

Background: The time is 1835, and the Cherokee Nation is in crisis. The people are torn in the question of removal. Should the Cherokee people decide to move west and side with the Ridge faction, or should they fight to stay on their own lands with the Ross faction? In this piece, (li)ah *icks calls the Cherokee people to action. This is his position on removal as seen in an edition of the Cherokee newspaper, The Phoenix.

Cherokee Nation

(li)ah *icks

My friends and brethren in humanity, we stand strong. I beseech you to continue in our fight for justice. Although this tumult continues to burden our hearts, we must labor on until we can keep our lands and see that our future generations flourish on its fruits. Moreover, before us is a great divide among our people. The question of ceding and fleeing from what is rightfully ours remains. Our people, who were once united under one goal, are now fighting against each other like the savages the whites call us. What would our great ancestors, who see our plight, have to say? We cannot win this fight divided. We are as strong as ever before, and we should fight to stay in the lands that are ours.

Our dear brothers, who believe we should flee without a fight, have forgotten who they are. They have forgotten that we were born to live as warriors not as cowards. The strength that our ancestors have passed onto us is woven into our rooted courage. So, let us remain strong against this unjust removal. We already have become so incredibly united. Courageously, we have turned over the united States Supreme Court and have shown our irrepresible voice as an independent nation.

Read our children and people are literate and educated, as we have developed a unified Cherokee writing system and have erected schools for our children to attend. We have cultivated our lands on large-scale farming systems and have become economically successful and independent. We would have fought the odds and proved ever so skeptical wrong in their preconceived judgments of our kind. We are innately strong; removal is unnecessary.

The whites, who represent a small minority of the Cherokee, underestimate our strength. They make their point of removal clear, but are they meant to follow in their cowardly footsteps? We are a great nation. We are not a nation of cowards, like this small minority who decide to flee when an obstacle draws near. We are a nation with traditions that move us forward. - are we willing to submit to the whites who have made us their enemies? When will our submission stop? When will their greed cease? We have succumbed to the whites' demands long enough. This unjust submission started long ago with our peaceful ancestors when our fathers laid aside their arms and ceded the best portions of their country even though their act meant nothing.¹ From 1763 until now, more than 1,500,000 acres of Cherokee land have been ceded, and from more than 1763; different treaties our rich soils have been taken from us in attempts to find peace. Our fathers relinquished our rightful lands to avoid aggression. For many years, our people endured manipulation and extortion. When will it end? Georgia has already pushed us beyond its own country's constitutional limits. - s witnessed with our fellow Creeks, Georgia has taken its native peoples' rights without their consent. - o error . Lumpkin of Georgia so kindly remarks that the inhumanity of Georgia, so much complained of, is nothing more nor less than the extension of her laws and jurisdiction over this mingled and misguided population who are found within her acknowledged limits.⁸ - re our mingled and misguided people wrong not to want to endure the cruelty Georgia has unjustifiably extended over us, after Georgia has flagrantly dehumanized our identity and has ignored the laws of our Council? - re we too ignorant to know what is best for us? Georgia has already taken away our human liberties. The state claims that it is justified in its actions when Georgia made it unlawful for an person or persons, under colour or pretense of authority from said Cherokee tribe. . . . to cause or procure any means the assembling of any council or other

¹ Memorial of the Cherokee Nation. *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. (ed. by Jace Weaver and Laura Adams Weaver 2010. Print. 92. ; Lumpkin, Wilson. "Speech before Congress." *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. Ed. Jace Weaver and Laura Adams Weaver 2010. Print. 84.

pretended legislative. If our council is made illegal, how are we to make decisions for the good of our people? Furthermore, Georgia has made it impossible for us to defend ourselves: No Indian or descendant of an Indian, residing within the Creek or Cherokee Nations of Indians, shall be deemed a competent witness in any court of this State. No one is to defend ourselves in their court system in peaceful and diplomatic ways if they will not allow us. We cannot endure this injustice any longer. If we passively allow this to continue, our Nation will cease to exist. By fleeing from the problem, we are not ending it. It is so that they will not further take away our lands after removal assistance is no longer an option.

We refuse to go down the dangerous and futile path of removal not because we are cowards. Not because it would be suicidal. As we have witnessed our brothers whom have fled earlier, the path was full of disease and death. If we mistakenly listen to those like the Sledge family, we will suffer: even Non-Cherokee people who see these dangerous consequences, like Jeremiah Everts, predict that there will be much suffering, in the removal of Black souls . . . much exposure, sickness, hunger, and nakedness.⁵ This is our family. This is our land. This is our life. Let us take care of our people. The demand for removal is unreasonable. We should not be forced down a path that we do not want to follow. As they push us west of the Mississippi, there is no guarantee of a new country that could be given to us.⁶ The land is foreign, and if we are compelled to leave our country, we see nothing but ruin before us, as the dark country west of the Arkansas territory is unknown to us.⁷ Most likely, we will hardly get settled in the new location before we will be urged to remove again.⁸ No one will

³ “Georgia General Assembly.” *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. (d. Everts and Sledge family. *Journal*. 61.

⁴ Ibid. 61

⁵ Everts, Jeremiah. “William Penn’ Essay.” *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. (d. Everts and Sledge family. *Journal*. 55.

⁶ Ibid. 56

⁷ “Memorial of the Cherokee Nation.” *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. (d. Everts and Sledge family. *Journal*. 94.

⁸ Everts, Jeremiah. “William Penn’ Essay.” *Red Clay, 1835: Cherokee Removal and the Meaning of Sovereignty*. (d. Everts and Sledge family. *Journal*.

portion of manual labor is performed by the men, & the women occasionally lend a hand to the field, more by choice and necessity than anything else.⁸¹ / Our woman used to work in the fields by choice. But now, under new white societal laws, it is not proper for them to continue in that conduct. Now, we force them to stay in the home and take to a woman's sphere of the white culture. Additionally, a woman's esteem and advice is no longer respected as it once was, as we move from our traditional male-dominated society to a female-dominated one.