

1845

## Letter from W.H. Raper to James B. Finley

W.H. Raper

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Bro. Finley, you request me to contribute to your work - an  
account of Lydia Osborn, the last girl, with which I most sincerely  
comply. Lydia Osborn was the daughter of Ebenezer & Rachael  
Osborn, who were residing at Williamsburgh, Clermont County Ohio,  
at the time she was lost. Early in the afternoon, August 1805  
Lydia, & a little daughter of Mr. Mc Ginnis were sent into the woods  
to hunt the Cows, they started in the direction of Lebanon, one mile,  
& there fell in with a patch of blackberries; through which they  
wandered in quest of berries until they got lost. Having found  
their way to the woods, Miss Mc Ginnis wished to go one way for home,  
& Lydia insisted on another being the right way, when after some  
parley, they parted, & some time in the night little Mc Ginnis was  
found making her way home, but Lydia was gone. The town, which  
at that time contained ~~some~~ some 24 families, turned out to hunt  
the lost child; the men, mostly on horseback, & the women on foot  
explored the neighbourhood of the place. The first day passed -  
The parties returned, but no information of the little girl could  
be obtained, except a few tracks in the sand where she had  
crossed the east fork of the little Miami, some three miles above  
Williamsburgh. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day Tompkins - from guns &c. were  
taken in order to give signals in case of any essential discovery being  
made - & the search renewed by additional numbers - but that ended  
in no additional discovery of signs. The coming day only ended in  
disappointment, & so on until 46 days were fruitlessly spent by  
men from various parts of Ohio & Kentucky - all gone over the  
~~search~~ search except yourself & Abalom Smyth; you two continued  
until after having found a small wigwag apparently constructed  
by a child, near a blackberry patch, & in the neighbourhood of a  
hunting party of Indians, but which had been abandoned for  
some days - you gave over in despair. One only continued his  
indefatigable labours, & this was the father. And who but a father could  
hold out when all others failed? In August of 1824, returning  
from my circuit (Lawrenceburgh Ia) to my family, living in  
Aurora Ia, late in the afternoon, I saw an wayward old man  
sitting in my door; & on approaching him, I found him to be the  
father of the last girl, I asked him, "Mr. Osborn, whom  
are you traveling?" He replied, "from hunting Lydia!" Then  
the big tears coursed their way down those deep furrows that  
age & sorrow had made on his sun-burnt cheeks; he sat motionless  
with his eyes fixed on the ground in front of the door.

I went to the stable - put up my horse, & returned but found  
the old man still motionless as a statue. I inquired, Mr. Corbourn  
how long have you been hunting Lydia? He replied "19 years"  
Then added, he had good reason to suspect that the hunting party of  
Indians then at the time she was lost had captured her, & if living  
she was still with them. He had visited, the Menomonee, Seneca  
Shawnee, Delaware, Iowas - Potowatomies, Winnebagoes & all  
the Nations on the Mississippi, Missouri & Missouri rivers - then  
the Southern & South-Western Nations, returning home once  
in two years, or thereabouts. I asked him if he had concluded  
to go again, he replied "No - I am unable - or I would, he  
went down to his grave sorrowing for his lost child!!"  
W. W. Cooper

P.S. Mr. Finley. The above is the substance of all I know  
about the subject, or all I recollect.

You wished me to go to Cintra & watch those fellows  
in their maneuvering about Dr. Elliott. Oh! let them plan & plan -  
& they will only be like the Prophets' men, by climbing the bean  
pole - "the higher they climb, the plainer they will show their a - s"  
I am satisfied, the way things are going, that the line of division  
will be between South & South - & "you know" when Greek goes  
against Greek - then comes the tug of war!! It seems  
to me, they are judiciously judicially blinded, I would  
like much to see you. I have many things to talk about.  
W. W. Cooper

William W. Cooper  
At Fort M.D.  
1845

Rev. Jas. B. Finley  
Care of Rev. J. M. McKelby  
R. Dayton