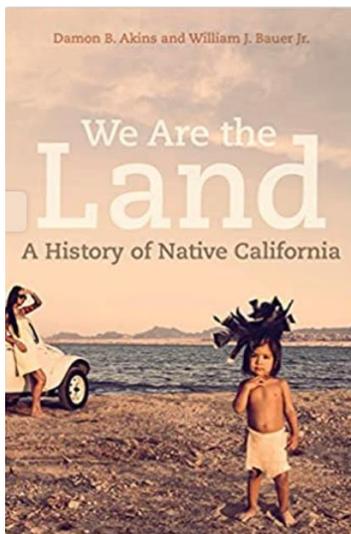


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We Are The Land
A History Of Native California
Zoom Event to be held Dec. 8, 7 – 9 PM



Benicia Literary Arts announces a new Author Talk series focused on California, its past, present, and future.

We are fortunate to have historians Damon Akins and William Bauer, Jr. open our series discussing their best-selling book, *We Are The Land – A History Of Native California*.

- Wahpepah’s Kitchen, the first sit-down Native American restaurant in Oakland, opened on Oct. 30.
- A flag acknowledging the Ohlone people is now flying over City Hall in Albany, California — a first for a Bay Area city, and one of several recent moves by Albany aimed at recognizing the region’s original inhabitants.
- After a 98-day on-site prayer vigil, the Committee to Protect Glen Cove yesterday announced a victory in its struggle to protect the sacred burial grounds of Sogorea Te/Glen Cove.

Headlines like these are increasing in Bay Area newspapers as today’s Californians wake up and acknowledge the significance and importance of their state’s Indigenous forebearers.

We Are The Land tells the complex story of the Native nations and tribes that were once central to California, and then seemingly disappeared with the arrival of outsiders from Mexico and all over the world. Scholars estimate that prior to 1769, at least 310,000 Indigenous people lived in what is now California. After the Gold Rush, the population declined from about 150,000 to 30,000.

According to the authors, "...before there was such a thing as "California," there were the People and the Land. Manifest Destiny, the Gold Rush, and settler colonial society drew maps, displaced Indigenous People, and reshaped the land, but they did not make California. Rather, the lives and legacies of the people native to the land shaped the creation of California." Akins and Bauer recount the centrality of the Native presence from before European colonization through statehood—paying particularly close attention to the persistence and activism of California Indians in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

"In this time of climate change and social upheaval, we stand to learn about how to live in a place by studying ways both ancient and modern, including economic and political efforts to maintain connections to the land...[that] rested on the efforts that began in the 1870s, as California Indian People, communities, and nations recovered from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and slavery."

The book's introduction sets the stage with an account of the campaign, a decade ago, to prevent the bulldozing of a burial site at Glen Cove, near Vallejo, California. Good civic intentions (the goal was to build a city park) and legal complexities abound (the primary protestors were the Ohlones who have 'lived in the Bay Area since their creation,' but were not a 'federally recognized tribe') – still, the outcome was positive.

Our two authors are professors of history. Bauer is also a member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes.



Damon Akins grew up in Oklahoma, but found himself in California where he attended UCLA and taught high school in the (east) San Fernando Valley. He later returned to Oklahoma to do a PhD in Native American / California history at the University of Oklahoma. He is currently Professor of History at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he teaches on Native America, California, and the American West



William Bauer, Jr. (Wailacki and Concow of the Round Valley Indian Tribes) is professor of history and program director for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research is focused on oral history, labor and California Indian history. He is the author of *We Are the Land: A Native History of California*, with Damon Akins, (University of California Press, 2021), *California Through Native Eyes: Reclaiming History* (University of Washington Press)

Please join us for this exciting conversation. Authors Damon Akins and William Bauer are both professors of history who focus on American Indian and Indigenous Studies.

**To obtain a Zoom invitation please contact our Webmaster at
webmaster@benicialiteraryarts.org.**

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Benicia Literary Arts (BenLit) is Benicia's nonprofit organization to encourage and develop interest in reading and writing in the community, and to publish high-quality books in any genre.