

For BYM weekly announcements

REPARATIONS DISCUSSED AT INTERIM MEETING

Friends will have heard about the thousands upon thousands of Indigenous children in the U.S. and Canada who were separated from their families and forced to reside in government or religious boarding schools (1819-1969). Horrible things happened in far too many schools; universally, their Native language and cultural practices were forbidden. Some children never were reunited with their parents since they died of disease at boarding school.

Quakers were stunned and saddened to learn that we too build and administered such schools around the U.S. in places such as Indiana and even Alaska. Most were in the west where both Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers ran Indian agencies in conjunction with the Grant administration. Hicksite Friends, including Quakers from this area, were involved in Nebraska with these tribes: Great Nemaha, Omaha, Winnebago, Otoe, and Santee Sioux. However, Baltimore Yearly Meeting had responsibility for the Pawnee Nation where it had special jurisdiction. Because it was our Yearly Meeting that managed all facets of that reservation, including day and boarding schools, we have a special obligation to address the harm we did there.

For the past eight years, national Native organizations and activists such as Paula Palmer from Boulden Meeting (who researched Quaker schools) have urged churches to make amends including reparations. Faith groups have started to respond. Quakers have begun payments, small in large amounts. Numerous Friends in BYM are of the deep belief that we should do the same. At Interim meeting on June 8, 2024, the Indigenous Affairs Committee proposed reparations of at least \$20,000 be sent to the Pawnee language restoration program.

Next week, the Indigenous Affairs Committee will provide more information on this proposal and the Pawnee people.