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Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

10-16-1847

Letter from George Dent to James B. Finley

George Dent

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1036
I rec a letter from Devine he says he has been well
acquainted with you I have known him for 14 years
his character so far as I have an knowledge in good
thorp I have no acquaintance with he was Mrs Devine
Dutton at the time the girl was executed

Snyder has since my acquaintance been a man of very
industrious habits and quiet in his megarum had was
not in the habit of meddling with other persons business
but unfortunate for him he was the first to let it out
that the state indence should just came from the
state prison which caused the church to expell
him from their school he swore revenge on him he
has got it to his satisfaction Snyder is a brother to my
wife has a wife and four children now scattered
amongst their friends his connections on both sides are
all in good standing and mostly members of the
E F Church if my health will permit I may come out
in a short time to see him if not soon I will not be out
till about the middle of Dec

I will take it as a kindly favor if you will see him
and write me this next week

Yours Truly &c George A Dend

if Thomas M Tipton state Dependance texture is in your
city please show him this he is acquainted with all the men
who were witness from Fairview as well as my self

(12)

New Birmingham Oct 16 1847

Dear Sir

Quincy Co

I received a letter from James M Snyder now confined
in the gloomy walls of our state prison suffering under the
penalty of our Laws not as a guilty but innocent slave
I was much pleased to hear that you had visited him and I
hope you will please to be so kind as to continue your visits
as often as convenient and give him such comfort and
encouragement as you can to bare up under his trials
though I have not seen you for a number of years and
but small when you left Mt Clairville your name is still
dear to me I yet recollect many things that transpired the
two years you was our intimate friend and neighbor
I have often heard my Father and Mother speak of that time
my Father still living in the North part of Belmont Co enjoys
tolerable health Mother is gone to her home about six years
died as she lived a Christian her last words was all is well
Not knowing the prison rules for writing I have taken
the liberty of addressing you for the purpose of opening
a communication with Snyder hoping it will meet your
approbation and that you will give us such information
concerning him as to his health and how he appears to bear
up under his afflictions it will truly be a favour
to me as well as to his Family and an affliction and
aged Father & Mother who I think unless this man can be released
will hardly be able to bear up untill he sees his time but
I am not without hope I believe Justice will reach them all and open
a way for their release

Snyder,
Sharp } were jointly tried and convicted for forging a
Devine } will last will of Margery Devine wife of
the said John Devine one of the prisoners

They were convicted on the testimony of a notorious
fellow who had only been a few months out of the
state prison where he had served four years lacking six
days for Bigamy he received a pardon from gov Bartley
a few days before his time expired came to this neighbor
hood a stranger made high pretension for religion succeed
in being appointed superintendent of Sabbath ^{school} in the Baptist
church finally succeeded in seducing ^{an} innocent girl and
has now gone to parts unknown no doubt he will receive
for his services he testified that the parties made an
overture to him to assist in the forgery but he could not
his conscience would not let him commit the crime

The forgery was proven by him to have been done about
two months after Mrs Devine's death Snyder & friends near
the will was in existence a few days after her death
but as they came to the knowledge of it by the action
of Snyder they were not admitted to give testimony which
seems hard

The defendants proved by Joseph Ware local preacher & Newell
Kennon both of Fairview and probably well known to you Kennon
was our representation in the Legislature last winter also a
number of other witnesses of Fairview ^{and} this County
and Tuscumans all of the highest standing

persons who were Mrs Devine's intimate friends that
she had expressed her self freely to them ~~that~~ a short
time before her death that she was under the impression
that her time was short and that she was going to make
a will and leave her little property worth about 800\$ after
her debts were paid to her husband John Devine and that
they ~~were~~ also testified that they were well acquainted
with her hand writing and no doubts resting on their
minds but that the signature to the will was the
the signature of Mr Devine Mr Ware a connection
of hers by marriage went as far as a man could go
and all persons as far as I have any knowledge except
those who were interested believe them innocent
They also proved by 30 witnesses all of the highest standing that
the State witness was a man of bad habits for years back
and that from their knowledge of him they could not believe
him on oath yet after all this and unexpected to all they
were convicted I would like to give you full history but cannot
I wish you to say to Snyder that we will attend to them all
the citizens of this County & Tuscumans all most unanimously
are urging daily for me to petition but I shall not make
any more until I see their Council and see what course
they are going to pursue I have not been able to go from home
since I returned from the East my health is so feeble ~~at~~
at present that I am not able to attend to business but if able
will go in a few days to Canton to see their Councils and
will be governed by them