

Note: Some of the words in the photograph of the Declaration are illegible; these are denoted with a question mark (?).

Declaration of the Return of Indian Land

How did we lose our land?

Wars-Massacres-Fraud-Occupation-expropriation-Forced sales-Division of Tribal Lands-Deprivation of Water-Flooding.

Who Took it?

Government-Railroad-Oil-Mining-Timber companies-Settlers Homesteaders-Robbers.

When England ruled our right to our land was recognized by the British Crown. After the revolution, Indian title was recognized by The United States in proclamations by Presidents, in Treaties in Statutes. Vast Areas of the United States were ceded by Indian tribes to the government.

Could anyone believe that any Indian tribe would voluntarily cede their ancestral land, more precious to them than life itself, and the sole source Of satisfaction for their spiritual, religious and material needs? Almost before The treaties were signed they were broken-In order to take still more Land.

Finally within the past two or three decades the government has (confessed?) the wrongs done to the Indian people. Statutes have been passed concerning illegality, unconstitutionality and unconscionable behavior and the courts and the Indian claims commission have been authorized to find specifically the (?) places and victims of these wrongs.

How does the government propose to right these wrongs?

In place of their land the government offers to the Indian tribes, and the Indian people. Money. How much money? For California they offer 47 cents an acre for land which, in some areas is worth 5 million times that. For the hundreds of billions taken from or earned by Indian land-nothing. For more than one hundred years that Indians have been without their land-nothing.

Will Indians accept money for their land?

To the government of the United States the Indian people say: You cannot be relieved from your Legal and moral obligations, Your conscience cannot be assuaged, the historical, spiritual and material needs of the Indian people cannot be satisfied-except by what we demand and by this declaration affirm.

The Return of our land

Under the white man's law we have the right to the return of our land. When (?) white man illegally deprives another of his land the wronged one always (?) (?) his land. At the very moment the government is promising the TAOS Indians that they reject their Indian claims commission checks and their historic (?) land will be restored to them. It would have been better for the white man's (?) self-esteem & world-image if he had done what we must do. Indian patience and (?) have been exhausted. We cannot, will not wait any longer. From the facts, (?) (?) and the verities we have recited it flows as inevitably and relentlessly as the great rivers of our country, that we mist, and we do declare.

Our land is ours again

As a first step we announce on behalf of all the Indian people, or tribes, that from this day forward we shall exercise dominion, and all rights of use and possession, over Alcatraz island in San Francisco Bay.

Hence forth, from time to time, the Indian people, Or tribes or other groupings of Indian people, will Similarly announce the restoration of other land to Indian Dominion use and possession.

What we have done by this declaration we have done Indians-but to those whites who desire their government To be a government of law, justice and morality we say We have done it also for you.

Indians of All Tribes, Inc., Alcatraz Island, May 31st 1970

Activity 3 Part 4 - July, 2014 Transcription of the "Declaration by the occupiers of Alcatraz Island, the Indians of All Tribes" (Essential Lens Item 1061). Photograph by Ilka Hartmann.