

Tribal Newspaper Article about Cherokee Nation and White Settlers in Georgia, March 4, 1829

To the Cherokee Public,

The undersigned, in behalf of a town meeting, composed of the Citizens of Turkey Town, take the liberty of addressing you through the public journal of our Nation, on the subject of emigration to the west, to which the United States have called their attention. The view we take of this measure, and the sentiments we will take occasion to express, will be simple and plain, founded on truth as handed down to us by our ancestors. Limited in knowledge and possessing but a small share of experience, our apology in this attempt is in the interest we feel in every thing that concerns the well being of our Nation. Our ancestors settled in this place at a period not now in our recollection. Here was sacred ground, and on this spot the Council-fire blazed with lustre, and here were the dwellings and seats of Kings and our beloved Chief! — We speak of days when we lived in the hunter's state, and when our feet were swift in the track of game.

General Washington, after having smoked the pipe of peace with our Chiefs, sent us word to discontinue the pursuit of vagrant habits and adopt those more substantial, and become cultivators of the soil. His successors pursued, in regard to us, the same policy, and sent to us the same Talk from time to time — that as game was precarious and liable to destruction, the bosom of the earth afforded means of subsistence, both infinite and inexhaustible. But time was not allowed us to experience the blessing of putting this recommendation to practice by interested wicked white men, who lived near to us, and who esteemed us a nuisance, because the Great Spirit had placed our habitations in a desirable County, and because they themselves had crossed the Big Water (the Ocean) and had become our neighbors. The bitter cup of adversity was filled to us on every side, by our enemies. Our safety was often endangered by intrigue and misrepresentation of our character to the General Government; and it was not mental or natural disability that opposed itself to our advancement in civilization, but the obstacles placed in our way to reach it.

The Indians were represented as incapable of learning the arts of civilized life, and at the same time treated in the most uncivil manner. They were savagely revengeful, because they had the spirit to resent the murder of their friends & relations. They were rogues and thieves, because, not knowing the method of legal processes to obtain justice, and if they did, their oath decreed to non-availing, they retaliated in the same way. They were drunkards, because intoxicating liquors were introduced among them. They were disinclined to the study of books, because of some few superficially educated under bad instruction had betrayed their countrymen and had set bad examples. They were stubborn, because they loved the land that had been endeared to them as an inheritance of their fathers. This flood of inconsistency raged with violence over the heads of our Chiefs & swept with its waves, from under their feet, the earth, for which they had struggled for ages past. In this way our territory diminished, and our inheritance was circumscribed to its present bounds.

Our Chiefs displayed wonderful forbearance in these trials, and maintained the faith of treaties, with

the United States, whose Chief Magistrate also exercised the spirit of paternal affection, and adhered to his engagements as pledged to us by treaties. With caution have we passed the strong shoals of opposition, and its mingled cruelties, to the light of civilization. The sun has arisen in our moral horizon and is fast advancing to its meridian. We hail it with joy! Although a part of our Nation have detached themselves from us, to follow the chase in the western wilds, and we are invited to retrograde to savageism, with strong talks and inducements, as bribes, our appetite for our present enjoyments is too strong to relinquish them, because we have tasted their sweets and are contented.

We have noticed the ancient ground of complaint, founded on the ignorance of our ancestors and their fondness for the chase, and for the purposes of agriculture as having in possession too much land for their numbers. What is the language of objection at this time? The case is reversed, and we are now assaulted with menaces of expulsion, because we have unexpectedly become civilized, and because we have formed and organized a constitutional government. It is too much for us now to be honest, and virtuous, and industrious because then are we capable of aspiring to the rank of Christians and Politicians, which renders our attachment to the soil more strong, and therefore more difficult to defraud us of the possession. Disappointment inflicts on the mind of the avaricious white man, the mortification of delay, or the probability of the intended victim's escape from the snares laid for its destruction. It remains for us in this situation of the question, to act as free agents in choosing for ourselves to walk in the straight forward path of the impartial recommendations of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, as most congenial to our feelings and knowledge of the means calculated to promote our happiness. We hereby individually set our faces to the rising sun and turn our backs to its setting. As our ancestors revered the sepulchral monuments of the noble dead, we cherish the sacred spots of their repose, as they lie under hillocks of clay, that cover them from our sight.

If the country, to which we are directed to go is desirable and well watered, why is it so long a wilderness and a waste and uninhabited by respectable white people, whose enterprise, ere this, would have induced them to monopolize it from the poor and unfortunate of their fellow citizens as they have hitherto done? From correct information, we have formed a bad opinion of the western country beyond the Mississippi. But if report was favorable to the fertility of the soil, if the running streams were as transparent as crystal, and silver fish abounded in their element in profusion we should still adhere to the purposes of spending the remnant of our lives on the soil that gave us birth and rendered dear from the nourishment we receive from its bosom.

We take the liberty of acknowledging our obligations to Major Ridge for his attendance at our meeting and for an eloquent speech suitable for the occasion which he delivered at our request.

MONEY HUNTER, his x mark.

TAH-KA-HA-KEE, his x mark.

SCATTERED, his x mark.

KUNG-WAS-SOO-LAS-KEE, his x mk.

KILLER, his mark.

RICHD. RATLIFF, jr. his x mark.

CRYING SNAKE, his x mark.

RESURRECTION, his x mark.

FOLLOWER, his x mark.

John Ridge Sec.y. pro. tem.