

# Opinion on the Removal of the Cherokee

**Creator:** A Virginia Patriot

**Date:** 1830

**Published in:** The Cherokee Phoenix and Indian's *Advocate*

**Source type:** Newspaper Article (Adapted)

**Introduction:** After the passage of the Indian Removal Act, the official newspaper of the Cherokee Nation, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, published many articles condemning the Act. In this article, an author known only as "A Virginia Patriot" lists the problems associated with Indian removal.



Will the government **compel** the Cherokees to **emigrate** beyond the Mississippi? It would be in **defiance** of **treaties** entered into between the United States government and the Indians, **in contempt of** the clearest rules of truth, justice, and humanity, and disgracing those principles on which our **republican** government are supposed to be based.

We maintain that to **compel** the Cherokees to move west of the Mississippi is to have them **submit to** laws designed by their longtime enemies, who desire to **exterminate** them. This is in effect the same as a complete **expulsion** of the Cherokees from their homes, the **tombs** of their **ancestors**, and in a word their native soil. This is the purpose of the Indian Removal Act. By that Act the Cherokees are compelled to leave their lands in Georgia. They are to be driven from their native lands.

The **title** of the Cherokees to the lands they now occupy, the lands where the **ashes of their ancestors sleep**, has been **acknowledged** by this government in no fewer than sixteen separate **treaties** between the government of the United States and the Cherokee Indians, who are now **asserting** their rights. Some of these treaties were made at a time when the Cherokees could support their rights **by the sword**, if necessary. Others were made when the Cherokees were weak and without the means of defense. All, however, acknowledge to their fullest extent the rights of the Cherokees and **concede** to them **exclusive sovereignty** over the **territory** the Cherokees occupy.

# A Letter From Cherokee Chief John Ross

**Creator:** Chief John Ross

**Date:** September 28, 1836

**Source type:** Letter (Adapted)

**Introduction:** John Ross was Chief of the Cherokee Nation in Georgia. In this 1836 letter addressed to the U.S. Congress, Ross claimed that the Treaty of New Echota--the treaty that forced the Cherokee out of Georgia--was illegal, and pleaded for the U.S. government to **reconsider** Cherokee removal.



We are denationalized; we are **disfranchised**. We are **deprived** of membership in the human family! We have neither land nor home, nor resting place that can be called our own. And this is caused by the **terms of an agreement** which claims to be an official treaty. We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened.

The Treaty of New Echota is not the act of our Nation; we did not participate in **negotiating** it; it has not received the approval of our people. The makers of it hold no office nor **appointment** in our Nation, under the title of Chiefs, Head men, or any other title, by which they have **authority** to **make bargain and sale of our rights**, our **possessions**, and our **common country**. And therefore we **appeal** with confidence to the justice, the generosity, the **compassion** of your government against the **enforcement** of the terms of an agreement that we had no role in making.

In truth, our cause is your own; it is the cause of liberty and of justice. It is based upon your own principles, which we have learned from yourselves; for we are proud to **count** your George Washington and your Thomas Jefferson as our great teachers. We have read their communications to us with great respect; we have practiced their ideas with success. And the result is clear. The wildness of the forest has given way to comfortable houses and **cultivated** fields.

On your kindness, on your humanity, on your **compassion**, on your **benevolence**, we rest our hopes. To you **we address our prayers**: spare our people!