

John Henry Eaton to the Principal Chiefs and Head Men
of the Choctaw Nation

Department of War,
1st. June, 1830.

Friends & Brothers,

When your special messenger Major Haley arrived here, he brought a treaty signed by many of your principal men, proposing to cede your Country and to go to your lands beyond the Mississippi. Your Great Father was rejoiced, because he is every day more and more convinced, that you cannot remain where you are, and be a happy and prosperous people. He placed the treaty you had sent, before his great Council the Senate who were then in session, and asked them seriously to consider the situation of their red brothers and to decide if they would agree to the treaty which was sent. They have lately broke up their Council, and have returned home, refusing to adopt it; but at the same time directed you to be informed that they would be well pleased, if you would meet any Commissioners, your Great Father might send, and expressed a wish that a treaty should be concluded with you on liberal terms.

Your Great Father who sits by me while I write, directs me to say this to you; and further, that if you are sincere in your disposition to make a treaty, and go beyond the Mississippi, he will send some confidential persons to see you at your Council, and to make a liberal and generous treaty with you; such as shall satisfy you all, and in the end, tend to make you a happier people than you are at present.

Very shortly, he will write you again. Talk these things over, and send him word that you are willing to meet and to treat with him. He does not, and so directs me to say, wish to meet you in Council unless he is fully assured that you are ready and sincerely willing to make a treaty. He expects himself, to go shortly to Tennessee, and if so, then he wishes you to consent to meet him at Franklin, near Nashville. The President will himself be there with the Secretary of War, when and where he will be happy to shake you by the hand; hear your grievances, and far as he can relieve them.

Congress has passed a law manifesting a desire that you should remove, and have liberally prepared the means for taking care of you. They will not, because they cannot, interfere to prevent the States extending their laws over you, and of course you are now to decide whether you will submit to those laws upon your people, or go beyond the Mississippi where you can be under your own laws, and upon your own land with none to interrupt you.

Major Haley is present with me and will tell you all and every thing about your affairs more than I have leisure to write. He is instructed by your Great Father to assure you of the good feelings entertained by him towards your nation. He is a good friend of yours and will tell you how necessary it is for you to remove. Speak with him freely and let us know, what you will do. Send word to your neighbors the Chickasaws, that they may come with you, to Tennessee, to see your Great Father, that they too, if disposed, may make a treaty, and remove with you.

Upon condition only, that you shall be willing to enter into a treaty, is it desirable for you to come to Tennessee, there to meet your Great Father, and the Secretary of War. He expects to be there; but if any thing shall prevent them, on hearing from you, he will send the Secretary of War or some Commissioner to meet you. It will be expected, that the principal Chiefs, in health, and able to do so, and Six Captains from each District, will come which will be twenty in all. Bring also one or more interpreters, and such others as you may choose, the whole number not to exceed 25 or 30. Those who come must bring with them full and ample powers to make and conclude a treaty finally upon all matters. A liberal allowance, for your travelling expenses in coming and returning home, and while you are in Tennessee, will be made. Your Friend & Brother,

John H. Eaton.

National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 75, M21-6.