Robert Simerwell to S.M. Crane

In this letter to Reverend S.M. Crane, Robert Simerwell addresses the state of affairs at the Carey Mission, Michigan Territory, in the winter of 1830. Simerwell also discusses the efforts of Carney missionaries to learn the local Native Indian language.

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Simerwell, R.

[Letter] to Crane

Carey Dec 20. 1830

Rev. & Dear Sir

Being persuaded that any thing relative to Indian reform would be pleasing to you I attempt to inform you of things as they are now moving among us, you are aware that missionary labors ceased at the plow on the first of September since that time I have devoted most of my time to the study of the language, we have recently opened a small school for the few scholars who were obliged to stay in our family this school we wish to keep up till Spring, when we expect to move to the west.

As it regards the feelings of the Indians from every information and from personal acquaintance I am free in saying the principal part of the Putawatomies would willingly accept of the offers of our Government, I am credibly informed that a number of the Weas or miamies with a considerable portion of the Putawatomies have been in readiness to move west they have applied to Gen. John Tipton Ind Agent who has written to the Department making known their request their number is still increasing and many of those Traders who are willing to go west say that nearly all the tribe would be willing to go if Government would move forward and make provisions, for their Journey &c. But I am sensible that many traders and others have an interes in keeping the Indians where they are and do misrepresent thing to dissuade them, every lawful and I might say unlawful measure is resorted to by these designing men to keep the poor Indians where they are, so they are kept between two parties one persuading them and the other dissuading them, Three Indians one of them a village chief who have been under the influence of a french Trader started the 18 inst. in company with said trader to Detroit expecting to proceed from there to Washington City. Topinabee the principal Putawatomie Chief has had a promise of a journey to Washington but he is now indisposed and these fellows have taken the advantage of him, he and others have remonstrated against their going, and have ordered the Agent to write Gov Cass on the subject, if they are permitted

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to go I make no doubt but they will misrepresent things, for they are altogether under the influence of this trader who accompanies them for they were selected I believe by him and are such as will act as he directs,

I have not heard any thing very directly from Br McCoy since he took his journey into the wilderness I can not say where he is at present not what he intend to do this winter but I presume he will not be idle

Mr Lykins is now on the Wabash I look for him in a few weeks at Coesy he will not go west tile spring he has been advised to stay in this country over winter by Gen John Tipton.

I have been favoured with the company of that excelent man the Revd G. B. Davis of Colosse Oswego County N. Y. no. under the employ of the A. B. S. he will finish his tour through the Territory by Spring, at which time I hope he will be ready to accept an appointment from the Bap. Board to go among the Indians, by his permision I mentioned his name to Dr Bolles, and as the Dr was not personaly acquainted with him I refered him to you, and to the Gen. Agent of the A. B. S.

In the study of the Indian language we find many peculiarities they have no article the pronoun admits of no declention as I have yet discovered they have no infinitive mood and but the present past and future tenses the verb is very expresive and has both the nominative and objective cases so closely connected with it that they are inseparable, the inflections of the verb are numerous I have written 1300 inflections of one verb and have not finished it. You will Dear sir pardon me for the liberty I take and permit me to be yours

Affectionately

Robert Simerwell

Rev S. M. Crane

P.S. a line from you would be acceptable and if desired I may say more in my next respecting the Potawatomie language

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