

Ruby Valley Treaty
Western Shoshone Indians
Of Nevada - October 1, 1863
Historical Commemoration

Written by the
Traditional Chief of the Western Shoshone,
the late Frank Temoke Sr.(1903-1994)

The following is a historical commemoration of the signing of the Ruby Valley Treaty of Peace and Friendship contrived between the Western Shoshone Indians and the United States Government and signed on October 1, 1863. Just 134 years old, the Ruby Valley Treaty is a portrayal of the period of time when conflicts between the Indian and whites were coming to an end in the West, however, the enclosed document symbolizes a viewpoint that narrates the activity and attitude of the United States Government and it's agencies, as to being equivalent today as that of 1863 or even 1965 when the Traditional Chief of the Western Shoshone, the late Frank Temoke Sr.(1903-1994), of Ruby Valley, Nevada, signed the article that follows. The Ruby Valley Treaty has never been honored by the Government in any manner of speaking.

{April 24, 1965}

Our legends tell us how we were brought to this land by the Coyote. We know that we are the first people upon this continent and the true owners. And like the Coyote also we have been subject to much violence since the coming of the white man upon our lands. We of the Western Shoshone Indian people have known that our ancestors were shot, the springs poisoned, germs were spread among our people and we even today are subject to every deceitful and dishonest tricks of attorneys who are supposed to represent us and do not, together with Indian agents in order to steal our lands from us, under the pretense of buying these lands which they say on the other hand that we do not own.

The Treaty of 1863 made in Ruby Valley, Nevada outlines generally the lands which comprise the Western Shoshone Indian Nation. This Treaty was signed by our principal chiefs and headsmen and ratified by the Congress of the United States.

The white man today through his government in Washington is seeking to break this Treaty also in order to steal our lands.

We know that this is not right. Our Treaty was paid for in blood, so I would like to tell you how this Treaty was made.

In the first place the white people at that time (1863) were weak and few in number's and it was they the white man and his government who came to us asking for a peace treaty. It seems that the white people were at war among themselves which war was called the Civil War and President Lincoln of the United States wanted to get gold from California in order to finance the war. And since the government at this time did not have enough soldiers to guard all of the stage coaches which were carrying this gold across Nevada the only solution was a peace treaty with the people whose lands that stage coaches had to travel which was the lands of the Western Shoshone Indian Nation.

So it was that the white people and the representatives of the United States Government put out the word that they were anxious to meet with the chiefs and the people of the Western Shoshone Indian Nation for the purpose of signing such a treaty. So a date was set and the word was passed by runners and on horseback that there would also be a feast with plenty to eat and then the peace treaty would be signed by both parties, Indians and Whites and that there would be no more fighting. And that the Indians were to come unarmed because they would not need their guns.

And so it was that at the appointed time the Indians together with the chiefs did come to this place in Ruby Valley and they came unarmed and the soldiers together with the government representatives also came but the soldiers had rifles which they stacked in bunches. So when the Indians had all gathered, the soldiers grabbed the rifles and killed an Indian which they had previously captured and brought with them. Then they cut the Indian up and put him in a huge iron pot which they had in those days and they cooked him and then the soldiers aimed their rifles at the heads of the people and forced the people to eat some of this man they had killed. Men, women and children were all forced to eat some of this human flesh while the soldiers held their guns on the people.

And it was after this terrible thing which the white man did to our people that the Treaty of 1863 was signed. So it is hard for us of the Western Shoshone people to understand why the white man doesn't wish to keep this Treaty. And why the government insist through its agents and attorneys that this Treaty is no good.

We think that our Treaty has been paid for in blood. And the White man will have to live by this Treaty. All of his conniving and scheming will be for nothing, he will have to live by this Treaty. And like the Coyote whom the white man also has tried to exterminate he also cannot exterminate the Indians. We will continue to hold our Treaty and our lands and no part of our heritage, our birthright to this Mother Earth is for sale.

Frank Temoke Sr.
Chief Western Shoshone Indian Nation
April 24, 1965