

Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community

1351 Sibley Memorial Hwy
P O Box 50835
Mendota, MN 55150

Phone: 651-452-4141
email: mendotadakota@gmail.com
www.mendotadakota.com

To Whom It May Concern.

5-3-2018

My name is Jim Anderson I am the Cultural Liaison for the Mendota Dakota people of Minnesota. It has come to my attention that we are repeating history again. Back in 1990s our community reformed after many years of not knowing who we were as Dakota people. Of course many people questioned the same, who are we? After years of researching from our members and other Dakota relatives we found what our true history is. What happened to our relatives and most of the information came from MNHS[Minnesota Historical Society] archives.

We spent 17 months protecting cold water spring from destruction and got the law passed to protect the flow to and from the spring, even though some Dakotas from recognized tribes said we should not have a say because of our status with state and federal government.

There was even an in-house memo from then Director Nina Archabal to employees not to help us with our history research at MNHS. However, we continue to do our research with help from people like Chris Leith, the spiritual leader for Prairie Island Dakota, Art and Ray Owens, Emmitt Eastman and many other well respected federally recognized Dakotas. They know who we are, and what happened to the Mendota Dakotas. Also many non-indian people like Bruce White, Alan Woolworth and other professional historians. Over 20 years ago we started working with the MNHS on the Dakota history series at our ancestral DuPuis house. We've had Dakota speakers like pastor Gary Cavender, a spiritual elder for Prior Lake, Chuck Derby, a pipe maker from Pipestone, Lewis Goodbird a storyteller and many others that know our history and know we are Dakotas.

Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the Dakota Culture for Future Generations.

Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community

1351 Sibley Memorial Hwy
P O Box 50835
Mendota, MN 55150

Phone: 651-452-4141
email: mendotadakota@gmail.com
www.mendotadakota.com

Even with all this support we still have native and non native people questioning us about who we are. The Dakota from Prior Lake our relatives were upset and said because we were not federally recognized, that we did not have the right to say anything about our Dakota history or the right to work with MNHS to help and teach our Dakota history in Mendota. Back in 2000? an archaeological dig was going on in Bloomington Minnesota. The late Vernon Bellecourt called me to say there was a dig going on and I should check it out. When we found the Lincoln Mound site named in the book *Aborigines on Minnesota*, because it was a known burial mound. The developer knew it was a documented Dakota burial mound. When we reached the site Jim Jones from the Minnesota Indian Affairs council was in the trench under a large tent with a cyclone fence around it. When he saw me his eyes got very big and he said Jim what are you doing here. My answer was no Jim what are you doing here. He crawled out of the trench and started to explain that they were were doing a preliminary dig to see what was there. He then told me they had already found some remains that have been disturbed and their plan was to remove them. That's when I said "Let me get this right. Your doing a preliminary dig, and already found Dakota remains and made the decision to remove them." I told him that's just wrong, and that they must stop this project NOW and rebury the remains they found. That's when he said to me, "Jim don't do this we have a very good working rapport with the McGough Development Company and I should not jeopardize this relationship. That's when we called the media and put up our Mendota tipi to protest the desecration of another known sacred site in this area. I then called the owner of the McGough Development Company and explained that this site should be protected because it's in the book "Aborigines of Minnesota" and is a documented Dakota burial mound. I also told him this could be the perfect opportunity to do the right thing and protect site by erecting a plaque to commemorate all the sacred mounds that have already been destroyed by developers in Bloomington Minnesota. But again I was told that he did not have to listen to me because I did not come from a federally recognized tribe. He said that the Prior Lake Dakota and the Minnesota Indian Affairs council gave their permission to destroy this documented burial mound.

The proof was that Leonard Wabasha was the cultural liaison for Prior Lake Dakota. He was there smudging box's that they were removing for the site. When we asked what was in the boxes, he told me glass shards and other garbage from the Lincoln family dump. I ask to see inside the boxes, and again he refused because we were not recognized we did not have the right to know. Then the lawyers for Prior Lake Dakotas put in the Star Tribune that Jim Anderson does not speak for the recognized Minnesota Dakota and he was disrespecting the remains because of his protest and by demanding the remains be reburied and to stop the project.

Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the Dakota Culture for Future Generations.

Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community

1351 Sibley Memorial Hwy
P O Box 50835
Mendota, MN 55150

Phone: 651-452-4141
email: mendotadakota@gmail.com
www.mendotadakota.com

We tried to get more information about what was in the boxes but we were again denied. So with Dr. Bruce White, we contacted the Attorney General Mike Hatch and he made them turn over the final report under the Freedom of Information Act. In the report our worst fears were confirmed. They had found and dug up 55 sets of our Dakota relatives remains or as Leonard referred to them as shards of glass and garbage. They removed our Dakota relatives from their resting place, a sacred place but this was not a normal burial. It was a very special circle burial with children in the middle surrounded by women, and around them were the men. Warriors to protect them in the afterlife. But these Dakotas were not federally recognized so no one listened to them because they had no voice. So again we lost this very important sacred site because we don't have the right to speak up for those without a voice, our dead Dakota relatives all for another condominium or office building. It is always about money.

But we continued to fight when they proposed to build condominiums on Pilot Knob Hill after the first public meeting in Mendota Heights. We introduced ourselves to the owner of the development company and told him there would be no development on our sacred site Oheyawahi or hill much visited. With mainly non Dakotas, we protected in perpetuity this Dakota site. Jim Jones of the Indian Affairs Council told me that they need us to speak up because recognized tribes are afraid to say anything. Because if they speak up against the government federal and state they may lose their right to gambling so I don't blame them. Because it is a form of extortion and blackmail the government uses on the indigenous to keep them from speaking out when they were being wronged, even when it's a sacred burial site. So this letter our proof that the Mendota Dakota need to be recognized by the state of Minnesota. So we can speak and be recognized for our relatives of the past that don't have a voice. These things are of great importance to all indigenous people. With state recognition the Mendota Dakota won't have to prove who we are when we speak up. Everyone will know WHO and WHY we will **never** stop fighting for our rights as Dakotas of Minnesota. Our Mendota relatives never left the sacred Mdote and are still being punished for staying in this Sacred Place where our story comes from.
Respectfully Yours Jim Anderson.

Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the Dakota Culture for Future Generations.