

PLACERVILLE HISTORY

Understanding the
racism
fundamental in
building this
country and
Placerville CA, AKA
Old Hangtown



CATALYST
PROJECT

1492



Europeans arrive in the Americas. Millions of indigenous people die throughout the hemisphere due to genocide, war, slavery and diseases carried by Europeans. Many continue to resist european colonization today.

1500s

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

During the years of the Transatlantic slave trade, between 10 million and 12 million Africans were kidnapped and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas.

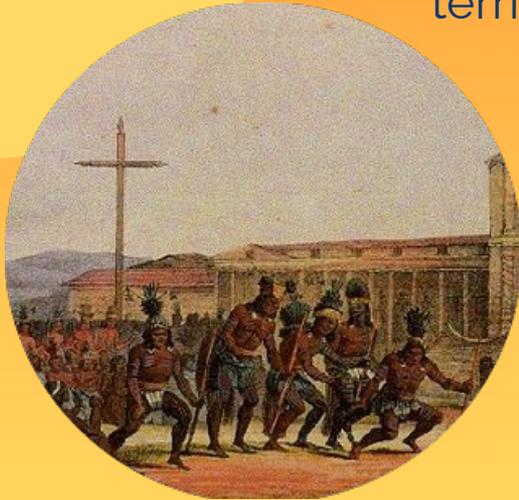
Estimates are that between 1 to 2 million people died just during the Middle Passage (the stage in which millions of Africans were forcibly transported to the New World). Millions more died in Africa after capture before they were transported, and untold numbers died during enslavement in the U.S..

1542

At the time of the first European contact, Native American tribes included the Chumash, Nisenan, Maidu, Miwok, Modoc, Mohave, Ohlone, Pomo, Serrano, Shasta, Tataviam, Tongva, Wintu, Yurok and Yokut. Historians believe that California was once the most densely and diversely populated area for Native Americans in U.S. territory. Spain colonized and exerted control of

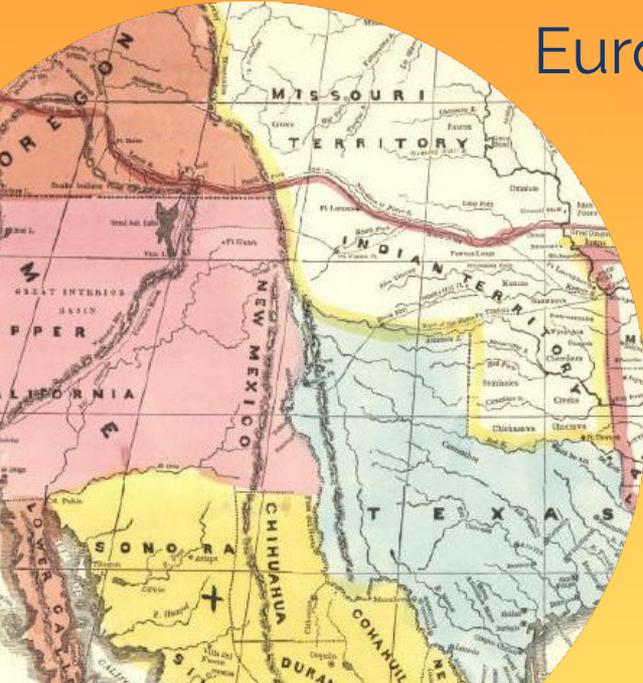
California through the mission system, where indigenous people were enslaved, killed, raped, and forcibly converted to Catholicism. No mission escaped uprising from imprisoned communities or guerrilla attacks by escapees.

Without this resistance, there would be no descendants of the California Native peoples in this area.



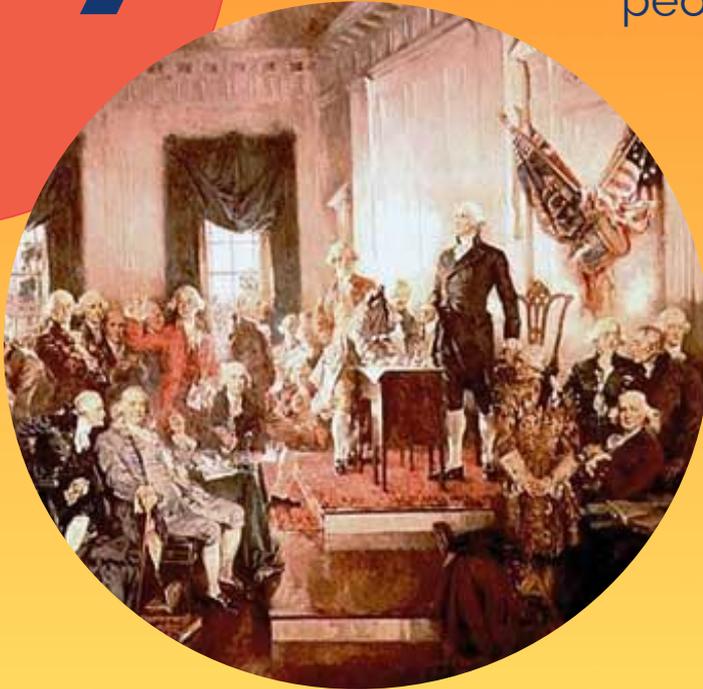
Spanish colonization of "Alta California" began when the Presidio at San Diego, the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast, was established in 1769

1769



1787

The Constitution is signed, defining African-American males as $\frac{3}{5}$ of a man and not mentioning Indigenous peoples at all.



The Constitution leaves the issue of voting rights up to the states and most limit the vote to those white men who own a certain amount of property, with the result that in the first presidential election in 1789, just 6% of the population is eligible to vote.

1820s

U.S. and Mexico Relations

From the 1820s-1840s, the Mexican & US governments encouraged white people to settle indigenous land in the Oregon Territories and Northern Mexico. This culminated in US military invasion and war, until the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in which Mexico ceded its Northern territories to the US. The Navajos, Apaches, and Utes, who had resisted all colonization efforts by the Spanish and Mexican, authorities continued to resist the new colonial regime.

U.S.A

California

Placerville

1848

Gold is found in Coloma in 1848, sparking the gold rush. The town now known as Placerville was established as "Old Dry Diggins," a gold mining camp on Hangtown Creek



Starting in 1848, with protection of the US Army, 300,000 gold seekers brought enslavement, death, torture, rape, starvation and disease to the Indigenous peoples of Northern California, exterminating more than 100,000 Native people in 25 years, the worst slaughter of Native Americans in US history.

"A war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian race becomes extinct." --California Governor Peter H. Burnett, 1851

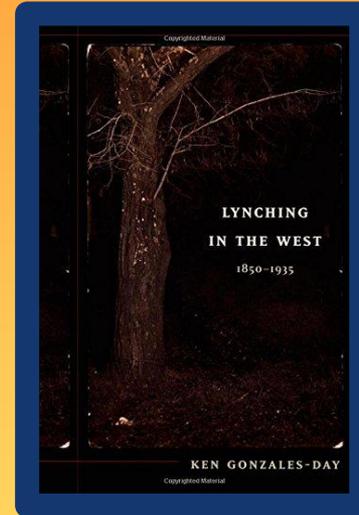
California's first state constitution is written. It states, "the right of a trial by jury shall be secured to all, and remain inviolate forever"

1849

3 men accused of robbery are killed by hanging in **Placerville**, beginning a series of hangings that would lead to the town, originally known as "Old Dry Diggins" becoming known as "Hangtown." Some historical accounts refer to the three men as "foreigners."

1850s through 1935

In this 85 year period, at least 350 racially motivated lynchings occurred in **California** (as shown by the research of Ken Gonzales-Day). The majority were perpetrated against Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans; more Latinos were lynched in California than any other race or ethnicity.



1850s through 1870s

Millions of dollars worth of gold
extracted from the Placerville area



1850

The Fugitive Slave Act: The Fugitive Slave Act forced the authorities in states that had banned slavery to return escaped enslaved Black people to their enslavers. This created legal and monetary incentives for white people to turn in or aid in the capture of Black people and increased the monetary value of enslaved people, while making it riskier for white abolitionists to assist escaped enslaved people. It also led to the capture and enslavement of many free Blacks.

1850

El Dorado Indian War: Miners and settlers murdered a group of Indigenous people to provoke a retaliation, which was then used to justify ongoing murder, violence, and displacement of local indigenous people. Through the winter and spring of 1851, the militia and natives engaged in numerous skirmishes. The militia continued the incendiary campaign at every rancheria they came upon—leaving countless natives homeless. In one 24-hour period, it was reported that the militia destroyed four villages along the South Fork of the American River.

1853

California began confining the remaining Native population on harsh military reservations.



1854



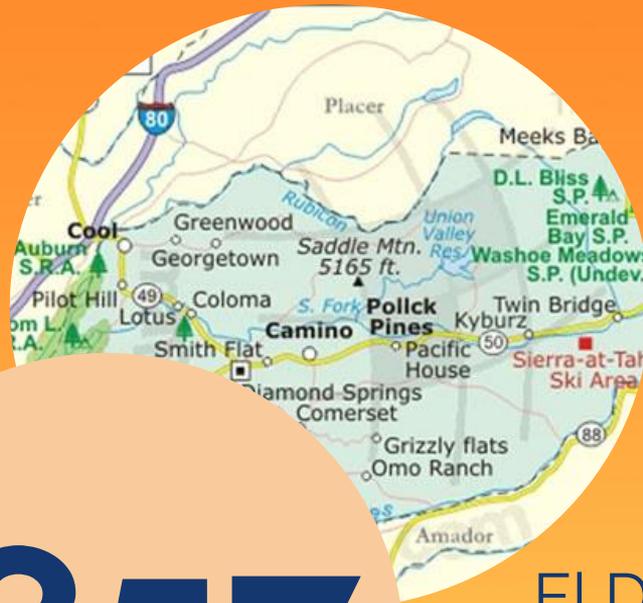
In *The People v. Hall*, the California Supreme Court reversed the conviction of a white man for murder, stating that the statements of key Chinese witnesses are inadmissible because “no Black or mulatto person, or Indian, shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against a white man.” The Chief Justice noted that if allowed to testify, the Chinese, an “inferior” race, would then be eligible for citizenship, voting, jury duty, which would present a great “danger.”

1854



“Hangtown” is
renamed
Placerville.

1857



El Dorado County
seat is moved to
Placerville

1859

Silver was discovered in Nevada.
Suddenly, the flow of
fortune-seekers
turned eastward from California.

Many of the hopeful miners passed
through Placerville on their way to the Comstock
strikes in Nevada. Much of the silver traveled back
west over the mountains and through Placerville on
its way to Sacramento or San Francisco.

1861 through 1865

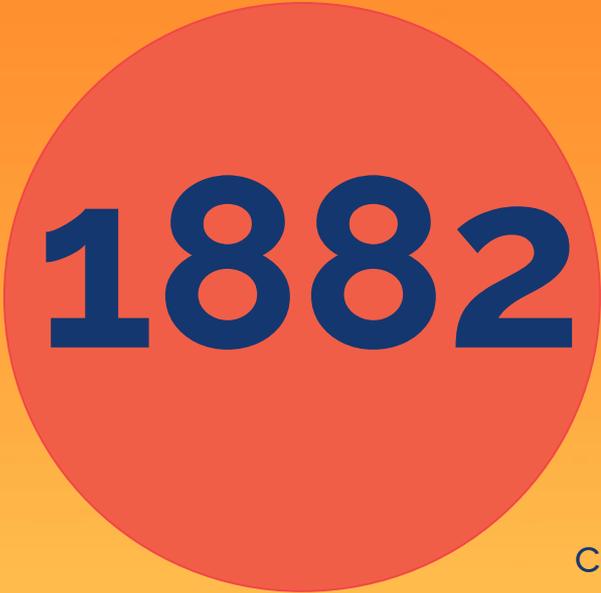
The American Civil War: Over 150,000 formerly enslaved Africans fought to end slavery and over 500,000 fled their plantations for Union lines. Their participation was decisive in the Union/North's victory.



Homestead Act of 1862: 1.5 million homesteads, comprising nearly a half-million square miles, were taken from Indigenous collective estates, privatized, and granted to white settlers. Most was passed to large operators or land speculators. Land as a commodity, 'real estate,' remained the basis of the US economy and capital accumulation.

1862

Pacific Railroad Act of 1862: the US government "provided private companies with nearly two hundred million acres of Indigenous Land" to build a transcontinental railroad to facilitate the growth of capitalism.



1882

The first significant law restricting immigration to the U.S. was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which banned Chinese workers from coming to the US, and prevented Chinese nationals already here from ever becoming citizens. The law sparked over 150 racist mob attacks on Chinese people, including lynchings. The Act remained law for 60 years.

1900s and beyond

President Roosevelt signs an executive order requiring Japanese Americans living within 20 miles of the Pacific coast, to relocate to 10 internment camps; over 112,000 Japanese Americans are forcibly placed in military internment camps during WWII, their homes and property seized and sold to white Americans at reduced costs.



1942



1947

The G.I. Bill is passed and subsidizes employment, suburban home loans, and college education opportunities for veterans returning from WWII, but refuses to challenge the discriminatory policies embedded in the practices of employers, bank lenders, and college institutions. As a result, almost all of the benefits of the bill go to white veterans and their families. Only 0.15% of the home loans went to veterans who weren't white.

Suburban sprawl and white-flight to the suburbs became popular as certain communities were officially red-lined and marked as undesirable, starving inner cities of essential tax dollars used for schools, roads, parks, and other public necessities.

1954

The Supreme Court rules in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separate means unequal and mandates desegregation of public schools. In southern schools, thousands of Black teachers and principals are fired as School Boards claim that white parents will not allow their children to be taught by Black teachers. As a result, thousands of white men and women get jobs in the newly integrated schools, while Black teachers and administrators, often the backbone of the African-American community, are shut out.



1980s Expanding The War on Drugs

Building on President Nixon's "War on Drugs," the Reagan Administration expands this "war," dramatically increasing the number of people behind bars for nonviolent drug offenses. In the late 80s, Congress passes draconian penalties that rapidly increase the prison population. The U.S. currently spends more than \$51 billion on the war on drugs and we incarcerate 1 in every 99 adults, the highest incarceration rate in the world.

The Great Recession hits and yet doesn't hit everyone equally. As a result of the subprime mortgage lending crisis, the total loss of wealth for people of color was close to \$200 billion over eight years, perhaps the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in U.S. History.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (aka the Stimulus): \$840 billion for schools, municipalities, infrastructure development, energy, etc. Another race neutral act that has disproportionately benefited white people because of who is able to meet qualifying criteria.

Between 2005 and 2009 black household median net worth fell 53% while white household median net worth fell 16%.



2008



2012

According to census data, white Americans now have 22 times more wealth than blacks. Even at the same income level, whites have, on average, two to three times as much wealth. Whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group. Black and Latino mortgage applicants are 60% more likely than whites to be turned down for loans, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood characteristics.