



*Missionary's address to the Chiefs of the Six Nations of Indians
and their response.*

ID_TEI: SW_1805_00_00
TYPE_OF_MANUSCRIPT: Manuscript
CALL_NO: Mss 004/ 1805
DATE: 1805
LOCATION: Swarthmore College
AUTHOR: Jacob Cram
SUMMARY: Address of Red Jacket at Buffalo Creek in response to
speech by Massachusetts missionary Jacob Cram.

How to cite: Accessed online Fri 26 Apr 2024 02:04 PM EST

This page is intentionally left as blank.

(1)

An Indian Speech

In the Summer of 1805, A number of the principal Chiefs and Warriors of the six Nations of Indians principally Senecas assembled at Buffalo Creek in the State of New York, at the particular request of a Gentleman, Missionary from the State of Massachusetts,

The Missionary being furnished with an Interpreter, and accompanied by the Agent of the U. States for Indian Affairs, met the Indians in Council, where the following talk took place.

First by the Agent

Brothers of the six Nations, I rejoice to meet you at this time, and thank the Great Spirit that he hath preserved you in health, and given me another opportunity of shaking you by the hand.

Brothers, The person who now sits by me is a friend who has come a great distance to hold a talk with you, he will inform you what his business is, and and it is my request that you should listen with attention to his words.

Missionary

My friends I am thankful for the opportunity afforded us in meeting together at this time, I had a great desire to see you and enquire into your state and welfare, for this purpose I have traveled a great distance, being sent by your old friends the Boston Missionary Society; you will recollect they formerly sent Missionaries amongst you, to instruct you in Religion and labour for your good, altho they have not heard from you for a long time yet they have not forgotten their Brothers of the six Nations, and are still desirous and anxious to do you good.

Brothers I have not come to get your lands or Money but to enlighten your minds, and to instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit, agreeable

Transcription

ytf ytf ytf An Indian Speechytf In the summer of 1805, a number of the principal Chiefsyt
and warriors of the six Nations of Indians principally
ytf Seneca assembled at Buffaloe Creek in the state of
ytf New York , at the particular request of aytf Gentleman
Missionary from the state of Massachusett , ytf ytf The Missionary being furnished with an
ter and accompanied by theytf Agent of the U States for
Indian affairs, met the Indians in council, whenyt
the following talk took place ytf ytf First by the Agent
Brothers of the sixyt Nations , I rejoice to meet you at
this time, and thank theytf Great spirit that he hath
preserved you in health, and given me anothersyt oppo
rtunity of takeing you by the hand ytf ytf Brothers, The person who now sits by me is a frie
who has come a greaytf distance to hold a talk with
you, he will inform you what his business is,ytf and
and it is my request that you should listen
with attention toytf his words ytf ytf Missionary
My friends I am thankful for the opportunity
afforded usyt in meeting together at this time, I had
a great desire to see you andytf enquire into your state
and welfare, for this purpose I have traveled aytf
great distance being sent by your old friends
the Boston Missionary society ; you will recollect
ytf they formerly sent Missionaries amongst you, to
instruct you in Religionyt and I aboud for your
good, Altho they have not heardyt from you for
a long time yet they have not forgotten there
Brothersyt of the six Nations , and are stillytf
anxious to do you good ytf ytf Brothers
I have not come to get your lands or
Money but to enlighten yourytf minds, and to
instruct you how to worship the Great Spirit,ytf agreeable

agreeable to his mind, and ⁽²⁾ will, and to preach to you
the Gospel of his son Jesus Christ, there is but one Religion
and one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the
right way you cannot be happy hereafter, you have
never worshiped the Great Spirit in a manner acceptable
to him but have all your lives been in great errors and
darkness, to endeavour to remove these errors, and open
your eyes, so that you might see clearly is my business
with you -

Brothers I wish to talk with you as one friend talks
with another, and if you have any objections to receive
the Religion which I preach I wish you to state them
~~and I will~~, and I will endeavour to satisfy your minds,
and remove ~~the~~ the objections -

Brothers I want you to speak your minds freely, for
I wish to reason with you on the subject, and if possible
to remove all doubts if there be any on your minds
the subject is an important one, and it is of consequence
that you give it an early attention, while the offer
is made you, your friends the Boston Missionary Society
will continue to send you good and faithful Ministers
to instruct and strengthen you in Religion, if on your
part you are willing to receive them -

Brothers Since I have been in this part of the Country
I have visited some of your small Villages, and talked
with your people, they appear willing to receive instruction,
but as they look up to you as your Elders & Brothers
in Council, they want first to know your opinion on
the subject, if you have now heard what I have to propose
at present, I hope you will take it into consideration,
and give me an answer before we part -

After about two hours consultation amongst
themselves, the Chief commonly called the Jacket
by the white people arose and spoke as follows -

Friend and Brother It was the will of the great
spirit that we should meet together this day,

Transcription

agreeable to his mind, and will, and to preach to you
ytf the Gosple of his son Jesus Christ, there is but one Religion
and one wayytf to serve God, and if you do not embrace the
right way you cannot be happyytf hereafter; you have
never worshiped the Great Spirit in a maner acceptablytf
to him but have all your lives been in great errors and
darkness, toytf indeavour to remove these errors, and open
your eyes, so that you mightytf see clearly is my business
with you ytf Brothers

I wish to talk with you as one friend talks
with another,ytf and if you have any objections to recieve
the Religion which I preach Iytf wish you to take them
ytf and I will, and I will endeavour to satisfy your minds
andytf remove the the objections ytf ytf Brothers

I want you to speak your minds freely; for
I wish to reasonytf with you on the subject, and if possible
to remove all doubts if there beytf any on your minds
the subject is an important one, and it is of consequytf
ence that you give it an early attention, while the offer
is madeytf you; you find the Boston Missionary society ytf
will continue to send you good and faithful Ministers
to instructytf and strength you in Religion, if on your
part you areytf willing to receive themytf ytf Brothers

Since I have been in the part of the country
I have visitedytf some of your small Villages, and talked
with your people, they appearytf willing to receive instruc
tion, but as they look up to you as your Olderytf Brother
in council, the want first to know your opinion on
theytf subject; you have now heard what I have to propose
at present, I hope youytf will take it into consideration,
and give me an answer before we partytf ytf ytf After about two hours consultation amongst

themselves, the Cheif commonlytf called Red Jacketytf
by the white people arose and spoke as followsytf ytf Friend and Brother

It was the will of the great
spirit that we should meetytf together this day,

(3)

he orders all things and has given us a fine Day for our Council - He has taken his garment from before the Sun, and caused it to shine with brightness upon us, our eyes are open that we see clearly, our ears have been unstopped that we have been able to hear distinctly the words you have spoken, for all these favours we thank the great spirit, and him only.

Brother, This council fire was kindled by you, it was at your request that we came together at this time we have listened with attention to what you have said, you requested us to speak our minds freely, this gives us great joy, for we now consider that we stand upright before you, and can speak what we think, all has heard your voice and all speak to you now as one Man, our minds are agreed.

Brother, You say you want an answer to your talk before you leave this place, it is right you should have one, as you are a great distance from home, and we dont wish to detain you, but we will first look back a little, and tell you what our fathers have told us, and what we have heard from the white people.

Brother listen to what we say. There was a time when our forefathers owned this great Island, their seas extended from the rising to the setting sun, the Great spirit had made it for the use of Indians - he had created the Buffalo, the Deer, and other animals for food, he made the Bear & the Mink, their skins served us for clothing, he had scattered them over the Country and taught us how to take them, he had caused the earth to produce Corn for bread, all this he had done for his red Children because he loved them; if we had some disputes about hunting ground they were generally settled without the shedding of much blood; but an evil day came upon us your forefathers crossed the great water and landed on this Island; their number

were

Transcription

he orders all things and has given us a fine Dayytf for our council. He has taken his garment from before the Sun, andytf caused it to shine with brightness upon us, our eyes are open that we seeytf clearly, our ears have been unstoped that we have been able to hearytf distinctly the words you have spoken, for all these favours we thankytf the great spirit, and him only. ytf ytf Brother

This council fire was kind led by you, it was at yourytf request that we came together at this time we have listned with attentionytf to what you have said, you requested us to speak our minds freely, ytf this gives us great Joy, for we now consider that we stand upright beforeytf you, and can speak what we think, all have heard your voice and all speakytf to you now as one Man, our Minds are agreed ytf ytf Brother,

You say you want an answer to your talk before you leaveytf this place, it is right you should have one, as you are a great Distanceytf from home, and we dont wish to ditain you, but we will first look ytf back a little, and tell you what our fathers have told us, and what weytf have heard from the white people

Brother listen to what we say. There wasytf a time when our forefathers owned this great Land, their seats ytf Extended from the rising to the setting sun, the Great spirit had made itytf for the use of Indians he had created the Buffaloe, the Deer, and otherytf animals for food, he made the Bear & the Beaver, their skins servedytf us for clothing, he had scattered them over the country and taughtytf us how to take them, he had caused the earth to produce corn for bread,ytf all this he had done for his red children because he loved them; if we hadytf some disputes about hunting ground they were generally settledytf without the shedding of much blood; but an Evil day came upon us yourytf forefathers crossed the great watter and landed on this Island; theirytf number were

were small, they found ⁽⁴⁾ friends and not enemies, they told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion, they asked for a small seat, we took pity on them, granted their request, and they sat down amongst us, we gave them corn & meat, they gave us poison (alluding it is supposed to ardent spirits) in return. the white people had now found our country, tidings were carried back, and more came amongst us, yet we did not fear them, we took them to be friends they called us brothers, we believed them, and gave them a larger seat, at length their numbers had greatly increased, they wanted more land, they wanted our country, our eyes were opened and our minds became uneasy, wars took place. Indians were hired to fight against Indians, and many of our people were destroy'd, they also brought strong liquors amongst us, it was strong and powerful, and has slain thousands.

Brother, our seats were once large and we were small, you have now become a great people; and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets, you have got our country, but are not satisfied, you want to force your Religion upon us.

Brother, continue to listen, you say you are sent to instruct us how to worship the Great Spirit agreeably to his mind, and if we do not take hold of ^{the} Religion which you teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter, you say that you are right and we are lost, how do you know this to be true; we understand that your Religion is written in a book, if it was intended for us as well as you, why has not the great spirit given to us, and not only to us, but why did he not give to our forefathers the knowledge of that book, with the means of understanding it rightly: - we only know what you tell us about it, how shall we know when to believe, being so often deceived by the white people.

Brother, you say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit, if there is but one Religion

Transcription

were small, they found friends and not enemies, they
ytf told us they had fled from their own country for fear of
wicked men, andytf had come here to enjoy their religion,
they asked for a small seat, weytf took pity on them,
Graned their request, and they sat down amongst us,ytf
we gave them corn & meat, they gave us poisonsytf (alluding
it as supposed to ardent spirits) inytf retuurn. the white people
had now found our country, tidings were carriedytf back,
and more came amongst us, yet we did not fear them
we took them toytf be friends they called us Brothers, we
believed them, and gave them aytf large seat, at length
their numbers had greatly increased, they wantedytf
more land, they wanted our country, our eyes were
opened and ourytf minds became uneasy, wars took place
Indians were hired to fight againstytf Indians, and
many of our people were destroy'd, they also brought
ytf strong liquors amongst us, it was strong and power
ful, and has slainytf thousands. ytf Brother, our seats were once large and yours
were small, you have nowytf become a great people;
and we have scarcely a place left to spread our
ytf Blankits, you have got our country, but are not
ytf satisfied, you want to force your Religion upon us.ytf ytf Brother, continue to listen, you say you a
to instruct us how toytf worship the Great spirit agreeably to
his mind, and if we do not take holdytf of the Religion which you
teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter, you sayytf that you
are right and we are lost, how do you know this to be
true;ytf we understand that your religion is written in a
book, if it was intendedytf for us as well as you, why has
not the great spirit given to us, and notytf only to us,
but why did he not give to our forefathers the know
ytf ledge of that book, with the means of understanding
it rightly; we onlyytf know what you tell us about
it, how shall we know what to believe, beingytf so often
deciev'd by the white people ytf ytf Brother, you say there is but one way to worship
and serve the Greatytf spirit, if there is but one Religion

(5)

Religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? why not all agreed, as you can all read the books?

Brother, we do not understand these things, we are told that your religion was given to your forefathers, and has been handed down from father to son, we also have a Religion, which was given to our forefathers, and has been handed down to us their Children, we worship in that way, it teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we receive, to love each other and to be united, we never quarrel about Religion.

Brother, the Great spirit has made us all, but he has made a great difference between his white & Red children, he has given us different Complexions & different Customs, to you he has given the arts, to these he has not opened our eyes, we know these things to be true; since he has made so great a difference between us in other things, why may we not conclude that he has given us a different Religion according to our understandings; The Great spirit does right, he knows what is best for his Children, we are satisfied.

Brother, we do not wish to destroy your Religion, or take it from you, we only want to enjoy our own.

Brother, we are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place, These people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them, we will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching has upon them, if we find it does them good, makes them honest and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you have said.

Brother You have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all we have to say at present, as we are going to part we will come and take you by the hand and hope the Great spirit will protect you on your Journey and return you safe to your friends.

Transcription

Religion, why do you whiteytf people differ so much about it? why not all agreed, as you can all usedytf the Book?ytf that your religionytf was given to your forefathers, and how been handed down from father toytf son, we also have a Religion, which was given to our forefathers, and hasytf been handed down to us their Children, we worship in that way, itytf teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we Recieve, to love eachytf other and to be united, we never quarrel about Religion.ytf ytf Brother, the Great spirit has made us all, but he has made a greatytf difference between his white & Red children, he has given us differentytf complexions & different customs, to you he hasytf given the arts, to these he has not opened our eyes, we know these thingsytf to be true; since he has made so great a differenc between us inytf other things, why may we not conclude that he has given us a differentytf Religion according to our understandings; The Great spirit does right, heytf honors what is best for his children, we are satisfied. ytf or take it from you, weytf only want to enjoy our own. ytf ing to the white people inytf this place, These people are our neighbours, we are acquainted with them,ytf we will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching hasytf upon them, if we find it does them good, makes them honest and lessytf dispos'd to cheat Indians, we will then consider again what you haveytf said. ytf ytf Brother You have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all weytf have to say at present, as we are going to part we will come and take youytf by the hand and hope the Great spirit will protect you on your ytf journey and return you safe to your friends.

ytf Brother, we do not understand these thi

ytf Brother, we do not wish to destroy your F
ytf Brother, we are told that you have been

(6)
As the Indians began to approach the missionary,
he rose hastily from his seat and replied, he could not
take them by the hand, that there was no fellowship between
the Religion of God and the works of the Devil, this being
interpreted to the Indians, they smiled, and retired in a
peaceable manner.

It being afterwards suggested to the Missionary that
his Reply to the Indians was rather indiscreet,
he observed, that he supposed the ceremony of shaking
hands would be received by them as a token, that he
assented to what they had said, being otherwise informed,
he said he was sorry for the expression.

Missionary's
address to
the chiefs of the
Six nation Indians
&
their answer

Transcription

As the Indians began to approach the missionary, he rose hastily from his seat and replied, he could not take them by the hand, that there was no fellowship between the Religion of God and the words of the Devil, this being interpreted to the Indians, they smiled, and retired in a peaceable manner. It being afterwards suggested to the Missionary that his Reply to the Indians was rather indiscreet, he observ'd that he supposed the ceremony of shaking hands wou'd be receiv'd by them as a token, that he assented to what they had said, being otherwise inform'd he said he was sorry for the expression.