

This article is protected by copyright, East Tennessee Historical Society. It is available online for study, scholarship, and research use only.

Suggested Citation:

“The Lost Archives of the Cherokee Nation.” Ed. by James William Hagy and Stanley J. Folmsbee. Part II. The East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications 44 (1972): 114-125.

THE LOST ARCHIVES OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Edited by

JAMES WILLIAM HAGY AND STANLEY J. FOLMSBEE*

PART II, 1772-1775

The traders among the Cherokees freely made loans to the Indians who soon found themselves heavily in debt. The traders then offered to cancel their debts if land would be granted to them. The Cherokee leaders, including Ouconnostotah, agreed to this proposal at a time when Cameron was absent from the nation. Such a concession was forbidden by the Proclamation of 1763 but despite the protests of Superintendent John Stuart, the Indians said they had the right to give up their lands. Thus a tract of land about sixty miles square, north of the Little River and west of the site of Savannah, Georgia, was turned over to the traders in February 1771. The transfer was complicated by the fact that the Creeks also claimed part of the same territory. The Creeks were highly disturbed by the action of the Cherokees, but in the spring of 1772 the traders in their nation offered to cancel the debts of the Creeks if they would give up their rights to the land which the Cherokees had already ceded.¹ At this point, David Taitt, another Scotsman who became a commissary in 1772 and later a deputy superintendent in the South, arrived on the scene and prevented the transaction by the Creeks.² At length a congress was called for May 25, 1773, at Augusta, Georgia, to deal with this problem, as described by Stuart's deputy, Alexander Cameron, in a letter to Ouconnastotah, the "Great Warrior" of the Cherokees, and other chiefs.

ALEXANDER CAMERON TO OUCONNASTOTAH AND THE RULING CHIEFS OF THE OVER HILL CHEROKEES, 30 MARCH 1773, PP. 165-168

Friends and Brothers Fort Prince George³ 30th March 1773

I Received Your Talk Sent by James Holmes with a String of white Beads,

*For the editors' introduction see Part I, *Publications*, No. 43 (1971), 112-13.

¹ John R. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Ann Arbor, 1944), 301-3; Louis DeVorsey, *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill, 1961), 162-69.

² Alden, *John Stuart*, 297, 303-4.

³ A frontier fort on Keowee River in South Carolina which was built in 1753. See David H. Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740-1762* (Norman, 1962), 47-48. Page numbers in the headings are to Virginia Papers, Item 71, Vol. II, Papers of the Continental Congress (The National Archives, Washington, D. C.).

and I am Sorry to learn by it, that You Seemed undertermined whether You Should Attend the Congress on the 25th of May at Augusta or not.

I do not Blame You for endeavouring to Establish a firm Peace with the Different Tribes of Indians, who Still Persist in turning the Hatchet against; but if they should even Come into Your Nation about the Time of the Treaty you might Send Some of Your Chiefs to meet your Father & Governor Wright at Augusta by the Time appointed, as a disappointment of this kind would be attended with Bad Consequences to Yourselves, a Great Expence to Your Father, and a General loss to the Traders—I therefore Desire, that you will be punctual in attending, that you may not gain your Fathers displeasure, nor give the White People Reason to Suspect Your unwillingness in making good the Lands (against any Claim of the Creeks) which you have already ceded to your Traders, for their debts.

I must inform you at the Same Time, that the intended meeting is appointed by the Great Kings Desire, finding that the Granting of the Land, to the Traders was a Voluntary Act of all Your Chiefs and that they were so solicitous to his Majesty for having it finally Settled. He has therefore been Graciously Pleased to give his Royal Assent to the Cession, providing that you do Settle Your Claims, with the Creeks so as to prevent any future Cavils or disputes on that head —

I Observe What You Say of Duk [illegible] and I Shall acquaint the Beloved Men of Chas. Town [now Charleston] of what you say about the Land that he pretends to have got from you as I am to Meet them at Ninety Six⁴ in a few days, which is reason of my not visiting my Overhill Brothers at this Time —

I am Once More to desire that you will not fail in Comming Down to the Treaty . . . You have Signified to the Gentlemen at Augusta & other places when you were down running the Land, that you would be glad to have an opportunity of going to England, to request his Majesty the King, to give his assent to Cession. what would the World, now think if you Should offer frivolous excuses for your not appearing at Augusta. In Token of my Ernest desire of Seeing you at my house, by the 20th May, I send You this String of White Wampum at the Same Time, that I hold My Brothers fast by the Arm.
Alexr. Cameron

The congress at Augusta resulted in a treaty of cession being signed on June 1, 1773, for what became known as the New Purchase. An abstract of this treaty is to be found in the Cherokee Archives.

ABSTRACT OF THE TREATY OF CESSION TO HIS MAJESTY OF CERTAIN LANDS FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE DEBTS DUE BY THE CREEK & CHEROKEE INDIANS TO THEIR TRADERS AT A CONGRESS OF THE CHIEFS OF BOTH NATIONS AT AUGUSTA
1 JUNE 1773, P. 161.

The Line to begin at the Place where the Lower Creek Path Intersects Ogeechie River & along the main Branch of said River to the Source of the Southermost Branch of said River & from thence along the Ridge between the Waters of Broad River & Oconee River up to the Buffalo Licks & from thence in a Streight Line to the Tree marked by the Cherokees near the Head of a Branch

⁴ A fort in South Carolina on Saluda River.

falling into the Oconi River & from thence along the said Ridge Twenty Miles above the Line already Run by the Cherokees & from thence across to Savannah River by a Line Paralel with that formerly marked by them, and the Creeks by Saleachie & Taleachie & other Headmen of the Lower Creeks, also Cede from the present Boundary Line at Phentiotoway Creek on the Alatomaha [Altamaha] River up the said river to an Island opposite to the mouth of Barber Creek & from thence across to Ogueechie [Ogeechee] River Opposite to the Road about Four Miles above Buckhead where a Canoe Ferry used to be kept. [Illegible] Wright⁵

John Stuart

Englishmen were just as interested in lands in the North as in the South. When Lord Dartmouth (William Legge) became responsible for colonial affairs in North America in April 1772, the speculators were better received in London, as Dartmouth himself had obtained a grant in 1770. A number of speculators on both sides of the Atlantic had long been in favor of a new colony in America, but before the arrival of Dartmouth they had been unable to receive approval in London. In August 1772, the approval was given. Eventually it was decided that this new colony should be called Vandalia. The project ultimately collapsed⁶ but at a meeting at Augusta the Creeks, Catawbias, and the Cherokees were notified of the establishment of Vandalia.

TALK [OF SUPERINTENDENT STUART] TO THE CHEROKEES,
AUGUSTA, 3 JUNE 1773, PP. 157-160.

Augusta 3 June 1773

Friends and Brothers

The Business which occasioned this meeting is now happily agreed upon by the Warriors of both Nations, and we are all acquainted with the description and Extent of the lands which you have Consented to Cede to His Majesty by way of Satisfaction for your Debts to your Traders.

I am now by His Majestys Orders to Communicate to you a Matter in which you as well as other Indian Nations may think yourselves materially concerned.

You know that Boundary Lines dividing the Lands Ceded by you to His Majesty in the different Provinces from those Reserved by you for your Hunting Grounds have at different Times been agreed upon & marked by order of His Majesty that Cavils and disputes about Lands might thereby be avoided.

In the year 1771 you the Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation marked a Line dividing your Hunting Grounds from what you gave up to His Majesty in the Province of Virginia, and which fell in upon the Head or Source of Louisa [now Kentucky] River and down the stream thereof to its Confluence with the Ohio, and by an Instrument of Cession you relinquished all Claims or Pretensions to any Lands to the North Eastward of said Line.⁷ Boundary Lines now

⁵ Probably James Wright, Governor of Georgia.

⁶ Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937), 52-57.

⁷ The survey of the Lochaber Treaty line by Alexander Cameron and John Donelson described in Part I, *Publications*, No. 43, pp. 120-21.

in like
ern De
Bound
to Ext
River
North
Conse
upon
such a
Count
to gov
been g
The B

o
to
s
C
R
th
th
s
S
[
o
s
c
I
t
H
I

Map
I
direct
Provin
of the
His M
Resol
possib

was
trans

8
routin
Nation
rivers.

9
et pas
It has
from

ns
Ridge Twenty
hence across to
them, and the
er Creeks, also
the Alatomaha
outh of Barber
pposite to the
sed to be kept.

orth as in the
e responsible
e speculators
d obtained a
the Atlantic
at before the
roval in Lon-
was decided
ct ultimately
bas, and the
a.

CHEROKEES,

1773

agreed upon by
escription and
Majesty by way

a Matter in
ves materially

by you to His
or your Hunt-
d by order of
be avoided.

marked a Line
Majesty in the
ce of Louisa
ence with the
ns or Preten-
ry Lines now

olution (New

John Donelson

in like manner and for the Same Reasons agreed upon and marked in the Northern Department and the River Ohio was agreed upon as a natural & permanent Boundary as far as the claims of the Northern Tribes Extended or were Suffered to Extend. That is to the Confluence of the Conkoway [Kanawha] with the said River and all Lands which had untill then Belonged to or been Claimed by the Northern Tribes, were by the Treaty of Fort Harris⁸ ceded to His Majesty, in Consequence of which a great Number of His Majestys White Subjects Settled upon those Lands and that Order & Regularity might be Introduced amongst such a Number of People preferred a Petition to His Majesty praying that said Country might be Erected into a Government and Civil Magistrates appointed to govern & Administer Justice amongst them which Prayer His Majesty has been graciously Pleased to Grant.

The Boundaries of the said New Province are

"Beginning on the South Side of the River Ohio opposite to the Mouth of Sioto, thence Southerly thro the Pass in the Ouanoto Mountains to the South Side of the said Mountains thence along the Side of the said Mountains [illegible] North Easterly, to the fork of the great Cokhaway [Kanawha], made by the junction of Green Briar & new River, thence along the said Green Briar on the Easterly Side of the Same unto the Head or Termination of the North Easterly Branch thereof, thence Easterly to the Allegheny mountains, thence along the said Allegheny mountains to Lord Fairfax's line, thence along the Same to the Spring Head of the North Branch of the River Powtomac [Potomac] thence along the Western Boundary Line of the province of Maryland to the Southern Boundary Line of the Province of Pennsylvania thence along the said Southern Boundary Line of the province of Pennsylvania to the End thereof, thence along the Western Boundary Line of the said Province of Pennsylvania untill the Same Shall Strike the River Ohio, thence down the Said River Ohio to the place of Beginning."

I shall now show you the Limits of said Province as marked upon the Map which will Convey to you a Clearer Idea of the Situation and Extent.⁹

I am further to acquaint you that His Majesty has Strictly ordered and directed that no part of the Land lying between the Boundary Line of said new Province, and that marked by you in 1771 extendg to the Ohio, in Consequence of the Treaty of Lochaber in 1770 Shall be Occupied by or granted to any of His Majestys Subjects this must Convince you of his Majestys Justice and Resolution to Adhere to his Engagement with you, and to prevent as far as possible those Intrusions upon your Lands so often & Justly Complained Of.

[John Stuart]

One of the chiefs not in attendance at the conference at Augusta was Ouconnostotah. Therefore, he was notified by letter of the transactions.

⁸ No other reference to a Treaty of Fort Harris has been found. It may have been a routine confirmation of Sir William Johnson's Treaty of Fort Stanwix with the Six Nations ceding land north of the Ohio between the mouths of the Tennessee and Kanawha rivers. DeVorsey, *Indian Boundary*, 68-69.

⁹ Reference is to the proposed colony of Vandalia. Alden, *John Stuart*, 278, 286, *et passim*. The map was enclosed with the succeeding letter (no date), to Ouconnostotah. It has been printed in Abernethy, *Western Lands*, facing p. 54, and is therefore omitted from this document.

JOHN STUART TO OUCONNOSTOTAH, NO DATE, PAGE 195

To Oukonnestotah Great War Chief of the Cherokee Nation
Friend & Brother

I received your Message by Ousteniko, who also at the Same produced your Medal¹⁰ and Commission with a String of white Whampum[.] I should have been glad to have shaken hands and smoked with you but as you was engaged at a Meeting with Messengers from other Nations and had my Friend ottasse Mico [Outassemico?] by the hand and were set down together on a white seat at Chota, I looked upon your medal to be the same as if you were present in Person. I have the pleasure to acquaint you that everything is finished in a Friendly manner[.] I send you herewith an account of the Boundary Line which was agreed upon and your Warriours will be able to describe it to you very particularly—and as persons are appointed to mark it immediately when finished a plan shall be sent to your Nation

I also send you a Copy of the Governor of Georgia & my Talk which you will get some person to read and Explain to you. I send you a particular message which I delivered from the Great King relative to a new Province on the Ohio also a plan of said new Province by which you'll see the King's Justice and Resolution to observe his Engagements with you and you will perceive that he has given orders not to settle any Lands between your Line and said new province.¹¹ I expect to hear fully from you and that you will give me an account of all that may pass at your meeting with the other Nations and that nothing will be hid from me—

John Stuart

Although Ouconnostotah did not attend the meeting in Augusta in June 1773, he did visit Charleston in November at which time he was inducted into the St. Andrew's Society, an organization for Scotsmen which had been founded in Charleston in 1729. John Stuart joined the organization soon after his arrival in Charleston, served as secretary, 1752-1755, and was the president of the society from 1772 until the Revolution.¹²

CERTIFICATE THAT OUCONNOSTOTAH WAS ADMITTED TO
ST. ANDREWS CLUB, 30 NOVEMBER, 1773, P. 205.

These are to Certifye That Ouconnastotah [the] great Warrior of the Cherokee Nation was by Majority of Votes regularly admitted a Member of the St. Andrews Club, at Charles Town, in South Carolina at a meeting of the Society held the 30th of November Anno Dom. 1773. Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Society the Day & Year above written

John Stuart President

James Brisbane Clerk

¹⁰ It was customary for the British, and later the Americans, to give medals to prominent Indian chiefs. Francis Paul Prucha, *Indian Peace Medals in American History* (Madison, 1971), *passim*.

¹¹ These documents were not included in the recovered Cherokee Archives.

¹² Alden, *John Stuart*, 165; J. H. Easterby, *History of the St. Andrew's Society of Charleston, South Carolina, 1729-1929* (Charleston, 1929), 31, 45-46. The organization is still in existence.

, PAGE 195

Same produced
pum[.] I should
but as you was
had my Friend
together on a
as if you were
thing is finished
Boundary Line
describe it to you
immediately when

my Talk which
you a particular
a new Province
see the King's
and you will per-
your Line and
you will give me
er Nations and

t
ag in Augusta
which time he
cion for Scots-
Stuart joined
rved as secre-
om 1772 until

MITTED TO
205.

of the Cherokee
ber of the St.
g of the Society
Hand and the

sident

give medals to
American History

Archives.

Drew's Society of
The organization

In October 1773, a group of frontiersmen moved outward from the westernmost settlements of Virginia and North Carolina to settle in the present state of Kentucky. According to contemporary records the group was led by William Russell, a settler in Castle's Woods (now Castlewood), Virginia; however, another person involved was Daniel Boone, although he is not mentioned in the records of the time. Part of the group was attacked before they reached Cumberland Gap, and the eldest sons of both Boone and Russell were killed along with three other white youths and a slave belonging to Russell. After this, Boone and his family, along with the Russells, retreated to Castle's Woods, where Boone lived until Henderson negotiated his Treaty of Sycamore Shoals with the Cherokees for the Kentucky (and Middle Tennessee) lands in 1775.

One of those who survived the attack and maintained a hatred for the Indians after this incident was Isaac Crabtree. In June 1774, Crabtree attended a horse race at the Watauga settlement. There he killed without provocation an Indian named Will or Cherokee Billey.

Arthur Campbell, as a militia leader in Virginia, urged Alexander Cameron to send a peace mission to the Overhill Cherokees.¹³ The following letter was perhaps prompted by Campbell's urging.

ALEXANDER CAMERON TO THE CHEROKEES, LOCHABER,
JULY 7, 1774, PP. 153-156.

Lochaber 7th July 1774

Friends and Brothers

I Received a Talk lately from you in which you inform me of the Misfortune that Happened to One of your Young men at Wataga [Watauga]. I am Sorry that you have Suffered any Settlement So near you as it is Contrary to the Great Kings Desire. His Head Beloved men of the Different Provinces & Your Father Capt. Stuart; who in conjunction with you, have stipulated & fixed a Boundary line to Prevent Encroachments from White or Red People. However it Seems that the Wataga people had no hand in this Murder, that they rather endeavoured to prevent it tho they were overpowered—By all accounts this Murder has been committed by the Relations of five Whitemen Who was Murdered, as they suppose By the Delawares, who left the Nation last Fall accompanied by the Elk & Allatuskee of the Cherokees. This Brothers appears to be plainly the case by the Inclosed Paper, which was Sent by Some of the Inhabitants of Holston to the Govr. of Virginia & by him Transmitted to your Father Capt. Stuart, who sent it here to me that I might acquaint you of the

¹³ James William Hays, "The First Attempt to Settle Kentucky: Boone in Virginia," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, XLIV (July, 1970), 227-34; James William Hays, "The Frontier at Castle's Woods, 1769-1786," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXV (October, 1967), 418; Samuel Cole Williams, *Dawn of Tennessee Valley and Tennessee History* (Johnson City, 1937), 388-89.

Contents of it[.] I often represented to your People in General, the bad Consequences of Murdering the King[s] Subject[s] Wantonly & without provocation, but they still Persisted & Seldom [Seldom] any of them went to War, as they pretended against the Red People but they Brought in some Scalps from the White People: If they found them Hunting or Settling upon their lands, they would have a sufficient appology for knocking them up. As in that case they act Contrary to law, and against the Great Kings Express orders. The Great King & his beloved Men have for a long Time Suffered the Cherokees to Commit to [too] many unprovoked Murders with[out] requiring the Satisfaction which has been stipulated by Treaty. But the [more] indulgence he shews, the more Mischief is committed untill We come to an Oppen War. The Governor of Virginia therefore Demands that Satisfaction be given for the 5 white people already mention[ed], of Negro Belonging to Capt. Russel. Two of Your People was Concern'd as they were in the party who Committed the Murder[.] But as One has already lost his Life for that Act, there is but one More Demanded—I am extremely Sorry for Will as he was a good Civil Young Man & have suffered for the Act of rogues. I will say no more on this Head at Present—as you are wise Men you will no doubt consult upon Proper Methods of giving Your eldest Brothers Satisfaction—

I give you thanks for the intelligence you Sent me relative to the Northern Indians. But you may depend upon it; that what was told you respecting Sir William Johnston¹⁴ were lies. He never would advise any Nation of Indians to take up the Hatchet against you; without Provocation, as in that case he would not only incurr the Great King's Displeasure but at the Same Time forfeit his on [own] Word, to you in endeavoring to make the Northern Tribes Maintain & adhere to the Peace, which was Concluded at His House,¹⁵ between You & the Northern Tribes—If he had cause to behave in that Manner, he would openly avow it & give the Great Warrior at New York and Capt. Stuart Notice of it, But don't you believe it, as it's Nothing but lies—

I have Sent your Talk to Capt. Stuart & am very Sensible that he will be very Sorry for the Death of Will & will take every method to obtain Satisfaction from the Government of Virginia for taking any reveng[e] in so illegal a Manner—

He has wrote me that the Quarrel between us & the Creeks is near at an End, thae 5 of the Creek Murderers have been apprehended, & Executed & that Emistisiguo¹⁶ or the Gt. Creek Warrior of the Little Tallassie, & some other Head men are daily Expected at Savannah with the Scalps of the five whom they put to Death in presence of Capt. Stuart's Interpretater, whom they kept with them to see Justice done—The last Time; they told Capt. Stuart that they were always ready to do justice. But that the Cherokees were double tongued & would like Singing Birds, change their Note [as] often as they Changed their Situation—that their sendin so often to the Norward, was not for Nothing, & the many meetings which was called at Chote of other nations—that the Mogue Mankillers¹⁷ Talks last fall in their nation, might plainly prove what they were—You may always depend that I shall hid[e] nothing from you, & do

¹⁴ Sir William Johnson was superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northern Department. See n. 8, above.

¹⁵ Fort Stanwix. In April 1768. John P. Brown, *Old Frontiers* (Kingsport, 1938), 126.

¹⁶ Chief of the town of Little Tallassie. After 1774 he was the leading chief of the Upper Creeks. He died in 1782 fighting Mad Anthony Wayne. Alden, *John Stuart*, 182.

¹⁷ Mankiller of Tellico. Brown, *Old Frontiers*, 74-75.

everything in my power for you & your Nation, in Token of which, I send you this White String of Wampum—

from Your friend & Brother
Alexr. Cameron

Like the Cherokees the Shawnees of the Ohio country were also upset by the whites moving into their lands. They began to resist with force. The royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, decided to take the war to the Indians in what became known as Dunmore's War. The Shawnees were defeated in October 1774, in the Battle of Point Pleasant, which proved to be the only engagement of the expedition to the Ohio.¹⁸ This and other matters were of concern of Cameron in early January 1775 when he wrote the Cherokees seeking intelligence.

ALEXANDER CAMERON TO ATTAKULLAKULLA AND OTHER
CHIEFS, 16 JANUARY 1775, P. 143

To the Great Warrior and Friend, Attakullakulla[,] Willianawaw¹⁹ and the other Head Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation

Friends & Brothers

Upon my arrival at Keowee²⁰ I sent to your Father by the waterside to inform him of the Good Talks You & I had together and the Tokens you had given of maintaining peace & Friendship with your Elder Brothers the English, which has given him the greatest Pleasure and thanks you all for your Wise and Manly Behaviour and the White People in General, I mean the Head & Beloved Men of them Approve of your Talks & Behaviour.

I have been informed that my Friend Attakullakulla was Carried in by Some Warriors from North Carolina, what Business he has Transacted I should be glad to know as I suspect they did [not] go to your Nation for Nothing—I have not likewise heard from you relative to the Land on Nolathucky²¹ or whether or not you have Sent any Message there after I came away—I cannot as yet be positive whether I shall go over the Hills²² for this Spring or not but at any rate I shall be there Early in the Summer. I shall be very glad to hear from you & that you will hide nothing from me of what Concerns Yourself or Your Nation—I shall be glad at the Same Time to be inform'd by you of what the Shawnesse [Shawnees] had done with the Virginia people or whether they continue the [Dunmore's] War still with them, and how the

¹⁸ The best sources on Lord Dunmore's War are: Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg (Eds.), *Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 1774* (Madison, 1905); Virgil A. Lewis, *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant Fought Between White Men and Indians at the Mouth of the Great Kanawha River [Now Point Pleasant, West Virginia] Monday, October 10th, 1774. The Chief Event of Lord Dunmore's War* (Dayton, Virginia, 1909).

¹⁹ Brother of Attakullakulla (Little Carpenter). Alden, *John Stuart*, 62.

²⁰ A Cherokee town in South Carolina.

²¹ This is possibly in reference to Jacob Brown's Purchase of March 25, 1775, on the Nolichucky River near the present Erwin, Tennessee, of land he had leased as early as 1771. Williams, *Dawn of Tennessee Valley*, 351, 415-17.

²² Overhill Cherokee towns, in East Tennessee.

Yanchtonnes or Piankisees behave at present, or any other intelligence worth Communication.

I remain at all Times Your

Sincere Brother
Alexr. Cameron

In 1775 a group of North Carolina speculators led by Judge Richard Henderson organized the Transylvania Company in order to acquire Cherokee lands west of the mountains. On March 17 of that year they signed at Sycamore Shoals (near the present Elizabethton, Tennessee) a treaty with the Cherokees by which, for a few wagon loads of goods, worth about 10,000 pounds, they purchased approximately twenty million acres of land in Kentucky and Tennessee.²³ The treaty was signed by the Cherokee chiefs Attakullakulla, Ouchonostotah, and Savanooka. Reacting to this event, and resenting the encroachment of the North Carolinians within the bounds of his colony, the governor of Virginia dispatched a letter to the Cherokee chiefs.

LORD DUNMORE TO THE LITTLE CARPENTER AND OTHER
CHIEFS OF THE CHEROKEES, 23 MARCH 1775, PP. 145-148.

To the Little Carpenter and the Cheiffs of the Cherokee Nation of Indians.

Brothers

When I lately received through Colonel Byrd²⁴ the Talk addressed to me from the Little Carpenter, I was rejoiced at so good a Testimony of the pacifick disposition, and friendly Sentiments of the Cherokees toward their Brothers of Virginia; and I resolved in return to give every proof in my power of my regard for the Cherokees, by promoting harmony between them and their Brothers the Virginians, and Establishing an intercourse, between their Country and this, that might be of mutual advantage. But I fear the Cherokees are taking a Step which will defeat all my good intentions and if my advise be true lay a foundation for Still greater Calamities than those we were so lately threatned with.

I am informed that the Cherokees have inconsiderately (not to say worse) listened to the dangerous proposals of a certain evill disposed and disorderly Person named Henderson, and, allured by a little present gain, have entered into a bargain for Lands, which they either have sold or intend to Sell to the said Henderson.

The Cherokees cannot be ignorant that the Great King, our Common Father and Sovereign, in order to Secure the Possessions of the Indians, from the Incroachments of our own unruly People and to prevent their artifice[r]s from imposing upon, and taking an advantage of, the unwary Indians in underhand Bargains hath forbid²⁵ any Persons but such as are duly Authorized by

²³ Archibald Henderson, *Conquest of the Old Southwest* (New York, 1920), 221-25, map between pp. 192-93. For the text of the treaty, see Brown, *Old Frontiers*, 553-56.

²⁴ Colonel William Byrd, speculator, member of the governor's council in Virginia, and an officer in the militia.

²⁵ Forbidden by the Proclamation of 1763.

Himself, or one of his Governors, to treat with Indians for Lands. And the Cherokees must be Sensible that if they were allowed to dispose, in this irregular Manner, of Lands, to the White People, it would be impossible for the different governments, in their neighborhood, even to know the exact Boundaries of the Indian Country, and therefore it would be impossible to prevent Continual quarrels and murders, the unhappy examples of which, on that account, having already been but too frequent. But these private agreements will have Still more extensive Consequences, and prove fatal to the Indian Race in the End.

Titles to Land, thus obtained from Indians by our bad People (for no others will ever take them in that manner) will interfere with the Grants of the King and his different Governors, and be productive of endless confusion, disputes and ruin among the white people themselves; and the Indians will be considered the Cause: The King, whose orders and regulations you thus neglect, will think you no longer worthy his Fatherly love and Care; the people in the Governments about you, will take every opportunity of revenging upon you the Injuries which your irregularity brings upon them; and these very wicked men who betray you into the errors, though now they are but few in number, they speak you fair, and pretend Integrity by paying you, perhaps, a valuable Consideration for Land you [illegible word] to sell and think of no great Consequence, yet these men, when they find themselves strong which will soon be if you encourage such as them, for all the bad People from every part will flock to them, will take by force those Lands you wish to preserve, and are most dear to you—how can it be Supposed that men who have disobeyed the Law and orders of their King and Governments to which they, their relatives and friends all belong, will keep any agreement with you;—You may assure yourselves they will never rest Satisfied till they have dispossessed you of all your Country, and driven you out or extirpated you.

I hope the little Carpenter and all my Brothers the Cherokees will give attention to what I have here written, and consider me as their real friend when I advise them if the Bargain is not yet concluded, that they will make known to the said Henderson and his associates that they did not understand the import of it, and it was contrary to the orders & regulations and Laws of the King and his governments, it cannot be valid. And I expect the Cherokees will oblige the said Henderson and whatever Persons are connected with him, to quit the possession of any land which he or they may have taken under pretence of the said Bargain. This is the only way of preventing the evils I have above enumerated, and if My Brothers the Cherokees Comply with this, fully, they may depend upon the protection and favour of the King, his governments and all the good People belonging to them; but if they refuse or trifle with me, I shall be obliged, though with grief, to Speak to them in another manner.

Dunmore

at Williamsburg this 23d Day of March 1775.

William Preston, a frontier and militia leader of Fincastle County, Virginia, was also directed by Lord Dunmore to write to Ouconnostotah and the other Cherokee leaders concerning the sale to Henderson and his associates.

WILLIAM PRESTON TO OUCONNASTOTAH AND OTHER CHIEFS,
12 APRIL 1775, PP. 185-188

To Oconastota the little Carpenter, Judge Friend²⁶ and the other Chiefs of the warlike Nation of the Cherokees.

I am commanded by his Excellency the Right Honourable John Earl of Dunmore, his Majesty's Lieutenant and Governor General of Virginia, to send you his Letter by a special Messenger who is to read it to your Council and have it justly interpreted; and as it contains Matter of the greatest Importance to your Nation, I make not the least doubt but you will pay due Attention to it, especially as it is from so great a Man, and one who stands in the place of the Great King over the Water, our common Father. I hope you will treat the Messenger with kindness, and give him a safe Convoy if he desires it to Watawgo [Watauga].

The Sale you have lately made of the Great Tract of Land on the Ohio without the advice or consent of the King or any of his Governors has greatly alarmed the people in this and the neighbouring Collonies, and there is not doubt but our King will be much offended with you, and will withdraw that fatherly love & protection from you which he has hitherto granted, unless you immediately comply with the Governor's request.

This Land you all know was the property of the Northern Indians till they sold it to our King; and that it is but a few years since you pretended to claim it—In the Year 1744 at Lancaster Town in Pennsylvania the six Nations sold and made a Deed for it, in presence of Commissioners sent from Virginia, Maryland, & the Governor of Pennsylvania, who paid them a great price for it. About twenty-three Years ago, the Ohio Indians at a Great Treaty at Logs Town, sold their claim to all the Land on the southside of the Ohio & confirmed the Deed made at the Treaty at Lancaster, for which the Commissioners from Virginia paid them a large Sum—About seven Years ago another Treaty was held with the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix, in the presence of Sr. Wm. Johnson the Governor of Pennsylvania & new Jersey, & Commissioners from Virginia, when all the former Sales were confirmed new Deeds made for all the Lands on the Ohio to the cherokee River & a very great Sum paid for it, and it was then proved by Witnesses that the Cherokee had at a Treaty they formerly held with the Northward Indians, acknowledged they had no Land there off the Waters of their own Rivers.²⁷

All these Transactions you have no Doubt been acquainted with and therefore could not but know that you were selling Land that has been the property of the King our Father for upwards of thirty Years; and that your now setting up a claim to it would give him and our Great Warrior the Governor great Offence.

I hope you will fall upon some Method of having this Matter Settled with your Brothers the white People in an amicable Manner, that it may not break that friendly Intercourse that have for some time subsisted between us & which I hope will always continue as it is so much the Benefit of both Nations.

²⁶ Probably Judd's Friend (Ustenaco).

²⁷ For a rebuttal of this unjustified interpretation of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, see DeVorsey, *Indian Boundary*, 69-73. Also, five years before the date of this letter, the Cherokee title to land south of the Ohio had been admitted by the Treaty of Lochaber of 1770. *Ibid.*, 75-76.

I make no doubt but you will on reading & considering the Governor's Letter send him an Answer, in which you will fully declare your Sentiments & give him that Satisfaction he so earnestly requests. The Letter I shall carefully transmit to his Lordship. I received a Letter from my Brother the little Carpenter, with a string of Wampum; by which I promised myself the pleasure of shaking Hands with him at my House; and of Conducting him safe through the Inhabitants of this County, but I since heard that Colo. Henderson would not suffer him to come this way.

I am Brothers your Friend & Brother,
Wm. Preston

Fincastle County April ye 12th 1775.

ons
OTHER CHIEFS,
er Chiefs of the
n Earl of Dun-
ia, to send you
ncil and have it
ortance to your
Attention to it,
he place of the
I treat the Mes-
it to Watawgo

d on the Ohio
ors has greatly
d there is not
withdraw that
ted, unless you

ndians till they
ended to claim
x Nations sold
from Virginia,
great price for
Treaty at Logs
e Ohio & con-
Commissioners
another Treaty
e of Sr. Wm.
issioners from
ade for all the
l for it, and it
they formerly
and there off

and therefore
e property of
ow setting up
overnor great

r Settled with
may not break
n us & which
Nations.

rt Stanwix, see
this letter, the
ty of Lochaber