

# Broken Treaties: United States and Canadian Relations with the Lakotas and the Plains Cree, 1868-1885

Jill St. Germain

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Broken Treaties is a comparative assessment of Indian treaty negotiation and implementation focusing on the first decade following the United States-Lakota Treaty of 1868 and Treaty Six between Canada and the Plains Cree (1876). Jill St. Germain argues that the "broken treaties" label imposed by nineteenth-century observers and perpetuated in the historical literature has obscured the implementation experience of both Native and non-Native participants and distorted our understanding of the relationships between them. As a result, historians have ignored the role of the Treaty of 1868 as the instrument through which the United States and the Lakotas mediated the cultural divide separating them in the period between 1868 and 1875. In discounting the treaty historians have also failed to appreciate the broader context of U.S. politics, which undermined a treaty solution to the Black Hills crisis in 1876. In Canada, on the other hand, the "broken treaties" tradition has obscured the distinctly different understanding of Treaty Six held by Canada and the Plains Cree. The inability of either party to appreciate the other's position fostered the damaging misunderstanding that culminated in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. In the first critical assessment of the implementation of these treaties, Broken Treaties restores Indian treaties to a central position in the investigation of Native-non-Native relations in the United States and Canada.

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