

CHIEF SEATTLE'S SPEECH

→ The text was originally known as Chief Seattle's Treaty Oration, 1854.

▣ ABOUT THE AUTHOR - Chief Seattle (1780-1866)

Chief Seattle was the leader of Suquamish and Duwamish confederacy and a very popular figure in his tribe. He was given a nickname de Gros which means 'The Big One' due to his height. From the very young age he was known for his authoritative personality. He knew different dialects of Lushootseed, one of the Coast Salish languages. He was proponent of peace. He wanted the two different cultures, the whites and the Natives, to live harmoniously. His main aim was to ensure the rights of safety of his tribe and give them their lands in which their ancestors' soul had lived and which they worshipped. He also laid emphasis on the ecological responsibility of human beings and believed the ideology that Earth was not meant for them but they were meant for Earth.

Chief Seattle was known as a fine orator, his voice was said to have carried from his camp to the Stevens Hotel at First and Marion, a distance of 1.2 km.

▣ BACKGROUND OF THE STORY

The speech was initially a response to the US Government's land treaty by Isaac Stevens, the Governor of Washington. Isaac Stevens believed "The only good Indian was a dead Indian". He began buying up or seizing Indian lands. Also a matter of fact all through the early decades of the 19th

the relations between the native inhabitants and the European immigrants were getting strained. As more and more settlers moved into the country, aggressively displacing the native tribes, discontent rose.

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On May 28, 1830 - The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson, authorising the President to grant unsettled lands in exchange of Indian lands within existing State borders. This resulted in The Trail of Tears - a series of forced relocations of approximately 60,000 Native Americans in the US from their ancestral homelands in the Southeastern United States to areas to the West of the Mississippi river. This continued from 1831 to 1877.

This forced relocations resulted in the deaths of thousands of Native Americans. In December, 1854, the Governor met Seattle and Lyco. Seattle delivered a speech lamenting over the loss of lives of Indians.

This text that we are going to experience is the most authentic documentation of Chief Seattle's speech transcribed by Henry A. Smith.