



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Devil's Lake Sioux Tribe of North Dakota has officially changed its name to SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE, Ada E. Deer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs announced today.

According to the elders of the Tribe, who maintain the oral history of the lake for which the Tribe was named, it was always known to the Sioux as "Spirit Lake." Therefore, for members of the Tribe it has always been considered wrong to refer to the lake as "Devil's Lake."

The Spirit Lake Sioux are related to the Sisseton-Wahpeton Band of Mississippi or Eastern Sioux. This group's ancestral grounds were in Minnesota. The discovery of gold in Montana in 1862 brought a major influx of settlers and gold miners through Minnesota - Sioux country, which resulted in the Minnesota Uprising. Many members of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Band migrated west in the wake of this conflict settling in the Fort Totten Area.

In the 1970s the Tribe changed their name to the "Sisseton-Wahpeton of North Dakota." This change was short lived because it caused confusion with the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux of South Dakota and was abandoned.

Final approval of the name change was granted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on August 15, 1996. "This brings to a conclusion the dream of many tribal members as well as bringing closure to the memories of those whose grandparents handed down the true meaning of 'Mni Waukan Oyate' (Spirit Lake Family/Relatives)," Delbert E. Brewer, Area Director, Aberdeen Area Office said.

The Spirit Lake Tribe is located in northeast North Dakota. Their address is Spirit Lake Tribe, Sioux Community Center, Fort Totten, ND 58335, (701) 766-4221, fax (605) 226-7446.
