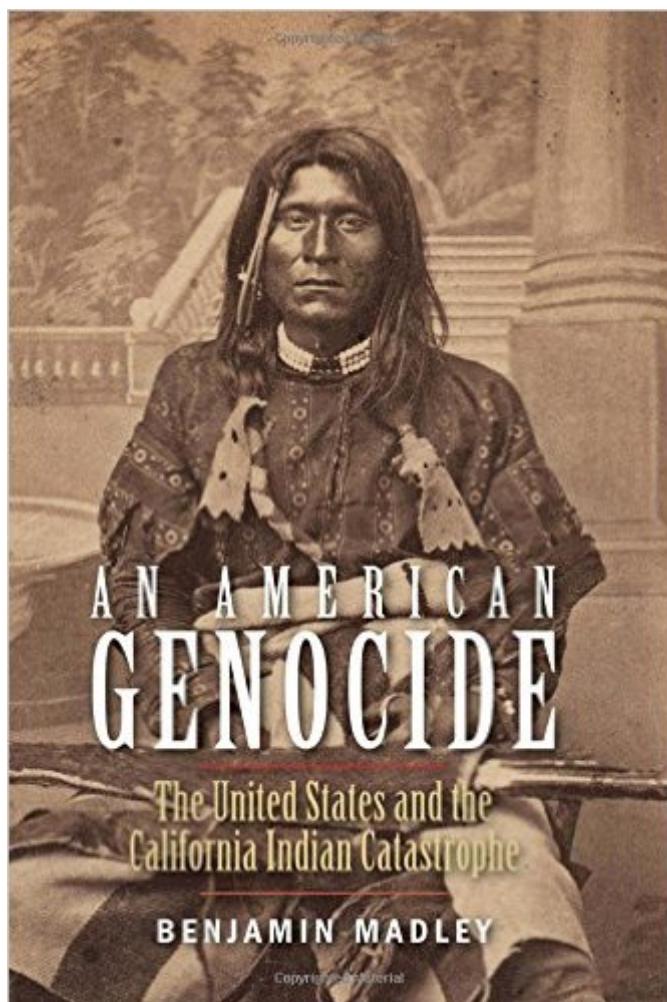


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An American Genocide: The United States And The California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873 (The Lamar Series In Western History)



Synopsis

The first full account of the government-sanctioned genocide of California Indians under United States rule Between 1846 and 1873, California's Indian population plunged from perhaps 150,000 to 30,000. Benjamin Madley is the first historian to uncover the full extent of the slaughter, the involvement of state and federal officials, the taxpayer dollars that supported the violence, indigenous resistance, who did the killing, and why the killings ended. This deeply researched book is a comprehensive and chilling history of an American genocide. Madley describes pre-contact California and precursors to the genocide before explaining how the Gold Rush stirred vigilante violence against California Indians. He narrates the rise of a state-sanctioned killing machine and the broad societal, judicial, and political support for genocide. Many participated: vigilantes, volunteer state militiamen, U.S. Army soldiers, U.S. congressmen, California governors, and others. The state and federal governments spent at least \$1,700,000 on campaigns against California Indians. Besides evaluating government officials' culpability, Madley considers why the slaughter constituted genocide and how other possible genocides within and beyond the Americas might be investigated using the methods presented in this groundbreaking book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the same reasons the country of Turkey refuses to admit their Armenian Genocide, the US may never admit to genocide within its borders. The book specifically deals with California. People have

a general historic notion of the Gold Rush, "49ers", Missions, and a wild San Francisco, but little has been said and understood about the horrific treatment given to the indigenous populations, first by the Spanish and later the Americans. There were at times paid bounties for Indian scalps and more. It's a real eyeopener. I hope that many will read this quite accessible, well referenced book and understand the rest of the California state story. I live in a beautiful California forest interface area that was once Ohlone Indian territory. I love to go out in the brush to pick wild blackberries and love to see the terrain in the moonlight. It has dawned on me it wasn't all that long ago that Ohlone Indians enjoyed the area just the same way I do now until they were violently run off. I don't have any plans to give the property back, but the troubling thought is often in the back of my mind. When I pick the blackberries, I'm doing something an Indian once did in exactly the same spot.

Ben Madley's book is an important one and highlights a period not often discussed in California history. He highlights key ways that the state of California sponsored violence, assault, and murder on indigenous/first peoples of California. It is a heavy read, but an important one!

This book provides definitive proof of the genocide of California Indians by California militia, vigilantes and the US Army. Professor Madley provides details in chronological order for the genocide from 1846 - 1873. This is one of a few books that actually tells the truth about how white people treated California Indians. Please also read Murder State by Lindsay, Freedom's Frontier by Smith and Strangers in a Stolen Land by Carrico to learn more about the history of white racism against California Indians. You can also read Estanislao - Warrior, Man of God to learn the truth about how California Indians were treated in the Missions. It turns out that many of the white people we venerate as historical figures in California were terrible to the Indians.

Seems like an important work. I am not a historian and don't know to what extent others have put together such information but the story of California's annihilation of Native Americans is somewhat eye/opening to me. Profoundly affecting, distressing to read, but important to know. As the author has noted our history belies the national myth of American exceptionalism. We built this nation on racism genocide and war (we can now feel those tendencies echoing in the nativist embrace of Donald Trump). I do think Dr Madley would have benefitted from a better editor. I see substantial redundancy and repetition. Writing could be much tighter.

It is not cool that the author does not cite a book covering nearly the same subject with an almost

identical title published in 2012, Brendan Lindsay's *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*. It is especially galling since this book is advertised as by the "first historian" to cover this topic. It is hard to believe that Prof. Madley would not have seen or heard of Prof. Lindsay's book, and even if he hadn't it doesn't shine a bright light on his expertise. I think it is a fine book and the more coverage of the topic the better, but these shenanigans leave a bad taste.

Very enlightening.

This is a subject I never heard about in school and I am history major and returned from seeing a museum exhibit in Oakland, CA on this very subject just before I bought the book. I gave it 3 stars for one simple reason. Too much emphasis is put on the continual and repetitive use of the word genocide and the "drumbeat" of the how/why/when it occurred becomes highly monotonous by the end of the book. It is a tragedy, it needs discussed and explored, but, it doesn't need to become a drone which is what it did for me by the time I finished the book. I think the author made his point early on that what happened did indeed meet the accepted definition of a genocide. The culpability of the US government and the military is also an unfortunate chapter in this recounting of our history and also needs brought to the forefront and that was more interesting to me. The book speaks of a subject needing to be spoken about but the editor(s) should have insisted the author consider a different approach to getting his point across; that I feel soured the book by the end at least for me.

Hella long

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