

Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868)

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Article I: Peace and Justice

Starting from today, all wars between the parties involved in this agreement will cease forever. The United States government wants peace and promises to maintain it. The Native American Indians also desire peace and pledge to uphold it.

If any bad individuals among the white population or other groups under the authority of the United States commit any harm to the Indians' person or property, the United States will take immediate action. Upon receiving proof of the wrongdoing, which should be submitted to the agent and forwarded to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., the United States will arrest the offender and punish them according to its laws. Additionally, the United States will compensate the injured person for the losses they have suffered.

Similarly, if any bad individuals among the Indians commit any wrong or harm to anyone—be they white, black, or Indian—subject to the authority of the United States and living in peace, the Indians named in this agreement solemnly promise to deliver the wrongdoer to the United States. The wrongdoer will be tried and punished according to U.S. laws. If the Indians refuse to cooperate, the person who was harmed will be reimbursed for their loss using the annuities or other money owed to the Indians under this or other treaties with the United States. The President, after consulting with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, will establish rules and regulations to determine the damages incurred under the terms of this article. However, those who suffer losses while violating the provisions of this treaty or the laws of the United States will not be reimbursed.

Article II: Land Agreement

The United States agrees to designate a specific area of land for the Indians. This area includes the following: starting from the eastern bank of the Missouri River, where the 46th parallel of north latitude intersects it, and following the riverbank until a point opposite the northern boundary of the State of Nebraska. From there, the boundary extends west across the river and follows the northern line of Nebraska until the 104th degree of longitude west from Greenwich. Then, it moves north along this meridian until it intersects with the 46th parallel of north latitude, and finally, it proceeds east along this parallel to the starting point. Additionally, all existing reservations on the east bank of the Missouri River will also be set aside for the Indians named in this agreement. These lands are exclusively designated for the use and occupation of these Indians, as well as any other friendly tribes or individual Indians who may be admitted with the consent of the United States. The United States promises that no one, except those authorized and designated in this agreement or those with government duties, will be allowed to enter, settle, or reside in this territory. The Indians agree to give up any claims or rights to

any part of the United States or its territories, except for the designated lands mentioned above and unless otherwise specified.

Article VI: Farming and Land Ownership

If any individual who is part of the Indian tribes or legally incorporated with them, and who is the head of a family, wishes to start farming, they will have the privilege to select a piece of land within the designated reservation. The land should not exceed an area of 320 acres and must be chosen in the presence of and with the assistance of the appointed agent. Once the land is selected, certified, and recorded in the "Sioux Land Book," it will no longer be held in common but will become the exclusive possession of the person and their family, as long as they continue to cultivate it.

Similarly, any person over eighteen years old, who is not the head of a family, can select and have certified a tract of land not exceeding 80 acres for cultivation. This person will also be entitled to the exclusive possession of the land as mentioned earlier.

A certificate containing a description of the selected land and the name of the person selecting it, along with a record of the certification, will be delivered to the entitled individual by the agent. The agent will keep a book, known as the "Sioux Land Book," where these records will be recorded and available for inspection.

The President may order a survey of the reservation at any time. Once surveyed, Congress will establish measures to protect the rights of the settlers and determine the nature of their land ownership. The United States can also pass laws regarding property ownership and inheritance between the Indians and their descendants. Male Indians over eighteen years old, from any band or tribe that is or becomes a party to this treaty, and who currently reside or will reside in any reservation or territory not included in the designated land for the Indians, may be eligible to receive a patent for 160 acres of land, including any improvements they have made. To qualify, they must continuously occupy and improve the land as their homestead for a period of three years. To apply, they need to submit a written application with the support of two unbiased witnesses to the local land office register if the land is within a land district. If the tract of land is not within a land district, the application and proof should be submitted to the Commissioner of the General Land Office. The right to enter and own the land will be granted from the date of the first improvements made and will continue as long as the person maintains residence and improvements. Once an Indian or Indians receive a land patent under these provisions, they will become citizens of the United States and entitled to all the privileges and rights of citizenship while retaining their benefits as Indians under this treaty.

Article VIII: Support for Farming

Once the head of a family or a lodge has selected land and received the necessary certificate, and the agent is satisfied that they genuinely intend to cultivate the soil for their livelihood, they will be entitled to receive seeds and agricultural tools for the first year. The value of these supplies should not exceed one hundred dollars. If they continue farming for the following three years, they will receive seeds and

tools worth up to twenty-five dollars each year. Those who start farming will also receive guidance from the farmer appointed for this purpose. If more than one hundred people engage in farming, a second blacksmith will be provided along with the necessary iron, steel, and materials.

Article XI: Mutual Agreement

In return for the advantages and benefits granted by this treaty and the numerous displays of friendship by the United States, the tribes involved in this agreement agree to relinquish their permanent occupancy rights outside of their reservations, as defined in this treaty. However, they reserve the right to hunt on lands located north of the North Platte and the Republican Fork of the Smoky Hill River, as long as there are sufficient buffalo numbers to support hunting. Furthermore, the tribes explicitly agree to the following conditions:

- They will not oppose the construction of railroads currently being built on the plains.
- They will allow the peaceful construction of any railroad that does not pass through their reservation.
- They will not attack individuals at home or during travel, and they will not disturb or harm any wagon trains, coaches, mules, or cattle belonging to the people of the United States or those who are friendly to them.
- They will not capture or abduct white women or children from settlements.
- They will not harm or scalp white men or attempt to harm them.
- They will no longer oppose the construction of the railroad along the Platte River and westward to the Pacific Ocean. In the future, they will not object to the construction of railroads, wagon roads, mail stations, or other useful and necessary works as permitted by the laws of the United States. If any of these projects are built on their reservation lands, the government will compensate the tribe for damages determined by three impartial commissioners appointed by the President, with one of them being a chief or headman of the tribe.
- They agree not to oppose military posts or roads established south of the North Platte River, or those that may be established in compliance with previous or future treaties with any Indian tribes.