

THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
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CONTENTS

DAVID CROCKETT AND HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY Stanley J. Folmsbee.....	3
THE SECOND PARTY SYSTEM IN TENNESSEE Brian G. Walton.....	18
FELIX K. ZOLLIFFER: CONFEDERATE DEFENDER OF EAST TENNESSEE (PART I) James W. McKee, Jr.....	34
THE MAN BROWNLOW FROM A NEWSPAPER MAN'S POINT OF VIEW Stephen F. Humphrey.....	59
KNOXVILLE NEGRO VOTING AND THE ROOSEVELT REVOLUTION, 1928-1936 Larry W. Dunn.....	71
PAPERS FROM THE SPANISH ARCHIVES RELATING TO TENNESSEE AND THE OLD SOUTHWEST D. C. and Roberta Corbitt.....	94
X THE LOST ARCHIVES OF THE CHEROKEE NATION (PART I, 1763-1772) James William Hagy and Stanley J. Folmsbee.....	112
THE UNKNOWN PREFACE OF THE NASHVILLE (4TH) EDITION OF LORENZO DOW'S THE YANKEE SPY... (EMBRACING THE RIGHTS OF MAN) William J. MacArthur, Jr.....	123
BOOK NOTICES	129
NOTES AND NEWS, 1970.....	137
DIRECTORY OF CONTRIBUTORS.....	140
LIST OF MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS, 1971.....	141
INDEX	148

#54
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THE LOST ARCHIVES OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Edited by

JAMES WILLIAM HAGY AND STANLEY J. FOLMSBEE

PART I, 1763-1772

In December, 1780, and January, 1781, Arthur Campbell, a political and military leader in Southwest Virginia, joined John Sevier of Washington County, North Carolina, in a devastating raid against the Cherokee Indians, who had seized upon the King's Mountain campaign of the western settlers as an opportunity to recover their lost hunting grounds.¹ The punitive expedition led to the burning of most of the Overhill Cherokee towns as well as the destruction of much of the provisions of the Indians. In a letter to Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia detailing the events of the expedition, Campbell reported: "We found in Okana-Stote's² Baggage, which he left behind in his fright, various manuscripts, copies of Treaties, Commissions, Letters, and other Archives of the nation, some of which shews the double game that People have been carrying on, during the present War."³ Campbell later wrote Jefferson forwarding the documents which remained in his possession. The letters and treaties thus lost by the Cherokee Nation were sent to Thomas McKean, President of Congress, December 20, 1781,⁴ and later found their way into the files of the Continental Congress⁵ where they have been seen by a number of writers but seldom noted. The documents that have survived are few in number for a once proud nation of Indians. They cover the years from 1763 to 1778, which was one of the most critical times in the

¹ For an incomplete story of the career of Campbell, see Lillian Stuart Butt, "The Political Career of Arthur Campbell" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1934). The raid is discussed in Carl S. Driver, *John Sevier: Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Chapel Hill, 1932), 24-27.

² One of the leading chiefs among the Cherokees for many years. His name has been spelled a number of ways. Although usually spelled Oconostota by modern writers, in this paper the spelling "Oucnonnostotah" will be used, as nearer the form found in contemporary documents.

³ Campbell to Jefferson, January 15, 1781, in Julian P. Boyd (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 16 vols. to date (Princeton, 1950—), IV, 359-63. See also Samuel C. Williams, *Tennessee During the Revolutionary War* (Nashville, 1944), 190.

⁴ Boyd, *Jefferson Papers*, VI, 141. A list of the documents is in a note to this letter.

⁵ Virginia Papers, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item Number 71, Vol. II, pp. 141-222 (Microfilm 247, Roll 85), The National Archives, Washington, D. C.

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history of the Cherokees as well as for the English colonies in North America. The one theme that runs through all the papers is that of the constant encroachment of the white man on the Cherokee territory. The Indian nation was fighting for its homeland and slowly losing battle after battle, sometimes as a result of their own mistakes and temporary appetites for the white man's goods, and at other times as a result of aggression on the part of the frontiersmen whose greed for land was more permanent. The Lost Cherokee Archives constitute a brief history of an important era of an ancient people who were unable to cope with the more advanced Europeans on their frontiers.

In his covering letter to Governor Thomas Jefferson, June 20, 1781, accompanying the papers, Arthur Campbell stated:

I send by this conveyance part of the Papers you desired in your letter of 23d of May last. I have not received those in the hands of the Carolina Officers, but this being so good an opportunity I am desirous of forwarding what I have. At the same time you will please to consider them as sent to you as a private Gentleman or a member of the Philosophical Society, and not as a public Officer of Virginia.⁶

The document of the earliest date included in the "Lost Archives" is a communication from John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department, to the Cherokee Indians inviting them to participate in a conference of southern tribes scheduled to be held at Augusta, Georgia, August 15, 1763. It was designed, according to John R. Alden, "to soothe any jealousies that might be created by the withdrawal of the French and Spanish [as a result of their defeat in the French and Indian War] and to remove grievances."⁷

John Stuart, the man most concerned with Indian affairs in the South, apparently arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1748, where he established his home. During the French and Indian War he commanded one of the companies which built and garrisoned Fort Loudoun on the Little Tennessee River in the Overhill Cherokee country in 1756-57, and he was the only officer spared when the Cherokees, who

⁶ *Ibid.*, 141-42. The list in Boyd's note to Jefferson's letter to McKean indicates that Campbell's promise to send more documents later was not fulfilled. What happened to those seized by Sevier and other North Carolina officers is unknown. There is a photostat of one letter of the period in the Cherokee Collection, comprised mainly of the papers of John Ross, Cherokee chieftain (Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville), as listed in *Register No. 11, Cherokee Collection* (MS Division, State Library and Archives, Nashville, 1966), 7. It is from "Oconestota" to "Dear Friends and Brothers," June 24, 1775, and is included in a later installment of this document.

⁷ John Richard Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Ann Arbor, 1944), 181.

had become allies of the French, captured the fort and massacred many of the garrison in 1760. He was helped to escape by the Cherokee chief Attakullakulla, the Little Carpenter, and returned to Charleston.

In 1763 he was appointed to succeed Edmund Atkin as superintendent of Indian affairs for the Southern Department, a post which provided him with a larger salary than some of the governors of southern colonies received. Stuart acquired large tracts of land in South Carolina and Florida, some two hundred slaves, and a beautiful house in Charleston which still stands. He served as Indian agent until his death in 1779.⁸ His invitation to the Cherokees to attend the Augusta Conference follows. It is in the Virginia Papers, Item 71, Vol. II, 217-18. Hereafter, page numbers will follow the headings of the documents.

JOHN STUART TO THE PRINCIPAL WARRIORS OF THE CHEROKEE
NATION, JUNE 30, 1763, PP. 217-218.

To the Principal Warriors and the Governing beloved Headmen of the Cherokee
Nation
Warriors and Headmen

His majesty the King having by the Blessings of God on His Arms, reduced his Enemies the French and Spaniards to reason and the Necessity of making Peace upon Equitable terms, and being desirous of renewing and Strengthening Friendship and Harmony between his white Subjects and Your Nation: That so desirable an end may be obtained has thought proper to order me his Agent and Superintendant of Indian Affairs, to invite you the Headmen and Warriors of the Cherokee nation to meet the Governors of his Provinces of Virginia North & South Carolina and Georgia, with me, at Augusta in Georgia on the Fifteenth day of October next where the Warriors and Headmen of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Catawba Indians are also invited to meet at the Same time that His Majestys most Gracious and Benevolent Intentions may be communicated to You and them and that Peace Harmony and Friendship between the Indian Nations and His Majestys White Subjects may be established on a firm and permanent Footing.

I therefore send this Letter by Express to acquaint you that the Several Governors will be at Augusta on the Fifteenth Day of October, to meet you with the Warriors and Headmen of the Other Nations abovementioned: and as the Object of the intended meeting is Peace I must recommend to you to come to it with pacifick and Friendly Intentions toward each other, that no bad Talk may prevail and that the Path may remain Straight and Open——

As an incontestable Proof of his Majestys most benevolent and upright Intentions and Disposition towards you and the Other Indian Nations, I enclose you a copy of Orders which he has lately sent to his Governors in America relating to your Lands: and which I am ordered to Communicate to You, that you may cause them to be read and Published thro'out your Nation, to the End that all men may know his Majesty[s] determined resolution of maintaining you

⁸ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

and the Other Indian Nations in Your just Rights & Priviledges and Observing
inviolably his Engagements. I am

Your affectionat Friend
and Brother
John Stuart, Agent
& Superintendant

Charles Town 30 June
1763

Even before Stuart issued the invitation for the congress at Augusta, the colonial governments in North America had received a proclamation dealing with Indian affairs. The proclamation, although issued by George III on December 9, 1761, apparently was not received in the colonies until the summer of 1763.⁹ The document has been overlooked by the writers on the history of the southern Indians although it was published in the colonial newspapers about six months before the publication of the Proclamation of 1763,¹⁰ which set the Appalachian watershed as the western boundary for settlement by Englishmen. In many ways the Proclamation of 1761 closely resembles the Proclamation of 1763, although it does not fix a definite boundary; indeed, in some respects it seems to be harsher on those who exploited the Indians.

The document was printed by Stuart soon after its arrival in Charleston, and it was sent to all the Indian nations under his jurisdiction as of the date July 4, 1763. Apparently, then, it was not enclosed with his letter of June 30, 1763, to the Cherokees.

JOHN STUART'S COMMUNICATION TO THE CHEROKEE INDIANS,
JULY 4, 1763, OF A ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1761,
PRINTED, P. 151.

His Majesty's Instructions to all the Governours of his Provinces in America. Whereas the peace and security of our colonies and plantations upon the continent of North-America, does greatly depend upon a just and faithful observance of those treaties and compacts which have been heretofore solemnly entered into with the Indians by our royal predecessors, Kings and Queens of this realm; AND WHEREAS, not withstanding the repeated instructions which have been, from time to time, given by our late Royal Grandfather to the governours of our several colonies upon this head, the said Indians have made,

⁹ See next document, which was not enclosed, but sent separately under date of July 4, 1763.

¹⁰ The 1761 proclamation was printed in the *South-Carolina Gazette* in the issue of June 18-25, 1763, soon after its receipt by the governor of South Carolina on June 17, 1763. The Proclamation of 1763, dated October 7, was published in Charleston in an "Extraordinary" edition of the *South-Carolina Gazette* on December 31, 1763. It may be found in Henry S. Commager, *Documents of American History*, 2 vols., seventh edition (New York, 1963), I, 47-50.

and do still continue to make great complaints, that settlements have been made, and possession taken of lands, the property of which they have by treaty reserved to themselves, by persons claiming the said lands under pretence of deeds of sale and conveyance, illegally, fraudulently and surreptitiously obtained of the said Indians, AND WHEREAS it has likewise been represented unto us, that some of our governors, or other chief officers of said colonies, regardless of the duty they owe to us, and of the welfare and security of our colonies, have countenanced such unjust claims and pretensions by passing grants of the lands so pretended to have been purchased of the Indians. WE THEREFORE, taking this matter into our royal consideration, and being determined, upon all occasions, to support and protect the said Indians in their just rights and possessions, and to keep inviolable the treaties and compacts which have been entered into with them, DO HEREBY strictly enjoin and command, that neither any governour, nor any lieutenant-governour, president of the council, or commander in chief of any of our said provinces, do upon any pretence whatsoever, upon pain of our highest displeasure, and of being forthwith removed from their or his office, pass any grant or grants to any persons whatsoever of any lands within, or adjacent to the territories possessed or occupied by the said Indians, or the property or possession of which has, at any time, been reserved to or claimed by them: And it is our further will and pleasure that our governours publish proclamations in our name, strictly enjoining and requiring all persons whatever who may, either wilfully or inadvertently, have seated themselves upon any lands so reserved to, or claimed by, the said Indians, without any lawful authority for so doing, forthwith to remove therefrom. And in case they shall find, upon strict enquiry to be made for that purpose, that any person or persons do claim to hold, or possess, any lands within our said province, upon pretence of purchases made of the said Indians, without a proper license first had and obtained either from us or any of our royal predecessors, or any persons acting under our or their authority, they are forthwith to cause a prosecution to be carried on against such person or persons, who shall have made such fraudulent purchases, to the end that the land may be recovered by a due course of law. AND WHEREAS the wholesome laws which have at different times been passed in several of our said colonies, and the instructions which have been given by our royal predecessors for restraining persons from purchasing lands of the Indians without a license for that purpose, and for regulating the proceedings upon such purchases, have not been duly observed: It is therefore our express will and pleasure, that when any application shall be made to any governour for license to purchase lands of the Indians, they do forbear to grant such license until they have first transmitted to us, by our commissioners for trade and plantations, the particulars of such application, as well in respect to the situation as the extent of the lands so proposed to be purchased, and shall have received our farther directions therein. And it is our further will and pleasure, that they do, forthwith, cause these our instructions to them to be made publick, not only within all parts of our said provinces inhabited by our subjects, but also amongst the several tribes of Indians, to the end that our royal will and pleasure in the premisses may be known, and that the Indians may be apprized of our determined resolution to support them in their just rights, and involably to observe our engagements with them.

(signed) GEORGE REX

By JOHN STUART, Esq; his Majesty's Agent and Superintendant of the Southern District of America.

The Great King's most gracious intentions, towards all the Indians his

children, contained in the above instructions, being sent from London in a letter signed by his own hand, and sealed with his own seal, are, pursuant to his Majesty's express commands, communicated to all the nations of Indians

Given under my hand and seal at arms, at Charlestown, this fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three, and of his Majesty's reign the third.

[signed] John Stuart

The Proclamation of 1761 insisted that the whites should stay in their own areas and remove themselves from the lands reserved to the Indians. The Proclamation of 1763 was more precise in that it stated that "for the present" the Appalachian divide—"the sources of the rivers which fall into the sea from the west and northwest"—marked the dividing point between the two races. But at the same time a long process of marking off boundary lines (which would modify the proclamation line) with the various southern provinces had begun at the congress at Augusta. Representing the Cherokees at this meeting were Attakullakulla (also known as the Prince of Chote and the Little Carpenter) and another chief named Saluy. Oucnonstotah remained at home. Other tribes represented were the Choctaws, the Upper and Lower Creeks, the Chickasaws, and the Catawbias. The meetings began formally on November 5, 1763, and by November 10, 1763, a treaty had been signed.

The main grievances of the Cherokees at the congress were the incursions of the whites into the territory west of the Kanawha River in Virginia and to the west of Long Canes River in upper South Carolina. The Cherokee chiefs, however, acknowledged that whites had been west of the Kanawha for some ten years, and promised that those residing on the left bank, and also those north of the Holston, would not be disturbed. The settlers west of the Long Canes River could remain if they seized no more land there. The Creeks, on the other hand, were more upset by the incursions into their lands.

Not many weeks after the treaty, Stuart learned that seven Lower Creek Indians had murdered fourteen whites in the Long Canes area on December 24, 1763. He then sent messages to the governors notifying them of the incident and requested the Creeks execute the Indians

involved.¹¹ Stuart also sent "talks" to the other tribes in the South, including the Cherokees.

JOHN STUART TO THE PRINCIPAL WARRIORS OF THE CHEROKEE
NATION, 14 JANUARY 1764, PP. 177-180

To the head Beloved Man & principal Warriors of the Cherokee Nation at
Choté

Friends and Brothers

I am sorry to acquaint you that so soon after the Congress as the 24th last Month, Fourteen of our People settled near Long cane River were murdered.

You were present at the Congress; You heard the Talks of the different Nations, their Promises and Professions. You heard the Great King's Pardon of all past Offences and Offers of Friendship declared, and you were [word not visible] in the Treaty which all the Nations signed. What then can you think of those who so wickedly and ungratefully, without the Least Provocation spilled the blood of defenceless people suspecting no harm. Yet seven Creek men, who for five years past lived at Estatoy, perpetrated this peice [*sic*] of Villany; and Pretend that they did it by desire of the Cherokees, and particularly of the Young Warrior Saluy.

I know you all and I am sure you are innocent, and that you had not the Least Hand in this affair; I Likewise believe the Young Warrior knew nothing of it. But of those Creeks, [line not visible] Protection, how will it Look? — will not People with good reason think that what they have said is true?

The Creeks have sent me a Talk and Say That if the Cherokees are innocent, they will kill the Seven Fellows that committed the Murder.

You are wise Men and know best what to do. I do not doubt but you will act properly and clear yourselves of any hand in this wicked affair.

I desire to hear from you as soon as Possible after receiving this, and I hope to receive a good Talk from you and that you will send good talks all over Your Nation that the Path may remain Straight as it is at present.
I remain Your affectionate Friend & Brother

John Stuart, Agent &
Superintendent So. District

Charles Town 14 Jany. 1764

The recovered Cherokee Archives have no documents of the period 1764-1770. During these years the whites still pressed in upon the Cherokees especially along the Carolina and Virginia frontiers, and Stuart continued his efforts to negotiate Indian boundary lines. Also in this period two important treaties were negotiated with the Cherokee Indians. The first was signed at Hard Labour, South Carolina, in October, 1768, and was primarily intended to draw a boundary between the troublesome Virginians and the Cherokees. It confirmed the line negotiated with North Carolina from Reedy River to Chiswell's Mines,

¹¹ Alden, *John Stuart*, 182-86. Stuart considered asking for Cherokee help in restraining the Creeks, but it turned out not to be necessary. The next year, two renegade Creek warriors killed a Long Canes settler. They were seized by the Cherokees and sent to Charleston. *Ibid.*, 187-91.

near the site of Wytheville, Virginia, and extended it to the Ohio River at the mouth of the Kanawha.¹² The second treaty, of Lochaber, 1770, was made necessary by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768, negotiated by the northern superintendent, Sir William Johnson, with the Iroquois, who were permitted to cede the lands south of the Ohio River as far west as the mouth of the Tennessee. Their claim to that area was vague and distinctly inferior to that of the Cherokee Nation. Nevertheless, the treaty led to a rapid migration of white settlers into the region beyond the Hard Labour line. By 1769 the whites had penetrated into the Holston, Watauga, and Clinch river valleys. Therefore, the Virginia governor, Frances Fauquier, demanded that a new Cherokee boundary be negotiated. This was done in October, 1770, at a meeting at Lochaber, South Carolina, between Stuart and his deputies and the Cherokee Chiefs. The new boundary agreed to on this occasion was described as:

. . . beginning where the boundary line between the province of North Carolina and the Cherokee hunting grounds terminates [at the 36°30' parallel, the Virginia-North Carolina boundary], and running thence in a west course to a point six miles east of Long Island in Holsten's [Holston's] River, and thence to said river six miles above the said Long Island, and thence in a direct course to the confluence of the Great Conhoway [Kanawha] and Ohio rivers.¹³

At Lochaber, the Cherokees had been most adamant about retaining Long Island (at the site of Kingsport, Tennessee) as they feared that the strategic location would be used for a fort if the Virginians had control of it. Therefore the treaty line was moved six miles away from Long Island.¹⁴ Despite this it appears that the Cherokees did not trust the Virginians and thought it best to keep posted on their activities in that area. This seems to be the explanation of the following pass which was issued to the Great Warrior of Chote (Ouconnostotah).

The pass was issued by Alexander Cameron, a Scotsman like Stuart, who had recently been appointed deputy superintendent of

¹² Louis DeVorse, Jr., *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775* (Chapel Hill, 1961), 64-65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 66-78; Alden, *John Stuart*, 273-80. The "beginning" point was the intersection of the Hard Labour line with the North Carolina-Virginia boundary, the 36°30' parallel.

¹⁴ DeVorse, *The Indian Boundary*, 77.

Indian affairs. Cameron lived among the Cherokees and had a great deal of influence over them.¹⁵

SAFE CONDUCT FOR THE GREAT WARRIOR, ISSUED BY
ALEXANDER CAMERON, MARCH, 1771, P. 169.

The Great Warrior of Chote is the Bearer hereof. He intends to hunt Beaver from hence to the Long Island and there abouts, until the arrival of the Virginia Commissioners who are appointed by that Government to run the Boundary Line, and will be at the Long Island Some Time in May next—It is therefore required that all persons will use him and his people with hospitality and Civility, they behaving as becometh friends and allies: it is likewise hoped that if he Should met [meet] with any hunting parties that they will remove from the Lands, which are reserved for the Cherokees.

Given under my hand and
Seal at Toqueh¹⁶ Thirteenth
day of March 1771
Alexr. Cameron Dept. Superint.

The boundary line as agreed upon at Lochaber was to be surveyed chiefly by Cameron and Colonel John Donelson (a member of the Virginia House of Delegates and a participant in the treaty). The leading Cherokee representative was Attakullakulla, the Little Carpenter. They began their task on May 27, 1771, and surveyed westward along what they judged to be the 36°30' parallel to its junction with the South Fork of the Holston River. At that point they made the first deviation from the line as agreed to at Lochaber. Instead of continuing along the parallel, they agreed that the line should follow the course of the South Fork of the Holston to the vicinity of the Long Island. As the Little Carpenter later explained it, he learned there were some white people living north of the river, and he "pittied them." Thus, the so-called "North Holston" settlement between Sapling Grove (Bristol) and the South Fork was placed outside the Indian country, and that portion of the present Tennessee was also considered to be a part of Virginia until the 36°30' line was eventually surveyed (incorrectly) in 1779. When the Lochaber surveyors reached the point six miles above the Long Island, the Indians agreed to a much greater deviation from the treaty provisions. In exchange, apparently, for a promise (never fulfilled) of an increase of £500 in payment for the lands, they permitted a shift of the line from "a

¹⁵ Alden, *John Stuart*, 187, n.34; John P. Brown, *Old Frontiers: The Story of the Cherokee Indians from Earliest Times to the date of Their Removal to the West, 1838* (Kingsport, 1938), 122-23.

¹⁶ An Overhill town.

direct course" northward to the mouth of the Kanawha to a course westward to the headwaters of the Louisa (now the Kentucky) and along that stream to the Ohio River, and then up the river to the mouth of the Kanawha, adding about ten million acres to the region ceded.¹⁷

Although Attakullakulla and the other Cherokees who participated in the survey were apparently aware of the white settlements north of the South Fork of the Holston and agreed to the modification of the line in their favor, they seem not to have been aware of, or more probably neglected to mention, three other settlements which had been made beyond the Lochaber line. One was made by William Bean, James Robertson, and others near the site of Elizabethton; another by Jacob Brown on the Nolichucky near the site of Erwin; and the third was a store established by John Carter and his partner Joseph Parker in what later became known as Carter's Valley, west of the Holston below the Long Island. The settlers in the first two were soon to lease their lands from the Cherokees and organize a homespun government known as the Watauga Association. The third, which is mentioned in the next letter, had come to Attakullakulla's attention just before he left Donelson and started back home at the end of the survey. Before leaving he declared:

I expect that you will inform the Governour [Botetourt] that we are daily infested with some white Hunters from your province; but as the Boundary line is now plain, they will hunt on their own Lands; if not, they may be compelled to do it. I have yet one more thing to tell you, and that is that a Trader who lives now below the great [Long] Island sollicitus us to remain there. But we cannot allow it.¹⁸

The following letter, which deals with this matter, appears to have been written during the winter of 1771-72 since Stuart was in West Florida from May 1771 to May 1772 and in Mobile from December 1771 to January 1772.¹⁹

¹⁷ Alden, *John Stuart*, 283-85. DeVorsey in his *The Indian Boundary*, 79-85, and also in his "The Virginia-Cherokee Boundary of 1771," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, No. 33 (1961), 17-31, describes the changes and also prints Donelson's map of the survey (found in the British Public Record Office), and in the latter also a tracing from another Donelson map, "A Sketch of the Cherokee Boundaries with . . . Virginia, etc. 1771."

¹⁸ Samuel C. Williams, *The Dawn of the Tennessee Valley and Tennessee History* (Johnson City, 1937), 334-53. The quotation is on pp. 349-50.

¹⁹ Alden, *John Stuart*, 322-23. The British agent, Alexander Cameron, must have been misinformed about the gift of a 12-mile tract to the traders (Carter and Parker) "below the Long Island." They were driven out and forced back to the Watauga Valley, where Carter became one of the first judges of the Watauga Association. *Ibid.*, 373-76.

LETTER OF ALEXANDER CAMERON, NO DATE, PP. 173-176.

Friends & Brothers

When I left the Nation, I thought that I would have been able to give you Some Accounts from your father Capt. Stuart in and about this time but I have not heard from him Since I saw you, altho I wrote to him about every thing that we Transacted to the Norward, as well as in the Nation Last Summer & fall; He is Still at Mobile, but he's expected in Chas. Town in the Spring— Brothers—I have agreeable to my Promise, Sent in my Brother to Virginia to acquaint the Governor & his Beloved men, that the Course of the Boundary line to where we left it on the Cedar River was agreeable & approved of by all your Chiefs and beloved Men, & to remind Col. Donelson of his Promise of Sending a few presents to the Long Island upon Holston in the Spring — But as my Brother is not yet return'd I cannot inform you of what their answer may be — altho I doubt not but Coll. Donelson will represent Your Generosity to the Governor & wise men in the strongest terms, and that his Talk will have the greatest weight with them — I am daily in expectation of my Brothers return for he has been gone upward of two moons from hence, and upon his Arrival I Shall either Visit you, or Communicate to you whatever Talks I shall receive from Virginia—

I am Sorry to inform you Brothers that I have been told that the path to Virginia has been spoil'd this Winter by Some of your young Men Shedding of the Blood of White People from that Province—I make no doubt but they have been stealing of your Deer & Game from you. Contrary to the Great Kings Talk, and also the great & ruling Men of Virginia and if you had taken themselves, their guns, horses & leather, you would have been justified; but to take away lives, is what the great King will not Suffer. But when any of his Children commits a Crime, They must be examined & Tried by a Particular Sett of wise men that he hath chosen purposely for that Business & if found Guilty by Sufficient prooffs, or evidence who were eye witness to any bad Acts, then Such Person or Persons, so found guilty Shall be killd in the presence of Hundreds of People.

I need not tell you Brothers, what Conditions you Signed at the last Peace. I hope that you will not Suffer Young foolish men to involve your whole Nation into Trouble, by Acting as they think Proper.

There is one thing more that I am to mention to you, and that I have just now been informed of—You Cannot forget your Promisses to your Father Capt. Stuart of never granting any Land without first informing him of it— You Seemed Sorry to have given the land to the Traders without first acquainting him of your design, & then you told me at my house at Toqueh that you never Should Transact any Business of Moment without his, or my knowledge. But I am now told that you have given away a Tract of Twelve Mile Square on Holston River to the Traders who are Settled there below the Long Island. But this I do not give the least Credit to, no never Shall, untill I hear it from Yourselves for I have known you a long Time and always found Your Tongues & Mind go together — In Token of this Talk being Sincere & from your Brother, I send you a White String of Wampum. I remain as I always Shall

Your firm Friend & Brother Alexr. Cameron

John Vann²⁰ Conveys this to you, whom I have Sent to Talk & receive any Public Talks that you may have to Communicate— A. C.

²⁰ One of the interpreters who assisted in running the Donelson line.

Bonnie
Culley

THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
PUBLICATIONS, NO. 44 (1972)

CONTENTS

THE SETTLEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF BRADLEY COUNTY, TENNESSEE James L. Slay	3
FELIX K. ZOLLICOFFER: CONFEDERATE DEFENDER OF EAST TENNESSEE (PART II) James W. McKee, Jr.	17
THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE AND DEATH OF JOSEPH A. MABRY Jerome G. Taylor, Jr.	41
A HISTORY OF THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD William Robert Rogers	71
LEGALITIES, AGRICULTURE, AND IMMIGRATION: THE ROLE OF OLIVER PERRY TEMPLE IN THE RUGBY EXPERIMENT Fred A. Bailey	90
PAPERS FROM THE SPANISH ARCHIVES RELATING TO TENNESSEE AND THE OLD SOUTHWEST D. C. and Roberta Corbitt	104
THE LOST ARCHIVES OF THE CHEROKEE NATION (PART II, 1772-1773) James William Hagy and Stanley J. Folmsbee	114
FROM GREENE COUNTY, TENNESSEE, TO ILLINOIS: A PERILOUS TRIP Nancy Moore Britton	126
BOOK NOTICES	130
NOTES AND NEWS, 1971.....	138
DIRECTORY OF CONTRIBUTORS.....	142
LIST OF MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS, 1972.....	143
INDEX	150

THE LOST ARCHIVES OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Edited by

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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 DeVorse, *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 Expencc 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 & Oconi 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] Wright⁶

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

⁶ 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.

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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 Beginng."

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.

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.¹⁸ 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

¹⁸ James William Hagy, "The First Attempt to Settle Kentucky: Boone in Virginia," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, XLIV (July, 1970), 227-34; James William Hagy, "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 incur 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 oppenly 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.

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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[,] Williamawaw¹⁹ 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 Yourselves 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, Ouconnostotah, 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 artificer[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 Oucnostotah and the other Cherokee leaders concerning the sale to Henderson and his associates.

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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 Watauga [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 Colonies, 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.

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