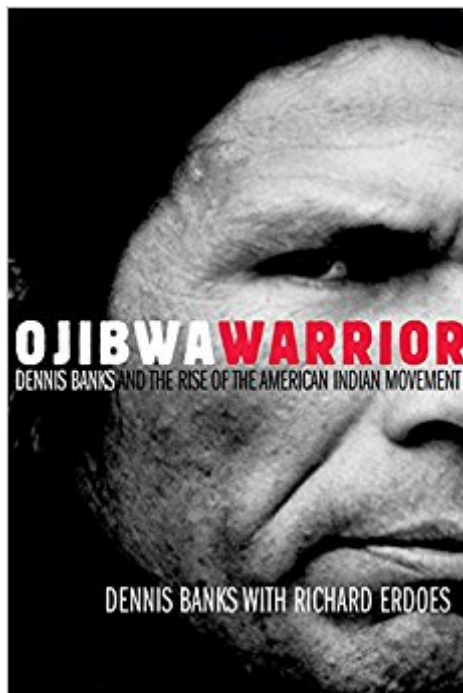




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# Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks And The Rise Of The American Indian Movement



## Synopsis

Dennis Banks, an American Indian of the Ojibwa Tribe and a founder of the American Indian Movement, is one of the most influential Indian leaders of our time. In *Ojibwa Warrior*, written with acclaimed writer and photographer Richard Erdoes, Banks tells his own story for the first time and also traces the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM). The authors present an insider's understanding of AIM protest events—the Trail of Broken Treaties march to Washington, D.C.; the resulting takeover of the BIA building; the riot at Custer, South Dakota; and the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee. Enhancing the narrative are dramatic photographs, most taken by Richard Erdoes, depicting key people and events.

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## Customer Reviews

A compelling account of one of the most influential Indian leaders in the United States, this autobiography describes how Banks was taken from his family as a young child and placed into a government boarding school by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in an attempt to "acculturate" him. Nine years later, he returned to the Ojibwa "rez" only to find that he had forgotten his native Anishinabe language and many of his culture's traditions. "My teachers had made me into an apple outside but white inside." Nonetheless, Banks stayed for two years, reconnecting with family and relearning skills like rabbit trapping, before he joined the Air Force in search of "three meals and warm place to sleep." When he returned from his tour in Japan in the late 1950s, he re-experienced the prejudice, brutality and poverty that were preying upon his

people in America. Angered by what he saw, Banks founded the American Indian Movement (AIM) with the help of his friends. His retelling of these events reads as seamlessly as a great campfire story (or a well-edited oral transcript). He takes readers deep inside the traditional Sun Dances and Sweat Houses of his Ojibwa Tribe and deep into the action of the Trail of Broken Treaties—a peaceful march on Washington that turned into a historic, six-day takeover of the BIA headquarters. Bank's 11-year run from the FBI, his many wives and children and the strategies of AIM all find their place in his winding narrative, making this volume an important addition to this history of Native American and civil rights movements in the United States. 73 b&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Banks opens his honest and moving autobiography with the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee, pondering how he got there, from his 1937 birth in Leech Lake, Minnesota, to a major confrontation with the U.S. government. He recalls being separated from his family, language, and traditions while he lived "a life of innumerable rules" at a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school. He escaped at 16, joined the air force, and was later imprisoned for burglary. In prison, Banks studied the history of American Indian civil rights and became committed to the American Indian Movement (AIM), overseen by the spiritual leaders Mary Crow Dog and Leonard Crow Dog, subjects of previous books by coauthor Erdoes. The decision to make AIM confrontational but not violent led to the occupations of Alcatraz and Mt. Rushmore, the 1972 march on Washington, and Wounded Knee, which Banks considers "the greatest event in the history of Native America in the 20th century." For readers who can recall the spotty media coverage of these events, this powerful litany of AIM's accomplishments is especially provocative. Deborah Donovan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Well written autobiography of American Indian Leader, Dennis Banks. The details of his life give perfect examples of what the government has done to the Native Americans since their arrival on this continent. It's well worth the reading, and something that should be in every school library as a part of Social Injustice in this country.

I was very aware of AIM In the 70s. This book was so detailed with the events leading up to Wounded Knee. It was well written. I could not stop reading chapter after chapter. The relentless pressure put on the AIM members NON STOP. This was not the Feds that are portrayed on

Criminal Minds. The Feds the Bureau of INDIAN Affairs the prosecuting attorneys did everything they could to set up discredit all progress & freedom for Native Americans. Highly RECOMMENDED

I worked and lived with Ojibway back in the late 60's and have been hungry stories told by Native Americans ever since. This man's story needs to be read and appreciated by us all.

great

If one desires to increase ones understanding with a clearer appreciation of events and attitudes & perceptions of how they effected people past, how likely is it to change for the better for all concerned?

'Ojibwa Warrior' by Dennis J. Banks (aka Nowa Cumig in the Ojibwa language) is a long overdue record of the cruelty the U.S. Government and this society has inflicted on the American Indians right up to this day. I was in Minneapolis at the time of the uprising of AIM. I was sympathetic to this cause. As an anglo I was not fully aware of the details until I read this book. The media did not broadcast the events being played out accurately. They just presented the American government side and made the Indians appear as troublemakers. All the Indians did was run out of patience of centuries of mistreatment; and throw it all back on the invaders. They are the original and true residents of this continent. Invaders took over and murdered Indian nations and tribes after arriving from the Eastern Hemisphere and it continued as a routine way of life with the successive generations of anglos. This autobiography is a true account of the history of this society and what has been happening to the American Indians right up to now - the twenty-first century of this civilization we live in! THIS BOOK IS A MUST for educational insitutions and their history and cultural courses in addition to A MUST FOR PRIVATE READING. Only by reading this book and "Where White Men Fear To Trend" by Russell Means will the American people really know the true record of events of the American Indians' circumstances in their own homeland, especially during our recent and current times.

Dennis, thanks for all you and AIM did for all of us. We will always remember the Knee , both struggles and always remember the lessons that our elders taught us. May the great spirit watch over and protect you and all our people.

As a university graduate in 1973, I was greatly moved by the struggle for human rights and fight for self-dignity by the original inhabitants of what became known as North America. Wounded Knee was the catalyst for what has become a greater love and respect for Indian people. From that moment forward, I was a "spiritual" member of the American Indian Movement. During the last forty years, I have had the privilege of meeting most of the original leaders of AIM and was always welcomed at Native gatherings in New York, St. Paul, Pine Ridge, Wounded Knee, San Francisco and too many other locales to mention, even as a white man. My wife and I remember taking Dennis to the Newark Airport after one such gathering and I will never forget looking in the rear-view mirror as Dennis was standing on the sidewalk waving goodbye. No matter the negative things that have been written about AIM, including some that I witnessed with my own eyes, I continue to focus on the positive contribution made by so many Indian people who died and risked their lives, simply to be treated as human beings. The struggle continues at a very high price. For the last eight years, I have been working in China. Four years ago I began teaching English to some of the finest and smartest high school seniors on the planet. As I write this review, I am finishing my current semester in China teaching the kids about AIM and screening "A GOOD DAY TO DIE". They of course know nothing about Native Americans other than the criminal Columbus. I am doing my best to change their thinking. Dennis' song, "Still Strong" resonates in my head on almost a daily basis. I read Dennis' book upon original publication and have revisited it several times. I hope to see you again one day my friend. Tim Patterson Zhengzhou, Henan Province, People's Republic of China

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