

[Ebook free] The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake

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R.C. Gordon-McCutchan

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R.C. Gordon-McCutchan : The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Blue Lake - the whole storyBy Pam HannaWhen Frank Waters published his novel *The Man Who Killed the Deer* in 1942, he brought the plight of the Taos Indians to the attention of the American public. A recurring theme of the novel, like a drumbeat through all of its pages, is Taos Pueblo's concern with the return of their sacred Blue Lake, which was taken away from them, without recompense, by the U.S. government in 1906.Taos Pueblo, nestled in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Northern New Mexico, is the oldest continually occupied pueblo in North America, reputed to have been the refuge of the ancient Anasazi who fled a drought in the 13th Century. This lake is the site of emergence in the Taos religion.In 1906, Teddy Roosevelt established the Carson National Forest, taking the 50,000 acres of Taos land, the watershed of the Rio Lucero and Rio Pueblo that runs through Taos Pueblo as government land. The Taos Indians waived their right to the town of Taos and surrounding areas, asking only for the return of their sacred lake. They refused money for it. Instead, the U.S. Forest Service cut roads into the area, made it available to campers and tourists, built cabins and corrals, allowed fishing in the sacred lake itself, allowed grazing of herd animals into the area, allowed illegal clear cutting of some 2,000 acres of timber, and threatened to mine the area immediately adjoining Blue Lake. To the Indians, this was comparable to developers taking over the Washington Cathedral and turning it into a strip mall or a camping site.The Pueblo had formidable opponents - the Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Budget Committee, the BIA, and New Mexico Senator Clinton P. Anderson, who at first persuaded the Indians that he was on their side.

But white man spoke with forked tongue and viciously opposed the bill to give back the land that Taos Indians had held since time immemorial. He refused to believe that these Native Americans didn't want to exploit their own land (as all true-blooded Americans do), with timbering grazing and mining. He had an underground deal with a mill owner who had already illegally clear cut a huge chunk of it. In 1921, using the Religious Crimes Act as its chief weapon, the U.S. government made the practice of Indian religious ceremonies a punishable offense. Government officials invaded the Tribal Council, stole and destroyed religious objects in their kivas and had the old Indian elders arrested and put in jail in Santa Fe. In other words, everyone in America had religious freedom except for its oldest inhabitants - the Indians. But the Pueblo people also had formidable friends throughout the 64 years of their struggle - writers and artists of Taos such as Mabel Dodge Luhan, Oliver La Farge, Frank Waters - and into the '50s and '60s when politicians got into the fray - Interior Secretary of the Interior under Johnson, Stuart Udall, his brother, Morris Udall, Senator from Arizona, Senators Edward and Robert Kennedy, Barry Goldwater, Corrine Locker (secretary to Oliver La Farge) and many others including hippies all over the country who took up the cause of Native Americans as their own. The struggle for Blue Lake made strange bedfellows indeed. Taos Pueblo Indians flew on an airplane for the first time in their lives to Washington to attend hearings before the Senate Subcommittee. Several times. But the culmination of the hearings happened when Nixon was President and the venerated 93-year-old Cacique, the spiritual leader of Taos Pueblo, Juan de Jesus Romero, spoke to Congress so movingly and with such spiritual presence (bringing his three canes of office from the King of Spain, President Abraham Lincoln and President Nixon with him) that Washington was stunned, and on December 15, 1970, Bill HR 471 was signed by Nixon into Law and Taos Pueblo got back 48,000 acres of their sacred space including their beloved Blue Lake. This book is tedious at times, only because the whole process of American justice is tedious, agonizing and incredibly difficult. The Pueblo went into great debt to pay legal fees. But it is a story of victory. I don't know whether Nixon did other good services for the American people, but this is certainly the best thing he ever did. And he had both bipartisan opposition and bipartisan support for this amazing action. It has set a precedent for self-determination (not assimilation) for Native American peoples throughout the country. This is not a coffee table book with glossy pictorials but a chronicle of the complete story of Blue Lake, replete with historical photographs of the area and the people who were involved in the struggle. If you're not at all interested in this period of our history as a nation, this work will bore you and you won't bother to read it. But if you are interested in the whole scoop about the return of Blue Lake, the last chapters, especially, will leave you mesmerized - and hopeful. Hopeful about American justice and the future of our society. 0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Had hoped for a more aesthetically pleasing book. By Jason Adamik. The photos are quite poor - usually grainy, a bit out of focus, sort of amateurish...that is my main complaint. This is also a thin book - not a lot of information for the price. Considering the lack of information on the subject, though, it might be worth buying if you are interested in the Taos people and pueblo.

This book shows how the battle for Blue Lake became the focus of national debate under Richard Nixon's presidency. It is a paean to individual courage and initiative and focuses on one of the few bright spots in the conduct of established governments toward the native people of North America.

From the Back Cover It is extremely rare that a book addresses the positive side of the struggle between Native Americans and the United States Government. This book tells a fascinating story that involves not only Indians devoted to a decades-long struggle to reclaim their sacred Blue Lake and preserve their culture but also includes a host of prominent non-native figures who allied themselves with the Indians' quest. The list includes Fred Harris, Ted and Robert Kennedy, Stuart Udall, Barry Goldwater, George McGovern, Spiro Agnew, Richard Nixon, John Collier, Oliver La Farge, and Eliot Porter. The Taos Indians' persistent attempts to reclaim their sacred lands repeatedly met with failure until 1970 when President Richard Nixon took a personal interest in the matter. Nixon oversaw the formation of a bipartisan campaign that eventually brought the Blue Lake issue to a successful roll call vote in the Senate. This book shows how the battle for Blue Lake became the focus of national debate and the centerpiece for the Indian "new deal" commenced under Nixon's leadership. It is a paean to individual courage and initiative and focuses on one of the few bright spots in the conduct of established governments toward the native people of North America. About the Author R.C. Gordon-McCutchan is a scholar in religious studies and a research associate at the School of American Research. For four years he was a tribal planner for the Taos Indians.