

sent. Their memorial to the President is a historic document.

President Wilson had set the hour as twelve fifteen on December tenth. The Society represented by its Active officers, Associate officers, Board, and by many members of both divisions marched promptly from their headquarters at the Hotel Powhatan and reached the White House a few minutes before noon. More than forty delegates were in the body. Senator Robert L. Owen of Cherokee blood, was already with the President as the delegation entered the reception room in the Executive Mansion. The local arrangements had been made with the Secretary to the President by Mr. Gabe E. Parker who introduced the members of the Society. The President stood in the center of his office and shook hands cordially as each member was presented. Then, after a short explanation, Mr. Dennison Wheelock read the Memorial, which follows:

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, CITY OF WASHINGTON.

HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

Acting under instructions of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians, held on the 6th to 11th of October, 1914, at the University of Wisconsin, in the city of Madison, Wisconsin, your petitioners respectfully present this Memorial.

Congress has conferred special authority upon the President of the United States respecting the welfare of the Indians, regarded as wards of the Federal Government. We believe that this obligation lies close to your heart and we, therefore, feel free to suggest to you a few things which seem to us necessary to our welfare and progress, to our development as co-laborers and producers. We believe that you feel, with the progressive members of our race, that it is anomalous permanently to conserve within the nation groups of people whose civic condition by legislation is different from the moral standard of American life.

DEFINITION OF LEGAL STATUS

As a race, the Indian, under the jurisdiction of the United States, has no standing in court or nation. No man can tell what its status is, either civic or legal. Confusion and chaos are the only words descriptive of the situation. This condition is a barrier to the progress of our people who aspire to higher things and greater success.

We hold it incontrovertible that our status in this nation should be defined by federal authority. We request, therefore, that, as the first essential to a proper solution of the Indian Problem, and even for the benefit of the nation itself, this matter be placed in the hands of a commission of three men—the best, the most competent and the kindest men to be found, and that they be authorized to study this question, and recommend to you and to the Congress the passage of a code of Indian law which shall open the door of hope and progress to our people. Our