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Willis Stephens

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H.R. Rep. No. 210, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1837)

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WILLIS STEPHENS.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 246.]

DECEMBER 28, 1837.

MR. CAMPBELL, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to which was referred the petition of Willis Stephens, report :

That the petitioner represents that he intermarried with a woman of Cherokee blood, in whose right he received a reservation for life of six hundred and forty acres of land in the Huntsville district, Alabama, consisting of parts of sections 10 and 15, of township No. 7, range No. 2, east of the basis of the meridian line at Huntsville, Alabama, with remainder to his children, upon condition of becoming a citizen of the United States, and continuing on it during the life of his wife ; that said reservation was made under the treaties of 1817 and 1819 with the Cherokee Indians. He prays that the United States will release their reversionary interest, to enable him the better to provide for his family.

Upon inquiry at the General Land Office, the committee have ascertained that no register of heads of families entitled to reservations, according to the provisions of the treaties referred to, has been returned to that office ; but, by a letter of Colonel Hugh Montgomery, then Cherokee agent, bearing date the 2d day of January, 1830, that the name of Willis Stephens was entered on the register at his agency, among the names of persons so entitled, and that his reservation was subsequently laid off from the sections and in the range and township mentioned in his petition, on the 18th day of December, 1829, by Samuel B. Mead, surveyor. As it has, for some years past, been the policy of the Government to incorporate such Indians and Indian countrymen as are qualified and desire it into our political family, and as that policy is evidently indicated by the provisions of the treaties already referred to, and forasmuch as a reversion in fee simple to the children of Stephens is secured, your committee think the prayer of the petitioner is reasonable, and ought to be granted, so far as to relinquish the title of the United States to his reservation ; and for that purpose report a bill.