

18 Broken Treaties

By Tashina Boyer

Introduction

“18 Broken Treaties” is a piece that explores the lasting effects of the 18 treaties that were signed by 122 California Native American tribes between 1851 and 1852. These treaties were never ratified by Congress and never signed by the President. California has not made amends for this, which left many tribes without land or protection. California representatives influenced the U.S. Senate’s decision and ordered that the broken treaties be hidden for 50 years. My erasure-style poem is designed to bring these broken treaties to the front and center while adding my voice and my experience to the discussion. As a California Native, my goal for this piece is to show my readers the ways that broken treaties have negatively affected Native people and their communities not only in California but throughout the U.S. Although this short piece doesn’t analyze each treaty, it does add a level of visibility and awareness about the ways that the Mono people were forced to get creative and continue to be resilient.

Keywords: Broken treaties, Indigenous resilience, California Native history, Mono people, erasure poetry, tribal sovereignty, historical erasure, U.S. colonialism

18 Broken Treaties

1830

May 28, 1830- President Andrew Jackson signs the **Indian Removal Act** into law. Many Indigenous tribes are **displaced**, including **the** Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, **Seminole**, and **Chickasaw**, resulting **in** the “Trail of Tears.”

-By the end of **Jackson’s** presidency, **his** **administration** had **negotiated** almost **70** **removal** **treaties**.

(www.archives.gov)

1840

~~Nearly all Indian tribes had been driven West.~~ Are forced to leave their land.

1850

California passes the Act for the government ~~and protection of Indians~~, ~~also~~ known as the California Slave Act (making it legal for Whites to own Native people. Native

people were then removed from their land and our children were taken from their homes and placed into boarding schools; many never make it back home).

Great, Great, Grandma Mauda was taken from her land at the age of 7.

They cut her hair and punished her for speaking her Mono language.

(Northforkrancheria-nsn.gov) (<https://www.gov.ca.gov>)

1851-1852

The Federal Commissioner signs

18 treaties with California Tribes that ~~relinquished~~ TAKE each Tribe's rights to their traditional lands in exchange for ~~reservations~~ dry slanted hills.

This sets aside 8.5 million acres for reservations, [...] (Which never happened)

However, the United States Senate refuses to ratify the treaties based on objections from the California Legislature.

"Lost Treaties" are placed under an injunction of secrecy until 1909.

(northforkrancheria-nsn.org)."

Maude doesn't have a home to go back to.



1853

California Tribes are rendered landless.

My Mono People are left homeless.

1862

Abraham Lincoln- Indian removal “Free Soil” meaning cheap land free of slavery- Homestead Act 1862- Land grabs broke treaties

1860's-1900- Tribes are pushed further into the foothills
My Ancestors are left to create homes on unstable ground.

1916

Eighty acres of land are placed in trust for the use of the North Fork Band of landless Indians. Like the prior allotments, the rocky soil, precipitous landscape made the ground unsuitable for farming, and only suitable for a few families No one.

Nobody.

(northforkrancheria-nsn.org).

**1988**

*I am a child visiting my Great Grandma.
 Her home sits on a slanted hill.
 She has an outhouse that I refuse to use.
 She collects fallen acorn
 and pounds them into a fine powder.
 She makes my grandfather, (her son)
 Acorn mush.
 I refuse to eat it,
 Because it tastes like wet dirt.*

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