



# Resource Wars in California

Before Europeans arrived, the central part of today's California was the most densely populated region in what is now the continental United States. Studying 1,000 years of Native American burials, researchers related trauma to skeletal remains and periods of scarcity. Where conditions were harsh, more remains showed injuries, evidence that competition for limited resources contributes to violent conflict, even in small communities. Lead author Mark Allen, anthropology professor at Cal Poly Pomona, found that where resources were scarce, seven percent of remains studied showed signs of forced trauma, such as arrow, knife, and cudgel wounds. Signs of violence marked five percent of female skeletons and 11 percent of male skeletons. The results support a hypothesis linking violence to competition for scarce resources rather than social stratification. The study appeared in the October 25, 2016 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



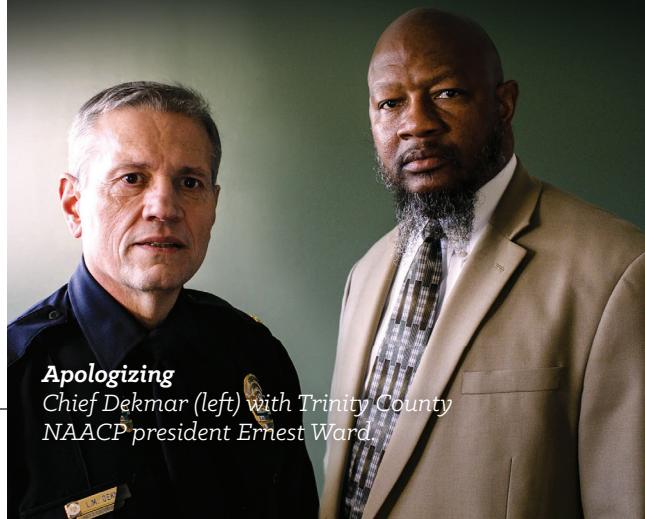
# Top Bid: Batting First

A first edition of the Batman comic sold for \$143,400 at Heritage Auctions in February. Envisioned by artist Bob Kane in the vein of an airborne Zorro, the character was softened by writer Bill Finger, who pushed for a cape and cowl instead of wings, less vigilantism, and Bruce Wayne as the character's civilian name. Batman debuted in 1940.

# Lynchings Remembered

On January 26, 2017, Louis Dekmar, chief of police in LaGrange, Georgia, apologized for what he called his department's "action and inaction" in the 1940 death of Austin Callaway. Callaway, a black man, was slain by a mob that had dragged him from LaGrange's jail. Dekmar's apology—77 years after the fact—was part of efforts to bring attention to the history of lawless killing of African-Americans. A 2016 Equal Justice Initiative study estimated that between 1877 and 1950 lynchings claimed more than 4,000 African-Americans. Educational materials company auut studio—findauut.com—has mapped lynchings in America from 1835 to 1964, marking when and where fellow Americans killed blacks, as well as Chinese, Native Americans, Latins, and Italians. The deaths appear on an interactive map, color coded by group on a timeline indicating increased incidence of attacks—1920 was the peak—and who suffered. The map builds on research by African-American scholar Monroe Work, who pioneered data analysis of the black experience in America.

A son of former slaves, Work, who trained and worked at the University of Chicago, correlated crime with housing conditions. The first African-American to publish in the *American Journal of Sociology*, he moved in 1908 to the Tuskegee Institute, where he combed newspapers and reported every other year on lynching. To verify Work's results and build the new map, staff at auut spent four years combining Work's results with other scholarly data. Questions and caveats at the site help visitors understand the process of building a database on so controversial and poorly documented a topic. Along with Work, the site profiles eight other anti-lynching activists—monroeworktoday.org.



Apologizing Chief Dekmar (left) with Trinity County NAACP president Ernest Ward.

FROM TOP: CHRONICLE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; HERITAGE AUCTIONS, DALLAS; JUSTIN CHAMBERS/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDX

Copyright of American History is the property of Historynet LLC and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.