Letter from James B. Finley to L.W. Cass

James B. Finley

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Now sir, take from them the following families. I have written the present opportunity of writing this to you on the subject of the Indians under our care at this place and am happy to state to you that the work of civilization is progressing as fast as we can. I expect it to be improved and that the Indians in the General & the Chief Emigration will follow the advice of their friends and those in the instructions given by your self & the General Government to improve their lands & stock, and also to divide their lands according to the provisions made at the treaty at Fort Maps & the advice of your self & others this plan think is fully adopted by the nation and in the last six or seven years they employed a Surveyor to commence and lay off into sections as long as they were able to lay them off. I think it was 1824 for a reason. Adam was led by the chief & request to you to use your influence with the government to send them. I have seen the government will grant it. In my judgment this article have claims on us that move others of the government. They have since the treaty of Greenville they have been quiet and sought to improve the land also and I wish to their constant adherence to the advice of the government and their strong desire to become a civilized people. I think this is an essential and they cannot now be a remaining doubt, but the whole that is a large majority of these, I am convinced people.
The American Government is the Constitution of this Nation in the time of war to prevent their being taken by themselves or others.

It was their constant custom to purchase all Indians from our native tribes and when adopted them to their own families as if they were their own children. I think now the time has come when we must begin to take care of ourselves and not depend on others. Our friends are not what they were.

They are becoming more and more mixed with the whites and the negroes. Many of them are no longer Indians but are now considered as white people. This is a great change and needs to be considered.

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Hon Sir – I take the present opportunity of writing to you on the subject of the Indians under our care at this place and am happy to state to you that the work of civilization is progressing as fast as we could reasonably expect it. Our Indians in the general & the chiefs especially feel disposed to follow the advice of their friends and especially the instructions given by your self & the general government to improve their lands & stock and also to devise their lands agreeable to the provisions made in the Treaty at Fort Meggs & the advice of your self & others. This plan I think is fully adopted by the nation and in the last summer they employed a surveyor to commence and lay off into sections as long as they were able to pay him then the work was stopped for a season. And I am requested by the chiefs to request you to use your influence with the government to lend them some aid in this business as it will be a great help to them in their march to civilization. I do hope the government will grant it. In my judgment this people have claims on us that none other of the Norwestern Indians have.

1st Since the Treaty of Greenville they have been friends and fought valiantly in the last war with Briton.

2d Their constant adherance to the advice of the government and their strong exertions to become a civilized people this I think is unperrell and their cannot now be a remaining doubt but they will (that is a large majority of them) be an agricultural people.

3rd The mercy constantly shewn by this nation in the time of war to prisoners wheather taken by themselves or others. It was their constant practise to purchase all prisoners from other nations of Indians and either adopt them to their own families or to have them exchanged & this I think now calls for us to shew mercy & help them.

4th Their approximation to the whites is much more then any other people of the forests. They are very much mixed with the Amarcans and the foregoing article may easally acount for it. Many of the principal families that compose this tribe are three fourths one half or one quarter white and have numerous white relatives living in this state, ‘viz’ the Walker the Zane the Armstrong the Hicks the Grayeys the Rankin the McCulocks the Brown old __________. Besides several white women that have been taken prisnors and have half breeds. There is George Abram & Joseph Williams families all those be connected with the whites and whose fathers were all American citizens and I know of no law that can deprive their children by Indian women of the right of citizenship. The two Mr. Walkers are acknowledged as such and both hold offices under the government. If this be correct I do assure you that three fourths of this people have the same and nothing is wanting to make them respectable and useful citizens of the United States but to be educated and instructed in the useful arts and every exertion is making to do this that the circumstance will admit off.

5th The approximation of these people to the whites is perhaps reason why they are so rapidly mixing with them and I have no doubt but they will continue to mix until they will be swallow’d up in our
population. Some of this nation and those who draw regularly their annuities are in office in the state employ. Major Long is married to half Indian woman and Noah McCullock is auditor of Logan County. In a word sir I do believe that a majority of the rising generation are legitimately citizens of the American government if my premises are correct, that is their being descended from those who were naturally citizens and I am happy to find that the government has acknowledged the principle by appointing them to offices. This is not a chimera but I hold my self responsible for the truth of what I have stated. Its true that many of the old ones are Indians but how long will they last. They are falling every year as grass before the sythe and a very few years their will not one of them be left and even these are most anxious that their children should not be driven from the land of their relations but remain & become fellow citizens and enjoy all blessing of civilized life.

6th This nation is but a remnant and that small six hundred & twenty I think will be the amount of all that resides here at the Big Spring the River Huron & Canaan in Cannada and there is to my knowledge ___ with these Mohawks Delawares & Shawnees so that the remnant of the Wyandott is small.

7th Much labor and money has been expended already by the government & the church on this people and if removed to the wilderness it might considered lost in a grate degree and it would be in the judgment of many driving our own citizens to heathenism for they are certainly bone of ours & flesh of our flesh. I do hope that the government will let us make a full trial on these people and also that the government will continue our school sallary at what it was let year. Please to use your influence for this purpose.

In answer to Gov. Cass letter June 13, 1825 J.B. Finley