

bury my heart at wounded knee

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: A Powerful Chronicle of Native American History

bury my heart at wounded knee is more than just a phrase; it's a profound reflection on the tragic history of Native Americans in the United States. Originally popularized by Dee Brown's groundbreaking 1970 book, "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" delves deeply into the systematic displacement and suffering endured by Indigenous peoples during the late 19th century. This phrase has since become synonymous with the sorrow and resilience of Native American communities, capturing a pivotal era marked by loss, resistance, and enduring cultural survival.

The Origins of "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee"

The phrase "bury my heart at wounded knee" originates from a poem titled "American Names" by Stephen Vincent Benét, which mourns the violent history associated with many Native American sites. Dee Brown's book adopted this evocative line as its title, using it as a powerful metaphor to illustrate the emotional and physical devastation inflicted upon Native tribes.

Dee Brown's Landmark Book

Published in 1970, Dee Brown's "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" revolutionized the way American history was told. Prior to this, the dominant narratives often glorified westward expansion while marginalizing Native perspectives. Brown's work shifted the focus, presenting history through the eyes of Native Americans and documenting injustices such as forced relocations, broken treaties, massacres, and cultural erasure.

The book covers significant events, including the Sand Creek Massacre, the Battle of Little Bighorn, and the infamous Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890—where hundreds of Lakota Sioux men, women, and children were killed by U.S. troops. Brown's detailed storytelling humanizes the victims and exposes the brutal policies of the U.S. government and military during this period.

Understanding the Historical Context of Wounded Knee

To fully grasp the significance of "bury my heart at wounded knee," it helps to understand the historical backdrop against which these events unfolded. The late 1800s was a time of rapid expansion for the United States, driven by Manifest Destiny—the belief that Americans were destined to spread across the continent.

The Forced Displacement of Native Americans

As settlers moved westward, Native American tribes were pushed off their ancestral lands through a

series of treaties—many of which were unfair or outright ignored by the U.S. government. Reservations were established, often on undesirable land, disrupting traditional ways of life and economies based on hunting, fishing, and agriculture.

This period saw numerous conflicts as Native Americans resisted encroachment, culminating in violent clashes. The Wounded Knee Massacre is often cited as the tragic endpoint of this era—a symbol of both defeat and the indomitable spirit of Indigenous peoples.

The Wounded Knee Massacre: A Tragic Culmination

On December 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota, U.S. soldiers confronted a band of Lakota Sioux. What began as an attempt to disarm the group quickly escalated into chaos and bloodshed, resulting

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' about?

'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' is a historical book by Dee Brown that chronicles the systematic displacement and destruction of Native American tribes in the late 19th century United States, focusing on the injustices they faced.

Who wrote 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee'?

The book was written by Dee Brown, an American historian and author, and was first published in 1970.

Why is 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' considered important?

It is considered important because it presents Native American history from their perspective, highlighting the suffering and broken treaties during westward expansion, which was largely overlooked in mainstream history.

What historical events are covered in 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee'?

The book covers major events such as the Sand Creek Massacre, the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Nez Perce flight, and the Wounded Knee Massacre, among others.

Has 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' been adapted into other media?

Yes, the book was adapted into a television film in 2007, which brought the story to a wider audience

and visualized the struggles of Native Americans during that era.

What impact did 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' have on public awareness?

The book increased public awareness and empathy towards Native American history and issues, influencing discussions about indigenous rights and historical injustices.

Is 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee' used in educational settings?

Yes, it is often included in school and university curricula to teach about Native American history, U.S. expansionism, and the consequences of colonialism.

What is the significance of the title 'Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee'?

The title symbolizes the deep sorrow and loss experienced by Native Americans, referencing the Wounded Knee Massacre as a tragic culmination of their suffering during U.S. westward expansion.

Additional Resources

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: A Critical Examination of Native American History and Legacy

bury my heart at wounded knee is more than just a phrase; it is the title of a seminal work that has profoundly influenced the understanding of Native American history in the United States. Written by Dee Brown and published in 1970, the book offers a poignant and detailed account of the systematic displacement, cultural destruction, and violent confrontations faced by Native American tribes during the westward expansion of the United States. This article explores the historical significance, thematic depth, and lasting impact of "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," while also considering its role in shaping contemporary discourse on Indigenous issues.

Historical Context and Significance

Dee Brown's "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" is a meticulously researched chronicle that covers the period from the mid-19th century to the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. The book draws on a wide range of primary sources, including government documents, eyewitness testimonies, and tribal records, to present a narrative largely absent from mainstream histories of the American West. It foregrounds the experiences of Native American peoples, detailing the loss of their lands, livelihoods, and lives as a consequence of U.S. policies and settler encroachment.

The title itself references the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota, where hundreds of Lakota Sioux men, women, and children were killed by U.S. Army forces. This event symbolizes the tragic culmination of decades of conflict and the systematic oppression of Indigenous peoples. By centering this watershed moment, Brown's work highlights the human cost of

colonization and the failure of government treaties and promises.

Unveiling the Native American Perspective

One of the defining features of "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" is its dedication to presenting history from the Native American perspective. Prior to its publication, much of the historical narrative around the American West was dominated by Euro-American viewpoints, often portraying Native Americans as obstacles to progress or as romanticized figures detached from contemporary realities.

Brown's approach disrupts these narratives by amplifying Indigenous voices and experiences. The book provides detailed accounts of tribal leaders such as Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Geronimo, illuminating their resistance efforts and cultural resilience. This shift in perspective was critical in fostering a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and injustices faced by Native Americans during this era.

Thematic Exploration and Narrative Style

Dee Brown's narrative is both analytical and deeply empathetic, weaving a tapestry of sorrow, resilience, and injustice. The book explores themes such as broken treaties, forced removals, cultural genocide, and the relentless march of Manifest Destiny. By incorporating direct quotations and firsthand accounts, the text conveys the emotional depth and human tragedy underpinning historical events.

The structure of "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" is chronological, guiding readers through a series of interconnected stories that collectively build the larger picture of Native American suffering and resistance. Brown's prose is measured and accessible, balancing scholarly rigor with compelling storytelling. This accessibility has contributed to the book's enduring popularity and educational use.

Impact on Public Awareness and Indigenous Rights Movements

The publication of "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" marked a turning point in public awareness of Native American history. It coincided with the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and a broader push for Indigenous rights during the late 20th century. The book galvanized support for Native American causes by exposing the historical roots of contemporary issues such as land rights disputes, cultural preservation, and political sovereignty.

Furthermore, the book has been instrumental in academic circles, influencing the fields of Native American studies, history, and anthropology. It has prompted educators and policymakers to reexamine curricula and historical narratives, fostering greater inclusivity and accuracy.

Comparative Analysis: Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee and Other Historical Works

When compared to other historical texts about Native American history, "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" stands out for its comprehensive scope and emotional resonance. Unlike earlier histories that often minimized Indigenous suffering or portrayed Native Americans in a one-dimensional manner, Brown's work foregrounds their humanity and agency.

For instance, while books like Francis Parkman's "The Oregon Trail" offered a pioneer-centric view, often romanticizing westward expansion, Brown's narrative serves as a counterpoint that emphasizes the consequences of that expansion for Native communities. Similarly, it complements works such as Vine Deloria Jr.'s "Custer Died for Your Sins," which critiques ongoing policies and attitudes toward Native Americans, by providing a historical foundation for contemporary critiques.

Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths:**

- Comprehensive documentation of Native American experiences during a critical historical period.
- Incorporation of Indigenous voices and primary sources enhances authenticity.
- Accessible writing style appeals to both academic and general audiences.
- Influential in reshaping historical narratives and promoting Indigenous rights.

- **Limitations:**

- Some critics argue that the book reflects a romanticized view of Native Americans as noble victims, potentially oversimplifying complex histories.
- As a work published in 1970, it does not incorporate some of the more recent scholarship and Indigenous methodologies that emphasize self-representation.
- The focus on tragic events can overshadow examples of Indigenous resilience and cultural continuity beyond conflict.

The Legacy of Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee in Contemporary Culture

Beyond its historical and academic importance, "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" has permeated popular culture and media. It inspired a 2007 HBO film adaptation that sought to bring the book's powerful narratives to a wider audience, underscoring its relevance in discussions about race, justice, and historical memory.

Moreover, the phrase itself has entered the lexicon as a poignant metaphor for mourning the loss of Indigenous lands, cultures, and lives. It is frequently referenced in activism, literature, and art that seeks to reckon with the United States' colonial past and its ongoing implications.

Educational Influence and Continued Relevance

Today, "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" remains a staple in educational settings, from high school classrooms to university courses. Its continued use underscores the necessity of confronting difficult histories to foster understanding and reconciliation. The book encourages readers to question dominant narratives and to acknowledge the deep wounds inflicted upon Native American communities.

As Indigenous voices and scholarship gain prominence, the legacy of Brown's work persists as both a foundation and a catalyst for more inclusive historical inquiry. It invites ongoing dialogue about the representation of marginalized histories and the responsibilities of historians and educators.

The enduring power of "bury my heart at wounded knee" lies in its unflinching portrayal of a painful chapter in American history, serving as a reminder of the human cost of expansion and the resilience of those who endured it. This work continues to challenge readers to confront the past honestly and to consider the ramifications that history holds for present and future generations.

[Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee](#)

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bury my heart at wounded knee: Literature Suppressed on Political Grounds Nicholas J. Karolides, Margaret Bald, 2014-05-14 Literature Suppressed on Religious Grounds, Revised Edition

profiles the censorship of many such essential works of literature. The entries new to this edition include extensive coverage of the Harry Potter series, which has been frequently banned in the United States on the grounds that it promotes witchcraft, as well as entries on two popular textbook series, *The Witches* by Roald Dahl, *Women Without Men: A Novel of Modern Iran*, and more. Also included are updates to such entries as *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie and *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin.

bury my heart at wounded knee: Police Files: The Spokane Experience 1853-1995 M. Kienholz, 1999

bury my heart at wounded knee: The Remembered Earth Gary Hobson, 1981-04 This broad survey of Native American writing today is incisive, reflective, moving, and provocative in its variety.

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bury my heart at wounded knee: *Academic Writing* Ilona Leki, 1998-07-13 This book provides instruction on the process writers go through to produce texts. It teaches attention to form, format and accuracy. The central goals of the Student's Book are to teach the process that writers go through to produce texts, and to provide instructions on how to meet the demands of the academy by attention to form and accuracy. One half of the book is devoted to leading the student through the process of writing from observation and experience. About a quarter of the book focuses on helping the student solve the writing problems typical of university-level course work. The remaining part of the book contains an anthology of readings that correspond to the assignments used in the earlier portions of the text. Through an emphasis on the academic applications of writing and on exploring processes and strategies, this text helps students produce, prepare, and polish their writing. -- Description from <http://www.amazon.com> (April 19, 2012).

bury my heart at wounded knee: *Honest Patriots : Loving a Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds* Donald W. Shriver Jr. President of the Faculty and William E. Dodge Professor of Applied Christianity Union Theological Seminary (Emeritus), 2005-02-18 In *Honest Patriots*, renowned public theologian and ethicist Donald W. Shriver, Jr. argues that we must acknowledge and repent of the morally negative events in our nation's past. The failure to do so skews the relations of many Americans to one another, breeds ongoing hostility, and damages the health of our society. Yet our civic identity today largely rests on denials, forgetfulness, and inattention to the memories of neighbors whose ancestors suffered great injustices at the hands of some dominant majority. Shriver contends that repentance for these injustices must find a place in our political culture. Such repentance must be carefully and deliberately cultivated through the accurate teaching of history, by means of public symbols that embody both positive and negative memory, and through public leadership to this end. Religious people and religious organizations have an important role to play in this process. Historically, the Christian tradition has concentrated on the personal dimensions of forgiveness and repentance to the near-total neglect of their collective aspects. Recently, however, the idea of collective moral responsibility has gained new and public visibility. Official apologies for past collective injustice have multiplied, along with calls for reparations. Shriver looks in detail at the examples of Germany and South Africa, and their pioneering efforts to foster and express collective repentance. He then turns to the historic wrongs perpetrated against African Americans and Native Americans and to recent efforts by American citizens and governmental bodies to seek public justice by remembering public injustice. The call for collective repentance presents many challenges: What can it mean to morally master a past whose victims are dead and whose sufferings cannot be alleviated? What are the measures that lend substance to language and action expressing repentance? What symbolic and tangible acts produce credible turns away from past wrongs? What are the dynamics-psychological, social, and political-whereby we can safely consign an evil to the past? How can public life witness to corporate crimes of the past in such a way that descendents of victims can be confident that they will never be repeated? In his provocative answers to these questions Shriver creates a compelling new vision of the collective repentance and apology that must precede real progress in relations between the races in this country.

bury my heart at wounded knee: *The Plains Indian Wars, 1864-1890* Andrew Langley, 2013

Looks at the Plains Indian Wars that took place in the United States at the end of the 19th century and how these wars affected people on both sides of the conflict.

bury my heart at wounded knee: Stricken Field Jerome A. Greene, 2008 The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is the site of one of America's most famous armed struggles, but the events surrounding Custer's defeat there in 1876 are only the beginning of the story. As park custodians, American Indians, and others have contested how the site should be preserved and interpreted for posterity, the Little Bighorn has turned into a battlefield in more ways than one. In *Stricken Field*, one of America's foremost military historians offers the first comprehensive history of the site and its administration in more than half a century. Jerome A. Greene has produced a compelling account of one of the West's most hallowed and controversial attractions, beginning with the battle itself and ending with the establishment of an American Indian memorial early in the twenty-first century. Chronicling successive efforts of the War Department and the National Park Service to oversee the site, Greene describes the principal issues that have confounded its managers, from battle observances and memorials to ongoing maintenance, visitor access, and public use. *Stricken Field* is a cautionary tale. Greene elucidates the conflict between the Park Service's dual mission to provide public access while preserving the integrity of a historical resource. He also traces the complex events surrounding the site, including Indian protests in the 1970s and 1980s that ultimately contributed to the 2003 dedication of a monument finally recognizing the Lakotas, Northern Cheyennes, and other American Indians who fought there.

bury my heart at wounded knee: Day Pass from the Asylum Meryl Taylor, 2013-05-01 *Day Pass From The Asylum* is Meryl Taylor's second large collection of poetry published and ninth overall since 1987. She is also a romance novelist with first title to be released in August in the UK. She is a retired law enforcement officer, equestrian, artist and attributes her gifts to her hellish childhood and the kind people she crossed paths with by chance and by providence (Aunt BeaTisdale) Especially to be mentioned is her late husband who never lost faith and the incredible Todd Gates whose gift for healing and friendship tapped a well spring of creativity that has been a blessing. Thank you dear friend. Part of the proceeds of this volume will be dedicated to the American Humane Society.

bury my heart at wounded knee: Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee Tracy Keenan Wynn, 1984 Unproduced script based on the book by Dee Brown, about the battle with Custer at Wounded Knee.

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bury my heart at wounded knee: Law and War Peter H. Maguire, 2010 This is a revised edition of *Law and war : an American story* [published in 2000].--T.p. verso.

bury my heart at wounded knee: Reservation Reelism Michelle H. Raheja, 2011-01-01 In this deeply engaging account Michelle H. Raheja offers the first book-length study of the Indigenous actors, directors, and spectators who helped shape Hollywood's representation of Indigenous peoples. Since the era of silent films, Hollywood movies and visual culture generally have provided the primary representational field on which Indigenous images have been displayed to non-Native audiences. These films have been highly influential in shaping perceptions of Indigenous peoples as, for example, a dying race or as inherently unable or unwilling to adapt to change. However, films with Indigenous plots and subplots also signify at least some degree of Native presence in a culture that largely defines Native peoples as absent or separate. Native actors, directors, and spectators have had a part in creating these cinematic representations and have thus complicated the dominant, and usually negative, messages about Native peoples that films portray. In *Reservation Reelism* Raheja examines the history of these Native actors, directors, and spectators, reveals their contributions, and attempts to create positive representations in film that reflect the complex and vibrant experiences of Native peoples and communities.

bury my heart at wounded knee: A Misplaced Massacre Ari Kelman, 2013-02-11 On

November 29, 1864, over 150 Native Americans, mostly women, children, and elderly, were slaughtered in one of the most infamous cases of state-sponsored violence in U.S. history. Kelman examines how generations of Americans have struggled with the question of whether the nation's crimes, as well as its achievements, should be memorialized.

bury my heart at wounded knee: 100 More Great Books Bonnie A. Helms, 1991 A companion title to 150 Great Books, this acclaimed sequel reviews classic and contemporary works. Each title contains a plot summary, three evaluation tools (a 20-question quiz, 5 short-answer questions, and a challenge essay question), answers and suggested responses, glossary of literary terms, and bibliographical entries. The 100 titles are grouped in seven categories: Adventure and Survival (such as *Run Silent, Run Deep*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *A Walk Across America*) The Maturing Self (such as *The Stranger*, *Carrie*, and *Homecoming*) History in Fiction (such as *The Sun Also Rises*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*) Science Fiction, Fantasy, and the Supernatural (such as *The Last Unicorn*, *The Other*, and *The Martian Chronicles*) Social Issues and Moral Challenge (such as *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *All the President's Men*, and *Skindeep*) Success and Achievement (such as *The Bell Jar*, *A Man Called Peter*, and *Up the Down Staircase*) Reflections of the Family (such as *Roots*, *Cold Sassy Tree*, and *Giants in the Earth*) Note: The original literary works are not included.

bury my heart at wounded knee: American Indians at the Margins H. Roy Kaplan, 2022-05-11 Since the earliest days of America, racist imagery has been used to create harmful stereotypes of the indigenous people. In this book, the conflict between invading European white settlers and the indigenous groups who occupied the land that became the United States is described through the context of race and racism. Using depictions from art, literature, radio, cinema and television, the origin and persistence of such stereotypes are explained, and their debilitating effects on the well-being of Indians are presented. This text also explores their accomplishments in attempts to maintain their sovereignty, dignity and respect.

bury my heart at wounded knee: The Great Father Francis Paul Prucha, 1995-01-01 This is Francis Paul Prucha's magnum opus. It is a great work. . . . This study will . . . [be] a standard by which other studies of American Indian affairs will be judged. American Indian history needed this book, has long awaited it, and rejoices at its publication.-American Indian Culture and Research Journal. The author's detailed analysis of two centuries of federal policy makes *The Great Father* indispensable reading for anyone interested in understanding the complexities of American Indian policy.-Journal of American History. Written in an engaging fashion, encompassing an extraordinary range of material, devoting attention to themes as well as to chronological narration, and presenting a wealth of bibliographical information, it is an essential text for all students and scholars of American Indian history and anthropology.-Oregon Historical Quarterly. A monumental endeavor, rigorously researched and carefully written. . . . It will remain for decades as an indispensable reference tool and a compendium of knowledge pertaining to United States-Indian relations.-Western Historical Quarterly. Perhaps the crowning achievement of Prucha's scholarly career.-Vine Deloria Jr., *America*. For many years to come, *The Great Father* will be the point of departure for all those embarking on research projects in the history of government Indian policy.-William T. Hagan, *New Mexico Historical Review*. The appearance of this massive history of federal Indian policy is a triumph of historical research and scholarly publication.-Lawrence C. Kelly, *Montana*. This is the most important history ever published about the formulation of federal Indian policies in the United States.-Herbert T. Hoover, *Minnesota History*. This truly is the definitive work on the subject.-Ronald Rayman, *Library Journal*. *The Great Father* was widely praised when it appeared in two volumes in 1984 and was awarded the Ray Allen Billington Prize by the Organization of American Historians. This abridged one-volume edition follows the structure of the two-volume edition, eliminating only the footnotes and some of the detail. It is a comprehensive history of the relations between the U.S. government and the Indians. Covering the two centuries from the Revolutionary War to 1980, the book traces the development of American Indian policy and the growth of the bureaucracy created to implement that policy. Francis Paul Prucha, S.J., a leading

authority on American Indian policy and the author of more than a dozen other books, is an emeritus professor of history at Marquette University.

bury my heart at wounded knee: *Arkansas, Arkansas* John Caldwell Guilds, 1999-01-01 From the expeditions of de Soto in the sixteenth century to the celebrated work of such contemporary writers as Maya Angelou, Ellen Gilchrist, and Miller Williams, Arkansas has enjoyed a rich history of letters. These two volumes gather the best work from Arkansas's rich literary history celebrating the variety of its voices and the national treasure those voices have become.

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