

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Indigenous Affairs Annual Report

June 2023 to June 2024

Our committee has welcomed three new members this year who invigorate our old committee with fresh ideas.

Two Events with an Indigenous Organization

In September the intertribal American Indian Society of DC (AISDC) held a picnic attended by Sue Marcus and past members Nancy & Jana McIntyre and Pat Powers. The Society presented Pat with a certificate of appreciation for our



committee's long-term support. Framed, the certificate is in the BYM office.

In December, our committee secured Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting's Community House as the site for AISDC's annual Christmas Bazaar.

The committee and the AISDC are grateful to Sandy Spring Meeting volunteers for warmly welcoming our Native guests. Quaker and public attendance was good and Society members said it

was their best bazaar ever. Signs made by Sandy Spring member Tom Harvey attracted the public. Afterward there was a lively Society potluck with drumming, songs, prayers, and dancing. Dellie James co-hosted with AISDC's Tracey Pitcock.

Talk by Indigenous Leader

At the 2023 Annual Session workshop, we heard from Chief Donna Wolf Mother Abbott, of the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians who live on the Eastern Shore, about their history, heritage and present-day activities to help clean up the waterways in the Cambridge area, including Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Chief Donna was well received and invited everyone to the bands 31st annual Pow Wow which was held in September. She stayed and had dinner with members of the committee. Others in BYM said they were pleased that she was recruited to speak.

New Communication Projects/Activities Information Dissemination

We started a newsletter featuring information and interesting facts on Native issues called Indigenous Affairs Quarterly (IAQ) that will be sent by email to contacts at Monthly Meetings. The editor is Susannah Rose. If you want to be put on the email list, contact her at susanhillrose@gmail.com. We hope the contacts will share the newsletter with their Meetings.

Information Updating

Our committee received BYM funding for two projects to benefit Meetings and the general public. One project will gather information to update a comprehensive 2009 statistics and demographics report. It will be geared to the lay person. Among the topics are facts about Native health, education, housing, employment and infrastructure. We hope to engage a Native researcher in this work.

Creation of Audio-Visual resource

The other project is to develop an audio-visual educational production (approximately 10 minutes) focused on the BYM region. We hope it could be shown to interested Monthly Meetings to provide education about local Natives. While the committee has made two slide shows, a committee member has to be there to speak. A stand-alone vehicle is needed for First Day Schools or adult education. Most items now available are National and issue specific. We hope to use a Native videographer or reviewer familiar with local tribes.

Coordination Among BYM Groups

Pat Powers suggested reaching out to other committees who might be interested in hearing about our activities and in doing more in the world rather than just within BYM. A preliminary conversation might identify common concerns or ways to cooperate on joint activities. She and Bob Rhudy (Patapsco Meeting) contacted other BYM committees including the Working Group on Racism, Unity with Nature, Peace & Social Justice, Reparations Action Working Group, and Camp Property. There was an initial zoom call in May. Pat also prepared a questionnaire to learn more about the interests and experience of BYM members but received few returns. Many suggested that the questionnaire be posted online.

Ongoing Major Activity

Indian Boarding Schools Developments

Our committee is responding to revelations about the scandalous Indian boarding school operations (1819-1969). First, we track research, developments and media exposes. Dan Cole is the committee liaison to Paula Palmer's research network. The U.S. Department of Interior has documented the cultural assimilation and

destruction of culture that Indigenous peoples suffered through the forced removal and relocation of their children. It released a major study in 2022 which found that the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or then territories, including 21 in Alaska and 7 in Hawaii. The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) has identified 15 Quaker-run schools. Haverford and Swarthmore have opened their archives to NABS researchers. Second, we actively support the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the U.S. Act. Legislation is pending in Congress. Third, we are raising money for a small act of redress.

BYM Involvement

This year, the Committee researched exactly what Quakers did in the past and under what auspices. When President Grant started his Peace program, he assigned the existing Indian agencies in the Northern Superintendency to Hicksite Friends (and the Central Superintendency to Orthodox Friends). Samuel Janney from Goose Creek Meeting was made Superintendent. Other individuals and families from Baltimore Yearly Meeting went to Nebraska to work with the Great Nemaha, Pawnee, Omaha, Otoe, Santee Sioux, and Winnebago tribes. Providing education was one of their responsibilities. Volunteers spent considerable time with the Pawnee tribe for which BYM had exclusive jurisdiction. They established and built the Pawnee Agency School, but Pawnee families were reluctant to send their children. Then the federal government required that students be in boarding school for at least nine months a year. Quakers insisted the students speak only English. It is this history that contemporary BYM Friends are facing and addressing.

Reparation

After discernment, our committee decided to request that BYM provide monetary reparations for a 2-year period, totaling \$20,000. This proposal will be brought to the Spring Interim Meeting. It has already received support from the Reparations Action Working Group. We think that the BYM funds will be used towards the Pawnee language restoration program, though we believe that money decisions must be guided by the receiver (Pawnee Nation) not the provider (BYM). Sue Marcus reached out to Herb Adson, Culture Director for the Pawnee Nation, who was pleasantly surprised to hear from us.

Budget

Current Year 2024

Indigenous Speaker – Annual Session	\$ 400
Audio-Visual education project (1st year)	2000

Indigenous statistical update (1st year)	2000
Association of American Indian Affairs	200

total \$5,000

(The Pawnee project is not part of IAC's budget since it is a BYM reparation rather than a committee activity)

Other Committee Activities

Transition to Indigenous Peoples Day

Pocahontas Project – Richmond, Va Executive Director Rick Tatnall asked us to support bills before the Virginia and Maryland legislatures to change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. We sent general letters to both bodies but neither state brought the bill to the floor for a vote. We decided to award the last of our historic fund money (\$256) to the Pocahontas Project for this action.

Individual Activities

Our members keep busy with activities like these: being active with the Society of American Indian Government Employees (for example by helping with their annual conference); laying wreaths on Native graves at Carlisle, (which several of our members took part in this year, joined by members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting); going to local Pow Wows; supporting Native organizations; and educating ourselves on policy issues at the federal and state level through online Native websites.

In February 2024, Pat and Martha Catlin spoke about committee activities past and present at a Sandy Spring Meeting forum on “Beyond Acknowledgement.” Martha published a print book entitled *As They Were Led: Quakerly Steps and Missteps Toward Native Justice, 1795-1940*. Pat picked up the recent history in an e-book entitled: *Respect and Justice For Indigenous Peoples: A Quaker Advocacy Group's Experience Recounted (1941 – 2000)*. Both can be purchased on Amazon; the printed book is available through Pendle Hill or FGC Quakerbooks.

Composition of Committee

Dan Cole, Frederick (co-clerk) and Dellie James, Stony Run (co-clerk). Kimberly Benson, Annapolis. Abbey Compton, Herndon. Mac Broussard, Roanoke. Sue Marcus, Alexandria. Bill Mims, Langley Hill. Susannah Rose, Patapsco. Sharon Stout, Adelphi. Steve Tatum, Blacksburg. Possible oncoming—John Meyer. _