

Indians Seize Upper Peninsula Lighthouse

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1970

Two hundred Chippewa warriors seized a lighthouse belonging to the U.S. government at Whitefish Bay in the Upper Peninsula on June 23. The takeover came after a Great Lakes Indians Youth Conference that was attended by 250 Ottawa, Potawatomi, Sioux and Chippewa Indians.

The lighthouse is situated on 62 acres of land that rightfully belongs to the Indians. It was ceded to the U.S. government in treaties of 1836 and 1862, but the pigs in Washington never paid the money.

Pamp, whose organization represents 10,000 Indian youths in Michigan, said the federal government has not honored any treaties ever made with the Indians when "white man's interests were at stake."

Older Indians are considered "apples" by Pamp—red on the outside, white on the inside. Apparently, older Indians have had to accommodate themselves, to the system so long that they don't feel the same rebellion and anger that all nonwhite youths are feeling today.

Moose Pamp, a 21-year-old spokesman for the Indian youths, said the takeover of the lighthouse was to dramatize the need for a youth center on the Bay Mills Reservation as well as the government's neglect in honoring the treaties.

The leader of the seizure was Becky Carrick, a part-Indian girl from Detroit. She said, "We got to talking about how the Indians took over Alcatraz Island from the government, so we decided to get our lighthouse and the land around it back that way."

The Indians carried signs that read, "Indian Power," "Custer Died For Your Sins," "We Discovered America," "We Hated Custer," and "Let Indians Groove."

Many Indians wore war paint, had tribal dress on, and beat tom-toms. Outside the lighthouse they displayed their culture proudly, doing ancient tribal dances.

A few days after the seizure, the Indians decided to abandon the structure, in order to make concrete plans for getting back the land surrounding the lighthouse, as well as another 62-acre plot at Bay Mills Point.

Meanwhile, Moose Pamp, director of the Great Lakes Indian Youth Alliance, said that he feels that demonstration and confrontation are "the only ways to achieve anything in this country."

"If the government doesn't start living up to its obligations, armed resistance and occupation will have to become a regular thing," Pamp said.



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