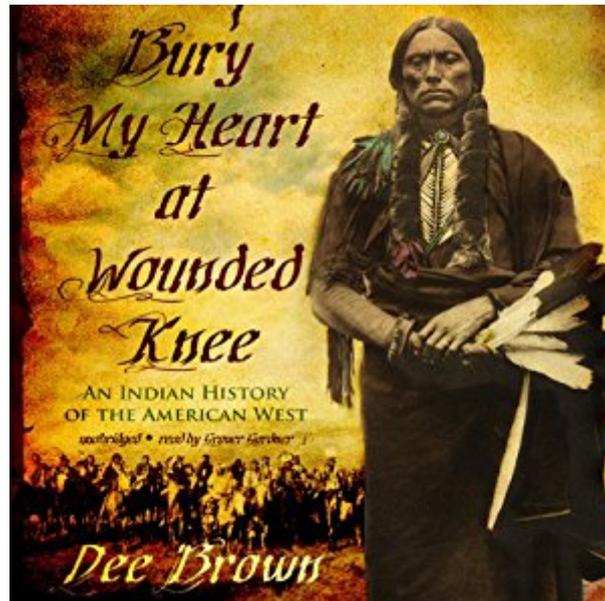


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Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee: An Indian History Of The American West



Synopsis

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee is Dee Brown's classic, eloquent, meticulously documented account of the systematic destruction of the American Indian during the second half of the nineteenth century. Using council records, autobiographies, and firsthand descriptions, Brown allows great chiefs and warriors of the Dakota, Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, and other tribes to tell us in their own words of the series of battles, massacres, and broken treaties that finally left them and their people demoralized and decimated. A unique and disturbing narrative told with force and clarity, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee has become a watershed in American culture that changed forever our vision of how the West was won and lost. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Since its publication in 1970, Dee Brown's well-documented history of American Indians from 1860 to 1990 has sold more than 5 million copies. Mr. Brown quotes from original documents, including translations of the actual words of the Indians as they made their eloquent pleas for justice in the many councils they attended and where they were deceived again and again by white men who robbed them of their land. Even though there's a certain sameness to the outcomes, each tribe had a different experience. The Indians didn't have a concept of ownership of land. To them, it belonged to everybody. As they couldn't read, they didn't know what they were signing, but even when they did understand, it was just a matter of time until new laws took even more land away. And then

there were the massacres. I had tears in my eyes while reading about them, especially in the descriptions of the cruelty to women and children. The Indians fought as best as they could, but they were no match for big guns and well-equipped armies. It was an awful time in our history, one of shame for Americans. Throughout the book I couldn't help thinking about the real stories it contained that would make great movies. There's the story of the Seneca Indian who took the name Ely Parker and studied to be a lawyer. Because he was an Indian, he was not allowed to practice and so he became an engineer. During the Civil war he was Military Secretary to U.S. Grant. Later, he was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs. How that all played out is a fascinating story. And then there is the story of the Ponca Indian, Standing Bear, who left the reservation in the late 1870s with a small band of people. Because of some helpful white men, his case was argued in the courts.

Let me first say, Dee Brown's book, BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE is a well written classic that flows nicely. It contains great structure and is a pleasure to read. Certainly no right thinking person would disagree that the American Indians were used and abused by the government at every turn. The treaties the Indians signed were more often than not, not worth the paper they were written on. Murderous cowards like Chivington betrayed those who declared themselves peaceful and friends of the whites, like Black Kettle and the Cheyenne atrocity at Sand Creek. While still under British rule, Indians of the Ohio Valley were victims of one of the first instances of bio-terrorism when the British knowingly and deliberately infected them with small pox. So while it is safe to say the sentiment of Brown's book is clearly accurate and justified, for the overall scope of the book, exception must be taken by anyone seeking the cold hard truth. Since Brown's book was published, and quickly popularized, most historians have followed Brown's approach to viewing the Indian wars of the American West from a strictly ethnocentric viewpoint. To them, the term "Indian wars" has come to mean only "Indian - White wars", fought primarily to interrupt the flow of the expansion of white settlement. Paul Wellman began this trend in 1934 with his publication of the account of the 1862 Minnesota Massacre, DEATH ON THE PRARIE. However, what Wellman began, Brown perfected, until we have now reach, in this country, where the history of the American Indian is involved, a sort of Zinnian approach (a phrase I coined myself after revisionist historian Howard Zinn) to the re-writing or revision of American history, in this case specifically, the history of the American West.

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