



Dakota Information Card

Treaty of Ghent, 1814

British and American representatives met on Christmas Eve 1814 in modern-day Belgium to negotiate the Treaty of Ghent, which signified the end of the War of 1812. It was signed far from the First Nation representatives who had played such a significant part in the North American arena of the conflict.

The American and the British governments drafted a treaty that consisted of 11 articles. Under the Treaty of Ghent, all conquests were to be returned. Hostilities against the First Nations were to be terminated by both sides, and Britain was not to arm the Aborigines for operations against the US. Consequently, none of the issues that had caused the war or that had become critical to the conflict were included in the treaty. There was nothing included on neutral rights or impressment. All captured territory in Upper and Lower Canada and the US was returned to its original owner. A commission later resolved outstanding concerns about the western boundaries of both countries.

[Per Article 9 of the Treaty of Ghent](#) of 1814, all lands, rights, and privileges restoration of the First Nations as had existed prior to the war were to be restored. British officers expressed concern that the American government would not live up to these terms.

Colonel McDouall, who helped secure Dakota allegiance to the British cause, expressed outrage and shame that the terms of the peace treaty did not live up to his repeated assurances to the First Nations. He wrote: *Instead of the flattering promises, which I was so lately instructed to make to them, being realized, the Whole Country is given up. A breach of faith is with them an utter abomination, and never forgotten.*¹

As was feared, the British forgot their promises to protect the homeland of their First Nations allies. The American government began to enforce restrictions on the Dakota and other Indigenous groups whose territory was now within their political borders. The Americans forced the Dakota to sign treaties and resettle on inferior reserve land in the state of Minnesota. Policies restricting the movement of First Nations across the border were also put in place.

Despite these restrictions, many Dakota continued to follow their northern traditional trade and hunting routes throughout the seasons, including present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Dakota continued to trade with the Hudson Bay Company, the largest fur trading business in North America. They maintained peaceful relationships and alliances with the Métis and other First Nations in the Northwest.

¹ McDonall, "Restitution of Posts," 104.



Information Adapted By:

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