

Native American Quotes About Land Ownership



"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." --Ancient Indian Proverb

"The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forests, plains, pueblos, or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that fashioned the continent also fashioned the man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers, he belongs just as the buffalo belonged..." --Luther Standing Bear

"What is this you call property? It cannot be the earth, for the land is our mother, nourishing all her children, beasts, birds, fish and all men. The woods, the streams, everything on it belongs to everybody and is for the use of all. How can one man say it belongs only to him?" -Massasoit

"One does not sell the land people walk on." --Crazy Horse

"We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us?" -Sealth

"My reason teaches me that land cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon. So long as they occupy and cultivate it, they have a right to the soil. Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away" --Black Hawk

"We know our lands have now become more valuable. The white people think we do not know their value; but we know that the land is everlasting, and the few goods we receive for it are soon worn out and gone." -- Canassatego

"I love this land and the buffalo and will not part with it...I have heard you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don't want to settle. I love to roam over the prairies. There I feel free and happy, but when we settle down we grow pale and die. A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up to the river I see camps of soldiers on its banks. These soldiers cut down my timber, they kill my buffalo and when I see that, my heart feels like bursting." -- Santana, Kiowa Chief

"If we ever owned the land we own it still, for we never sold it. In the treaty councils the commissioners have claimed that our country had been sold to the government. Suppose a white man should come to me and say, Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them. Then he goes to my neighbor and says to him; Joseph's horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell. My neighbor answers, Pay me the money and I will sell you Joseph's horses. The white man returns to me, and says, Joseph, I have bought your horses and you must let me have them. If we sold our lands to the government, this is the way they were bought." --Chief Joseph-Nez Perce

"They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one: they promised to take our land and they took it. It was not hard to see that the white people coveted every inch of land on which we lived. Greed. Humans wanted the last bit of ground which supported Indian feet. It was land - it has ever been land - for which the White man oppresses the Indian and to gain possession of which he commits any crime. Treaties that have been made are vain attempts to save a little of the fatherland, treaties holy to us by the smoke of the pipe - but nothing is holy to the white man. Little by little, with greed and cruelty unsurpassed by the animal, he has taken all. The loaf is gone and now the white man wants the crumbs." --Luther Standing Bear

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