

1-30-1845

Memorial of the American Indian mission association, praying the adoption of measures for promoting the permanent welfare of the various Indian tribes.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>

 Part of the [Indian and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

S. Doc. No. 76, 28th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1845)

This Senate Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact darinfox@ou.edu.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE AMERICAN INDIAN MISSION ASSOCIATION,

PRAYING

The adoption of measures for promoting the permanent welfare of the various Indian tribes.

JANUARY 30, 1845.

Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The memorial of the Board of Managers of the American Indian Mission Association respectfully sheweth:

That the said association having been organized for the special purpose of promoting the civilization and the christianization of the aboriginal tribes of America, they are well aware that the favorable action of Government on various points deeply affecting the interests of that people is essential to the success of the enterprise, and therefore respectfully ask leave to *renew* their petition presented to the last session of Congress; which memorial referred to the following matters:

It is believed that, notwithstanding the great diminution of numbers, there are yet upwards of four millions of the aboriginal race in North America. All the tribes have had some intercourse with white men, and nearly all are perishing by causes which can only be removed by civilization. Whatever may be painful in the history of the past, it is an interesting fact, that the location of about twenty tribes, or parts of tribes, west of the States of Missouri and Arkansas, in what they esteem a country of *their own*, and where they may enjoy among themselves the benefits of civil, religious, and literary institutions, presents a cheering exception to the gloom which has hitherto obscured the red man's atmosphere. The tribes which were so far advanced in civilization as to be somewhat comfortable before their removal now enjoy prospects of uninterrupted prosperity. The poorer tribes from the north, most of whom remained tribes of hunters up to the time of their emigration, are now improving their condition, and some of them rapidly. None of the immigrant tribes rely materially on the chase for subsistence, but all depend almost wholly on the fruits of their industry at their homes. The experiment of securing to the Indians a permanent residence, under the circumstances alluded to, proves to be successful in a high degree. No settlement of the natives

since the white people came to their country has exhibited signs of equal prosperity to this under consideration. This plan adopted by the Government is doubtless the only possible one ever adopted by any Government for the improvement of the condition of that unfortunate people; and it is hoped that it will be followed up until its benefits shall be extended to the most remote or most degraded tribe.

Your honorable body must be aware that this rapid change for the better is greatly owing to their confidence in the guardianship of the Government of the United States, and especially to the hopes they indulge that their possessions shall remain undisturbed. These hopes have been excited by repeated assurances, given in the most solemn manner, and strengthened by the adoption of a feasible plan of Indian reform. Nevertheless, a recollection of the precarious tenure by which the immigrant tribes held their lands on the east of the Mississippi, and the lamentable effects of their hitherto unsettled condition, create so much doubt in regard to the future as to obstruct their improvement very much. These fears are augmented by the want of some further action of Government in their favor, which they have been taught to expect. Your petitioners would therefore respectfully solicit the attention of Congress to the following matters, an adjustment of which, they believe, would effectually eradicate the remains of distrust which haunt the hopes of those Indians, and would confirm their confidence, and greatly accelerate their improvement:

1st. Your memorialists respectfully pray that the boundaries of the country designed for the permanent residence of Indians be fixed by law, and that those boundaries be such as were described in the bill relating to this subject which passed the Senate at the session of 1837-'38, which boundaries were—on the east, the western limit of the States of Arkansas and Missouri; on the northeast and north, the Missouri river and the small river Puncab; on the west, a line two hundred miles west of the States above named; and on the south, the Red river.

Bills relating to this subject have been agitated in several former sessions of Congress; and your petitioners believe that their failure to pass was not in consequence of any thing objectionable in their design. In 1837, one of those bills for the organization of the Indian territory was, by order of the department of Indian affairs, submitted to the consideration of eleven tribes, assembled respectively in council, by all of whom it was approved, and the commissioner intrusted with this service so reported. The Indians, therefore, have been taught to expect this action of Government in their favor, for which your petitioners now, the second time, respectfully pray.

2d. In conformity with the design of securing to those people an undisturbed residence, where they could enjoy the advantages of law, and social institutions in general, the Government in 1837 caused to be selected and surveyed a tract of land, central in reference to the boundaries above mentioned, about seven miles square, for purposes connected with the seat of Government of the Indian territory. This tract has been consequently reserved from cession to any particular tribe, being intended for a district to which all the tribes should have equal claims for mutual benefits in reference to the seat of government of their territory.

Your memorialists respectfully request that Government invite the tribes by a suitable number of representatives, respectively, to meet in general council once a year on this central and common ground, under such super-

vision as may be deemed proper, for the purpose of adjusting matters for the promotion among them of peace and harmony, industry, education, and virtue. And, further, your petitioners respectfully pray, that, as soon as it can be done consistently with the interests of the tribes, this Government district be made available for settlement, under suitable regulations, to those who, from the nature of their office, or from personal inclination, are disposed to occupy portions of the same.

Your petitioners are aware that some of the tribes that are far advanced in civilization, properly jealous of their rights, would not, as it is not desirable that they should, consent to any measure of a general nature which would in any degree tend to eclipse their brightening prospects as individual tribes. They are, however, equally confident that the things prayed for would be so far from abridging the privileges of those who have adopted the forms and are exercising the essential functions of civil government, precisely the reverse would be the result. It is known that many of the less civilized tribes have long desired such a connexion with their more civilized brethren as is here prayed for; and no doubt exists that the latter would be particularly happy in extending to them the hand of help.

3d. Your memorialists would further solicit the consideration of the propriety of allowing a representation, consisting of one or more, from the Indian territory, in the character of an agent or agents, at Washington, during each session of Congress, with ample emoluments, attending to Indian interests within the Indian territory. Your petitioners are happy to know that this matter was not overlooked by the framers of the bills for the organization of the Indian territory above referred to, which have been under consideration in Congress.

4th. Aware that your honorable body is prepared to appreciate the advantages of the light of science, (if, indeed, its advantages could be estimated,) your memorialists, with increased confidence, respectfully pray, that the annual appropriation for purposes of Indian reform may be increased. In favor of this, no argument is deemed necessary beyond a bare reference to facts, which show that what has been applied to educational purposes has produced very beneficial results; that various tribes within the Indian territory manifest an unusual desire to enjoy the advantages of education, which desire ought to be cherished, and that the present location and condition of those tribes are such as to make education substantially beneficial.

As in duty bound, your memorialists subscribe, most respectfully,
 WILLIAM C. BUCK,
President.

ISAAC McCoy,
Corresponding Secretary.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, December 23, 1844.