

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 - Horns - Ginn &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 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 - Potawatomes, 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  
 Ft. Fort W. D.  
 1845

Rev. Jas. B. Finley  
 Rev. J. P. McKelby