

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oneida Business Committee

FROM: L. Gordon McLester

DATE: November 14, 1983

SUBJECT: Centennial of the Lake Mohonk Conferences Report

The Conference on the history of reform in American Indian Policy started on Sunday, October 30, 1983. The first day this meeting centered around the past history of these conferences that dealt with the history of these conferences that dealt with the history of reform in American Indian Policy. These conference were held at the Mohonk Mountain House through the years and this was the 100th anniversary. The first day dealt with explaining the history of the facility. The owner, A. Keith Smiley, gave a welcome speech and spoke on the history of the conferences.

The Monday session dealt with diverse approaches to reform. Professor Frederick Hoxie spoke on the 19th century ethnology in Indian reform. This was a paper which explained how the historians looked at the mentality of the Indian people. It explained that the Indian people, because of the brain size do not have the ability to be on the same level as the white man. It gave you an inkling of how the historians looked at the Indian people at that time. Elizabeth Tooker from Temple University spoke on the case of Lewis H. Morgan. Lewis H. Morgan gave the history of the Iroquois and basically she explained the type of a scholar he was and how he viewed life on the reservation among the Indian people. There was another speaker, Professor Paul Stuart from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He dealt with the administrative reform in Indian Affairs and how the Indian Affairs was set up in the beginning and the various changes on down through the 50's. At the end of each session there was time for comment and additional discussions. At the afternoon session it dealt with the Assimilationist reform. They spoke about how the Indian people related to the reform policy and womanhood on the reservations and returning students that had gone away to school and then returned to the reservation. The evening session dealt with directions in the history of Indian Policy Reform. There were four historians or professors that spoke on this topic. One was an Indian from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Donald Fixico, who was the only Indian professor that participated in all of these presentations. He also

works under Dr. Reginald Horseman, who will possibly be working for the Oneida's on the New York land claims. In this session, each one of these professors gave the direction that they felt that the Indian Policy Reform had come. In most cases, the professors were dealing from the technical standpoint. Their involvement in the field of just how Indian policy reform affected most Indian people did not show up at all. Donald Fixico was the only one I felt had first hand knowledge of Indian people.

There was some very good discussion from the audience at this point. There were some Indian people present beside myself who were mainly from New York state. The point of the discussion from the Indian people's view point was the textbook attitude of these professors and scholars and not really getting into the real effects that these policy reforms had on Indian people.

On Tuesday morning the twentieth-Century Indian Policy was dealt with. One of the papers of Ken Philips from the University of Texas dealt with relocation of Indians to cities in 1952 through 1960. This paper almost all the Indian people took issue with. The paper again dealt strictly with the statistics and not with Indian people at all. There was also a discussion on the reform of termination.

In the overall presentations of the scholars, there were two things that seemed to come to the forefront in their presentations. The development of the presentation seems to be totally lacking in many areas of the Indian input. We, as Indian people desperately need the Indian input in the development of an Indian Policy Reform. The conference is held in a very isolated location and listening to the history of the first conference that was held, these were people of wealth and influential positions and for them to come to a location such as this Mohonk House and the report of the Indian people and how they could be best served is so far removed from what they really know about people on the reservations. This was what happened in the beginning and as this present day conference it is still happening. There seems to be a need for more communication between the scholars and the Indian people.

During the time that I was at the conference I was able to talk with Keith Smiley. He is from Oneida, New York. Basically, our discussion centered around what can be developed to minimize the differences in New York State. I explained to him the meeting that was set up for the 19th and 20th of November in Canada. All parties are welcome and urged to attend. He seemed to be responsive to a meeting of this sort and stated that he would try to attend. On Wednesday, I met with Mrs. Barthalemev She is the wife of Dave Barthalemev who is the individual who came out here to Oneida and brought his artifacts to the opening of our Museum. There is an understanding in a written contract that at this time the display of the artifacts that Dave had would stay at the Museum until such time as we would be prepared to purchase them at the price they would be evaluated at by the Insurance Company. In the meantime, as long as the Oneida's of Wisconsin keep the artifacts they would keep them in a place suitable for artifacts and continue to pay the insurance. She has agreed to work out any kind of arrangements that the Tribe would want leading to the purchase of these artifacts. The evaluation of these artifacts comes to \$5400 at the present time. She also has additional artifacts I think that the Tribe should consider making a purchase of but that is an area I am hoping the Museum Director would be able to follow up on.