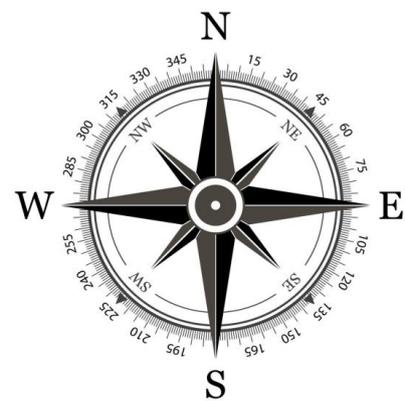


Before I can explain why this day - 25 June - is important, I need, like I did on Tuesday, to go back over a bit of history. So - in many ways, the United States of America is the greatest country on earth. But it has two huge sins on its conscience (pronounced 'kon - shunts') that should keep it awake at night. The first is the sin of SLAVERY. When they declared independence from the British in 1776, the United States could have made it clear that slaves would not be used in any state in the United States. But because the slave-owning states wouldn't agree to this, when the United States of America became a full independent nation in 1783, slavery was still allowed in the southern states belonging to the United States. The United States would go on to pay a terrible price for this choice, with 700,000 soldiers dying in the 1861-1865 Civil War that resulted in all the American slaves being freed, and it is still paying a price for allowing slavery to this day.

The United States hasn't paid much of a price for the second sin, which is its treatment of the NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS. You see, in 1776, the United States of America was made up of 13 states, all grouped down the eastern side of the North American land mass. (Incidentally, I've talked quite a bit in my emails this week about east and west, but while everyone knows that north is up and south is down, how do you know which side is east and which west? If you imagine a circle with the north at the top and the south at the bottom, and you go round the circle clockwise, starting with the north and then going round and round downwards till you get to the south and go round and round upwards until you get to the south, just imagine yourself saying as you do that, 'Never Eat Shredded Wheat'. That's a mnemonic (remember I told you about those ages ago? - and 'mnemonic' is pronounced 'nee - monic') - the first letters of the phrase help you remember something. So you start with the north (N - ever), and then as you go to the south (S - hredded) you go through the east ('E - at') and then as you go up from the south back to the north, you go through the west (W - heat). So the east is on the right hand side when you look at things north to south, and the west is on the left hand side. So when I say the original 13 states that made up the United States of America were all on the eastern side of the North American land mass, I mean they were all on the right hand side of the land mass. (And how can you tell your right from your left? Just look at the hand you write with, and if you are right handed, your hand is on the right, and if you are left handed, your hand is on the left.)) And the original states that made up the United States were all on the eastern side of the North American land mass, because those were the areas that it was easiest for Europeans coming from countries like Britain and Spain to explore and settle in - because they were coming across the Atlantic Ocean and when they landed in America they landed on the eastern side of America.

All of the rest of the North American land mass was occupied by Native American Indians, who had been on that land for hundreds of years. At first, they were amused by the



Europeans who came across the water to America and wanted to buy land from the Indians that they could live on. The Indians thought - how can you buy land? The land belongs to the gods, it doesn't belong to us. But once the United States of America had become an independent country in 1783, it slowly started expanding across North America, with more and more states being created and joining the United States. And the further west the United States went, the more the Indians were affected. They were gradually being pushed back and back as the United States expanded.

And each time the United States expanded west, it would make a treaty (pronounced 'tree - tee') with the Indians, promising 'That is it - you can keep the land which we, the United States, don't occupy, and we promise not to go into that land. We are happy with what we have got.' But each treaty the United States made with the Indians was broken - the United States would go back to the Indians and say, 'Yeah, you know about that treaty we made promising you could keep all these lands? Yeah - it turns out we are going to need to build a railway or create a goldmine in these lands of yours - so can we make another treaty where you give us the land we need, and you settle a bit further west. And if you agree to that, we promise, that is it - we won't need any more land from you. You will be able to keep your remaining land, and everyone can be happy.' Eventually, the Indians realised that they were being pushed further and further west and if they didn't make a stand, they would be pushed all the way across America and into the Pacific Ocean, and then there would be no more Indians. But whenever they tried to make a stand and say 'No', the Americans would threaten to kill the Indians unless they agreed to move out of the lands the Americans wanted and either move further and further West or move into RESERVATIONS - areas that the Americans were not interested in and where the Indians would be allowed to live, really as prisoners in their own country.

The United States started getting really serious about taking over the whole of the North American land mass (other than CANADA, which is above the United States of America) all the way to the Pacific Ocean after the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ended in 1865. So after 1865, the Indians were put under a lot of pressure to give up their lands, and move into reservations. And when they resisted and said 'No' the United States sent in their army, which had just won the Civil War, to get the Indians to surrender and force them to go to the reservations. And that takes us to what happened 'On this day' - on the 25 June 1876, the



BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN began between soldiers in the American Army, belonging to the 7th CAVALRY regiment, and a number of different Indian tribes which the American Army was trying to hunt down and force to surrender. The 216 American soldiers were led by GEORGE CUSTER, who had fought in the American Civil War. Up against them were about 2,000 Indian warriors, led by great leaders like SITTING BULL and CRAZY HORSE. With those numbers - 200 odd American soldiers against 2,000 Indian warriors - who do you think won? Actually, the 200 Americans might have been able to defeat 2,000 Indian warriors because they were much better armed - they had far better and far more



guns than the Indians had. But the Indians were ready for the Americans, and the Americans weren't ready for them - they had no idea they were marching into battle against so many Indian warriors. The result was a massacre (pronounced 'mass - uh - ker'), where 160 American soldiers were killed and the rest were wounded, while only 31 of the brave Indian warriors were killed. Towards the end of the battle, the Indians surrounded Custer and his men, and killed all of them.



This became known as CUSTER'S LAST STAND. But really, it was more the Native American Indians' last stand. They would never score such a big victory over the Americans again. Instead, they were forced to submit and surrender to the Americans, and go into reservations, and not get in the way of the United States fulfilling what the Americans said was their 'MANIFEST DESTINY' - to rule the whole of the North American land mass 'from sea to shining sea'. Defeated and humiliated, the future for the Native American Indians was really hard - it was very hard for them to see any point in living, cooped up in the reservations.

Things are a bit better now - the reservations still exist, but the living conditions on them are much better than they were. And of course, many Native American Indians live regular lives in the United States outside the reservations. But there is no getting around it - they were robbed of their lands and their spirit as a brave, independent people. But, as I say, the United States does not seem to have paid any kind of price for doing this, and it's doesn't seem as though it ever will. But we shouldn't forget what was done - and now I have told you a bit about it, I hope you won't either. And to help you remember a bit more, here is the trailer for the film version of a great book about the way the Native American Indians were treated, called BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTK33wnSgJA>