

# Doctrine of Christian Discovery

## A Journey of Healing

The Workshops on the Doctrine of Discovery are a project of the Racial Social and Economic Justice Committee of the NEYM and AFSC Healing Justice Program. It is designed and implemented by Indigenous trainers who travel with RESJ's Working Party to work with individual meetings. To schedule a workshop, contact: Rachel Carey Harper [rch@cape.com](mailto:rch@cape.com)



### HANDOUT: QUAKERS AND THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1866, said in his Annual Report: The question of whether the Indian should be civilized or exterminated was a much discussed one at this time and served to quicken the interest of several organizations in the problem. One of these was the Society of Friends which had manifested an interest in the American Indian ever since 1672. (Senate Executive Document, No. 13, 40 Cong., 1 Sess., 39)

The Yearly Meeting of the Friends of Iowa appointed a "Committee on Indian Concerns" and invited other Yearly Meetings to join in their work. Representatives were from the states of Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, New York, **New England Yearly Meeting**, Friends of Philadelphia and Baltimore. This Committee sent a letter to Congress in January, 1868, asking for their members to be part of ". . . the appointment of officers and agents, to have charge of their [the Indians] interests,"

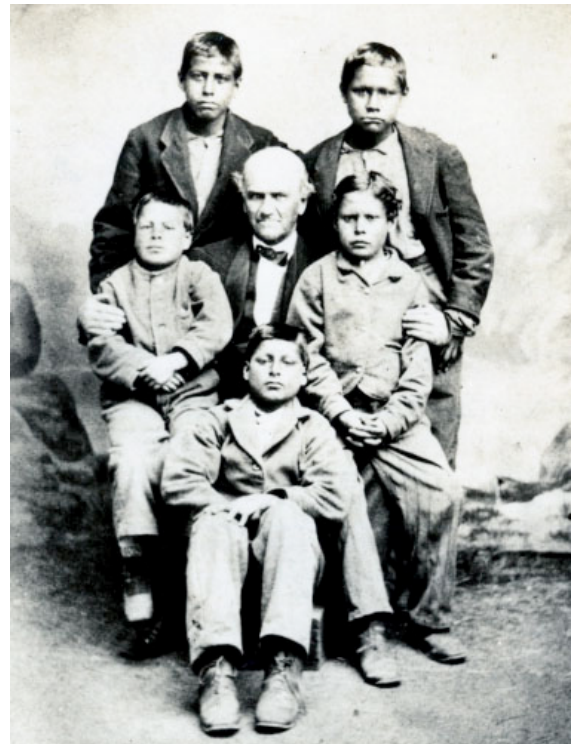
An act of Congress created a Board of Indian Commissioners April 10, 1869 and General Grant, the President-elect, wrote Friends to "request that you will send him a list of names, members of your Society, whom your Society will endorse as suitable persons for Indian agents."

The policy to be administered summarized by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as:

1. that they should be secured their legal rights,
2. located when practicable, upon reservations;
3. assisted in agricultural pursuits and the arts of civilized life;
4. and that Indians who should fail or refuse to come in and locate in permanent abodes provided for them, would be subject wholly to the control of and supervision of military authorities, to be treated as friendly or hostile as circumstances might justify.

The 6,490 Indians of the Northern Superintendency in Nebraska were turned over to the Society of Hicksite Friends while the Central Superintendency embracing the 16,379 Indians of Kansas and the Indian Territory were turned over to the Orthodox Friends.

Duties included instructing the Indians in agricultural pursuits, advising them on their multitudinous difficulties and the distribution of rations and annuity goods. The rations (beef, bacon, flour, coffee, sugar, soap, tobacco, and soda. ) were issued every two weeks to the chiefs, who divided them. If one family's supplies were exhausted before "issue day," they went to visit another. This procedure was followed until the food of the entire band was gone and then, if they could not fast until the next "issue day," they would kill a mule. (Lawrie Tatum, *Our Red Brothers and the Peace Policy of President Ulysses. S.*



Grant, (Philadelphia, 1899), a part of the new agent's work was to establish schools among his charges. The Wichita and Caddo were willing to send their children to the boarding school provided for them, but the Kiowa and Comanche did not place their children in school for several years. Report, 1869, 50; and Report, 1870, 265.

The Quaker Indian agent wrote on the the continual raids particularly in Texas. "I believe affairs will continue to get worse until there is a different course pursued with the Indians. I know of no reason why they should not be treated the same as white people for the same offense. It is not right to be feeding and clothing them, and let them raid with impunity in Texas. Will the committee sustain me in having Indians arrested for murder, and turned over to the proper authorities of Texas for trial?" (Tatum, op. cit., 115-116. See also, Report, 1871, 502-503)

The Society of Friends was very anxious about the whole problem of the arrest of chiefs since it was considered as a wedge which might open the way to a revision of the government's Indian policy and take the management out of their hands. But they were also much concerned that punishment be meted out to



Satanta

the chiefs as can be seen in a typical paragraph from one of their letters sent to Tatum at this time. ". . . I believe that if by any means their punishment should be imprisonment for life it would be more consonant with Christianity, and vastly more effective in deterring their people from a repetition of crimes." (James E. Rhoads to Lawrie Tatum, June 13, 1871, "Kiowa—Satanta and Big Tree Trial," O. H. S.)

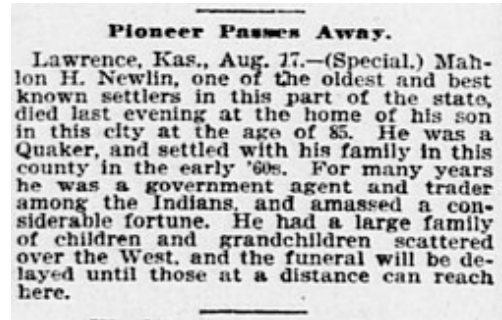
Tatum said that the continual raids had, in his opinion, forfeited the treaty rights of the Indians. No more treaties should be made with them since they were really wards of the government and their true relationship should be recognized. (Report, 1871, 503-504.)

Lawrie Tatum believed that the measures taken against them such as the arrest of the chiefs, the capture and holding of the Comanche women and children, and the threat to punish the Indian when he left the reservation were largely responsible for

improvement. To him it seemed that ". . . the effect on the Kiowas of the promise of the release of Satanta, a daring and treacherous chief, was like a dark and rolling cloud in the Western horizon, and when he should be restored to his people in freedom, it might burst like a tornado upon innocent and unsuspecting parties." (Tatum, op. cit., 159-160.)

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THE BEGINNING OF QUAKER ADMINISTRATION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS IN OKLAHOMA By Aubrey L. Steele



Two Quaker brothers, Albert and Alfred Smiley owned an inn north of New York City they called the Mohonk Mountain House. Between 1883 and 1916, the Smileys held annual conferences hoping to improve the lives of Indians. As one of the earliest speakers at the first conference said, their goal was "the civilization of the Indian." Of course, the assumption was that the Cheyenne, the Mohawk, the Cherokee and the Odawa could not possibly already have "civilization," but that these reformers had to provide it for them.

Henry Dawes, a Republican senator from Massachusetts, was an enthusiastic attendee at the Mononk conferences, and he came increasingly to believe that Congress should act to end the reservation system. Each individual on the reservation should be provided with personal property and surplus land would be sold off to outsiders. Tribal government would wither away, and churches and other organizations would move in to increasing the "civilizing" effect.