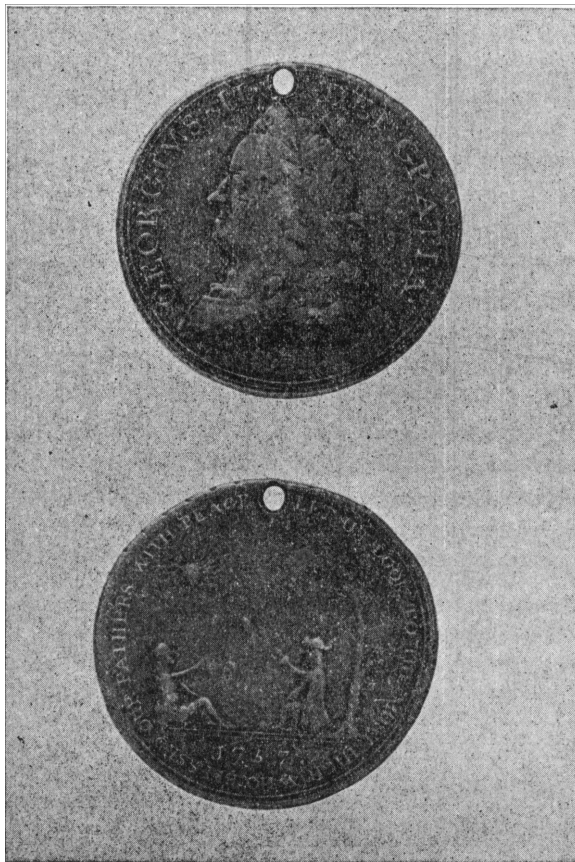


# An Old Indian Peace Medal

By AMOS W. BUTLER

What connection had King George II with Indiana? None that I know of.<sup>1</sup> Then how came a medallion of his to be found in the upper Wabash Valley? Not long ago in my search for silver used by the whites when trading with the Indians, Mr. Glen A. Black called my attention to a medal in the possession of our good friend Charles C. Deam of Bluffton, Indiana, which was found near that city. When requested, Mr. Deam sent it to me. It was promptly recognized as a peace medal, a picture of which is shown herewith.



What is its history? Mr. Deam states:

The medal was found by my uncle Frank Deam (1829-1907). It was plowed up probably between 1850-1865. My grand father Deam and family came to Wells County in 1837. The locality where the medal was found is just above the mouth of John's Creek on the north side of the Wabash river, about a quarter of a mile east of the east corporation limits of Bluffton.

<sup>1</sup> The British claimed the territory extending westward to the Pacific, which includes the present Indiana, from the time of John Cabot's voyage. Though France had set up a strong rival claim to the Mississippi Valley, a part of which she had made good by exploration and occupation, the Ohio Valley was the most important area in dispute at the opening of the Seven Years War in 1756. When the Medal of 1767 was struck off, the British under George II were at last fighting a great war to drive the French from the region east of the Mississippi.

This place is reputed to have been the site of an Indian village—Miami, Delaware or Potawatomi—probably the last. A hole approximately an eighth of an inch in diameter was made in the object at sometime so it could be worn suspended. No doubt it was lost by its possessor, probably an Indian chief, and remained until discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The medal is mainly of silver and is one and three quarter inches in diameter. On the edge one can make out thirty-seven notches. Its face shows the profile of George II. surrounded by the legend, "GEORGIUS II. DEI. GRATIA." On the reverse, around the outer rim of the circle, are the words: "LET US LOOK TO THE MOST HIGH WHO BLESSED OUR FATHERS WITH PEACE." Toward the center is a white man wearing a hat, seated on a stone beneath a tree, offering to an Indian seated on the ground beneath the sun, a pipe of peace towards which the Indian extends his arm to receive it. Below them, beneath a double line, is *J757*, which means 1757. Whence came it? From whom?

Through Miss Thelma Sullivan of the State Library, and Julian P. Boyd, librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, two articles referring to these questions were found in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. They were written by Harrold E. Gillingham of Philadelphia, treasurer of the Numismatic Society of New York. It was in 1756 that "*The Friendly Association for regaining and preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures* was inaugurated by the most prominent Friends of Philadelphia and adjacent counties." Concerning this society, Mr. Gillingham writes:

Members of this association attended a meeting with Indians on April 29, 1756, "at Fort George in the City of New York", where after an address they gave presents to different Indians, showing they endeavoured to extend their influence to other colonies. They also attended the conference with the Indians at Easton, Pennsylvania, in 1756. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The French in Canada seem to have been the first to have given medals. Those of Louis XV. are mentioned. They were soon followed by English medals. Both the English govern-

<sup>2</sup> Harrold E. Gillingham, "Indian Silver Ornaments," in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (No. 2, 1934), LVIII, 97-126. The other article mentioned, "Indian and Military Medals from Colonial Times to Date," is found in the same quarterly (No. 2, 1927), LI, 97-125.

ment and the Friendly Association presented silver medals of King George II. to the Indians in 1756, and the "following year the Friendly Association decided to have a medal of their own, and the minutes of 3 mo, 15 [March 15], 1757," show that a committee was appointed for that purpose. The minutes of the next meeting state: "The Committee appointed now produced the Essays [*essai*, models] of the Device of a Medal suitable to be Struck, and reported what they had done towards getting one finished and procuring the Silver Plates &c to which service they are continued."<sup>3</sup> The manufacture of the medal is described in detail, and pictures of both sides accompany Mr. Gillingham's article, proving it to be a medal struck from the same dies as was that found by Mr. Deam in Indiana. Edward Duffield cut the dies, and a member of the Association, Joseph Richardson (the elder), struck the medals, which were made of silver, with a little copper and pewter added. They are believed to be the first Indian Peace Medals made in the colonies. The white man in the scene, probably the figure of a Quaker "is symbolic of the Governor of the Colony [Pennsylvania]: the Indians called William Penn *Onas*, and so styled the succeeding Governors. The tree is likely to be the *Tree of Peace*, as the Indians spoke of the friendship for other nations as being like a great tree, firmly rooted in the ground, under which they gathered together."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Gillingham's articles carry pictures of a gorget made by Joseph Richardson, Jr., son of the famous Philadelphia silversmith of the same name, on which is depicted the scene, slightly changed in detail, that is shown on the reverse of the medal under discussion. Mr. Gillingham says that this was "probably one of forty similar gorgets issued by the Governor of Pennsylvania, together with wampum belts and calumets, to the Delaware and Iroquois Indians at a Peace conference, probably held in Philadelphia at the end of the year 1757 or beginning of 1758."<sup>5</sup>

In corroboration of the above and going back to the year 1818 when the medal found near Bluffton, Indiana, was still buried beneath the leaves of the forest, I quote from a paper

<sup>3</sup> Gillingham, "Indian Silver Ornaments," *op. cit.*, LVIII, 105.

<sup>4</sup> Gillingham, "Indian and Military Medals from Colonial Times to Date," *op. cit.*, LI, 97-125. See illustrations preceeding this article, and description of medal, 102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

by James Mease, M. D., read on June 9, 1918, before the New York Historical Society:

*Occasion*—Promoting peace with the Indian tribes.

*Device*—A head of George II.

*Reverse Device*—A citizen and Indian seated under a tree; the former holding up the calumet of peace: the Indian in the act of receiving it. A fire, as usual on such occasions, is between them. The sun is in the zenith.

*Legend*—Let us look to the most High, who blessed our fathers with peace—1757.<sup>6</sup>

Another description of the medal is found in a paper by Henry Phillips, Jr., which he read before the American Philosophical Society in 1879:

There are silver medals given by Kings George First and Second to the North American Indians, usually worn by the Sachems as gorgets, and interred with them at their decease. The one which bears the head of King George the Second is stated, in Vaux's life of Anthony Benezet, to have been cut in America, and is especially worthy of notice on that account, as having been the first medal ever made in this country. It is cut in very bold style, although the reverse is decidedly stiff in execution. The obverse bears the bust of King George the Second, with his titles, the reverse a Quaker seated on the ground is receiving from (or handing to) an Indian the calumet of peace; around is the inscription, "Let us look to the most high who blessed our fathers with peace."<sup>7</sup>

These medals are rather rare, but there are specimens, according to Mr. Howland Wood, in the collection of the American Numismatic Society of New York. The late W. C. Wilson of Montreal had three of them, but his collection was sold several years ago. There are also some restrikes: one in the New York Historical Society's collection, one in the

<sup>6</sup> James Mease, M. D., "Description of Some of the Medals Struck in North America, before and since the Declaration of Independence by the United States," in *Collections of the New York Historical Society*, 1821, 387-404. For the matter quoted, see page 388. In a note relative to the description quoted above, the following explanation is given (page 400): "The medals were struck at the expense of the Society (chiefly composed of the religious society called Quakers) formed for the purpose of promoting peace with the Indian tribes." Joseph Richardson, whose father was a silversmith at Philadelphia (Joseph Richardson, Sr.), furnished the information to Dr. Mease. Among other things Richardson stated that his father struck off the medals and that they were presented to the Indians by the Society ("The Friendly Association for regaining and preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures"). Richardson also told Dr. Mease that the original dies were in his possession, and that one of each was on deposit in the cabinet of the Historical Society (Pennsylvania). There is a figure of one of these medals, without the perforation and without the milled edge in *Bulletin* No. 30, of the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Part I, 832.

<sup>7</sup> See *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, XVIII, 191. The paper was read at a meeting held on Feb. 7, 1879. For further references to the medal, see *American Journal of Numismatics* (Oct., 1877), XII, 48; *Antiques* (Dec. 1824), VI, No. 6, 312-313.

collection of Harrold E. Gillingham of Philadelphia, and one in the collection of the United States mint at Philadelphia.

Mr. Gillingham in a recent letter to Miss Florence Venn of the Smith Memorial Library, Indianapolis, says:

I am unable to tell you how many of these medals were presented, to whom they were given, or when they were passed out as gifts to the Indians by this Quaker Society of most worthy objects. I have searched—during the past twenty years—through every available source, and through the manuscript collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and have never found out all I wanted to know.

On the whole, one is given the general impression that the medals were distributed because of a general sentiment for peace rather than to commemorate any specific event. Some feel that the idea of their distribution was confined to the Society of Friends.

The medal found in Indiana was probably brought from Pennsylvania by the Indians, as they were in all probability only distributed to Indians in that colony. They may not have been given officially in connection with any treaty. On the contrary, they may have been given to the Indian chiefs when they assembled to confer regarding a treaty. We do not know who were the recipient tribes. Probably they were the local Algonkians, presumably Delaware groups.<sup>8</sup>

The date of this Peace Medal was during the war between the French and English. Great destruction had been wrought and many atrocities committed upon the British colonists. There was evident a general hope that the war would soon end as it did in America in 1760, and also that peace should be made with the Indians. To these ends the English Government and the colonists began to plan.

While it may have nothing to do with the medal, it is interesting to observe that the British official, Sir William Johnson was appointed by Braddock in charge of Indian Affairs relating to the Six Nations, their Allies and Dependents, an appointment which was later (1756) confirmed by Royal Commission.<sup>9</sup> That year George Croghan was appointed deputy superintendent under Johnson.<sup>10</sup> To him were assigned the tribes of Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley, in-

<sup>8</sup> Letter from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, Sept. 9, 1935.

<sup>9</sup> Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* (Cleveland, 1926), 117.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

cluding the distant tribes of the Illinois country.<sup>11</sup> On November 24, 1756, Johnson gave Croghan his first formal instructions. These outlined the Indian policy for the next two years, and Croghan was ordered to Pennsylvania

(1) to find out the attitude of those Indians who still remained within the English area and to try to keep them friendly and to persuade them to join the English forces; (2) to find out the causes of the alienation of the Delawares and Shawnee and to assure them that if they would return and state their grievances a sincere attempt would be made to grant them justice; (3) to send Indian messengers to the Ohio to secure intelligence and to weaken the alliance of the Ohio tribes with the French.<sup>12</sup>

Governor William Denny of Pennsylvania made plans to hold a treaty at Lancaster early in 1757 in opposition to which Johnson and Lord Loudoun remonstrated.<sup>13</sup> The Quakers at this time dominated the popular party in Pennsylvania. It was at this time that they organized the "Friendly Association for regaining and preserving Peace with the Indians, by Pacific Measures," which I have already mentioned. They supported this Association by voluntary contributions, and the leaders tried to secure control over Indian affairs. The assembly of the colony was usually in sympathy with their actions. A conference with the Indians, arranged by Governor Denny and other officials, which was attended by over one hundred Quakers, was held on May 12, 1757, at Lancaster. Croghan's speeches aimed to restore friendly relations with the Indians. At the close, the Indians left, carrying with them another invitation to the Delaware chief, Teedyuscung, to a future conference.<sup>14</sup> That conference was held at Easton in July, 1757, when about two hundred Delawares and one hundred Senecas, men, women, and children assembled to make a treaty of peace.<sup>15</sup> There were present, also, Governor Denny and his council, Croghan and other public officials, together with about twenty-five Quakers. During the year 1757, Croghan had held three major and many minor Indian conferences in Pennsylvania.

And now after almost two hundred years, we have gathered what is available on the subject of this paper. It is

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

brought together for the use of all who may be interested. That the peace medal which has led to this writing may be preserved and cared for, Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Deam have generously presented it to the William Henry Smith Memorial Library of Indianapolis.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> My thanks are due, and are hereby tendered, to the staff of the Indiana Historical Bureau, the Indiana State Library force, and to Miss Florence Venn of the William Henry Smith Memorial Library for their valued assistance. I also wish to thank Frank N. Wallace for the photograph of the medal.