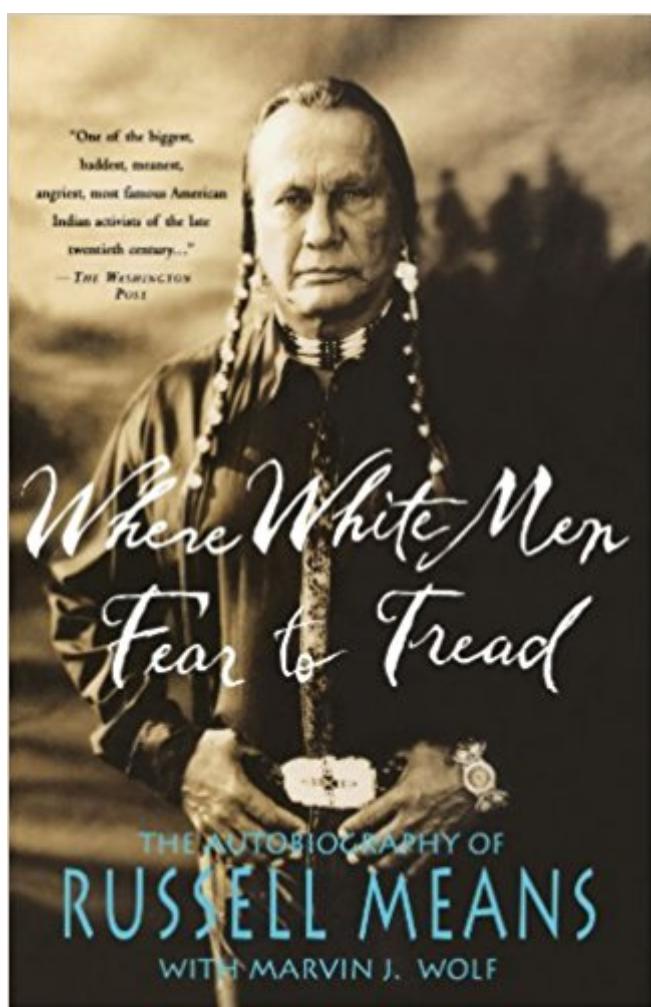


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# Where White Men Fear To Tread: The Autobiography Of Russell Means



## **Synopsis**

Russell Means is the most controversial Indian leader of our time. *Where White Men Fear to Tread* is the well-detailed, first-hand story of his life so far, in which he has done everything possible to dramatize and justify the Native American aim of self-determination, such as storming Mount Rushmore, seizing Plymouth Rock, running for President in 1988, and--most notoriously--leading a 71-day takeover of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. This visionary autobiography by one of our most magnetic personalities will fascinate, educate, and inspire. As Dee Brown has written, "A reading of Means's story is essential for any clear understanding of American Indians during the last half of the twentieth century."

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 624 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin (1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312147619

ISBN-13: 978-0312147617

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 42.9 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 129 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #320,560 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #147 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Native American #315 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Social Activists #995 in Books > History > Americas > Native American

## **Customer Reviews**

"Indian people are dying of sympathy," declares legendary activist Means. "What we want is respect." His unwieldy yet absorbing epic conveys his furious, resourceful activism, intertwined with (and sometimes overshadowed by) his own dramatic, messy life?including heavy drinking, attempts on his life, a stint in prison and several rocky marriages. "Conscientized" by the American Indian Movement at 30, Means helped define Indian rage, leading an occupation of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs and, in 1973, an armed takeover of Wounded Knee in protest of a corrupt Lakota tribal government. Assisted by historian Wolf, Means tells his story with vernacular frankness, regularly slamming Eurocentrism. While Means's love for his people and his anger at America's historic depredations seem genuine, his conclusion steals some of his thunder (and contradicts his

opposition to intermarriage): after finally entering therapy to cope with his anger, he determines that "feelings and relationships" matter far more than race or culture. Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Next to Wilma Mankiller, Russell Means is the contemporary Native American leader that most non-Native Americans are likely to know. He first came to worldwide media attention during the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and has rarely been out of the spotlight since. A leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), he also made news for filing a lawsuit against the Cleveland Indians to stop the use of the Indians mascot; most recently, Means played in the Disney animated feature film *Pocahontas*, in which he was the voice of Powhatan. This extremely readable and chatty autobiography gives an insider's eyewitness account of the events of Means's life, allowing non-Native readers some insight into the world of contemporary Native America with all of its strengths and weaknesses. Struggling with alcohol throughout his busy life, Means went into treatment in 1991 and began this book soon after. Highly recommended. [For an interview with Means, see p. 68.]?Lisa A. Mitten, Univ. of Pittsburgh Lib.-?Lisa A. Mitten, Univ. of Pittsburgh Lib.Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Truth here spoken from the most of the most controversial Indian leader ever. You will not be able to put this book down. Powerful, provocative and sad. It will help you understand todays Indians, the suffering and betrayal that they endured also how a man like Russel Means understood the struggle as he struggled himself and fought to the end. A man who has done it all, seen it all and been though it all, in agony and pain. I respect his honesty for being so transparent about his life. Highly recommended and enthralling. I do believe that the Indians will come back and live again and those who did them wrong will have to pay.

This autobiography was published in 1995, about seventeen years before the death of Russell Means. With his co-author, Marvin J. Wolf, Means has written an overwhelming account of his life, his childhood experiences, his involvement in the American Indian Movement (AIM), his failures (particularly as a husband & father), his spiritual growth and his enduring love for his people the Lakota and for all indigenous people throughout America and around the world. His honesty regarding the many crimes he committed during his youth & as a young adult might shock most readers; he was a wild, angry kid who became an alcoholic. Extremely intelligent & eager to

understand who he was meant to be, he learned to curb his anger and become a spiritual human being who could work hard to help improve the lives of his people. He was a brave activist, frequently making mistakes along the way but often succeeding to create positive results for the benefit of many. His story and the numerous accounts shared about American Indians both historically and what is happening today cannot fail to enlighten. This book should be read by everyone.

I just didn't find Russell Means to be a very interesting person. In his youth he was just another punk kid getting in trouble and using the dope he sold to other kids. As an adult, some of his causes were noble, but his actions frequently were not. He was quick to blame other things or people whenever things went badly throughout his life. Marvin J. Wolf worked valiantly with a difficult subject.

From what I had read previously, I understood Russell Means to be an alcoholic brawler and womanizer. Now I know that he was an articulate, deep thinking and spiritual human being. Yes, this change in my perception comes from reading his version of his life, but he doesn't shy away from revealing his weaknesses as well as his virtues. He is also generous in giving credit to others when it is due and fair in his evaluations of people with whom he had significantly different outlooks. I would like to have known him.

This is probably one of the most honest autobiographies I have read. Russell Means had a very interesting life and he explains it, warts and all, in this book. He details the racism that is rampant between the white man and the Indian, how he came to be one of the leaders of AIM, his love of dancing and ceremony. He loves the culture of his people and is encouraged that his actions have sparked a resurgence of tradition. He works hard for the poor and underprivileged and is involved in outrageous acts of civil unrest reaping both praise and hatred. He is shot several times, married several times, arrested many times, nothing seems to be left out of this book. You come to hate his lifestyle but marvel that one man would make so many sacrifices for his cause. Russell Means is truly a modern Indian warrior and you come away with the impression that had he been born 200 years ago he would have been a great war leader. It's hard to read some of the things he got involved with but you won't put this book down.

The only way to learn the true history of this Country is to start with its roots. For America, this means learning the actual (and continuing) treatment of the First Nations People by the "white

invaders." Reading the actual experiences written by American Indian authors is the only way; the rest is propaganda fed to us as schoolchildren and reinforced by Hollywood. Want to know why our Country is in the shape it's in today? Follow the beginning threads which began in 1492 and hang on up to the present. The Europeans brought their culture with them which included ownership of land rather than a sense of the sanctity of place. It changed everything, and continues to, both domestically and absolutely with foreign policies. It's all about the money and started with ol' Chris! What a legacy! This IS an autobiography so these comments include all the other books written by Native Americans; it's difficult to exclude the background, tho' the way our history is traditionally portrayed, it is clear that the truth has never been told.

A very interesting story. This man held nothing back as he fought for the rights of his people. He acknowledged that he was not a very good husband and father. He felt as though it was his calling to do what he did for his people. Most people would have been killed after what Russell has been through. The great mystery as he calls it was definitely looking out for him.

When is is all said and done, the worst enemy of Russell Means is not the white man, the BIA, the U.S. government, alleged vestiges of Christopher Columbus, or recalcitrant fellow American Indians. Russell Means' worst enemy was Russell Means! He was his own worst enemy. (This of course is not unique to Mr. Means. Most of us are our own worst enemies). It is unfortunate Russell didn't realize this early in life. What a difference it could have made! I bought this book used through .com. To my surprise it was autographed by Russell Means in 1-25-97 at a Tuscon book signing. The owner of the book was named Caroline from Georgetown, Texas. I omit her last name for privacy. An internet search indicates she is deceased as of 2007. The book is certainly worth reading.

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