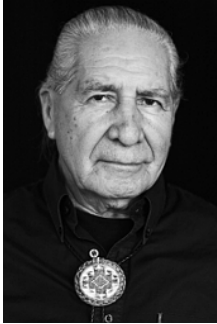


Losing Earth? Realign with Original Free Peoples' Great Law and Find Her Again

by David T. Ratcliffe
rat haus reality press
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The law prevails, what we call the Great Law, the common law, the natural law. The law says if you poison your water, you'll die. The law says that if you poison the air, you'll suffer. The law says if you degrade where you live, you'll suffer. The law says all of this. If you don't learn that then you can only suffer. There's no discussion with this law. (1991)

We always said that we have been told and understand that we're relatives. Where our white brother will talk about water and trees and animals and fish as resources we talk about them as relatives. That's a whole different perspective. If you think that they're relatives and you understand that then you're going to treat them differently. (2006)

—Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper, Chief, Onondaga

Indigenous peoples offer possibilities for life after empire, possibilities that neither erase the crimes of colonialism nor require the disappearance of the original peoples colonized under the guise of including them as individuals.

—Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014



This work is about the liberation of our nations and peoples from the behavioral patterns and language system of domination. It is about restoration and healing for our nations and peoples based on our love of and spiritual connection to the land, our languages, our sacred and ceremonial places, and our original free and independent existence as nations extending back before a Western notion of time.

—Steven Newcomb, 2018

We are a part of the memories of evolution	And these memories
These memories carry knowledge	Are trying to remind us
These memories carry our identity	Human beings, human beings
Beneath race, gender, class, age	It's time to rise up
Beneath citizen, business, state, religion	Remember who we are
We are human beings	—John Trudell, 2001



A fundamental blindspot in U.S. society revolves around the question: *Where did all this land we call the United States come from?* European settlers began colonizing—read invading—North America in the early 17th century. This process of settler colonialism was and is based on a denial of the humanity of the Original Free Nations, Peoples and Communities that existed and developed their own multitudinous cultures and societal interrelations for millennia prior to the arrival of white people from across the Atlantic. In "[Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.](#)" Australian anthropologist and ethnographer [Patrick Wolfe](#) wrote "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.... Indigenous North Americans were not killed, driven away, romanticized, assimilated, fenced in, bred White, and otherwise eliminated as the original owners of the land but as *Indians.*" (p.388) The ongoing legacy of denial of how what is today called the United States came to be and how that has played out over 400-plus years into the 21st century postpones Life -nurturing and -respecting timelines from manifesting. Extraordinary possibilities exist for life after empire, provided we as the inheritors of the Empire Domination Model of

Christianity are willing to redeem the consequences of the past evermore becoming present. Genocide, dispossession, colonization, forms the core of U.S. history, the very source of the country's existence. Will it be the future as well? The choice is ours. An analysis of the steadfast denial of the actual foundations and development of U.S. society and culture is explored here with regard to the catastrophic, accelerating changes to Earth's climate reaching critical mass in recent decades. The way forward requires reestablishing adherence to the Great Law, of reawakening to the spiritual reality of Earth, of Life itself, and conducting ceremonies of Thanksgiving throughout the seasons for the Life-giving energies Mother Earth bestows upon all of Creation.

Nathaniel Rich's August 1 essay in *New York Times Magazine*, "[Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change](#)" is presented as "a work of history, addressing the 10-year period from 1979 to 1989: the decisive decade when humankind first came to a broad understanding of the causes and dangers of climate change." Mr. Rich's worldview—and that of the New York Times Corporation—severely limits his/its awareness of what is expressed. The following from the Epilogue clearly distills the frame-of-reference the author dwells within:

These theories share a common principle: that **human beings**, whether in global organizations, democracies, industries, political parties or as individuals, **are incapable of sacrificing present convenience to forestall a penalty imposed on future generations**. When I asked John Sununu about his part in this history — whether he considered himself personally responsible for killing the best chance at an effective global-warming treaty — his response echoed Meyer-Abich. "It couldn't have happened," he told me, "because, frankly, **the leaders in the world** at that time were at a stage where they were all looking how to seem like they **were supporting the policy without having to make hard commitments that would cost their nations serious resources**." He added, "Frankly, that's about where we are today."

If human beings really were able to take the long view — to consider seriously the fate of civilization decades or centuries after our deaths — we would be forced to grapple with the transience of all we know and love in the great sweep of time. So we have trained ourselves, whether culturally or evolutionarily, to obsess over the present, worry about the medium term and cast the long term out of our minds, as we might spit out a poison.

Mr. Rich's fragmented and ultimately lethal perspective ignores the wealth of intelligence and wisdom humanity has possessed since time immemorial to address this catastrophic development. His use of the term "democracies" more accurately should be labeled for what it is: capitalism, a system based on financial profit as the supreme value overriding every other purpose in life. Further, implying John Sununu (Bush I's [chief of staff](#)) is an authority on what constitutes "leaders in the world" reveals inherent bias excluding the full measure of the human project's chiefs.

A potent complement of "human beings" are practiced throughout all of human history in taking "the long view". Indigenous Peoples, who have struggled to maintain and preserve the Sacred Instructions of respect and love for Mother Earth through the eons, understand the vital necessity of ceremonies of Thanksgiving to serve the needs of the Sacred Web of Life in Universe in order to keep the balance. As John Trudell [expressed with clarity and coherence](#): life is about responsibility; not the abstraction of freedom, but responsibility.

Employing the term “human beings” to indicate he is including all of humanity, Mr. Rich strangely omits *the* most significant source and wealth of knowledge and wisdom human beings have accrued and practiced to address our current litany of existential threats including the climate crisis. This abundance of human understanding and awareness providing guidance and solutions to what we are dealing with is not new. Mr. Rich mentions in passing the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Faithkeeper and Onondaga Chief, Oren Lyons spoke from the perspective of Original Free Peoples [on June 9 at Rio:](#)



PHOTO: [ROGER LABORDE](#)

**Oren Lyons & Onondaga
Tadadaho Leon Shenandoah at
Rio in June 1992.**

As we go through the world and we observe life, the western civilization of looking at life as resources, and as long as they use that term for life as resources you’re never going to gain anything. When you recognize life for what it is: a tree as a spirit, a tree as a living being, a tree as a grandfather that we call; when you recognize that there is a reason for all of these beings and that these beings are interlocked, that we depend on one another; if we can change the definitions, if we can have people speak about life for what it is—as life with equal value, as life is necessary for survival and not as commerce and not as resources then we may have a chance. But as long as we look at forests as resources, as long as we look at these things as board-feet of lumber or we look at the fish runs as resources for people, we’re going to continue to use them without restraint and without guidance.

That’s why it is important for the small voice of Indigenous people at this point to come forward. Because I must say in our own defense that we have never given up that position. And I must say that during all the time of this glorious development process that took us through the Victorian era, that came with the Monroe Doctrine, that came with the great wars of one, two, and now maybe three, that during all of that development of human as they say, you lost the mystery, you lost the elegance, you lost the spirituality of the reality of the Earth and of life itself. And when you lost that you lost direction.

The only ones who have hung onto that over these periods of time have been the Indigenous people wherever they were. They did hang on to that. I commend them for that. I would not be here if my grandfather and my grandmother did not say the same thing. If I wasn’t told by them and I didn’t believe them I would not be speaking to you here. It’s to their credit that I stand here. And it’s to my obligation and responsibility to see that when I’m gone somebody else is going to be standing there speaking and saying the same thing. So we must inspire the young people and we must defend and protect them. We must not let them be homeless and in the streets and being so persecuted.

In his December 1992 [Opening Speech for “The Year of the Indigenous Peoples”](#), the Onondaga Chief stressed the continuity and Power of Good Minds that has guided [the Haudenosaunee](#) since the time of [The Peacemaker & the Tadadaho](#):

This proclamation brings home inspiration and renewed dedication to our quest for self-determination, justice, freedom and peace in our Homelands and our Territories. Indeed, the quest is a renewal of what we enjoyed before the coming of our White Brothers from across the sea. We lived contentedly under the Gai Eneshah Go’ Nah, The Great Law of Peace. We were instructed to

create societies based on the principles of Peace, Equity, Justice, and the Power of Good Minds. Our societies are based upon great democratic principles of the authority of the people and equal responsibilities for the men and the women. This was a great way of life across this Great Turtle Island and freedom with respect was everywhere. Our leaders were instructed to be men of vision and to make every decision on behalf of the seventh generation to come; to have compassion and love for those generations yet unborn. We were instructed to give thanks for All That Sustains Us. Thus, we created great ceremonies of Thanksgiving for the life-giving forces of the Natural World, as long as we carried out our ceremonies, life would continue. We were told that ‘The Seed is the Law.’ Indeed, it is The Law of Life. It is The Law of Regeneration. Within the seed is the mysterious force of life and creation. Our mothers nurture and guard that seed and we respect and love them for that. Just as we love I hi do’ hah, our Mother Earth, for the same spiritual work and mystery.

Societies based on making “every decision on behalf of the seventh generation to come” were and continue to be imbued with vital numinous awareness that all Life is sacred and that the needs of the future inform all choices and decisions made in the present. The final portion of the Introduction to *A Basic Call to Consciousness, The Hau de no sau nee Address to the Western World* (1977) speaks to the long view and divine wisdom Original Free Peoples continue to follow and practice:

The papers which follow are position papers which were presented by the Hau de no sau nee to the Non-governmental Organizations of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in September, 1977. The Non-governmental Organizations had called for papers which describe the conditions of oppression suffered by Native people under three subject headings, with supportive oral statements to be given to the commissions. The Hau de no sau nee, the traditional Six nations council at Onondaga, sent forth three papers which constitute an abbreviated analysis of Western history, and which call for a consciousness of the Sacred Web of Life in the Universe.

It is a call which can be expected to be both ignored and misunderstood for some period of time. But the position papers themselves are absolutely unique—they constitute a political statement, presented to a representative world body, pointing to the destruction of the Natural World and the Natural World peoples as the clearest indicator that human beings are in trouble on this planet. It is a call to a basic consciousness which has ancient roots and ultra-modern, even futuristic, manifestations.

It is a statement which points to the fact that humans are abusing one another, that they are abusing the planet they live on, that they are even abusing themselves. It is a message, certainly the first ever delivered to a world body, which identifies the process of that abuse as Western Civilization—as a whole way of life—and which acknowledges the immense complexity which that statement implies.

What is presented here is nothing less audacious than a cosmogony of the Industrialized World presented by the most politically powerful and independent non-Western political body surviving in

basic call to consciousness



North America. It is, in a way, the modern world through Pleistocene eyes.

Scholars and casual readers alike should question the significance, in the age of the Neutron bomb, Watergate, and nuclear energy plant proliferation, of a statement by a North American Indian people. But there is probably some argument to be made for the appropriateness of such a statement at this time. Most of the world's professed traditions are fairly recent in origin. Mohammedanism is perhaps 1500 years old, Christianity claims a 2000-year history, Judaism is perhaps 2000 years older than Christianity.

But the Native people can probably lay claim to a tradition which reaches back to at least the end of the Pleistocene, and which, in all probability, goes back much further than that.

There is some evidence that humanoid creatures have been present on the Earth for at least two million years, and that humans who looked very much like us were in evidence in the Northern Hemisphere at least as long as the second interglacial period. People who are familiar with the Hau de no sau nee beliefs will recognize that modern scientific evidence shows that the Native customs of today are not markedly different from those practiced by ancient peoples at least 70,000 years ago. Indeed, if an Iroquois traditionalist were to seek a career in the study of Pleistocene Man, he may find that he already knows more about the most ancient belief systems than do the modern scholars.

Be that as it may, the Hau de no see nee position is derived from a philosophy which sees The People with historical roots which extend back tens of thousands of years. It is a geological kind of perspective, which sees modern man as an infant, occupying a very short space of time in an incredibly long spectrum. It is the perspective of the oldest elder looking into the affairs of a young child and seeing that he is committing incredibly destructive folly. It is, in short, the statement of a people who are ageless but who trace their history as a people to the very beginning of time. And they are speaking, in this instance, to a world which dates its existence from a little over 500 years ago, and perhaps, in many cases, much more recently than that.

And it is, to our knowledge, the very first statement to be issued by a Native nation. What follows are not the research products of psychologists, historians, or anthropologists. The papers which follow are the first authentic analyses of the modern world ever committed to writing by an official body of Native people.

This ancient, *human* “philosophy...sees The People with historical roots which extend back tens of thousands of years.... It is the perspective of the oldest elder looking into the affairs of a young child and seeing that he is committing incredibly destructive folly. It is, in short, the statement of a people who are ageless but who trace their history as a people to the very beginning of time.” Why is this richly inclusive long view of human beings something Mr. Rich does not mention, much less acknowledge? Is he actually ignorant of this, our collective and primeval human cosmology? Or is this a more intentionally biased and underhanded perspective being presented? That the New York Times Corporation tapped Mr. Rich and devoted this *entire issue* of the *NYT Mag* to his “work of history” indicates the NYT LLC grants its full imprimatur on—and agrees with—the lens of reality proffered by the author.

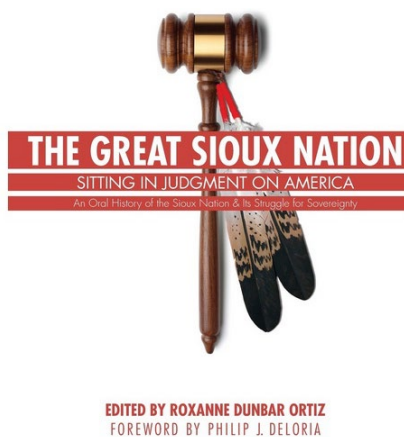
While there are some merits to what Mr. Rich reviews and catalogs, his thought structure indicates

a constrained outlook expressing the white man's belief system that progress means economic growth by private—i.e. individual—ownership of the Earth and its “resources”. Such a viewpoint consistently chooses, consciously or otherwise, to reject the fact that, [as Martin Luther King understood](#), “It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny to whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality.”

Oren Lyons speaks of the laws of the universe founded in the Sacred Instructions of “[the Great Law](#), the common law, the natural law. The law says if you poison your water, you’ll die. The law says that if you poison the air, you’ll suffer. The law says if you degrade where you live, you’ll suffer. The law says all of this. If you don’t learn that then you can only suffer. There’s no discussion with this law.”

Even with something as categorically critical to deal with as the unfolding epoch of climate catastrophe, the frame of reality proffered by media corporations like the NYT are inadequate to present a more inclusive world view because it is not in their *financial interests* to actually acknowledge the history that has brought us to this point: a timeline founded on the theft of this entire continent from its Original Free Nations and Peoples through [over 400 years of attempted genocide, dispossession, and colonization](#), and building the bedrock of the U.S. economic system by enslaving millions of human beings from Africa.

Author and historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz has greatly extended the history of Native Peoples’ struggles since *A Basic Call To Consciousness* was published. Serving as both an expert witness and on the legal team in the Wounded Knee trials, Dunbar-Ortiz described that process in 2014:



The Great Sioux Nation was my first book in 1977. It came out of the Wounded Knee trials. All of the people who came out of Wounded Knee were arrested and charged with various felonies and misdemeanors so it just tied the movement up. Each one, one after another, were dismissed or the people found Not Guilty. A few people served some jail time. It was kind of purposely putting the American Indian Movement (AIM) through great expense, raising money for court cases and not being able to organize in the communities.

So we decided to have these remaining cases, I think there were about 90 of them left, that they all be dismissed on the basis of this [1868 Fort Laramie] Treaty that said that any crimes committed in the Great Sioux Nation, the people were subject to punishment by Sioux authorities. This [1868] was when the Great Sioux Nation was a contiguous land base that covered all of North and South Dakota, some of Wyoming and Montana and much of Nebraska that has been broken down into 7 separate little reservations within that. The largest amount of that land, taken away when the Black Hills were the Sacred area of the Sioux, were taken illegally.

And that was actually, because of [AIM and Wounded Knee](#) and the Sioux Treaty hearing, in 1980 the Supreme Court accepted a case and found that the Black Hills were taken illegally [*United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*, 448 U.S. 371]. But the Federal Government only pays money compensation, not restoration of land. So the Sioux refused to take the money and now it's up to something like almost 2 billion dollars in a trust fund that the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere refuse to take because they want the land back. [from [TUC Radio, Part Two](#), 17:24-19:48]

“Because they want the land back.” Project this: Your ancestors dwelled on a continental land base for millennia that included soil rich from the bones of countless generations of your progenitors. The land was imbued with Sacred Spirit and your purpose, instilled within you from birth, was to respect and be responsible during your lifetime for the land and its numinous essence and the future lifetimes of all who will follow yours. Wouldn't you want the land back if it had been violently stolen from your ancestors, your descendants, and you?

With regard to the Black Hills, in an [August 2012 National Geographic article](#), author Alexandra Fuller writes about Alex White Plume, Oglala Lakota:

the Oglala consider [the Black Hills] their *axis mundi*, the center of their spiritual world... And then White Plume asked me to consider the seemingly calculated insult of Mount Rushmore. “The leaders of the people who have broken [every treaty with my people](#) have their faces carved into our most holy place. What is the equivalent? Do you have an equivalent?” I could offer none.

Over 500 years ago, in the mid-fifteenth century, most of the non-European world began to be colonized under so-called legal cover of the doctrine of Christian discovery. Fundamentally racist, this doctrine of domination and subjugation consists of medieval canon law codified in a series of declarations by Popes in the Vatican called Papal Bulls. “*Consists*” because it was written into U.S. case law by the Supreme Court in 1823 and remains operative to this day—in the context of what is called legal, historical precedent—in property law, nationhood, and federal Indian law.

Steven Newcomb (Shawnee, Lenape) has been studying and writing about U.S. federal Indian law and policy since the early 1980s, particularly the application of international law to Indigenous Nations and Peoples. Newcomb is the Director of the [Indigenous Law Institute](#), which he co-founded with mentor and friend [Birgil Kills Straight](#), a Traditional Headman and Elder of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Together they have carried on a global campaign challenging imperial Vatican documents from the fifteenth century. Those documents resulted in the decimation of Original Nations and Peoples of Mother Earth and in doing so deprived the planet of life-ways, sustainable ecosystems, and Sacred Teachings. Newcomb is one of the world's foremost authorities on the doctrine of Christian discovery. On May 4, 2016 [he called on Pope Francis](#) in St. Peter's Square to formally revoke the May 4, 1493 *Inter Caetera* Papal Bull issued by Pope Alexander VI which called for non-Christian nations to be reduced and subjugated. From [doctrineofdiscovery.org](#):

[Papal Bulls of the 15th century](#) gave Christian explorers the right to claim lands they “discovered” and lay claim to those lands for their Christian Monarchs. Any land that was not inhabited by Christians was available to be “discovered”, claimed, and exploited. If the “pagan” inhabitants

could be converted, they might be spared. If not, they could be enslaved or killed.



May 4, 2016: Steven Newcomb calls on Pope Francis to formally revoke the May 4, 1493 *Inter Caetera* papal bull. He is seen here giving the Pope a copy of his book, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*. The beginning of the book, from the Cover through page 15, is [accessible here](#).

In his Keynote Address, [Toward a Paradigm Change for Mother Earth](#), at the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, Newcomb summarized specific elements in the historical timeline distilled from decades-long research, laying out references and consequences which the Empire Domination Model of Christianity has exacted on humanity and all Life on Earth.

Yesterday I listened with interest to the plenary session on climate change. It occurred to me that working on climate change without working on Paradigm Change would be a grave mistake. We need a mental and behavioral shift away from the prevailing paradigm of domination, dehumanization, and greed, the symptoms of which are everywhere on planet Earth, our Mother.

More than five centuries ago, various popes in Rome, on behalf of Christendom, unleashed the paradigm I'm talking about. It may surprise you to learn that the Empire Domination Model of Christianity was woven by jurists into the laws and policies of the United States, and into the laws and policies of many other countries, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. That hidden code of Christian Empire has worked for more than five centuries toward the dissolution of our Original Nations and Peoples here on Great Turtle Island and Abya Yala to the south.

The idea patterns of domination and so-called Christian Discovery have been incorporated into U.S. federal Indian law, where they remain to this day. Those ideas are traced to Vatican documents called papal bulls of the fifteenth century^[2] and to royal charters of England which declared the right of Christian people to discover the lands of heathens and infidels and to assume a right of domination or subjugation against the nations and peoples of those places, "which before this time have been unknown to all Christian people." In 1823, Chief Justice John Marshall, on behalf of the United States Supreme Court, wrote that doctrine of Christian discovery and domination into U.S.

case law, *Johnson & Graham's Lessee v M'Intosh*, where it remains to this day.[3]

We can trace the pattern back to 1452 and the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, issued by Pope Nicolas V to King Alphonse of Portugal. It instructed the King to go to the Western coast of Africa, and to non-Christian lands everywhere, and “to invade, capture, vanquish, subdue,” “all Saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ,” “to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery,” and “to take away all their possessions and property.”[4]

That was repeated in 1493 shortly after Cristóbal Colón sailed across the ocean to what is now called the Caribbean and claimed possession of our Original Lands on behalf of the Spanish Crown. Several Papal bulls or decrees of 1493, were issued by Pope Alexander VI, which called for the propagation of the Christian empire, *imperii Christiani* in Latin, and called for “barbarous nations” to be reduced and subjected to the Catholic faith and Christian religion.[5] ...

Our documentary *The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code*, based on my book *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, brings into focus the dehumanizing patterns premised on a claimed right of Christian discovery and domination over the lands of so-called infidels, heathens, pagans, and unbaptized peoples. It is a focus that we began more than twenty years ago, with the *Indigenous Law Institute*....

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish I had more time to go into detail. Given my time constraint, I will leave you with this: In 1954 the U.S. Justice Department delivered a legal brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in the case *Tee-Hit-Ton Indians v. United States*.[6] The main argument of the Justice Department was that the Tee Hit Ton People in Alaska did not deserve monetary compensation for a taking of their timber because “the Christian nations of Europe had discovered the lands of heathens and infidels.” In 1955, the year I was born, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld that, citing Henry Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law*,[7] which reference all the things I am talking about. Among the things Wheaton said was: “the heathen nations of the other quarters of the globe, were the lawful spoil and prey of their civilized conquerors”[8] That pattern of Christian domination was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court as recently as 2005, in the case *City of Sherrill v Oneida Indian Nation of New York*.

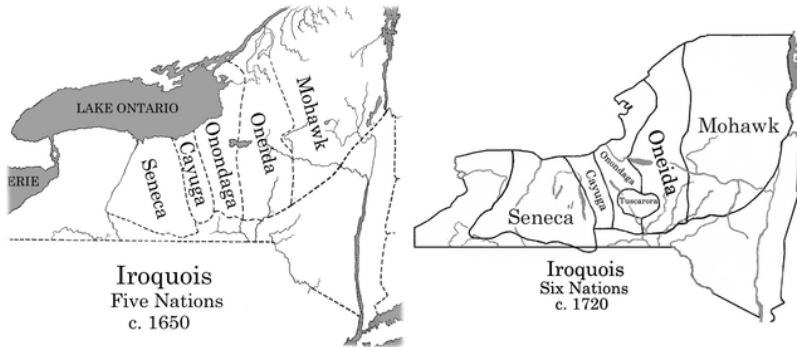
Footnote #1 in *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York* 125 S. Ct. 1478, 148384 (2005) states:

Under the “doctrine of discovery,” *County of Oneida v. Oneida Indian Nation of N.Y.*, 470 U.S. 226, 234 (1985) (*Oneida II*), “fee title to the lands occupied by Indians when the colonists arrived became vested in the sovereign—first the discovering European nation and later the original States and the United States,” *Oneida Indian Nation of N.Y. v. County of Oneida*, 414 U.S. 661, 667 (1974) (*Oneida I*).

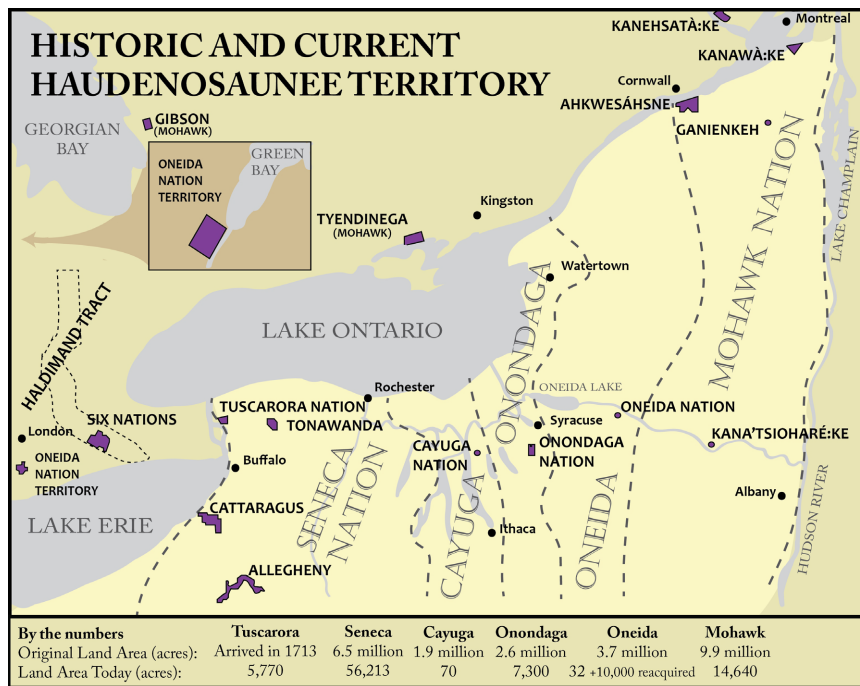
English name	Iroquoian	Meaning	17th/18th century location
Seneca	<i>Onondowahgah</i>	"People of the Great Hill"	Seneca Lake and Genesee River
Cayuga	<i>Guyohkohnyoh</i>	"People of the Great Swamp"	Cayuga Lake
Onondaga	<i>Onónda'gega'</i>	"People of the Hills"	Onondaga Lake
Oneida	<i>Onayotekaono</i>	"People of Standing Stone"	Oneida Lake
Mohawk	<i>Kanien'kehá:ka</i>	"People of the Great Flint"	Mohawk River
Tuscarora ¹	<i>Ska-Ruh-Reh</i>	"Hemp Gatherers" ^[39]	From North Carolina ²

¹ Not one of the original Five Nations; joined 1720.

² Settled between Oneidas and Onondagas.



Haudenosaunee Territory
TWO ROW WAMPUM RENEWAL CAMPAIGN



Tragically for the future of Life on this planet, aptly named *limited liability* corporations like the *New York Times* LLC are thrall to a system of human subjugation and denigration that was “kickstarted” in the 1400s. In Steven Newcomb’s words, an Empire Domination Model of Christianity was instituted to pursue control and exploitation of Indigenous Lands and the extinguishment of Indigenous Nations and Peoples for the benefit of the few. As the Church gave Christian explorers “divine right” to claim lands they “discovered,” so the Crown Colonies on the eastern seaboard of North America were granted their “right” to extract and concentrate the wealth of the land through the Crown Corporations’ “divine right” of Kings. On the heels of the industrial revolution, capitalism in the U.S. exponentially expanded its lethal grip on Earth and Life with

financial wealth becoming increasingly concentrated in ever fewer hands. Biological, social, ecological, psychic, and spiritual costs of corporate governance in the 20th century exceeded anything previously imaginable by the acolytes of and apologists for the pseudo sanctity of U.S. empire and financial profit as the supreme value of existence. In the conclusion of [“Face to Face with Pope Francis to Get the Inter Caetera Papal Bull Revoked,”](#) Newcomb writes

This work is about the liberation of our nations and peoples from the behavioral patterns and language system of domination. It is about restoration and healing for our nations and peoples based on our love of and spiritual connection to the land, our languages, our sacred and ceremonial places, and our original free and independent existence as nations extending back before a Western notion of time.

In her 2014 book, [An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States](#), Dunbar-Ortiz presents an extensive accounting of the Original Nations, Peoples, and Communities of this continent. The essential history of the United States is never truly confronted by U.S. white culture. How could it be? Any exposition of the unspeakable in this context must acknowledge, confront, and integrate “the fact that the very existence of the country is a result of the looting of an entire continent and its resources” [*Indigenous Peoples’ History*, p.5] as well as “that the great civilizations of the Western Hemisphere, the very *evidence* of the Western Hemisphere, were wantonly destroyed, the gradual progress of humanity interrupted and set upon a path of greed and destruction.” [*Ibid.*, p.1] Understanding the factual history of the theft of land from sea to shinning sea and the attempt to subdue and deny the humanity of its Original Free Nations and Peoples encapsulates the creation, expansion, and existence of the United States.

The nightmarish disaster that befell Indigenous Peoples throughout the Americas and throughout the world has profoundly interrupted the progress of humanity with potentially fatal consequences to the future of more complex life forms on this planet. Given our present situation, it is evermore necessary to apply common sense intelligence and independent, coherent critical analysis to the frame of reality being presented by missionaries of capitalism through conduits such as the *New York Times* and monetized media generally. Inherent bias presented by commercial print and broadcast media promotes a chimerical representation of reality through historical omission, distortion, lack of contextual analysis, and disinforming opinion stated as obvious, incontestable fact. It is always our choice what lens we adopt to view the world and our place in it.

Regarding how institutional slavery in the U.S. built the country’s economy, Dunbar-Ortiz catalogs some of this in Chapter 3, Slave Patrols, from page 65 of [Loaded, A Disarming History of The Second Amendment](#):

By the early 1820s, slave-worked plantation agribusiness in Tidewater Virginia waned as the soils were degraded from mono-production and over-production, and investments moved to the Mississippi Valley. Nevertheless, slave patrols actually increased in Virginia, where the main commercial “crop” of the plantations was the enslaved person’s body, as farms turned into breeding factories to produce slaves to be sold in the Cotton Kingdom. [Bridgewater, [“Un/Re/Dis Covering Slave Breeding in Thirteenth Amendment Jurisprudence,”](#) (2001) pp.12-44] Thomas Jefferson

bragged to George Washington that the birth of Black children was increasing Virginia's capital stock by 4 percent annually. It is estimated that in 1860 the total value of enslaved African bodies in the United States was \$4 billion, far more than the gold and silver then circulating nationally (\$228.3 million, "most of it in the North," the authors add), total currency (\$435.4 million), and even the value of the South's total farmland (\$1.92 billion). [Ned & Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry* (2015) p.312]

Playwright Robert Schenkkan wrote *The Kentucky Cycle* for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. Almost 7 hours in length, the story follows one settler family and its descendants over 200 years from first settlement in 1775 to 1995. Schenkkan is quoted in *Loaded* from a 1993 *New Yorker* interview, acknowledging the deep denial U.S. society has chosen to exercise since its inception at the beginning of the 17th century.

One of our big problems is how much we're in denial about our past, and how unwilling we are to examine our past and come to terms with it. There's so much loss in this country, so much grief that we're in denial about. There's a river of loss that runs throughout the bedrock of this country. [pp. 105-6]

It is of evermore concern how the lens of reality, framed by legal subordinate fictions such as the New York Times Limited Liability Corporation—which purports to present all the news that's fit to print—is, tragically and consistently doing F-minus work on behalf of humanity in its essential *business* of managing perceptions in service to its stockholders.

The rejection of the tenets of Indigenous wisdom's Great Law is a reflection of the toll the prevailing paradigm of domination, dehumanization, and greed has taken on all Life here including the future of the human project. The antidote to this tyranny of the partial masquerading as the whole is to remember, recover, and relearn what human beings collectively understood and were guided by for well and away the majority of the span of human life on this planet. That wisdom is reflected in The Center For Partnership Studies' [Shifting from Domination to Partnership](#).

Further, the age-old wisdom and instructions still practiced and understood by Original Free Nations, Peoples, and Communities offers a Sacred life-line to all of us who, in Oren Lyons' words, "lost the mystery, lost the elegance, lost the spirituality of the reality of the Earth and of life itself"—*and* who want to reconnect with and reawaken to respecting and giving thanks for the sanctity of All Our Relations and All That Sustains Us. On 23 March 2012 Newcomb [spoke](#) at an Indigenous Peoples Forum on the Doctrine of Discovery held at the Arizona state capital House of Representatives. [Beginning at 23:03](#) he observed how destitute and deteriorated the world of post-industrial reality is. It does not have to be this way.

What I see is that the non-Indian society has actually deprived itself tremendously; by dehumanizing and sub-humanizing Indigenous Peoples they have deprived themselves of being able to learn from the vast amount of knowledge and wisdom that Indigenous Nations and Peoples have been able to accumulate over thousands and thousands of years going back to the beginning of time as expressed in our oral histories.

That's what needs to occur. Once this understanding of respect for the Original Laws of the Land, for the Original Nations and Peoples of the Land, once that begins to occur then there is going to be more of a flow of communication and that knowledge that's been buried and suppressed is going to rise up. If you want a clearer understanding of what that knowledge and wisdom entails look at the book called *1491; New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* by [Charles C Mann](#). It's an amazing exploration and understanding of just how incredibly wonderful and rich and vibrant and intelligent Indigenous Nations and Peoples and their cultures and spiritual traditions have been and continue to be at this time.

[Louise Mandell](#), Q.C., LL.D. (hon.) self described "growing up Jewish, [as] a post-holocaust kid," observed [at the conclusion](#) of her 20 September 2012 presentation at the International Seminar held in British Columbia on the Doctrine of Discovery, "[The Tsilhqot'in Case and the Doctrine of Discovery](#)":

We've already got a beautiful new model built. It's Indigenous laws which are the laws of the universe. It's interesting, I was at a conference in Australia where a lot of Indigenous people were talking about Indigenous laws and it just sounded like music to my ears. Because it's all the same cause that your Elders talk about. The Earth still holds those laws and Indigenous peoples stories still carry those laws. It's those laws which hold the transformative possibility because they carry a different thought structure than the thought structure which is denying it. And so I wanted us to dream together that the human consciousness issue is shifting from the ideas that we're living today.

I'd like to also speak strongly about [what Walter Echo-Hawk said](#) about shifting into a framework of human rights based on the international. In other words we need a collective strategy. We need a multi-pronged political, legal, international strategy. Once again where the two paths that I see in front of us ... is the blessing of Indigenous laws which are still our best hope and our most beautiful opportunity and the opportunity internationally to move into a human rights dialogue which isn't about stereotypes and racist doctrines which are egoic and are dysfunctional even to those that are promoting them.

So to close by expressing my great gratitude to the Elders who are helping us restore our mind to its rightful state and contributing to the energy environment with solutions. We're far more powerful and capable than we give ourselves credit for. Creator put us in the world of the possible, not the impossible.

The magnitude of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom that can address the litany of existential threats facing humanity is profound. An extremely relevant and timely facet is how to counteract the escalating frequency and intensity of forest fires. In a 13 November re-broadcast of her 1990s documentary on [Restoring the Forest — the Indian Way](#), long-time Broadcast Journalist and Radio Producer Maria Gilardin introduces the recording she made of Dennis Martinez when she visited Mountain Grove, Oregon.

When Spanish Conquistadors rode up the West Coast they were astonished to see that they entered forests that looked like parks with widely spaced trees. Church and military records show that in the early 19th century California's forests were carefully tended.

The catastrophic wildfires of today were extremely rare. California Natives used controlled fires to create these parks but the use of fire was outlawed by the Settlers from 1850 on. There is now talk about bringing back controlled burns—but how complex, interwoven with intimate knowledge of the web of life, that practice is, was beginning to dawn on me when I set out to Mountain Grove for a three day visit with Dennis Martinez.

The forest at the Mountain Grove Center near Glendale, Oregon, was clear cut in the 1930s and '40s. It has come back thick, young, and dark with invasive trees. When Indians cared for the land, the Indigenous Oaks, old-growth Incense Cedars, and Chinquapins were spaced widely, like a park. Plants thrived on the sunlit forest floor and animals found shelter and food.

Dennis Martinez is of O'odham and Chicano heritage, and he helps traditional communities with the restoration of ancestral lands. He is a well loved and popular writer and lecturer on cultural survival and he works in the forests of the Klamath Mountains of southwestern Oregon as a seed collector, vegetation surveyor, restoration tree thinner, and ethno-botanist.

The concluding paragraphs of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* describes the way forward if we are to succeed in mending the Sacred Hoop of Life on Mother Earth and its unique, single Web of which we are all indelibly part by right of birth, whether or not we choose to re-cognize and consciously engage this interrelated structure of reality.

Indigenous peoples offer possibilities for life after empire, possibilities that neither erase the crimes of colonialism nor require the disappearance of the original peoples colonized under the guise of including them as individuals. That process rightfully starts by honoring the treaties the United States made with Indigenous nations, by restoring all sacred sites, starting with the Black Hills and including most federally held parks and land and all stolen sacred items and body parts, and by payment of sufficient reparations for the reconstruction and expansion of Native nations. In the process, the continent will be radically reconfigured, physically and psychologically. For the future to be realized, it will require extensive educational programs and the full support and active participation of the descendants of settlers, enslaved Africans, and colonized Mexicans, as well as immigrant populations.



In the words of Acoma poet Simon Ortiz:

*The future will not be mad with loss and waste though the
memory will
Be there: eyes will become kind and deep, and the bones of
this nation
Will mend after the revolution.*

[pp. 235-6]

John Trudell was national chairman of the American Indian Movement as well as gifted poet and musician. In 2001 he presented a stream-of-consciousness meditation at The Women's Building in

San Francisco on [What It Means To Be A Human Being](#). In this presentation, Trudell gave voice to the following poem, reminding us how [we are the memories of evolution](#) describing how, “because ... we come from where we come from, every one of us is the descendant of a tribe. Every person in this room is a descendant of a tribe at some point in our ancestral evolution. Common, collective, genetic memory that’s in there, you know, that’s encoded, like I say, in the DNA.” Remembering who we are, and especially who our ancestors were and the fact that we are their descendants, can serve to reconnect our steps on the journey with what preceded us and [what that means](#).

[In the reality](#)

Of many realities
How we see what we see
Affects the quality
Of our reality

We are children of Earth and Sky
DNA descendant now ancestor
Human being physical spirit
Bone flesh blood as spirit
Metal mineral water as spirit

We are in time and space
But we’re from beyond time and space
The past is part of the present
The future is part of the present
Life and being are interwoven

We are the DNA of Earth, Moon, Planets, Stars
We are related to the universal
Creator created creation
Spirit and intelligence with clarity
Being and human as power

We are a part of the memories of evolution
These memories carry knowledge
These memories carry our identity
Beneath race, gender, class, age
Beneath citizen, business, state, religion
We are human beings
And these memories
Are trying to remind us
Human beings, human beings
It’s time to rise up
Remember who we are



We are human beings, indivisible; one species, one family, one home.

In a [2006 interview](#) for The 11th Hour film, Oren Lyons expresses human reality perceived through the eyes and heart of Indigenous intelligence and awareness. The worldview that never lost sight and understanding of the mystery, elegance, and spiritual reality of the Earth and Life nurtured and sustained by it is still manifesting and being lived out by such consciousness and spiritual energy. This deeply profound understanding of respect and love offers a signpost to rediscover and explore in the manner some human beings on Mother Earth continue to observe and follow the Sacred Instructions. This life-way calls to all of us who choose to listen, understand, and live out for Mother Earth, Her children, and all that follow us here.

We always said that we have been told and understand that we're relatives. Where our white brother will talk about water and trees and animals and fish as resources we talk about them as relatives. That's a whole different perspective. If you think that they're relatives and you understand that then you're going to treat them differently.

[The Peacemaker] said that this Tree of Peace is a spiritual law and represents a spiritual law and the spiritual law is the law of nature. He told us explicitly, Never challenge this law because you cannot prevail. You will not prevail; wrap your laws, your rules, and your conduct. He said, you, the leaders, when you're weak as a human being, he said this tree will give you your spine strength. Wrap yourself around this tree because it's powerful. Do not challenge the laws of nature because you cannot, you will not, prevail.

Now that's great wisdom. That's a thousand years ago and it reminded us of our obligations. Indian nations in North America, South America, Central America, as far as I know, Indigenous People around the world, all have ceremonies. And these ceremonies are [thanksgivings for what we have](#).

We have just now initiated a great ceremony for the trees at Onondaga, Long Houses of the Six Nations still operational. We hold these ceremonies for the leader of the trees which is the maple. The maple is the leader. So we have ceremony of Thanksgiving as soon as the sap starts running. When the sap stops then we'll have a closure ceremony. But in between, we're thankful for all trees of this Earth, wherever they are, whatever their names are, those that we know and those that we don't. We give thanks. If this kind of instruction were given and understood by other people, you wouldn't be cutting trees all over the world and destroying the infrastructure of Life and everything

that's in the woods.

Certainly the ice melt is something beyond our control at the moment. Because what it takes, it takes the instruction of the Peacemaker to be of one mind. He said when you're of one mind the power of the good mind can change anything. We have to somehow get to that point of unity of thought and direction and effort. If we can do that we certainly can mitigate what's going on now. When our concern is for the children and their grandchildren and their children. Peacemaker said that we're responsible and that we should be always watching. I think what he's saying and the instruction is correct and could happen.

There's a great imbalance of humanity on this Earth and the natural laws don't abide that. Just the quality of life that comes from all the beings that are here, they'll be denied our grandchildren. We're destroying their well-being. We're really destroying the efforts that they can put forward if they have the respect and knowledge. This style of talking and observation, they tell me, it's not realistic in today's times. I suppose not if you're thinking in terms of Wall Street and you're thinking in terms of power and authority. But in the long run it is absolutely the law.

This world has to understand the importance of sharing. I know that in the structure of the United States it's very contrary to that as people are not instructed to share. They're instructed to gain. They're instructed to hold to themselves. They're instructed to gather unto themselves. And they're rewarded for that. So you have an instruction that's contrary, very contrary, to this whole concept, if indeed this is what you think is right.

But this, I'm simply telling you what our instructions are. Operating under this, I've traveled to Indian Nations across North America and Central America. I'm invited to the ceremonies and I always know what's going on. I may not understand the language and the dancers may be different. But I know what is being said. It's always the same: Thanksgiving to the Creation. Thanksgiving to the life-giving forces of the Earth.

When I travel and when I speak I'm just doing my instructions that was given so long ago. Because our mandate is to look out for everybody and I can tell you that when we have our ceremonies, and we're going to have a planting ceremony pretty soon, and we're going to have a ceremony for the strawberries and leader of the fruit, and we'll have a ceremony for the beans, and we'll have a corn ceremony. When we have these ceremonies you're all included. We don't say this is a ceremony for the Onondagas. We say this is a ceremony for the people and we were told that as long as we hold these ceremonies we're going to survive. As long as there's one to listen, one to speak, one to sing, one to dance, we'll fight on. So it's up to us. It comes down to us at the last minute. We have to use our common sense which is not so common anymore.

I think we have to rely on our own observations and challenge poor leadership, change leadership, and act quickly and strongly and be convinced of our direction. It certainly would reinforce the Indigenous People, traditional people, it would make us feel good to see this. I can report to my people, There's a group of people out there that are doing something and we'll see where it goes. At least they're allies. So that's what we are, **we're allies. It's a common fight, common cause.** It's for the future. It's for peace. What could be better? It's a good fight. We should be happy to be in it and happy to be able to make that difference. I believe it's this generation and next one coming going to determine whether we survive.

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