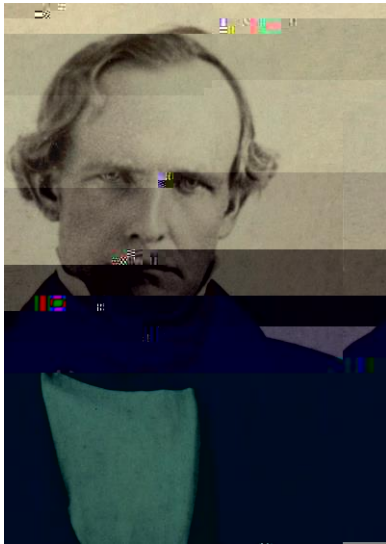


Kit Carson

Kit Carson was perhaps the most famous trapper and guide in the West who traveled with John C. Frémont's expeditions in the 1840s. Frémont's wife, Jessie Benton Frémont

Peter Burnett



California's first governor, Peter Burnett, came from a slaveholding Missouri family. He migrated to the Oregon Territory to escape his debtors and ultimately became the Supreme Judge of Oregon's territorial government. He advocated for the total exclusion of all African Americans from the territory and authored what became known as "Burnett's lash law," which authorized the beating of any free Black people refusing to leave the territory.

As the Gold Rush began in 1848 Burnett migrated to California. While serving on the state Supreme Court, he ordered the extradition of Archy Lee (a slave who the California Court had ruled was a free) back to Mississippi. Burnett, who owned two slaves that he kept in California, advocated for the total exclusion of African Americans in

California, as he had in Oregon.

Regarding California's tribal communities, Burnett gave state money to local militias to exterminate the indigenous peoples and worked with the US government to obtain the resources needed to carry out this genocide. Consequently, with support from the U.S. Army, local militias raided tribal settlements and murdered Native people. Local governments paid bounties to settlers for Native scalps and for the horses of the tribal people they killed. According to the historian Benjamin Madley, about 100,000 Natives in California died during the first two years of the Gold Rush alone; by 1873, only 30,000 Indigenous people remain (Madely 2016). At least 16,000 murders of Native Indians of California are documented during this time (Blakemore, 2019).

