

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

*Inside the Vault:  
Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection*

April 15, 2021

*The session will start shortly. Please note:*

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email [collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org) so we can assist you.

## *Our Team*

- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
- CherylAnne Amendola - 2017 New Jersey History Teacher of the Year
- Robert Anderson - Educator at Hoopa Valley High School with the Hoopa Valley Reservation in California
- Zoya Siddiqui - Curatorial Intern

# *During the Session*



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature.**
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

## **For Security and Privacy**

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

# Self-Paced Courses

## American Indian History: Recasting the Narrative



Ignored for generations, American Indian history has recently become among the most dynamic fields of historical inquiry. As scholars now recognize, Indian peoples have fundamentally shaped and defined the modern world. From the founding of the first European settlements in North America to continuing debates over the meanings of American democracy, Indian history remains integral to understanding of US history and culture. This course introduces this complex and often ignored field of study.

### COURSE CONTENT

- Twelve **seminar sessions** led by Professor Ned Blackhawk
- **Primary source readings** that supplement Professor Blackhawk's lectures
- A **certificate of completion** for **15 hours** of professional development credit

**Readings:** The optional readings for each seminar session are listed in the "Resources" tab on the course page. Please note that you are not required to read or purchase any print materials. Quizzes are based on the content of the seminar recordings rather than the readings.

*American Indian History: Recasting the Narrative*, taught by Professor Ned Blackhawk (Western Shoshone), professor of history and American studies at Yale University

## American Indian History: Case Studies



This course, part of the **Gilder Lehrman Self-Paced Course series**, guides participants through a broad and deep exploration of American Indian history through a series of case studies, including early encounters; the Lewis and Clark expedition; and persistence in the face of government expansion, removal, and assimilation policies.

Historian Colin Calloway, Professor of History and Native American Studies at Dartmouth College, guides this comprehensive consideration of the earliest North Americans.

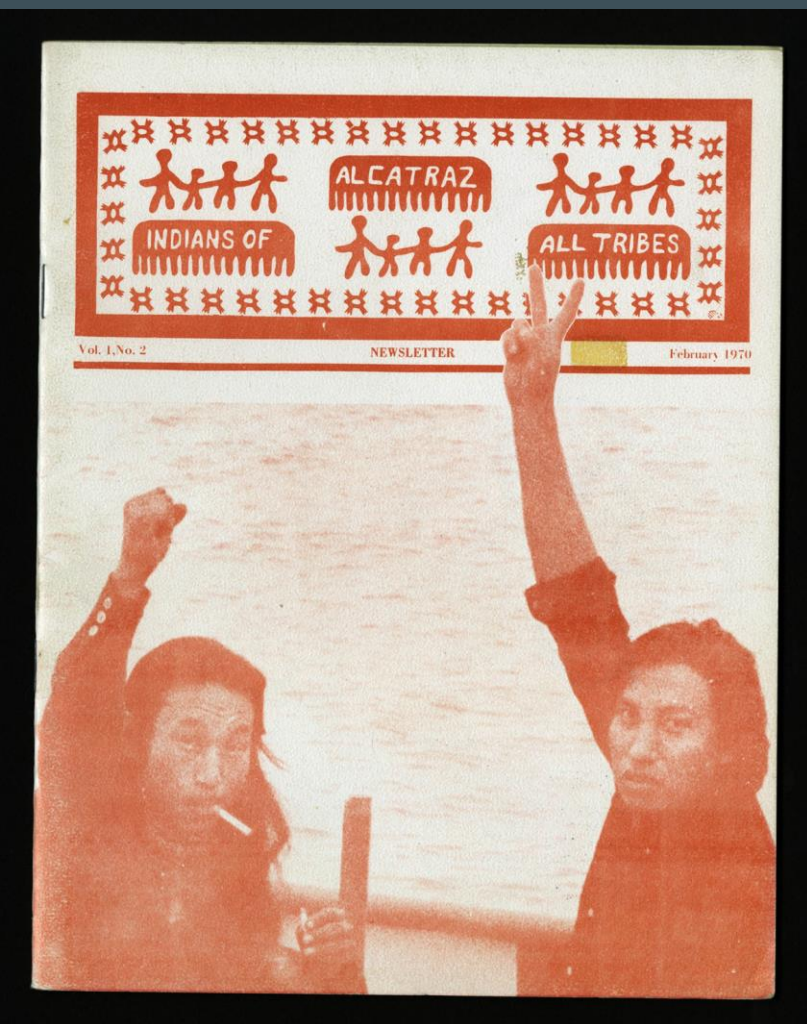
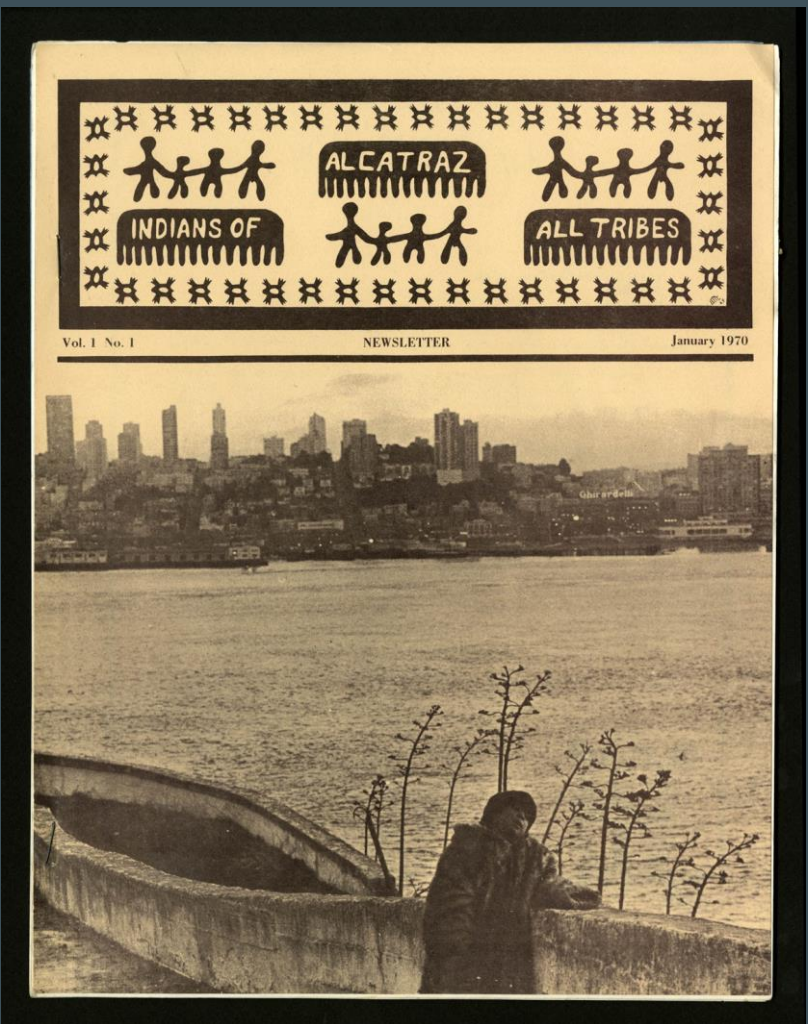
### COURSE CONTENT

- Six two-hour **seminar sessions** led by Professor Calloway, which can be watched at your convenience
- **Primary source readings, digital resources, and teaching tools** that complement Professor Calloway's lectures
- A certificate of completion for **15 hours** of professional development credit

**Readings:** The optional readings for each seminar session are listed in the "Resources" tab on the course page. Please note that you are not required to read or purchase any print materials. Quizzes are based on the content of the seminar recordings rather than the readings.

*American Indian History: Case Studies*, taught by Professor Colin Calloway, professor of history and Native American studies at Dartmouth College

Two issues of *Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes Newsletter*, January-February, 1970



# *Alcatraz Island*

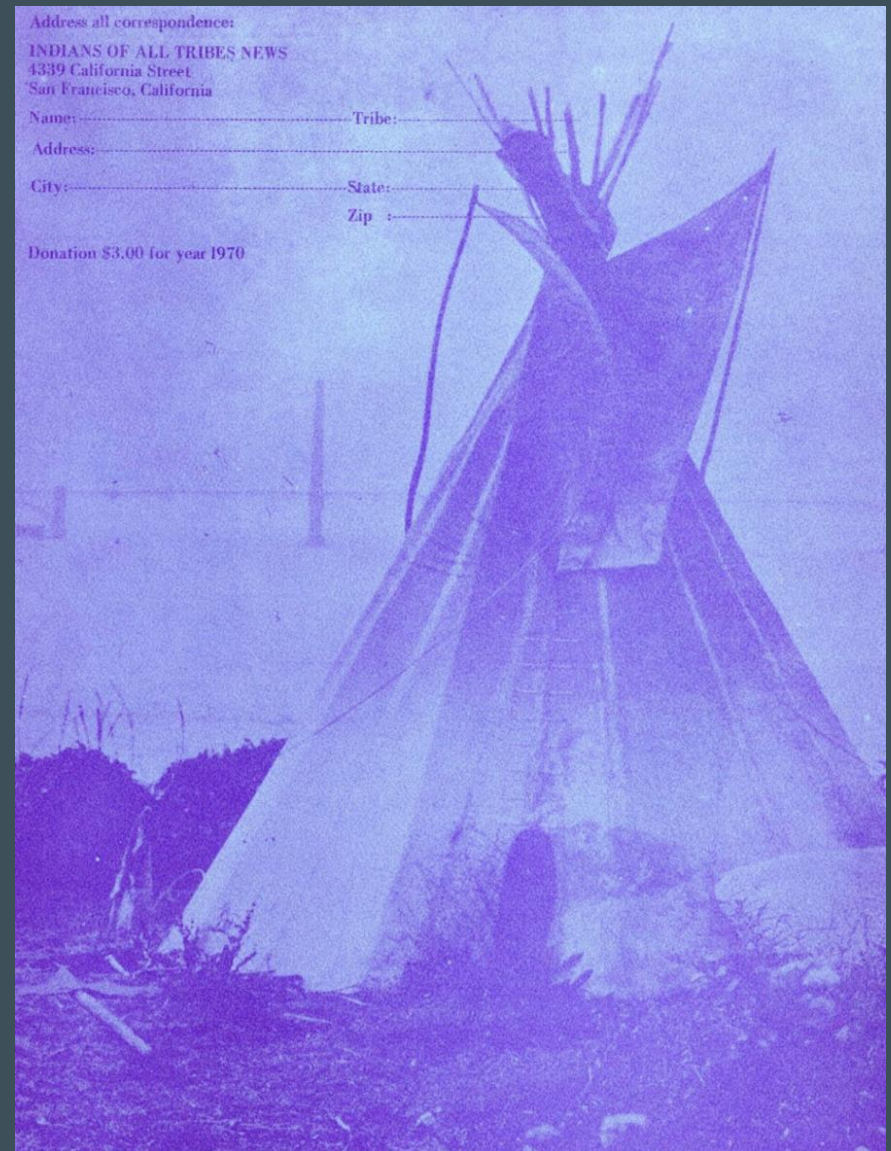
- Sits 1.25 miles off the coast of San Francisco
- The island was a place of isolation for Indigenous Peoples away from forced assimilation on the mainland.
- Operated as a prison from 1861 to 1963
- In 1895, 19 Hopi leaders were imprisoned on the island on sedition charges.
- The island became surplus land after the prison closed.



Alcatraz Island, 1980,  
Library of Congress

# *Self-determination movements*

- Under the Treaty of Fort Laramie, surplus government land was supposed to be returned to the Indigenous group who once owned it.
- American Indian self-determination movements began in the 1920s.
- The occupation was the culmination of centuries of mistreatment by the United States government.
- Alcatraz became a symbol of the government's indifference to Indigenous peoples.



# Timeline of the Occupation of Alcatraz Island

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**October 1969:**  
Fire destroys  
San Francisco's  
American Indian  
Center.

**November 20,  
1969:** Indians of All  
Tribes occupies the  
island with eighty-  
nine men, women,  
and children.

**May 1970:**  
President Nixon cuts  
power to Alcatraz; a  
fire breaks out and  
lowers morale.

**June 11, 1971:**  
The occupation of  
Alcatraz officially  
ends. At this point,  
only 15 people  
remain.

**November 9, 1969:**  
A group of activists  
led by Richard  
Oakes travels to  
Alcatraz for one  
night before being  
removed.

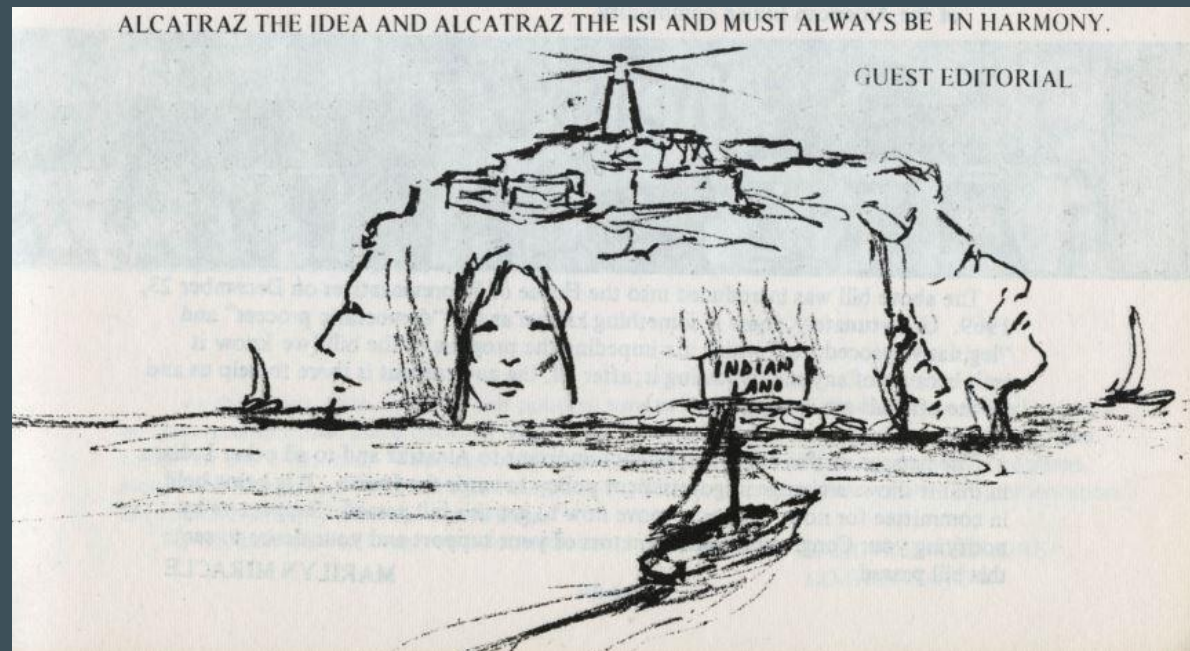
**Late 1969-Early 1970:**  
The Occupation  
continues to grow,  
reaching 600 people  
at its peak.

**May 1970-June 1971:**  
Alcatraz continues to  
be occupied, but  
many people have  
returned to the  
mainland.



# Occupation of Alcatraz Island

- November 20, 1969, led by
  - Richard Oakes (Akwesasne Mohawk)
  - John Trudell (Santee Dakota)
  - Earl Livermore (Niitsitapi)
- Two primary goals:
  - Buy the deed to the island from the US government
  - Have the US government pay for the building of a school, museum, and cultural center on the island
- LaNada Means War Jack (Shoshone-Bannock)
- Linda Aranaydo (Muscogee Creek)
- Stella Leach (Lakota)
- Estimated 10,000 people visited the island in support of the movement over 19 months
- Peaceful beginning, peaceful ending



## **We Hold the Rock!**

- More than 500 distinct nations gathered as a symbol of unification of the movement.
- They wrote a proclamation that outlined their goals and objectives and was later published in the newsletter.

We are a proud people! We are Indians! We have observed and rejected much of what so-called civilization offers. We are Indians! We will preserve our traditions and ways of life by educating our own children. We are Indians! We will join hands in a unity never before put into practice. We are Indians! Our Earth Mother awaits our voices.

**We are Indians Of All Tribes! WE HOLD THE ROCK!**

## PROCLAMATION:

TO THE GREAT WHITE FATHER AND ALL HIS  
PEOPLE

We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery.

We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land, and hereby offer the following treaty:

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars (24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the 47 cents per acre the white men are now paying the California Indians for their land.

We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of the land for their own to be held in trust by the American Indian Affairs and by the bureau of Caucasian Affairs to hold in perpetuity - for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea. We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state. We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all white men.

We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian reservation, as determined by the white man's own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game.
8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

What use will we make of this land?

Since the San Francisco Indian Center burned down, there is no place for Indians to assemble and carry on tribal life here in the white man's city. Therefore, we plan to develop on this island several Indian institutions:

1. A CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES will be developed which will educate them to the skills and knowledge relevant to improve the lives and spirits of all Indian peoples. Attached to this center will be traveling universities, managed by Indians, which will go to the Indian Reservations, learning those necessary and relevant materials now about.
2. AN AMERICAN INDIAN SPIRITUAL CENTER which will practice our ancient tribal religious and sacred healing ceremonies. Our cultural arts will be featured and our young people trained in music, dance, and healing rituals.
3. AN INDIAN CENTER OF ECOLOGY which will train and support our young people in scientific research and practice to restore our lands and waters to their pure and natural state. We will work to de-pollute the air and waters of the Bay Area. We will seek to restore fish and animal life to the area and to revitalize sea life which has been threatened by the white man's way. We will set up facilities to desalt sea water for human benefit.
4. A GREAT INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL will be developed to teach our people how to make a living in the world, improve our standard of living, and to end hunger and unemployment among all our people. This training school will include a center for Indian arts and crafts, and an Indian restaurant serving native foods, which will restore Indian culinary arts. This center will display Indian arts and offer Indian foods to the public, so that all may know of the beauty and spirit of the traditional INDIAN ways.

Some of the present buildings will be taken over to develop an AMERICAN INDIAN MUSEUM, which will depict our native food & other cultural contributions we have given to the world. Another part of the museum will present some of the things the white man has given to the Indians in return for the land and life he took: disease, alcohol, poverty and cultural decimation (As symbolized by old tin cans, barbed wire, rubber tires, plastic containers, etc.). Part of the museum will remain a dungeon to symbolize both those Indian captives who were incarcerated for challenging white authority, and those who were imprisoned on reservations. The museum will show the noble and the tragic events of Indian history, including the broken treaties, the documentary of the Trail of Tears, the Massacre of Wounded Knee, as well as the victory over Yellow Hair Custer and his army.

In the name of all Indians, therefore, we re-claim this island for our Indian nations, for all these reasons, We feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land should rightfully be granted to us for as long as the rivers shall run and the sun shall shine.

Signed,

Indians Of All Tribes  
November 1969  
San Francisco, California

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# *“What use will we make of this land?”*

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## Education in Progress

On December 11, 1969, Alcatraz's new "Big Rock School" opened its doors for the first time, admitting 12 enrolled students, ranging in levels from kindergarten to level 6. Since this time, the school has reached a peak enrollment of 22 students on December 30.

The instructors; Linda Aranaydo, Creek; Vicky Santana, Blackfeet; Douglas Remington, Ute, and Woeha Cloud North, Winnebago, with the assistance of the permanent aides, Justine Moppin, Mono, and Rosalie Willie, Paiute, and a number of teenagers have all worked co-operatively to give each child as much individual and group attention as needed.

The Big Rock School was set up as an experimental school, with the order of subject material flexible, varying with each individual student. The guidelines the instructors use for the student depend entirely on how the subject material is grasped by the student, and how this learning fits into his own growth and development.

The subject material itself includes reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, health and science studies. There are also native studies, which include native history, culture, and as much specific tribal information as may be provided by the parents of the children, and others familiar with this field.

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### Alcatraz Nursery School

Alcatraz Nursery School was started in December in the caretaker's building although it was previously in operation in the office quarters of the main cell block.

When it originated, the nursery was operated as a day care center for the working mothers on the island. Now, although the basic idea is the same, the nursery has evolved into a pre-primary institution and enables the youngsters of Alcatraz to learn through a wide variety of stimuli such as painting, modeling clay, collages, paper cut-outs, block building, story telling, and most interesting song - sessions in which Mr. Francis Allen, Sac & Fox, participates by singing Indian songs to the children.

## Health Clinic

The health clinic of Alcatraz, run entirely with volunteers, started November 21, the second day after the invasion. Clinic hours: 8:30 AM - 5 PM daily. 24 hours in case of emergency. Stella Leach, LPN, Colville - Sioux was put in charge. Mrs. Leach, a dynamic grandmother, took a three month leave of absence from her job at the Well Baby Clinic in Oakland.

Grandma Stella reports, "I wouldn't have missed this opportunity for the world. This Indian movement is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me." When asked about the health on the island she said, "We have the usual colds at this time of the year, but other than that everybody on the island is well."

Volunteer doctors are on duty from 2PM to 4 PM daily. Heading the staff are Doctors: David J. Tepper, Robert Brennan, and Richard Fine. Miss Jenny Joe, Navajo, RN, runs the clinic on weekends.



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## Kitchen and Stores

Organization of storage rooms for canned goods, dry goods, and meats, vegetables, etc., is now in smooth operation. Dry ice is being used in our food lockers at the moment, but it is hoped that better means of refrigeration will be put into operation soon. All orders for food are taken from the cooks and passed on to the Finance Committee who in turn do all the buying through our expert purchasing agent, Judy Scraper.

Three stoves and a water heater run on butane are now functioning in the kitchen. The cooks include: Vernon Conway, Wallacki - Yuki - Wintun; Ted Jake, Yakima, and Manny McDougal, Colville. Our expert on nutrition is Gloria Duran, a student at U.C. at Berkeley. A number of volunteers help with food preparation as well as dishwashing and general cleanup. On weekends we welcome the many women who contribute so much time to kitchen chores.

Things are going pretty well in the kitchen.

THE STOREKEEPER

# *Radio Free Alcatraz*

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## Radio Free Alcatraz

Radio Free Alcatraz broadcasted for the first time on December 22, 1969 from Alcatraz Island. Radio Station KPFA - FM, Berkeley, California, of the Pacifica Foundation offered us prime time (7:15 PM) in which to broadcast. We are free to air any type of programming we wish.

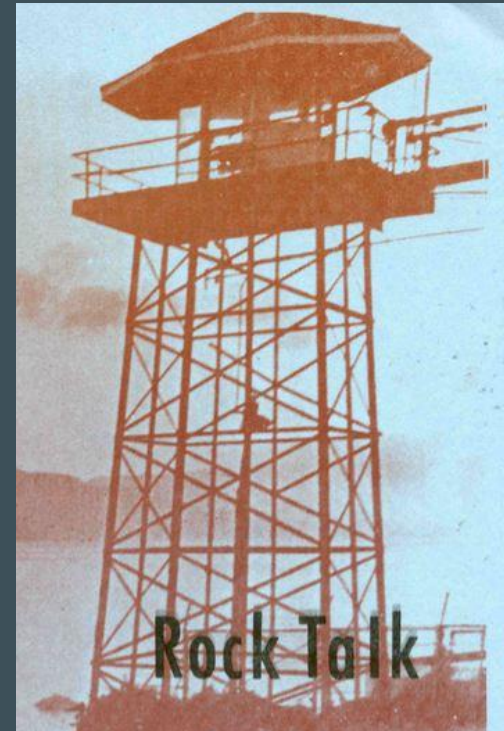
Radio Free Alcatraz reaches an Indian listening audience of approximately 100,000. Besides KPFA, are her sister stations; KPFK, Los Angeles, and WBAI, New York. We are making use of this opportunity by broadcasting Indian affairs and problems confronting our Indian People all across our lands as well as here on Alcatraz.

We will also stress cultural awareness by presenting the Indian Arts such as music, poetry, legends, and stories of our past and the present.

If anyone is interested in submitting material for broadcast or wishes more information concerning Radio Free Alcatraz, please contact John Trudell through the Alcatraz Relief Fund Office. Participation is needed and will be welcome, as we believe it is one step closer to Indian unification.

JOHN TRUDELL :SANTEE SIOUX

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# *Request for Infrastructure Services*

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CLINIC NEEDS: Standard clinic supplies - emergency hospital equipment - portable laboratories - bathing and laundry facilities - portable heaters - sterilizers - Coleman stoves and Lanterns.

TELEPHONES are needed in case of:

[

1. Health emergencies on the Island.
2. Emergency utility repairs on the Island.
3. Families on the Mainland should be able to contact "Alcatrazans" in case of emergency situations.

TRANSPORTATION: Federal docking privileges on the Mainland - boat capable of carrying 40 people and supplies - two pick-up trucks - emergency helicopters service - adequate docking facilities.

MAINTENANCE MEN to repair or install:

1. Plumbing
2. Wiring
3. Heating
4. Stairway treads
5. Install fencing in dangerous areas.
6. Water pumps for toilets

OTHER NEEDS: Surplus food commodities - garbage and sewage disposal equipment - janitor and maintenance (supplies and tools) - office equipment and machines - a large generator capable of supplying electricity for the Island - a portable kitchen suitable for 200 feeding 200 people (field type) - fire fighting equipment - recreation and athletic equipment.

We consider these needs important, but not as important as our dreams of an Indian Culture Center on Alcatraz.

# Response

You and your Indian predecessors on the island have been warned repeatedly of such dangers by me. Such warnings commenced on November 20, 1969, when you initially appeared on the island, and I have taken every opportunity since then, both on personal visits here and in press statements, to keep all of you apprised of the dangers. It is impossible to convey this message to you individually because of the continuing turnover of personnel.

In spite of the numerous warnings, several serious accidents have occurred.

I must therefore again advise you that you are present here as trespassers. I must further advise you that the Government assumes no responsibility for your safety while you remain on this island.

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Robert Robertson, Executive Director,  
National Council on Indian Opportunity,  
January 12, 1970

# American Indian Activism

- The Occupation of Alcatraz Island ended June 11, 1971 when federal marshals removed the last remaining 15 people.
- Movement inspired widespread American Indian activism.
  - Occupation of Wounded Knee, 1973
  - 1975 Indian Self-Determination Act
  - Protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline



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# Upcoming Programs

- *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, May 6 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  - We will be discussing the experiences of nurse Ella Jane Osborn and infantryman Russell Flynn during World War I.
- *Book Breaks*, April 18 at 2 pm ET (11 am PT)
  - Richard Haass discusses his book *The World: A Brief Introduction*.
- The Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize, April 19 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  - Honoring 2020 & 2021 Lincoln Prize winners - Elizabeth Varon for *Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War*, and David S. Reynolds for *Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times*
- Sign up for History School classes for elementary to high school students through May 15th!