



SQUAW VALLEY

Fresno County, California, USA

38.0318, 78.4805



Image by Xavier Rain Tree, courtesy of Roman Rain Tree.

Executive Summary

The term 'squaw' (hereafter sq___) is widely considered as an offensive, derogatory, racist and misogynistic word to refer to Native American women. In 2021, following the renaming of the Sq___ Valley ski resort in the unincorporated populated place in Olympic Valley in Placer County California, to 'Palisades Tahoe Ski Resort', a petition was launched to change the name of the town of Sq___ Valley in Fresno County California by local Indigenous resident Roman Rain Tree. After two years of campaigning at the local, state, and national levels, the movement led by Rain Tree succeeded in getting the town's name changed to Yokuts Valley in 2023. However, this campaign created serious division within the community, and many people are still opposed to the renaming.

Introduction

*'Why just disrespect American Indian women by naming places 'Squaw'? ...
I propose we start with Squaw Valley, CA. How does this sound?
"Ski Cunt Valley and explore the Penis Peaks with your children. A family oriented resort."
I know this couldn't possibly be offending to anyone;
since 'Squaw Valley' is acceptable the literal translation of it must be acceptable as well.'*
~ Debra Glidden, "Reflections on the word Squaw"¹

According to a 2006 survey, there are 785 officially recognized toponyms in the United States which employ some form of the derogatory word 'sq___' with nearly 100 in California alone.² Campaigns to change these offensive place names have occurred across the US over the past 30+ years. One recent contestation involved the town of Sq___ Valley in Fresno County, California, where a grassroots organisation started in 2020 by Roman Rain Tree succeeded in getting the town's name changed to Yokuts Valley (a name meaning 'The People' in a local Indigenous language) in early 2023.

Background

The Naming of Sq___ Valley, California

Sq___ Valley is a small, unincorporated community in Fresno County without a city council, and is home to approximately 3,564 people.³ The earliest documented appearance of the name Sq___ Valley in the area dates to 1871, and in the 150+ years since has been applied to the community's school, library, ambulance and fire stations, cemetery, and numerous local businesses.⁴ Local traditions regarding the origins of the name vary. Some claim the name refers to 'an imprint shaped like a woman's moccasin in a granite rock pointing toward the valley,' while others claim the name was given to the area in 1851 by two hunters who found 'only women and children in the valley, with the men having gone off to war.'⁵ Another, darker story links the name to the murder of an Indigenous woman.⁶

¹ Debra Glidden, "Reflections on the word Squaw" quoted in C. Richard King, "De/Scribing Squ*w: Indigenous Women and Imperial Idioms in the United States," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2003), 8.

² Debra Merskin, "The S-Word: Discourse, Stereotypes, and the American Indian Woman," *Howard Journal of Communications* 21, no. 4 (2010), 345-366. 350; (Seidman, "Native Americans want to ditch the name Squaw Valley," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2022).

³ Carmen Kohlruss, "Hundreds of places have removed 'squaw' from name. Why not the town in Fresno County?" *Fresno Bee*, September 14, 2022.

⁴ Lila Seidman, "Native Americans want to ditch the name Squaw Valley. A county supervisor says context matters," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2022; Carmen Kohlruss, "Newsom signs law removing 'squaw' across California. What it means for Squaw Valley," *Fresno Bee*, September 24, 2022.

⁵ Seidman, "Native Americans want to ditch the name Squaw Valley," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2022.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Why the Term Sq___ is Offensive

Theories on the etymology of the word sq___ vary. The dominant explanation links the term to the word *eskwa*, meaning 'woman' in the Narragansett language spoken by the Indigenous peoples of the Northeastern United States. According to this theory, sq___ 'was originally a descriptive term with no derogatory or offensive connotations.'⁷ A second, widely held interpretation 'asserts that French trappers borrowed the Mohawk word for female genitals, *ge-squaw*, to refer to Native women and their sexualities, giving *squaw* a vulgar and negative connotation.'⁸ Regardless of its origins, most, if not all current English-language dictionaries define sq___ as 'disparaging' and 'Indian activists have pointed to this labelling as authoritative.'⁹ According to many Indigenous peoples and academics 'the word "squaw" is as hateful as the "N word," and analogous to the 'C-word.'¹⁰ This word contributes to a harmful discourse framing Indigenous women as sexually immoral, 'animalistic, savage, and sub-human.'¹¹

In California, the term sq___ has been associated with the sexual violence against Indigenous women 'during the 1850s California Gold Rush, when Native women were consistently referred to as the "S word" as they were kidnapped, raped, and killed.'¹² Fresno County resident Roman Rain Tree recalls his grandmother recounting how European American men on horseback would chase her and her friends, terrorising and sexually harassing them while 'calling them the s-word'.¹³

The sq___ stereotype has significant implications for Indigenous communities. It has reinforced dehumanising stereotypes, and has contributed to 'the physical and psychological health-related consequences' of what has been termed Ethno-stress – a form of 'internalized oppression resulting from negative verbal and visual discourse that results in poor self image, low self esteem, and dissociation which have very real health consequences.'¹⁴ It also contributes to the systemic violence against Indigenous women that has resulted in this group experiencing 'the highest rates of socioeconomic distress of any racial or ethnic group' in the USA, in addition to suffering from a rate of violence 'almost 50% higher than that reported for African American males.'¹⁵ While the impact of this type of language on Indigenous women is clear, this racist and sexist stereotype has impacts for all women, as it derogates female sexuality in general.¹⁶

⁷ King, "De/Scribing Squ*w: Indigenous Women and Imperial Idioms in the United States," 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ William Bright, "The Sociolinguistics of the "S-Word": Squaw in American Placenames," *Names* 48, no. 3-4 (2000): 214.

¹⁰ Rebecca Sockbeson, "Honored and Thriving: The Squaw Law and Eradication of Offensive State Place-Names." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 40, no. 2 (2016): 123; Sockbeson, "Honored and Thriving," 128.

¹¹ Merskin, "The S-Word: Discourse, Stereotypes, and the American Indian Woman," 347.

¹² Sockbeson, "Honored and Thriving: The Squaw Law and Eradication of Offensive State Place-Names," 128.

¹³ Kohlruss, "Hundreds of places have removed 'squaw' from name," *Fresno Bee*, September 14, 2022.

¹⁴ Merskin, "The S-Word: Discourse, Stereotypes, and the American Indian Woman," 347.

¹⁵ Sockbeson, "Honored and Thriving," 127; Merskin, "The S-Word: Discourse, Stereotypes, and the American Indian Woman," 359.

¹⁶ King, "De/Scribing Squ*w: Indigenous Women and Imperial Idioms in the United States," 4.

Prior Contestations Against Squaw Placenames in the United States

Due to the harm inflicted by this term, efforts by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists across the United States have been made to remove this term from the Nation's topography since the 1990s. In a survey of name-change petitions submitted to the Domestic Names Committee of the US Board on Geographic Names, 'a full 79.31% of the cases calling for a toponymic replacement' involved the term squaw.¹⁷ As of April 2023, five US States – Minnesota, Montana, Maine, Oregon, and most recently California - have passed laws requiring the replacement of squaw place names.¹⁸

History of the Contestation

In July 2020, Roman Rain Tree, a resident of Fresno County and member of the local Mono and Choinumni Tribes, launched a petition on Change.org to rename Squaw Valley.¹⁹ Part of a larger goal of gaining Federal acknowledgement for his Tribes, Rain Tree was motivated to seek the name change following a conversation he had with his mother shortly before her passing, in which he asked her "do you think we'll ever be acknowledged so long as our ancestral homeland is named this pejorative?"²⁰ The renaming of the Squaw Valley Ski Resort in Tahoe, California to Palisades Tahoe in early 2020 provided Rain Tree with further inspiration regarding how to go about seeking a name change for his own community.²¹

Building upon Rain Tree's initial petition, a coalition was soon formed, comprising 'local tribal members, Squaw Valley residents, along with representatives from Fresno State, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Northern California, and Faith in the Valley.'²² 'Yokuts Valley' was eventually selected as the preferred replacement, as 'Yokuts is a regional description for American Indians that encompasses many traditional tribes.'²³ Despite the petition amassing over 36,500 signatures by 2022, efforts to garner local support and recognition from the local Board of Supervisors in 2021 experienced limited success.²⁴ Due to concerns over Covid-19, Rain Tree opted to hold a virtual 'town hall' meeting rather than an in-person event. However, local Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig did not attend the virtual town hall, and claimed the online

¹⁷ I.M. Nick, "Squaw Teats, Harney Peak, and Negrohead Creek: A Corpus-Linguistic Investigation of Proposals to Change Official US Toponymy to (Dis)Honor Indigenous US Americans," *Names* 65, no. 4 (2017), 231.

¹⁸ Lila Seidman, "Indigenous coalitions takes fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board," *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2022; Kohlruss, "Newsom signs law removing 'squaw' across California," *Fresno Bee*, September 24, 2022.

¹⁹ Roman Rain Tree, "Petition - RENAME SQUAW VALLEY FRESNO COUNTY," Change.org, February 24, 2023; Melissa Montalvo, "Should the community of Squaw Valley change its name?" California Divide, November 19, 2021.

²⁰ Roman Rain Tree, interviewed by Anna-Kirstie Ross, March 24, 2023.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Montalvo, "Should the community of Squaw Valley change its name?" California Divide, November 19, 2021.

²³ Carmen Kohlruss, "'Squaw' removed from place names. What changed – and what didn't – in Fresno area," *Fresno Bee*, September 9, 2022.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

forum shouldn't be viewed as a credible reflection of the community's interests.²⁵

On November 19, 2021, a group of 15 protesters gathered in downtown Fresno to urge the Board of Supervisors to initiate a name change for Sq___ Valley.²⁶ At the protest Linda Tubach, a Sq___ Valley resident for over 30 years, stated 'it's time to hear our community members' concerns about the detrimental effects of this name', while another Fresno County resident, Cintia Quesada, urged the Board to take action, asserting that 'there is power in words and the stories they shape, and the board has the opportunity to change the legacy of the community's name.'²⁷ Despite the protesters' efforts, the Board chose not to commit to renaming the community.

On January 1, 2022 the Rename S-Valley Fresno County coalition 'submitted a proposal to change the name to the Board on Geographic Names, a federal body tasked with naming geographic places.'²⁸ The protestors thus sought to bypass local politics and make use of the November 2021 Order by US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland declaring sq___ derogatory and ordering its removal from federal usage.²⁹ While this new national policy resulted in the removal of six local sq___ place names in September 2022, Sq___ Valley was not among them, as the Board on Geographic Names decided to first give the residents, localities and State Names Authority six months in which to weigh in on the renaming process before making a final decision.³⁰

Lack of Consensus Among Local Indigenous Communities

Many individual members of the local Indigenous Tribes supported Rain Tree's renaming campaign, including Shirley Guevara, vice chair of the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians.³¹ However, the Tribal council made no official statement of support.³² According to Rain Tree, this can be attributed to the fact that none of the local Tribes are federally recognized. Pending applications for official government acknowledgement have made these tribes hesitant about doing anything that might result in the federal government refusing their status applications.³³

Pushback from the Sq___ Valley Community

The renaming campaign also received significant opposition from the inhabitants of Sq___ Valley.

²⁵ Carmen George, "American Indians calling for Squaw Valley renaming want Fresno County leaders' interest," *Fresno Bee*, June 26, 2021

²⁶ Montalvo, "Should the community of Squaw Valley change its name?" California Divide, November 19, 2021.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Seidman, "Indigenous coalitions take fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board," *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2022.

²⁹ United States, The Secretary of the Interior [Deb Haaland]. Order No. 3404: Declaring "Squaw" a Derogatory Term and Implementing Procedures to Remove Term for Federal Usage. November 19, 2021.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Seidman, "Indigenous coalitions take fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board," *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2022.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ George, "American Indians calling for Squaw Valley renaming want Fresno County leaders' interest," *Fresno Bee*, June 26, 2021.

Speaking against the proposed name change, many blamed ‘cancel culture’ and ‘the woke agenda’ while others expressed concern ‘about the cost to local businesses and residents associated with the name change.’³⁴ At a meeting held on September 22, 2022 - shortly before California Governor Gavin Newsom was scheduled to sign a new law prohibiting discriminatory place names - Supervisor Magsig held a public meeting for residents of Sq___ Valley to discuss the potential renaming. Over 100 people attended the meeting, which was characterised by anger and disorder, with sheriff’s deputies stepping in to maintain the peace.³⁵ The majority of speakers were opposed to the change, citing concerns about:

erasing history and language; feelings that the town wasn’t named in a racist or sexist way; defensiveness – that residents weren’t involved in atrocities of the past; frustration that they had not been contacted to share their input; concerns about the cost of changing personal documents if a name change happens, and worries that a name change could interrupt services they receive.³⁶

Kenneth Woodrow, the Tribal chairperson of the Wuksachi Tribe-Eshom Valley Band, spoke at the meeting ‘but was surprised by the crowd’s level of anger, and even feared going home after the meeting.’³⁷ Addressing concerns over the removal of local signage, Magsig stated that ‘residents have a right to do what they please on private property, but the federal and state government have the authority to pass legislation that could change the town name.’³⁸

Decision-Making Processes

At the local level, very little was done to address the concerns of the people calling for a name change. Rain Tree describes how he had hoped Supervisor Magsig, as an elected official, would show the respect due to his constituents by sitting down with Rain Tree and listening to what he and his supporters had to say.³⁹ Instead, Rain Tree claims that local officials, in particular Magsig, were dismissive, repeatedly ignoring the concerns brought to them.⁴⁰ Magsig asserted that he does not believe there is strong community support for a name change, stating that while not inherently opposed to a change, he ‘wants the effort to come from local residents and tribe members’, calling Rain Tree and his supporters ‘outsiders’ despite the majority of them residing either in or around the community.⁴¹

³⁴ Melissa Montalvo, “California county defies Biden and Newsom administrations on move to re-name Squaw Valley,” *FresnoLand*, October 12, 2022.

³⁵ Liz Juarez, “Many Squaw Valley Residents Are Mad as Hell About Likely Name Change,” *GV Wire*, September 22, 2022.

³⁶ The argument that the townspeople never got to share their input is hollow, given that the DOI openly invited public comments and recommendations. Carmen Kohlruss “‘We didn’t do it!’ Squaw Valley residents vent anger at moves to change town’s name.” *Fresno Bee*, September 23, 2022.

³⁷ Juarez, “Many Squaw Valley Residents Are Mad as Hell About Likely Name Change,” *GV Wire*, September 22, 2022.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ George, “American Indians calling for Squaw Valley renaming want Fresno County leaders’ interest,” *Fresno Bee*, June 26, 2021.

⁴⁰ Seidman, “Indigenous coalitions take fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2022; George, “American Indians calling for Squaw Valley renaming want Fresno County leaders’ interest,” *Fresno Bee*, June 26, 2021.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Despite local opposition, developments at both the Federal and State levels compelled the eventual renaming of Sq____ Valley. Secretary Haaland's Order outlined a process for sq_____ place names to be replaced across the country.⁴² However, this Federal review process was deliberately slow, requiring the extensive solicitation of input from members of the public, as well as "the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and all 574 federally recognized tribes."⁴³

While this federal review was still ongoing, a new piece of California State Legislation – AB2022 – was signed into effect on September 23, 2022 mandating that the term sq_____ be 'removed from all geographic features and place names in the state' by 2025 at the latest, ensuring that within the span of a few years the town would have to change its name.⁴⁴ Under this new law, the state is required to 'reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs' related to the name changes mandated by the state, although it is unclear whether 'the state will pay for related costs incurred by residents for things like updating vital records.'⁴⁵ Furthermore, this law does not apply to private property or businesses, so local businesses such as Sq_____ Valley Realty would not be forced to change their names or replace their signage, so long as they are on private property and do not face public domain such as state highways.⁴⁶

In reaction to the new state law and Secretary Haaland's Order, the County Supervisors formally asserted their opposition to the name change. Supervisor Steve Brandau stated that this resolution was 'intended to tell people in Washington and Sacramento that "there's an awful lot of dissent here in Squaw Valley" with the name change.'⁴⁷ Magsig sent ballots to Sq_____ Valley households to ascertain the level of local opposition, and of those returned '87% opposed the name change.'⁴⁸ However, only 1,435 ballots were distributed in the community, which has approximately 3,500 residents, and of those 1,435 only about 635 were returned, thus leading to some concern that only a minority of the inhabitants' views were really reflected.⁴⁹

On January 12, 2023 the US Board on Geographic Names formally voted to change the name of Sq_____ Valley to Yokuts Valley.⁵⁰ In response to this news, Rain Tree stated 'This is a proud moment

⁴² United States, The Secretary of the Interior [Deb Haaland]. Order No. 3404: Declaring "Squaw" a Derogatory Term and Implementing Procedures to Remove Term for Federal Usage. November 19, 2021.

⁴³ .Seidman, "Indigenous coalitions take fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board," Los Angeles Times, January 8, 2022.

⁴⁴ Kohlruss, "Newsom signs law removing 'squaw' across California," *Fresno Bee*, September 24, 2022.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kohlruss, "Newsom signs law removing 'squaw' across California. What it means for Squaw Valley," *Fresno Bee*, September 24, 2022; CBS47 KSEE24, "Effort to change Squaw Valley's name is not enough to make it stick, supervisor says," YouTube video, 2:04, posted by CBS47 KSEE24, April 29, 2021; Roman Rain Tree, interviewed by Anna-Kirstie Ross, March 24, 2023.

⁴⁷ Montalvo, "California county defies Biden and Newsom administrations on move to re-name Squaw Valley," *Fresnoland*, October 12, 2022.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Melissa Montalvo, "It's not called Squaw Valley anymore. Here's the new name of this Fresno County town," *Fresno Bee*, January 12, 2023.

of acknowledgement and healing.⁵¹ Despite the official renaming of this community, opposition from local residents persists. After the 'Welcome to Sq___ Valley' sign was removed from in front of the local library on February 8, 2023, multiple residents demanded the sign be returned. In response, Magsig posted on Facebook, assuring that the sign would be put back up.⁵²

Summary and Conclusions

The case of the Sq___ Valley renaming reveals how for Indigenous peoples and other minorities in the United States, place names can be a crucial element of reaffirming their 'historical, and social, identities,' although as Rain Tree has stated, the renaming is only the first step towards a greater goal of securing official status for the unrecognised tribes in the region.⁵³ Furthermore, this case study demonstrates 'the importance of institutional policies and legislative acts for eradicating language use injurious to minorities,' as without the Secretary of the Interior's action and introduction of Assembly 22, change at the local level seems unlikely to have succeeded.⁵⁴ Finally, the continued opposition to the new town name demonstrates how divisive names can be, and the strength of attachment that people feel to the places and terms that are familiar to them, even when aware of the harmful nature of those names. Although divisive, one can argue that renaming represents a necessary step towards reconciliation and 'healing between the Indigenous communities and both state and federal governments' as well as between the Indigenous and settler members of the community of Yokuts Valley.⁵⁵

Research contributed by Anna-Kirstie Ross

Last updated April 2023

References

Bright, William. "The Sociolinguistics of the "S-Word": Squaw in American Placenames." *Names* 48, no. 3-4 (2000): 207-216.

CBS47 KSEE24, "Effort to change Squaw Valley's name is not enough to make it stick, supervisor says," YouTube video, 2:04. Posted April 29, 2021.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SenTp98N2Xk&ab_channel=CBS47KSEE24

Elassar, Alaa. "Five locations throughout the US have been renamed to remove a derogatory term for Indigenous women." *CNN*, January 16, 2023, CNN Travel.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² FOX26 News Team, "Removal of 'Welcome to Squaw Valley' sign has residents outraged," *KMPH*, February 8, 2023.

⁵³ Nick, "Squaw Teats, Harney Peak, and Negrohead Creek," 233; Roman Rain Tree, interviewed by Anna-Kirstie Ross, March 24, 2023.

⁵⁴ Nick, "Squaw Teats, Harney Peak, and Negrohead Creek," 233.

⁵⁵ Alaa Elassar, "Five locations throughout the US have been renamed to remove a derogatory term for Indigenous women," *CNN*, January 16, 2023, CNN Travel.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/16/us/us-changes-derogatory-term-native-american-indigenous-women-slur/index.html>

FOX26 News Team. "Removal of 'Welcome to Squaw Valley' sign has residents outraged." *KMPH*, February 8, 2023.

<https://kmp.com/news/local/removal-of-welcome-to-squaw-valley-sign-has-residents-outraged>

George, Carmen. "American Indians calling for Squaw Valley renaming want Fresno County leaders' interest." *Fresno Bee*, June 26, 2021.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article252341548.html>

Juarez, Liz. "Many Squaw Valley Residents Are Mad as Hell About Likely Name Change." *GV Wire*, September 22, 2022.

<https://gvwire.com/2022/09/22/many-squaw-valley-residents-are-mad-as-hell-about-likely-name-change/#>

King, C. Richard. "De/Scribing Squ* W: Indigenous Women and Imperial Idioms in the United States." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2003): 1-16.

Kohlruss, Carmen. "Hundreds of places have removed 'squaw' from name. Why not the town in Fresno County?" *Fresno Bee*, September 14, 2022.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article265559991.html>

Kohlruss, Carmen. "Newsom signs law removing 'squaw' across California. What it means for Squaw Valley." *Fresno Bee*, September 24, 2022.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article266270086.html>

Kohlruss, Carmen. "'Squaw' removed from place names. What changed – and what didn't – in Fresno area." *Fresno Bee*, September 9, 2022.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article265512816.html>

Kohlruss, Carmen. "'We didn't do it!' Squaw Valley residents vent anger at moves to change town's name." *Fresno Bee*, September 23, 2022.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article266118166.html>

Merskin, Debra. "The S-Word: Discourse, Stereotypes, and the American Indian Woman." *Howard Journal of Communications* 21, no. 4 (2010): 345-366.

doi:10.1080/10646175.2010.519616.

<https://doi-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10646175.2010.519616>.

Montalvo, Melissa. "California county defies Biden and Newsom administrations on move to re-name Squaw Valley." *Fresnoland*, October 12, 2022.

<https://fresnoland.org/2022/10/12/california-county-defies-biden-and-newsom-administrations-on-move-to-rename-squaw-valley/>

Montalvo, Melissa. "It's not called Squaw Valley anymore. Here's the new name of this Fresno County town." *Fresno Bee*, January 12, 2023.

<https://www.fresnobee.com/fresnoland/article271072387.html>

Montalvo, Melissa. "Should the community of Squaw Valley change its name?" California Divide, November 19, 2021.

<https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2021/11/squaw-valley-rename/>

Nick, I. M. "Squaw Teats, Harney Peak, and Negrohead Creek: A Corpus-Linguistic Investigation of Proposals to Change Official US Toponymy to (Dis)Honor Indigenous US Americans."

Names 65, no. 4 (2017): 223-234. doi:10.1080/00277738.2017.1370067.

http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00277738/v65i0004/223_sthpanuttiua.

Rain Tree, Roman. "Petition - RENAME SQUAW VALLEY FRESNO COUNTY." Change.org.

February 24, 2023.

<https://www.change.org/p/fresno-county-chief-administrative-officer-county-supervisor-nathan-magsig-continued-refusal-to-place-resolution-rename-squaw-valley-fresno-county-as-an-agenda-item>

Seidman, Lila. "Indigenous coalitions takes fight to rename town of Squaw Valley to federal board." *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2022.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-01-08/coalition-seeks-to-rename-squaw-valley-in-fresno-county>

Seidman, Lila. "Native Americans want to ditch the name Squaw Valley. A county supervisor says context matters," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2022.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-01-18/native-americans-want-to-ditch-the-name-squaw-valley-a-county-supervisor-says-context-matters>

Sockbeson, Rebecca. "Honored and Thriving: The Squaw Law and Eradication of Offensive State Place-Names." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 40, no. 2 (2016): 123-138.

doi:10.17953/aicrj.40.2.sockbeson.

United States, The Secretary of the Interior [Deb Haaland]. Order No. 3404: Declaring "Squaw" a Derogatory Term and Implementing Procedures to Remove Term for Federal Usage.

November 19, 2021.

Figures

"Roman Rain Tree and daughter Lola in front of Squaw Valley Sign." Image by Xavier Rain Tree, courtesy of Roman Rain Tree.

About Contested Histories

Many contestations have been over memorials, street names, and other physical representations of historical legacies in public spaces in recent years. These contestations often reflect deeper societal tensions, whether triggered by political transitions, demographic shifts, inter-ethnic strife, or a growing awareness of unaddressed historical injustices.

The Contested Histories project is a multi-year initiative designed to identify principles, processes, and best practices for addressing these contestations at the community or municipal level and in the classroom. Conflicts about history, heritage, and memory are a global phenomenon. Although each case is different, comparative cases can indicate lessons learned and reflect best practices.

About IHJR at EuroClio

The Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) is a research centre at EuroClio - European Association for History Educators in The Hague, The Netherlands. The IHJR works with educational and public policy institutions to organise and sponsor historical discourse in pursuit of acknowledgement and the resolution of historical disputes in divided communities and societies.

Contact information

Marie-Louise Jansen
Program Director
Institute for Historical Justice &
Reconciliation
+33 663 828327
contestedhistories@euroclio.eu
www.contestedhistories.org

EuroClio Secretariat
Riouwstraat 139
2585HP The Hague
The Netherlands
secretariat@euroclio.eu
www.euroclio.eu

Published by IHJR-EuroClio in February 2021

This document is copyright © The Contested Histories Initiative 2021

Some rights reserved [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

To cite this publication:

The Contested Histories Initiative, "Renaming of Squaw Valley in Fresno County, California", *Contested Histories Case Study #354*, April 2023, retrieved from [link].

The Contested Histories Initiative receives support from the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which only reflect the authors' views. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union 