

John Henry Eaton to Mushulatubbe et al.

Copy.

Franklin 24th. July, 1830.

Friends & Brothers,

Your talk of the 2nd. June, directed to me at Washington, has been forwarded, and has just reached me at this place. It is matter of surprise and some regret, to find, that you are desirous to make a visit to the country west of the Mississippi, before you are prepared to decide, as to the propriety of a removal. The experience of the past has abundantly shewn, that you cannot reside peaceably where you are. The laws of Mississippi, subjecting you to a different government, than you have been accustomed to, and which will restrict you to the usages and customs, and rule, to which your white brothers conform, are already extended over you. This your Great Father cannot prevent; and repeatedly, he has told you so. Are you prepared to submit to this state of things, and to become citizens, for such must be the case? If you are so prepared, then is it unnecessary to say more, or to speak to you further on the subject. These matters have been discussed already long enough; and it is high time, there should be an end of the argument, and a decision had, whether you will remain where you are, surrounded by the whites, and made subject to their laws, or peaceably remove to the west, there to live on your own soil, under your own ancient usages and customs, and free from those interruptions which now on every side beset you. One or the other you must resolve upon. Further delay, is not only unnecessary, but is attended with hazard to your best interest.

Why should you solicit time to visit the Country which has been assigned you to the west. Already you are well advised, that it is situated in a pleasant, agreeable Climate, even more so, than that you are about to leave; and in all respects equally fertile. Bounded by the Arkansa to the North, and by Red River, to the South, and embracing nearly twenty millions of acres, it is a Country infinitely more desirable, and larger in extent, than the one you occupy. All the information possessed shews this to be the fact.

Of your own accord during last winter, you forwarded to your Great Father, a treaty, ceding your entire Country. He laid it before his great Council, the Senate; but in doing so, he told them of your differences, and discontents; and that while a portion of the Nation desired the treaty to be agreed to, another, was of a contrary opinion. The Senate, did not approve what you did. One reason was, that the terms proposed were too extravagant; but another and a strong one was, they did not desire any arrangement to

which the Nation was not with general approbation assenting. The same language is now declared to you. We want no dissatisfaction, no heartburnings to abide after a treaty shall be made. Your Great Father is satisfied, that your peace, prosperity and happiness, depend upon your removal; but he will take no course which shall not be entirely satisfactory to his red children. He does not merely desire their removal, but he desires it to take place under such circumstances, as shall conclusively satisfy them, that justice, and liberality, are the terms upon which their departure is asked. Beyond the Mississippi, he is solicitous for them to remove, tho' still under such circumstances as shall retain them as his children, and friends; a result which he is persuaded is to be obtained only, by suffering them to depart, with a full conviction that their interest has been regarded, and their happiness as a people, consulted.

But these things cannot be so fully explained at a distance. Major Haley, your friend and agent, was so informed, and he was instructed to tell you, that with a view to a perfect understanding of every thing, the President and the Secretary of War, would be in Tennessee this summer, near to you, and face to face, would confer with you. Now that they have come, instead of meeting, to enter into an arrangement for a removal as your previous acts and conduct had indicated a disposition on your part to do, you propose an examination of the Country; information already sufficiently possessed, whereby, to defer longer, doing that, which every sensible man in the Nation perceives must happen, if you would preserve yourselves.

Friends and Brothers—Your Great Father will not attempt disguise—he will in nothing deceive you. He will not now do, what in all his former intercourse with you, he never attempted. Truth and justice, are his object, and they are the great land marks, which in his intercourse with you, he would carefully preserve and maintain. In a spirit of frankness then, he assures you of what shortly you cannot but discover, that it is vain and idle for you to expect to dwell in peace where you are. Difficulties, and severe trials, must and will be yours. Surrounded by the whites on all sides—made subject to their laws and customs, so variant from your own, it is not to be expected that you can dwell under them with any thing of security, or quiet to yourselves. Your own reflection and reason cannot fail to teach you the certainty of these suggestions. How you shall conclude to act, is for yourselves to decide. We shall do no more than to persuade, not coerce you, to what your interest requires.

A just regard to your happiness demands of you to pursue the course that has been suggested. Why then defer it? why not at once arrive at the

conclusion which reason and experience prove, is the only sure one to which you can arrive. It cannot be accounted for on any other principle, than that you are deceived and imposed upon by designing men, who would persuade you to error, and to a course which cannot fail ultimately to involve your Nation in ruin. I warn you to be upon your guard against these intruding and obtrusive advisers who disregarding your true interest would advise you to a course, of which in the end, you may have cause for deep and lasting repentance. I urge you to beware of such evil Counsellors, for they have any other object before them, than your welfare; On the other hand, what motive adverse to you, can have influence with the President. In past times, you have known him to be your friend, and he will not now be different from what he has been: While, as Chief Magistrate of this Country he will on all occasions consult the happiness and prosperity of the whites, I take occasion to assure you that he will never do so at the expense of his red children—no such course will be demanded of him by the people of this Country.

Friends and Brothers—Your Great Father is here, not distant from you, where it was understood you would gladly meet him, to treat for a final removal to a home, which promises to you greater happiness than you can possess where you are. A country will be yours, not on the principles of mere occupancy, but one which your Great Father will give you to hold forever, as his white children possess their lands—a Country where being to yourselves and at a distance from the whites, there will be none to disturb or make you afraid—where he can and will protect you from all interruptions. Such an opportunity of furthering your interest may no more occur. Your Great Father and his Secretary of War are here, to hold council with you, to extend to you terms liberal as can be admitted. Hereafter this may not be the case! He may be constrained to send his Commissioners to see you, and then the advantages now presented may be impaired. It is in his power at present to pay all the expenses of your removal, and to take care of you at your new homes for twelve months until your crops can be made. He may not have it in his power hereafter to do this, inasmuch as Congress may change that policy which they have adopted, and thereby place it out of his reach to do, what at present it is in his power to affect. The whole scheme of emigration, if it be now deferred, may require hereafter to be carried into effect thro' your own means and at your own expense. Then you may call for help, when the power to extend it, may not be possessed.

Under these considerations your Great Father has instructed me to send his friend, and your friend, Mr. Jno. Donnelly, to converse freely with you, and to tell you, in detail more than I have time to write. Listen to his counsel,

for he comes from your Great Father and will not deceive you. He comes to tell you the truth—to point you to your true condition, and to warn you, of what experience in a short time will convince you, that to remain where you are, happy, and preserved as a Nation, is what no sensible and reflecting man can look to, or hope for. Where now are the tribes of former years—the Tuscaroraws—Six Nations, and others which once, were numerous and powerful. Easy to learn the vices, but slow to acquire a knowledge of the virtues and morals of their white brothers, they have gradually disappeared, until now scarcely are they known as a people. The same fate must be yours; and reflection and observation should convince you of the correctness of the assertion. To escape, is in your power; but defer your removal for a time, and the just expectations which are now within reach may fail you, no more to return.

These things have repeatedly been brought to your consideration. A long time ago, your Great Father, who at this time presides over the affairs of the Country, told you truly what your condition would be—what, the certain result that awaited you. Then, as now, you heeded not his opinions, but listened to the advice of bad men, who had no regard for you; and whose object was to deceive. At present you may not, but by and by, when probably it may be too late for you to be benefited, the truth of what he has asserted may be perceived. To discuss the matter longer is unnecessary: it is a waste of time and words to repeat, what so often has been told. Decide then fully in reference to the merits of your case and let that decision be final. Either you must make up your minds to become citizens of Mississippi, subject to her laws and her government, or conclude to remove to the Country which has been assigned you beyond the Territory of Arkansa: Already you have had ample time to deliberate upon this subject; and if further consideration and deliberation shall be necessary, your Great Father cannot undertake to promise, that any provision will be made by the Government for your removal and support, as is now the case. The people of this Country already complain of the ample and liberal provision which has been made for their Indian brothers, and may induce Congress to forbear further assistance, and hence when circumstances and your own necessities shall compel you to remove, it may be at your own expense, and upon your own resources. The Government then may not supply the means of assisting you to your homes. How important is it, then, that you should seriously reflect upon these things, and at once decide and act: it may presently be too late for you to do so. Your friends & Brother

John H. Eaton.

National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 46, SEN 21B-C5. The [Choctaws' letter](#) to which this is a response, though dated June 2, was likely written July 2.