

CHICKASAW RESPONSE

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Response to Government Treaty Negotiators [excerpt]*

Tuesday, October 24, 1826, and Friday, October 27, 1826

To our beloved brothers, the Commissioners of the United States:

We have received the talk of our father the President of the United States, by the hands of our brothers the commissioners on the part of the United States. We find it is the wish of our father to exchange lands with us, lying on the west side of the Mississippi river, which we are very sorry to hear, as we never had a thought of exchanging our land for any others, as we think that we would not a country that would suit us as well as this we now occupy, it being the land of our forefathers, if we should exchange our lands for another, fearing the consequences may be similar to transplanting an old tree, which would wither and die away, and we are fearful we would come to the same. We want you, our brothers, to talk our talk. We have no lands to exchange for any other. We wish our father to extend his protection to us here, as he proposes to do on the west of the Mississippi, as we apprehend we would, in a few years, experience the same difficulties in any other section of the country that might be suitable to us west of the Mississippi.

Friends and brothers: we know that our white brothers are crowding upon us daily, which we know is not just. We further consider that there are a number of nations west of the Mississippi that have been enemies to us as well as our white brothers. It would be as much impossible to unite us with them as it would be to unite oil and water, and we have every reason to believe that those tribes that have left their country are not well satisfied; and if that should be the case, we are fearful that those tribes will take satisfaction of us for injuries done by us as well as our white brothers. We are a small tribe, and unable to defend our rights in any country...

We hope our brothers the commissioners will take our situation into serious consideration; they know we are not qualified to become citizens of the United States, and we are ignorant of the pressure of laws.

To our beloved brothers, the Commissioners of the United States:

Friends and brothers: We have taken your talk of yesterday into mature consideration. We are sorry to hear that our talk has so much disappointed our father the President, and our brothers the commissioners. . . . It appears from what you say, that all the objections which we, his red children, can make, will have no weight with the policy of the General Government. You say that our neighbors and friends, the Creeks, Cherokee, and Choctaws, have secured themselves a country beyond the Mississippi, where their names may be preserved forever. Have not our father the President and our white brothers the same power there as they have here? We have always looked up to our father the President for protection, as dutiful children; we have every feeling of gratitude that children can have to a father; we have always been in readiness to assist our white brothers as well as our own. You say, "Are you willing to sit down in delusive security, and see your nation dwindle away until the name of Chickasaw forever lost?" No, we are not; but if it be the will of the Great Spirit that we should lose our name and language, we must submit. We know the

wisdom, foresight, and abilities of our father the President are great; therefore, we look up to him for his protection. You say that the country we have is too large for us. We have always taken the talks of our father the President heretofore and reduced our lands to very small bounds, not more than what will support us comfortably; we, as well as our white brothers, have a rising generation to provide for. We have abandoned the idea of hunting for a support, finding the game will not do for a support. Our father the President introduced missionaries to come amongst us to advance us to a state of civilization; we accepted them, and are making all the progress that people can; we have also been providing means for the support of the missionaries, to enable us to go on with the education of our children and to have them enlightened. . . . We know that the United States have always protected us, and that the strong arm of your Government has extended its protection west of the Mississippi for the peace and happiness of our red brethren; we also have every reason to expect that the Government of the United States feel themselves bound, by every tie of gratitude, to defend and protect their brothers the Chickasaws, as we have never shed the blood of any of our white brothers. . . . We think that our father the President cannot reflect much upon his children the Chickasaws; we have always dealt very liberally with him; we have reduced ourselves to very small bounds, and have not more than we can reasonably do with. We are very sorry that we cannot assist our father; but so it is, that we are so reduced that we cannot. Our father the President must exercise his own judgment; we are his children and are at the discretion of our parent; we, your Chickasaw children, are weak in our judgments; we cannot see the necessity of selling any more of our lands to our father the President. Our brothers the commissioners say that our father the President has directed them to say that we must sell a part of our country that we can most conveniently spare. We, your Chickasaw children, cannot see any land that we can spare, nor yet do we see the necessity of our white brothers to compel them to have it. We, your Chickasaw children, have no idea that our father the President is disposed to take any advantage of his Chickasaw children, nor our brothers the commissioners; we have every confidence in them, that they will discharge the duty of a father and brothers; we have no doubt that our brothers the commissioners are disposed to deal fairly and honorably with us. It is true we are poor for money, but we love our lands better.

Sources: Colbert, L., Emmubbia, Ash-Tak-Ma-Tut-Ka, McClish, J., & Colbert, M. (n.d.). [Response to government treaty negotiators] [Manuscript]. The Avalon Project. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/nt007.asp (Original work written October 24, 1826)

Colbert, L., Emmubbia, Ash-Tak-Ma-Tut-Ka, McClish, J., & Colbert, M. (n.d.). [Further response to government treaty negotiators] [Manuscript]. The Avalon Project. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/nt007.asp (Original work written October 27, 1826)