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The Wealth Lost of The Indigenous People Through Treaties

From the early history of this country, the equality of all men in our constitution did not really apply to all men. One of the groups that was excluded by this country was the Indigenous people who had lived here centuries before the first European settlers stepped on this land. This hypocrisy is prominently stated in the opening chapter of Martin Case's book, "The Declaration of Independence, though it was written by slaveholders and refers to indigenous people as 'savages', expresses the ideal of equality among all people" (Case 3). I believe that the wealth lost by the Indigenous people through treaties had a generational impact, affected the loss of culture, and exacerbated the power imbalance.

Having to part with ancestral land causes a massive impact on the whole community and it is no surprise that this can have impacts not just on the present generation but the one that comes after and so on. The enforcement of the treaties on the Indigenous people and the way they were hunted down by the government made it so that this Government could never be seen as fair in the eyes of Indigenous people. In Case's book, he states that "As it became clear that a majority of Cherokee people refused to recognize the treaty, the US military was assigned to hunt, imprison, and move by force those indigenous people who had dispersed from their towns and plantations to avoid removal" (Case 122). Ancestral land is more than just property, the Indigenous people had a spiritual connection with the land and to part with that also meant parting with a part of one's culture. Case states, "The choice to destroy indigenous culture was

seldom questioned anywhere in US society. Even the missionaries who organized opposition to the Indian Removal Act intended indigenous identity to disappear” (Case 167). Once a whole group loses its wealth so frequently it directly results in the loss of one’s power this in turn has made the imbalance in power between the white settlers and the Indigenous people much worse.

In conclusion, the loss of wealth on Indigenous people had a much bigger impact than just the financial status of the community, this loss of wealth resulted in a generational impact, a loss in culture, and a great power imbalance. The dispossession of ancestral lands disrupted traditional ways of life, leading to the erosion of cultural practices, languages, and spiritual connections to the land. This loss of culture is immeasurable, as it represents the severing of ties to thousands of years of heritage and wisdom. Case’s book does a great job of encapsulating what the Indigenous people had to go through for the United States to look like what it is on our map today.

References

Case, Martin. The Relentless Business of Treaties : How Indigenous Land Became US Property.
St. Paul, Mn, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2018.