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Updated: Wed, Dec 7, 2011, 6:21 am

Uploaded: Mon, Dec 5, 2011, 7:03 am

Local Native American tribe seeks identity

Muwekma Ohlone lose federal court battle over official recognition of tribe

by Sue Dremann / Palo Alto Weekly

The Muwekma Ohlones, whose ancestral lands are in Pleasanton and throughout the Bay Area, have lost a federal lawsuit seeking recognition of their tribe by the United States, according to [U.S. District Court documents](#).

The group -- which now numbers 550 members in the Bay Area, many in San Jose and Palo Alto -- traces its ancestral lineage to aboriginal villages that extended from the tip of the Marin headlands and north edge of San Pablo Bay through Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties and portions of Napa, Santa Cruz, Solano and San Joaquin counties.

Federally recognized tribes are considered sovereign nations. That designation allows a tribe's members to receive government benefits such as housing, health care and education funding and more recently, special dispensation to open lucrative casinos.

The Muwekma began petitioning the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for federal acknowledgement as an Indian tribe in 1989 and received a determination in 1996 that their group had received "previously unambiguous recognition" from the government. But in 2001 the bureau denied the Muwekma's request for federal tribal recognition because the Muwekma did "not meet all seven criteria required for federal acknowledgement." The Muwekma failed to present sufficient evidence that they were "the same tribal entity that was previously acknowledged or as a portion that has evolved from that entity," according to court documents.

The Muwekma [sued in 2003](#), saying the tribe has a paper trail of descendants that were recognized on government rolls.

But Reggie B. Walton, a district judge of the District of Columbia, said surviving as Indian descendants is not the same as surviving as an Indian tribal entity.

It is "obvious that Indian nations, like foreign nations, can disappear over time ... whether through conquest, or voluntary absorption into a larger entity, or fission, or dissolution or movement of population," Walton wrote, quoting a 2001, 7th Circuit Court decision regarding the Miami Nation of Indians of Indiana.

"Should a tribe cease to exist, it follows that the federal government would no longer have a trust relationship with that entity," Walton wrote. "The Muwekma thus needs to demonstrate it did not cease to exist after 1927."

The judge also said the Muwekma's claims are barred by the statute of limitations because the tribe could have pursued a cause of action against the Bureau of Indian Affairs at several dates in time, as far back as 1927.

The Muwekma [filed an appeal](#) to Walton's decision in the U.S. Court of Appeals on Nov. 22.

Land, the most visible benchmark of tribal status, appears to be the crux of the Muwekma's predicament. Through treaties and government land purchases in the 1800s, tribes throughout the country were delegated property as a means to settling "the Indian question," and those land designations also established them as sovereign nations.

But California Indian tribes were not part of the land/reservation equation, having first been supplanted and then devastated by the mission system under Spanish rule.



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Bounty-hunted for their scalps in the late 1800s by white settlers and subjected to continuous acts of violent racism into the early 20th century, Muwekma survivors retreated to the Spanish-speaking Californio rancherias, where they were better accepted, said Alan Leventhal, a San Jose State University archaeologist who has worked with the tribe.

In the early 20th century, the government set about purchasing land for the surviving landless Indians. Indian rancherias in southern California evidence those land purchases.

But northern California tribes did not fare as well, Leventhal said. Many, including the Muwekma, were politically erased by a government administrator's decision in 1927. L.A. Dorrington, the Office of Indian Affairs superintendent charged with locating the tribes that would receive land, in 1927 specifically did not recommend purchasing land for the Muwekma and other tribes, according to court papers.

That decision politically erased the Muwekma, who were even termed "extinct" as a tribe by noted anthropologist A. L. Kroeber, who later rescinded the comment.

Should a group of people who were previously disenfranchised by the government be expected to conform to a government-constructed definition of a tribe?

Leventhal doesn't think so.

"It's gestalt. This is how colonial systems operate. It is the continuation of a colonial system (where) you are made invisible or erased from the forum. If you appear, you are viewed with contempt," he said.

"The politics of erasure" has also worked to the advantage of some tribes that are claiming ancestral heritage to lands in the Bay Area where they never lived, Leventhal said. In the new world of big-money investment on tribal lands, the Muwekma pose a significant threat to the power brokerage, Leventhal said.

Muweka Tribal Chair Rosemary Cambra could not be reached for comment. But she has said in the past that her goal is to provide access to higher education and good, stable housing for the tribe, especially for elders.

Colin Cloud Hampson, an attorney for the Muwekma, said he could not comment due to the ongoing case. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has not returned requests for comment.

Leventhal said the appeal is the most crucial step for the tribe; he does not think the U.S. Supreme Court would hear the case. Many other similarly situated tribes in California are watching the Muwekmas' case, he said.



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Comments

Posted by **Mike Cheney**
a resident of Pleasanton Meadows
on Dec 5, 2011 at 11:00 am

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It's sad to see an American Indian Tribe become extinct right before our eyes. I would hope that they could find the people and the docs needed to keep their ancestry alive. Truly a large part of our history in our area.

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Posted by **Jed**
a resident of Kottinger Ranch
on Dec 5, 2011 at 12:06 pm

Like this comment

This is so awesome! Finally we'll get a casino in Pleasanton. An Indian casino will be a great fit for the change demographic of the Tri-Valley area.

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Posted by **Mike**
a resident of Highland Oaks
on Dec 5, 2011 at 2:35 pm

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There must be a compromise solution.

Mike

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Posted by **Sam**
a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 5, 2011 at 4:01 pm

Mike Cheney said "It's sad to see an American Indian Tribe become extinct right before our eyes. I would hope that they could find the people and the docs needed to keep their ancestry alive. Truly a large part of our history in our area."

No need to express sorrow over this. When you say that this Indian tribe became "extinct" you're simply referring to the fact that the Federal government that they will not officially recognize and acknowledge the tribe. That doesn't mean that the remaining culture of this tribe is going to be vigorously stamped out. This isn't some sort of death sentence on the tribal culture. As far as I can tell, what this basically means is that there will be no Federally recognized tribal lands along with the associated Indian stores and casinos. I just don't see anything to mourn over here. And I suspect that many or most of those who were pushing for tribal recognition were motivated more by the possible financial rewards that would accompany official tribal recognition than by any deep desire to preserve tribal culture.

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Posted by **MAN**
a resident of another community
on Dec 5, 2011 at 4:16 pm

Like this comment

Neighbourhood or school community . I have none. Although my christian. Sir name is Neighbour. But If I must choose. I Chose another. My name spells out M.A.N. I do not know why. I was given this name. But I do seek information. First I would like to ask. For information. I would first ask. Was it true. That the red clay. Was given to all who chose to collect It, for making. Peace pipes. And It was freely given. To all peoples freely. The 2nd question I would like to ask. Is why /when was / It was denied?. malcolmneighbour@btinternet.com

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Posted by **Anthropologist**
a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 5, 2011 at 4:37 pm

Like this comment

Sam says, "As far as I can tell, what this basically means is that there will be no Federally recognized tribal lands along with the associated Indian stores and casinos. I just don't see anything to mourn over here. And I suspect that many or most of those who were pushing for tribal recognition were motivated more by the possible financial rewards that would accompany official tribal recognition than by any deep desire to preserve tribal culture."

I think you're assuming quite a bit, Sam. We are talking about 'political erasure' of a Native American tribe, and now the gov't denial that members of that tribe can claim tribal status for the tribe they have traditionally belonged to. But the tribal members DO EXIST. So, with this most recent court decision, the tribe has again been 'politically erased'.

You assume that the those pushing for tribal recognition were "motivated more by financial rewards ... rather than any deep desire to preserve tribal culture." I'm not sure your assumption is valid. First, how do you know what the tribal members' motivations? And, second, why do you assume that "seeking financial rewards" and a desire to preserve tribal culture are mutually distinct? Cannot they be held simultaneously?

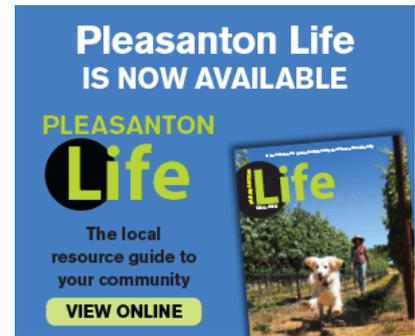
We need to begin serious discussions regarding financial remunerations for historically oppressed, 'politically erased', and excluded peoples. So doing may better enable the preservation of traditional values and an acceptance of diverse ways of life.

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Posted by **Sam**
a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 5, 2011 at 7:43 pm

Like this comment

"Anthropologist", for lack of any concrete information as to how government recognition would help to preserve tribal culture, yes, I assume that most proponents for recognition are motivated primarily by financial considerations. You dispute this assumption but yet you don't explain how government recognition would help preserve tribal culture. I'm pretty open-minded and willing to



listen to reason. Please explain in concrete terms what cultural or non-financial benefits government recognition would confer.

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Posted by **Anthropologist**

 Like this comment

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 5, 2011 at 8:25 pm

First, thanks to Sam for not embarrassing me re. my abuse of the term remuneration....

I was recently in El Norte county where a number of tribal Klamath Native Americans live. With federal financial, there are many things a Native American tribe can do. Build better schools, for one, open a cultural heritage center for another. Provide better health and medical opportunities which uplifts the young and supports their own educational endeavors. Yet another I can think of is what (I think it's) the Yurok have done. Reconstruct an ancestral village using native materials that provides an educational opportunity for native and nonnative children and adults to better learn about and appreciate how a Native American tribe lived in the region that is now pockmarked with Burger Kings and McDonalds. These are all possibilities, I think, and not at all necessarily at odds with casino building.

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Posted by **Sam**

 Like this comment

a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 5, 2011 at 9:58 pm

"Anthropologist", the building of better schools and furthering the educational endeavors of young Native Americans sounds commendable. The problem is that in practice I see no evidence that government recognition of tribal status has been successful in supporting the goal of better education for Native Americans. On the contrary, Native Americans tend to score relatively poorly in standardized testing, whereas many Asian minority groups - who attend standard public schools - tend to score relatively highly in those same tests. So I have to suggest to you that in regards to better educating young Native Americans, the tribal recognition path is a failed experiment.

As for constructing a native village as an educational opportunity for native and non-native children, that sounds fine. Seems like there should be a way to do that without going through the process of gaining official tribal recognition by the Federal government, though.

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Posted by **Larry**

 Like this comment

a resident of Livermore
on Dec 6, 2011 at 9:02 am

You have to ask the question why?
Then you have to follow the money.
And if you do that, you will answer the question of "why"

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Posted by **Anthropologist**

 Like this comment

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 6, 2011 at 10:52 am

Sam,

Let a few Native Americans have input into those 'standardized' (homogenized) tests and I bet you'd see a marked swing in numbers. Back in grad school I took an IQ test developed by black researchers aimed specifically for black students. The first question on the test was: 'Who shot Stago Lee?'

But even more to the point. Surely you must realize that comparing Native Americans' test performance with that of Asian Americans doesn't mean a whole lot. (You're beginning to sound like the right-wing huckster Michelle Rhee!) Standardized tests are merely one of many diagnostic tools used by educators to get a general idea of how students are learning in certain settings. I'd prefer not to engage in stereotyping about Native Americans not being as "imitative" as Asian-Americans; but we do both know that there are cultural differences between groups of people. I'd not venture to engage in any standardized comparison between what Native Americans might seek to gain from education vs. what Asian Americans might seek.

The differences are likely to be stark on many levels. Most importantly, here, Native Americans who have a `_tribal_` self-identity probably differ in many respects from most Asian Americans whose self-identity is `_not_` bound up with a tribal membership. This difference, by itself, would probably go some way toward explaining differences in group-based educational goals.

But I want to again point out to you what strikes me as being a critical fact: members of the Muwekma Ohlones tribe are being denied recognition as being who they claim to be. This amounts to a 'political erasure' of their existence. In any political sense, they are forced to remain invisible to others. I think the government's decision on this matter is a detriment to us all. Just another indicator of the increased McDonaldsization of American culture.

Answer to above exam question: Billy DeLyn. (Recommended: Taj Mahal's musical rendition, titled Stagger Lee, probably found easily on youtube.)

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Posted by **Anthropologist**

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 6, 2011 at 11:03 am

 Like this comment

Correction! Who shot Billy Delyin? "Stagger Lee", said Billy, "man don't take my life! I got two lovely childrun and a really lovely wife!"

"Stagger Lee shot Billy. Shot de boy so bad. De bullet went through Billy and broke de bartender's lookin' glass. Talkin' 'bout dat bad man, cruel ol' Stagger Lee."

(Wanted to get this in before someone called me on my ignorance!)

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Posted by **Sam**

a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 6, 2011 at 12:53 pm

 Like this comment

"Anthropologist", are Korean-Americans "politically erased" because they don't have any sort of official government 'tribal-like' recognition of their ethnic group? Are African-Americans "politically erased" because they don't have official government recognition of their ethnic group? Of course not. The Muwekma Ohlones or any other tribe can organize themselves politically as they wish. Now it's true that due to their relatively small numbers they may not have much a political impact, and that official government recognition would give them enhanced political impact by a degree far exceeding their actual numbers, but that doesn't sound very fair or democratic to me.

As for your suggestion that scholastic achievement or scholastic aptitude tests are "culturally biased" against Indian Americans, all I can say is that this is the world we live in and if Native Americans wish to excel professionally and academically then they have to get with the system. The "cultural bias" of the standardized tests doesn't seem to slow down members of many other ethnic groups. No, many of them excel in the tests and go on to develop themselves academically and professionally. Instead of having young Native Americans also devote themselves to excelling academically and measuring themselves against the same academic yardstick used by everyone else, you seem to have some utopian image of some sort of parallel educational system devoted to the special needs of Native Americans which can compete on the same level as standard schools. If so, I think that that's a very expensive fantasy with no chance of succeeding.

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Posted by **oh please**

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 6, 2011 at 1:54 pm

 Like this comment

Tribe want recognition for one reason only -- tax free money. In the form of casinos, stores and anything else they can think up. Give them their recognition, even give them some land but make it contingent upon paying taxes on all revenue earned. See how fast they jump on that one.

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Posted by **History Buff**

a resident of Avignon
on Dec 6, 2011 at 3:12 pm

 Like this comment

Sam seems to harbor some kind of imperialist/colonialist world view that insists that all peoples conform to the same cultural standards as does he and so many other Americans.

Obey the same laws? Maybe. Conform to same cultural standards? No, not necessarily, at all.

In typical colonialist mind frame, Sam seems to ignore the specific cultural history and traditions of Native American tribes. Since Korean Americans don't have (and never have had) tribal status, he argues, why should Native Americans? Well, perhaps Sam can prove me wrong, but I don't think Korean Americans have any history in this country of being organized as a tribe. Nor, to the best of my knowledge, do Korean Americans identify themselves as members of a tribe. I wonder if Sam can name any Korean tribal sovereign nations on American soil.

With govt recognition of Muwekme Ohlomes tribal status, there likely would also be a parcelling of land and the right to declare sovereign nation status. In that sovereign nation, tribal members can decide what particular kinds of educational aims and standards they wish to embrace. Thus, as Anthropologist rightly noted, material gain and preservation of cultural heritage may not at all be mutually exclusive. They might indeed be mutually reinforcing.

On a personal note, I find Sam's comparisons of Native American culture with that of recent immigrant groups to be rather flip, and verging on insult. To the best of my knowledge, Korean Americans were not displaced as a tribe from their homelands by the American govt and then 'politically erased' after the govt's repeated violations of treaties that greatly disadvantaged Korean American tribal populations and their way of life.

Sam's idea of cultural diversity seems to include Korean Americans working side by side with other cultures at all of our countless McDonalds. The Muwekme Ohlones, in contrast, are pleading for something a bit different than that. I for one am sympathetic to their appeal.

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Posted by **tonto**
a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 6, 2011 at 3:32 pm

 Like this comment

Sorry to say it, history buff, but after all these years, it's time to assimilate instead of continued govt sponsored segregation.

No one is requiring anyone else to work at McDonalds, so your depiction of that as the American standard is shallow and disingenuous at best.

You might have well said that all Indians work in casinos and drink firewater, while you're stereotyping.

It's admirable they want something different and they should have the chance to earn it like everyone else.

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Posted by **History Buff**
a resident of Avignon
on Dec 6, 2011 at 3:43 pm

 Like this comment

How does one "earn" one's own tribal identity? That's rather like How does one "earn" one's family, or how does one "earn" being Jewish or African American.

Is it possible for a person to be any more stupid than this one is? (Oh, and calling oneself 'tonto' is not funny but only reveals the third-grade-boy-etching-nazi-signs-into-his-school-desk mentality behind choice of the name.)

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Posted by **hybrid owner**
a resident of Valley Trails
on Dec 6, 2011 at 4:08 pm

 Like this comment

I find the generalized statements that all the Native Americans want is money & casino's very offensive. I am a member of a tribe that is also trying to re-establish federal recognition. WE DO NOT WANT a casino or stores, or any other money making operation. Let me enlighten you to the fact that in our last round of dealing with Washington DC, we were advised they would not reconognize us as a tribe UNLESS we found an investor to assist us in building a casino, which has caused an impasse lasting many, many years.

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 Like this comment

Posted by **Hybrid Owner**
a resident of Valley Trails
on Dec 6, 2011 at 4:13 pm

Anthropologist & History Buff. I appreciate and thank you for your comments and input!

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Posted by **History Buff**
a resident of Avignon
on Dec 6, 2011 at 6:20 pm

 Like this comment

And many thanks to you, Hybrid Owner, for helping to negate some of the negative stereotypes that people hold.

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Posted by **Mike Cheney**
a resident of Pleasanton Meadows
on Dec 6, 2011 at 6:23 pm

 Like this comment

I thank (most of) you for an intelligent discussion on a good subject. We don't and likely won't know the TRUE reason for them wanting recognition. Only those within this tribe do. I for one am somewhat sympathetic to the Indian Culture and feel that they have been discriminated against for a long time. They and we need to be able to keep their history true and try to preserve of it what we can. I find their culture very interesting and knowing that they were here before we were makes a difference to me. They lived in a balance with nature that was commendable. It's just who I am. I do agree that we can't give every TOM, DICK and Harry land and money to create their own little world but I still go back to the thought that they should be recognized as a tribe because we all know that they were here. History says so. Why? Because through our own research we have made it so. No need to go on and on with stats and bla bla bla.....

Thanks
Mike

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Posted by **Sam**
a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 6, 2011 at 7:20 pm

 Like this comment

History Buff said: "Since Korean Americans don't have (and never have had) tribal status, he argues, why should Native Americans?"

You're distorting my words, History Buff. That's not what I said. Unfortunately (for you), my post above still stands and everyone can see exactly what I did and did not say.

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Posted by **History Buff**
a resident of Avignon
on Dec 6, 2011 at 8:55 pm

 Like this comment

Sam is the one who brought up what I think is a specious comparison between Native Americans and Korean Americans. How can they in any sense be compared? I apologize for distorting his words, for I truly had no intention of so doing. But as I re-read Sam's posts, I cannot in all honesty retract anything I have written. Hope there are no hard feelings.

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Posted by **Tonto**
a resident of Parkside
on Dec 7, 2011 at 7:29 am

 Like this comment

Ok, troops. No need to circle the wagons. Nothing to see here.
Buff, you seem to have a pattern of misinterpreting others posts. My reference to earning something better was to your reference about having to work at McDonalds, not their claimed "identity".
My Italian ancestors discovered America, maybe I should file a claim as well. After all, everyone here came from somewhere else. Everyone.

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Posted by **Sister to a tribe member**

 Like this comment

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 7, 2011 at 8:45 am

My adopted brother is half Native American. My parents were very supportive of educating him on what they could find out about his "politically extinct" tribe - one of Louisiana. The federal education system does not support better education for tribal members unless they live off the "reservations". In research on a tribe in New Mexico, findings indicated that standardized testing and current federal education standards are at odds with some aspects of Native Tribal culture. Because Koreans or Chinese or most other ethnic groups but African and Native American, came to the white European culture willingly looking for jobs, they never had their culture forcibly erased. Both African and Indigenous peoples have had to fight to keep their culture and their identities in a different way. Political recognition for a tribe is one way. It is wrong for the federal government to 1)negate the political existence of this or any tribe that can follow its existence back, and 2)require tribes to find investors and force them to build casinos. Tribes need to find their own solutions to the problems instead of someone from outside forcing what they think would work - because that has NEVER worked.

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Posted by **Sam**

 Like this comment

a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 7, 2011 at 10:12 am

Sister said: " In research on a tribe in New Mexico, findings indicated that standardized testing and current federal education standards are at odds with some aspects of Native Tribal culture."

What does this sentence mean? Standardized testing and education standards are at odds with exactly what "aspects" of Native Tribal culture?

What many proponents of government recognition here seem to be saying is that if standardized testing and education standards are "at odds" with Native Tribal culture, then the solution is not for tribal culture to change and adapt, but for standardized testing and educational standards - the same tests and standards applied to all other ethnic groups -to change and adapt to meet the special needs of Native Americans. However well intentioned, that's a path to underperformance and mediocrity. Like it or not, after young Native Americans complete their education they'll have to step out into the real world and compete on the same basis and standards as everyone else. How well prepared will they be for that?

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Posted by **Anthropologist**

 Like this comment

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 7, 2011 at 11:02 am

I don't read many of the posters here so much calling for a change in standardized testings and educational standards (though this may very well be a good idea, as the tests have been proven to exhibit cultural biases that tend to work to the disadvantage of groups that historically have experienced exclusion from meaningful public sphere participation). Rather, I read the gist of many of the comments being that tribes should be recognized by our federal government as a required first step toward tribal self determination.

Sam says, "Like it or not, after young Native Americans complete their education they'll have to step out into the real world and compete on the same basis and standards as everyone else." This statement shows a good deal of hubris on Sam's part, and whether he acknowledges it or not, reflects a devaluing of the worldview of some Native Americans. "Real world" (Sam's world) v. the world of Native Americans (which Sam strongly implies in his above quote is "not real").

I became an anthropologist not long after I visited the Wounded Knee memorial which specified on its grounds where each "American" had died during Custer's Last Stand, and then made general mention of the "Indians" -- posed as a people distinct from "Americans." Each American is given a name and rank; the "Indians" are simply dumped into a general category. At that time, and still, I was struck by how Native Americans were rendered invisible by the memorial.

Denial of Muwekma Ohlones' tribal status continues the systematic erasures and denial of visibility of a people that comes with it. Native Americans may (or may not) want to partake of Sam's "real world." It should be their choice, not Sam's or anyone else's; and that choice cannot be a genuine choice without gov't recognition of tribal rights to self determination. I believe we all have much to gain by the tribe being formally recognized.

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Posted by **Sam**

 Like this comment

a resident of Oak Hill
on Dec 7, 2011 at 12:50 pm

"Anthropologist", it should be obvious that when I say the "real world" I mean the life and world beyond beyond the world of the tribal reservation. But rather than debate or comment on my central claim (i.e., that young Native Americans will be unprepared to compete on equal terms with everyone else beyond the tribal reservation), you let my point slide by and instead engage in word games about my definition of the "real world". Why? Is my claim that young Native Americans educated by some special tribal education will be unprepared to compete with others in the "real world" not provocative enough for you? Or perhaps you just decided to concede my point and so you went off on some tangent about alternative world views instead.

It's interesting how people of so many other cultures are able to both embrace their ethnic identity and culture AND excel in educationally and professionally in the world we all share without special government programs and treatment. But you seem to think Native Americans are an exception. Apparently, according to you, not only are Native Americans unable to both practice their culture and excel educationally and professionally on the same level playing ground as other peoples of other ethnic groups, but they are so crippled that they also need government programs and assistance. What a fragile and weak people and culture you make them out to be.

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Posted by **Anthropologist**

 Like this comment

a resident of Another Pleasanton neighborhood
on Dec 7, 2011 at 2:28 pm

Sam,

I am not certain at all that, as you say, "young Native Americans will be unprepared to compete on equal terms with everyone else beyond the tribal reservation." You seem to be assuming a lot when you say this. Even if your assumption is valid, and I'm pretty certain it is not, it seems to me that a people should be able to make those kinds of life choices on their own and, yes, with gov't recognition and assistance. As I'm sure you are aware, some people, for any variety of reasons, decide they do not want to partake of ("succeed in") the dominant, homogenized corporate culture. The range is great, from the Amish, to immigrants to the US who choose not to learn English, to those who embrace countercultural expressions of life (such as tattoo artists and those who adorn their bodies with massive splashes of artful ink). I think it is unarguable that the fed gov't has prevented the Muwekma Ohlones and other Native Americans the rightful opportunity to pursue their own lifestyles, on their own terms, upon a tribal land they can call their own.

This shouldn't be about judging them on Sam's terms (success and achievement) and thereby using that as rationale for denial of recognition. But you persist in hoisting that standard (success cum achievement) and that standard alone without recognition of alternative worldviews and lifestyles.

Your claim that, according to me, a tribe's seeking recognition from the federal gov't is an indication of fragility and weakness. Let's call it as it is. The Muwekma Ohlones are seeking recognition, and I am only expressing my sympathy. I doubt they themselves would take on the label of 'fragility and weakness'. But neither would they agree with your apparent assumption that they already exist on a level playing field. I do hope you realize your argument here is exactly that espoused by William Buckley in his opposition to the black civil rights movement. To paraphrase, Buckley claimed that African Americans' demands for "special" civil rights protections and a redress of grievances amounted to a concession that they are an inferior race. Of course, in this regard as in so many others, Buckley was dead wrong. The question wasn't "inferiority" or, in your words, "fragility and weakness" but rather whether an equal playing field did indeed exist. Here, Native Americans are pleading for a playing field that assists them in their struggle for self determination. That playing field has been disgracefully lacking as it pertains to so many Native Americans. The Muwekma Ohlones' appeal offers us the opportunity to repair, at least to some small extent, the damage done to a defeated people by a triumphant one.

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Posted by **Steve**

 Like this comment

a resident of Parkside
on Dec 7, 2011 at 9:49 pm

Anthropologist, I'm sure you intentions are good, but gov't handouts create a vicious cycle of dependency that always ends badly. If recognition is all that's required, that's an admirable goal. If, however, the goal is gov't funding, using 'recognition' as the vehicle, that's just welfare under another name.

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Posted by **Wyatt**
a resident of Mariposa Ranch
on Dec 8, 2011 at 12:42 pm

 Like this comment

Steve the Sick, unable to distinguish between tribal sovereignty and social welfare, remains lost in his own private fog of ignorance and lack of education. Paddling through life with nothing but cliches. Very sad.

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Posted by **roger g**
a resident of another community
on Mar 20, 2012 at 5:51 pm

 Like this comment

HAD SOME GROUP ATTEMPTED TO STEAL THE LUMBEE IDENTITY NOT ONCE BUT 4 TIMES AND BENEFITS YOU LUMBEE WOULD BE CRYING FOUL PLAY!!!

stevedMarch 19, 2012, 10:28pm (report abuse)

THERE ACTUALLY WERE 4 ATTEMPTS BY THE lumbee croatan PUT FORTH BILLS BEFORE THE US CONGRESS TO BECOME CHEROKEE INDIANS ALL 4 BIILS FAILED!!

1. 1910 (January 24). Introduction of a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to change the tribe's name from Croatan to Cherokee. The bill did not pass. [entry 1320]
2. 1913 (July 10). Introduction of a bill in the U.S. Senate to change the tribe's name from Indians of Robeson County to Cherokee Indians of Robeson County. The bill did not pass. [entry 1329]
3. 1924 (March 20). Introduction of a bill in the U.S. House to change the tribal name to Cherokee. The bill did not pass. [entry 1339]
4. 1932 (May 9). A bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate to recognize and enroll the tribe as Cherokee Indians. The bill did not pass. [entry 1345]

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Posted by **Educated Indian**
a resident of another community
on Dec 24, 2012 at 7:29 am

 Like this comment

Just a thought and friendly suggestion for all interested to take a college level course in American Indian history or government. They don't teach this in schools k-12 for a reason. This is why so many American citizens are innocently ignorant of tribal people and entities. Federal recognition status has many dimensions and means more than what has been debated here. You cannot base all your knowledge and opinion by what you see on TV or read in the news. There are over 500 federally recognized tribes in America; you might as well get used to it. We will continue to be here for a long time. Muwekma don't give up, it's just a matter of time before the future generations will recognize and may even depend on the values and contributions of Native people.

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