners are very reluctant to articulate the specific elements of either the ceremony or the location. And since some ceremonies involve the continued good health and prosperity of the “other peoples,” discussing the nature of the ceremony would violate the integrity of these relationships. Thus, when traditional people explain that these ceremonies are being held for “all our relatives,” that explanation should be sufficient. It is these

.....  
*“Ancient wisdom speaks directly  
 to pressing modern concerns. In sacred  
 sites lies a vision of our future and the  
 planet on which we live.”*

— VINE DELORIA JR.  
 .....

ceremonies in particular that the Supreme Court’s rulings now prohibit.

It is unlikely that non-Indians have had these kinds of experiences, particularly since most churches and synagogues have special rituals which are

designed to denaturalize the buildings so that their services can be held there. Non-Indians have simply not been on this continent very long; their families have moved about constantly, so they have forfeited any kind of relationship that might have been possible. Additionally, non-Indians have engaged in senseless killings of wildlife and utter destruction of plant life, and it is unlikely that they would have understood any effort by other forms of life to communicate. But it is also a fact of human experience that some non-Indians, who have lived in relative isolation in rural areas and whose families have lived continuously in certain locations, tell stories about birds and animals not unlike the traditions of many tribes.

The third kind of sacred lands are places of overwhelming holiness where higher powers, on their own initiative, have revealed themselves to human beings. Again we can use an Old Testament narrative to illustrate this kind of location. Prior to his trip to Egypt, Moses herded his father-in-law’s sheep on and near Mount Horeb. One day he took the flock to the far side of the mountain, and to his amazement he saw a bush burning with fire but not being consumed. Approaching this spot with the usual curiosity of a person accustomed to the outdoor life, Moses was startled when the Lord spoke to him from the bush, warning, “Draw not hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, *for the place whereupon thou standest is holy ground*” (Exodus 3:5, emphasis added).

This tradition tells us that there are, on this

earth, some places of inherent sacredness, sites that are holy in and of themselves. Human societies come and go on this earth, and any prolonged occupation of a geographical region will produce shrines and sacred sites discerned by the occupying people. One need only to look at the shrines of present-day Europe and read the archaeology of the sites to understand that long before Catholic or Protestant churches were built in certain places, many other religions had established their shrines and temples on those spots. These holy places are locations where human beings have always gone to communicate and be with higher spiritual powers. This phenomenon is worldwide and all religions find that these places regenerate people and fill them with spiritual powers. In the Western Hemisphere these places, with some few exceptions, are known only by American Indians. Bear Butte, Blue Lake and the High Places of the *Lyng* case are all well-known locations which are sacred in and of themselves.

Among the duties that must be performed at these holy places are ceremonies that the people have been commanded to perform in order that the earth itself and all its forms of life might survive. Some evidence of this sacred dimension, and of other sacred places, came through in the testimony of traditional people at various times in the 20th century when they explained to non-Indians, in and out of court, that they must perform certain kinds of ceremonies, at certain times and places, in order that the sun may continue to shine, the earth prosper, and the stars remain in the heavens.

Skeptical non-Indians and representatives of other religions seeking to discredit tribal religions have sometimes deliberately violated some of

these holy places with no ill effects. They have thereupon come to believe that they have demonstrated the false nature of Indian beliefs. These violations reveal a strange non-Indian belief in a form of mechanical magic that is touchingly adolescent, a belief that an impious act can trigger an immediate response from the higher spiritual powers. Surely these impious acts suggest the concept of a deity who spends time recording minor transgressions, as some Protestant sects have envisioned God. It would be impossible for the thoughtless acts of one species to have a drastic effect on the earth. The *cumulative* effect of continuous secularity, however, poses an entirely different kind of danger, and prophecies tell us of the impious people who would come here, defy



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*Bear Butte, South Dakota*

the Creator, and bring about the massive destruction of the planet. Many traditional people believe that we are now quite near that time.

Of all the traditional ceremonies extant and actively practiced at the time of contact with non-Indians, ceremonies derived from or related to these holy places have the highest retention rate because of their planetary importance. Ironically, traditional people have been forced to hold these ceremonies under various forms of subterfuge and have been abused and imprisoned for doing them. Yet the ceremonies have very little to do with individual or tribal prosperity. Their underlying theme is one of gratitude expressed by human



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*“It’s not that Indians should have exclusive rights there, it’s that that location is sacred enough so that it should have time of its own, and once it has time of its own then the people who know how to do ceremonies should come and minister to it. That’s so hard to get across to people.”*

— VINE DELORIA JR. FROM *IN THE LIGHT OF REVERENCE*

beings on behalf of all forms of life, and they complete the largest possible cycle of life, ultimately representing the cosmos in its specific realizations, becoming thankfully aware of itself.

Having used Old Testament examples to show the objective presense of the holy, we can draw additional conclusions about the nature of these holy places from the story of the Exodus. Moses did not make that particular location of the burning bush an object of worship for his people, although there was every reason to suppose that he could have done so. Rather he obeyed and acted on the revelation he received there. In the absence of further information, we must conclude that this location was so holy that he could not reveal its secret to other people. If he had been told to perform ceremonies at that location during specific days or times of the year, world history would have been entirely different. In that case, the particular message received at these locations becomes a definitive divine command which people must then follow. We have many tribal migration stories that involve this particular kind of divine command, and sacred sites that

originate in the same revelation. For traditional Indian religious leaders who have been told to perform ceremonies as spiritual guardians of this continent, there is no question of obedience.

The second and third categories of sacred lands result from revelations of the Holy at certain locations. The ceremonies that belong to these sacred sites involve a process of continuous revelation and provide the people with the information they need to maintain a balance in their relationships with the earth and other forms of life. Because there are higher spiritual powers who are in communication with human beings, there has to be a fourth category of sacred lands. Human beings must always be ready to receive new revelations at new locations. If this possibility did not exist, all deities and spirits would be dead. Consequently, we always look forward to the revelation of new sacred places and new ceremonies. Unfortunately, some federal courts have irrationally and arbitrarily circumscribed this universal aspect of religion by insisting that traditional religious practitioners restrict their identification of sacred locations to those places

that were historically visited by Indians, implying that, at least for the federal courts, God is dead.

In denying the possibility of the continuing revelation of the sacred in our lives, federal courts, scholars and state and federal agencies refuse to accord credibility to the testimony of religious leaders, demand evidence that a ceremony or location has *always* been central to the belief and practices of the tribe, and impose exceedingly rigorous standards on Indians who appear before them. This practice does exactly what the Supreme Court avows is not to be done—it allows the courts to rule on the substance of religious belief and practice. In other words, courts will protect a religion if it shows every symptom of being dead but will severely restrict it if it appears to be alive.

Today a major crisis exists in Indian country because of the *Lyng* decision. As the dissent noted, there is no real protection for the practice of traditional religions within the framework of American constitutional or statutory law. Courts usually dismiss Indian petitions automatically without evidentiary hearings and at the same time insist that traditional people identify the “central belief” of the tribal religion. Presumably this demand is benign and made with the hope that by showing centrality for the site or ceremony, courts will be able to uphold some form of constitutional protection on some future occasion.

As human beings, we live in time and space and receive most of our signals about proper behavior primarily from each other. Under these circumstances, both the individual and the group *must* have some kind of sanctity if we are to have a social order at all. By recognizing the sacredness of lands in the many aspects we have described, we place ourselves in a realistic context in which individuals and groups can cultivate and enhance the experience of the sacred. Recognizing the sacredness of lands on which previous generations have lived and died is the foundation of all other sentiments. Instead of denying this aspect of our lives, we should be setting aside additional places which have transcendent meaning.

Sacred sites that higher powers have chosen for manifestation enable us to focus our concerns on the specific form of our lives. These places remind us of our unique relationship with spiritual forces and call us to fulfill our religious vocations. These kinds of experiences have shown us something of the nature of the universe by an affirmative manifestation of themselves, and this knowledge illuminates everything else that we know.

## PROTECTING SACRED SITES: NATIONAL BENEFITS

THE STRUGGLE by American Indians to protect their sacred sites and to have access to them for traditional ceremonies is a movement in which all peoples should become involved. The federal agencies charged with managing public lands, which argue that to give recognition to any form of traditional tribal religion is to establish that religion, have raised a false issue. No other religion in this country speaks to the issue of the human relationship with the rest of the universe in this manner. The alternative use of land proposed by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service allows the rapid exploitation of natural resources by a few favored private clients—a wholly secular and destructive use of the lands.



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

The truly ironic aspect of modern land use is that during the last three decades, Congress has passed many laws which purport to protect certain kinds of lands and resources from the very developers who now seek to exclude Indian religious people from using public lands. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Wilderness Act, the National Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and several other statutes all take definite steps to protect and preserve the environment in a manner more reminiscent of traditional Native American religions than that of uncontrolled capitalism or the domination of land expounded by the world religions. No real progress can be made in environmental law unless some of the insights into the sacredness of land derived from traditional tribal religions become basic attitudes of the larger society.

At present, legal remedies for Indian religious practitioners are limited to procedures provided by various environmental and historic preservation laws that may, in some circumstances, indirectly protect sites. The only existing law directly addressing this issue, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, is simply a policy statement with “no teeth.” It has led to some administrative regulations and policies that give limited additional opportunities for input, but it provides no legal cause of action to aggrieved practitioners.

## THREATENED SITES

IN 2003, EXAMPLES OF threatened sacred sites are Zuni Salt Lake in New Mexico, Indian Pass and Medicine Lake in California, Weatherman Draw in Montana, and Yucca Mountain in Nevada. There are many others.

The Department of Interior has issued a permit for the Salt River Project, an Arizona utility, to open an 18,000-acre coal stripmine within a sanctuary used by the Zuni and other tribes on pilgrimages for salt. The mine threatens to dry up

Zuni Salt Lake, home of the Salt Mother deity, who lives in the aquifers beneath the lake, and through the flow of water provides salt to the people for protection and sustenance.

The Quechan people of Southern California are fighting a proposed open-pit gold mine amidst a network of trails used for spiritual practices for 10,000 years. After six years of hearings and studies, the Department of the Interior protected Indian Pass during the Clinton administration, but the Bush administration reversed that decision and re-opened the permit process for a massive cyanide heap-leach gold mine.



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*Harvesting salt at Zuni Salt Lake*

At Medicine Lake, near Mount Shasta, geothermal energy may soon be tapped in a vision questing area of great importance to the Pit River Tribe. Bush administration officials in the BLM and Forest Service in November 2002 reversed minimal protections provided just two years earlier, and approved a geothermal power plant within one mile of the lake. Calpine Corp. is drilling exploratory wells and an industrial labyrinth of roads and transmission towers is being planned for this remote mountainous area.

Weatherman Draw, a valley that contains one of the highest concentrations of rock art in the country, is threatened by oil drilling. In early

2002, the National Trust for Historic Preservation bought some time by purchasing the current leases from the Anschutz Oil Company, but the Bureau of Land Management can still proceed with leasing in the future.

By the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, Yucca Mountain is under the jurisdiction of Shoshone and Paiute peoples. In 1977, the Indian Claims Commission offered the Western Shoshone \$26 million for their treaty lands. The Shoshone refused, maintaining that their religion prevented them from selling the land. In July 2002, a bill approving the burial of 77,000 tons of high-level radioactive waste in Yucca Mountain passed the Senate by a 60-39 vote, overriding a veto by the state of Nevada, and President Bush signed his approval.

As a result of these ongoing threats, the Sacred Lands Protection Coalition—including the Association on American Indian Affairs, Seventh Generation Fund, the National Congress of American Indians, as well as tribes and other Indian organizations—is seeking legislation that

will provide a legal cause of action when government or corporate actions are likely to affect sacred places. New legislation should provide for more extensive notice to and consultation with tribes and affected parties in such circumstances, and for strict confidentiality with regard to details about sacred lands.

New legislation would ensure that the principle of religious freedom, rightfully urged upon the rest of the world by the United States, truly incorporates and applies to the unique needs of Indian religions.



VINE DELORIA JR. is a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. A noted author, theologian, historian, and attorney, he is uniquely qualified to address Native American religious freedom and sacred land issues. He is author of *Custer Died for Your Sins*, *God Is Red, For This Land* and many other books.



# SACRED PLACES OF NATIVE AMERICA

~ by Peter Nabokov

*“Every society needs these kinds of sacred places. They help to instill a sense of social cohesion in the people and remind them of the passage of the generations that have brought them to the present. A society that cannot remember its past and honor it is in peril of losing its soul.”*

— VINE DELORIA JR.



## EUROPE MEETS A NEW HOLY LAND

**I**N JULY 7, 1540, some of the earliest European soldiers to invade North America stumbled upon the powers of an American Indian sacred place. That evening a train of Spanish horsemen and wagons led by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado approached the adobe houses of *Hawikuh*, a Zuni Indian village which was located just east of the present-day New Mexico-Arizona state border.

According to Zuni Indian memory, these bearded “men in metal” had shown up just as the tribe was celebrating its summer solstice ceremonies. During this four-day affair, a single file line of about 60 pilgrims and elders leave their pueblos and embark on the “barefoot trail.” Also known as the “pathway to heaven”—

*ko:thluwala:wa*—the path leads 55 miles west to a place where the Zuni River flows between two mountains before it reaches the Little Colorado. The Zuni believe that this is where their spirits travel after death, ending up where a special spring feeds a sacred, underground lake. At this lake the departed are said to dance with the spirits, who are known as *Kokko*. Not far away is the mountain where the holy Zuni clowns, the *Koyemshi*, were first created. Some Zunis have described the route from their homes to this holy terrain as “a spiritual lifeline.”

The entire atmosphere during the pilgrimage is one of great solemnity; the Indians make offerings, pray and gather natural pigments in an attempt to bring peace and order to the whole



SALLY COLE

But Coronado didn't understand or didn't care about the Indian ceremonies. So a bloody fight ensued—the first major warfare between Indians and Europeans in North America.

Today, the Zuni people continue to undertake those foot pilgrimages to their sacred lake.

For a great many of the 300 or so distinctive Indian cultures in aboriginal North America—not to mention for the native societies of Central and South America as well—spiritual ties such as these to their natural environments were

world, to unite the generations over time, to commemorate their origins, and to maintain proper relations between human beings and the universe. This was the religious process which the Spanish were interrupting in 1540, and the sacred landscape they were violating.

During their trek the Zuni insist that no one may cross the pilgrims' path, which has been consecrated with cornmeal. And so it is said that priests of their Bow Society yelled at the Spaniards not to endanger the pilgrims, warning them "don't cross the trail." When the foreigners did not halt, the Zuni tried to frighten them away. The following day, as Coronado's command came upon *Hawikuh* village, they spotted people on the rooftops making smoke signals, probably part of the same solstice ritual which involved sending rain-making symbols ahead to the little "fire god"—*Shu'la:witsi*—whose masked impersonator was accompanying the pilgrims to the sacred lake, the doorway to "Zuni Heaven."

When Coronado's men tried to press forward, Indian priests sprinkled yet another protective line of cornmeal at the entrance to the village, in effect alerting them again, "Do not enter, now, because we're having a ceremony that you should not disrupt." Almost certainly their anxiety was due to concern for the safe and auspicious re-entry of their pilgrims back home.

absolutely essential to native identities, religious concepts and notions of basic truth. And for many contemporary Indians, they still are.

## WHAT ARE LAND-BASED RELIGIONS?

ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, a wide range of religious beliefs and practices directed tribes of people toward proper relationships with their encompassing cosmos and immediate surroundings, including its winged and four-legged inhabitants, its rocks, trees and waters. Special ceremonies assured the seasonal bounties of wild foods and agricultural produce. Individual and group ceremonies tied Indians to the spirits that they believed inhabited their immediate skies, trees, groves, mountains, volcanic fields, caves, lakes, rivers, waterfalls and springs.

Risky as it is to make generalizations about all North American Indians, it is safe to say that the great majority of tribes also designated certain locales as supernaturally potent and especially beneficial—as "sacred." The historian of religions Mircea Eliade coined the awkward term *hierophany* to explain what happens at such special places. At these places "the sacred manifests itself." In these locations, the supernatural realm with all its powers—positive and negative—

asserts itself into the ordinary world.

For Indian societies these were time-honored, proven spots for human beings to seek out and transact with the unseen beings and forces that inhabit the universe. At such locations aspiring shamans, leaders, warriors, lovers, hunters and gamblers might acquire that special “edge” and boost their fortunes through supernatural grace or assistance.

In addition, Indian creation stories and folk tales are often quite specific as to their geographical settings. Studying them closely, we learn of sacred sites where a tribe’s original ancestors either descended from an above-world (as with the Iroquois of the Northeast), or emerged out of an underworld (as with the Pueblos of the Southwest). We hear of places that are still revered for being the climax of lengthy migrations (by whole ethnic groups or by separate clans who later merged, as with the Hopi of Arizona) to a “promised land” (as with the Crow of Montana or the Choctaw of Mississippi).

Through such oral traditions we also discover how the formation of some landscapes was attributed to the dramatic actions of mythological beings during a long-ago Age of Transformation—such as the work of the Trickster figure, Coyote, who fashioned many of the outcrops, hills and riverfronts of Oregon and Idaho’s landscape, as described in stories told by the Nez Perce and neighboring tribes. For other native nations, such as the Hopi, the Hidatsa of North Dakota or the Yaqui of Sonora, there remain boundary shrines, which circumscribe

entire territories whose political integrity is reinforced by creation or migration narratives that describe them as “holy lands.”

But Indians also treasured other portions of the natural environment for more down-to-earth reasons. Such locations nurtured medicinal herbs, special roots, plants for eating, basket-making or textile arts, minerals for body paints and ground “dry” paintings, and springs renowned for their healing powers. Certain meadows, underbrush or water sources might attract animals or fish, or the twists and contours of particular river valleys might prove conducive to trapping, fishing or

killing game, and so Indians might use and treasure those same sites year after year. Generally, tribes also took special care to either memorialize (or studiously avoid) those places where blood had been shed in intertribal warfare. And for many Indians, the interment of their dead lent a poignant sanctity to cemetery plots, effigy mounds or burial caves.

ONE SCHOLAR who has devoted much of his career to studying the

wide range of Indian sacred sites is Colorado anthropologist Deward E. Walker Jr. Over the years, Walker has come up with the following useful checklist of “major types” of such culturally sensitive Indian places that comprise “sacred geography”:

1. Vision quest sites.
2. Monumental geological features that possess extraordinary (and usually mythic) significance, such as mountains, waterfalls or

.....

*“We consider archaeological sites to be shrines and living entities. This is where our ancestral people lived, and when they left they laid these villages to rest. When you disturb an archaeological site, in our Hopi view, you disturb a living entity. They are meant to be silent—they hold the spirits of our ancestral people, and the sites themselves have life and spirit.”*

— LEIGH KUWANWISIWMA,  
HOPI CULTURAL PRESERVATION OFFICE

.....

unusual natural formations.

3. Rock art sites, such as pictographs or petroglyphs.
4. Burial areas and cemeteries.
5. Sites of ceremonial structures, such as medicine wheels or sun dance arbors.
6. Sweat bath sites.
7. Gathering areas where medicinal plants, stones and natural materials are available.
8. Sites of historical significance, such as battlefields.
9. The points where a group is described in creation stories to have originated, or routes they hallowed in myth.

To this list one might add shrines, sites of puberty initiation rituals, “homes” of rain or bounty-bringing spirits, and “opening” places to the supernatural world.

Whether with a band of fellow tribesfolk or utterly alone, Indians often left offerings of food, tobacco or other gifts at such places. Plains Indians and other tribes offered painful sacrifices there, suffering thirst and hunger as they pleaded for blessings and power. During key moments in some ritual calendars (such as the Zuni solstice ceremony described above), Indians uttered prayers, sang songs or undertook collective pilgrimages to these locations. Yet the powers of these places could also prompt the opposite behavior. For Indians might take pains to detour around some spots because they were the well-known homes of especially dangerous or unpredictable spirit-beings with whom only the

bravest men and women dared make contact.

The Lakota author Vine Deloria Jr. has written extensively about the central importance of sacred places in American Indian consciousness. Attempting to communicate their diversity to non-Indian readers, he has proposed four main categories of sacred lands, and sometimes uses non-Indian examples to help illustrate them. His first category includes places where something significant took place. Here he is referring to spots of historical importance that have been created by human action, such as the Gettysburg Battlefield for non-Indians, or the Wounded Knee massacre site in South Dakota for Indians.

Deloria’s second grouping includes places that have been created by the actions of mysterious, sacred forces or supernatural beings. Recorded in myths and legends, these actions have lent signifi-

cance to thousands of often-forgotten Indian places across North America. As examples, he cites places such as “Buffalo Gap in the southeastern edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota, which marks the location where the buffalo emerged each spring to begin the ceremonial year of the Plains Indian.... Several mountains in New Mexico and Arizona mark places where the Pueblo, Hopi, and Navajo peoples completed their migrations, were told to settle, or where they first established their spiritual relationships with bear, deer, eagle and other forms of life who participate in the ceremonials.”

Deloria’s third category covers locations where the divine revealed itself to human beings. His non-Indian example of these



WILL PARRINELLO

VINE DELORIA JR., LAKOTA SCHOLAR

*“The attitude of our species is that this whole thing was created for us. It has no value except how we use it. The basic problem is that American society is a ‘rights society’ not a ‘responsibilities society.’ What you’ve got is each individual saying, ‘Well, I have a right to do this.’ Having religious places, revolving your religion around that, means you are always in contact with the earth, you’re responsible for it and to it.”*

powerful places is the Old Testament story of the burning bush on Mount Horeb, which spoke to Moses and warned him, “Draw not hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Sites associated with similar supernatural revelations are highly regarded by many Indian tribes across North America. However, “In the Western Hemisphere,” writes Deloria, “these places, with some few exceptions, are known only to American Indians. Bear Butte, Blue Lake and the High Places [in northwestern California]...are all well-known locations which are sacred in and of themselves.... Among the duties which must be performed at these holy places are ceremonies which the people have been commanded to perform in order that the earth itself and all its forms of life might survive.”

In Deloria’s fourth and final category of sacred land, we are reminded that American Indian peoples and their religions are not dead and gone. “Human beings must always be ready to receive new revelations at new locations,” he continues, emphasizing that “we always look forward to the revelation of new, sacred places and new cereonies.” Here he reserves for Indians the continuing right to worship in their own ways, and for their religions and cultures to remain creatively engaged in the world. But Deloria acknowledges that this final category of sacred sites yet-to-be faces its greatest challenge under the non-Indian’s judicial system, which “will protect a religion if it shows every symptom of being dead but will severely restrict it if it appears to be alive.”

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to find an American Indian nation without some claims to being rooted in its particular landscape in some supernatural or extraordinary fashion. While varying from tribe to tribe in historical background or religious rationale, this preoccupation with being anchored to a particular North American regional landscape is usually a foundation of Indian identity.

## THE LONG SIEGE AGAINST INDIAN RELIGIONS

WITH THE ARRIVAL of European Christianity in the 16th century, the heavy hand of religious repression descended upon native belief systems and their environments. Christianity followed an exclusive creed. Competing belief systems that revered multiple spirits to be found in rocks and the winds were condemned as pagan and evil. The crusade against Indian sacred places began in Latin America, as Catholics studied native religions closely to identify their ceremonial centers and stamp them out. In defense, the Incas, Mayas and Mexican Indian peoples adopted two strategies: *syncretism* and *subterfuge*.

First, colonized native villagers took full advantage of Catholicism’s readiness to “indigenize” its rituals and precepts, allowing for animal dancers to honor their Saints’ Days and even their blessed Virgin, and permitting the old offerings of chocolate, tobacco and distilled liquors. *Syncretism* is one term for this blending of pre-Christian and Catholic rituals. But Indians also used *subterfuge* to hide or camouflage their beliefs. At old sanctuaries such as limestone wells, caves of origin or sacred groves, they fed hidden effigies and prayed to their old deities of rainfall, mountains and corn.

When Protestant settlers began moving into New England’s Indian territories, they proved even less tolerant of native ways. Christian clerics and the Algonquian Indian shamans known as *powwows* struggled against each other over allegiance to their respective belief systems. Some 17th century missionaries established special “praying towns” to segregate Christianized Indians from their fellow tribes people. The only native spirits of the land to survive east of the Ohio River were reconstituted in local legends as Indian ghosts that lingered around graveyards, or haunted houses, old village sites and dark road crossings.

As pioneering Euro-Americans expanded westward into the more thinly populated Midwest and

Great Plains, the Puritans' single-mindedness was diluted by cultural diversity and seemingly unlimited open space. But in the 19th century, Indian beliefs again fell under official disapproval of the U.S. government. The Civilization Act of 1819 sought to support Indian missions and their suppression of Indian beliefs, and in the 1880s Indian rituals were targeted directly. In 1883, as the scattered Western Indian reservations were organized under a more efficient system of operating procedures, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller established the Courts of Indian Offenses.

Under Teller's new network of Indian courts, reinforced by native police forces, participation in certain religious and social traditions, such as the Sun Dance, "animal dances," give-aways, feasting and polygamy, made reservation Indians subject to fines or imprisonment. As late as 1921, official circulars transmitted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to its Indian reservations reminded federal agents to actively discourage native ceremonies and traditional dances.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Sioux woman and child, 1908.  
The caption on this archival photograph reads:  
"Bone Shirt's Squaw and Papoose."

The late-19th century was a time of accelerating threats to Western Indian sacred places, due to 1) mining and ranching concerns, which wound up desecrating sacred places or making them off-limits to Indians, 2) government actions to safeguard the wildlife and scenic wonders of public lands, and 3) growing public sentiment to annihilate the American Indian reservation system altogether. Starting with Yellowstone National Park in 1877, early environmentalists and outdoorsmen began "protecting" land areas that formerly were part of Indian territories—many of them containing culturally sensitive locations, such as sacred mountains, springs, lakes and caves, but also places for traditional procurement of natural resources. Meanwhile, the broad-based campaign to "assimilate" Indians climaxed with passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887.

Under this Act's provisions, the treaty-decreed Indian land bases were to be broken up into 320-acre Indian family homesteads, with all surplus acreage to be auctioned off. When the total consequences of this devastating allotment policy were tallied 50 years later in the 1930s, Indians had lost two-thirds of their land base. President Theodore Roosevelt hailed "the pulverizing engine" of allotment, during which a great many sacred sites were removed from Indian ownership or access.

Indians responded in various ways. Some practiced their ceremonies in secret, and surreptitiously visited special places in the wider landscape. Sympathetic ranchers often looked the other way when native families visited buttes or caves on their land. Finally, with the "Indian New Deal" of 1934, some restrictions against native religions were lifted. Across the Great Plains, Sun Dancing came out of hiding and underwent a rebirth, which continues today. But the government still frowned upon other practices, such as the harvesting of eagle and hawk feathers for ritual regalia and the use of the hallucinogenic plant *peyote* for ceremonies of the Native American Church.



Each place on the map at left is sacred to more than one tribe and so each has several different names. The map on the right indicates the Lakota, Wintu and Hopi names: Mato Tipila, Lodge of the Bear (Devils Tower), Bulyum Puyuik, Great Mountain (Mt. Shasta), Tuuwanasave'e, The Earth Center (Black Mesa), Tsimontukwi, Jimson Weed Place (Woodruff Butte), and Nuvatukaovi, The Place of Snow on the Very Top (San Francisco Peaks).

In the pro-native climate of the 1960s, issues such as the freedom to conduct *peyote* rites, the recovery of “cultural treasures,” ritual paraphernalia and skeletal remains from museums and archaeological collections, and the rights of access to sacred sites caused the U.S. Congress to take notice. In 1970, President Richard Nixon returned the Blue Lake watershed to Taos Pueblo. Then, a series of congressional hearings led to passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), which was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter on August 11, 1978.

The ability of AIRFA to enforce Indian rights and access to sensitive areas was quickly thrown into question. In a quartet of cases, Indians tried to use the Act to protect sacred sites, but they wound up with well-publicized legal defeats at Tellico Dam in Tennessee, Bear Butte in South Dakota, the San Francisco Peaks in Arizona, and the Siskiyou Mountains in California. This last case—which pitted Yurok and Karuk Indian traditionalists against the plans of the U.S. Forest Service to pave a logging road through their sacred “high country” between the towns of Gasquet and Orleans (dubbed the “G-O Road”)—set the most devastating precedent. Recorded officially as *Lyng v. Northwest Cemetery Protection Association*, this important case reached the U.S. Supreme Court after two lower courts had ruled in favor of the

Indians and blocked the Forest Service road due to religious freedom claims. In 1988, the Supreme Court overturned those decisions and found that even if the ruling fatally injured Indian religions, the native people had no right to halt federal programs on federal lands.

Legislation passed in 1993 sought to strengthen AIRFA, but the Supreme Court struck this down as unconstitutional in 1996. Nevertheless, in dozens of local campaigns, Indian rights groups across the United States and Canada continue their struggles to save the vestiges of their holy lands. “Irrespective of this sad history of governmental insensitivities,” writes the Mescalero Apache/Yaqui educator, Irene S. Vernon, “the struggle for Indian religious freedom continues, fueled by a belief that the defense of religious liberty will ensure the preservation of all ways of life.”

To illustrate the host of cultural contexts and current threats to American Indian sacred places—from rock climbers to mining to New Agers—the film *In the Light of Reverence* depicts three case studies from the Northern Plains, the Southwest and California. As you watch and discuss the film and learn about these three sites, do not forget that they stand for dozens of similar sites and controversies across the United States where Indians are fighting to safeguard their spirits of place.

## PLAINS



*“The reason why the Black Hills were so long unknown to the white man was that Wakan’tanka [Great Spirit] created them as a meeting place for the animals. The Indians had always known this and regarded the law of Wakan’tanka concerning it. By this law they were forbidden to kill any of the animals during their great gatherings. In the Black Hills there is a ridge of land around which is a smooth, grassy place called the ‘race course.’ This is where the animals have the races, during their gatherings.”*

— EAGLE SHIELD, STANDING ROCK LAKOTA, 1911

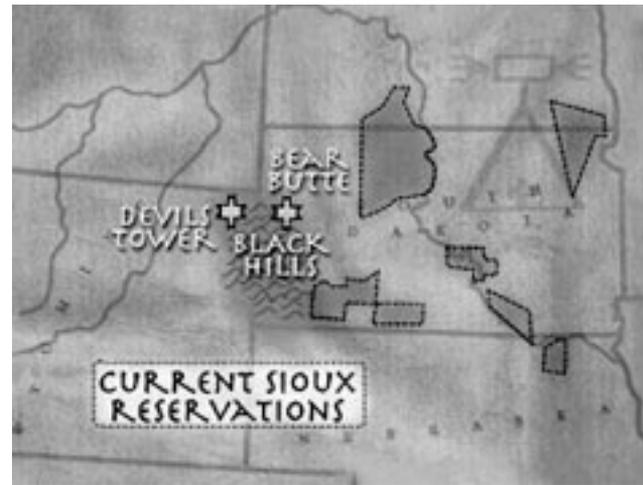
## THE FIGHT OVER “BEAR’S LODGE”

**T**O ENLIVEN a Fourth of July picnic in 1895, two Wyoming ranchers hammered wooden stakes into the cracks of an upthrusting volcanic core that was visible for many miles above the Belle Fourche River in the northeast corner of the state. Then they climbed to the flattened summit of the 865-foot high monolith and erected an American flag, which the wind soon tore away.

Known locally as Devils Tower, President Theodore Roosevelt made that name official on September 24, 1906, when he established Devils Tower National Monument. Thereafter it proved irresistible to local and visiting climbers alike, who clambered up to the 200-by-400 foot summit. In 1934, a helicopter deposited some passengers there; in 1941, a parachutist won a \$50 bet by dropping there. In the 1980s, climbing gyms proliferated, and scaling Devils Tower by hand became so popular that by 1994 there were 6,000 applicants for permits to climb up and rappel down the tower’s deep basaltic grooves.

For a number of Plains Indian cultures, however, these stunts seem frivolous, even sacrilegious. For centuries, tribes such as the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Crow, Arikara and Lakota felt the site was imbued with sacred power, and featured it in their oral narratives. In their belief systems, its reputation stood in marked contrast to its evil-sounding Anglo-American designation. For the Kiowa it was known as *T’sou’a’è*, or “Bear’s Lodge,” which stems from a well-known story of six brothers and a sister who escaped from a bear by praying and climbing a ladder of arrows into the sky where they transformed into the star constellation known as the Pleiades. For the Northern Cheyenne, the tower is said to be the resting place of Sweet Medicine, the culture hero who brought the Sacred Arrows to the Cheyenne people.

For the Lakota, this landmark is especially potent. “The Lakota people do not call this butte ‘Devils Tower’ as do many non-Indian people,”



The first comprehensive treaty with the Sioux, signed at Fort Laramie, Wyoming, in 1851, recognized as sovereign Sioux territory a large area including the sacred Black Hills and the important ceremonial sites at Bear Butte and Bear's Lodge (Devils Tower). The discovery of gold led to subsequent treaties and acts of Congress that separated the nine bands of the Sioux from many of their sacred places.

said an elder from the Cheyenne River (Lakota) reservation about his people's association with the site. "Instead we use different names. I know the butte as 'Mato Tipila,' or 'Bear Lodge.' I know of other Indians who call it 'Grey Horn Butte.' *Mato Tipila* is pure. It is a sacred site without which our people cannot preserve our traditional culture and spirituality.... *Mato Tipila* is a vital cultural resource for our people. When we go there in the name of *Tunkasila Wakan Tanka*, we experience a spiritual renewal. Even the grandchildren experience the intensity and special feeling of the butte when they are taken there."

## THE WORLD OF THE BLACK HILLS

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE to consider Devils Tower in isolation from its broader ecological setting. For this horn-like butte stands near an immense "hog back," an oblong ridge that curves nearly 200 miles from north to south and about half that distance from east to west. Like a protective barricade, the ridge orbits one of the most unusual environmental features in the United States—the Black Hills. A dark forested island rising out of a sea of grass, the Black Hills

are as interesting culturally as they are geologically or botanically.

For thousands of years, Indian people made exploratory, hunting forays into this isolated uplift. Around 1000 B.C. they began hunting there more extensively. By the 18th century, the Hills were attracting the Crow, Kiowa, Cheyenne and Lakota, and other Plains native groups as well. Especially for the Lakota, the Hills became *Wamakaognaka E'cante*, which translates as "the heart of everything that is," or *Paha Sapa*, literally meaning "black hills." "To the Indian spiritual way of life," said Lakota medicine man Pete Catches in 1993, "the Black Hills is the center of the Lakota people. There, ages ago, before Columbus came over the sea, seven spirits came to the Black Hills. They selected that area [and that was] the beginning of sacredness to the Lakota people."

Until the middle of the 19th century, ownership of the Black Hills was not an issue. When the U.S. government signed its first treaty with most of the major Plains Indian tribes at Ft. Laramie in 1851, it affirmed Lakota rights to 60 million acres including Devils Tower and all of the Black Hills. (See maps above.) In 1868, following the First Great Sioux War, a second Ft. Laramie treaty

reduced that to 26 million acres, but Devils Tower, the Hills and all of South Dakota remained in Lakota hands.

Then, in the summer of 1874, General George Armstrong Custer led an exploratory expedition directly through the Hills, breaking the treaty and confirming the existence of gold. Nothing could brook the thousands of miners awaiting the go-ahead to claim creeks and build sluices throughout the region. Two years after the Lakota turned down President Grant's 1875 offer to buy the Black Hills for \$6 million, the U.S. Congress passed the Black Hills Act, which transferred ownership to non-Indians. From the 1920s until today, groups of Lakota have filed claims in various courts to recover the area. Finally, in 1979, the U.S. Indian Claims Commission decided that the "Sioux Nation" deserved compensation for the Hills, and offered an initial payment of \$105 million. But the following year the Indians decided they would rather regain their beloved lands, and they have thus far refused to accept the claims settlement, which would permanently extinguish their aboriginal title to the land.

Present-day Lakota claims of traditional religious ties to the Hills are well-substantiated. Included in a series of drawings produced by the 19th century Lakota artist, Amos Bad Heart Bull, is a pictographic map of the Black Hill's many revered sites. (See below.) Encircling the area one clearly sees the oval race track, "Red Canyon," where it is said the world's first animals ran an epic foot race to see which would function as the leading species. Directly at the heart of the Hills lies Harney Peak, the craggy mountain where the famous Oglala seer Black Elk experienced the visions described in his autobiography, *Black Elk Speaks*. Among other sites of cultural significance nearby are The Old Woman's Hill, The Dancer's Hill and Buffalo Gap.

Only a mile or so northeast of the sacred race track stands the Hills' best-known sacred place—*Mato Paha*, or Bear Butte. Geologists call it a "laccolith," a volcano that never reached eruption, as if still storing its force within. The Mandan of North Dakota used to undertake pilgrimages to this place; in 1857, it was the site of a great council of the Teton and other Lakota tribes, when Crazy Horse vowed to resist the whites forever. Today it remains a highly desirable location for vision-questing.

Bear Butte is equally sacred to the Cheyenne. Known as *Nowah'wus*, it is where the tribe was instructed about its life, given relationships with the world's animals, and received ceremonies that are still performed by the Cheyenne today.

Around 1979, the sanctity of Bear Butte was endangered when Indian vision-questers were forced to restrict the times they could fast, and were told that portions of Bear Butte State Park would be off-limits to them while parking facilities were expanded. This worsened Indian resentment about signs posted at



©1967 & 1995, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS

From *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* by Amos Bad Heart Bull, Lakota, this 19th century ledger drawing clearly shows the Black Hills surrounded by the sacred hoop known as "the racetrack," along with Mato Tipila (aka Bear's Lodge or Devils Tower) at the top of the hoop and Bear Butte just outside the hoop.

park overlooks which informed tourists where Indians could be spotted conducting their religious practices. But Bear Butte was a multi-use state park, a registered National Natural Landmark and a navigational guide for the flight paths of supersonic aircraft. So in 1983, the joint Lakota and Cheyenne suit to fight these restrictions was turned down, and a parking lot was built alongside the area where they camp and conduct their ceremonial sweat baths.

About 60 miles to the west of Bear Butte, a legal struggle over religious protection for Devils Tower National Monument came to a head in the early 1990s. Just as Indians were reasserting their religious rights to Black Hills sites, increasing numbers of rock climbers were registering to climb the tower.

To Indians, however, hammering pitons into this rock was a desecration. When spokespeople such as Elaine Quiver of the Gray Eagle Society on the Pine Ridge (Lakota) Reservation complained, “It’s a sacred site and should not be desecrated by pounding on it,” some climbers responded that their sensations when ascending the Tower and their feeling of communion with nature were just as spiritual. Besides, they argued, the National Park Service’s policy of assuring “multiple use” of its sites protected their right to climb.

These sportsmen were unhappy with the National Park Service’s “Climbing Management Plan,” issued in February 1995. The new plan called for a voluntary halt to climbing during the “culturally significant” month of June, out of respect for the “reverence many American Indians hold for



*Elaine Quiver (Lakota) at Mato Tipila*

WILL PARRINELLO

Devils Tower.” If climbers refused, warned Monument Superintendent Deb Liggett, the Park would simply not issue climbing permits, making the June ban mandatory. The draft plan also called for an outright ban on commercial climbing.

That caused commercial guide Andy Petefish to team up with the conservative Mountain States Legal Foundation and slap the Park Service with a lawsuit, accusing it of violating the climbers’ constitutional rights, and of “establishing religion on a federally owned piece of ground.” In June 1996, a federal judge in Wyoming sided with the climbers, citing the northern California G-O Road case as a precedent that “affirmative action by the National Park Service to exclude legitimate public use of the tower for the sole purpose of aiding and advancing some American Indians’ religious practices violates the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause.”

At the same time, Judge William Downes refused to forbid the Park Service from making their verbal request to climbers for a voluntary halt during the month of June. In his words,

“a voluntary program whereby climbers are encouraged to show respect for American Indian religious and cultural traditions is both laudable and constitutionally permissible.”

As a result of the Park Service’s consultation process and public education program, June climbing of Devils Tower has decreased by 85%. Native people of the Plains look forward to a day when all climbers voluntarily choose not to climb the tower during every month of the year—and the volcanic monolith is re-named Bear’s Lodge.



*Climbing Devils Tower*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

## SOUTHWEST

*“The Hopi Tusqua (land) is our Love and will always be, and it is the land upon which our leader fixes and tells the dates of our religious life. Our land, our religion, and our life are one.... It is from the land that each true Hopi gathers the rocks, the plants, the different woods, roots, and his life, and each in the authority of his rightful obligation brings to our ceremonies proof of our ties to this land. Our footprints mark well the trails to these sacred places where each year we go in performance of our duties. It is upon this land that we have hunted and were assured of rights to game such as deer, elk, antelope, buffalo, rabbit, turkey. It is here that we captured the eagle, the hawk, and such birds whose feathers belong to our ceremonies. It is over this land that many people [clan groups] have come seeking places for settlement. It is here on this land that we are bringing up our younger generation and through preserving the ceremonies are teaching them proper human behavior and strength of character to make them true citizens among all the people.”*

— FROM A 1951 HOPI PETITION TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT



## “JIMSON-WEED PLACE”—THE DESTRUCTION OF WOODRUFF BUTTE

**I**N 1992, a contingent of Hopi Indian priests were finishing their 1,100-mile pilgrimage to nine major sacred shrines that mark the boundaries of their landscape in northern Arizona, the traditional domain the tribe calls *Hopitutskwa*.

Located both inside and outside of their official reservation’s perimeter, hundreds of shrines dot the landscape of the Hopi’s ancestral territory. Some shrines mark places where clans paused during migrations. Others commemorate village sites where Hopis once lived, or ancient footpaths

still in use today. Shrines also consecrate fresh water springs, sites where salt is gathered or eagles captured, and mountains where *kachinas*—the rain-bringing spirits impersonated during ceremonies—live in the mists.

Periodically, the Hopis feel obliged to renew the life-force of these places by visiting them to plant prayer-sticks, or *pahos*, to pray and blow from special prayer pipes the smoke which is equated with moisture from rain-bearing clouds. As the late chairman of the Hopi Tribal Council, Abbot

Sekaquaptewa, once explained, “The elders say that the shrines are our standards—the way white people raise flags over their territory. Without our shrines, an inheritance, we simply cannot continue as Hopis.” Anthropologist Armin Geertz has written of Hopi visitation to the major *tutskwa* boundary shrines:

“Pilgrimages are made to the various ruins which Hopi clan migration mythology lays claim to, and which are guarded by the clan ancestors. Clans made journeys to the former homes of their ancestors in order to keep an eye on the ruins, to keep the spirits alive as boundary guardians *and* to notify them whenever major ceremonies were to be performed at home.”

Traveling for four days in the clockwise direction, which is obligatory for Hopi ritual procedure, the elders finally arrived at the final boundary shrine—a symmetrical volcanic cone 12 miles south of Holbrook, Arizona. Heading from the Chevelon Cliffs just outside Woodruff, their boots crunched up its cinder slope. While whites know this promontory as Woodruff Butte, the Hopis call it *Tsimontukwi*, meaning “Jimson Weed Place.” Fabled in the tribe’s mythology, this site figured in the clan stories of both the Bearstrap and Water clans, featured a spiral-shaped migration symbol in the rock, and was also important to their *Porqwiwimkyam* curing society. (The site is also important to the Zuni, who left a shrine on its south side to mark its significance in their migration narrative, as well as to Navajos, who know it as *Tooju’hwiiidzoh*, or “Line Extends to the River.”) Around the butte’s base are nearly 100 ancient circular walls, with centrally placed fire pits made of sandstone slabs.



Woodruff Butte

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

The Hopi visitors were well aware that their access to the site was tenuous and its future uncertain. Since 1935, it had been owned by non-Indian road-builders who coveted its iron-rich, angular cobbles. Already some Bearstrap clan shrines were

disturbed when a radio tower was constructed in the 1960s. But in 1990, immediately after the land was leased to a gravel mining concern, a bulldozer tore into the butte.

On this visit the Hopis confronted a barbed wire fence, with a crucified coyote hanging alongside a “No Trespassing” sign. After offering prayers, they left with heavy hearts. In 1996, mining accelerated, obliterating more of their ancestral markers and destroying the Zuni shrine as well. When the Hopis complained, a judge suggested they buy the place for \$3 million. At present, Woodruff Butte is still being shortened from the top and reduced, truckload by truckload, to rubble. No court of law or public opinion has given the Hopi any hope that destruction of their storied landscape will stop.

## OTHER EMBATTLED SITES IN THE SOUTHWEST

TO INDIANS of the Southwest, the ominous forecast for the survival of Woodruff Butte is a familiar story. For nearly 50 years their homelands have increasingly experienced the destructive mining of uranium and coal, obliteration from flooding due to hydroelectric dams, and inundation by swarms of recreational tourists.

Until the early 1960s, these mesa lands had, for the most part, escaped the earth-transforming forces of modernization that produced the flood-control projects of the 1930s and 40s. As uranium

and coal interests targeted this arid country, however, the term “national sacrifice area” came into popular usage. It hypothetically designated certain pieces of ground as available for evisceration by open-pit strip mining. Soon the Four Corners Power Plant was constructed near Shiprock, New Mexico, and became the largest source of electric power (and air pollution) in the western United States.

To fuel a mounting number of electrical plants in the Four Corners region, gargantuan strip mines for extracting immense quantities of coal were opened on Black Mesa, in the heart of the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Beyond poisoning the air with their smoke, these power plants and mining operations damaged the land and its people in other ways. They extracted non-renewable fossil fuels in massive amounts, leaving open wounds in their revered landscape and salting the land in the process. Pumping underground water to create slurry for a distant power plant, they drastically reduced the precious subterranean stock of water that desert farmers like the Hopi and Navajos had learned to use over time through a blend of intricate ceremonies and careful gardening practices.

All these effects frightened longtime native

residents of the region. As an elderly Navajo woman who was born at Black Mesa told government officials during a hearing in 1971: “When Mother Earth needs rain we give pollen and use the prayers that were given us when we came from the earth. That brings rain. Black Mesa area is used to ask for rain. And afterward (after the mining) we don’t know what it will be like.”

In 1979, Jimme Begay explained the deeper, philosophical belief of traditional Navajo religion in the inner life possessed by aspects of the landscape:

“Each mountain, each earth feature has an inner form—something that gives it life. Something that makes it able to perceive and to feel. It has its own consciousness, and it receives sense impressions from us. The Navajo world is thick with deity. Every natural force, every geographical feature, every plant, animal, or meteorological phenomenon has its particular supernatural power, and may be represented by a personified image in the sand paintings.”

In addition to their opposition to Black Mesa mining, some Navajo Indians were also upset by



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*Dalton Taylor points to bullet damage of ancient Hopi petroglyphs at Woodruff Butte*



National Park Service sign at Rainbow Bridge

more popularly referred to as Navajo Mountain.

After this spirit-saving experience, some Navajos claimed the canyon and its rainbow as a sacred site, according to a dozen or more medicine men who in 1976 provided details about the myths, prayers and pilgrimages associated with the place. Their testimony buttressed a legal brief against the flooding of Lake Powell, but it was too late. Today, noisy tour boats anchor on the Park Service dock, just yards from the rock rainbow. Although a sign warns visitors to respect the place, many traditional Navajos refuse to return there because,

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

they say, “our gods are drowned.”

another non-Indian effort to transform their environment in the northwestern corner of their region. In 1963, Glen Canyon Dam, on the Colorado River in southern Utah, was completed. Immediately, the 710-foot-high concrete structure began to impound immense quantities of water, which soon pooled into Lake Powell. By 1970, this reservoir was creeping into side canyons that branched 60 miles north of the dam, and invading the 160-acre tract of land that in 1910 was set aside as Rainbow Bridge National Monument.

The Monument’s centerpiece, a sandstone arch spanning 278 feet, is known to Navajos as *Nonnezoshe*, which means the “rainbow turned to stone.” But the hidden canyon leading to it is also hallowed. The roots of the Navajos’ special regard hails back to 1864, when all the dispersed Navajo clans were the target of a round-up campaign by United States troops. Aided by Ute Indian allies, Colonel Christopher “Kit” Carson was assigned to drive all Navajos to a concentration camp at Ft. Sumner in southeastern New Mexico. But one band of Navajos slipped through the dragnet and hid out in the Rainbow Bridge canyon region, which is located north of the Navajo sacred peak known as “Head of Earth Mother Mountain,”

MEANWHILE, another prominent Southwestern sacred place, revered by both the Navajos and Hopis, came under assault from a different industry. A recreational company named the Arizona Ski Bowl sought to expand its lift facility on the slopes of the San Francisco Peaks, located in Coconino National Forest north of Flagstaff, Arizona. To the Navajo, the mountain was their sacred peak of the west, “Shining on Top.” It functioned as a key boundary and a location where their shamans, or “singers,” collected herbs for healing ceremonies.

But to the Hopi it held perhaps even greater significance. For it is at the Peaks, known as *Nuvatukaovi* (“The Place of Snow on the Very Top”), that the ancestral *kachina* spirits live for half the year among the clouds around the summit. Well before Spaniards arrived, the Hopi drew the distinctive horizon line of the Peaks on the walls of their secret ritual chambers, known as *kivas*, and they still miniaturize representations of the Peaks in rock fetishes. Properly honored with the downy eagle plumes that Hopis equate with sacred breath, *kachinas* assure that moisture will

rain down upon their patches of corn in the desert.

Since the 1930s, however, the Peaks have been alluring to skiers. In 1979, the Forest Service decided to permit the expansion of lift facilities and associated parking on the so-called “Snow Bowl,” a 777-acre downhill stretch located on the northern slopes. The following year the Forest Service allowed a paved road to carry skiers directly to the Bowl and expanded parking facilities.

Objecting to this invasion on grounds that it imperiled their religious freedom, the Hopis (*Wilson v. Block*, *Hopi Indian Tribe v. Block*) and Navajos (*Navajo Medicinemen’s Association v. Block*) filed separate suits to stop the development. The chairman of the Hopi Tribe warned, “If the ski resort remains or is expanded, our people will not accept the view that this is the sacred Home of the *Kachinas*. The basis of our existence will become a mere fairy tale.”

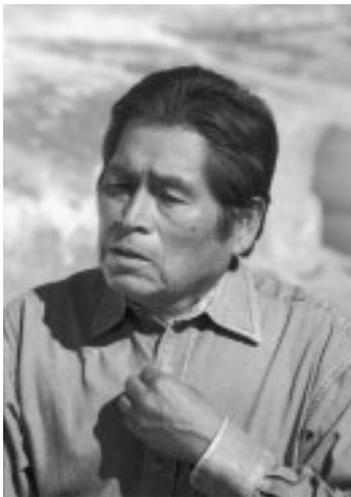
Despite Hopi and Navajo protests, the Forest Service regional supervisor in 1980 approved the paving of a new access road into the Peaks. Three years later the Indians were unable to convince a District of Columbia Circuit Court that the Peaks were “indispensable” to their religions, and their



*Ski run map at the Arizona Snow Bowl on the San Francisco Peaks*

suits were denied. According to the judge, permitting the Ski Bowl expansion may have “offended” their beliefs, but the Forest Service had faithfully met all the provisions of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. In 1997, Snowbowl Resort proposed adding another 66 acres of trails, along with major upgrading of existing ski runs, though the expansion is opposed by many local tribes and is on hold pending an Environmental Impact Statement.

Versatile coalitions of native activists, tribes and environmentalists continue their struggles to protect the San Francisco Peaks, Black Mesa, Zuni Salt Lake and other sacred places of the Colorado Plateau.



VERNON MASAYESVA, HOPI

*“The whole Earth is sacred. Every step you take you’re on sacred land. You can have your own shrines, your own churches. The danger is if you put a boundary around it, you create a situation that separates this from that. Once you do that, you make it easier to exploit land. If you put a boundary around the San Francisco Peaks and say, ‘this is sacred,’ then the people who are mining there will have no problem mining outside of it because it’s not a religious shrine, it’s not sacred.... We have the technology to continue to develop, but we don’t have to destroy everything as we move along the path of what we call progress. There is a way to approach a problem, whereby you also honor the Earth. If we can bring this dimension into our lives—all professions—I think we’ll have a healthier world.”*

## CALIFORNIA



*“We don’t chop down the trees. We only use dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull up the trees, kill everything. The tree says, ‘Don’t. I am sore. Don’t hurt me.’ But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. The Indians never hurt anything, but the white people destroy all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the earth. The rocks say, ‘Don’t. You are hurting me.’ But the white people pay no attention. They don’t care how much the ground cries out. How can the spirit of the earth like the white man? That is why God will upset the world—because it is sore all over.”*

— KATE LUCKIE, WINTU, 1934

## AN INDIAN DOCTOR FIGHTS FOR HER PLACE

**I**N NORTHERN CALIFORNIA there is a place that has long attracted Indians for religious purposes, and more recently non-Indian seekers as well. It is Mount Shasta, at 14,162 feet the West Coast’s tallest peak, whose snow pack provides the headwaters of the Sacramento River. The Karuk know this lofty mountain as *Oou tuko Tueship*, or “Snow Hitting the Mountain”; to them and their close neighbors, the Hupa, Mount Shasta is a sacred peak, renowned for its powers to restore health. To the Wintu people, living in the mountain’s immediate vicinity, it is called *Bulyum Puyuik*, or “Great Mountain,” and has long been the pivot for a constellation of special places featured in the tribe’s mythology and religious practices.

Among them is Panther Meadows, a peaceful, off-road area on the mountain’s southern flank, which is luxuriously carpeted with flowers and grasses and stands at 7,500 feet just below the tree line. Local maps showing the Everitt Memorial

Highway that brings tourists to the site of the old Mount Shasta Ski Bowl, also encourage visitors to ski across the meadow on their way to Grey Butte. But today’s Wintu Indian traditionalists wish recreationists would leave this area alone because it is the favored place for ceremonies conducted by one of California’s most respected medicine people, Florence Jones.

During the second half of the 19th century, Florence’s Wintu ancestors suffered at the hands of gold miners, ranchers and the United States government. In 1800, the Wintu population was estimated at 14,250. By 1910, disease, hunger and outright murder had reduced them to 395 individuals. Florence Jones’ village, which was located along the McCloud River near present-day Baird, California, survived that harsh period of disease, land loss and killing by Gold Rush miners—only to be flooded 50 years later by the waters rising behind Shasta Dam.

From childhood, Florence was cradled by

medicine people. Her grandmother, Judy, had been a shaman; her mother, Jenny Curl, was a noted healer. Shortly after Florence's birth on November 28, 1908, she was visited by six Wintu shamans who declared her "a spiritual child." She later underwent training in medicine practices under her aunt, Tildy Griffith, another

Wintu doctor. As Florence described this experience, "It's just like going to school and going to college and being a medical doctor or lawyer. There's a lot of no-no's and a lot of things I had to go through. All the sacred places, sacred springs, and sacred mountains. They took me up to Mount Shasta to the bubbling spring, the sacred spring. That's where we start doctoring, right there." By the 1990s, Florence had become the last Wintu knowledgeable in "doctoring language," her people's so-called "higher" form of secret, magical speech.

As Florence matured into one of northern California's leading medicine "doctors," a number of rocky places and grassy flats acquired special importance for her. She lived at the foot of Bear Mountain, an ancient Indian place, and every spring she led followers to its summit for special rituals. She also retained a retreat near Dekkas Rock, close to her own birthplace on the McCloud River, and above Shasta Lake.



*The McCloud River, ancestral home of the Winnemem Wintu*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

In later years, Florence led doctoring sessions every August at Panther Meadows, in the shadow of Mount Shasta. Entering into trance with the aid of song and tobacco, she transmitted prophecies and healing forces to her community.

In the 1960s, however, the Mount Shasta region began to attract

non-Indians who believed, among other things, that the peak was a UFO landing spot, one of the world's nine sacred mountains, and a place where priests from the sunken continent of Mu hid their magic crystals. After the Harmonic Convergence in 1987, New Age guidebooks spread word of Shasta's spiritual powers to aspiring pilgrims, who danced in the nude in its meadows, painted flowers on rocks and left crystals in its springs. Simultaneously, Shasta's appeal to winter recreationists was on the rise.

Local ski promoters petitioned the U.S. Forest Service for permits to open 2,000 acres surrounding Panther Meadows for downhill runs, seven new lifts and three lodges—a \$21 million ski resort that could accommodate 5,000 skiers per day on the mountain's slopes.

For Florence Jones and the Wintu, this intrusion into Mount Shasta's spirit world was a grave concern. By this time two government-funded studies had verified that in historic



*Florence Jones (left) and Mary Norton, Wintu*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

times the mountain figured centrally in Indian belief systems, that those beliefs and associated rituals continued up to the present day, and that protecting Mount Shasta's atmosphere of peace, quiet and religious function was essential to the cultural persistence of nearby Indian communities.

## AN ASSEMBLY OF SACRED PLACES

MOUNT SHASTA is just one of California's many special locations of religious importance to its wide range of Indian groups—nearly 60 politically autonomous native communities. Reflecting that diversity, the region also contains a plethora of culturally sensitive landscapes to which the larger, non-Indian population is generally oblivious. Moving from the Oregon border down to Mexico, these locations begin in the mountain ranges of northwestern California. From the mouth of the Klamath River on the Pacific Coast, upstream to the highest inland slopes, this region is replete with places that figure in the mythologies and rituals of the resident Karuk, Yurok and Hupa peoples.

In the geographical system of the Yurok, for instance, it was the river that determined orientation, not cardinal directions. They believed that a huge fishing net fell like a dome over the floating earth and was



WILL PARRINELLO

CALEEN SISK-FRANCO,  
WINNEMEM WINTU

*"We call the spring sauwel mem. Sauwel means a place that has a sacredness about it, like it's the beginning of something, or it's the life form of something. And mem is water. So, this is the life-giving water and it runs all the way through our land. The winnemem is the middle river (McCloud River), which comes from this spring. So, all the water from this sauwel mem gives life to everything down river, down through the valley, all the way down through Sacramento. It all comes from this life-giving force. When you recognize that, it's kind of like your mother. That's your life-giver that brought you into this world. Without this spring, nothing else would be."*

fastened in the ocean. Their most powerful sites are found in the upper altitudes reached by special trails such as the one along Blue Creek.

In order to find this supernaturally powerful "high country," Indian shamans-in-training climbed the *Thkla-mah*, the "ladder," also referred to as the "Golden Steps." Once there, they pursued so-called "lines of power" which ran in a general east-west direction, between sacred peaks like Mount Shasta, Red Mountain and Doctor Rock. Using special east-facing stone meditation platforms still located in these heights, they fasted and smoked to acquire their medicine powers.

According to Pohlik-lah/Karuk activist Chris Peters, a leading advocate for northern California Indian land rights, "There are a number of prayer seats along the river. The more important ones are in the high country areas—the Burl's Peak and the Doctor Rock-Chimney Rock areas. These are where high mountain medicine people go for fasting and praying. They make the connection that unites them as individuals with all of creation and with all of their spiritual needs."

Tribes further south looked to other mountains such as Mount Diablo, Mount Tamalpais and Pico Blanco to lend them supernatural power. In the flat central valley loomed the rocky outcrop that the Maidu know as *Histum Yani*, the Marysville or Sutter

Buttes, where tribal mythology says the world began. In the narrow Yosemite Valley, the inland Miwok people passed on sacred narratives about the supernatural origins of lofty cliffs and misty falls. Still further south, in the palm fringed oases of Southern California, one finds female fertility shrines and associated rock art where women of the Kumeway and neighboring groups prayed for healthy offspring. Along the Colorado River rise the craggy peaks so important to Quechan tribal mythology, especially the mountain called *Avikwame* or “Spirit Mountain” (Newberry Mountains), where their culture-hero *Mastamho*, son of the sky and earth, was born and died. In the southeast corner of the state, the 10,000 year-old Quechan “Trail of Dreams” is threatened by a massive open-pit gold mine which has been proposed by a Canadian company.



*Caleen Sisk-Franco (upper left) oversees the removal of crystals from the Wintu sacred spring on Mt. Shasta*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Hundreds of such California Indian sites were part of vast sacred landscapes. Early reports and anthropological writings on native California describe sites for observing solstices and equinoxes, places where the action of mythological beings left their indelible imprints, caves where shamans sought training and locations where Indians prayed before harvesting natural materials for artwork or subsistence. According to the traditions of Florence Jones’ Winnemem Wintu people, these spots might present themselves to a seeker almost anywhere. “A sacred place, *s’wel*, could be a pot hole or a peculiarly shaped rock, often in animal form,” says Frank LaPena, a Wintu painter and writer. “Caves, seepage holes, whirlpools in the river, and knolls were all representative of dwelling spirit sacred places. A person knew of a spirit place by the buzzing sound made there.”

Both LaPena and Florence Jones continue to struggle to safeguard their sacred places around Mount Shasta from recreational development, U.S. Forest Service policies and alternative spiritual movements. While seeking protection for Shasta by listing it on the National Register of Historic Places—which is the closest the U.S. government can come to saving places of cultural importance—the Wintu warned that the mountain might just try and defend itself.

Referring to an avalanche that took out a ski lift and lodge above Panther Meadows in the 1950s, Florence Jones said, “When that ski lift was put right on my spiritual mountain, I had a dream. The mountain said, ‘Look at me, snow all over me. What are these white people doing here, walking and trampling on my clothes? My beautiful white clothes. What are we going to do, what can I do?’

“I said, ‘You are my spiritual power. You are my mountain that I doctor from. If you don’t want that ski lift up there and those people trampling all over your beautiful white coat, just shake ’em up.’

“Two days later it shook ’em up. Now what do you think about that?”



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Mount Shasta, 1873*

Apparently, Florence's feelings made an impression on Forest Supervisor Sharon Heywood. In 1998, she decided not to permit the new \$21 million ski resort on the Wintu sacred mountain.

• • • •

THE THREE STORIES of endangered sacred places that are profiled in the film *In the Light of Reverence* must stand in for hundreds of other endangered landscapes of religious importance to American Indian peoples. Whether they are found on public, state or private land, many of them are threatened by competing ownership claims, land development, extractive industries, government multiple-use policies, recreational tourism or outright takeover by official agencies for scientific purposes. On the other hand, in recent years some religious sites have been "reclaimed" or even "rediscovered" by Indians. And their campaigns in and out of the legal system to safeguard old burial

grounds and to repatriate ritual items from museums and private collections have met with some success.

Of all the struggles for Indian rights and the future of their traditional identities, however, none remains more difficult and urgent than the continuance and restoration of their religious interactions with their sacred landscapes.



PETER NABOKOV is an anthropologist and director of the World Arts and Cultures Department at U.C.L.A. He is author of *Indian Running and Native American Architecture*, and he edited *Native American Testimony—A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992*. He is an advisor to the *Sacred Land Film Project*.

## AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: A SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- 1513**—Spain produces the Laws of Burgos which stipulate that New World Indians be grouped in “encomiendas”— Indian reserves where natives were expected to work on plantations or in mines, abandon paganism, give up social customs, accept the superiority of Spaniards, and become “free vassals of the crown.”
- 1606-1609**—Charters of Virginia colony declare conversion of Indians to Christianity to be a principal goal. Similarly, Plymouth, Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies state their determination to convert “such savages as remain wandering in desolation and distress to civil society and the Christian religion.”
- 1621**—Publication of *The Extirpation of Idolatry in Peru* by Pablo Jose del Arriaga, a manual for assisting Catholics in detecting and destroying Indian beliefs and rituals—punishing paganism, burning fetishes and destroying sacred sites.
- 1651-1674**—Establishment of quarantined settlements for “praying Indians”; 14 of these “praying” towns are established in southern New England, boasting nearly 5,000 converts.
- 1787**—The Northwest Ordinance, passed by the U.S. Congress, declares that the “land and property [of Indian tribes] shall never be taken from them without consent.”
- 1883**—Secretary of Interior Henry M. Teller establishes the Courts of Indian Offenses, which attempt to suppress traditional Indian social and religious practices, targeting the Sun Dance, social gatherings, giveaways.
- 1884**—The Canadian government declares the Sun Dance illegal, and soon prohibits even the practice of Indians dancing at public rodeos in traditional dress.
- 1889**—Congress authorizes a railroad right-of-way through the sacred red pipestone quarry in western Minnesota, in violation of official agreements that this shrine was granted to the Yankton Sioux Indians in perpetuity.
- 1895**—Continuing its campaign to banish tribal practices, Canada outlaws the Northwest Coast Indian “potlatch” because its fundamental purpose of redistributing property goes against the principle of private property.
- 1906**—Loss to Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico of 48,000 acres in their Blue Lake watershed region, for creation of Carson National Forest.
- 1918**—Legal incorporation of Native American Church in Oklahoma.
- 1921**—The Commissioner of Indian Affairs issues Circular 1665 “Indian Dancing” to curb the “evil tendencies” of “primitive and pagan” dances such as the Plains Sun Dance and Hopi snake dance, and to promote “wholesome educational entertainment.” The directive states: “...we should control it by educational processes as far as possible, but if necessary, by punitive measures...”
- 1923**—After missionaries working in Sioux territory held a conference in 1922 and submitted a set of recommendations, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs issued “Indian Dancing: Supplement to Circular 1665” which reiterated the 1921 directive to superintendents to discourage “give-aways” and dances and to work closely with missionaries. The Circular states: “...our success must often follow a change of honest conviction and surrender of traditions held sacred, and we should, therefore especially gain the support of the more enlightened and progressive element among the Indians...”
- 1922-24**—Indian advocate John Collier and the American Indian Defense Association fight efforts by Indian Commissioner Burke to enroll Pueblo Indians in distant boarding schools, legitimize non-Indian claims to Indian lands, and restrict Pueblo rights to hold certain religious ceremonies.
- 1934**—John Collier is named U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs and advocates the principle of religious freedom for all Indians, asking the U.S. Congress to promote “the study of Indian civilization, including Indian arts, crafts, skills, and traditions.”
- 1970**—President Richard Nixon signs bill returning 48,000 acres, including sacred Blue Lake, to Taos Pueblo.

**1978**—Passage of American Indian Religious Freedom (AIRFA), signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. But it was followed by a string of legal losses in Tennessee, South Dakota, and Arizona when Indians tried to protect sacred sites under the legislation.

**1988**—In the last major court case through which Indians sought AIRFA protection for sacred sites, the U.S. Supreme Court denied Yurok, Karuk and Tolowa Indians protection of a 25-mile area in the Six Rivers National Forest in northwestern California. For Indians everywhere, this decision remains the most devastating precedent where cultural rights are concerned.

**1993**—Responding to the need to protect Indian ceremonies—especially those of the Native American Church—the U.S. Congress passes the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). RFRA restored the "compelling interest" test, requiring the government to demonstrate a compelling state interest before its actions or projects can override an individual or group's right to free exercise of religion. It attempts to override state laws and reassure members of non-majority religions—such as Amish, Muslim and traditional Indian—that their practices will be protected.

**1994**—American Indian Religious Freedom Act is amended to legalize the use of peyote by American Indians (but only for those who are at least 25% Indian blood).

**1997**—In the case of *City of Boerne v. Flores*, Archbishop of San Antonio, the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, arguing that it had no evidence of "religious bigotry" or "deliberate persecution" that would convince it that religious freedoms were in danger. The Court ruled that Congress had overstepped its authority in passing RCRA, and that the law was unconstitutional.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*with comments by the author*

### GENERAL

*American Indian Religious Freedom Act Report Public Law 95-341*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, August 1979.

"American Indian Religious Freedom: First People and First Amendment," *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 1996 Issue 19 (4):26-69.

• Articles on subjects such as legal protection of sacred sites (Jack F. Trope), meaning and managing of Hopi places (Peter Whiteley), and the struggles for Mount Graham (Elizabeth A. Brandt) and the Black Hills (Mario Gonzales).

Keith H. Basso. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

• Based on more than 30 years of careful linguistic fieldwork into the implications of place-naming, this is the best and most unusual example of a detailed investigation of environmental attitudes and practices of an American Indian people.

David L. Carmichael, Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves, and Audhild Schanche, editors. *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

• Collection of essays on interpretation and preservation of American Indian religious/spirit locations, specifically, California Wintu, Soviet Arctic, Mescalero Apache, Alaskan Chugach, San Juan Paiute, Plains Blackfeet.

Vine Deloria Jr. *God Is Red*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973; *For This Land*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999; "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom," *American Indian Religions: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1(1): 73-83, Winter, 1994.

• This prolific, thought-provoking Indian essayist has written many articles on concerns for sacred landscapes.

Mircea Eliade. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co. (1958) 1966. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959.

☛ These works contain Eliade's argument that aspects of constructed and non-built space fit into belief systems and ritual practices, which in turn reflect a universal tendency drive by traditional ("primal" or "archaic") peoples to annually renew their worlds.

James S. Griffith, James S. *Beliefs and Holy Places: A Spiritual Geography of the Pimeria Alta*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992.

☛ In this study based on decades of fieldwork into the traditional and syncretic religious expressions in southern Arizona, former Arizona State folklorist Griffith looks at the sacred mountains, native shrines, and churches used by Tohono O'odham and Hispanic peoples of the Sonoran desert.

Eugene S. Hunn. *Nch'i-Wana, "The Big River": Mid-Columbia Indians and Their Land*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990.

☛ A detailed case-study of subsistence and spiritual relationships between one region's Indian peoples and their habitat.

J. Donald Hughes. *American Indian Ecology*. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1983.

☛ Early overview of American Indian environmental beliefs and practices.

Christopher Vecsey. "American Indian Environmental Religious," in *American Indian Environments*. Edited by C. Vecsey. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980. *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1991.

☛ Papers on Indian religious freedom from symposium at Chicago's Newberry Library, convened by the late Alfonso Ortiz. Scholars and lawyers such as Sharon O'Brien, Omer Stewart, Walter R. Echo-Hawk, Steven Moore, Robert S. Michaelsen and Deward Walker Jr., summarize their research and advocacy on issues from sacred sites protection to rights to use peyote.

Jo Carillo, editor. *Readings in American Indian Law: Recalling the Rhythm of Survival*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

☛ In this useful anthology, section three, "Constitutive Incommensurables: Land, Culture, History," and section six, "Religious Expression," contain essays on religious sites and their legal rights and struggles.

## PLAINS

Raymond L. Clow. "A New Look at Indian Land Suits: The Sioux Nation's Black Hills Claim as a Case for Tribal Symbolism." *Plains Anthropologist* 23:1, 1983.  
☛ Interpretation of the role of the Black Hills in defining a Lakota Sense of identity.

Edward Lazarus, *Black Hills, White Justice: The Sioux Nation Versus Then United States, 1775 to the Present*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

☛ Historical documentation of struggles on battlefields and in courtrooms over America's longest fight over a native sacred environment.

Douglas Parks. "Pawnee Geography: Historical and Sacred." *Great Plains Quarterly* 5, Summer, 1985.

☛ Based on fieldwork in eastern Nebraska and comparative research, this essay examines Pawnee fasting practices, shamanism, and the role of well-known "animal home" sites in the landscape.

Anita Parlow. *A Song From Sacred Mountain*. Pine Ridge, South Dakota: Oglala Lakota Legal Rights Fund, 1983.

☛ Collection of Lakota testimonies regarding the sacredness of Bear Butte, a multi-tribal place of power just outside of Sturgis, South Dakota.

Julian Rice. "Beyond the Race Track: Paha Walean Lakota." *North Dakota Quarterly* 53:2, 1985.

☛ Describes a cluster of Lakota sacred places in the Black Hills.

## SOUTHWEST

E. Richard Hart, editor. *Zunis and the Courts: A Struggle for Sovereign Land Rights*. Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1995.

☛ Collection of papers that document fight by Zuni Indians and academic allies since the 1950s to recover land rights. Central to this ultimately successful campaign was the sacred landscape associated with "Zuni Heaven."

Karl Luckert. *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion*. Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1977.

☛ Historian of religion describes various cultural sites in Rainbow Bridge Canyon—now under Lake Powell—that were revered by Navajo Indians. In its appendices are testimonies by seven Navajo elders

about religious practices related to the canyon, its fossilized supernatural beings, and prayers to them.

Klara Bonask Kelley and Harris Francis. *Navajo Sacred Places*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.  
• Surveying 13 Navajo communities on behalf of the tribe's Historic Preservation Department, this collaboration focuses less on an inventory of sites and more on stories that Navajos attach to landscape, how they categorize them, and native concerns about preservation.

Anita Parlow. *Cry, Sacred Ground: Big Mountain U.S.A.* Christic Institute, 1988.  
• Collection of testimonies, by mostly Navajo residents of the Big Mountain corner of the Four Corners area, concerning hardships due to Joint Use Area dispute between Navajos and Hopis.

## CALIFORNIA

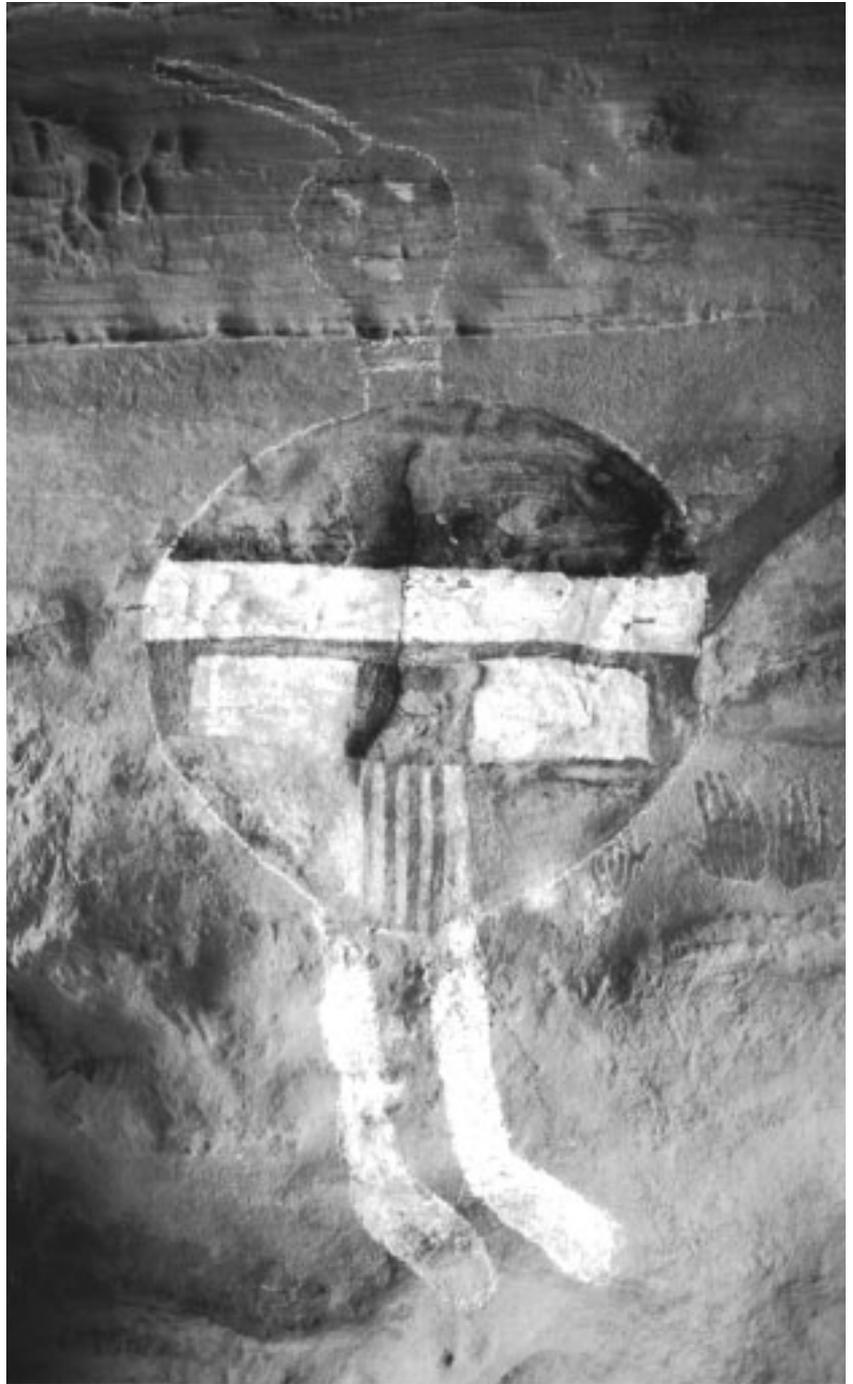
Charlotte McGowan. *Ceremonial Fertility Sites in Southern California*. San Diego Museum Papers N. 14, San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego, 1982.  
• Monograph surveys 21 Kumeyaay (Southern Diegueno) female-connected locations bearing distinctive "yoni formations" where women sought child-bearing powers.

Bev Ortiz. "Mount Diablo as Myth and Reality: An Indian History Convolved." *American Indian Quarterly*. Special Issue: The California Indians. V. 13, N.4, Fall, 1989.

• Survey of cultural meanings associated with 3,849-foot peak in Contra Costa County. Central to this ethnographer's study are ways that non-Indians distorted the significance the mountain has for Miwok and Maidu Indians.

Dorothea J. Theodoratus and Frank LaPena. "Wintu Sacred Geography," in *California Indian Shamanism*, edited by Lowell John Bean. Menlo Park, Calif.: Ballena Press, Anthropological Papers N. 39, 1992.  
• Collaboration by Anglo anthropologist and Native American writer that provides glimpses into the belief system that creates sacred places for north-central California Indians. (See page 63.)

Robert F. Heizer. "Natural Forces and Native World View," *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 8 (California), edited by Robert F. Heizer. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978.  
• Useful overview of California Indian attitudes about land use and associated beliefs.



# MANAGING HOPI SACRED SITES TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

~ by Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Kurt E. Dongoske, and T.J. Ferguson

**T**HE HOPI RESERVATION in northeastern Arizona encompasses lands that the Hopi people have inhabited for more than a thousand years. Unlike many other tribes, the Hopi people have never been relocated from their ancestral lands to other geographical areas by the United States government. Over the past century, however, the sovereign lands of the Hopi Tribe have been continually reduced through takings by the United States and litigation with the Navajo Tribe. As a result of these actions, access to Hopi ancestral sites and sacred places has become increasingly difficult and, in some instances, dangerous. Shrines are also being desecrated by vandalism or “use” by non-Indians.

The religious practices of

the Hopi people are embedded in the landscape that the deity, “Ma’saw,” gave to them when they entered into a covenant to earn stewardship of the earth. The ceremonies, pilgrimages and rituals that sustain the Hopi religion are inextricably linked to shrines that were established in ancient times at specific springs, mountain peaks and

other sacred areas. These shrines were created in accordance with divine instructions as a permanent testament to the Hopi’s covenant with Ma’saw. Each shrine and sacred place contains an irreplaceable life essence that prohibits any relocation or alteration of the shrine.

Hopi religious practice differs from modern Christianity and other Western religions, which typically are not



JOHN SCHAEFER

*At the White Vulcan Mine on the San Francisco Peaks, Hopi elder Dalton Taylor points out a pilgrimage trail to U.S. Forest Service archaeologist Linda Farnsworth*

dependent on place. The successful practice of Christianity and the practitioners resultant sense of spiritual contentment can be achieved irrespective of location. The Hopi, on the other hand, must complete certain rituals at specific shrines. The protection of sacred sites and access to them are issues, therefore, that concern the Hopi Tribe.



*Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Hopi, harvests corn*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

## CHALLENGES TO HOPI USE OF SACRED SITES

THE RITUAL USE of Hopi sacred sites is becoming increasingly difficult due to development outside of the Hopi Indian Reservation, problems with access to sacred sites on land that the federal government has given to other Indian tribes, and the appropriation of and infringement on shrines by non-Indians.

After the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in 1978, the Hopi Tribe, joined by the Navajo Medicine Man Association and the Zuni Tribe, sued the Department of Agriculture in an attempt to block the expansion of a ski development on the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, Arizona, in the Coconino National Forest. This suit charged that the U.S. Forest Service had failed to apply AIRFA, and this infringed on Indian religious rights that the tribe held were incompatible with expanded recreational use. In this landmark case, the courts decided against the Indians, offering an opinion that AIRFA does not require that access to all publicly owned properties be provided to Indians without consideration for other uses, nor that native traditional religious considerations should always prevail to the exclusion of all else. The expansion of the ski area took place even though

the Hopi Tribe considered this to be desecration of a sacred peak.

Today, many Forest Service officials are sympathetic with Hopi concerns about sacred sites in the Coconino Forest, but Hopi people are still required to obtain special use permits for collecting the natural resources needed for ritual use. Many Hopi religious practitioners personally view this as an infringement on their rights to freely exercise their religion because the administrative procedures involved in obtaining permits detract from the proper attitudes needed to conduct religious activities.

Other challenges to Hopi use of the San Francisco Peaks have come from groups attempting to use the mountains for their own religious observances. Several years ago, for instance, a Bahai group applied for a Forest Service permit to conduct religious activities on Mt. Agassiz, one of the Peaks. This concerned the Hopi Tribe because a Two-Horn Society (one of the Hopi priesthood organizations) Shrine is located on the peak, and use of the area by the Bahai would result in desecration. The Hopi Tribe considers itself to have a right of first use, and maintains that Hopi sacred areas should not be used by other, recently arrived people if that use negatively impacts Hopi values.

A flagrant violation of a Hopi sacred site occurred when two shrines on Woodruff Butte near Holbrook, Arizona, were tragically destroyed

in 1990 during the mining of a gravel pit. Although located on private property, the gravel was to be sold for use in the construction of federally funded highways in which a cultural resources inventory was required. Unfortunately, however, the Hopi shrines were not identified as sacred features by the archaeologist who surveyed the area. The Hopi Tribe only learned about the threat to its shrines after the historic preservation consultation process had been completed. At that time, Hopi tribal officials discussed their concerns with the contractor who was mining gravel at the site. In response to this humanitarian appeal the gravel pit developer deliberately bulldozed the shrines to eliminate the impediment that he thought the shrines posed to the development of his project.

Despite the desecration of the shrines, the area

continues to be culturally significant to the Hopi people, as well as to the neighboring Zuni, Navajo and Apache Tribes. In order to halt further destruction of the area, Hopi tribal officials met with the governor of Arizona and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to explain their concerns and seek an equitable solution. Further development of the gravel pit for use in ADOT projects has been suspended, but the threat of future mining at Woodruff Butte persists. Mining for local projects continues, and the last remaining Hopi shrine was bulldozed in the spring of 2003.

Even when sacred sites are identified and afforded a certain level of protection, their access and use can still be problematical for the Hopi. This is exemplified in recent incidents at “Ki’iswu” (Cliff Spring), a site the Hopi have used in their



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY CLINE LIBRARY (NAU.PH.93.38.1)

*In this 1922 photo by Edward Curtis, “Loitering at the Spring,”  
Hopi women gather water in the evening.*

religious practices since ancient times. Although Ki'iswu is located on land that a federal court awarded to the Navajo Tribe in *Healing v. Jones*, the Hopi have an explicit legal right under Public Law 93-531 to enjoy access to, and use of, the spring.

On April 16, 1992, a group of Hopi went to Ki'iswu to dismantle a wall that had been constructed around the spring as part of an Indian Health Service "improvement" project in the 1960s. During the dismantling of the wall, a *Katsina* priest placed *pahos* (prayer stick offerings), prayer feathers and *piki* (a ceremonial food) at the spring to commemorate its opening. As the work progressed, a group of approximately forty Navajos, protesting the Hopi presence at the spring, confronted the Hopi delegation by removing the *pahos*, prayer feathers and *piki* and throwing them down at the feet of the Hopi priest. This incident escalated into a violent confrontation between the Hopi and the Navajo, culminating in a physical assault on several of the Hopis.

Later, the Navajos prevented the Hopi from depositing *pahos* and other offerings at another spring, "Mong'va" (Chief's Spring), by blocking the Hopi vehicles with their trucks. This volatile situation was prevented from becoming more violent by the collaborative efforts of the Navajo Tribal Police, the Hopi Rangers and the Navajo County Sheriff's Department, all of whom worked together to calm the situation and escort the Hopi religious practitioners from the area.

The following July, a pilgrimage to Ki'iswu was initiated by the village of Hotevilla's One Horned Kiva (one of the Hopi kivas, a ritual organization) as a part of the Home Dance ceremony (an annual religious ritual). Once again, *pahos*, prayer feathers, and *piki* offerings were placed at the



Stripmining Black Mesa

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

spring before the Hopi departed. Ordinarily, it is inappropriate to return immediately to a place where offerings have been left. In this instance, however, the Hopi pilgrimage priests decided to return to the spring, their suspicions aroused by a Navajo man who was watching the ceremonies. They found that their *pahos* and other offerings had been stolen and strewn across the ground.

Subsequent attempts to resolve the issues surrounding these incidents were handled at the political level between the Navajo and Hopi Tribes. The chairman of the Navajo Tribe, Peterson Zah, asked the Hopi to inform the local Navajo chapters every time they wanted to visit the spring, a request which the Hopi deemed an unacceptable bureaucratic infringement on the free exercise of their religion. The Hopi believe that they earned a divine right to visit these springs and that Congress, through the passage of P.L. 93-531, recognized this right as a matter of law.

Other Hopi shrines located on the Navajo Indian Reservation have been subjected to vandalism. For instance, the famous Hopi clan marks at *Tutuveni* near Tuba City, Arizona, have been desecrated by graffiti and spray paint. These clan symbols were incised on the rocks during ritual pilgrimages to the Hopi Salt Mine in the Grand Canyon. Attempts to remove the spray paint have not been entirely successful. Such vandalism saddens Hopi people.

The Hopis also face challenges to the sanctity of shrines and cultural sites on their own reservation. "New Agers" have begun to leave crystals and other "offerings" at Hopi shrines. While these New Agers are apparently sincere, they don't realize that the appropriation of Hopi

shrines desecrates them and mocks the Hopi religion. Petroglyph sites such as the so-called “Prophecy Rock” on Third Mesa—named by New Agers and other “worshippers”—have also been appropriated by non-Indians who have begun to leave “offerings” there. These “offerings” are offensive to the Hopi people.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A STRATEGY TO PROTECT SACRED SITES

AS THESE EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATE, the Hopi people face continuing problems in their efforts to maintain the integrity of sacred places. Because litigation based on AIRFA has not been successful, the Hopi Tribe’s Cultural Preservation Office has turned to the historic preservation compliance process as a strategy to protect sacred sites. Under the National Historic Preservation Act, shrines are considered to be traditional cultural properties, that is, historic sites important in the maintenance and transmission of Hopi culture. As such, these sites need to be identified during project planning and, if deemed significant, measures to protect them must be developed. Unlike archaeological sites, however, where adverse impact to historical values can be “mitigated” through scientific studies, there is no way to “mitigate” adverse impacts to Hopi sacred sites because they are unique and irreplaceable resources. The only “mitigation” is complete avoidance.

Archaeologists sometimes find it difficult to recognize Hopi shrines because the simple stone con-

structions that often mark them may resemble mere rock piles or other natural features. In addition, many shrines are located atop or within ancestral archaeological sites that preoccupy the attention of archaeologists and are, therefore, ignored. Consequently, the policy of the Hopi Tribe is to use Hopi Tribal members as consultants in investigations to identify Hopi traditional cultural properties. The incident at Woodruff Butte taught the Hopi Tribe the importance of becoming actively involved in the identification of shrines and other sacred places in the early stages of historic preservation research and planning. If Hopi sacred places are not identified, their significance cannot be assessed; if the shrines are afforded no protection, incidents similar to Woodruff Butte are bound to continue.

The identification of shrines and other sacred sites for purposes of historic preservation planning, however, puts information into the public domain, and this adversely impacts the confidentiality of these sites. It is a difficult choice between releasing information to protect sacred sites from development and keeping their locations a secret to protect them from exposure to non-Indians.

In recent years, the Hopi Tribe has participated in a wide range of projects to identify Hopi shrines and other traditional cultural properties in areas subject to development or impact. Sacred

Hopi trails and other cultural sites that will be impacted by a proposed coal mine near the Zuni Salt Lake in New Mexico were studied in a project sponsored by the Salt River Project, a utility company in Phoenix, Arizona. Hopi shrines and ancestral sites in the Grand Canyon have been studied in cooperation with the National Park Service



*Lee Wayne Lomayestewa of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office at the White Vulcan Mine on the San Francisco Peaks*

JOHN SCHAEFER



CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

*Kiva built by Hopi ancestors in southern Utah*

for the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies program, sponsored by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Hopis who have been consulted on these projects have assessed impacts to traditional cultural properties and developed recommendations on how to best protect these sites. The participation of the Hopi Tribe in these projects does not mean that the Hopi people endorse these projects; it only means that the Hopi Tribe is working to protect its sacred sites and cultural interests.

While these projects demonstrate that historic preservation can be used electively to protect Hopi sacred sites, the strategy is not a perfect solution to the problem. Using the National Historic Preservation Act to protect sacred sites reduces these precious cultural resources to historic properties and does not consider their true spiritual significance.

Decisions about the significance of traditional cultural properties are made by federal agencies and State Historic Preservation officers, using a value system that differs substantially from that held by the Hopi. This sometimes results in historical values taking precedence over spiritual values in a way that is incomprehensible to Hopi religious leaders.

Furthermore, publication of information about sacred sites in cultural resource management reports and in associated academic publications presents a vexing paradox that the Hopi Tribe is only now beginning to confront. Information about sacred sites needs to be divulged in order to protect them but the very process of divulging this information also has an adverse impact on them. Indiscriminate writing about sacred sites exposes them to desecration by New Agers and vandals. Hopefully, as federal, state and private land-managers continue in dialogue with the Hopi people about sacred sites, there will be increased recognition of the importance of these cultural resources and an effort to develop more sensitive ways to protect them.

Hopi shrines and sacred sites are essential in the practice of the Hopi religion. Without them, the Hopi people cannot fulfill their religious obligation to serve as stewards of the land. For this reason, the Hopi Tribe will continue to do everything it can to protect sacred sites, including the development of new strategies that can be applied in addition to historic preservation. Hopi cultural preservation is predicated on the continued use of the sacred areas that are the legacy of Hopi ancestors.



LEIGH KUWANWISIWMA is a member of the Greasewood Clan from Bacavi Villages. He is the Director of the Cultural Preservation Office of the Hopi Tribe.

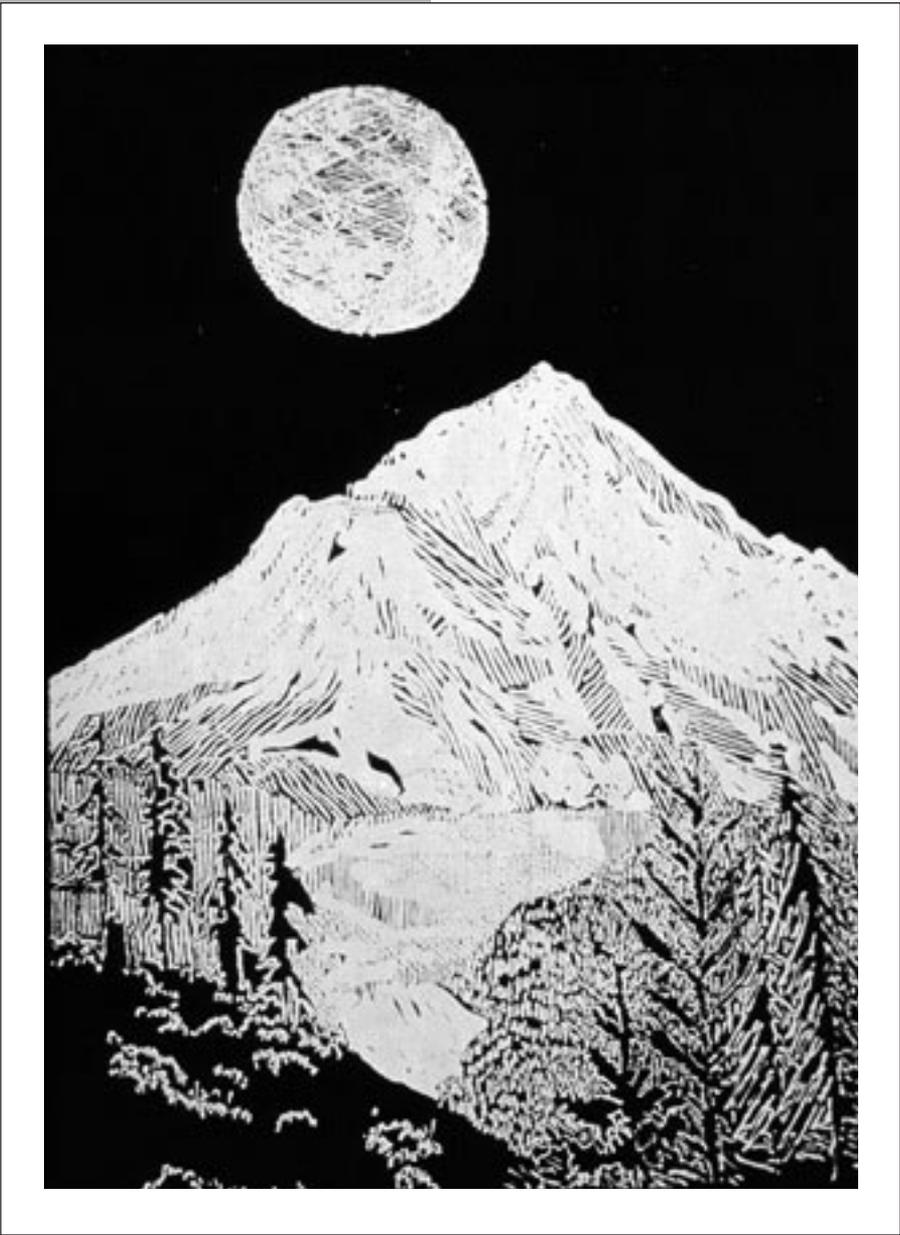
KURT DONGOSKE is the Hopi tribal archaeologist. T.J. FERGUSON is an anthropologist in Tucson, Arizona.



“Managing Hopi Sacred Sites to Protect Religious Freedom” from American Indian Religious Freedom: First Peoples and the First Amendment, *Cultural Survival Quarterly, World Report on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities*, Winter 1996, Vol. 19(4). © 1996 by Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Kurt E. Dongoske, and T.J. Ferguson. Used by permission of Cultural Survival Quarterly, Cambridge, MA. All rights reserved.

## FOR FURTHER READING

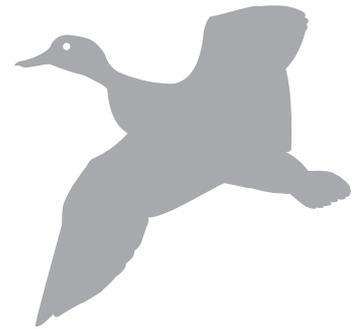
- Dongoske, Kurt, Leigh Jenkins, and T.J. Ferguson. 1994. “Issues Relating to the Use and Preservation of Hopi Sacred Sites.” *Historic Preservation Forum* 8(2): 12-14.
- Ferguson, T.J., Kurt Dongoske, Leigh Jenkins, Mike Yeatts, and Eric Polingyouma. 1993. “Working Together, The Roles of Archeology and Ethnohistory in Hopi Cultural Preservation.” *CRM* 16 (Special Issue): 27-37.
- Franklin, Robert and Pamela Bunte. 1994. When Sacred Land Is Sacred to Three Tribes: San Juan Paiute Sacred Sites and the Hopi-Navajo-Paiute Suit to Partition the Arizona Navajo Reservation. In *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, edited by David L. Carmichael, Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves. Audhild Schanche, pp. 245-258. London: Routledge.
- Masayeva, Vernon. 1991. Epilogue. In *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, edited by Christopher Vecsey, pp. 134-136. New York: Crossroad.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. “The Problem of American Indian Religious Freedom: A Hopi Perspective.” *American Indian Religions* 1:93-96.
- Secakuku. Ferrell. 1993. “The Hopi View of Wilderness.” *Federal Archaeology Report* 6(3):9.



# WINTU SACRED GEOGRAPHY

~by Dorothea J. Theodoratus and Frank LaPena

*“The world is a gift from our old ones. This sacred gift was created through love and respect by those elders who understood the beauty of their surroundings... The evidence for the representation of the earth as a mystical and magical place was given embodiment through the experiences of those who made visits to sacred places... We respect those thoughts and teachings; when we are forgetful and need reminding of those teachings they are given back to us in our dreams (LaPena 1987:n.p.)”*



## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS PAPER is about Wintu sacred geography: specifically those topographical features that give meaning and distinction to people and place and are apart from villages and daily home life. It is about topographical features that are the embodiment of Wintu expression of an ordinary and nonordinary world. It is about a concept of land and interpretations of that natural universe that translate into a coherent world. We are concerned here with a physical geography—an ethnogeography that, as a whole, forms a complex unit of sacred domain.

The data used here come from a “cultural inventory” of religious places on federal lands that were compiled to meet the requirements of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Theodoratus Cultural Research 1981). The

approach was to review past anthropological and historical data and to consult with Wintu traditionalists. Dorothea Theodoratus conducted the field research in 1983 with native anthropologist, scholar, poet, artist, and Wintu traditionalist Frank LaPena.

The study resulted in a recording of places and regions of religious significance to the Wintu. These places and regions were seen to be a major aspect of Wintu identity. As the study progressed it became clear that topography is essential for Wintu identity-maintenance and cultural continuity. Cultural and personal loss occurs when “locales” are altered, destroyed, or placed off-limits. It is clear that significant alterations have taken place in the Wintu domain due to non-Indian development of artificial lakes, railroads,

highways, and habitation areas, and through economic ventures such as mining, ranching, deforestation, and recreation. The 1983 federal study aimed at translating Indian realities into concepts understandable and useful to government officials in designing meaningful accommodation for site protection.

Federal land management policies and their burdensome, often ethnocentric, interpretations and distortions sometimes serve to polarize the assessment of Indian claims as unusual and illogical. In other words, the qualities of a place or a region that make them sacred—as well as the concomitant reverence and spiritual activities of the native practitioners—are profoundly different from mainstream perceptions of these places, attitudes, and actions. This is, of course, the problem in converting Native American site realities into “understandable” non-Indian categories. The intent here is to present a perception of some of the structures and characteristics of the Wintu universe that will provide a clearer conception of Wintu ethnogeography and prompt us to devote greater effort toward developing a methodology for examining sacred geography (see Nabokov 1986:486 for discussion of requirements for a sacred geography methodology).

## POWER OF PLACE

As the secrets of an esoteric world became known to seekers of knowledge and told to the people, never again was it possible to take for granted or approach the earth in a thoughtless fashion.... The earth is alive and exists as a series of interconnected systems where contradictions as well as confirmations are valid expressions of wholeness (LaPena 1987:n.p.).

Religious cosmology, often related through myth, defines power and directs human action and interaction so that dangers may be minimized and success maximized. At the center of the



*Mountain Travelling—painting by Frank LaPena (1989)*

Native American religious system is the affirmation that spiritual power is infused throughout the environment in general, as well as at interconnected, special places, and that knowledgeable persons are participants in that power. Thus some special locations are imbued with benevolent sacred qualities that assist people, for example, in having good health, good luck, and good energy. Other localities are imbued with malevolent forces capable of aiding in injurious acts. LaPena reminds us in *The World Is a Gift* (1987:n.p.) that such “poison places” are warnings

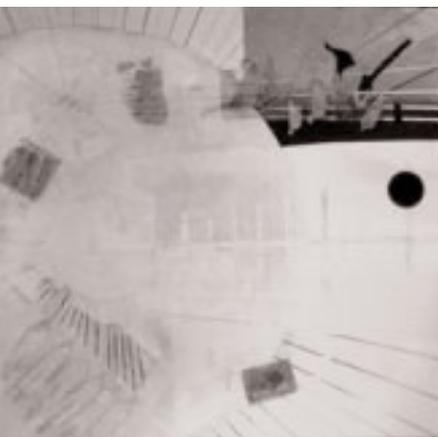
...that caution and preparation must be used in order to maintain a proper respect for life and the unexpected. With things of power and life everything is possible. Our actions determine both good and bad. There are new things to learn, which can enlighten us or confuse us by their challenge.

Specific types of features, such as mountains, rock outcroppings, caves and pools, possess qualities important for Wintu spiritual experience or veneration. These form the sacred domain that is integral to the maintenance of Wintu cultural tradition. Humans relate to topographical features (i.e., sacred sites), and these features, in turn, give expression to conceptual life and cultural identity. The landscape provides images whose meaning has influence on daily activities, spiritual life, and ethical considerations. This is perhaps what Nabokov means when he discusses the “inner-landscape,” which he defines as the “soul behind the surface that our eyes pick up” (Nabokov 1981), or what Bean describes as “empowered places” (Bean 1990: personal communication). For the Wintu, these localities are not discrete elements or cultural shards. They are combined and bonded into cultural domains and sacred

realms that provide essential meaning to life. As a Wintu travels through the countryside, he/she is aware of this sacred dimension that is “power of place,” and of its interconnectedness in Wintu sacred cosmology (note especially, Towendolly’s stories of travel in Wintu country [Masson:1966]).

## THE WINTU

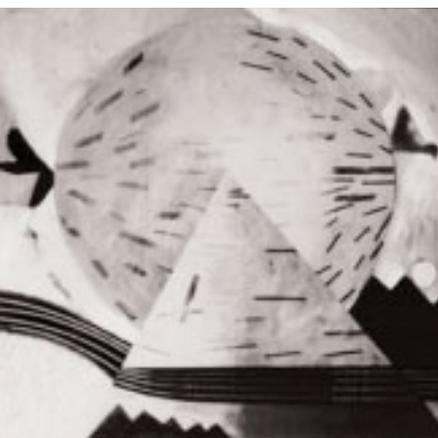
THE WINTU or Northern Wintun were (and remain) a comparatively large and widespread Native American (California) group occupying the present-day Shasta and Trinity counties, and parts of Tehama and Siskiyou counties. Wintu territory includes an extensive range of environmental topography, ranging from a relatively flat terrain to rugged canyons and mountains, all of which provided a diverse subsistence base for the benefit maximization of the Wintu lifestyle. The



East



West



South



North

### EAST

*As a Wintu travels, he or she starts from the east, the direction of the sun and the beginning of the new day. Birds sing before sunrise. Then it is quiet while the sun comes up. Then they sing again.*

### SOUTH

*The south gives reference to life. This painting is primarily red, signifying the travelling sun. South is about badger, the obsidian keeper who went south and set the world on fire. The green road is the Milky Way, the "spirit road."*

### WEST

*West is oriented toward the jagged edge of the world. You can see it in the evening when the sun goes down. Part of west's orientation is the spirit of moving up and facing west.*

### NORTH

*North is the "main one" and the orientation of Bohem Puiyuk, Mount Shasta. The artist's Wintu auntie is in direct association because she lived as close as you can get.*

*Paintings by Frank LaPena (1988)*



THOMAS HOUSEWORTH/NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

*Kloochy, an 80-year-old Wintu man on the McCloud River in California, circa 1882.*

Wintu held portions the Trinity, Sacramento, and McCloud rivers, as well as a network of creeks. Within this domain, they recognized a number of geographically based population divisions, but the exact social boundaries are not precisely known today. Currently, there are several Wintu organizations or groups, but no single one representative of all the Wintu. After contact, the Wintu suffered substantial destruction of their habitat and native economy as non-Indians expanded into their territory, destroying tradition economic conditions and developing a new, non-Indian land base (mining, logging, transportation routes, towns).

Wintu mythology provides an insight into their concept of the universe and a cultural map for their relationship with their environment (DuBois and Dematracopoulou 1931; Masson 1966). Myths often explain natural phenomena and set models for behavior within the context of the geography, and all have meaning as part of Wintu cosmology. Mythology helps keep the balance of

spirit and body, and gives direction to Wintu life. It paints a philosophical portrait for those beings—human, animal, and spiritual—which inhabit the earth, providing an ongoing process and meaning to life (LaPena 1987:n.p.). Mythology, then, is intricately entwined with the environment. Features of nature are imbued with various powers and levels of sacred importance. Wintu people understand their own humanity in relation to the perception of this universe. Wintu poet Tauhindauli (1979:13) writes,

I am related  
in a universe  
bigger than  
my mind...  
...  
I travel  
both earth and heaven  
trails

lost in reference  
to other lives

to other stars  
and songs  
of other constellations.

Familiarity with the way the environment “should be” is related to the Wintu sense of “well-being,” and thus “reality.” LaPena (1987:n.p.) sees the “subjective spirit world” and the “objective physical world” as giving vision and meaning to life, and thus, in a conceptual sense, as both real and symbolic. Myth and its embodiment in geographical reflections enhance the Wintu sense of consciousness. Geographical formations remind the Wintu that a great range of possibilities exist, and that a person must be open to reality if he/she is to be enlightened about the world. LaPena reminds us that the essence of the living Wintu world is meaningful and not to be taken for granted (LaPena 1987).

## GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

LOCALITIES of unusual configuration, such as distinctive rock outcrops (often in human or animal shapes), caves, knolls, whirlpools in a river, and seepage holes, often housed or were dwellings of spirits—especially those of Coyote, Deer and Sucker. The spirit often made its presence known through an audible buzzing. Such places were visited chiefly by men—often shamans—who sought transcendence in order to achieve another level of jurisdiction over a domain more potent and supreme in its influence than that found in the everyday world. Such locales were generally avoided by women, and they were especially dangerous to unmarried or menstruant women. Only places inhabited by the coyote spirit were used by women (DuBois 1935:79-81). A person in quest at these locations might travel from one sacred locality to another in search of dreams and spiritual influence. Different locales possessed different degrees sanctity; some were sources for shamanistic power while others were primarily used for special skills such as gambling or hunting, or, in the case of women, for basket-making. Many such places were recognized by Wintu people (DuBois 1935:81; TCR Field Data).

Shamans sought sacred energy at locations where they could acquire the skills necessary to serve as practitioners in the medical and religious aspects of Wintu life. A candidate would visit a sacred place and invoke the spirits associated with that esoteric domicile. The Wintu revere a creator or omnipotent spirit, *Olelbis*, who plays an integral role in the mythology, and to whom prayers are addressed. Prayers are a part of daily life, associated with sojourns in sacred places. Topographical features such as caves, springs, and rock outcroppings serve as settings for these functions. Tauhindauli (1979:24) tells us about caves in the poem “Power Waits,”

The cave has power  
whirlwind dances  
on the valley floor

sometimes people  
come to watch  
not all of them can see

Caves were used for gaining skills or for success in secular endeavors, and some offered enrichment in a full range of activities. These could be used by any person who sought the ends for which the cave was known. Some caves, known as *sauwel*, had to be approached in a specific manner. A *sauwel* has been specified by Wintu consultants as a place for religious people to acquire special power and spiritual guidance (see Samwell Cave).

Springs possessed importance in numerous ways. They often formed a component in healing practices, and as such were related to activities such as mud bathing, herbal treatment, or use of water in some other physical manner. The healing properties of some water was such that in some springs it was used directly for healing physical ailments and treating open wounds, as well as in cleansing and purifying the body of poisons. Other springs offered spiritual energy, where prayer could be made to attain the guidance of the



*Olelbis is a spiritual force; Olelbis is neutral and not static. It is responsible for the creation of all life.*  
Painting by Frank LaPena (1989)

specific spirit-beings found in such places. Of particular importance were springs found inside caves, especially *sauwel*. These springs were instrumental in acquiring spiritual prowess and other favors. Springs were also used for bathing and swimming.

Springs might also be created for specific purposes. For example, I was shown a basin or spring of water in a basaltic formation. It was created by a shaman to supply water to a group of Wintu who were hiding out from vigilantes and America troops (Theodoratus Cultural Research Field Data 1979-91). Vernal pools or seasonal rain ponds might also have significance. One seasonal rain pond used by doctors as a source for power took on the “look of blood” when filled.

Indwelling spirits are attributed to rock features of unusual configuration. Numerous places, considered sacred, are mentioned in the literature, particularly in the mythology, and are said to resemble a spirit, a heart, or a salmon. Present-day consultants discussed the importance of these formations to modern Wintu (Theodoratus Cultural Research Field Data 1979-91). Tauhindali writes in “A Rock, A Stone,”

I can't pass a rock  
like you  
without being mystified  
or hypnotized

I have heard stories  
of rocks  
and have known some  
rocks personally

They represent the  
world by their presence  
wisdom has no  
relationship to size

One time, perhaps many  
times



a man became a rock  
thinking that a fine way  
to gain immortality

A “guide rock” was one particular kind of formation used to show directions to particular places some of which were sacred. One type of guide rock, for example a split rock on the side of a hill, was visible from a distance, and was used to direct travelers to both ordinary and non-ordinary places. Many guide rocks were pointed out by a Wintu consultant who had traveled extensively by foot through a Wintu area (TCR Field Data). The guide rocks were interconnected, and a traveler would understand the direction to proceed to the next guidance point.

STREAMS AND RIVERS often were used to determine cardinal orientations, thus being part of a configuration of the Wintu world view. Rivers were sometimes named in a manner which included directions of flow. Pools or holes which formed along a watercourse were frequently assigned spiritual significance. Other topographic features—such as special rock formations, natural bridges, and caves associated with watercourses were thought to contain spiritual beings within their confines. Wintu myths often detail the creation of streams, and numerous references to

Bag of Bones—Woodcut and photo by Frank LaPena (1987)

streams in the mythology reveal them as significant elements of Wintu life. Streams were generally avoided by menstruating women; however some streams presented such spiritual danger that women avoided them at all times.

Mountains housed supernatural animal beings (such as werebeasts, mountain lions, mountain boys, bush boys) that could transform themselves into human form. Werebeasts were associated with evil or malevolent influences, so areas inhabited by these creatures were avoided (DuBois 1935:84-85). Mountains also possessed benevolent spiritual power, and a number of such peaks were named by consultants—Mount Shasta being the “main one” (TCR Field Data). LaPena reminds us that mountains (along with rocks) have slow, deliberate ways about them (1987:n.p.). *Sanchaluli*, a sacred place, is described as “constant and patient in its teaching” (LaPena 1987:n.p.). Tauhindauli (1979:22) tells us about a mountain in “Bird Healer”:

Yolla Bolli  
holds the imprints  
of mud tracks  
showing mother  
father  
and the children...

One of each  
covered with  
feathers and wings  
suitable for  
this mountain

Suitable for  
a spirit responsible  
for the beginning  
of the world

Spirits of the living and the dead could also be manifest in the environment. The spirits of the dead might manifest themselves in whirlwinds of dust, or as ghosts. The soul of the newly deceased could linger a few days before traveling north-

.....  
“When you look at the land, what is the first thing people see? How they can make money on it, what it can be used for. So it’s money, or learning how to value what looks like nothing. ‘Cause when the European people came here, they said, ‘Look at the Indians, they’ve done nothing with this land.’ Well, in our world view, that’s great. It looks so natural. That’s the way it’s supposed to be!”  
— CALEEN SISK-FRANCO,  
WINTU EDUCATOR  
.....

ward, where it would go to Mount Shasta or to a spring known only to souls. It would then rise to the Milky Way where it would travel south to a fork in the spirit trail, and then east to a grassy plain where Indians “are always having a big time” (DuBois 1935:79; TCR Field Data). Generally, at death, the body would be oriented toward the north, the direction the ghost must travel to drink from the spring of life before starting the journey to the next world (DuBois 1935:65). Different soul-travel orientations might be used for a person buried outside the Wintu area. Then, the spirit would be released in the direction of Mt. Shasta, but the funeral oratory would always direct the soul on its celestial journey.

Many Wintu today are particularly synchronized with, engaged in, and committed to their landscape. One consultant told me that in order to record the Bald Hills area properly I would have to be content to cover less than a mile each day. Other Wintu have similar knowledge of the network in their landscape showing intense regard for their physical environment even though the order of the Wintu world has been broken by development and Western disorder. For many, there has



*North Mountain by Frank LaPena (1987)*

been a perpetuation of the meaning of landscape—that is, the relation of geographical features to life in general, LaPena reminds us, in *The World Is a Gift* (1987), that “we are all connected because time has no boundary and space is of one continuity” (LaPena 1987). Clearly, the Wintu perceive the sacredness of features and the power of place in their environment, but also resplendent in this wide-angle vision is the interconnectedness of these features into a broader cosmology, or a complex sacred geography.

Again, according to Tauhindauli, in his poem, “I Am Related,”

I am related  
in the universe  
bigger than  
my mind

I am connected  
to the stars

and sing to  
chosen star groups

...

I travel  
both earth and heaven  
trails  
...  
to other stars  
and songs  
of other constellations



DOROTHEA THEODORATUS is an anthropologist who was Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies for 27 years at Cal State University, Sacramento. She did extensive work for many years with 30 tribes to document and protect sacred sites.

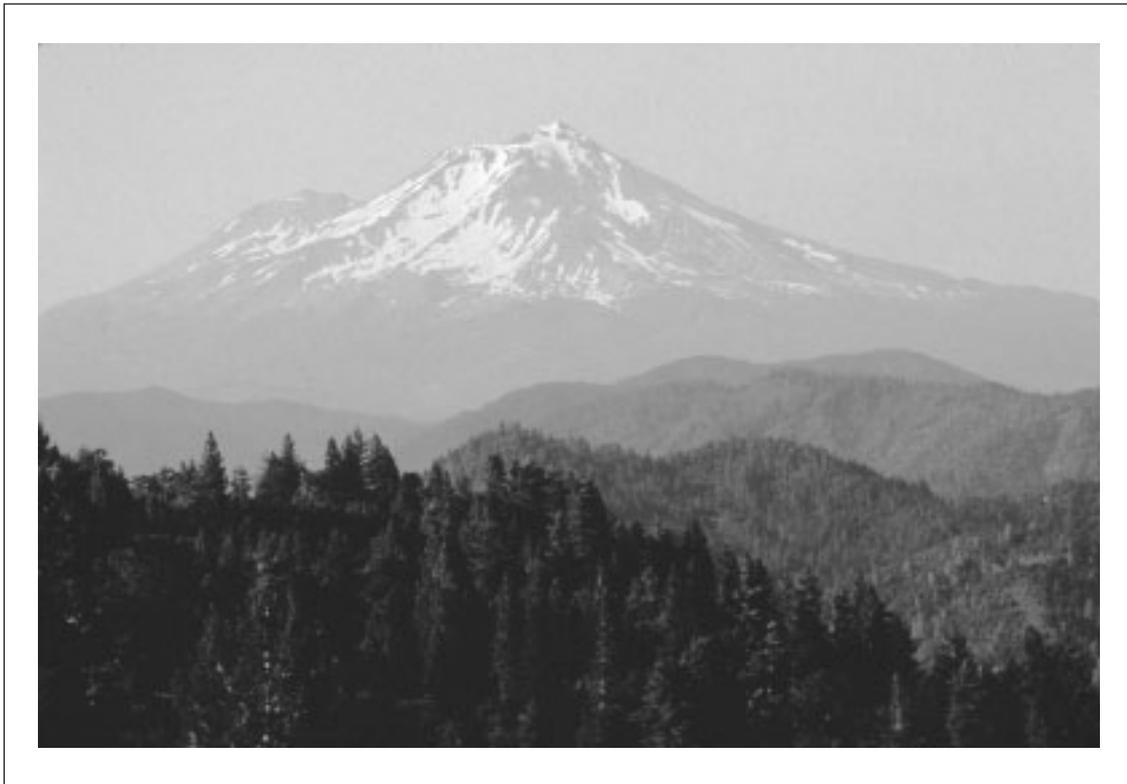
FRANK LAPENA, Nomtipom Wintu, is a writer, painter and traditional singer and dancer. He is Professor Emeritus in Native American Studies and Art at Cal State University, Sacramento.



“Wintu Sacred Geography” from *California Indian Shamanism* (1992), edited by Lowell John Bean. Ballena Press Anthropological Papers; No. 39. ©1992 and 2000 by Dorothea Theodoratus and Frank LaPena. Used by permission of Ballena Press. All rights reserved.

## REFERENCES

- Bean, Lowell John. 1991. Personal communication.
- Dubois, C. 1935. Wintu ethnography. *University of California Archaeology and Ethnology* 36 (1), 1-148.
- DuBois, C. & D. Demetracopoulou 1935. Wintu myths. *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 28 (5), 279-403.
- LaPena, Frank, 1987. *The World Is a Gift*. San Francisco: Limestone Press.
- Masson, M. 1966. *A Bag of Bones, Legends of the Wintu Indians of Northern California*. Happy Camp, Calif.: Naturegraph.
- Nabokov, Peter, 1981. Land as symbol. Speech recorded in the American Indian Option Series at Ames, Iowa. National Public Radio, Washington, D.C.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1986. Unto these mountains: toward the study of sacred geography. In *Voices of the First America: text and context in the New World*, G. Brotherston (ed.), Special issue of *New Scholar* 10, 1-3, 479-89.
- Tauhindali, 1979. *Sanusa Stopped the Rain*. Carmichael, Calif.: Chalatien Press.
- Theodoratus Cultural Research 1979-91. Field data. Fair Oaks, Calif.: Theodoratus Cultural Research.
- Theodoratus Cultural Research 1981. Native American cultural overview, Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Principle, Dorothea Theodoratus. Report, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Redding, Calif. Fair Oaks, Calif.: Theodoratus Cultural Research.





## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS RESISTANCE

# FREEDOM, LAW, AND PROPHECY

~by *Lee Irwin*

**I**N AUGUST 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) was passed by Congress as a guarantee of constitutional protection of First Amendment rights for Native Americans. This act was passed as an attempt to redress past wrongs by the federal government or its agents. That history of legal suppression was due to “the lack of a clear, comprehensive and consistent Federal policy [which] has often resulted in the abridgement of religious freedom for traditional American Indians.” The summary text of this act states:

Henceforth it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sacred sites, use and possession of sacred objects and freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps hard for those unfamiliar with the history of Native American religious oppression to

realize that in our own lifetimes it continues to be difficult or impossible for Native Americans to freely practice their religions. The suppression of those practices has been pervasive to such a degree that AIRFA has proven to be insufficient to grant the freedom that many Native Americans feel is necessary for the complete affirmation of their respective religious identities.

What is the background that necessitated AIRFA and what directions have issues of religious affirmation taken since this act became law? Perhaps the most suppressive laws regarding religious freedom were those promulgated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the Indian Courts, known as the Indian Religious Crimes Code. These laws were first developed in 1883 by Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller as a means to prohibit Native American ceremonial activity under pain of imprisonment. Teller’s general guidelines to all Indian agents ordered them to discontinue dances and feasts as well as instructing them to take steps with regard to all medicine men, “who are always in the anti-progressive party... to compel these impostors to abandon this deception and discontinue their practices, which are not only without benefit to

them but positively injurious to them.”<sup>2</sup>

Religious offenses on the reservations were later codified by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas J. Morgan, in 1892 in his “Rules for Indian Courts,” whereby he established a series of criminal offenses aimed at Native American religious practices. He wrote:

*Dances*—Any Indian who shall engage in the sun dance, scalp dance, or war dance, or any similar feast, so called, shall be guilty of an offense, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished for the first offense by withholding of his rations for not exceeding ten days or by imprisonment for not exceeding ten days; for any subsequent offense under this clause he shall be punished by withholding his rations for not less than ten days nor more than thirty days, or by imprisonment for not less than ten days nor more than thirty days.

*Medicine men*—Any Indian who shall engage in the practices of so-called medicine men, or who shall resort to any artifice or device to keep the Indians of the reservation from adopting and following civilized habits and pursuits, or shall use any arts of conjurer to prevent Indians from abandoning their barbarous rites and customs, shall be deemed guilty of an offense, and upon conviction thereof, for the first offense shall be imprisoned for not less than ten days and not more than thirty days: Provided that, for subsequent conviction for such offense the maximum term or imprisonment shall not exceed six months.<sup>3</sup>

These laws not only abrogate First Amendment rights in a conscious and well-documented policy of religious oppression, they also reveal a systematic attempt on the part of highly placed government officials to stamp out Native American religious practices. They also represent a

determined policy to reconstruct Native religions in conformity with dominant Protestant majority values in a myopic vision of what constitutes “civilized” religious behavior. Such policy is found consistently in the Annual Reports of many commissioners of Indian Affairs from the creation of the office in 1832 through the appointment of John Collier in 1934.<sup>4</sup>

These oppressive policies can be traced through the writings of not only the Indian commissioners and other heads of state who managed Indian affairs such as various secretaries of state (after 1849) as well as various secretaries of war (1824–48), to an even earlier policy, that of the 1819 Indian Civilization Fund Act, the primary intent of which was to create a fund to reform and “civilize” Indian peoples in accordance with alien cultural norms imposed on them by a conquering majority.<sup>5</sup> Where this proved impossible or undesirable, the Indian Civilization Act also called for the more insidious policy of Indian removal, generally to the West and thus away from encroaching Euroamerican settlement. The mandate for determining Indian affairs by government officials can be further traced back to the 1783 First Continental Congress Indian Proclamation which says, “The United States in Congress assembled have the sole and exclusive right and power of regulating trade and managing all affairs with the Indians.”<sup>6</sup> This set in place the legal precedent by which Indian peoples were denied religious freedom, imposing exclusively non-Native standards of legitimacy. Pushing back even further, it is significant that in the United States Constitution only five words can be found that refer to any Native peoples, these words involving only trade and taxation agreements.<sup>7</sup>

What strategies have Native peoples followed in responding to this crushing onslaught against their spiritual lives, goods, and diverse religious practices? In general, there has been a range of strategies in a spectrum between two major alternatives: accommodation or resistance. As Gregory Dowd has argued, the late 1700s and early 1800s was a period of resistance by Native



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

*Sign posted by missionaries in the Southwest in the early 20th century.*

people against Anglo-American settlement, a time of “widespread intertribal activity” in which various Native peoples sought to solve the challenges of cultural and political encroachment while also being deeply influenced by events affecting other tribes.<sup>8</sup> On the religious front, some groups, like the Cherokee and other southeastern peoples, tried to accommodate the new way of life introduced by settlement, taking up Anglo farming as well as taking a receptive interest in the teachings of Christianity. Significantly, the strategy of accommodation often was promoted by those in upper echelon leadership roles (like John Ross among the Cherokee) who often had diminishing contact with the most traditional ways of life as a result of intermarriages, exposure to Anglo-European education, or wealth accrued through non-Native economic practices.<sup>9</sup>

However, this strategy of accommodation proved to be primarily a one-way accommodation; that is, while Native groups struggled to adapt or accommodate the invading Anglo-Europeans, this accommodation was rarely if ever reciprocated. Such one-way accommodation often proved fatal, such as in the Cherokee case when, after many years of often successful adaptation and conformity to alien values and lifeways, they were forced

off their lands through the greed and racist mentality of the Georgia legislature that revoked their political rights after gold was discovered on Cherokee lands. The federal government then forced Cherokees to take the Trail of Tears in the fateful winter of 1838 when so many Cherokee people died.<sup>10</sup> Thus the strategy of accommodation has its own tragic history and has largely been nonreciprocal, often resulting in a subordination of Native concerns to those of the dominating political hierarchies on state and federal levels.

Over against the strategy of accommodation is the resistance or revivalist movements that increasingly emphasized the importance of traditional Native values, indigenous religious orientations, and the need to abandon all dependency on non-Native goods or ideas. Often, the origins of this resistance came from a variety of Native religious leaders who emphatically called for an assertion of Native beliefs and practices as an affirmation of intrinsic, inherited spiritual values and as a rallying cry for the preservation of the many diverse paths found in Native religious life. At the extreme pole of this response, “nativistic” came to mean not a return to the past in an ideal or artificial, Utopian sense, but a preservation of core indigenous values and beliefs as a basis for cultural survival, a survival that might include a diverse synthesis of alternative religious ideas or practices. This affirmation was strengthened by the emergence of a significant number of prophetic spiritual leaders whose visionary experiences confirmed and celebrated Native religious orientation as a primary source of empowerment for resisting colonial advancement. In many cases, this prophetic leadership was forced to advocate a militant resistance and a strategy of complex alliances, often turning hostile in the face of non-

Native aggression while also rejecting any form of unilateral, submissive accommodation.<sup>11</sup>

Examples of this prophetic leadership are many, extending from coast to coast in the wake of increasing patterns of political and cultural domination. The corrosive effects of trans-Appalachian conflicts through the forced migrations of East Coast indigenous peoples, the uninhibited spread of the rum and whiskey trade, and various Anglo-European armed conflicts (and later American military aggression) all contributed to a necessarily defensive stance on the part of Native peoples.<sup>12</sup> A responsive religious leadership began to emerge among Native peoples in the form of empowered individuals whose messages were oriented to more apocalyptic visions in which non-Native aggressors would be defeated, destroyed, or pushed back depending on the degree to which Native peoples could re-affirm traditional

values corrupted by colonial advancement.

As early as 1752, Munsee religious leader Papounhan received a vision while mourning the death of his father that he should lead the Munsee people in a restoration of their Native traditions that had been nearly lost as a result of European contact.<sup>13</sup> The Delaware prophet Neolin, in the 1760s, was one of four such prophetic leaders who arose to reaffirm through personal visions the importance of traditional religious values and in fact influenced Pontiac's resistance during his so-called "conspiracy" of 1763. In 1776, Wangomen, another Delaware prophet, also advocated a return to Native values and religion. He condemned a number of Euroamerican practices such as slavery and the use of alcohol and tried to lead the Delaware to a renewed affirmation of traditional Delaware values.<sup>14</sup> Around 1800, Handsome Lake, a Seneca



SOUTHWEST MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

*Many Hopis refused to go along with government privatization of land and refused to send their children to schools where the Hopi language was banned and only English was taught. These Hopi men, known as "Hostiles," were imprisoned at Alcatraz in 1895 for resisting government edicts.*

prophet, perhaps a bit more of an accommodationist, received a religious revelation that combined elements of Christianity and core Senecan religious practices. Preaching the Gaiwio or Good Word, Handsome Lake led the Iroquois in reorganizing their economic, social, and religious lives along lines that combined traditional Iroquois religious practices and beliefs with elements from Christianity.<sup>15</sup>

By the early 1800s on the Northwest Coast, many such prophetic and charismatic figures appeared in a sequence of revitalizing spiritual movements, all advocating a new rebirth of older religious patterns as a means for the affirmation and survival of indigenous tribal identities. The Spokane leaders Yurareechen (Circling Raven), the Flathead leader Shining Shirt, and the Umatilla religious leader Diaupac, all preached the importance of preserving indigenous traditions. Diaupac predicted ominous and apocalyptic scenarios in the wake of the arrival of Euro-American settlers, including a prediction of the complete destruction of the Indian way of life as well as the destruction of the world through flood or fire.<sup>16</sup> In the East, prior to 1812, Tenskataaw (Open Door), the Shawnee prophet and brother of Tecumseh, sparked the first intertribal confederacy that united many thousands of diverse Native peoples around a religiously motivated resistance movement. Tenskataaw emphasized a return to indigenous values as a result of a visionary journey he had during a near death experience. He condemned intermarriage and all contact with Europeans and urged a return to traditional communal values. He traveled extensively throughout the tribes with his message of spiritual and political renewal.<sup>17</sup> Around this same time Hildis Hadjo (or Josiah Francis), the Creek Prophet, also led a movement that combined resistance to Anglo-European ways with a return to Native values in the face of cultural erosion.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, revitalization movements continued along the front of advancing Anglo-American settlement, as tribal displacements made life increasingly more diffi-

cult and bitter for Native peoples. In 1820, Yonaguska (Drowning-Bear), a Cherokee prophet, as a result of a visionary experience at the age of 60, promulgated traditional Cherokee values, promoted anti-alcoholism, and resisted removal talk, emphasizing the need to retain ancestral ties to the Blue Ridge mountains as intrinsic to Cherokee spiritual life.<sup>19</sup> In 1832, Kenekuk, a Kickapoo spiritual leader, led the Kickapoo to Illinois after they were displaced by settlers as a result of the 1832 Indian Removal Act promulgated by Andrew Jackson. While Kenekuk assimilated some features of Christianity into his teachings, he also emphasized the maintenance of core Kickapoo religious values and practices as essential for Kickapoo survival. The Kickapoo under his leadership resisted standardized education and land division, refused to learn English, and engaged in Kickapoo dances and singing during religious ceremonies.<sup>20</sup> In the mid-1850s, other Nativistic religious movements in the Northwest were underway, led by Smohalla, the Wanapam dreamer-prophet and Washani religious revitalizer.<sup>21</sup> Smohalla's teachings, which emphasized a return to Native traditions and the abandonment of alien goods and ideas, acted as a catalyst for tribal confederation during the Yakima Wars of 1855–56 against Anglo-American encroachment and government plans to confine the Northwest peoples onto small and inadequate reservations. Those who kept the old Washani spiritual ways would be resurrected after death and their traditional world would be restored to them.<sup>21</sup> Smohalla, like many other yantcha or "spiritual leaders" of the Northwest emphasized non-violence and peaceful co-existence with non-Natives (as did Kenekuk and Drowning Bear) while still seeking to return to older ways and indigenous spiritual values.

From this period forward, many such prophetic movements arose, all emphasizing Native values and traditional religions, with varying degrees of accommodation with Christian beliefs—but all stressing the importance of a return to basic core values and indigenous practices. The culmination

of this movement, what Leslie Spier has called the Prophet Dance tradition, was transmitted by the 1860s dreamer-prophet, Wodziwob, a Paiute of central California, to Tavibo, the father of the Nevada Paiute, and Wovoka, the visionary founder of the Ghost Dance of 1889. Again, this visionary history of spirit dancing became a rallying cry for many different Native peoples throughout the Great Plains area, illustrating the intertribal effects of Native prophetic movements and their often unifying character. Many different tribes sent representatives to meet with Wovoka, who then instructed them in Ghost Dances rites. These rites were then transported back to the Plains tribes as a revelation of greatest import—the practice of the dance was to result in the return of the old way of life now rapidly diminished, a return of the buffalo, and the expulsion of Anglo-Americans from Native lands.<sup>22</sup> The tragic consequence of the Lakota practice of this dance resulted in the U.S. Army's slaughter of 84 men, 44 women, and 18 children at Wounded Knee, in December 1890. The victims of this massacre are buried in a mass grave on the Pine Ridge reservation. This site, a stain on the American national conscience, continues to be a historic monument of the tragic and aggressive assault on Native religious life. Even though the Ghost Dance continued sporadically, as among the Kiowa, the unprovoked destruction of the Lakota people as they attempted to arbitrate their rights to practice Native religions had a shocking, suppressive force on all Native religious practices.<sup>23</sup>

It is around the time of the events at Wounded Knee that the most suppressive measures against Native religions were promoted through the "Rules of Indian Courts" instigated by Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan, nominal head of the BIA under the Secretary of the Interior. Morgan also wrote in his 1889 Annual Report:

The Indians must conform to "the white man's ways," peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must.... The tribal relations should be broken up, socialism destroyed, and the



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*In 1890, Kicking Bear, a Miniconjou Sioux, brought the Ghost Dance to Sitting Bull's people at Standing Rock, South Dakota. Within months, General Miles and the Seventh Cavalry arrived to suppress the ceremony. Kicking Bear survived the Wounded Knee massacre, in which 250 Lakota were killed by U.S. government troops, and he was one of the last ghost dancers to turn in his rifle. Sites of terrorism can become "sacred ground."*

family and the autonomy of the individual substituted. The allotment of lands in severalty, the establishment of local courts and police, the development of a personal sense of independence and the universal adoption of the English language are the means to this end.<sup>24</sup>

A similar Canadian law also was promoted, the 1884 Canadian Indian Act that made Native potlatch or giveaways illegal and participants subject to a misdemeanor and imprisonment from two to six months. Similarly repressive laws were introduced and approved by the Canadian legislature in 1895, 1914, and 1933.<sup>25</sup>

The darkest and most difficult times for the

practice of Native religions and ways of life was the post-Civil War period up to the mid-twentieth century. During this period Sun Dancing and other such rites were made illegal, suppressed by government Indian agents as “barbaric and uncivilized.” In accordance with the Grant Peace Policy, the Board of Indian Commissioners was formed in 1869. Their first report noted that the duties of the board were “to educate the Indians in industry, the arts of civilization, and the principles of Christianity.” This board was given joint control with the secretary of the interior over congressional funds appropriated for dealing with the Indian agencies. Christian missionaries of all denominations were given government support for the founding of missions on Indian reservation land in 73 agencies. In 1872, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Walker reported that agents from the most Protestant denominations were appointed “to assume charge of the intellectual and moral education of the Indians thus brought within the reach of their influence.”<sup>26</sup> During this time, Native children were forcibly shipped to Christian missionary schools where they were denied the rights to speak Native languages, to wear Native clothing, or to practice any form of Native religion.<sup>27</sup> Missionary zeal specifically targeted Native religions as the bane of all civilized Christian ideology. Subsequent missionary activities caused “fractions, feuds and schisms, discredited popular leaders and imposed new ones on the Indians and in scores of ways undermined and weakened the unity of the tribes.”<sup>28</sup> Indian ceremonies were banned, religious practices disrupted, and sacred objects destroyed or confiscated.

Some renewal movements did continue, such as the turn of the century Four Mothers Society of the Natchez-Creek based on a return to the old Southeast ceremonial tradition. Membership in the Four Mothers Society linked traditional full-bloods from the Natchez, Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole in Oklahoma. In 1900, there was a resistance to allotment led by the Creek spiritual leader Chitto Harjo (Crazy

Snake), who formed a Chitto or Snake Society, members of which were dedicated to preserving the old Creek spiritual way and to resisting political encroachment. In 1902, Redbird Smith, breaking away from the Four Mothers Society, led a renewal of the Oklahoma Cherokee Ketoowa or Night-Hawk Society and laid out a traditional ceremonial ground on Blackgum Mountain. This effort established a new sacred fire from which 22 more traditional fires were started, spreading a traditionalist spiritual movement among the older Cherokee population.<sup>29</sup> In the Northwest, in 1910, the Nisqually John Slocum established the Shaker Church in Olympia, Washington. As a result of a visionary experience, Slocum and his wife promoted a religious movement that brought together Native people from many different tribes throughout the Northwest and California in a synthesis of prophetic Native indigenous beliefs and reinterpreted Christianity.<sup>30</sup> In 1918, the Native American Church (NAC) was legally incorporated in Oklahoma in resistance to congressional efforts to make possession and transportation of peyote illegal, though 17 states passed laws making the use of peyote illegal.<sup>31</sup>

During the early twentieth century, however, Native religious reaffirmation movements tended to decline as indigenous peoples struggled to survive under the appalling and oppressive political circumstances. In 1906, the Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities (APAA), while making it a criminal offense to appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy historic or prehistoric ruins, monuments, or objects of antiquity located on lands owned or controlled by the U.S. government, also defined dead Indians or Indian artifacts as “archaeological resources” and converted these persons and objects into federal “property,” thereby further depriving Native peoples of the right to dispose of their dead or to maintain possession of sacred objects because reservation lands were under federal jurisdiction.<sup>32</sup>

Indian religions, many still espousing a commitment to Native religious practices, went underground, into the Kivas, out of sight, into the

back hills and hidden valleys of the reservations. Many religious leaders still refused to accommodate the larger cultural imperium. In 1934, John Collier was appointed as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Indian

Reorganization Act was passed. This act ended allotment, allowed for the appointment of Native people to the BIA without civil service requirements, and encouraged the formation of tribal governments—but only with a written constitution and accompanying by-laws approved by the Department of the Interior. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes approved of Collier's BIA Circular 2970 titled "Indian Religious Freedom and Indian Culture," which was sent to all agencies and stated that "no interference with Indian religious life or ceremonial expression will hereafter be tolerated." This circular represents the government's first specific policy statement made to protect Native American religious rights.<sup>33</sup>

Still, the long history of religious oppression was by no means ended as government policy and legislation continued to undermine the solidarity and cohesion of reservation life. In 1940, the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior "issued regulations restricting the taking, possessing and transporting of bald and golden eagles or their parts" as a result of the Bald (and later Golden) Eagle Protection Act. This made the use of eagle feathers a federal offense and individual spiritual leaders and traditional practitioners were persecuted under this act.<sup>34</sup> Displacement from reservation lands in the mid-1950s to forced relocations in urban environments, as epitomized by the 1954 Menominee Termination Act, further added to disorientation and spiritual loss as many families were paid to move into large cities where promised job opportunities and employment failed to materialize.



Zuni Governor Malcolm Bowekaty (right) testifies at a Senate hearing on sacred land in July 2002. At left are Lorey Kachora and President Mike Jackson of the Quechan tribe.

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Thousands of indigenous people found themselves alienated from reservation life, living in "red ghettos" where crime, poverty and alcoholism escalated to extreme proportions.<sup>35</sup> In 1959, a court case between

the Native American Church and the Navajo Tribal Council resulted in a ruling from the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals that "The First Amendment applies only to Congress....No provision in the Constitution makes the First Amendment applicable to Indian nations nor is there any law of Congress doing so." This decision severely limited the freedom and legal rights of Native peoples to seek redress from religious oppression or discrimination.<sup>36</sup> As late as 1971, Sun Dancers were being arrested on Pine Ridge by tribal police because the tribal judge issued an injunction against Sun Dancing.<sup>37</sup>

The first contemporary resistance movement came with the formation of yet another Nativistic survival movement, this time led by younger Native American political activists, in the form of the American Indian Movement (AIM). In 1968, George Mitchell and Dennis Banks (Chippewas) founded AIM in Minneapolis in an attempt to force better treatment for inner-city Native peoples harassed constantly by police and other city officials. Shortly thereafter, Clyde and Vernon Bellecourt (Chippewa) and Russell Means (Oglala) joined AIM and, in 1969, AIM members joined with other Native peoples in the occupation of Alcatraz Island as "Indian land" in the first public re-affirmation of Red Power since Wounded Knee. In August 1972, AIM members went to the Lakota Crow Dog Sun Dance at Pine Ridge where traditional spiritual leaders gave their support to the movement. The "spiritual rebirth" of Indian rights was affirmed as a union between traditional religious and political leaders espousing a revival of Native identity and a rebirth of Native religious

practices as a means for political empowerment. AIM became the spearhead in the effort to secure tribal rights, authentic religious practices, and governmental redress of past wrongs and oppression. Increasing confrontations between AIM leaders and non-Native authorities, as well as opposition from government-supported tribal leaders at Pine Ridge, resulted in numerous shoot-outs and yet another battle and standoff at Wounded Knee (Feb.-May 1973) as AIM members confronted state and federal authorities. While no redress was given after AIM members and tribal religious leaders surrendered at Wounded Knee (562 were arrested, yet only 15 were found guilty of a crime), from this time forward visible redress of Native rights begins to surface in government policy.<sup>38</sup>

In 1973, all attempts at tribal termination officially ended; in 1974 the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) authorized the secretary of the interior to implement “an orderly transition from federal domination of programs for and services to Indians to effective and meaningful participation by Indian people in the planning, conduct, and administration of those programs and services.” This act allowed for contracts and grants to train Native people to operate programs they might want to take over in full, as well as for the disbursement of funds more directly to reservation populations and the election of Native peoples to official positions within governmental institutions and programs.<sup>39</sup> In 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act assured that there will be no more governmentally enforced education or the “forcible and systematic transferring of care of Indian children to non-Natives through compulsory boarding schools and adoption to non-Natives.”<sup>40</sup> And in 1978, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) was passed.

In 1979, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) attempted to redress the 1906 Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities by ruling that permits must be obtained for excavations of sites more than one

100 years old, that consent must be obtained for any work on tribal Indian lands by tribal land-owners, and that work on public lands held to be sacred by any tribes requires those tribes to be notified before any permits are granted. However, human remains on federal lands are still “archaeological resources” and “property of the United States” which, if excavated under federal permit, can be “preserved by a suitable university, museum or other scientific or educational institution.”<sup>41</sup> This act still undercuts the rights of Native peoples to claim legitimate control over ancestral dead territorially identified as under federal jurisdiction and inhibits religious claims about how those ancestral dead (now or previously unearthed) should be treated.

In 1987, the National Park Service issued a policy statement in response to AIRFA, to explore means for integrating the needs of Native religious practitioners into park resource management. The statement clearly says that Native religious claims “must be within the bounds of existing legislation as well as NPS rules and policies” thereby subordinating Native religious needs and practices to pre-existing government regulations.<sup>42</sup> Also in 1987, the Iroquois Recognition Bill was passed “to acknowledge the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of



National Park Service sign at Chaco Canyon

Nations in the development of the United States Constitution and to reaffirm the continuing government-to-government relationship between tribes and the United States established in the Constitution.” In 1989, the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA) provided for the repatriation of Native human remains collected by the Smithsonian Institution to American Indian tribes upon tribal request. The Smithsonian must inventory and, where possible, identify its collection of remains (18,000), notify appropriate tribal groups, and return them if the tribe requests. Blackfeet reburial of 16 ancestral remains occurred in 1989, and 700 remains presently are being returned to Kodiak Island cemetery.<sup>43</sup> Previous to this, in the 1980s, the Denver Art Museum returned War Gods to the Zuni; the Heard Museum in Phoenix returned Kiva masks to Hopi elders; the Wheelwright Museum returned 11 medicine bundles to Navajo; the State Museum of New York in Albany returned 12 wampum belts to Six Nation Confederacy and a clan bundle to the Hidatsa; the Boston Peabody Museum returned the sacred pole (plus 270 other artifacts) to the Omaha; and many others have made nominal returns as well. But many museums and institutions have ignored requests. For example, the Iroquois request for return of all their sacred masks has not been met.<sup>44</sup>

In 1990, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed. This act protects Indian gravesites from looting and requires repatriation of all culturally identifiable tribal artifacts. According to the act, museums must inventory collections and notify tribes of their holdings. Legal procedures are established for reclaiming artifacts, though claimants must meet strict legal tests.<sup>45</sup> However, NAGPRA does not apply to state land or private property. By 1991, 32 states had laws that dealt with reburial and repatriation of ancestral prehistoric remains; but there is little consistency among the laws passed and many do not involve goods found on private property.<sup>46</sup> As Walter and Roger Echo-

Hawk have written, “criminal statutes in all fifty states very strictly prohibit grave desecration, grave robbing, and mutilation of the dead—yet they are not applied to protect Indian dead... [Native dead are still] ‘federal property’ to be used as chattels in the academic marketplace.”<sup>47</sup>

In 1993, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) was passed and signed into law, thereby compelling the government not to “substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification” and to “provide a claim or defense to persons whose religious exercise is substantially burdened by government.” While this act may help to redress future infringement of Native American religious rights, it does not mention those rights specifically. This brings us fully into the present with the 1994 Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act (NAFERA). NAFERA is a bill amending the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) and includes, among other things, specific protections for the use of peyote by Native American Church members as well as protecting the religious rights of Native American prisoners who wish to practice traditional Native religions. The NAFERA bill was proposed as a means to put teeth into the policy statement of the 1978 act which has been largely perceived as ineffectual in court cases involving Native American religious freedom.<sup>48</sup> As of 1995, no government agency has developed actual regulations based on AIRFA; further, the U.S. Forest Service has been one of the most aggressive antagonists of AIRFA in the courts (particularly in *Lyng v. Northwest*). As Sharon O’Brien writes concerning AIRFA, “Testimony by American Indian witnesses and government officials clearly attest to the lack of federal administrative compliance with the law and congressional failure to rectify religious infringements through legislative reform.”<sup>49</sup>

And where is AIM today? AIM is alive and well, continuing its long struggle for political and religious rights of Native peoples. In 1993, AIM reorganized into “an alliance of fully autonomous but reciprocally supporting chapters.” AIM

chapters are dedicated “to advance the cause of indigenous sovereignty and self-determination within its own context and regional conditions.” Decisions of local and state chapters are made independently, emphasizing their local constituencies.<sup>50</sup> In April 1993, AIM held a Western Regional Conference of its many chapter organizations where AIM members were joined by John La Velle, the Santee Lakota founder of Center for the SPIRIT (Support and Protection of Indian Religions and Indigenous Traditions). San Francisco area-based SPIRIT is “a nonprofit organization of American Indian people dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of American Indian spiritual practices and religious traditions.” La Velle announced a joint commitment with diverse tribal elders and the AIM chapters to continuing to work for the protection and maintenance of Native religious rights.

At the Lakota Summit V, in June 1993, an international gathering of United States and Canadian Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota nations, including 500 representatives from as many as 40 tribes, unanimously passed a “Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality.” At the conference, Wilmer Mesteth, a traditional Lakota leader and instructor at Lakota Oglala College, spoke about the imitation and sale of Lakota ceremonies by non-Indian peoples. Mesteth, along with Darrell Standing Elk and Phillis Swift Hawk, drew up the declaration to warn non-Natives against the appropriation of Native spirituality.<sup>51</sup>



*Roberta Blackgoat, Navajo, at Black Mesa*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

AIM also has become more visible in a walk led by Dennis Banks and Mary Jane Wilson that began February 11, 1994, from Alcatraz Island and which culminated in Washington, D.C., in July as a means to call attention to the continued imprisonment of Leonard Peltier—who many believe was falsely imprisoned and who is certainly the foremost symbol of Native American political and spiritual resistance.

The concerns of both AIM and SPIRIT are summarized in the Lakota Summit

“declaration of war” against all “plastic Indians.” This declaration expresses the frustration and anger that many Native peoples feel about the sale of Native American religious objects as well as the marketing of Native ceremonies by unqualified and (usually) non-Native people (see appendix 1). Tourism that results in the sale of Native artifacts has been denounced as well as “New Age exhibitors [who] wrongfully [portray] themselves as Native Americans or [sell] ceremonies for profit.”<sup>52</sup> AIM and SPIRIT sponsor political actions against institutions of higher education and confrontations with various institutions’ members who are engaged in ceremonies that falsely claim to legitimate students as “pipe-carriers” or as representatives of Native religions. Confrontations have occurred with people claiming to lead or in other ways sponsor Native religious activities who are neither members of any tribe nor qualified by tribal standards to lead such events.



*New Age offering at vision-questing site in California*

CHRISTOPHER MCLEOD

Congress of Women of the Americas (1994, Washington, D.C., 1995 in Beijing) which included women from North, Central, and South America, Canada, and Russia, providing an opportunity for networking which may prove to be a formidable resource for Native political and religious actions.

In the summer of 1995, while attending a Sun Dance on Pine Ridge, I had several opportunities to discuss these issues with the full-blood traditional Lakota ceremonial leader who had invited me to that dance.<sup>53</sup> In our discussions, we touched on the history and background of oppression on the Pine Ridge reservation. His comments on Black Elk were particularly salient:

You know, Black Elk was part of a conspiracy, a cover up here among the Lakota, What he says there about the Indian religion being dead, over, was part of a plan to stop the oppression here at Pine Ridge. It worked too. After that book came out, things got better; we just said it was over, dead, a thing of the past. We had to still do it secretly, but things have gotten better. Now we can do it more openly and bring other people in.... I don't believe our religion is something that should be hidden or kept from other people who are not Lakota or Indian. But for a long time, we had to keep everything hidden, even from other Lakota.

AIM and SPIRIT have adopted the terms “exploiters” and “exploitation” as part of a regional and national strategy to confront people, whether Indian or non-Indian, who profit from Native American religious traditions. Actions are presently underway by AIM to mandate tribal identification cards or tribal legal verification for anyone claiming to represent Indian people in any public forum, including powwow vendors and artisans. Anyone profiting from religious activities associated with a claimed tribal affiliation should be able to provide references from that tribe affirming the good standing of that person with tribal members. Finally, AIM delegates have resolved to work toward getting a bill to Congress making it illegal to falsely impersonate a medicine man or a medicine woman and to stop, where possible, the selling of ceremonies and sacred objects.

Other such Native groups have formed, including the League of Indigenous Sovereign Nations (LISN, May 1991, established on Piscataway Native land in Port-Tobacco, Maryland); the Indigenous Peoples Caucus (IPC, Canada, 1993, Sulian Stone Eagle Herney, Mi'kmak); Native American Traditions, Ideals, Values Educational Society (NATIVE, 1993, founded by a Navajo mother of five, Betty Red Ant LaFontaine); and WARN (Women of All Red Nations), one of the first Native American feminist movements. This feminist element has taken a more visible form in the recent Second and Third Continental

These comments reflect more than a personal point of view. They express in many ways both the consequences of a long oppressive history and the resistance strategies that have led to the preservation of many traditional Native religious practices in the face of religious persecution. Caution still exists—this Sun Dance was by invitation only and closed to casual outsiders. Held back in the hills, there were no signs, no indications other than a single red cloth tied on a stop sign. On entering the dance grounds, a very large sign in red paint read, “No cameras or tape recorders allowed!” The entrance was watched day and night and roped off

to anyone other than those approved or known to those posted at the entrance.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental of all strategies in the struggle for spiritual survival among Native Americans has been the constant theme of maintaining traditional religious integrity and not compromising religious beliefs or practices in the face of massive oppression and coercion. Accommodation has proven, in many ways, to lead to an erosion of traditional values in the face of a long and usually uncompromising, non-reciprocal assault on Native character and identity. Yet, political resistance in the late twentieth century has been moderated by a resurgence in Native religious practices, the leaders of which have constantly promoted non-violent tactics and an ethics of preservation, mutuality, and respect for tribal differences. All too often, these leaders have been labeled as “radicals” and “troublemakers” whose actions are seen as unjustly critical of majority rule. Such a response is a symptom of cultural blindness indicating a profound lack of awareness of the real history of Native American religious oppression.

The history of prophetic leadership has been one of cultural survival with a constant reaffirmation of the rights of Native peoples to formulate, and reformulate, their religious and communal identities through a validation of their own cultural pasts. Often this has required constant, bitter negotiation with non-Native peoples whose perspective is reinforced by alien cultural values. There is nothing “radical” about such resistance—it is a natural inclination to preserve valued cultural practices that are inseparable from a way of life and identity grounded in deep, abiding spiritual principles distinct from those imposed by aggressive missionization and assimilative government policies. In many ways, Native communities are actually proponents of the conservation of culture, of maintaining continuity with the past and of preserving long-held values. The prophetic foreground of visible resistance to cultural annihilation is more appropriately seen as a bulwark

protecting a long and deeply held stability than as simply a reaction to aggressive settlement.

Another theme of this paper has been the way in which traditional spiritual movements act to facilitate intertribal cooperation without denying the diversity of religious practices or values of any particular community. This, it seems to me, is a lesson for all of us. There is a genuine need for all people involved in the study and practice of Native religious life to respect religious differences (which past generations of Euroamericans in particular have failed to do, including academics) in order to further the causes of religious pluralism as a basis for personal empowerment and religious identity. The character of religious resistance is grounded in the confrontation between various cultural monomyths and the struggle for any people to value the uniqueness of their own spiritual practices. Only when we fully affirm those practices as living resources for our mutual betterment can we move past the need for legislation and legal protections for what is, in fact, a right of all human beings—the free exercise of their religious beliefs.



LEE IRWIN, PH.D., is a Professor of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. He specializes in Native American religions (including Maya and Aztec) and shamanism of Asia and Siberia. He wrote *The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains*, and edited *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader*.



“Freedom, Law, and Prophecy: A Brief History of Native American Religious Resistance” from *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* edited by Lee Irwin.  
©2000 by Lee Irwin. Used by permission of University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln and London. All rights reserved.

## NOTES

1. Prucha 1990:312-14; see Michaelson 1984 for an overview of this act.
2. Prucha 1990:160-61.
3. Prucha 1990:187-88.
4. Writing of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs are accessible in Prucha 1990; those writings that particularly express an intention to suppress Native religion and culture (1832-1901) are found on pp. 63, 73-74, 77-78, 124, 157, 160-61, 175, 177, 187-88, 200-201. With regard to the First Amendment, it is clear in the writings of both the secretary of the interior and the commissioner of Indian affairs during this period that Native Americans were regarded as having no protection or guarantees under the Constitution and were in fact regarded as "alien nations" within the borders of the United States.
5. In 1818, Secretary of War John Calhoun wrote: "Our views of Indian interests, and not their own, ought to govern them. By a proper combination of force and persuasion, punishments and rewards, they ought to be brought within the pales of law and civilization. Left to themselves they will never reach that desirable condition," Prucha 1990:32. The Indian Civilization Fund Act established a government fund "to employ capable [non-Indian] persons of good moral character to instruct Indians in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children reading, writing, and arithmetic," Prucha 1990:33.
6. Prucha 1990:3.
7. Loftin 1994:60.
8. Dowd 1992:xxii.
9. McLoughlin, 1994.
10. McLoughlin 1984:438.
11. Trafzer, 1986.
12. Dowd 1992:17.
13. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:207; even earlier prophetic traditions are found among the Aztec and other Mesoamerican peoples; see Stephen Colston, "No Longer Will There Be a Mexico': Omens, Prophecies, and the Conquest of the Aztec Empire" in Trafzer 1986:1-20.
14. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:66, 312; Champagne 1994:512-13.
15. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:114-15; see also Champagne 1994:512-14.
16. Ruby and Brown 1989:6.
17. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:295-96; Champagne 1993:520-21.
18. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:94; see also Frank Owsley, "Prophecy of War: Josiah Francis and the Creek War" in Trafzer 1986:35-55.
19. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:338.
20. See Joseph Herring, "Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet: Acculturation without Assimilation" in Trafzer 1986:57-69; Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:145.
21. See Clifford Trafzer and Margery Ann Beach, "Smohalla, the Washani, and Religion as a Factor in Northwest Indian History" in Trafzer, 1986:71-86; and Ruby and Brown 1989:29-49.
22. See L. G. Moses, "The Father Tells Me So! Wovoca: The Ghost Dance Prophet" in Trafzer 1986:97-113; Kehoe, 1989. Also of interest, see McLoughlin 1990.
23. For more on the Kiowa Ghost Dance, see Kratch 1992.
24. Prucha 1990:177; Commissioner Jones, in 1901, wrote of Indian education, "the Indian youth... [is] born a savage and raised in an atmosphere of superstition and ignorance, he lacks at the outset those advantages which are inherited by his white brother and enjoyed in the cradle. His moral character has yet to be formed.... In a word, the primary object of a white school is to educate the mind; the primary essential of Indian education is to enlighten the soul" (Prucha 1990:200-201).
25. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:38.
26. Prucha 1990:131-34,135,141-43. The 1872 distribution was listed by Commissioner Walker as follows:

	<b>Agencies</b>	<b>Indian Enrollment</b>
Methodists	14	54,473
Baptists	5	40,800
Presbyterians	9	38,069
Episcopalians	8	26,929

Catholic*	7	17,856
Orthodox Friends	10	17,724
Congregationalist	3	14,476
Christian Church	2	8,287
Reformed Dutch	5	8,118
Hicksite Friends	6	6,598
Unitarian	2	3,800
Am. Board of Comm.	1	1,496
Lutheran	1	273
Total	73	238,899

*\*Catholic is much higher as Catholic Missions were long established before the creation of the BIC and there was a strong Catholic presence on many reservations not listed by the obviously pro-Protestant board.*

27. Prucha 1990:200-201; See also Crow Dog and Erdoes 1990:28-41. In 1901, Indian Commissioner Jones wrote in his annual report: "These pupils are gathered from the cabin, the wickiup, and the tepee. Partly by cajolery and partly by threats; partly by bribery and partly by fraud; partly by persuasion and partly by force, they are induced to leave their homes and their kindred to enter these schools and take upon themselves the outward semblance of civilized life."
28. Josephy 1984:82.
29. Hendrix 1983:62-66.
30. See Al Logan Slagle, "Tolowa Indian Shakers and the Role of Prophecy at Smith River, California" in Trafzer 1986:115-36.
31. Stewart 1993:44-62; p. 60 gives a table of states which passed laws against peyote, of which only seven have been repealed.
32. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:2.
33. Prucha 1990:222ff.; Stewart 1993:45.
34. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:9-10; only after 1975 was the Bald and Golden Eagle Act modified to allow American Indians to "possess, carry, use, wear, give, loan, or exchange among other Indians without compensation, all federally protected birds, as well as their parts and feathers."
35. Prucha 1990:234, 264.
36. Prucha 1990:241.
37. Lewis 1990:65.
38. Josephy 1984:235-63; Crow Dog and Erdoes 1990:73-91.
39. Prucha 1990:264, 274-76.
40. Prucha 1990:293; Churchill and Morris 1992:17.
41. Prucha 1990:295; Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:6-7.
42. Moore 1993:86.
43. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:193.
44. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:238-39; for more on the Omaha Sacred Pole, see Ridington 1993.
45. This act is supported by the aam (American Association of Museums) and the saa (Society for American Archaeology) but limits the kind of objects legally subject to cLAIMs to avoid "raids on collections."
46. Hirschfelder and Molin 1992:32, 195, 305; for examples see 1976, Native American Historical, Cultural and Sacred Sites Act (California) and 1989, Unmarked Human Burial' Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act (Nebraska).
47. Echo-Hawk 1993:68.
48. See Michaelson 1993; also Churchill and Morris 1992:20; see also Smith and Snake (1996) for a case study on peyote and its relationship to NAFERA.
49. O'Brien 1993:30-31 where she also calls the Lyng case "most restrictive interpretation" of AIRFA; 31-40 reviews the outstanding cases involved. See also Steve Moore's excellent review of AIRFA (Moore 1993) as well as Loftin 1994; also Deloria 1994.
50. The Edgewood Declaration of the International Confederation of Autonomous Chapters of the American Indian Movement (Edgewood, New Mexico, December 18, 1993); endorsed by 10 other AIM chapters at that time.
51. From "Lakota Declaration of War" by Valerie Taliman, published in The Circle Newspaper, July, 1993; three Native newspapers, News From Indian Country, The Circle, and Native American Smoke Signals, have all published articles on AIM and spirit's present concerns.

52. A statement issued by spirit and reprinted in Churchill 1994, says: "Therefore, we urge all supporters of American Indian people to join us in calling for an immediate end to the cynical, sacrilegious spectacle of non-Indian 'wannabes,' would-be gurus of the 'New Age,' and 'plastic medicine men' shamelessly exploiting and mocking our sacred traditions by performing bastardized imitations of our ceremonies. They are promoters of 'spiritual genocide' against Indian people; and while some of them may be guilty 'merely' of complicity in 'genocide with good intentions,' others have become aggressive in insisting on their 'right' to profiteer by exploiting and prostituting American Indian sacred traditions."
53. The leader of this particular Sun Dance, one of many on Pine Ridge, prefers to remain anonymous.

## REFERENCES

- Champagne, Duane. 1994. *Native America: Portrait of the Peoples*. Detroit: Visible Ink Press.
- Churchill, Ward, and Glenn Morris. 1992. "Key Indian Laws and Cases." In *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes. Boston: South End Press.
- Churchill, Ward. 1994. *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America*. Monroe ME: Common Courage Press.
- Crow Dog, Mary, and Richard Erdoes. 1990. *Lakota Woman*. New York: Grove Weidfeld.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1994. "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom." *American Indian Religions: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1: 73-83.
- Dowd, Gregory Evans. 1992. *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Echo-Hawk, Walter R., and Roger Echo-Hawk. 1993. "Repatriation, Reburial, and Religious Rights." In Vecsey, *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, 63-80.
- Hendrix, Janey B. 1983. *Redbird Smith and the Nighthawk Keetoowahs*. Welling OK: Cross-Cultural Education Center.
- Hirschfelder, Arlene, and Paulette Molin. 1992. *The Encyclopedia of Native American Religions*. New York: Facts on File.
- Joseph, Alvin M., Jr. 1984. *Now That the Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Kehoe, Alice. 1989. *The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Revitalization*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Kracht, Benjamin R. 1992. "The Kiowa Ghost Dance, 1894-1916: An Unheralded Revitalization Movement." *Ethnohistory* 39: 452-77.
- Lewis, Thomas H. 1990. *The Medicine Men: Oglala Sioux Ceremony and Healing*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Loftin, John D. 1994. "Constitutional Law and American Indian Religious Freedom: A Tale of Two Worlds." *American Indian Religions: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1: 37-72.
- McLoughlin, William G. 1984. *The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789-1861*. Macon GA: Mercer University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. "Ghost Dance Movements: Some Thoughts on Definition Based on Cherokee History." *Ethnohistory* 37: 25-45.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*. Ed. Walter H. Conser Jr. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Michaelson, Robert. 1984. "The Significance of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52: 93-115.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993. "Law and the Limits of Liberty." In Vecsey, *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, 116-33.
- Moore, Steven C. 1993. "Sacred Sites and Public Lands." In Vecsey, *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, 81-99.
- O'Brien, Sharon. 1993. "A Legal Analysis of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act." In Vecsey, *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, 27-43.
- Prucha, Francis. 1990. *Documents of United States Indian Policy*. 2nd ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- Ridington, Robin. 1993. "A Sacred Object As Tea: Reclaiming the Sacred Pole of the Omaha Tribe." *American Indian Quarterly* 17: 83-99.
- Ruby, Robert H., and John A. Brown. 1989. *Dreamer-Prophets of the Columbia Plateau: Smohalla and Skolaskin*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Smith, Huston, and Ruben Snake. 1996. *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers.
- Stewart, Omer C. 1993. "Peyote and Law." In Vecsey, *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*, 44-59.
- Trazfer, Clifford E. 1986. *American Indian Prophets: Religious Leaders and Revitalization Movements*. Newcastle, Calif.: Sierra Oaks Publishing Co.
- Vecsey, Christopher (ed.). 1993. *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom*. New York: Crossroads Publishing Company.

## APPENDIX

## DECLARATIONS AGAINST THE SALE OR APPROPRIATION OF NATIVE CEREMONIES BY NON-NATIVES

THERE IS A SEQUENCE of this type of proclamation reaching back to at least October 1980, where an early version was passed at Rosebud Creek, Montana, in the Northern Cheyenne Two Moons' camp. This document was signed by the following tribal spiritual elders: Tom Yellowtail; Larry Anderson; Izadore Thorn; Thomas Banyacya; Phillip Deere; Walter Denny; Austin Two Moons; Tadadaho; Frank Fools Crow; Frank Cardinal; Peter O'Chiese. The text is as follows (circular in possession of author):

**RESOLUTION:  
FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
TRADITIONAL ELDER'S CIRCLE**

It has been brought to the attention of the Elders and their representatives in Council that various individuals are moving about this Great Turtle Island and across the great waters to foreign soil, purporting to be spiritual leaders. They carry pipes and other objects sacred to the Red Nations, the indigenous people of the western hemisphere. These individuals are gathering non-Indian people as followers who believe they are receiving instructions of the original people. We, the Elders and our representatives sitting in Council, give warning to these non-Indian followers that it is in our understanding this is not a proper process, that the authority to carry these sacred objects is given by the people, and the purpose and procedure is specific to time and the needs of the people. The medicine people are chosen by the medicine and long instruction and discipline is necessary before ceremonies and healing can be done. These procedures are always in the Native tongue; there are no exceptions and profit is not the motivation. There are many Nations with many and varied procedures specifically for the welfare of their

people. These processes and ceremonies are of the most Sacred Nature. The Council finds the open display of these ceremonies contrary to these Sacred instructions.

Therefore, be warned that these individuals are moving about playing upon the spiritual needs and ignorance of our non-Indian brothers and sisters. The value of these instructions and ceremonies are questionable, maybe meaningless, and hurtful to the individual carrying false messages. There are questions that should be asked of these individuals:

1. What Nation does the person represent?
2. What is their Clan and Society?
3. Who instructed them and where did they learn?
4. What is their home address?

If no information is forthcoming, you may inquire at the addresses listed [by those who signed], and we will try to find out about them for you. We concern ourselves only with those people who use spiritual ceremonies with non-Indian people for profit. There are many things to be shared with the Four Colors of humanity in our common destiny as one with our Mother the Earth. It is this sharing that must be considered with great care by the Elders and the medicine people who carry the Sacred Trusts, so that no harm may come to people through ignorance and misuse of these powerful forces.

Similar AIM resolutions were passed in 1982 and in the May 11, 1984, meeting at Window Rock, Arizona (circular in possession of author). These documents present concerns for the loss of Native ceremonies and religious practices to non-Native persons as a long-standing grievance with many Native people, as attested to by the 1993, Lakota Summit V.

## 1984 AIM RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Spiritual wisdom which is shared by the Elders with the people has been passed to us through the Creation from time immemorial; and

WHEREAS the Spirituality of Indian Nations is inseparable from the people themselves; and

WHEREAS the attempted theft of Indian ceremonies is a direct attack and theft from Indian people themselves; and

WHEREAS there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence of selling of Sacred ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge and the vision quest, and of Sacred articles, such as religious pipes, feathers, and stone; and

WHEREAS these practices have been and continue to be conducted by Indians and non-Indians alike, constituting not only insult and disrespect for the wisdom of the ancients, but also exposing ignorant non-Indians to potential harm and even death through the misuse of these ceremonies; and

WHEREAS the traditional Elders and Spiritual leaders have repeatedly warned against and condemned the commercialization of our ceremonies; and

WHEREAS such commercialization has increased dramatically in recent years,

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Southwest AIM Leadership Conference reiterates the position articulated by our Elders at the First American Indian—Tribunal held at DQ University, September 1982, as follows:

Now to those who are doing these things, we send our third warning. Our Elders ask, "Are you prepared to take the consequences of your actions? You will be outcasts from your people if you continue these practices"... Now, this [warning] is another one. Our young people are getting restless. They are the ones who sought their Elders in the first place to teach them the Sacred ways. They have said they will take care of those who are abusing our Sacred ceremonies and Sacred objects in their own way. In this way they will take care of their Elders.

WE RESOLVE to protect our Elders and our traditions, and we condemn those who seek to profit from Indian Spirituality. We put them on notice that our patience grows thin and they continue their disrespect at their own risk.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## FOR THE SACRED LAND READER

- Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (1996). New York: Pantheon.
- "American Indian Religious Freedom: First People and First Amendment," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (1996), Issue 19 (4):26-69.
- Armstrong, Jeannette, "Keepers of the Earth" (1995) in *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*. Edited by Theodore Roszak, Mary Gomes and Allen Kanner. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Barlow, Maude, and Tony Clarke. *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water* (2002). New York: The New Press.
- Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (1996). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Burton, Lloyd and David Ruppert. "Bear's Lodge or Devils Tower: Intercultural Relations, Legal Pluralism, and the Management of Sacred Sites on Public Lands" (1999), *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Vol. 8:2.
- Burton, Lloyd. *Worship and Wilderness: Culture, Religion and Law in Public Lands Management* (2002). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Cajete, Gregory. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (2000). Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers.
- Carillo, Jo, Editor. *Readings in American Indian Law: Recalling the Rhythm of Survival* (1998). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Carmean, Kelli. *Spider Woman Walks This Land: Traditional Cultural Properties and the Navajo Nation* (2002). Lanhan, Md.: Altamira Press, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.
- Charmichael, David L., Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves, and Audhild Schanche, Editors. *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places* (1994). London and New York: Routledge.
- Clemmer, Richard. *Roads in the Sky: The Hopi Indians in a Century of Change* (1995). Boulder: Westview Press.
- Deloria, Barbara, Kristen Foehner, Sam Scinta, Editors. *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader* (1999). Boulder: Fulcrum Publishing.
- Deloria Jr., Vine. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969). London: MacMillan.
- Deloria Jr., Vine. *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (1999). New York: Routledge.
- Deloria Jr., Vine. *God Is Red* (1973). New York: Gross & Dunlap.
- Deloria Jr., Vine. *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (1995). New York: Scribner.
- Deloria Jr., Vine. "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom" (1994), *American Indian Religions: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1(1): 73-83, Winter.
- Durning, Alan Thein. "Guardians of the Land: Indigenous Peoples and the Health of the Earth," *Worldwatch Paper* 112 (December 1992).
- Gedicks, Al. *Resource Rebels: Native Challenges to Mining and Oil Corporations* (2001). Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.
- Gulliford, Andrew. *Sacred Objects and Sacred Places: Preserving Tribal Traditions* (2000). Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Heizer, Robert F. "Natural Forces and Native World View" (1978), *Handbook of North American Indians*, v. 8, California. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Irwin, Lee, Editor. *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (2000). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Jocks, Christopher R. "Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age" (1996), *The American Indian Quarterly*, 20 (3 & 4): pp. 415-431.
- Jordan, Peter. *Material Culture and Sacred Landscape: The Anthology of the Siberian Khanty* (2002). Lanhan, Md.: Altamira Press, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.

- Kennard, E.A. "Metaphor and Magic: Key Concepts in Hopi Culture," in *Studies in Linguistics in Honor of George L. Trager* (1972), M.E. Smith, Editor. pp. 468-473. The Hague.
- Krech, Shepard III. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (1999). New York: Norton & Company.
- LaDuke, Winona. *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999). Minneapolis: Honor the Earth.
- Lazarus, Edward. *Black Hills, White Justice: The Sioux Nation Versus the United States, 1775 to the Present* (1991). New York: HarperCollins.
- Luckert, Karl. *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion* (1977). Flagstaff: Museum of Northern Arizona.
- Mander, Jerry. *In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations* (1991). San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- McCreery, Patricia, and Ekkehart Malotki. *Tapamveni: The Rock Art Galleries of Petrified Forest* (1994). Petrified Forest, Ariz.: Petrified Forest Museum Association.
- Michaelsen, Robert. "'We Also Have a Religion.' The Free Exercise of Religion Among Native Americans," *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 7, Number 3, Summer 1983. Native American Studies, U.C. Berkeley.
- Michaelsen, Robert. "Is the Miner's Canary Silent? Implications of the Supreme Court's Denial of American Indian Free Exercise of Religion Claims," *Journal of Law and Religion* (1988), Vol. 6 #1, pp. 97-114.
- Mullett, G.M. *Spider Woman Stories—Legends of the Hopi Indians* (1989). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Nabokov, Peter. *A Forest of Time: American Indian Ways of History* (2002). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nabokov, Peter. *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from 1492-1992* (1991). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nabokov, Peter. *Sacred Land Reader* (2002). La Honda, Calif.: Sacred Land Film Project.
- Page, Jake, Editor, and Charles Little, Introduction. *Sacred Lands and Indian America* (2002). New York: Harry Abrams.
- Parks, Douglas. "Pawnee Geography: Historical and Sacred" (1985), *Great Plains Quarterly* 5, Summer.
- Parlow, Anita. *A Song from Sacred Mountain* (1983). Pine Ridge, South Dakota: Oglala Lakota Legal Rights Fund.
- Schaafsma, Polly. *Indian Rock Art of the Southwest* (1980). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution and Profit* (2002). Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.
- Strapp, Darby C. and Michael S. Burney. *Tribal Cultural Resource Management: The Full Circle to Stewardship* (2002). Lanhan, Md.: Altamira Press, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.
- Theodoratus, Dorothea J. and Frank LaPeña. "Wintu Sacred Geography" (1992), in *California Indian Shamanism*, Edited by Lowell John Bean. Menlo Park, Calif.: Ballena Press, Anthropological Papers n. 39.
- Tinker, George E. "The Full Circle of Liberation: An American Indian Theology of Place" (1994), in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, David G. Hallman, Editor. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, pp. 218-224.
- Todd, Jude. "The Hopi Environmental Ethos" from *Hopi: Songs of the Fourth World*, A Resource Handbook (1986), pp. 19-21. San Francisco: Ferrero Films.
- Vecsey, Christopher. *Handbook of American Indian Religious Freedom* (1995). New York: Crossroads Publishing.
- Watkins, Joe. *Indigenous Archaeology: American Indian Values and Scientific Practice* (2001). Lanhan, Md.: Altamira Press, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.
- Weaver, Jace, Editor. *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice* (1996). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Whiteley, Peter. *Rethinking Hopi Ethnography* (1998). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.
- Whorf, Benjamin Lee. "An American Indian Model of the Universe" (1975), in *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy*, Edited by Dennis and Barbara Tedlock. pp. 121-129.

