

#9 – The Black Hills

First off, I wanted to say thank you to those who have contacted me about the Notes this year. I have had some interesting discussions and I appreciate your comments. Secondly, I mentioned at the outset that I would include something historical. I thought that this might be of interest to you.

A friend of mine over at the Department of Education received an email from a teacher asking this question, which she sent on to me:

" does anyone know of a web site or where I can find information regarding the sale of the Black Hills to the Lakotas?"

response:

well, first off the Black Hills were never sold to the Lakota Sioux, nor did they ever sell them. The Treaty of Ft. Laramie was in 1851 signed by the government that set aside that area, their homeland, for them forever. It also included a number of other tribes and their territories. You can read the treaty in its entirety at:

http://puffin.creighton.edu/lakota/1851_la.html

In 1868 The Second Fort Laramie Treaty was signed that specifically secured traditional Sioux territories. George Armstrong Custer was commissioned to explore the rumors about gold in the Black Hills and found it. After that, the Treaty was almost immediately violated and Euro-American exploitation went on in full strength. Much blood was shed on both sides.

1877 US government forced the Chiefs to transfer the Black Hills to its control, and organized the partition of the vast Sioux Territory into a number of small reservations.

In modern times, the Lakota sued the government for breaking the treaty, asking that the land be returned to them.

In June 30, 1980, after decades of legal wrangling, the high federal court upheld an award to the Great Sioux Nation of \$17.1 million for the illegal taking of the Black Hills, plus \$88 million in interest. Since then, that total has multiplied five-fold, as the Lakota, likely the poorest of the Indian tribes, refuse to take the money. They do not consider any amount of money a recompense for the sacred Black Hills, and will hold out indefinitely for the land. In the meantime, the interest continues to mount.

more references:

<http://www.unpo.org/member.php?arg=35>

http://www.pbs.org/mattersofrace/essays/essay3_survival.html

<http://www.hanksville.org/daniel/lakota/BlackHills.html>

http://www.sacredland.org/historical_sites_pages/black_hills.html

<http://www.l3-lewisandclark.com/ShowOneObject.asp?SiteID=30&ObjectID=633>

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