

(1) Letter of Intent

- September 7, 1826

To Valentine King, Esq.,
Registrar of Lands,

D.L. Todd, Esq.,
Receiver of Public Monies,

State Land Office,
Opelousas, La.

Gentlemen:

I deem it my duty, as an attorney for the Tunica tribe of Indians, to state to you that these Indians are the occupants of the land in the province of Bayou Rouge. Time out of mind they have been recognized by the Spanish government as a tribe and the proper owners of said land in the year 1779; that they have been encroached upon by

Works Progress Administration, Survey of Federal Archives in Louisiana,
Pintado Papers, Vol. 20 (Louisiana State University, 1941)

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the white people since the establishment of the American government, and that they have now a very small part of their former possessions remaining; that it is absolutely necessary they should have some provision made or they will either be turned loose upon society or starve to death; that instead of provision by the American government for the guarantee of the right of those harmless Indians, their lands are now advertised to be sold for the benefit of that government which is already deeply indebted to them. I consider it a misfortune of the Indians that their claims have not been known to the government. It is the duty of the government to inquire into their rights. There are Indian agents appointed for that purpose, and I do not think the Indians should forfeit anything by neglect. It is different with a nation or a tribe and an individual - the one has right that the other has not. The Indians govern themselves and the title to their lands is vested in them as a nation, and as such the American government was bound to know that; whereas as an individual holds his title from the government and depends upon the government for the protection of his rights, the Indians were conscious of their good title and of their power as a nation to hold their lands. Of course, they never dreamed until too late of the necessity of further security. It would be an act of justice and humanity in the office charged with the state of those lands - if consistent with law - to stop the sale until further instructions can be had from the government, when I have no doubt all will be set right.

* The lands claimed by the Indians now offered for sale are the fractional southeast part of section 25, section 26, and the east half of section 27, township No. 2 south, range No. 4 east.

I am with respect, gentlemen,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

(Signed) GEO. CORTEH

Opelousas, September 7, 1826.
