



Dakota Information Card

1787 Treaty at Michilimackinac

In 1787, the Dakota signed a written Peace and Friendship treaty with the British Crown at Fort Michilimackinac, which is a British fort and trade centre located between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

Throughout 1786, British officials met with Dakota groups and negotiated the terms of the treaty. The use of the Cànduhupà (also called the calumet), wampum, and gift giving made this a formal nation-to-nation alliance in the eyes of the Dakota. People from the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonais were present. The people who signed the treaty included Dakota leaders Wabasha and Tatanka Mani.

As part of the agreement, the Crown promised the Dakota would gain the “protection of the Great King.”¹ The Dakota pledged their allegiance to the British and, in terms written by the British, promised *“always to acknowledge next to the Great Spirit, the Great King of England their Father.”*² The treaty included provisions for trade and military alliance between the British and the Dakota. The Dakota agreed to support the British in the event of conflict with another nation.

At this time, the British presented many gifts, including three hundred guns, fifty blankets, chiefs’ jackets, and many smaller presents. This renewal of the bond between the Dakota and the British government was the first written treaty to be signed between the Dakota Oyate and the British Crown. Once again, this treaty was another nation-to-nation agreement, and did not put an end to Aboriginal title to their traditional land.

¹ Articles of Peace at Michilimackinac, 12 July 1787, RG 10, Vol. 16, 157-60, Reel C-1224, Library and Archives Canada.

² Ibid.



Information adapted from:

Danyluk, Stephanie, et al. *Wa Pa Ha Ska: Whitecap Dakota First Nation*. Saskatoon, SK: Whitecap Dakota First Nation and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2016.

Joseph-Louis Ainsé to [John Johnson], "Ainsée's Expedition to Wisconsin and Minnesota," August 16, 1787, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. XII (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, State Printers, 1892).

Indian Council at Michilimackinac, July 11, 1787, in *Historical Collections, Collections and Researches Made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society ...*, Vol. XI.