Abstract

The belief in American exceptionalism reached its apex during the 1800s and was expressed as a God-given pass for claiming territory called “Manifest Destiny.” Among the victims were Native Americans. The Sioux resisted, eventually in desperation resorting to Ghost Dancing and claiming that American Indians, not whites, were the chosen people. Frank Fiske was a young boy who observed this confrontation firsthand at the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, where Sitting Bull, the only man to ever be chief of the entire Sioux Nation, was held, then killed. Fiske recorded the story as he grew and also kept the glorious past of the Sioux alive with his spectacular photographs of the people and their traditions. The military, political, and legal destruction of American Indian culture provided precedent and justification for the empire building that accelerated soon after Sioux resistance was crushed.

About the Speaker

Robert Dodge is a retired history teacher, having taught in North Dakota, London and 23 years at the Singapore American School, including 25 years of Advanced Placement. He has a degree in history and a master’s degree in education from North Dakota State University and an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. His published works include The Strategist (Marshall Cavendish, Hollis, 2006), Prairie Murders (North Star Press, 2009), Schelling’s Game Theory (Oxford University Press, 2012, Chinese characters by Xinhua) and Which Chosen People? (Algora, 2013).

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