

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Indian Committee Report Fiscal Year July 2001-June 2002

Established in 1795, the Indian Committee is the oldest PYM committee in continuous operation. In supporting the many projects that come before it, the Indian Committee places high priority on those that directly support Native American communities and the development of leadership and self-sufficiency in those communities.

During FY 01-02 the Indian Committee had 16 members and attenders (we have no paid staff support for the work of the committee). An average of 100 volunteer hours per month are contributed to the work of the Indian Committee.

[Note: Activity in italics were projects brought to the Committee in FY 01-02, but funded in 02-03]

Support of Local Native American Initiatives

The Committee supported the Nanticoke Lenni Lenape conference held in October 2001. A full representation of Lenape and Delaware groups from wide-ranging areas were together and had the opportunity to speak. Several committee members also attended the conference.

The idea of a Confederacy to include all Lenape grew from this conference, and the Committee also supported two local Lenape who plan to travel in July 2002 to Lenape communities in Ontario and Wisconsin to exchange ideas and discuss plans for the establishment of a Lenape Confederacy.

The Committee supported the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware's symposium held in Dover during April 2002. Much of its focus dealt with archeological sites, and was very successful in gathering Lenape from various communities to continue the efforts to work together and preserve their culture. Several committee members were in attendance.

This conference highlighted the need within its membership for the development of a strong sense of Lenape identity and pride in the Lenape heritage. Toward this end, the Committee supported the travel in July 2002 of two Lenape from Moraviantown, Ontario, to Lenape in Delaware for the purpose of conducting and teaching ceremonies.

Support was given to the Piney-Lenape community in New Jersey for the purchase of computer equipment for genealogical research.

The Committee continued its long contact with the Lenni-Lenape Historical Society and Museum in Allentown, PA, and donated books for children about the Lenape for use in education programs.

The Pennsylvania Native American Theater was supported in their efforts to launch a program for the production of plays in the Philadelphia area.

The Committee supported the United American Indians of the Delaware Valley in the planning of a Powwow to be held in August 2002 in Fairmount Park. This event is designed to increase membership and to raise funds to rebuild the UAIDV center in Philadelphia. Committee funds were also used for renovation needs at the UAIDV center.

Support Nationally and Internationally to Native American Peoples

Projects this year have focused on educational institutions, individual scholarships, educational video projects, and the support of organizations that increase awareness of Native American issues.

We have maintained regular visits to the Mowa Choctaw Friends Center and Academy in Alabama and supported the purchase of furniture and equipment for the kindergarten and first grades, and the purchase of network computers, primarily for their GED adult outreach projects.

Two Native American students were granted one-time scholarships to Friends' secondary schools. One student, who attends locally, was visited by a Committee member to be sure the school was a good fit and that the student was adjusting well.

An after-school Cultural Native Horsemanship Program of the White Earth Recovery Project in Minnesota was supported. This program involves not only equestrian skills, but also cultural handicrafts and lore, native language, and study skills.

Support was extended to the Oneida Nation in New York to produce and distribute videos documenting political and economic concerns that have been threatening the future of that community. An Oneida scholar was also given support for research work to produce a video on the role of the Oneida in the American Revolution.

Permission was granted for the duplication of a video in the Quaker Collection at Haverford College pertaining to the Seneca people. This copy will be used by a PhD student in her dissertation on the education of Seneca Indians and the Quaker mission in Western New York, and then donated to the Seneca Nation of Indians Library in Salamanca.

Funds were also sent to the Association on American Indian Affairs and the Native American Rights Fund. These organizations work on a number of legal and social issues, and publish useful newsletters.

Work with Friends/Other Friends Organizations

The PYM Indian Committee has continued to work with FCNL, AFSC Native American/Native Peoples Task Force, and other Friends Indian Committees. During the year the Committee followed reorganization by the FCNL and expressed strong support for the maintenance of FCNL's high quality and much needed work to document Native American issues. In addition, the Committee sent funds for the publication of a special issue of the FCNL Indian Report.

The Committee also sent funds to the American Indian Law Alliance toward the sponsoring of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. A committee member attended this forum, and she and Ed Nakawatase (AFSC) gave a report on their experiences. The event was noteworthy in that it was the first formal representation of native peoples at the UN.

Committee members have also been speakers and have assisted in the organization of the Northeast Regional Gathering of Friends on Native Americans held in November 2001 at Baltimore, MD, and in May 2002 at Staten Island, NY. This gathering enables networking of Friends active on Indian Committees from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and has included participants from FCNL and AFSC as well

as other Friends simply sharing a concern in Native American issues. The theme of the May 2002 conference was "Native American community in the Urban Setting."

The Committee's long relationship with ACFIA (Associated Committee on Friends and Indian Affairs) has been maintained via our continued support and active visitation with the Mowa Choctaw School.

The Indian Committee approved a minute in support of AFSC's efforts to plan a nationwide gathering of Friends (from all yearly meetings and other Friends' organizations working on Native American concerns) and Native American peoples, slated for Fall 2003 in Denver, Colorado.

Outreach

The Indian Committee had developed its own website at www.pym-indiancommittee.com this year at nominal cost. It contains information about the Indian Committee and weblinks to resources about American Indians, such as news articles, publications, and suggested readings. We also developed a brochure describing our mission statement, history, and funding guidelines. Committee members continue to make themselves available to speak at Friends Meetings and Schools.