



Fresno Center for Nonviolence November 2023

Dedicated to PEACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE through
SIMPLICITY ~ JUSTICE ~ INCLUSIVENESS ~ NON-INJURY

1584 N. Van Ness Ave., 93728 - email: info@centerfornonviolence.org - www.centerfornonviolence.org -
- (559)237-3223. To see a more colorful and complete version of our page, go to our website.

Edited by
Richard Gomez

NATIVE AMERICAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Established in 1990, November is Native American Heritage month. Do you know that lawfully there are two types of Native Americans? Federally Acknowledged and Non-Federally Acknowledged. "Acknowledgement" is a legal term meaning that the United States acknowledges a tribal existence and recognizes a government-to-government relationship with a Tribe. Due to pressure from California delegates, in 1852, siding with early California legislators, Congress failed to ratify 18 California treaties. They repudiated the treaties and ordered them to remain secret. In 1905, the often referred to as "18 lost treaties" of 1851 and 1852, that set aside 8.5 million acres of land for reservations in California and were to be signed by President Fillmore, were instead discovered hidden in a secret compartment in a desk drawer in the Senate Archives.

Four years after Native Americans were granted U.S. citizenship, the California Indian Judgement Act of 1928-1933, tried to make up for the failure to enact the treaties of 1851 and 1852 by paying \$0.07 an acre, minus expenses, and divided between all the approved Native applicants for the census roll. This continued with the census in 1948-1950 and with the census in 1968-1972, as the U.S. government tried to remedy what their actions had caused. In 1978 the United States established a formal and lawful way for tribes to obtain Federal Acknowledgment. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement (OFA), within the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, implements an administrative process by which petitioning groups that meet the criteria are given Federal "acknowledgment" as tribes and by which they become eligible to receive services provided to members of American Indian Tribes. Since its establishment, no California tribe has successfully confirmed tribal Federal Acknowledgment through the petition process.

California is the most tribally diverse State in the Union. California has more tribes (66) who have submitted letters of intent to petition for Federal Acknowledgement than the remaining top five states combined (North Carolina (20), Michigan (18), Virginia (14), Louisiana (13)). One third of all Tribes currently seeking Federal Acknowledgement are from California. Half of all California tribes seeking such Federal tribal status are indigenous to the San Joaquin Valley. Fresno County has more tribes (9) actively seeking Federal Acknowledgment than any county in America. Yokuts Valley, just outside of Fresno city limits, in Fresno County, is the most populated geographic locale in America with tribes without Federal Acknowledgement. An estimated over 80,000 tribal members indigenous to California are affected by this plight.

The current Federal Acknowledgement system is widely considered broken. It is common to find tribes petitioning for nearly half a century with no significant progress toward Federal Acknowledgement. The Federal petition process systematically puts the burden of proof upon the tribes and the United States effectively removed itself from any fiduciary liability of the plight it created, while strategically positioning itself as both jury and judge of all future American tribal statuses. This continued denial of Federal tribal existence has created a silent genocide, with its most pervasive face being the devastating impact of the cultural ethnocide that persists in Non-Federally Acknowledged tribal communities. Without a tribal land base, petitioning tribes are often dismissed and depicted as families of a common genealogy and not a community, as justification for denial. These communities continue to shrink, languages face extinction, and tribes are routinely denied lawful tribal existence due to the ramifications of governmental policies enacted when the 18 treaties were not ratified. With no outside resources to preserve tribal existence, these communities are purposefully reduced in tribal population for future Federal tribal denial. Happy Native American Heritage Month. Written by War Eagle. acknowledgecalltribes@gmail.com

