



U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs



The Commissioners of Indian Affairs 1824 – 1981

Thomas L. McKenney ^{a/}	1824-30
Samuel S. Hamilton	1830-31
Elbert Herring ^{b/}	1831-36
Carey Allen Harris	1836-38
Thomas Hartley Crawford	1838-45
William Medill	1845-49
Orlando Brown	1849-50
Luke Lea	1850-53
George W. Manypenny	1853-57
James W. Denver	1857
Charles E. Mix	1858
James W. Denver	1858-59
Alfred Burton Greenwood	1859-61
William P. Dole	1861-65
Dennis Nelson Cooley	1865-66
Lewis Vital Bogy	1866-67
Nathaniel Green Taylor	1867-69
Ely Samuel Parker (Seneca)	1869-71
Francis A. Walker	1871-73
Edward Parmelee Smith	1873-75
John Q. Smith	1875-77
Ezra A. Hayt	1877-80
Roland E. Trowbridge	1880-81
Hiram Price	1881-85
John D. C. Atkins	1885-88
John H. Oberly	1888-89
Thomas Jefferson Morgan	1889-93
Daniel M. Browning	1893-97
William A. Jones	1897-1904
Francis Ellington Leupp	1905-09
Robert Grosvenor Valentine	1909-12
Cato Sells	1913-21
Charles Henry Burke	1921-29
Charles James Rhoads	1929-33

John Collier	1933-45
William A. Brophy	1945-48
William Zimmerman, Jr. ^{c/}	1946-48
John Ralph Nichols	1949-50
Dillon Seymour Myer	1950-53
Glenn L. Emmons	1953-61
John O. Crow ^{e/}	Jan. – July 1961
Philleo Nash	1961-66
Robert L. Bennett (Oneida)	1966-69
Louis R. Bruce (Mohawk/Oglala Sioux)	Aug. 1969 – Jan. 1973
Marvin L. Franklin (Iowa) ^{d/}	Jan. – Dec. 1973
Morris Thompson (Athabaskan)	Dec. 1973 – Nov. 1976
Raymond V. Butler (Blackfeet) ^{e/}	Nov. – Dec. 1976
Benjamin Reifel (Rosebud Sioux) ^{e/}	Dec. 1976 – Jan. 1977
Raymond V. Butler (Blackfeet) ^{e/}	Feb. – May 1977
Martin E. Seneca, Jr. (Seneca) ^{f/}	Oct. 1978 – July 1979
Sidney L. Mills (Oglala Sioux) ^{f/}	July – Dec. 1979
William E. Hallett (Red Lake Chippewa)	Dec. 1979 – Jan. 1981
Kenneth Payton (Cherokee) ^{f/}	April – May 1981

- *On October 13, 1977, Forrest J. Gerard began his tenure as the first Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs.*
- *William Hallett was the last to hold the title of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. On May 15, 1981, Assistant Secretary Ken Smith appointed Kenneth Payton as the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs for Operations to oversee the BIA’s day-to-day operations. From 1981 to 2003, the title Deputy Commissioner was used. In 2003, following a major reorganization of the Bureau that had begun the previous year, the title was administratively changed to Director, which is still in use today.*

^{a/}First head of the BIA when it was administratively established during President James Monroe’s administration by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun on March 11, 1824.

^{b/}First Commissioner of Indian Affairs following congressional action in 1832 to legislatively establish the BIA and the commissionership (4 Stat. 564, chap. 174).

^{c/}Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

^{d/}Assistant to the Secretary for the Bureau of Indian Affairs

^{e/}Named Commissioner under a recess appointment.

^{f/}Acting Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs.