

Robert Simerwell to Brother Goodridge

Written in the months after the passage of the Indian Removal Act, Robert Simerwell's letter to Brother Goodridge relates his feelings regarding the treatment of the Native Indians by "individuals of the Government" of the United States. Simerwell, obviously angered by the treatment of Native Indians, states that "the impositions practised by individuals on the Indians are incredible, only by custom are they made to bear it, it would appear strange to you to see a white man enter a store and purchase cloth at 25 cents a yard, and an Indian immediately enter who could not get it short of 37 cents."

Creator: Simerwell, Robert, 1786-1868

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Simerwell, R.

Carey October 24. 1830

Dear Brother Goodridge

We received your letter of May. nearly two months after it was written, and as we were altogether unsettled at the time we omitted answering till now. We are thankful to hear from our friends and relative and hope it will continue to be our privilege to hear from you. I am anxious to hear from brother Wallingford we have not heard from him for a long time.

Your remarks respecting the Indians appear very just and it is a fact not to be disputed that the Indians have been ranged beyond a parallel this is known to you it is also known to us — Now I say the continue to be ranged, this is known to us, but not to you — and again I say the time is not to be looked for when they will not be ranged, unless a change takes place of some kind or other, to prevent, and we presume no effectual change can take place till the Indians are removed from their oppressors. Now your object would be to do justice, but I ask how is justice to be done, and to whom will we look for the execution of justice. You say let God meet them on fair terms and render to them their just rights and shun every compulsory measure, I say so too, and when all this is done we find the Indians engulfed in ruin, the evil exists not so much between the Indians and Government as between them and individuals of Government. The impositions practiced by individuals on the Indians are incredible, only by custom are they made to bear it. It ~~would~~ ^{would} appear strange to you to see a white man enter a store and purchase cloth at 25 cents a yard, and an Indian immediately enter who could not get it short of 37 1/2 both paying the silver.

It is the practice of bellage chiefs and others to go in debt to those that trade with ^{them} the trader keeps the account and at the Indian payment stands at the door to seize the Indians bag of money, when he counts all the dollars till his conscience are satisfied, others have been known to accidentally

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rock the money out of their hands in order to assist them in picking
 it up, time would fail to give you all the instances of the kind
 thus with an open floodgate pouring out liquor continually upon them
 is enough to destroy any people who are no better fortified against
 such evils. But you ask me is there no law to prevent and if so
 why not put in execution, this brings us to a point worthy your consid-
 eration. Government has favoured us with laws but the people
 are left to put them in execution, none are willing to undertake the
 arduous task, in the first place it is hard to find proof an Indian is proof
 against an Indian but not against a white man many whites avail
 themselves of this benefit by hiring Indians as proof against others for hogs killed
 or a white man may swear he saw an other white man sell liquor
 that appeared like whiskey and smelled like whiskey and made drunk like
 whiskey but unless he tasted it his proof is nothing — again a man
 who will execute the laws impartially against the whites for their misde-
 mors as the Indians cannot live in this country, the whites would
 be up in arms against him, petition after petition would be sent till
 he was removed from office.

These things brought before you in their full force would
 no doubt convince you if the Indians could be persuaded to move it
 would be better for them. If they remove some may be saved and
 our government may draw a partition wall between them and the whites
 but if things remain as they are the besom of destruction will
 sweep all off, except those that amalgamate with the whites.

We expect to remain here till spring our missionary labors
 ceased Sep 1. If children remain with us we expect to study at the lan-
 guage this winter as soon as a company of Palawatamies are permitted
 to move west we will expect to go with them.

When I sat down I had not expected to consume time and
 paper on this subject, though it is a subject that much interests me
 as a missionary. With much respect I am your brother
 R Simerwell

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*Simerwell
To Goodridge
Oct 26. 1830*