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Washington, D.C. -- Commissioner Louis R. Bruce of the U. S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs has been presented a copy of the Southern Ute A Tribal History" by members of the Southern Ute Tribe of Colorado, the group responsible for the writing of this unique book. The presentation took place last week in the Commissioner's Office.

Making the presentation were Everett Burch, Southern Ute Vice Chairman, Eddie BOX, Sr., a tribal member, and Floyd A. O'Neill, Associate Director, Documentation and Oral History, American West Center of the University of Utah and the book's editor.

In accepting the book, bound in the blue that is also used in the Southern Ute's tribal seal, Commissioner Bruce, said: "The history of Indian tribes and the Indian peoples has been written by non-Indians top long. I am happy to see that Indian tribes are interested now in-doing their own research and in telling their stories themselves."

The Southern Ute representatives pointed out that half the 106 page book is documented European-style history and an explanation of the Southern Ute culture. A large section of the book is devoted to stories that are part of the Southern Utes oral tradition. A chronology and maps are also included. The book will serve as a text in schools that teach Southern Ute children.

The book shows that although today the Southern Utes represent less than 900 people, the larger group of which it was a part are the oldest continuous resident of Colorado that also lived in Utah and New Mexico. These Indians' first European contact was with the Spanish, who came to their homelands from Mexico in the 1630's and the 1640's.

A by-product of the book, the Southern Ute delegation explained, is "The Southern Ute Archival Collection.” This is more than 12,000 pages of maternal -- treaties, maps, photographs, letters, agreements 4+ that are now bound in tribal volumes. These volumes are kept in the Southern Ute tribal offices. They represent the first formalized attempt of an Indian tribe to assemble its own records – that have a unique value in legal matters involving land claims, tribal enrollment, and other issues in which the Indians have an interest.

The University of Utah started working with the Southern Ute Tribe in the documentation of some of the memories of the oldest residents of the reservation in 1967. In 1971, the southern Ute Tribal council received money from two private foundations, and from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Research and Cultural Studies Development Section, to create a tribal history that would be of general interest and would also be a textbook for the schools serving the children of the southern Ute.

"Efforts such as this one restores the idea of Indian leadership” commissioner Bruce pointed out. “In this case the University of Utah worked under the leadership the tribe. “

The Southern Ute Tribal Council chose James Jefferson a member of the tribe and its public relations director Dr. Robert Delaney, Fort Lewis College, a longtime friend of the tribe and a scholar who has

researched their history deeply, and Gregory C. Thompson, originally of Durango, Colo., a Research Associate in American Indian History, American West Center, university of Utah, to write the book.

The cover drawn by Russell Box, a Southern Ute

Copies of the book are available for $7.50 from the southern Ute Tribe, Tribal Offices, Ignacio, Colo. 81137