

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
CONSTITUTING THE YEARLY MEETINGS OF
GENESSEE, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA AND
BALTIMORE, FOR PROMOTING THE
CIVILIZATION AND IMPROVING THE CONDITION
OF THE SENECA NATION OF INDIANS**

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Proceedings of the Joint Committee Appointed by the Society of Friends, Constituting the Yearly Meetings of Genessee, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, for Promoting the Civilization and Improving the Condition of the Seneca Nation of Indians by Various

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VARIOUS

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1847.

P R E F A C E .

The society of Friends who compose the Yearly meetings of Genesee, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, having for some years past been engaged in efforts to promote the civilization, of some of the Indian tribes, residing in the western parts of the state of New York; and having under the present improved situation, both as regards the intellectual and social condition of the Senecas, who have been under their care, reason to hope, that in a little time, these people will be able to manage their own affairs, without much assistance from us, the Committees appointed by those several Yearly meetings to attend to this service, believe it right, to prepare for the general information of our members, who have taken a deep interest in this concern, a narrative of our proceedings.

This has been deemed the more necessary as, by being made fully acquainted with the former and present circumstances of those Indians, our members will be better able to judge, what it may be proper for the society of Friends hereafter to do for them, should our connexion with them be continued.

In the course of their labors, the joint Committees of the four Yearly meetings here referred to, have encountered many formidable obstacles; and among other difficulties they have had to struggle with a powerful combination, composed of an influential body of men, deeply interested, and resolutely determined to drive these Indians from the homes descended to

them, through many generations, from their forefathers, and who did not hesitate to resort to every means in their power to effect that object. The result that must have followed this cruel purpose, had it succeeded, may be seen in the melancholy fate which befel that portion of the Senecas, who were decoyed off to the west in the summer of 1846.

When the committee embarked in this effort to change the entire habits of a whole community or nation, strongly attached as these Indians were, to the usages and practices of their ancestors, and educated, as they had been, in a hereditary aversion to the institutions of civilization, they were fully aware that the undertaking was one of uncertain issue, and under the most favorable circumstances must have been expected to involve, much time and labor. By steadily pursuing their purpose however, cheered under the most adverse circumstances by the unbounded confidence of the Indians, and sustained by the consoling assurances of their own feelings, that they were endeavoring to discharge what they believed to be their duty, towards an oppressed and grievously wronged people, they yielded to no discouragements, and have now the satisfaction to witness a most favorable and radical change, rapidly advancing among the Senecas, affording a consoling prospect that this remnant of a once numerous and powerful people, will be rescued from the melancholy fate that has befallen so many tribes of their race in our country.

On comparing the condition of those Indians, at the time when they came under the care of Friends, with their present situation, it will be seen, that there has been an improvement among them, even greater than could have been reasonably anticipated. We found them without a home,—destitute, desponding and miserable—they are now in possession of a sufficient extent of their patrimonial domain, secured to them by a title, of which they cannot be despoiled, but with their own consent, and by their own act—They have been taught to cultivate their lands, have comfortable dwellings, and the requisite stock and implements, to render their farms sufficiently productive of the necessary food

for their families.—Many of their children have received school education, and the condition of their women, has been greatly meliorated and improved, with the prospect that hereafter, they will occupy a much more comfortable and appropriate position, than formerly, and above all, the Senecas at Cataraugus and Alleghany, from having formerly been generally addicted to the excessive use of spirituous liquors, have been induced to exclude all intoxicating drinks from their Reservations, and are become a sober, and to a considerable extent, industrious people.

PROCEEDINGS
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In the year 1827 Red Jacket, the distinguished Chief of the Seneca nation, then filling the highest station his people could confer, being their Head or chief Sachem; perceiving his health to decline and the infirmities of age to increase upon him, became deeply concerned for the welfare of his tribe. The difficulties and dangers, which he saw, fast gathering around his people, rendered him desirous, if possible, by precautionary measures, to avert the desolation that he feared would soon overtake them. He anxiously cast his eye round him to see where they might find protection, when he should be removed by death,—or to use his own expressions, “when my warning voice shall no longer be heard, and the foot of the Indian’s exulting foe may with safety be placed upon my grave.” Remembering the many acts of kindness, which had, reciprocally passed between his fore-fathers and the Society of Friends, as handed down by tradition from the first settlement of Pennsylvania, he determined to apply for assistance to the Committee on Indian affairs of New York Yearly meeting. He accordingly proceeded to that city, and made a personal appeal to the Committee; entreating that Friends would take his people under their care, with a view to their civilization and instruction in agriculture, but more particularly with a hope that they might be able to protect them from the intrusions of the white people, and the evils of the land speculators.

That Committee had then under their care the Onondago