

Ohio Wesleyan University

Digital Commons @ OWU

Finley Letters

James B. Finley Letters

6-3-1851

Letter from John M. Armstrong to James B. Finley

John M. Armstrong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.owu.edu/finley-letters>

Recommended Citation

Armstrong, John M., "Letter from John M. Armstrong to James B. Finley" (1851). *Finley Letters*. 1282.
<https://digitalcommons.owu.edu/finley-letters/1282>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the James B. Finley Letters at Digital Commons @ OWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Finley Letters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ OWU. For more information, please contact earutigl@owu.edu.

Armstrong

J. M. Armstrong
Wyandott Station



Rev. J. P. Finley
Yellow Springs

I am informed that he has children in the Sac. & Fox Nations, he has one in Indian Nation

1851
Wyandott Station June 3^d 1851

Dear Father Finley

I owe you an apology for not calling to see you on my way home from the East. It was my intention to spend some time in Ohio with ^aview of collecting some missionary money for the establish^{ment} of a mission school among our Shawnee friends, but our Missionaries were prohibited from going into the Shawnee country by the resident Agent Col. Luke Lee, at Westport Mo. I saw Bro. J. Lane Tr. of M. S. at New York, who thought it most prudent not to solicit any donations for the establishment of this school until ^{the} difficulty with the government should be removed. His in ^{conjunction} with sickness in my family induced me to travel home as fast as possible.

We have been peculiarly unfortunate in the appointments of the Government to the Indian work. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis is a wicked, ~~selfish~~, profane, ^{and has been} licentious man and ready and willing to uphold men of like character among the Indians as agents. A charge of intolerable ^{with other matters} profanity was ~~preferred~~ preferred against the Wyandott Agent. The Superintendent D. D. Mitchell was ordered to investigate

the changes. He accordingly came up and stayed
in the neighborhood, sent for ^{the} Agent and the whole
matter was whitewashed without even the show of an
investigation. As to the charge of profanity the Agent
desired, (I am told,) ^{to know} what he should do. "tell them to go
to Hell" was the advice. With such men at the head
of Indian matters in the west how can it be ex-
pected that the Indians will improve? For the
stand that I have taken against such conduct. I
am hunted down by them and their minions like
a wild beast. I am falsely charged of doing things that
never entered into my mind. I see no chance of
reform. The agents manage to control the chiefs
through designing demagogues, always at hand and
they are frequently made to sanction the most fla-
grous injustice. With such examples the Indians
have been corrupted to such an extent that money
and self interest governs in all their doings. In the
Wyandott nation the Wright family have ^{been} cut off
from all privileges except the bare living on the
lands of the Wyandotts, no annuity, nor privileges of the
Blacksmith Shop. An attempt was recently made
to cut off and drive away Uncle Isaac Zane's widow
and all the family. Vice wickedness, and drunkenness
are on the increase and the man who spends weeks
together in the streets of Kansas drunk has more influ-
ence than any other man in the nation. Why

can we not have good men for agents? The weight
of influence now is decidedly in favor of wickedness.
If we had such a man as old Ex. Governor M. Bantley
as Superintendent at St. Louis to control the Agents
in this country I think it would go far to throw
the influence on the side of virtue and honesty.

I have written to you freely and confidentially. I
have to request you not to allow this letter to be used in
any way that would seem to increase the violence
of these men towards me,

The Wyandotts are generally healthy.
In a religious way there is a faithful few who
never leave, and ~~never~~ never will bow the
knee to Baal. The Missionary to the Wyandotts of the old
Church has been threatened with expulsion since my
return. If this is done I reckon we will have to leave
the country. as to joining the Church South this
can never be.

Yours affectionately
J. M. Armstrong

Rev. J. B. Finley
Yellow Springs.
Ohio