

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK AND INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION

by

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate my thesis to my family, Nell P. and all my friends. This wouldn't have been possible without your support.

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VITA

Daniel Carlson-Strom was born in New York City in 1993. Daniel grew up traveling around the world and across the United States. He has a deep passion for history and learning. He is also an avid baker. His signature dish is apple pie.

In his youth, Daniel spent many months on both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow reservations in Montana. It was there that Daniel listened to the oral stories from tribal elders of both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes.

Daniel would also attend Crow Canyon Archaeological Center summer program in 2011, learning about the Puebloan people and their culture. Daniel also spent a summer doing an archaeological field school in Connecticut, learning about the Eastern Pequot tribe and their history. Daniel's most memorable experience was as an intern at Plimoth Patuxet in Massachusetts on the Wampanoag part of the living history museum. Daniel spent the summer of 2018 learning Wampanoag history and teaching visitors about the Wampanoag tribe during the 17th century and encounters with English settlers who settled at Plimoth. Daniel is an alumnus of the University of Massachusetts Boston and will be graduating in 2024 with a master's degree in Native American Studies from Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana.

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ABSTRACT

Yellowstone National Park, established in March 1872 as the United States' first national park, attracts millions of visitors each year due to its unusual and breathtaking landscapes, geothermal features, and bounty of wildlife. A critical aspect often overlooked by visitors is the park's history of forced removal and violence against Indigenous peoples during its formation. This thesis investigates the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and tribes who inhabited and utilized Yellowstone's lands before its designation as a national park. Through a comprehensive review of historical documents, and archival research, this study sheds light on the procedures and methods employed in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, illuminating the systemic erasure of Indigenous histories from the park's public discourse. The results reveal a significant gap in the dissemination of information regarding the historic and current Indigenous presence within the park boundaries and the continued impacts of Indigenous displacement from the park. Conclusions drawn from this research underscore the necessity of acknowledging and centering Indigenous voices and perspectives in the interpretation and management of a national park.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Yellowstone National Park first opened its doors in 1872. It would be the first national park in the United States. Many other national parks would soon be open around the United States, such as Glacier National Park, Zion National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Mesa Verde National Park and over 400 more.

National parks in the U.S are visited by millions of people each year. Millions of people visit to see the various natural landscapes of the North America. Other reasons to visit include hiking, camping, local flora and fauna, and the peacefulness of the wilderness.

For many Indigenous peoples, they view the land that makes up some national parks as sacred, such as the land that makes up Yellowstone National Park. The thought of seeing sacred land that their ancestors lived, hunted, and gathered on for millennia being used as a tourist attraction have angered many Indigenous peoples over the years.

Indigenous peoples have been in the Americas for thousands of years, from up top in Canada and the Arctic, all the way down through central and South America. Federally recognized tribes in the United States alone were counted at over 500. That's for federally recognized tribes; imagine the number of non-federally recognized tribes.

There are parks who do properly represent Indigenous peoples and the tribes who once lived on the land. There are parks who openly discuss Indigenous history and have Indigenous workers who help maintain Indigenous structures. Some national parks do their best to keep Indigenous history alive. Even after Indigenous ethnic cleansing by the United States

government, Indigenous history in some national parks is still alive and well and continues to be taught and spoken of in national parks.

Many Indigenous peoples and tribes were forced to leave their homelands and travel to reservations many miles away through the 1800s. Many Indigenous peoples saw their homelands being transformed into towns for settlers, mines for gold, silver and copper or turned into national parks such as Yellowstone.

Many guests over the years who have visited Yellowstone National Park are presented with very little acknowledgement or history offered about Indigenous peoples who lived and travelled through what is now Yellowstone National Park by the park itself. The park has even gone as far as to create myths and legends about how the Indigenous peoples and tribes in that area feared Yellowstone's lands and stated bold claims such as no one lived there.

Yellowstone has underrepresented Indigenous peoples for decades. For decades, Yellowstone National Park has focused mainly on the animals, geysers, and natural beauty of the land and less on Indigenous peoples who thrived in that area for millennia.

The lands that make up Yellowstone National Park have been used for millennia by Indigenous tribes for a few reasons; one of them is hunting. Yellowstone National Park is a great place to find obsidian due to all the volcanic activity. Even today, people are still finding obsidian arrowheads and flakes that were created by Indigenous peoples.

It's hard to imagine being in a situation such as the situation between Indigenous peoples, their tribes, and Yellowstone National Park. Imagine having generations of family hunt and use the land for centuries and millennia and suddenly, European settlers and the U.S Government arrive, kick you out and forbid you attempt to gain the Landback. To add insult to injury, the

European settlers and the U.S Government have over the years actively downplayed your history and the acknowledgement of your ancestral history to visitors.

This thesis will discuss Indigenous representation in national parks, both the positive and negative representations. This thesis will mainly focus on YNP's issues in the past with Indigenous representation. Indigenous representation is vital in national parks. If there's no Indigenous representation, it's almost as if some national parks are saying Indigenous peoples never existed. In this thesis, when I use the acronym YNP, I am using it in place of Yellowstone National Park. Along with representation, this thesis will also discuss American culture and Indigenous culture. This includes Indigenous culture and representation in American media, such movies and television shows. Indigenous representation in American media over the last century is filled with harmful stereotypes and incorrect depictions of Indigenous peoples and tribes.

The chapters in this thesis are titled "Indigenous Representation in U.S National Parks," "Yellowstone Issues with Indigenous Representation," and "Culture in America." The first chapter revolves around Indigenous representation within various national parks. Some national parks represent Indigenous peoples, others do not. Two that I discuss in this chapter are Glacier National Park and Mesa Verde National Park. The second chapter's subject goes into detail on Yellowstone National Park and the issues that the park has had in the past and how the park has started to introduce change over the last couple years. The third chapter delves into American culture and Native culture and how both are viewed differently despite both being American. Chapter three also delves into what Yellowstone National Park could do better in the future as well when it comes to Indigenous representation. In addition, chapter three discusses the history of Native American cinema and its changes to Native representation.

This thesis also discusses both Mountain Time Arts and Yellowstone Forever. Mountain Time Arts is an art company that shows the public art that explores culture, the environment, and its various landscapes. Mountain Time Arts is based out of Bozeman, Montana and has had a large impact in the surrounding art community by showing large scale installations and performances. I have had the honor of working for Mountain Time Arts over the last 8 or so years. I was with Mountain Time Arts in 2021 when we set up the first teepee in Yellowstone National Park since the early 1870s. I was also with Mountain Time Arts when the first meeting between Mountain Time Arts and Yellowstone National Park superintendent occurred to discuss allowing Mountain Time Arts into the park and being allowed the ability to set up teepees and represent Indigenous peoples and artists inside the park.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION IN U.S NATIONAL PARKS

YNP and other national parks were created on Indigenous land. Most of the land was and still is sacred to Indigenous peoples and tribes. YNP is no exception. YNP is one of many national parks that do not portray an accurate and respectful job of Indigenous representation. Indigenous representation includes openly speaking about Indigenous history of the area that makes up the National Park, having Indigenous guides that know their tribal history, exhibits on the local Indigenous tribes and more. There are also many other national parks and national park monuments that respect and honor Indigenous representation.

Indigenous Representation in National Parks

A famous American national park is Glacier National Park. Glacier National Park has started working with the Blackfeet nation, granting the Blackfeet nation the ability to give tours which tell their histories and oral stories of the land that is now Glacier National Park. This is an incredible opportunity that was granted to the Blackfeet nation that benefits everyone. It is an amazing sight to see the Blackfeet Nation have the ability to conduct their own tours on a government-run national park.

Samantha Weber's article, "The Blackfeet Nation Is Opening its Own National Park," goes into more depth on the Blackfeet and Glacier National Park. The article also describes how one man fought to have Indigenous stories told in Glacier. The section is as follows:

In 1992, Ed DesRosier wanted to offer visitors to Glacier National Park an experience that didn't yet exist. Tourists learned about the park's wildlife and the history of the iconic red tour buses that carried them to the park's most breathtaking

views. But the stories of the people who were connected to the landscape centuries before it became a tourist destination were not mentioned.

So DesRosier, an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation in northwestern Montana, made it happen. But before he could become one of the few Indigenous people in the country licensed to operate a tour business in a national park, he would be arrested and have to fight in court for the right to tell the stories of his people and their home.

It's easy to imagine DesRosier, whose energy belies his 65 years, captivating tourists at the helm of one of his 10 Sun Tours buses, which have become ubiquitous on Glacier's main roads in the summer. His official business came after many not-so-official tours; the corporate entity in charge of concessions in Glacier refused to give him a license to tell the Blackfeet stories he knew, but he gave tours anyway. DesRosier was responding to a common problem: Despite the fact that they comprise the ancestral lands of hundreds of tribes, few national parks offer visitors the sort of nuanced Indigenous view that DesRosier wanted to provide. (Weber, Para. 1,2,3)

This isn't a happy story throughout history. The creation of Glacier National Park did have horrible treatment of the Blackfeet Nation and how the Blackfeet had their rights revoked.

To earn funds for desperately needed food and supplies, the Blackfeet Nation ultimately agreed to sell the mountainous region and natural resource rights to the federal government for \$1.5 million, as long as the land remained public. That sale, or lease, as many tribal members maintain, was negotiated in the still-contested 1895 Agreement. When the land was declared a national park in 1910, Blackfeet hunting and fishing rights were revoked, but gathering rights remained. Since then, Blackfeet people have been arrested and challenged in court while attempting to assert some of their treaty rights. Park and tribal officials alike say meetings between the groups rarely end without a discussion about indigenous rights in Glacier. (Weber, Para. 7)

Glacier National Park, YNP, and other national parks have seen forced removal and harsh treatment of Indigenous peoples in the process of creating the park. Ed DesRosier fought tooth and nail for Blackfeet history and Blackfeet guides being able to give tours in Glacier.

Weber also has this to say:

DesRosier is glad these tribal leaders have taken a serious interest in developing a tourism economy, but he doesn't think they're moving fast enough. He also thinks Glacier National Park should be required to offer more opportunities to indigenous

people, an idea that compelled him to fight for his business all those years ago. He fought at negotiation tables and in appeals courts for two years before a judge ultimately expunged the charges against him, and Glacier Park Incorporated, the corporation that controlled park concessions at the time, offered him a full concession license.

At the zenith of his successful court battle, DeRosier's legal team planned to base their argument on the rights ensured in the 1895 Agreement. Back then, hunting, fishing and gathering fueled livelihoods. He maintains that a modern interpretation of those rights includes business ventures like his. "What is livelihood and survival nowadays," he asked. "Business opportunities, economic growth. When it was afforded to corporate America, it certainly should have been afforded to Native America. (Weber, Para. 16,17)

YNP has waited too long to change its old-fashioned ways and step into the modern era of representation. Samantha Weber's article mentions how Glacier National Park's superintendent Jeff Mow has greatly facilitated Blackfeet tribal members giving tours in the park. Samantha Weber gives this two-paragraph description on Jeff Mow and how the Blackfeet are grateful to him.

That said, DesRosier and many other Blackfeet tribal members agree that the park's new superintendent, Jeff Mow, has helped shift the tides. Mow came to Montana for the Glacier job in 2013, following a long career in Alaska's parks and indigenous communities, an experience he said helped prepare him for his new role in the lower 48. He's a vocal advocate for giving indigenous people a seat at the table. In 2017, he agreed to move some of the park's Native America Speaks programs onto the reservation for the first time and decided to open the tourist season with a Blackfeet blessing ceremony.

Mow thinks sharing a border with an indigenous people living on their ancestral homelands puts Glacier in a unique position. "I can demonstrate what the best relationship between the park service and a tribe could be," he said. In the future, if the Blackfeet tribe succeeds in opening a tribal national park, Mow said he'd like to include it in the existing international peace park, the first of its kind, which encompasses Glacier and Canada's Waterton Lakes National Park. (Weber, Para. 18,19)

YNP could learn from this story of the Blackfeet and Glacier National Park. YNP would benefit greatly by learning from Jeff Mow. It's inspirational to see national parks collaborating

with Indigenous tribes to represent themselves and tell their oral histories to tourists and visitors. Although YNP has initiated this process, it will be a substantial benefit to world understanding of Indigenous people when they include a greater Indigenous voice and presence in YNP.

Another National Park that represents Indigenous peoples and tribes is Mesa Verde National Park located in Colorado. I have had the great pleasure of visiting the National Park when I attended the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center's summer archaeology program.

The National Park Service website for Mesa Verde mentions the Puebloan people on the main page. The website's main page states the following: "For over 700 years, the Ancestral Pueblo people built thriving communities on the mesas and in the cliffs of Mesa Verde. Today, the park protects the rich cultural heritage of 26 Pueblos and Tribes and offers visitors a spectacular window into the past. This World Heritage Site and International Dark Sky Park is home to over a thousand species, including several that live nowhere else on earth" ("Mesa Verde," National Park Service Para. 1).

I was able to visit the famous "Cliff Palace" when I was at the summer program. I was able to learn so much about the Puebloan people and their culture. Mesa Verde does an incredible job of Indigenous representation. When I was, that I learned so much about the Puebloan people and how they built structures.

I visited an archaeological site that is trying to preserve the Puebloan houses from hundreds of years ago. It was amazing seeing how accessible Indigenous history was and how open and free flowing the National Park was about Puebloan people and their history.

Another national park that openly talks about Indigenous peoples is the Casa Grande Ruins. There are also individual webpages on the National Park website about the history of the Sonoran Desert people, the history and culture of the Sonoran people, and preservation.

The introduction to the Casa Grande Ruins is as follows: “Explore the history and stories of an extended network of communities and irrigation canals. An Ancestral Sonoran Desert People's farming community and Great House are preserved at Casa Grande Ruins. Whether the Casa Grande was a gathering place for the Desert People or simply a waypoint marker in an extensive system of canals and trading partners is but part of the story of the Ruins” (“Casa Grand Ruins,” National Park Service Para 1). It is unknown what the monument is used for, but it is great seeing the National Park Service try to understand it better and talk about the Sonoran Desert People.

One national park that does a mediocre job of Indigenous representation is Zion National Park. There are not many paragraphs on Indigenous peoples on the National Park webpage on the artifacts found in Zion. There are more webpages on “Artists of Zion,” “Civilian Conservation Core,” “Women in Zion,” and “Early European Americans in Zion.” All the previous webpages are run by the National Park Service website. It’s rather upsetting seeing only a couple paragraphs about Indigenous peoples, but whole webpages dedicated to settlers.

There is a website called “National Parks Conservation Association” that has a webpage that is dedicated to the relationship between national parks and Indigenous tribes and its peoples.

The introductory paragraph for this webpage is as follows:

Indigenous people were forcibly removed from their homelands, yet strong connections still exist between Tribal communities and the lands that have sustained them since time immemorial. In some cases, Tribes were specifically removed to create national parks, and the National Park Service continues to

struggle with that dark legacy. Tensions over access to sacred sites within national parks have continued for decades after the parks' creation and in some cases remain ongoing. ("National Parks Are Native Lands," National Park Conservation Association Para. 2)

I believe this shows just how the U.S Government treats Indigenous tribes and peoples. It shows how contradictory the U.S Government is. The U.S Government forcibly removes tribes and people and denies them rights to the land, then turns around and welcomes guests and tourists to these amazing and natural scenic lands that they're trying to preserve.

The webpage shows multiple articles about different Indigenous happenings in national parks. One link redirects you to an article titled "We're Still Here," which is about how it feels for Native peoples to work in the national parks. Another link goes to an article written by Apsáalooke writer named Dr. Shane Doyle and how he shares stories of connection between his people and YNP. Another link sends you an article titled "Naming Matters." The article is about how people are fighting to have names of Indigenous places changed back to the Indigenous name.

Between articles on the webpage, there are paragraphs that help bring awareness to the struggles and successes between Indigenous tribes and national parks. One such paragraph reads: "In 2021, Chuck Sams became the National Park Service's first indigenous leader in the agency's 105-year history, and Deb Haaland became the first Native American Cabinet Secretary in U.S. history when she began leading the Department of the Interior. As of 2022, 80+ co-stewardship agreements exist between the National Park Service and indigenous Tribes and communities. Tribes and agencies must work together to ensure inclusion of Tribal priorities, values and stories in the stewardship of our public lands at every level" (National Parks Are Native Lands. National Park Conservation Association Para. 3).

These paragraphs between links to articles show the national parks and Indigenous peoples are working closer more and more every year. This could possibly create steam to get the national parks moving towards more Indigenous representation and honoring Indigenous history.

One national monument saw a change of hands and is now in cooperation between five different tribes as of last year. The link is to a press statement stating that the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah gave more power to Indigenous peoples last year. Here is a quote from the press release:

Statement from Theresa Pierno, president and chief executive of the National Parks Conservation Association:

Finally, Bears Ears will be managed in a partnership with tribes. With equal voices, we can preserve this sacred and culturally important place together and share the responsibility to protect it for generations to come.

The story of Bears Ears goes back 13,000 years, to the people who first lived on and cared for these lands. Honoring that history requires those with the traditional ecological knowledge and cultural wisdom to properly understand and care for this incredible landscape.

With today's agreement which includes funding and supporting for Tribal staffing and co-management, we are creating a future for Bears Ears where visitors will see and hear about history and cultures that truly reflects Hopi, Navajo, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni, and other Pueblo Tribes. ("Parks Group Applauds Bears Ears Tribal Co-Management Agreement." National Park Conservation Association Para. 1,2,3,4)

Native Workers in National Parks

"Full Circle," by Karuna Eberl, is another article from the NPCA webpage on Indigenous tribes and peoples and national parks. The article tells of how young Native people can help restore and connect with their ancestral lands along with restoration efforts to repair Indigenous sites. The following excerpt is from the article and the writing from Karuna Eberl herself:

Nahohai, Seowtewa and three other young men from the Pueblo of Zuni comprised Crew 642 of the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps. The program, a modern incarnation of the 1930s-era Civilian Conservation Corps, helps connect young Native Americans with public lands — or, more precisely, with the homelands of their ancestors, who lived here long before the concepts of public and private lands existed.

The crew's project is part of a larger effort to increase the role Native Americans play in the protection and management of their ancestral lands, and it also reflects the government and nonprofits' greater willingness to incorporate Indigenous voices into that work. In recent years, this movement has celebrated significant achievements, from the designation of Bears Ears National Monument to the selection of Deb Haaland as secretary of the Interior Department and that of Chuck Sams as director of the National Park Service. Both are the first Native Americans in their respective positions.

This increased focus on collaboration has also paved the way for tribes to bring their own perspectives and expertise into the fields of archaeology and archaeological restoration. Historically, white academics have conducted most of the studies and excavations of ancient sites in the Southwest. "They have done important work, but often with a disregard for — and little understanding of — Indigenous culture", said independent Hopi archaeologist Lyle Balenquah. (Eberl, Para. 4,5,6)

It's amazing seeing that people are truly trying to save Indigenous history. I am also happy that they let Indigenous people do it, too. It is frustrating to see how outsiders such as the U.S Government or the National Park Service, think they can do a better job of preservation than actual Indigenous people. They don't have the history or knowledge that Indigenous people do.

The Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps started in 2008 under the banner of the Southwest Conservation Corps, and it became an independent program in 2021. The organization has four offices in New Mexico and one in Arizona, and participants include Native Americans and Chicanos. In 2021, the corps counted more than 200 paid participants and 60 volunteers and offered a range of programs for 8-year-olds to 30-somethings, from hiking outings to Grand Canyon river trips. Still, much of the corps's work is centered around historic preservation and environmental conservation projects, such as trail maintenance and habitat improvement in the federal and Tribal lands of the Southwest. (Eberl, Para. 11)

Another section of this article describes what these young men are currently working on in a specific site.

It was Crew 642's second trip to this site. The crew's main objectives on both trips were to replace missing mortar and backfill soil around the structures to stabilize those in danger of falling over the cliff. Visitors usually aren't aware they are causing damage, but foot traffic pulverizes and softens the sediment along the trail, which quickly washes away, leaving new erosion channels that undercut the structures. (Eberl, Para. 20)

Eberl also speaks about how the local Indigenous peoples feel that people have used the wrong terminology when describing Indigenous sites.

Tribal consultation has also led to a change in the policy on the materials used to stabilize and restore sites. "Historically, preservation work was conducted mostly using foreign materials — steel rebar, wire mesh, cement — materials not compatible with the organic material that is born out of the earth," Balenquah said. "From a Hopi perspective, the structure has a life cycle. It's meant to serve a purpose, then when the inhabitants no longer require it, it's allowed to turn back into the soil. The use of these materials is against that philosophy."

Using the correct terminology also matters to Balenquah, who would like to drop terms such as "ruins" and "abandoned" because Zuni, Hopi and other Tribes believe their ancestors' spirits still live at ancient sites. "Those are completely derogatory terms for us, the descendants," he said. "It implies they no longer have energy associated with them or they are no longer tied to a people." (Eberl, Para. 26,27)

I agree with Balenquah's statement in doing away with these terms. These terms make Indigenous people seem like they're living in the past. Everyone knows the national parks run taking caring of the land. There are articles stating that the Europeans could do a better job of land management than North American Indigenous peoples. This theory of national parks "taking care of the land" is a subject that will be touched on later.

It is amazing to see how people and organizations speak of Indigenous peoples as if Natives are not here or are still living "in the past." It reminds me of how the media over the years has done this as well. *Nanook of the North*, released in 1922, is guilty of portraying Indigenous people as not modern. In the film, it shows a group of Indigenous peoples hunting for walrus. The Indigenous peoples of the arctic at that time had already started using firearms. The

director insisted on hunting the old way. Showing the old way portrays the Indigenous peoples as non-modern.

The article “*Nanook of the North*” at 100: How Documentaries Can Warp Reality” by Lisa Laman, does a better job of describing the scene. Laman states:

By this point in history, Allakariallak and other members of his community would hunt animals in the wilderness with modern tools, such as guns. However, Flaherty insisted they hunt seals and other beasts with spears. Through this, the indigenous people onscreen could be further defined as “others” to white moviegoers in colonized countries. (Laman, Para. 2)

Laman also mentions an interview with the Inuk throat singer, Tanya Tagaq and her views on *Nanook of the North*. Laman said in the article:

The complicated, but ultimately negative, aura of “Nanook of the North” is best summed up by Tanya Tagaq, an Inuk throat singer. In an interview with CBC, Tagaq acknowledges Flaherty’s affection for Inuit culture while noting her joy at certain scenes that capture how her ancestors would endure and survive in harsh cold domains. However, she was primarily embarrassed and annoyed by “Nanook of the North,” which she saw as decidedly being the work of a white man in 1922 looking at indigenous people in a dehumanizing form. (Laman, Para. 8)

The article “We’re Still Here” by Katherine DeGroff describes how Indigenous people feel about working in the National Park Service. The article mentions one story of Albert LeBeau, who works for the Effigy Mounds National Monument. One section of the article discusses what it’s like realizing they are working on land that was stolen.

The article section states:

Inevitably, indigenous staff members face a host of challenges, underpinned by an uncomfortable truth: They are working — and living, in some cases — on lands that were, for the most part, illegally seized by the same entity that signs their paychecks. Many feel torn between representing the U.S. government in their Park Service uniforms and representing the sovereign nations to which they belong. Others say they struggle with a sense of isolation. Some recount instances of federally mandated Tribal consultation (regarding decisions that affect culturally significant areas of parks) that were perfunctory and failed to alter the outcome. At the same time, exhibits, signs, brochures and maps rarely paint the full picture of

parks' Native history. And while some parks are working to expand this narrow narrative, chronic underfunding can halt novel interpretation and cultural preservation efforts before they start. (DeGroff, Para. 4)

Another person the article mentions is Ethan White Calfe. White Calfe's interview in the article discusses how he feels about being an interpretive ranger in YNP. One section states:

White Calfe envisions a day when there are many more indigenous people telling their own stories from their own homelands. "Until then, he said, I try and make it my mission to go to these places and tell the stories that weren't being told about the people who were there and how they lived." This frequently involves after-hours research, informal interviews and, ultimately, securing permission to share the words entrusted to him.

Occasionally, there are hard realities he feels need telling. As an interpretive ranger in Yellowstone, for example, he regaled tourists with the saga of the bison's brush with extinction". The federal government slaughtered the herds as a way to force Native Americans to cede lands and accept treaties, "White Calfe said. Drawing attention to this as a federal employee was a little weird, he admitted, but his supervisors supported him. He recalls being told: "We're here to interpret the truth even if it doesn't paint us in the greatest light." (DeGroff, Para. 4,5)

I will have the opinion that what White Calfe said about mass killings of bison to make Native Americans cede land paved the way for more land for national parks to operate on. Many Native Americans were forcefully removed from their land and the national parks moved in shortly after or even while Native Americans were still living on said land.

The National Park Foundation has a webpage dedicated to sharing Indigenous history of the parks and is working to preserve Indigenous history. The web page is identical to the National Park Conservation Association website due to having different links to various articles and programs. The opening paragraphs are as follows:

National parks share stories of Indigenous peoples, including Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian, both historically and present day. Most, if not all, of the lands in today's National Parks were once home to Indigenous peoples. From Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and Navajo National Monument, our national parks preserve, protect, and honor the historic and present stories of the communities tied to these lands.

The National Park Foundation (NPF)'s work helps rehabilitate and preserve historic sites and artifacts in national parks across the country. NPS, NPF, and tribal partners are working to increase collaboration, connect communities to national parks, and expand storytelling in parks to share a more comprehensive history of the U.S. so we can all gain a greater understanding of our land's history. ("Native American History & Culture in Parks." National Park Foundation Para. 1,2)

It's great seeing how national parks are taking steps and working with tribal partners to help tell Indigenous stories and histories. Indigenous history and oral stories need to be told. All "American" history deserves to be told, not just history after 1620. History should be told, no matter how old it is or if it's pre-contact.

One article by Alison Steinbach, titled "Training NPS Staff on Tribal Consultation," discusses how the National Park Service is working towards more collaboration with Indigenous tribes. The opening paragraphs state:

The National Park Foundation (NPF) is supporting the National Park Service's (NPS) ongoing commitment to working effectively with Native American tribes by funding an NPS training on engaging in tribal consultation.

The Pathway to Confidence: Engaging in Effective Tribal Consultation training is designed to help NPS managers responsible for tribal consultation better understand the process and more effectively implement the government-to-government work with local tribes. (Steinbach, Para. 1,2)

The Pathway to Confidence: Engaging in Effective Tribal Consultation training seems to be working and is effective. The article goes on to state:

"During fiscal years 2018-2019, NPS participated in more than 3,500 tribal consultations with more than 270 tribes and Alaska Native Villages. NPS managers engaged with tribal liaisons, plus Native Hawaiian organizations, and Pacific Islander communities, across regions, parks, and programs when making decisions with tribal implications. (Steinbach, Para. 6)

The article goes on to describe exactly how these National Park Service managers are going to start consultations and soon national parks will see how important Indigenous history is.

The training will cover everything from starting a tribal consultation program at a park to studying challenging case studies to boost confidence in engaging in tribal consultation.

Managers will come away with an understanding of the significance of park lands and resources for Federally Recognized Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations, the commonalities between Indigenous Knowledge and NPS's mission of preserving and protecting cultural and natural resources, and tribal cultures more broadly. Training participants visit a site or project where tribal partners are active in decision making or management as part of the program.

They will gain knowledge in how to collaboratively plan and implement tribal consultations and will create personalized guidebooks on best practices, funding strategies, timelines, and relationship-building with tribal partners. (Steinbach, Para.6,7,8).

YNP personnel should take the tribal consultation course. It would be advantageous for YNP personnel to take the course. Another article titled "Inclusive Storytelling" from the National Park Foundation discusses how some stories have not been told in American history and not told to the public. The quote is as follows:

Our national parks tell the diverse and incredible stories of America. However, there are stories, experiences, and interpretations of peoples and communities whose voices and contributions have been excluded from the American story. The National Park Foundation (NPF)'s Inclusive Storytelling program supports work that documents, preserves, and shares the voices and actions of people who are not often recognized as having shaped our history or for whom the struggle for social, racial, and environmental justice continues. ("Inclusive Storytelling." National Park Foundation, Para.1)

The statement above could be about anyone, not just Indigenous peoples and tribes. Many immigrant stories have been lost to time or hidden. In America's 400-year history, there have been so many stories that have been lost to time.

My family has a story as well. My family name was changed as well. My family's name was changed because at Ellis Island, there were thousands coming through the island every day

and the employees couldn't keep up with all the names. My family's name ended up being lost in translation and mispronounced. The original name was Hedstrom; now it is Strom.

I would love to hear the stories of the unknown and those who did not make it into the history books. One of the places I have been to that preserves little known stories is the Tenement Museum in New York City. The website's bio is as following:

A hidden gem of New York City, our two historic tenement buildings offer visitors a chance to explore the historically recreated homes of immigrant, migrant, and refugee families who lived in city tenements between the 1860s and the 1980s through interactive guided building tours, as well as walking tours of the iconic Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan. (Tenement Museum, Para. 1)

The Tenement Museum isn't a National Park, but it still does its part in preserving history and people's stories, just like the National Park Foundation's Inclusive Storytelling program. Stories and history need to be preserved. Not just history and stories by the "winners" or "wealthy" but everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, wealth status, winners, or losers. Many times, we see winners, or the wealthy, dictate how their story is told and how they are seen by the public. Most likely, they want to be viewed favorably by the public.

It is my belief that immigrant and Indigenous stories are the ones that are lost the most in history books. If stories are lost, all that remain are the ones that are told the most. "History is written by the victors" is a quote perfectly suited as an example of people's stories being "lost" or forgotten. In a land of mass Indigenous genocide, both racial and cultural, along with racism and bias towards immigrants, skin color, class and more, stories of everyday people need to be told, not just those with wealth and power who can buy their way into the history books. The copper king mansions in Butte, Montana showcase this. The mansions are well preserved and the copper king's history, but the average everyday miner's story is barely known.

YNP has taken baby steps in introducing Indigenous history. One promise was not kept when it comes to honoring and Indigenous representation. The National Park Service website mentions the false promise:

In 2018, the park consulted with associated tribes on increasing opportunities for non-consumptive ceremonial use of the park. Consultants also reviewed park educational media and programming for representation of native peoples and perspectives. Previous education consultation focused on the Yellowstone segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the associated sites and events of the 1877 Flight of the Nez Perce. (“Native American Affairs.” National Park Service Para. 5)

I have not seen this representation and historical telling NPS has promised. All I have seen over the last few years, was four books on Native peoples in the gift shop. As of the writing of this thesis, I have seen no books relating to the 1877 flight of the Nez Perce in any YNP bookstore. Indigenous peoples need to be represented more and YNP has heard the call. YNP has started introducing Indigenous history into the park, just not about the 1877 flight of the Nez Perce. YNP hopefully will allow various rights within YNP to Indigenous peoples. Rights such as hunting, fishing, ceremonial, and more.

Stated earlier, YNP does indeed have interpretive rangers, which means YNP is slowly starting to introduce Indigenous history. A slow introduction to the subject would be better than no introduction at all. Baby steps beat no steps. The slow introduction to Indigenous history could lead to a more welcoming feeling in YNP for Indigenous peoples in the future.

YNP is one of the national parks that in the past has minimally mentioned Indigenous peoples. The issues with YNP will be given more explanation later in the thesis. It's a wonderful feeling to see national park managers taking steps to discuss and promote Indigenous history. Maybe one day YNP will fully commit to Indigenous history.

Many Indigenous peoples want to see their land rightfully returned or be given permission to hunt or fish on the land. Many tribes have started to fight to get the land returned. It's known as Landback. The movement for Landback began decades ago. The movement involves tribal groups, Indigenous scientists, Indigenous policy makers, activists, cultural and arts organizations, culture bearers and more. Landback has become a symbol of the reclamation of all things that were taken away and destroyed by settler colonialism. This thesis provides a brief history of settler colonialism and the numerous policies, actions, and historical events that impacted Indigenous land loss across North America. The results of these policies continue to shape the lives and struggles of Indigenous communities today.

One movement that predates the Landback movement is the occupation of Alcatraz between 1969 and 1971. Anne Brice mentions the reason behind the occupation in her article titled "Exploring the Sound of the American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz."

The federal prison on Alcatraz had been closed for six years, and the 89 protesters aimed to occupy the island, stating that the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie required that unused federal land be given back to Native Americans.

This was happening at a time when Native American livelihoods and cultures were acutely threatened by ongoing termination policies in which the U.S. government terminated the status of more than 100 tribes, withdrawing aid and services and seizing millions of acres of Native land. (Brice, Para 3,4)

Brice also mentions how the Native peoples planned to purchase Alcatraz. "Once they were on the island, the occupiers issued a proclamation to President Richard Nixon and the United Nations that said they would purchase the 16 acres of land for \$24 in glass beads and red cloth — an equivalent price to what the U.S. government paid for Manhattan 300 years before" (Brice, Para. 8).

This occupation/demonstration is one of the most famous attempts at Landback to date. This occupation was a textbook example of direct action by taking over Alcatraz once it was abandoned in 1963. The Natives' use of the Fort Laramie treaty was, to me, completely justified, and they should have been allowed to keep the land. The U.S Government intervened and took away the Natives' water barge to try to force them to leave. The occupation eventually came to an end in 1971. Today, Alcatraz is a national historical landmark with approximately one million tourists visiting every year.

The Indigenous peoples on Alcatraz had the U.S Government pedaling back when it comes to the Fort Laramie Treaty. "The 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie states that unused or retired federal lands will be returned to Native American Tribes" (Hill, para. 4). According to the treaty, the Alcatraz occupation should have led to the legal transfer of land upon request. However, instead of transferring the land, the US government sent in the FBI to disband them. The Indigenous peoples used it to try to reclaim any unused government land. Land that the U.S Government didn't let the Indigenous peoples have despite the treaty. Therefore, the U.S Government openly and without shame broke the treaty, plain and simple.

Another instance of Landback is the bison Range in the Flathead Valley in Montana. The Salish and Kootenai tribes saw the loss of their land and saw the U.S Government put a bison range in the middle of their land as well. Their story is available to read on their Bison Range's website. It contains the following:

The Bison Range, formerly known as the National Bison Range, was established in 1908 by the U.S. Federal Government in the middle of our treaty-reserved home, the Flathead Indian Reservation, on land taken without our consent. The bison living on the Bison Range also are descendants of the free-ranging Reservation herd started by Tribal members in the 1800's when plains bison were near extinction.

Through Public Law 116-260, Congress restored the Bison Range as a federal trust ownership under the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) so that our award-winning natural resource managers can take over as stewards of the Bison Range. (“About the Restoration of the Bison Range.” Bison Range Para. 1,2)

Another Landback win happened in 2022. Alaa Elassar’s article “A Redwood Forest in California Has Been Permanently Returned to Its Indigenous Tribes” discusses how the California tribes were forcefully removed and they believe the land is theirs.

More than 500 acres of California redwood forestland has been officially returned to a group of Native American tribes whose ancestors were expelled from it generations ago.

The land, formerly known as Andersonia West, was purchased by San Francisco conservation group Save the Redwoods League and donated to the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, the league announced Tuesday.

The Sinkyone Council consists of 10 federally recognized Northern California tribal nations including the Cahto Tribe of Laytonville Rancheria, the Pinoleville Pomo Nation, and the Round Valley Indian Tribes.

People indigenous to the land, located in Northern California’s Mendocino County, were forcibly removed by European American colonists, according to the league. But today, the Sinkyone people have been empowered with the ability to reclaim – and rename – the land they believe rightfully belongs to them. (Elassar, Para. 1,2,3,4)

These are a few events in America where Landback has been attempted that ended in both success and failure. Landback is possible. Maybe not for the entirety of the United States. Some of these events count in the eyes of many as an Indigenous victory when it comes to obtaining their land back.

These victories and attempts are important. It shows that Indigenous peoples are still fighting for the return of their land. Some of these attempts have made local and national headlines and gained national attention. There are also other attempts not necessarily based on Landback, but attempts in keeping land from encroaching government control.

The Oka crisis that took place in Canada in 1990 is one such example. Melinda Meng's article "Bloody Blockades: The Legacy of the Oka Crisis" describes the history of the Mohawk tribe and their land as well as going over what happened during the 1990 Oka crisis. Meng states:

Over time the Pines became the home of a Mohawk burial ground, which only added to the controversy when the town decided to build a golf course on the land without the consent of the Mohawk. While the initial golf course development was successfully completed, a critical line was crossed with the announcement of plans to expand the golf course into the cemetery.

In March of 1990, the Mohawk erected a blockade to prevent the arrival of bulldozers scheduled to break ground on the golf course expansion. The municipality was granted an injunction ordering the dismantling of the barricade, but instead of giving up, the Mohawk strengthened their barricade and warriors were seen patrolling the pines. (Meng, Para. 2,3)

The attempt to protect the land ended up becoming a standoff that lasted seventy-eight days. The police were called in to dismantle blockades. Eventually, the military came in to help quell the violence and put an end to the standoff. The military ended up injuring Mohawk people as well.

Meng has this to say in the ending paragraph on the 1990 Oka crisis:

Finally, after 78 days, the crisis came to an end, leaving a provincial police officer dead and hundreds of Mohawk civilians injured. The events led to the creation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, tasked with deepening consultation and cooperation between First Nations and governments across Canada. (Meng, Para. 7)

These instances of Landback have proved that Indigenous peoples and tribes are fighting hard for their land to be returned, or repatriated. It undoubtedly will raise some questions. One question that came to mind was, how can we prove the historical injustices of Indigenous peoples that occurred during the establishment of YNP? Should the restitution of land be viewed as a means of rectifying past grievances?

I think it would also be important to acknowledge how YNP came to be. An official acknowledgement of how the land was obtained to build YNP would be the best option.

Acknowledge the Nez Perce run, acknowledge the forced land removal by the U.S Army. YNP must admit wrongdoings of the United States towards Indigenous peoples and apologize for allowing it to happen all for the sake of preservation, settler colonialism, tourism, and money.

Despite many problems in the past that YNP has had with respect to Indigenous representation, YNP in recent years has committed to doing more Indigenous representation. A few examples of this would be allowing Mountain Time Arts into the park and allowing Indigenous artists to set up large scale art installations. Another example is Yellowstone Forever. Yellowstone Forever is an outside company that has been allowed to open a Tribal Cultural Heritage Center in the park.

CHAPTER THREE

YELLOWSTONE ISSUES WITH INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION

In the past, YNP has misrepresented the land and that Indigenous peoples were apprehensive regarding the YNP landscape. Forced removal is one harsh portion of YNP's past. One issue from the past that continues to this day is how YNP acknowledges Indigenous people and their history of the land that is now YNP. YNP has apocryphal versions of history to its visitors about how no one lived in the area and how Indigenous peoples were scared of YNP ("National Parks & American Indians: Yellowstone," Para. 9). This chapter explores the dark history, forced removal and how YNP and others acknowledge Indigenous peoples and their history of YNP today.

Yellowstone and Indigenous Representation Issues

In Mark David Spence's book *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, Spence discusses in chapter 4 how America has ignored Indigenous peoples when it came to national parks. Spence's book and chapter 4 show exactly why there is large possibility of tension between YNP and Indigenous peoples. This quote really brings home the fact of what Europeans did to Indigenous peoples and how they only saw land and ownership of said land. The abstract on chapter 4 states:

This chapter demonstrates that Yellowstone provides the first example of removing a native population to "preserve" nature. As an empty, seemingly untouched landscape, Yellowstone represents a perfect Eden, a virtual manifestation of God's original design for America. This conception of wilderness preceded the creation of the first national park by a number of years and proved so powerful that early preservationists either dismissed or ignored any evidence of native use and habitation. And later, when park officials did take notice of Indians, they viewed

native hunters as a dangerous and unnatural threat to Yellowstone's environment. These ideas shaped park policy for three decades until Yellowstone had indeed become a place that native people neither used nor occupied. (Spence 70)

Isaac Kantor's article "Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks" also mentions that settlers saw the area that would become YNP as Eden and what the government did to stop Indigenous use. Kantor states in his article:

Secretary of the Interior Lucius Lamar felt the new national parks should be managed to preserve "wilderness," in his mind defined as uncut forests and plentiful game animals. Because Indians hunted animals and set fires, preservationists came to view them as incapable of appreciating the natural world. The last of Yellowstone's human inhabitants, a band of Sheep Eaters, were removed in 1879. However, bands from various tribes continued to use the park seasonally. Early Yellowstone managers saw what the Indians did in the park as undermining everything the park was meant to accomplish. According to Lamar himself, the park was to preserve an Eden, "in as nearly the condition in which we found [it] as possible." This meant fire suppression and no hunting. Thus, an obsession with halting Indian use of Yellowstone began, despite authorization of much of this use by off-reservation treaty rights. The fact that Native hunters had little to do with the dramatic declines in wildlife populations of the West seems lost on early park management. The incredible irony that early managers were disregarding an integral part of the idealized Eden early white explorers found, its human inhabitants, seems overlooked by people trying to preserve part of what those explorers experienced.

Both forcible and legal efforts were pursued to end the Indian use of Yellowstone. In July of 1895, a Jackson Hole area lawman, William Manning, decided on a violent approach to "get the matter to the courts." With posse of twenty-six, he discovered a Bannock encampment, and confiscated their tipis, saddles, horses, rifles, and elk meat. The Bannocks were arrested and marched out at gunpoint for violating Wyoming game laws. As the procession neared a heavily forested area, Manning told his posse to load their weapons. Some of the Bannock bolted in fear; an old man was killed and two children lost. (Kantor 49-50)

It should be noted that William Manning's group were made up of deputies at this time. These two authors concur that settler colonialism has been responsible for land theft from Indigenous peoples across North America for hundreds of years. Kantor's article displays a history of violence when it comes to removal of Indigenous peoples. Spence's article mentions how the

U.S Government openly and unabashedly misrepresented Indigenous peoples to the American public and visitors by stating the land was untouched by man, as well as burying any signs of Indigenous culture, history, presence and “swept it under the rug” so to speak.

Kantor’s article documents how the U.S Government wanted to preserve the land. This notion of land preservation is nothing new. Land theft due to the colonist ideology that they could do a better job of taking care of the land than the Indigenous peoples goes back centuries. One book review about Mark David Spence’s book was written by Frank Goodyear and has this to say about Spence’s discussion on the topic of land preservation. “Euro-Americans discover a marketable tourist attraction, become upset at the presence of dirty Indians, and begin the process of removing them for the sake of the safety of the park’s visitors and the health of the natural environment” (Goodyear, Para, 3).

Stacy Leeds’ article “By Eminent Domain or Some Other Name: A Tribal Perspective on Taking Land” discusses the history of Landback and the colonist views on preservation and agriculture. Leeds states:

For centuries, American Indians have seen their lands taken by federal and state governments without consent, and at times, without compensation. Some Indian land takings have fallen squarely within the exercise of eminent domain powers, but takings have routinely occurred under other theories that provide no legal remedy. In both situations, the underlying rationale for the taking was the belief that Indians were not using the land as efficiently as another owner would. In short, the "public good" necessitated the taking of land from the Indians, so the land could be redistributed to others who would make better use of the land. From these experiences, American Indians have long been confronted with the reality that no matter what legal interest one holds in property, those ownership interests are always subject to divestiture by the government, whether tribal, state, or federal. (Leeds 52)

Both Leeds’ and Kantor’s articles align with each other. Kantor mentions

“Because Indians hunted animals and set fires, preservationists came to view them as incapable of appreciating the natural world” (Kantor 49), and Leeds mentions how “Indians were not using the land as efficiently as another owner would” (Leeds 52). These two sections of both writings agree that settlers have actively partaken in land theft of Indigenous peoples across North America for hundreds of years. These articles show that these colonist settlers came up with the notion that Indigenous peoples were not taking care of the land properly to justify their land theft actions.

There are thousands of years of Indigenous history in the Americas. People have the right to know about the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. History should be unbiased and without criticism. It is widely known that European settlers have controlled the narrative of how the United States was founded. Many children for decades were taught in school that everything was peaceful between the settlers and Natives. For example, the story of the first Thanksgiving and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the early to mid-17th century on the east coast. The United States has relied on presenting a construction of history that it can control. YNP is a part that was built on such a misleading construction. The disinformation that “No one was living here” shows that YNP is one of many national parks that were founded on misinformation and may perpetuate that information to control the historical narrative.

Hearing these apocryphal stories is very hard to hear from an Indigenous standpoint. The chance to make things right is a huge opportunity for YNP to bring in new information. New information and not just the usual; the ecosystem, geysers, and animals. People are always wanting new information. When I was in YNP for one of Mountain Time Arts’ teepee installation in 2023, I found that many of the tourists were excited about the installations and

wanted to know more about Indigenous history. YNP has so much Indigenous history embedded into the land. All YNP needs to do is tap into it. YNP has the history; all the park needs to do is tell it. Workers in YNP want to tell Indigenous history. YNP employees such as Doug Macdonald.

Richard Grant's article "Lost History of Yellowstone" features an interview with YNP employee Doug Macdonald. Macdonald has this to say about YNP:

"The big myth about Yellowstone is that it's a pristine wilderness untouched by humanity," says MacDonald. "Native Americans were hunting and gathering here for at least 11,000 years. They were pushed out by the government after the park was established. The Army was brought in to keep them out, and the public was told that Native Americans were never here in the first place because they were afraid of the geysers." (Grant, Para. 3)

Grant's article also mentions how the park still pushes the "pristine wilderness" idea even today.

Grant's article states that:

In the last three decades, the National Park Service has made substantial efforts to research and explain the Native American history and prehistory of Yellowstone, but the virgin-wilderness myth is still promoted in the brochure that every visitor receives at the park entrance: "When you watch animals in Yellowstone, you glimpse the world as it was before humans." Asked if he considers that sentence absurd, or offensive to Native Americans, MacDonald answers with a wry smile. "Let's just say the marketing hasn't caught up with the research," he says. "Humans have been in Yellowstone since the time of mammoths and mastodons." (Grant, Para, 4)

Indigenous culture, stories, and history at YNP could very well inspire other national parks for the better. Other parks could start discussing Indigenous history. If YNP accepts Indigenous history like Glacier National Park does, it could be seen as change throughout not only these two national parks, but other national parks as well. YNP is the first national park in the United States. YNP and Glacier National Park could very well lead by example.

Richard Grant also interviews Shane Doyle (Apsaalooke), a member of the Crow Nation who taught at MSU Bozeman. Shane Doyle has this to say in the article:

Shane Doyle, a research associate at Montana State University and a member of the Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation, burst out laughing when I read him that sentence from the brochure. But his laughter had an edge to it. “The park is a slap in the face to Native people,” he said. “There is almost no mention of the dispossession and violence that happened. We have essentially been erased from the park, and that leads to a lot of hard feelings, although we do love to go to Yellowstone and reminisce about our ancestors living there in a good way.” (Grant, Para. 5)

Richard Grant’s article ends on Macdonald stating that he wants YNP to acknowledge Indigenous peoples. The article’s ending is as follows:

In MacDonald’s opinion, the existence of Yellowstone National Park, and the United States of America, came at a “terrible cost” to Native Americans, and the least we can do today is acknowledge the truth. “When people look at Yellowstone, they should see a landscape rich with Native American history, not a pristine wilderness. They’re driving on roads that were Native American trails. They’re camping where people camped for thousands of years. (Grant, Para. 36)

MacDonald has no Native American blood, but he regards the people who lived in Yellowstone for 11,000 years as something like ancestors. “We’re all descended from hunter-gatherers who lived in similar ways to the people here,” he says. “They were really successful at surviving in difficult conditions. We know this because we’re alive. If they hadn’t been so resourceful and successful, none of us would be here today.”

He would like to see more signs and exhibits about the park’s original inhabitants, first and foremost at Obsidian Cliff, but the park service is more concerned about protecting the site from possible looting. Shane Doyle has been advocating for a tepee village inside the park, where tribal college students could teach park visitors about the Native American history. “So far I’ve got nowhere,” Doyle says. “It might take a really long time, but I’m hopeful we’ll get there in the end. Surely, they can’t just keep pretending we were never there.” (Grant, Para. 37,38)

YNP must really start doing a better job of acknowledging Indigenous history. The history told by the victors of YNP is one that doesn’t acknowledge Indigenous hardship and forced removal. This history focuses primarily on Presidents Grant and Teddy Roosevelt as well as conservation issues.

The same could be said about American history in general. The story of pilgrims, the first Thanksgiving, how Native peoples helped the pilgrims and how Squanto helped the pilgrims is widely taught to U.S school children. The stories of early America such as the first Thanksgiving have been so diluted and changed to fit America's narrative that not a lot of people really know what happened or how the Natives were treated.

King Phillip's War happened between 1675 and 1678. The war started when Wampanoag Sachem Metacomet (King Phillip) started to push back against the colonists and their quest for land expansion. Kathy Weiser Alexander's article on King Phillip on the Legends of America's website describe what happened to King Phillip and his family when the war ended.

He was beheaded and his head displayed on a pole for 25 years at Fort Plymouth. He was about 38 years old. Philip's head was mounted on a pike at the entrance to Fort Plymouth, where it remained for more than two decades. His body was cut into quarters and hung in trees. Alderman was given Metacomet's right hand as a reward. After his death, his wife and nine-year-old son were captured and sold as slaves in Bermuda. (Alexander, Para. 3)

This happened fifty years after the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, yet people still believe that relations between Native peoples and pilgrims were peaceful and happy. We have seen this pattern happen with American history time and again. American exceptionalism has been engrained since childhood, resulting in the impression that relations between pilgrims and Native peoples were collaborative. It's been engrained since childhood that the United States is great, and the first Thanksgiving was peaceful between pilgrims and Native peoples.

The United States has swept its wrongdoings under the rug. America's ego prides itself on a "perfect country" where "everyone is treated equal." How can this be if Indigenous history

isn't being fully told? "American" history has been favored and preserved far more than Indigenous history.

YNP was and remains a sacred area for Indigenous peoples (Landry, Para. 10). How can Indigenous peoples feel comfortable telling their stories about such a sacred land within the context of YNP if they do not feel accepted and welcomed by YNP personnel? They could tell the stories anyway, but to tell the stories on the land itself would bring so much life to the stories.

Recognition to me means that we can keep Indigenous culture, history, and stories alive well into the future. It shows that YNP and the U.S Government are being more open and willing to tread on ground they were formally trying to hide. However, openly acknowledging that people did live here before YNP and thus acknowledging they lied to the public or at least left out some important details would create some backlash for YNP and the U.S Government.

It's always going to be hard to get something or someone to change their ways after they've been doing it for long. It reminds me of a popular quote, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." If people continue to believe YNP's version of history and will pay money to experience the park, then why change?

But times are always changing. People change their views all the time. One famous story comes from Daryl Davis. Daryl Davis is an African American who has successfully changed the minds of Klu Klux Klan members and helped them leave the Klan. Adam Howard's NBC News article titled "Documentary About Black Man's Attempt to Befriend Klu Klux Klan" explains it all.

Davis began his crusade by asking himself the existential question: “How can you hate me when you don’t even know me?” After a chance meeting with a member of the KKK following a gig, Davis began to reach out to members of hate groups, and he found that the more willing he was to hear them out, the more open they became to embracing him. More than two dozen white supremacists have since renounced their ideology of hate in part because of Davis’ peace offering. And as part of that process, they have symbolically handed over their Klan robes and paraphernalia to him. (Howard, Para.2)

If people can change, why can’t YNP change and start telling the truth about how it was established and do more for Indigenous representation? Indigenous representation must be more prominent in American society. YNP must do more to acknowledge their wrongdoings and present tribal histories and cultures.

In Emily A. Vernizzi’s senior project, titled “The Establishment of the United States National Parks and the Eviction of Indigenous peoples,” Vernizzi goes into detail about the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Vernizzi’s statement on YNP is a quote from Nabokov and Leondorf and is as follows:

In March of 1872, when Yellowstone was established as the United States’ first National Park, the displacement of Native Americans throughout the nation had already been occurring for years. The conservation movement of the late 19th century stimulated the protection of natural lands and resources, which meant any human inhabitation, particularly of the hunter and gatherer lifestyle, would be unacceptable in the protected areas. (Vernizzi Pg. 15)

Vernizzi also has this to mention speaking to the removal and limited resources allowed to Indigenous peoples during the creating of national parks:

While the motive of removal of inhabitants from parklands was in the interest of land preservation, it was accompanied by intense racism. Natives’ rights were neglected in satisfying the public interest for the land. Even those who saw Native Americans as living symbiotically with the land, it was often accompanied by a popular belief that Indians were savage and drastically inferior to white people. Years of attempts to “civilize”, educate, and convert natives had been taking a toll on native cultures and the tribes that had remained far from the frontier only managed to continue their traditional lifestyles a little while longer.

The establishment of Yellowstone as preserved federal land at first allowed for continued inhabitation, but severely limited the activities of the people who continued to live on the lands. Native Americans originally subsisted by hunting and gathering and the laws of the parks strictly prohibited both strategies, therefore making it impossible for natives to survive on their native lands. They were eventually forced off the land completely and moved into reservation lands. The formation of other parks did not even offer the opportunity to stay on the lands, rather immediately drove the Native Americans out with threats of violence and use of armed forces. Yosemite, first established as a state reserve, and later a National Park, was evacuated through the use of the United States Cavalry. Their method of removal of the Yosemite tribes became the Yosemite Model, which served as a guide to other parks as to how to conduct the removal of native inhabitants. People viewed natives as visitors to the land; therefore, they did not expect them to be greatly affected by their relocation.

After the removal of natives from parklands, their existence was nearly erased from the local histories. By excluding the evidence of former inhabitation, parkland appeared completely untouched and entirely natural. In more recent decades, National Parks have made efforts to reincorporate Native American history and culture into the parks' environment. The nation as a whole has also made efforts to reconcile with Natives through payments for prior treatment but the damage has been done, and the cultures have nearly been exterminated. (Vernizzi 17)

The website "Native American Netroots" has an article titled "National Parks & American Indians: Yellowstone." The article by an admin mentions how YNP told the tourists that Natives were afraid of the park and that due to the fear, no Natives lived there. The article states:

While the creation of Yellowstone as a National Park in 1872 ignored the Indian presence in the Park, Indians continued to use the area. This came to the attention of the press and the general public in 1877 when the Nez Perce, attempting to avoid a fight with the American army, entered the Park through Targhee Pass. Nez Perce warrior Yellow Wolf reported:

"We did not follow the usual Nez Perce trail. We traveled over a hunting trail instead."

Yellowstone was a National Park at this time, and consequently there were tourists in the Park. The Nez Perce encountered a group of 9 tourists from Montana. Afraid that the tourists might tell the army where they were, the Nez Perce took the tourists captive. Upon the advice of Poker Joe, the Nez Perce leader during this part of their journey, the tourists escaped.

Unfortunately for the infant park system, the capture of tourists in Yellowstone National Park by "wild, renegade" Indians was a public relations nightmare. To

counteract this bad press, the government began a campaign in which Indians were portrayed as “superstitious” and afraid of all of the evil spirits in the Park. Indians, according to Park literature, rarely entered or used the Park. It took more than a century for the Park to correct this misinformation. (“National Parks & American Indians: Yellowstone” Para. 7,8,9)

It is unclear in the article about how YNP was able to correct the misinformation. Another source that clarifies the origin of the misinformation about Indigenous peoples being afraid of YNP comes from the United States Geological Survey. An article written by the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory titled “Indigenous People Were Never Afraid of Yellowstone” states the following:

Hundreds of campsites have been excavated near thermal areas, and Yellowstone Lake was clearly a center of activity for thousands of years. Perhaps the most important resource in the park was Obsidian Cliff, which provided an exceptional source of high-quality obsidian that could be used for fashioning blades and projectile points. Tools made of Obsidian Cliff material are common throughout the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains and have been found as far away as Columbus, Ohio, in mounds built 2,000 years ago by the Hopewell people.

The Tukulika even made direct use of the hot springs, soaking bighorn sheep horns to allow them to be shaped into bows.

Although the myth of indigenous fear of Yellowstone was certainly propagated by early leaders of Yellowstone National Park, probably to encourage tourism given the hostile encounters between the Army and indigenous tribes especially in the 1870s, the archeological, oral, and written evidence proves this to be completely false. Indigenous people not only knew of the region but utilized its resources for thousands of years. And according to the bison-hide map, they even understood Yellowstone’s volcanic nature—something that was not established geologically until the 1870s (Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, Para. 8,9,10)

For clarity, a bison-hide map is where a map is drawn onto the hide of a bison. With all this false history being told, surely there must be someone out there who is working towards YNP and Indigenous representation. It turns out there is. There are companies, such as Yellowstone Forever, that are currently working towards YNP acknowledging Indigenous peoples and tribes. Yellowstone Forever works on multiple projects such as preserving YNP’s

landscape and the construction of the Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center. The web page for the heritage center states the following:

In 2022, Yellowstone National Park commemorated 150 years as the world's first national park. Yellowstone Forever and the National Park Service recognize that prior to being established as a national park, Yellowstone was the home of—and is still culturally significant to—many Tribal Nations.

Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center is a space where indigenous artists, scholars and presenters from the 27 associated Tribes of Yellowstone National Park directly engage with visitors through formal and informal education. The center is a partnership between the National Park Service and Yellowstone Forever, with Tribal consultation.

During the 2023 season, 34 presenters from 16 associated Tribes will directly engage with Yellowstone visitors through formal and informal education. Presentations will include photography, beadwork, moccasin making, dancing, storytelling, quillwork and more (Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center, Para. 1,2,3)

It is unfortunate to see that a company outside of YNP is doing a better job on Indigenous representation in the park than YNP itself. YNP has done a bare minimum job on Indigenous representation. Only in recent years has YNP started to slowly introduce more representations, such as Yellowstone Forever and the Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center and Mountain Time Arts installations.

As mentioned earlier, Glacier National Park openly speaks of Indigenous history and has Indigenous story tellers as well. Glacier National Park is clearly leading by example when it comes to telling Indigenous history. YNP could follow in Glacier's footsteps and start incorporating real and rich Indigenous stories instead of just a brief mention.

It is amazing to see that people and times are changing for the better. People like Ed DeRosier are really starting to fight to include Indigenous history in national parks. However, there is still room for improvement. In 2023, I was told by a YNP employee that no Indigenous people lived in YNP, which not only is inaccurate but overlooks thousands of

years of cooperative hunting history in the Yellowstone region. I also heard a YNP ranger tell a group of tourists that, to the best of my recall, “YNP didn’t want to take the land, but instead buy it from the Natives and work on a healthy transition of land ownership.”

An academic article in *Wyoming Law Review* titled “Re-Indigenizing Yellowstone” by Kekek Jason Stark, Autumn L. Bernhardt, Monte Mills and Jason A. Robinson, describes how YNP removed Indigenous peoples from its borders and created boundaries so no Indigenous peoples can enter YNP. Meanwhile, YNP also created an almost military like base in the park. The article also states that the U.S Army was stationed in YNP for a while to help with any Indigenous problems that could arise. One section describes how Shoshone were removed from YNP. The quote states:

Across this time frame, the lives of the Mountain Shoshone—again, the park’s only “permanent residents”—were uprooted. One year prior to Yellowstone’s designation, in 1871, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Montana, J. A. Viall, was tasked with relocating “all those Sheep Eater, Lemhi Shoshone, and Bannock groups not already settled on the Fort Hall Reservation.” Viall delegated this task to a subordinate, A.J. Simmons, charging him with “depopulating . . . that part of the historical homeland of the Sheep Eaters within which . . . the U.S. government would create Yellowstone National Park.” Simmons’s “successful roundup” resulted in the Mountain Shoshone’s relocation from this portion of their homeland to the Lemhi Indian Reservation and, in 1907, to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Other Mountain Shoshone ended up on the Wind River Indian Reservation. There does not appear to be a uniform view about precisely how this relocation took place. By one account, however, following the so-called Sheep Eater War, “the [Mountain Shoshone] left Yellowstone when, under pressure from Superintendent Philetus Norris, the agent at Fort Washakie sent a party of Shoshone ‘to escort the [Mountain Shoshone] to new homes on the Wind River Reservation’ in 1879.” Superintendent Norris viewed the Mountain Shoshone’s presence in the park as a “potential deterrent to tourist traffic”—a topic examined further below. Ultimately, stemming from these efforts, Yellowstone’s “permanent residents” would no longer inhabit the park. (Stark, et al. 423-424).

Another section of the article involves the Crow tribe and how the tribe was originally supposed to get a section of the park from a treaty, but due to errors, were not allowed to receive it. The section is as follows:

A significant change involving the Crow also occurred at this time. Recall how the 1851 Horse Creek Treaty had designated roughly the eastern half of present-day Yellowstone National Park as the Crow Nation's tribal territory, as well as how the 1868 treaty formed at Fort Laramie had established the Crow Reservation as a "permanent home" within the northern portion of that territory. It turns out there was a problem with line drawing along the southern boundary of the reservation and the northern boundary of Yellowstone. Because surveyors had set the latter "some three miles above the Montana and Wyoming territorial border, a narrow strip of park land also lay within the Crow Reservation." Superintendent Norris got wind of this discrepancy in 1877 and promptly advocated for a quick resolution "for the better protection and management of . . . Yellowstone National Park." To this end, Congress passed a statute in 1882 extinguishing "Crow rights to that remaining segment of the park north of 45° latitude and east of the Yellowstone River." (424-425)

These are all examples of how YNP wreaked havoc on Indigenous peoples who are reliant on the landscape that is current-day YNP. This chapter also discusses how YNP also told apocryphal stories about Indigenous land use in the area. Many other national parks actively promote Indigenous history and culture, such as Glacier National Park and Mesa Verde National Park. YNP must do better or face being left behind in a new world that is eager for representation and acknowledgement.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURE IN AMERICA

Culture in North America has encompassed a vast spectrum of cultures for thousands of years. The culture in United States, commonly referred to as America, has become quite stereotypical with burgers, hot dogs, fireworks, guns, apple pie, and beer. Technically, America refers to three countries, the United States, Canada, and Mexico. However, I will be using the colloquial meaning of America as refereeing to the United States. The American culture has become a popular stereotype across the world. This chapter will discuss culture in America and how it should include more than the American stereotype.

Culture Differences in America

There's so much that can be added to the interpretation of national parks instead of focusing solely on animals, environment, and geology. There are more than 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States, each with an infinite number of stories to tell, many intertwined with parks. To be recognized as a tribe, the tribe must first be federally recognized by the U.S Government or by individual states.

Every tribe in United States has a unique assemblage of individual customs and culture. As in the past, today people travel to "other" places to experience just that. Cultures different and unique from their own and to learn the local history. The various tribes and Indigenous cultures in North America are compelling and replete with stories and teachings. If America has this

much Indigenous culture, why wouldn't people visit America and experience Indigenous culture and history for themselves?

People have always been fascinated with culture and history. Culture is a part of our evolution and is a part of the anthropological field, called cultural anthropology. I have had the great pleasure of experiencing French, Mexican, Dominican, Canadian and Italian culture firsthand. It's a truly fascinating world out there.

For instance, the Indigenous peoples and cultures of Mexico's Yucatan are incredible. I was able to learn so much about the Mayan people when I visited Mérida in the winter of 2019. I learned about the social roles the Indigenous people had, the games they played, how they collected water and more. I learned about sacred cenotes and how the Maya believed it connects to the underworld.

Visiting the massive Mayan pyramids is a wondrous experience, which for me was greatly enhanced by the knowledge imparted by our Mayan tour guide. The intricate carvings on the sides of the ruins relate their history and cultural beliefs and give a glimpse into this complicated past. The ruins are truly something to visit if one ever visits the Yucatan. But be warned, the top of the summits of the pyramids are not for those who are afraid of heights.

The lure of these ancient sites is strong. Approximately 26 million people from all over the world come to experience these ceremonial centers and cities each year (Gallaga et al., 569). In contrast, tourists to the United States mainly visit post-European contact sites, such as

Independence Hall, the Statue of Liberty, the Golden Gate Bridge and Mount Rushmore. Most people who visit the United States predominately receive information about settler history and sites but very little about Indigenous history and culture.

If Mexican Indigenous culture in Mexico is on full display, why would YNP and other national parks in the United States ignore so much Indigenous culture? One theory is that they are trying to mask their association with manifest destiny. Instead of denying history and culture from its visitors, why not embrace it and show how truly inspiring and engaging North American Indigenous history and culture can be? Why not share the Indigenous history instead of ignoring it and promoting Euromerican history and environmental education?

Prevalent hegemonic interpretation of U.S history promotes a vision of a perfect country where everyone is treated equally. How can this be if Indigenous history isn't being fully told? "American" history has been favored and preserved far more than Indigenous history, and has been favored by mainstream media.

The Yellowstone ecosystem was, and remains, a sacred area for Indigenous peoples. How can Indigenous peoples tell their stories about such a sacred land if they are unable to be accepted and welcomed by the NPS in YNP? Indigenous peoples could tell their stories without being on the sacred land, but to tell the stories on the land itself would bring so much life to the stories. Visitors can see with their very eyes, the exact spots the storyteller is talking about. There is a big difference between hearing and imaging versus hearing and seeing the real thing. Tourists

and guests would be able to think and view YNP in a whole new lens. A lens that they wouldn't have been able to look through before since YNP minimally talks about Indigenous tribes and peoples of North America. This Indigenous lens would be amazing and thought provoking to those who wish to view a different kind of "American" culture. The cultures of over 500 tribes, evolving over thousands of years. Cultures that vary radically from region to region, in terms of their creation stories, food, animal stories, battle stories and more.

Creation stories are fascinating. Almost everyone has heard of Christianity and the Christian church. However, the individual creation stories of Indigenous peoples are far less familiar to people. One tribe believes we're all just cruising on the back of a giant turtle. Another believes we are lizard people who emerged from underground. Another tribe believes that the creator created the earth by using some mud brought to the creator by a duck.

All these different creation stories indicate one thing. That each tribe and their cultural beliefs are unique. There are over 500 federally recognized tribes in the United States as well as state recognized tribes and tribes requesting recognition. Each of these hundreds of tribes has their own culture and stories to tell. Indigenous cultures are relatively rarely experienced by tourists and visitors.

If YNP created an Indigenous department, co-managed with the tribes, or at least worked with Indigenous peoples to telling their stories and history, it would open tourists' eyes to a whole new world. A world that isn't dictated by the stereotypical tropes of Hollywood cowboy

movies that everyone seems to believe when they visit the west or any place with Indigenous culture. One documentary that deals with this issue of Hollywood and wrongful Indigenous representation is titled *Reel Injun* by Neil Diamond.

For over a century, Hollywood has misrepresented Indigenous peoples as well as unashamedly depicting harmful stereotypes. To avoid perpetuating these kinds of stereotypes, it's important that YNP and other entities start accurately and with good intentions introducing more authentic Indigenous representation.

The same issues can be observed in the education system in the United States. Sonia Wong's article "UC and CSU Schools Offering Native American Studies or American Indian Studies Programs" discusses this issue. Wong states:

While nearly nine million people in the United States identify as at least partially American Indian or Alaskan Native according to a 2021 U.S. Census Bureau survey, there is often a misrepresentation and a lack of curriculum surrounding Native Americans in U.S. education.

According to a study by the University of Southern Mississippi, Native Americans are often portrayed with stereotypical images and outdated information in children's books. As a result, the study shows that many young non-Native children believe inaccurate concepts about Native Americans. (Wong, Para. 1,2)

The issue of the U.S schooling system and the portrayal of Indigenous history is a related topic that is beyond the scope of this research. For my thesis, I will discuss it briefly.

An article titled "Research Reveals America's Attitudes about Native People and Native Issues" published on the website "Cultural Survival" speaks of Indigenous history and what people know of it. The article's opening statement is about an Indigenous effort, stating:

First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) and Echo Hawk Consulting (EHC) today released groundbreaking research about attitudes toward and perceptions of Native Americans as part of a jointly-managed effort called Reclaiming Native Truth: A Project to Dispel America's Myths and Misconceptions. The project also released two messaging guides based on the research findings and a narrative-change strategy framework that will be used to begin to change the false and misleading narratives about Native peoples.

The project seeks to create a long-term, Native-led movement that positively transforms popular narratives and images of Native Americans. A two-year phase, launched in 2016, created a solid foundation of unprecedented public opinion research and data, building upon previous research efforts. It was funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and significant financial contributions from numerous other entities and individuals. ("Research Reveals," Pg. 1, Para 1,2)

The article then goes on to show its findings, labeled "Discrimination, Narratives, Invisibility" and "Desire for Complete History." The findings I want to focus on are invisibility and desire for complete history. These are the paragraphs on those two findings:

Unsurprisingly, another key finding was that Native Americans are assigned to a romanticized past. However, one of the biggest barriers identified was the invisibility and erasure of Native Americans in all aspects of modern U.S. society. Respondents, including members of Congress and administrative officials, agree that invisibility, stereotypes, and narratives set by others do impact policy.

One of the key opportunities uncovered is that, across the research, people are well aware of the inaccurate historical lessons they have learned about Native Americans and want more accurate education about both historical and contemporary Natives. This was reflected in national polling that indicated that 72 percent believe it is necessary to make significant changes to school curricula on Native American history and culture. ("Research Reveals America's Attitudes about Native People and Native Issues," Para. 6,7).

The sentence "however, one of the biggest barriers identified was the invisibility and erasure of Native Americans in all aspects of modern U.S. society" resonated with me when discussing the lack of awareness regarding Indigenous culture in American culture today.

As stated earlier, the overarching American cultural stereotype is that Americans are obsessed with burgers, hot dogs, fireworks, guns, apple pie, and beer. There are even “classic” American childhood games called “Cowboys and Indians” or “Cops and Robbers.” Depending on your childhood, you would play one or the other. If children played “Cowboys and Indians,” it would teach young children subconsciously that Native Americans are part of old wild west history and not modern. This game helps keep Native Americans in the past and not the present. The irony being is many Native people in the west are cowboys. This game also erases the complex history of black, Native and Hispanic cowboys. Hence the issue with American versus Indigenous culture of today. I will again highly suggest viewing the *Reel Injun* documentary for more information on Indigenous representation in media. The documentary showcases how Hollywood has misrepresented and stereotyped Indigenous peoples in the past.

People associate “American” culture as modern and don’t look at the different types of cultures that America has to offer. I’ve spoken with guests at Plimoth Patuxet during my internship, and it was shocking to see that people still hold that “old fashioned” notion of Native Americans despite clear as day, modern Native Americans standing right in front of them.

As mentioned earlier, Plimoth Patuxet is a museum in Massachusetts that is dedicated to bringing the early 17th century to life with living actors. The museum features a live cast of dedicated employees who dress up and use the correct dialect of the time when they play the part of European settlers at Plimoth colony in 1620. The museum also features a Wampanoag homesite where Indigenous peoples wear replica period clothing and tell visitors about what life was like for the Wampanoag tribe in the early 17th century.

Seeing Indigenous history as different from American history is nothing new. In Ned Blackhawk's article "Without Indigenous History, There Is No U.S History," Blackhawk speaks of this separation between histories.

It is time to build a new foundation for American history. Its old paradigms have grown thin and worn. For so long, the field's exclusive focus on Europeans and their descendants has left us with more problems than answers. Generations of other imperialists, for example, preceded the Puritans, who we have been told governed a commonwealth in the "wilderness." Similarly, histories that celebrated pioneers upon western "frontiers" have remained incomplete without attention to broader tales of expansion and empire. If history provides the common soil for a nation's growth and a window into its future, it is time to reimagine U.S. history and to do so outside the tropes of discovery that have often bred exclusion and misunderstanding. To find answers to the challenges of our time—racial strife, climate crisis, and domestic and global inequities, among others—will require new concepts, approaches, and commitments. It is time to put down the interpretive tools of the previous century and take up new ones (Blackhawk, Para. 1).

Blackhawk speaks truth. America's self-image has been focused on an identity founded on European settler colonialism for far too long. America is filled with people from every ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious background. Everyone deserves to have their story told, not just those who are deemed important by the hegemonic majority. Blackhawk argues why Indigenous history should be taught and included in American history.

Indigenous absence has been a long tradition of American historical analysis. Many scholars are building a different view of the past. I am a part of a generation of historians whose collective works have reframed critical elements of the nation's past, particularly its earliest chapters. My new work thus draws upon an outpouring of scholarship that has made Indigenous history a growing field. The argument is simple: a full telling of American history must account for the dynamics of struggle, survival, and resurgence that frame America's Indigenous past. Focus upon Native American history must remain an essential practice of American historical inquiry. Existing paradigms of U.S. history remain incomplete without engaging with this history. It is now time to rediscover the American past. (Blackhawk. Para. 4).

Blackhawk ends his article with these paragraphs:

Native Americans have emerged in the last few decades from the shadows of historical neglect in their full complexity, living in varied societies, speaking

centuries-old Indigenous languages, and governing often vast territories. Many continue to live in the homes of their ancestors and tend gardens that pre-date European arrival, such as the 21 Pueblo Indian nations of Arizona and New Mexico who maintain North America's oldest continuously inhabited communities.

The rediscovery of American history that is underway continues to swell. Each year, new courses, publications, and partnerships between tribal communities and non-tribal institutions continue to shape the practices of researchers, teachers, tribal members, and students of all ages who yearn for more accurate, multi-racial histories. Tribal governments have grown in their size and capacities, providing the clearest examples in American politics of the retained, inherent sovereignty of Native nations. Some, like the Navajo Nation, govern hundreds of thousands of tribal citizens across millions of acres. Others employ thousands of Native and non-Native workers in their industries and economies. These nations reside within the borders of the United States where they maintain autonomy, sovereignty, and power and do so in concert with the federal government. (Blackhawk. Para. 12,13).

When she was a child, one of my friends was asked, “do you still live in teepees?” She responded, “Do you still live in covered wagons?” It is astounding that even in the 21st century, people haven't modernized their understanding of North American Indigenous peoples and cultures. Indigenous culture in modern times is complex and often focused on exploring issues of cultural sovereignty through cultural heritage work and often through art. There are so many remarkable Indigenous artists and filmmakers in today's world that Indigenous peoples shouldn't have to be viewed through an “old fashioned” lens anymore. YNP helped this process by introducing modern Indigenous artists over the last few years inside the park through residencies and individual events. Modern Indigenous artists such as Sean Chandler, Ben Pease, and DG House have participated in these events.

Hollywood has been more inclusive in recent times with Indigenous themes expressed in movies and television shows, such as the popular *Reservation Dogs* and *1923* (which features a Native American boarding school), and films such as *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, *Blood Quantum*,

Wind River, and the critically acclaimed film *Killers of the Flower Moon* demonstrate this advance.

Indigenous cultures being shown in modern films and television shows is challenging the harmful stereotypical roles of Native Americans. These new and groundbreaking filmmakers and writers can really show what modern Indigenous cultures are about and how incredible and real it can be.

It is my hope that tourists see these new Indigenous television shows and movies and it will pique their curiosity. Soon they will want to see the real Indigenous cultures for themselves and not just the classic American tourist spots. Perhaps this curiosity will even get the visitors researching for themselves and learning about Indigenous history. Mass media, especially television shows, movies, and social media, have a very powerful influence on its users.

One way of making sure Indigenous history gets remembered and truly recognized as a part of American culture is by having an Indigenous department or research center in YNP. YNP would be an amazing place to have an Indigenous department or center. This has the possibility of being very influential for other national parks if YNP made this a reality.

As mentioned earlier, YNP has allowed the third party company “Yellowstone Forever” to operate a tribal heritage center inside the park. Although this tribal heritage center is valuable, it would be a lot more if YNP itself would create an expanded tribal heritage center. YNP has minimal mentions in its literature and signage regarding Indigenous peoples and tribes in YNP before the park existed as an entity.

In the article “National Parks Should Teach Indigenous History,” Joe Mayall talks about just that. The opening paragraphs show how YNP doesn’t really mention Indigenous history.

I could see the park ranger's sigh in the air, a cloud of disappointment hanging in the chilly Yellowstone morning. My girlfriend and I had asked Kelly, the only ranger at the socially distanced information stand, where I could learn more about the Native Americans who originally inhabited the park.

"We really don't have any exhibits," Kelly said. "It's quite embarrassing." All the shivering guide could offer was directions to a geyser part of a local tribe's origin story and a small placard halfway across Wyoming. "Maybe there's a history book in the gift shop," she suggested.

Like many people who've adventured into U.S. national parks during the pandemic, we left the trip with fond memories and breathtaking pictures. But there was also a sour aftertaste in knowing Indigenous peoples had been entirely whitewashed out of the country's oldest national park.

Yellowstone had its busiest October ever last year with more than 360,00 visitors, a 110% increase from 2020. This newfound passion for the outdoors isn't hard to explain. For all of its faults, the United States is a breathtaking country. But if we're going to enjoy these sacred landscapes, we have a duty to tell their entire story, not just the parts we want to hear. (Mayall, para. 1,2,3,4)

Reading that a YNP employee is admitting that the park doesn't have any exhibits on Indigenous peoples who lived in YNP was an epiphanal moment of realization for me. A park employee admitted that fact, but the park itself has not admitted to it. I understand that a press statement is a big deal and that backlash is always possible. This issue of lack of Indigenous representation is slowly coming to light, and one day YNP will have to answer that one difficult question, "Why don't you represent Indigenous peoples more?"

Mayall goes on to discuss the Nez Perce run in 1877 and how YNP barely mentions this event. Mayall also speaks on how history books tend to minimally mention Indigenous history and how the U.S tends to whitewash history:

In 1877, the Nez Perce tribe fled the U.S. Army on a trail through Yellowstone. The group was scared and starved, and eventually captured close to the Canadian border. Witnesses describe their capture as a "battle," but as we know, slaughter is a better word for what happened when the cavalry encountered Natives. What few survivors remained were sentenced to a life of hardship and poverty on an Oklahoma reservation, where their descendants still struggle today.

Yet this story isn't told to the thousands who frequent Yellowstone to learn the park's history. A look at the National Parks Service website illustrates the whitewashing. Of course, this problem extends beyond national parks; history textbooks, for example, often spend only a chapter or two discussing America's thousands of years of pre-colonial history. (Mayall. Para. 5,6)

Mayall's ending paragraphs discuss Indigenous peoples' hardships throughout the years and how national parks should do more to teach Indigenous history:

Today, Indigenous people are subjected to rampant systemic racism. Their schools are underfunded, their medical care is inadequate and reservation unemployment is nearly double the national average.

The United States owes much more to the Indigenous peoples whose land it stole and built upon. And while refusing to be silent about historical misdeeds isn't enough, education through the National Parks is a good first step. (Mayall, para. 11, 12)

YNP must appoint someone who deeply cares about Indigenous history and wants to get it right, someone who isn't motivated by visitor numbers or profit for the park. This hire should be someone who wants to preserve and share with the visitor public the Indigenous history and the oral stories of the tribes that occupied and traveled through Yellowstone throughout the centuries.

Another issue I think that YNP has is that by having this department or center that only tells Indigenous history, YNP would be acknowledging that they have been hiding or neglecting to fully mention Indigenous history on purpose for over a century and a half, thus hiding culture, stories, and traditions from the millions of tourists who visit every year. Hiding this history facilitates not having to acknowledge that YNP was a piece of land that was taken from Indigenous people by means of violence and forced removal.

YNP should not be afraid to admit wrongdoing. There is a possibility of backlash and a drop in visitor numbers, but that seems unlikely. YNP is the first national park in the United States, it's open to this day, and will remain a tourist destination to millions.

Admitting wrongdoing and introducing Indigenous history to the park could also create more visitors and a rise in visitation numbers. I believe the first step in proceeding with an Indigenous reconciliation process would be a public apology and a confession of wrongdoing. This is easier said than done. YNP has already started to slowly introduce Indigenous history over the last couple years. One question that could be asked is why now? Why not introduce Indigenous history earlier?

I speculate that the influence of Indigenous films, television shows and actors gracing the screen with their presence more and more with each passing day has spurred a spike in interest in representing Indigenous history. Indigenous history and culture are being portrayed more and more. People are eager to see it. The movie *Killers of the Flower Moon* received sensational reviews. Mass media focuses on what is currently popular. I feel that Indigenous representation in mass media is currently popular and is on the rise.

The film *Killers of the Flower Moon* explored difficult Osage history, but despite this, the film was immensely popular. This success creates an opportunity for YNP to explore its own difficult history and admit the forced removal of Indigenous people and acknowledge they downplayed and ignored Indigenous history over the last 150 years.

I believe the first step in issues being resolved is admitting that mistakes were made and wrongdoing has occurred. It must be heartfelt and sincere, not just "I'm sorry and whatever, here's an Indigenous building and department."

YNP needs to commit to a deep internal review and change when it comes to Indigenous history, perhaps some sort of reconciliation process between YNP and the Indigenous tribes who used the lands before the park was established. YNP doing more to introduce Indigenous history to tourists and visitors could easily bring Indigenous history into the spotlight.

Culture is something that is meant to be shared and experienced, not denied or neglected. Culture in the United States should include everyone's culture, not just one basic stereotypical one. The media has harmed and wrongfully portrayed Indigenous cultures but is slowly starting to accept and truly show Indigenous culture through movies and television shows. The self-reflection and change must be sincere and honest. It must truly be a heartfelt change and not because they feel forced. Perhaps it's time to do some soul searching and try something new for the good of the history of national parks and its visitors.

YNP has some decisions to make. It is my hope that YNP will make the decision to include more representation of Indigenous culture and history in the future.

A Vision for the Future

YNP, as stated earlier, has started to move towards a future with more Indigenous representation. Like any transition, there is always room for improvement and additions. There are some additions that YNP could do, on top of Mountain Time Arts and Yellowstone Forever, that would be beneficial to both the park and Indigenous representation.

One important part of culture is food, and one of the main meat sources out in the western states like Montana, Colorado and the Dakotas is bison. YNP has kept tabs on the bison in the park to make sure the bison don't get or spread diseases such as brucellosis (Robbins, Para. 3). YNP could very well take some of the bison meat and serve it in the various restaurants in and

around YNP. With the bison meat, restaurants in and around YNP could promote Indigenous foods. Restaurants could serve three sisters (corn, beans, and squash) stew, bison steaks, Indian tacos with shredded bison, and more. This could get the visitors thinking about Indigenous history and culture and want to learn more.

Another addition could be Indigenous information markers along YNP roads. In Montana, there are many roadside pullover spots where Lewis and Clark once travelled while exploring the United States in the early 19th century. The pullover spots feature a large wooden plaque with information about Lewis and Clark as well as the specific spot.

YNP could easily set up Indigenous versions of that system. For instance, visitors could easily pull off the road and read from a large plaque and learn about a specific tribe that used the surrounding area before YNP existed. These plaques and sites could be scattered across various locations in YNP.

YNP could also reach out to Native tribes and use their websites or information from their tribal historic preservation officer to gain accurate information on specific tribes that used the area which can then be relayed to visitors. What's more accurate when it comes to specific tribes than the tribal website itself? Or reaching out to someone within the tribe?

Another addition could be an Indigenous-led park ranger position and center. The park rangers would be Indigenous and could give accurate and well researched information about the Indigenous tribes that once inhabited YNP. This is all they would do. They wouldn't be a part of the ordinary run-of-the-mill park ranger cadre but be part of an elite group of park rangers.

The rangers could be based out of the suggested Indigenous center. It would be beneficial for YNP to include some sort of Indigenous study center or archives and have books on

Indigenous peoples. It would be beneficial for YNP or guests to have the ability to conduct research at the center as well. Students from all over the world could come and use the Indigenous resource center to further their Indigenous studies. An example of this kind of center is the California Academy of Sciences Academy Library. This library is open both to researchers and the public.

As stated earlier, YNP has changed some online representation. The Thomas James article “Debunking the Myth, Fear of Yellowstone” on the National Park Service website corrects the historical representation when it comes to the myth that Indigenous peoples were scared of the lands that make up YNP:

One of the persistent myths about Native American attitudes regarding Yellowstone is that they were afraid of this place and avoided it. The stories passed to us by early Anglo explorers and park administrators report that the geysers, fumaroles, and other thermal features frightened the native peoples. It is clear this myth is false based on the more than 1,900 archeological sites so far identified within park boundaries and the numerous accounts from many different tribes of how they interacted with and revered this place. This misconception was perpetuated by early park administrators to further the objectives of promoting the park as a tourist destination, off-limits to its original inhabitants. The myth that the Native Americans of the area were superstitious and scared of being near the “evil spirits” of the geysers was a convenient one. As Euro-Americans began removing native peoples from this landscape, this falsehood was an often repeated rationalization. (James, Para. 1)

Online recanting of this myth is different from in person recanting of the myth. In 2023, a park employee told me face to face that no one lived in the park before and after its opening in 1872. There needs to be a significant effort to update YNP staff and employees regarding accurate portrayal of Indigenous culture and use of the landscape. Despite accurate information available online regarding Indigenous history with the YNP, in my experience, there is a disconnect between information online and at least two interpretive rangers.

YNP has a public responsibility to provide accurate and unbiased historical information to all guests and YNP employees. These are a few examples that YNP should take into serious consideration and try to manifest for the future. These examples would really bring YNP into an Indigenous world with these examples. If done correctly, YNP could easily gain a solid reputation when it comes to Indigenous representation. Ultimately, the presentation of history should be unbiased and without criticism of Indigenous people. People have the right to know about the Indigenous peoples who have lived in the Americas for thousands of years.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are national parks that have amazing Indigenous representation and other parks that do not. A pair of parks that do an exceptional job are Glacier National Park and Mesa Verde National Park. These two national parks have exemplary Indigenous representation. Despite YNP having issues in the past, the park is haltingly moving closer towards full Indigenous representation.

YNP is slowly working on ways to include Indigenous peoples to the park's history. This includes allowing Mountain Time Arts to set up teepees and inviting Indigenous artists to set up their pieces and present live performances. Another way YNP is slowly introducing Indigenous representation is by having Yellowstone Forever operate a building within the park itself.

These steps that YNP is taking towards Indigenous representation are very welcome. For over a century, YNP perpetuated misrepresentations regarding Indigenous peoples occupancy of YNP as well as how Indigenous peoples feared the land that makes up the park. Only in recent times has YNP started to reverse their false history.

When it comes to Indigenous history in the park, YNP has over the years kept the mention of Indigenous history to a minimum. The park briefly discusses Indigenous history but focuses more on the hydrothermal features and the local flora and fauna of YNP. YNP is changing for the better, but some instances still slip up from time to time, such as last year when a park employee told me that "no one lived there."

Fortune favors the bold. YNP has started to shift away from its traditional education regarding the park but to introduce new and exciting concepts of where the park and its exhibits

could go. The possibility of people embracing new and exciting additions to the park could be a very real outcome. Recently, people have been more eager to learn about Indigenous history. I learned this when I got non-stop Indigenous related questions when I was in YNP setting up for Mountain Time Arts immersive cultural and art exhibition showcasing regional tribes in 2023.

Societies and social norms are always changing. We have seen Hollywood become more inclusive of Indigenous-led shows, writers, and actors. YNP must adapt to a changing society or face being left in an old-fashioned world. YNP has heeded the call and has started introducing Indigenous culture and history over the last few years, by their own means or by outside companies such as Yellowstone Forever and Mountain Time Arts.

Any change when it comes to introducing Indigenous history is good change. YNP has taken baby steps in introducing Indigenous history. Baby steps beat no steps. It is my hope that YNP will soon start creating and introducing more Indigenous led projects and exhibits in the future.

Perhaps one day, YNP can rival national parks such as Mesa Verde National Park and Glacier National Park when it comes to Indigenous representation. It is my hope that one day, national parks across the country will see what Glacier and Mesa Verde National Park are doing and start following suit. It's the least the parks can do. Indigenous people have been in North, Central and South America for tens of thousands of years. Instead of erasing and neglecting Indigenous history, why not embrace it?

Cultures are incredibly fascinating and provide deep insight into that region and peoples of that particular part of the world. People have traveled in the past and continue to travel today

to experience different cultures, customs, and regions. Indigenous people were known in the past for traveling and following the bison herds.

Minimal mentions or falsifying the history of Indigenous people's presence in YNP has been recorded over the years since YNP first opened in 1872. YNP is attempting to move forward and into a future where Indigenous representation is welcome and proudly displayed for all guests to see and experience.

YNP is a place where people can experience the unfiltered and raw beauty of the Rocky Mountains. Visitors can see the massiveness of a bison, herds of elk or the dangerous beauty of a grizzly bear. Or maybe one could view the amazing colors of the geysers that encompass the park or see the world famous Old Faithful Geyser, or perhaps a hike to stretch the legs and take in the Rocky Mountain air.

YNP is one of the most beautiful places in the world and should be experienced to the fullest by those who venture there. Everyone has the right to experience YNP as well as learn the history. History should never be neglected, ignored, or downplayed.

Guests who visit YNP should not have to worry or come to the realization that YNP has been, over the years, glossing over Indigenous history. No guest should hear from a park ranger that YNP doesn't have any Indigenous exhibits. YNP's baby steps when it comes to Indigenous history are a sign that the future of the park is changing for the better. The history of YNP should never be dulled or toned down. No one deserves to be taught false facts. Learn everything you can. If a guest didn't learn enough, then it's a discredit to the park.

YNP's history must include Indigenous history, even though it's a government-funded park and the government previously tried to mislead visitors about Indigenous presence in YNP.

YNP is still moving slowly towards being open with Indigenous history. I, for one, cannot wait to see what YNP has next for Indigenous representation.

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