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Elias Boudinot and the missionaries to the Cherokee

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This thesis is concerned with the relationship between Elias Boudinot, a mixed-blooded Cherokee, and the missionaries to the Cherokee Nation. Elias was born into a culture undergoing significant changes as the Cherokee struggled to modify their cultural practices to resemble those of the United States in a bid to maintain their territorial sovereignty, changes collectively known as the acculturation movement. This thesis begins its study by looking at the developments in the Cherokee Nation that led to the rise of the mixed-blooded Cherokee whose lineage descended from European and Cherokee stock. The mixed-blooded Cherokee led the tribe through the significant developments of the acculturation movement including permitting missionaries to teach in the Cherokee Nation.

Elias Boudinot's close relationship to missionaries is traced through his education in mission schools in Georgia and Connecticut to his role as editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*. As the sole editor of the *Phoenix*, Boudinot's work often kept him working all hours and although he resided in the Cherokee Nation with his tribal brethren, his workload was such that he was rarely able to engage in cultural practices of the tribe, instead becoming closer to the missionaries such as Samuel Worcester who aided him in the publishing of the *Phoenix*. This cultural divide between Boudinot and his fellow Cherokee, whom he diligently served and advocated for in the pages of the *Phoenix*, is at the heart of the thesis as it examines how this separation from his fellow tribesmen and his closeness to the missionaries influences his decision regarding Cherokee Removal.

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court case of *Worcester v. Georgia*, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the most prominent missionary organization in the Cherokee Nation, withdrew their support for the Cherokee remaining

on their tribal homeland and instead advocating a removal to west of the Mississippi . As many of his professional contacts and personal friends were members of the ABCFM, Boudinot's confidence in the Cherokee's position wavered and he was forced to decide between allying with his tribe or with the missionaries.

Introduction

In the early 1800s, Christian missionaries in the United States were emboldened by a groundswell of religious fervor at the same time the Cherokee Indians began seeking a means to adapt their tribe to the incursion of white settlers into their hunting lands and the tense encounters the incursions created between white settlers and the Cherokee. Within each group's struggle their counterpart found a potential solution to their own. Emboldened missionaries seeking to spread their gospel and the Cherokee leaders scrambling to find a means to acclimate to white culture discovered in each other allies to further their goals, greatly aided by a small but influential group of men descended from a split lineage of Cherokee and European ancestry that served to bridge the cultural and racial gap. The Cherokee were canny to the fate of some of their contemporaries whose tribes had waned and were forced off their land by white settlers, leading to a majority of the tribe distrusting whites and their motives for coming to the Cherokee. Missionaries, however, came to the Cherokee with a more peaceful message than the settlers the Cherokee were familiar with, coveting not Cherokee land, but the natives souls that the missionaries hoped to claim for God.

By establishing mission schools where they could reach the young people of the Cherokee, the missionaries were able to reach the most influential of the Cherokee, including a young Cherokee known as Gallegina Watie, born in 1802, whose life would be closely tied with the missionaries and their relationship with the Cherokee. Gallegina grew up in mission schools both inside Cherokee country and in New England and went to adopt the name of a patron of the mission school he attended as a teenager, Elias Boudinot. Boudinot the Cherokee would marry into a family of missionaries amidst controversy surrounding the miscegenation in 1826 and would return to his homeland,

with his white wife, to take up the editorship of a Cherokee periodical that contained tribal news but also translations of Christian prayers and scripture for the Cherokee layperson. Boudinot's relationship with missionaries would be tested, though, in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in *Worcester v. Georgia* that dealt with onerous laws passed by Georgia against missionaries in Cherokee country.

The removal of the Cherokee and the well-known Trail of Tears that followed from their eviction from their homeland are topics well covered in the scholarly community with the dubious honor of being heinous enough to warrant a sanitized mention in many public school textbooks, however the missionaries working alongside many of the prominent mixed-blood Cherokee is a topic that hasn't been widely covered. William McLoughlin covered the relationship between Cherokee and Christianity in *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870* which was published posthumously in 1994. Other historians have covered the facts of removal, but often, outside tales around the Trail of Tears, the story of the Cherokee is often lumped together with other southern tribes by authors such as Stuart Banner in *How the Indians Lost their Land*.

While both subjects are respectively well covered in their respective historiographies, the intersection of the Cherokee Removal with the missionary movement thriving in the early nineteenth century hasn't been broached by historians in a significant manner. More generally in the narrative of the Cherokee Removal, the historiography is relative untapped concerning the role and position of Elias Boudinot during the Removal Crisis in the 1820s until the forced emigration of the Cherokee in 1838. While the entire life of Boudinot is a monograph in and of itself, his relationship with missionaries and mission societies such as the American Board of Commissioners

for Foreign Missions is perhaps the most unique aspect of his life and the most significant considering the impact that relationship had on the Cherokee Nation and the United States.

This work has historians Theda Purdue and Theresa Strouth Gaul to thank chiefly for the publishing of key documents surrounding the life of Elias Boudinot and his relationship with other members of the Cherokee Nation, his wife Harriett Gold, and the missionaries that educated him and supported him in his endeavors as a young man in the Cherokee Nation. Also essential this work is the excellent narrative of William McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* which paints a clear picture of the Cherokee Nation prior to removal that proved invaluable as a reference source when this work was being written.

The Cherokee, a large and relatively prosperous tribe, were long protected from the worst of European predations by the Appalachian Mountains which early settlers found difficult to cross. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century, white incursions into the Cherokee's territory began to stir a feeling of resentment toward the white settlers. The Cherokee had long maintained close relationships with white traders who would bring European goods across the Appalachian, but the persistent encroachment of settlers would drive the Cherokee to an armed retaliation against the settlers in the Seven Years War and then against the Americans during the Revolutionary War. At the turn of the century in the early 1800s, the Cherokee had made peace with the United States and began allowing missionaries in to establish schools where Cherokee children could be educated. It was in one of the first schools, at Spring Place, Georgia,

that Boudinot began his education and association with missionaries that would shape not only his life, but the entire tribe.

The first chapter of this analysis of Elias Boudinot's religious life begins with an in-depth look at the importance white traders had prior to Boudinot's birth in setting up a culture in which he could achieve a position of influence. The Cherokee, like many other tribes, had a keen interest in meeting with white traders, whose manufactured goods were greatly valued by the American tribes and would serve as the impetuses for a great social and economic change in the tribes. The role of traders is essential to the story of the Cherokee and Elias Boudinot as their presence, along with British Loyalists fleeing the colonies at the outbreak of the American Revolution, and subsequent intermarriage into the tribe would lead to the emergence of a class of Cherokee known as the mixed-bloods, meaning their lineage derived from white and Cherokee predecessors. This group would come to form the leading class of the Cherokee Nation in the early nineteenth century as their access to better educations and their grasp of English allowed them to assume a position of authority in the previously meritocratic Cherokee society by virtue of their cultural and racial inheritance. After the end of a long conflict between white settlers and a rogue faction of the Cherokee known as the Chickamauga, missionaries who had long sought to bring the Good Word to the un-enlightened Cherokee were able to persuade the leaders of the tribe to allow them to open mission schools for the education of the tribe's youth, an opportunity that Boudinot's father would ensure his son received.

The second chapter delves into Boudinot's work as the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Native American periodical, and how Boudinot used the paper and his knowledge of white mission societies to appeal to an American audience with the paper.

After a tour through the United States raising money for the printing press necessary to publish the paper and a custom typeset for the newly-created written Cherokee language, Boudinot set about publishing the *Phoenix* for the betterment of the tribe. Included in the Cherokee-language articles he published for his newly-literate countrymen, Boudinot also included numerous articles meant to appeal to the sensibilities of socially-conscious Americans, primarily located in New England. Boudinot, having studied in Connecticut as a young man and travelled throughout the region on his fund-raising tour, knew the area was a hotbed for social reform movements such as temperance and abolition. With this knowledge, Boudinot was able to refine his articles so that they would appeal properly to both the religious and social zeal of his subscribers in the North.

The last chapter of this analysis deals with the results of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions decision to withdraw their support for the Cherokee remaining on their traditional homelands and advise removal to west of the Mississippi River. As a man who practically grew up in schools ran by missionaries, the loss of their support likely struck a significant blow against Boudinot's confidence in the Cherokee's prospects, and shortly after the ABCFM changed their position, Boudinot began seeking an open discussion of the "Cherokee Question," which sought to address what the Cherokee should do in the face of overwhelming American opposition to the Cherokee's sovereignty in their homeland. Boudinot's ultimate decision would test his faith and divide him from either his brothers in faith or his Cherokee brothers.

Faith and devotion to his people were at the core of Elias Boudinot's identity. For nearly his entire life, he attended a mission school or worked closely with missionaries in the Cherokee Nation. Missionaries and mission societies in the Cherokee Nation and

New England, while significant in their support of the acculturation movement underway in the tribe, were fundamental to Elias Boudinot's identity as he grew from a boy in Spring Place, Georgia in a Moravian mission school to a man in New Echota as the editor-in-chief of the *Cherokee Phoenix*. This influence would come to play a fundamental role in the fate of the Cherokee Nation after the decision of *Worcester v. Georgia* by the Supreme Court and the fact that the Cherokee would continue to face opposition to their sovereignty in spite of the court's decision in their favor. This analysis will look at Boudinot at the intersection between his Cherokee heritage and his brothers and sisters in Christ and how they shaped his role as the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* and as a member of the Treaty Party of Cherokee

Chapter 1

Traders were the first Europeans to arrive in the New World in their search for a path to the East Indies and in their wake, holy men came to tend to new flocks that had not yet heard the Good Word and must be saved. Even as churches sponsored these journeys into the wilderness to proselytize, only a few intrepid individuals were up to the journey to foreign lands on a mission of faith and these men often relied upon the ships and trade routes of the traders to reach those in need of the Lord's word. Unlike traders, who typically worshipped profit above all and would rarely remain with their native customers, the goal of missionaries was to come and live with their flock, to provide the example of a Christian and tend to the souls of the heathens they lived among.

In the American colonies, the trade between Native Americans and Europeans was a cornerstone of early relations between the groups, cementing alliances between fledgling colonies and powerful native leaders. These alliances, essential to the early survival of the regularly unprepared and underequipped colonial settlements, brought European goods into an entirely new trade system that was not used to worked metal or manufactured textile goods, causing an economic and social upturn. The key to power in areas near the Europeans quickly became the establishing of strong trade ties to the newcomers, securing for one's tribe the European goods that could ease the effort of domestic duties or grant an edge when on the hunt or when at war. Access to European trade goods quickly created divisions and rivalries between Native American groups as well as calcifying societal structures as the natives who traded directly with the Europeans had access to more choice trade goods.

Struggles and animosities from Europe regularly spilled over into colonies in North America, leading the continent's natives taking part in European wars with

European weapons. In the mid and late eighteenth century, the Cherokee began feeling the pressure of English and American settlers in their hinterlands and sided against the colonists, first with the French during the 1750s and 1760s and then with the British during the Revolutionary War. After the peace was established between the United States and the Cherokee in the 1790s, this generation, forged in war, birthed the next generation who would embark on a revolutionary trek that would see their nation rise to a level of advancement undreamed of by their fathers as the Cherokee threw off the traditional pursuits of hunting and gathering and took up agriculture and literacy.

At the forefront of this acculturation movement, Elias Boudinot served as a fundamental link between the worlds of white Christian civilization, like that fostered in New England, and the Cherokee Nation. Boudinot, born of a Cherokee father and mixed-blood mother, was sent to mission schools as a child and when he was a young man, he was sent to a mission school in Cornwall, Connecticut, to further his education, a rarity in a time when many white students did not attend a school after their primary education. In the time he spent with missionaries, Boudinot developed a deep faith in Christianity and the brotherhood of all mankind, including between Indians and whites. Boudinot, whose father's generation battled the Europeans, hoped that through Christ and the fruits of civilization, the Cherokee and the white man could live in harmony.

Power and prestige in American Indian societies often derived from the giving of exotic gifts from abroad to ensure loyalty and strengthen communal ties. Even prior to European contact, a vibrant trade system existed among Native Americans that followed North America's great rivers and connected disparate native communities in trade

networks driven by the exchange of rare goods.[1] Individuals who could obtain these gifts through trade would then be able to grant them to people in their community to display both their generosity, and the giver's ability to acquire these rare items. The goodwill granted by giving these special items would often ensure that an individual rose to a place of prominence in the community, or retained such a place, in hopes that he could continue to provide similar gifts to those who supported him. When the Europeans arrived in the North American, they brought with them goods and wares, the demand for which quickly outstripped many comparable domestic goods. A realignment of trade relations quickly took shape that oriented the trade with goods from Europeans at the center as the suppliers of the finest goods.

This connection to European trade goods, as it had for many tribes in North America, drastically shaped the social dynamic of the Cherokee. Access to rare and exotic goods, even before direct contact with Europeans, granted a prestige and social significance to individuals. As with other tribes, these goods were given as gifts and dispersed among loyal followers to strengthen ties to a single person in a type of cult of personality. Because Cherokee society tried to check the accumulation of wealth by preventing hereditary acquisitions, war, hunting, and, later, trade were the only means to leadership in the Cherokee's meritocratic power structures, observed by Timberlake among the Overhill Cherokees in the 1750s.[2] Early utilitarian goods like copper kettles and metal farm implements provided this prestige by virtue of streamlining and improving the yield domestic endeavors like cooking or agriculture. The structure of the

[1] Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 5.

[2] *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake,* (London: J. Ridley, 1765), 67.

Cherokee tribe during the eighteenth century was dispersed in numerous virtually-autonomous townships and with some townships able to out-produce others, a disparity in resources and, subsequently, power began to grow. However, the introduction of the firearm, combined with the unanticipated demand for deer skins in Europe combined to form a perfect storm for a trade system to aid in the amplification of trade with the Cherokee and the rise of a new social class among the tribe that would radically alter the meritocratic structure of the Cherokee.

Because Cherokee had no gold or coinage to offer European traders, they instead bartered for European goods using furs and pelts that were weighed by the pound.[3] By basing the trade upon the weight of pelts provided, the traders set up a system whereby successful hunters would have access to more and higher quality goods than their peers, leading the system to become exacerbated as more well-armed hunters were able to acquire more pelts with which to trade. The introduction of the rifle to the Cherokee intensified a drastic change in Cherokee society, making hunting a much more efficient endeavor than it was when using a bow. Packing more power than the bow, the rifle quickly became the preferred tool in these ventures among those Cherokee who could obtain one as it was much more effective than the bow and arrow at dropping both game animals and foes in war. The tasks of hunters and warriors, roles traditionally undertaken by men and served as a means for young men to achieve prestige and societal advancement, were revolutionized with the introduction of the rifle. A man's standing in his community could quickly change with access to a firearm that bettered his chances of a successful hunt or war party.

[3] Timberlake, 62.

Like many Native Americans, the Cherokee utilized the natural game animals of North America for many purposes including sustenance and clothing but when trade with France, England and later the United States exploded into a lucrative industry, the division of power among the Cherokee became exacerbated by the demand as the Cherokee began hunting their prey for the valuable pelts they wore. This demand commoditized the pelts of deer and beaver for the European bourgeoisies who lusted after them. In turn, the trade goods demanded by the Cherokee in return stimulated European and American economies as manufacturing scaled to satisfy the new demands, causing an increase in employment that the new demand necessitated. In just the 1750s, the estimated yearly exports to England alone were £90,000 sterling from the Ohio Valley with a similar amount being used throughout the colonies.[4] In turn, white traders provided manufactured goods that replaced the everyday goods that Native Americans had relied upon for centuries; what value does a bow have compared to a rifle, or a hide shirt to a wool or cotton shirt? Those successful hunters who provided bountiful pelts to trade would then have access to more and higher quality merchandise from the traders.

The intermediary traders, those middlemen who would travel with goods into Cherokee country with European goods and leave with hides, were the cornerstones of the entire trade network and power dynamic. These individuals were spread thin throughout Indian country and often held shop in military forts throughout the frontier for security and convenience. At these locations, traders held an advantageous negotiating

[4] William Clarke, *Observations on the late and present conduct of the French…*(Boston: S. Kneeland in Queen-Street., 1755), 16, Archive of Americana, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=G56E50RFMTM4MTk2NTI3Ni41MDcxMzoxOjEzOjEzNC4xMjYuMTAuMzU&p_action=doc&p_docnum=6&p_queryname=331&p_docref=v2:0F2B1FCB879B099B@EAIX-0F3015AA5B10C5A0@7389-@1 (accessed February 12, 2012).

position over the Cherokee who came to trade their furs for goods that allowed the trader to be selective when choosing with whom to trade. The security afforded by the forts meant that the trader could safely store his wares and negotiate under the protection of well-armed soldiers. With the ability to be selective with whom they traded, the merchants were able to build solid working relationships with specific Cherokee who could easily become steady and reliable contacts for the trader and gain the status of a "preferred customer".

A problematic hurdle when trading on the frontier was the issue of a language barrier between traders and Cherokee. Although English/Cherokee interpreters existed in the eighteenth century, they were rare. Even into the early 1800s, one could only find speakers of both English and "Indian," in good sized towns in the Cherokee Nation.[5] Regular contact between the white traders and steady Cherokee fur-suppliers would eventually result in linguistic transference; trade that likely began through signing and gestures broke down barriers with the language of wealth and profit surmounting linguistic hurdles and with continued contact, language was traded as easily as furs and rifles.

The sudden infusion of European goods quickly transformed the Cherokee Nation from a hunter-gatherer society, supplemented by limited agricultural based upon a subsistence economy to a culture that more closely resembled that of the Europeans with whom the Cherokee were trading, though not without resistance.[6] While the ability to

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[5] Friedrich v. Schweinitz to Frederic Willm. Marshall, 19th November, 1799, in *Records of the Moravians Among the Cherokees: Early Contact and the Establishment of the First Mission 1752-1802, Vol. 1*, ed. C. Daniel Crews and Richard W. Starbuck (Tahlequah, OK: Cherokee National Press, 2010), 94.

[6] William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 4

kill more deer more efficiently allowed the Cherokee to harvest more furs for the purposes of trade, the meat was still consumed internally in the Cherokee Nation, providing extra dietary nutrition to the populace. Other trade goods that came into the Nation also helped reduce work hours required in the household labors of the women and men too old or young to hunt. Manufactured goods from America and Europe replaced many of the everyday domestic items from needles to cooking vessels that the Cherokee had made from bone, stone or pottery, in many ways easing the labor involved in domestic work. For example, women, who were responsible for the limited subsistence agriculture prior to acculturation, would have easier time farming with iron or steel hoes to turn the earth than less durable alternatives.[7]

As white settlers in North America moved westward, infrastructure such as roads improved as travel from East to West became more common. With more reliable infrastructure, the danger and unpredictability of the frontier decreased which allowed more traders to reside permanently on the frontier among the Cherokee. Many of these traders, as well as the soldiers stationed in the frontier forts, took Cherokee wives, which further reinforced trade connections in the region as the merchants married into the families that grew prominent through trade.[8] As white and Cherokee intermarried, they gave birth to a generation of mixed-blooded children who would go on to lead the Cherokee Nation when they were adults. Their dual heritage granted the young mixed-bloods advantages out of the reach of their full-blooded Cherokee cousins. The most fundamental of these advantages regards the inheritance practices of the Cherokee which

[7] Timberlake, 42.

[8] Timberlake, 65-66.

would allow the sons of these dual-heritage unions access to advantages that would ensure their prominence in the future of the tribe.

With enough time and familiarity, it may have been inevitable that the white traders would eventually take Cherokee brides with the union only strengthening trade ties, but in doing so, begin to birth mixed-blooded Cherokee, a subsection of the tribe that would go on to have significant influence in tribal affairs. Because Cherokee society was matrilineal, any children born of a Cherokee mother were considered members of her family group, or clan, and in the event of divorce, the children would remain with their mothers.[9] The children of these cross-cultural unions would go on to benefit from both lineages. Unlike the white men who married into the Cherokee tribe and whose membership of the tribe was predicated on their marriage, the mixed-blooded children were born as full members of the tribe and society because of the Cherokee's matrilineal traditions respecting clan. While members of the tribe according to custom, these children would still be able to enjoy the benefits of having white fathers, particularly growing up able to speak English and have access to the resources of their father trade ties and wealth due to Americans and Europeans not practicing the Cherokee tradition that restricts the inheritance of wealth.[10]

The Cherokee method of attaining power and prestige was traditionally meritocratic prior to the 1800s and as such, their rules for inheritance reinforced this meritocratic structure by preventing hereditary inheritance in the society, a tradition that did not necessarily apply to children of white fathers, leading a significant difference in access to resources between mixed-blooded and full-blooded Cherokee. Whereas

[9] Timberlake, 66.

[10] Timberlake, 67-68.

tradition dictated that a full-blooded Cherokee rely upon merit as the sole means of acquiring prestige and social rank, the inheritance of wealth and experience interacting with whites that mixed-blooded children learned by virtue of their siring granted latter group a significant advantage when it came to acquiring influence and sway within the Cherokee society. The son of a white trader, for example, would likely spend time with his father, assisting him with minor tasks and observing the interactions his father had with other whites, all the while absorbing the English language in a manner that his full-blooded kinsmen would not. The sons of Cherokee fathers, on the other hand, were taught traditional skills of the Cherokee like hunting small game to hone the skills they would need as warriors and hunters when they were older.[11] While the lessons in hunting were valuable in gathering the valuable furs, they did not provide much insight regarding how to respond to settlers that continued to advance on the borders of Cherokee country other than with violence.

During the American Revolution, the Cherokee received significant influx of British loyalists who would settle among and ally with the tribe against the American revolutionaries who encroached upon Cherokee territory at the same time they were breaking away from England. It is hard to generalize the character and temperament of the loyalists who resided with and intermarried with the Cherokee at that time since a loyalist was just as easily a merchant whose business ties with England were endangered by the revolution or someone who advocated for a middle-road in the American conflict with the Crown. Historian William McLoughlin characterized many of these emigrants to Cherokee lands as, "outlaws, renegades, bankrupts, and confidence men," and that they

[11] Timberlake, 45-46.

and their children were more of a problem for the Cherokee than a boon.[12] It is difficult to discern who McLoughlin felt was being hindered by the presence of the whites and what portion of the white immigrants were troublemakers and what portion proved invaluable to the Cherokee in their conflicts with the Americans. Doubtlessly, the clash of cultures would cause significant tumult in Cherokee society in regards to a disruption of the normal matrilineal ties to children and inheritance customs, but if the loyalists were siding with the Cherokee in conflict against Americans, it is highly likely that they would be granted succor by the Chickamauga group that resisted American encroachment, even if the older chiefs who were shying away from conflict were opposed to the presence of the Tory agitators. With an increasing number of white-Cherokee marriages, the number of mixed-blooded children began to boom; what once was an variance became more and more common among many parts of the tribe, particularly in the Lower Towns of the Cherokee, so named due to their location down the Tennessee River from older Cherokee settlements. Though there was a clash of cultures and the whites did not speak Cherokee or know tribal customs, their children would come to be quite useful to the tribe, able to comprehend both European language and customs, and acting as interpreters for Cherokee leaders.[13]

Land struggles with America fundamentally changed the way the Cherokee behaved with mounting difficulties from settlers and the U.S. Government for land changing the characteristics of the nation. In 1775, Oconostota, a headman of the Cherokee explained to the British Indian Agent, John Stuart that the Cherokee desired, "to keep the Virginians at as great a distance as possible, as they are generally bad

[12] McLoughlin, 31.

[13] McLoughlin, 31.

men."[14] He subsequently led the nation's elders in signing the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals which ceded 27,000 miles of Cherokee hunting lands in hopes of staving off further advances into Cherokee lands, despite Indian agents and the colonies of Virginia and North Carolina decrying the treaty illegal. [15] As a result of the treaty, the Chickamauga band split with the Nation and launched their guerilla war that only ended seventeen years later.

The Chickamauga violently opposed the land cessions granted by the older chiefs and splintered away from them after the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals in 1775 that ceded 27,000 miles of Cherokee hunting lands. [16] Launching a guerilla war upon the American settlers, the Chickamauga benefited from the fresh bodies and keen insight into American defenses and infrastructure that the loyalists could provide. Given that the Chickamauga's younger chiefs violently opposed further incursions into their land by American settlers, loyalists likely resided with these Cherokee who were less likely to capitulate to American demands, thereby acting as a menace to the older chiefs interested in peace while serving as a boon to the younger, war-hungry chieftains frustrated at American incursions and the repeated capitulation of the older chiefs. Despite the uproar and cultural disharmony they engendered, the younger chiefs were more willing to accept internal cultural disruptions than further land cessions while they fought their guerrilla war that would go on seventeen years, a trend that would continue as the tribe moved into acculturation in the early 1800s.

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[14] Oconostota, "Talk from Oconostota to Stuart, June 3, 1769, CO 5/70/246," quoted in Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation,* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2011), 155. Virginians is used here as a generic term for white settlers in Indian Country.

[15] John Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 52.

[16] Finger, 52.

The Chickamauga split created a division in the tribe that lasted decades and bred inter-tribal strife. The division created two regional spheres of Cherokee power, each with their own tribal councils that acted semi-autonomously.[17] When the tribe divided into the Lower Towns (Chickamauga) and Upper Towns, the whites and mixed-blood children became more prominent as the groups interacted with the newly-established United States and required speakers of English speakers to translate for chiefs that could not communicate with American envoys. Because of the time of their settling with the Cherokee and the rapid influx during the Revolution, the loyalists in the Lower Towns likely outnumbered the traders and their descendents that resided in the Upper Towns, the traditional homelands of the Cherokee. Despite the tribal division, the residents of the Upper Towns still felt the repercussions from the Chickamauga's 17-year guerilla campaign against the United States and that country's settlers. Because the Americans did not discriminate when they retaliated against the Cherokee, sympathy was fostered with the Chickamauga cause among the residents of the Upper Towns which led Upper Town warriors to ally with the Lower Towns.[18]

After the guerilla war ended in 1794 and a tenuous peace was established along the Cherokee-American border, the divisions between the Upper and Lower Towns shifted from differences in relationships with the Americans to disputes regarding the dispersal of annuities from the United States. As part of the land cessions that the Cherokee granted in the Treaty of Hopewell of 1785 and the Treaty of Holston of 1792, the tribe received annuities from the United States in the form of goods and money. Since Cherokee law prevented individuals from owning tribal land, compensation for

[17] McLoughlin, 156.

[18] McLoughlin, 23.

land cessions and annuities were paid to the Cherokee Nation as a whole with the tribal leaders overseeing their dispensing. In 1808, the Upper Town chieftains insisted that the Lower Town chieftains, who generally enjoyed closer relations with the United States, were conspiring with the Indian agents and keeping the lion's share of the annuity for themselves.[19] The situation between the Upper Towns and Lower Towns became so strained that eventually the Upper Towns begged for admittance to the United States as citizens, prompting then-president Thomas Jefferson to respond:

> Should a principal part of your people determine to adopt this alteration, and a smaller part still choose to continue the hunter's life, it may facilitate the settlement among yourselves to be told that we will give to those leave to go, if they choose it, and settle on lands beyond the Mississippi, where some Cherokees are already settled, and where game is plenty, and we will take measurements for establishing a store there among them, where they may obtain necessaries in exchange for their peltries, and we will still continue to be their friends there as much as here.[20]

Jefferson was offering dissenting Cherokees who did not wish to acculturate to a sedentary, agricultural lifestyle the opportunity to peacefully move west of the Mississippi. In return for the land they left, the Cherokee who moved west of the Mississippi would receive an equivalent amount of land in return, freeing up land in the east for white settlement.

Because of regular tensions between the Cherokee and white squatters on tribal land, many Cherokee grew dissatisfied with their proximity to whites, which the United States and its representatives among the Cherokee saw as an opportunity to push for removal of the Cherokee to the west in an effort to acquire more land for an expanding

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[19] Henry Dearborn to Return J. Meigs, May, 5, 1808 in McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic,* 131.

[20] Thomas Jefferson to the Chiefs of the Upper Cherokees, May 4, 1808, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,* ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905), 435.

white population in the east. Many of the Cherokee that drove out squatters did so to preserve their tribe's landholdings in the face of the wave of settlers. This resistance to white incursions led to a degree of harmony being restored within the tribe as the Cherokee from Upper and Lower Towns agreed that they had ot reconcile their own differences and present a united front. As the Indian agent for the Cherokee continued to push removal west as the only option for those unhappy with their situation, though, the Cherokee began to unite and in 1809, the Upper and Lower Towns divisions were ended as they stood together against removal.[21] This coming together, however, would be replaced with a different manner of division within the Cherokee Nation as mixed-bloods grew in prominence and wealth during the peak of the acculturation movement.

Because the example of the Chickamauga War from 1776-1794 made it clear that the Cherokee were not able to outfight the United States, the leadership of the tribe came to the realization that the only way the Cherokee could survive would be to become like their American neighbors. Such a change was advocated by George Washington in 1796 in a letter to the Cherokee leaders, advising them to take up the white practices of agriculture, husbandry and weaving of cotton so that they might become more independent from their reliance on the fur trade and achieve a quality of life similar to that found in the United States.[22] The acculturation movement was a drive by many Cherokee to modernize their culture and nation to be able to survive while living alongside the United States. Since conflict with the Americans had failed, the Cherokee

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[21] McLoughlin, 156.

[22] George Washington, "Talk of the President of the United States to the Beloved Men of the Cherokee Nation," in *George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799; Series 4. General Correspondence*, Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:1:./temp/~ammem_TFbv:: (accessed March 1, 2014).

had few options but to live alongside them and hope that by adopting the characteristics of white society like agriculture and an organized central government and constitution.

At the same time Washington was pushing for the adoption of agriculture and husbandry among the Cherokee, missionaries were attempting to make inroads into the Cherokee territory to spread the word of Christ. The timing was such that the acculturation movement quickly became entwined with the proselytizing of the missionaries who tied civilization directly to Christianity as the two were inextricably linked. But despite early inroads into Cherokee country, large-scale missionary work did not begin until after 1817, making the first part of the Cherokee acculturation movement highly secular.[23] Due to resistance to the presence of missionaries, the only outposts of missionary work were in the mission schools set up by groups such as the Moravians where Cherokee students could be tutored. Despite this, missionaries championed the acculturation movement among the Cherokee as they tied Christianity so closely with civilization, a sentiment that their Cherokee ally Elias Boudinot would repeat later as he toured the United States.[24]

During the decades leading up to the acculturation movement, the tensions over white settlers squatting on Cherokee land gave the tribe little reason to trust Americans. As early as the 1760s, the Anglo-American explorer Henry Timberlake noted, "The English are now so nigh, and encroached daily so far upon [the Cherokee], that they not only felt the bad effects of it in their hunting grounds, which were spoiled, but had all the reason in the world to apprehend being swallowed up by so potent neighbours, or driven

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[23] McLoughlin, 37-38.

[24] Elias Boudinot, "An Address to the Whites Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, on the 26th of May, 1826" in *Cherokee Editor*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996),75.

from the country."[25] With the Chickamauga's seventeen year guerilla war against settlers, much of the American sentiment along the frontier returned the Cherokee's animosity. While there was a noticeable influence from Amero-European culture, deriving primarily form the trade goods the Cherokee relied upon, many characteristics of white culture did not take hold widely among the tribe, particularly the adoption of Christianity.

The Nation was faced with a building tidal wave of settlers surging at their borders and since the armed resistance of the Chickamauga band had proved ineffective, the Nation was turning inward to find a political means of improving their situation, warriors were forced to lay down their guns and hatchets and take up the weapons of diplomacy and culture. Pressures from the United States federal government to emigrate West caused the Cherokee to work together across the divisions between Upper and Lower Towns to find a non-military option for resistance in light of the failure of the Chickamauga uprisings. In 1801, Abraham Steiner, a white man associated with the Moravian Missionaries, observed, "The heads of the Indians are so full of their political affairs and they are so taken up with that that one can get nowhere with the Gospel."[26] The political world of the Cherokees had taken a much more prominent role in their everyday lives than that of their spiritual world. The Cherokee likely realized that since arms were unable to dissuade settlers, they would have to use the American's methods of diplomacy and political intrigue to defend their homelands.

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[25] Timberlake, 97.

[26] Abraham Steiner to Revd. Christian Lewis Benzien, August 18, 1801, in *Records of the Moravians Among the Cherokees: Early Contact and the Establishment of the First Mission 1752-1802, Vol. 1*, ed. C. Daniel Crews and Richard W. Starbuck (Tahlequah, OK: Cherokee National Press, 2010), 254.

Due to conflicts between Christian teachings and Cherokee beliefs and cultural practices, missionaries had long been unable to establish a foothold in the Cherokee Nation from which to spread the Good Word of the Lord but with the acculturation movement, moderate Cherokee like the mixed-blood James Vann began to consider the benefit the missionaries could provide. To convince the Cherokee to allow them onto their lands, the missionaries had to convince the Cherokee that the tribe had something to gain from the deal while reassuring the Cherokee that the missionaries would avoid stepping on too many Cherokee traditions. Both groups had something to gain, the missionaries a flock whom to lead and the Cherokee, an opportunity to advance themselves and their nation in the face of overtures from the United States and its states that they meant to acquire the Cherokee homelands.

Because of the tendency of white culture, and Christianity in particular, to conflict with Cherokee traditions, holy men and missionaries had a hard time gaining a receptive audience in Cherokee lands. To the Cherokee, missionaries and holy men did not have anything to offer as the Cherokee were secure in their own certainty that their way of life was superior to that of their American neighbors, especially considering the prosperity and size of the Cherokee, numbering over 13,000 by 1828, the Cherokee saw themselves in a good position when compared to other Native American tribes.[27] A proud as the Cherokee were of their culture, their position was untenable. During the early 1800s, the Nation was at an important crossroads and both its population and leadership were more concerned with the white settlers pressing at their borders and held little concern for

[27] "Indian Emigration," *Cherokee Phoenix*, May 14, 1828 in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18280514b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

attending the services by missionaries.[28] Because of the Cherokee's cultural security and their greater concern for political rather than spiritual issues, the harbingers of white values and religion were less significant since the missionaries had no worth to a culture that valued the material goods obtained from white merchants than the ideology offered by the missionaries.

The first missionaries to make a sustained effort at taking the Cherokee as their flock were the Moravians. Their task would present a new, kinder white face than the squatters and brigands that typically prowled the Cherokee-U.S. border. Settling on land donated by James Vann, one of the wealthiest men in the Cherokee Nation and a mixed blood, the white missionaries were greeted warmly by the Cherokee chieftains. In a speech given in during a meeting of Upper and Lower Town chiefs, a Cherokee official stated, "[The missionaries's] desire seems to be good, to instruct us and our children in goodness, to improve our minds and spirits, and so on. I hope these gentlemen will make an attempt, and their deportment and attention toward us and our children will allow us to judge properly."[29] With mixed-bloods coming into positions of power in the Cherokee Nation, they sought to rearrange the Cherokee Nation into a reflection of the United States, where their mixed heritage would restrict them from positions of prestige both socially and financially. This mixed lineage in a growing proportion of the Cherokee leaders eventually led to a more lax attitude toward traditional Cherokee cultural practices. With the opportunity to provide their children with a quality education on par

[28] Steiner to Benzien, 255-256.

[29] Abraham Steiner and Friedrich von Schweiniz, "Report of the Brethren Abraham Steiner and Friedrich von Schweiniz concerning their second visit to the Cherokees from 25 August to 2 November 1800" in *Records of the Moravians Among the Cherokees: Early Contact and the Establishment of the First Mission 1752-1802, Vol. 1*, ed. C. Daniel Crews and Richard W. Starbuck (Tahlequah, OK: Cherokee National Press, 2010), 211.

with that obtained in the United States, the moderate voices of the Cherokee leadership eventually persuaded the others to take advantage of the Moravian's offer. Further cementing the importance of the missionaries offer were the improvements to infrastructure that came with the establishment of missions and larger trading posts, particularly the roads that connected the missions to America and were subsequently utilized by Cherokee who had adopted agriculture to transport the fruits of their labors to market.[30]

Because white interpreters were relatively rare in Cherokee country, save for agents of the United States government, it is almost certain that the white school masters and preachers would teach their pupils in English, a language whose only child speakers were mixed-bloods who would learn the language at home from their parent, effectively restricting attendance to students who understood the teachers, eliminating many full-blooded children from the chance of attending. Added to other benefits enjoyed by mixed-blooded families, a division formed that would reinforce a growing disparity between mixed-blooded Cherokee families and full-blooded Cherokee. The young mixed-bloods who were receiving this education, such as Elias Boudinot, would eventually go on to lead the Cherokee Nation, acting as a small elite oligarchy because of the advantages afforded them due to their white ancestry.

Gallegina Uwati, the boy who would adopt the name Elias Boudinot from the famous missionary, was a mixed-blooded Cherokee who would find himself at the unique intersection along racial and religious lines that would greatly influence his perspective regarding the unique events he would face in his lifetime. Practically raised in mission

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[30] John Ross to James Monroe, March 5th, 1819, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross Vol. I*, edited by Gary E. Moulton, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 34.

schools, Boudinot's religious perspective regarding the acculturation of the Cherokee during the early part of the nineteenth century granted him a unique insight into both the acculturation movement within the Cherokee Nation and the Removal Crisis the tribe would suffer in 1828. Religion played an essential part of Boudinot's formation as a young man and as he grew into a prominent editor and statesman, the circumstances of his growth into manhood would leave an indelible mark on the Cherokee Nation while providing invaluable insight into wider events occurring in the United States.

When the acculturation movement began in earnest in the early 1800s, Elias Boudinot was barely walking. His father, David Watie, and uncle Major Ridge, had the foresight to allow their children the opportunities afforded by the U.S. Government's civilizing program, perhaps understanding the type of adversity a mixed-race child would face from Americans. Both men moved closer to Spring Place, a school ran by Moravian Missionaries, discarded traditions such as matrilineal ideas of parentage and kinship and establishing farms like their white neighbors in Georgia.[31] Attending Spring place commenced Elias Boudinot's Christian education which would continue at a secondary-education institution, rare in the early nineteenth century, established by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Cornwall, Connecticut.

At both Spring Place and Cornwall, Boudinot and his cousins were isolated from their families and the Cherokee community at large, an important aspect of many mission schools. As a part of the civilization program, the goal of this separation was to ensure that lessons taught to the students would not be forgotten as soon as the school day ended and they returned to their native families. This cultural immersion was intended to

[31] Theda Perdue, ed. *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 5.

baptize the students in white culture, a culture which the missionary institutions indelibly linked with Christianity in their efforts to spread the good word. These influences would guide the young Gallegina throughout his life and drive him to adopt the name of a well-known politician and supporter of missionary work, Elias Boudinot. This isolation in a white Christian environment would play a fundamental role to the development of Boudinot's life as he grew from a child to a young man and then an adult.

After attending school in Spring Place, Elias was sent north to Cornwall, Connecticut, to attend a seminary school for older boys where they would be trained in the values of white society and Christianity. As they went about their lives in and around the mission school, performing their coursework and partaking in agricultural endeavors so that they might transfer the skills they acquired to their countrymen, the mission's pupils made connections with members of the Cornwall community. While these interactions were structured and somewhat restricted, the best way for the students of the school to learn how society was organized and operated in a civilized manner was to interact and be a part of the community.[32] Coming into adulthood in this white world, it was inevitable that the young men of the seminary, who were typically in their late teens or early twenties, would be subject to the same passions as all young men. As students made connections to the community, the possibility of intimate connections between the young Native American men of the school and the young women about town was apparently not even considered by those that ran the school.

During the course of his studies at the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Elias met Harriett Gold, a young woman whose family was closely connected with the school,

[32] For more regarding the restrictions placed upon the students, see Joseph Harvey, *The Banner of Christ Set Up*, (New Haven: Nathan Whiting, 1819).

and the two began a discrete romantic courtship that lasted for over three years, according to a family friend, before their engagement was made public knowledge in Cornwall.[33] Cornwall bore many similarities to other small towns dotted throughout the landscape of New England, primarily serving as a small farming community prior to the founding of the Foreign Mission School, but threats of miscegenation would soon reveal a dark side to the pastoral community. With the news of his engagement to Gold being exposed so shortly after his cousin Major Ridge's marriage to a local white woman, a great deal of controversy was stirred up in the Cornwall community, with an effigy of Gold and Boudinot being lit by Harriett's own brother.[34] Upon going to church, Gold was asked to leave her singers seat so as to not disgrace the other girls, revealing the same forgiveness and civility that the mission school preached to its Native American pupils was found wanting in Cornwall's own religious community.[35] Because of her interracial engagement and the danger it posed to the Foreign Mission School, Harriett found herself an outcast among her neighbors and family and while race was ultimately at the heart of the matter, it is only evident through the danger the interracial union caused to the school itself, but more overt racial components were revealed in letters from other members of Harriett's extended family.

This violent reaction to the happy occasion of an engagement revealed an underlying racial divide present within the very missionary community that sought to

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[33] Catharine Gold to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, 18 July, 1825 in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 110.

[34] Harriett Gold to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill and Catharine Gold, 25 June 1825, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 83.

[35] Gold to Gold Vaill and Gold, 25 June 1825, 85.

raise up the Cherokee. In a sarcastic moment, Gold's brother-in-law Daniel Brinsmade commented that "all the blame lies on our side we dont see and feel how good and how pleasant a thing it is to be kissed by an Indian- to have black young ones & a train of evils."[36] While quite obviously a sarcastic dig at Harriett's relationship with Boudinot, the statement also reveals a darker side to an agent of the Foreign Mission School- a man whose duty it is to bring civilization and Christianity to the Native Americans attending the school. Brinsmade's words undercut his supposed godly duty to guide the aborigines into the light of Christianity.

Sheltered as he was in missionary schools, Boudinot likely had not encountered such violent and unrepentant racist fervor as he encountered from the same community that had educated him in the teachings of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. This treatment likely struck a significant blow to Boudinot's faith in the sincerity of the members of Cornwall's missionary community and soured him somewhat on the idea of the peaceful coexistence between Native Americans and Americans. After this event, Boudinot returned to Cherokee country where some reported that he had "gone native" and began attending frowned-upon events such as the Cherokee Ball Game, a traditional sport of the tribe.[37]

As a young man of only twenty summers, Elias Boudinot was appointed by the Cherokee Nation's National Council to travel along the East Coast, with particular emphasis on New England, touring cities in the United States seeking donations for the

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[36] Daniel Brinsmade to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill and Catharine Gold, 14 July 1825, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 108.

[37] Theresa Strouth Gaul, ed., *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 19.

establishment of a seminary and a printing press. Intelligent and well-spoken with a distinctive Christian-based education, Boudinot represented the best of what the Cherokee had to offer in showing how far a Cherokee can go along the path of acculturation. His selection was not coincidental but instead a meticulous decision to send an individual who presented what the council wanted. Elias Boudinot was a "safe" representative to send to speak to white American audiences. Boudinot, educated among white missionaries, was well aware of the propaganda spread in Indian narratives that were prominent in the northern literary tradition that told tales of Indians as wild savages barely able to cloth themselves.[38]

On his tour, Elias Boudinot gave speeches, one, perhaps the best known, was published as "An Address to the Whites," the embodiment of the young nation still stepping out of the shadows of savagery and barbarism, ready to present itself to its civilized neighbor. Boudinot himself repeatedly insists upon this point that although the tribe had made significant strides since it began acculturation in the early 19th century, it still appeared to white eyes as, "obscure and trifling," but nevertheless held the promise of becoming one of the "Garden spots of America."[39] On this tour, Boudinot solicited for funds to create a typeset in the newly-invented Cherokee language and the purchase of a printing press to create a periodical for the Cherokee Nation. This tour would see Boudinot's ability to speak to and make connections among white religious societies in New England, charming them with his education and devotion. This experience would set Boudinot up as an influential man in the Cherokee Nation due to these connections. With these cultivated relationships, Boudinot could spread news on the Cherokee's

[38] Boudinot, "An Address to Whites," 76-77.

[39] Boudinot, "An Address to Whites," 71.

progress to their supporters in the United States who could then influence political movements in their own government in favor of the Cherokee.

Chapter 2

Before the widespread acceptance of missionaries in 1817 among the tribe, the mission schools in Cherokee country existed as isolated islands of Christendom where missionaries shepherded the newest generation of Cherokee; however the men of God were not content to enlighten only the young but yearned to spread the good word to the rest of the tribe. The missionary schools had proven successful in convincing prominent Cherokee to enroll their children, primarily mixed-bloods, due to the obvious advantage of an English education. While invaluable young Cherokee they instructed, the reach of the mission school's influence did not extend to the majority of the tribe, who were separated by a language barrier from the missionaries. The solution would come in 1822, when the efforts of a Cherokee silversmith named Sequoyah who had no comprehension of English yielded a way to put the Cherokee language to print, creating an efficient means for mass communication within the tribe and the translation of Christian texts.[40]

By this time, the acculturation movement was in full swing in and many of the bright young men educated in the missionary schools, including Elias Boudinot, were leading the tribe into a new era of civilization that saw the Cherokee adopt a national government and a constitution as its people threw down the bow and picked up the hoe. Returning from his eastern fund-raising tour, Boudinot set himself to establishing the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Native American newspaper, as a key tool in the spread of information to aid in improvement of the Cherokee people. The religious and reform groups that Boudinot petitioned during his tours held a significant interest in what this new periodical would do to further the cause of Christendom, which Boudinot addressed in the Prospectus of the *Phoenix* when he stated his intention to use the paper to,

[40] McLoughlin, 351.

"promote Literature, Civilization, and Religion among the Cherokees."[41] Beyond religion, though Boudinot hoped to inform his Cherokee brothers of the goings-on of the nation and aimed to include articles that would enlighten as well as proselytize.

As Boudinot proved on his tours throughout the United States, he could effectively act as the face of the Cherokee Nation when communicating with their reformer allies in the United States. His education was nearly unmatched among his Cherokee brethren thanks to the mission schools at Spring Place and the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall. While too young to politic among the chieftains in the mid-1820s, Boudinot's connections to the tribe's leadership, notably his uncle Major Ridge who was a prominent chieftain, all but assured him an important position in the Cherokee Nation. His appointment as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Cherokee Phoenix* allowed him to utilize his education, acute mind and communication skills to act as the voice of Cherokee Nation to communicate with the paper's subscribers in the United States and oversee the publishing of articles in the Cherokee language, Sequoyah. As a son of a Cherokee father and a mixed-blood mother, Boudinot was able to straddle the divide between full-blooded majority and the mixed-bloods that held prominent positions and when he took up the role as the editor of the *Phoenix*, Boudinot became a man of the state, just as he was a man of God.

Established in October of 1827, the Cherokee Phoenix served as a dual-language periodical funded by the Cherokee National Council to spread literacy of both English and the newly-created Cherokee printed language and more broadly help reinforce the

[41] Elias Boudinot, "Prospectus," in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 90.

cultural cohesion of the Cherokee Nation.[42] The equipment required to publish the *Phoenix* were purchased with the funds collected from white philanthropists, primarily through Boudinot's speaking tour, and was the property of the Nation with the paper itself was patronized by and under the direction of the tribe's legislature. With this platform, the Cherokee government had the opportunity to have a direct line of communication to the nation's people. Since it was the only periodical written in the Cherokee language, it was the most direct medium through which the tribe could receive news from its leadership. Otherwise, the information would have to be transmitted via word of mouth among the non-readers. With a direct line to the people they represented, the Cherokee leaders could disseminate information much more quickly and efficiently in a manner that would ensure maximum exposure and minimum miscommunication.

Despite its status as a government-funded and endorsed periodical, the *Phoenix* would rely heavily upon the goodwill and support of white patrons. Boudinot, during his speaking tours in the United States, had cultivated contacts among white philanthropists and mission organizations that had an interest in the acculturation movement in the Cherokee Nation and what it meant for the spread of Christianity among the Cherokee, and potentially, other Native American tribes. Despite these enthusiastic supporters, Boudinot's letters reveal his trepidation with the paper's chances. In a letter to his brother-in-law Herman Vaill, with whom Boudinot and his wife had reconciled since their marriage, he includes a copy of the *Phoenix*'s prospectus for Herman, who was a preacher associated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in hopes that he would "present this Prospectus to all whom it may concern, and obtain as

[42] Boudinot, "Prospectus," 89-90.

many Subscribers as you possibly can, if any are to be had in Connecticut…"[43] Given the controversy he and Harriett had left in Cornwall just over two years prior and the objection Vaill had expressed to their marriage, Boudinot's decision to reach out to his brother-in-law teased of anxiety regarding the paper's prospects for success. Boudinot was likewise quick to point out to his brother-in-law that he did not wish to be perceived as competing with other periodicals and the purpose of the paper was simply for the betterment of the Cherokee, making it clear he wasn't attempting to supplant any white papers with the *Phoenix*.[44] Boudinot's experiences in Cornwall two years ago went a long way on the distance between whites and the Cherokee, but he knew that the Cherokee would need assistance from sympathetic whites to become recognized as a recognized civilization.

The decision to publish the newspaper move was likely fueled by the recent boom in literacy with the invention of a written form of the Cherokee language by Sequoyah, a Cherokee silversmith, who the language itself was named after. With a newly literate populace, the Cherokee Nation had achieved a significant milestone in its path to civilization as prescribed by contemporary white values with over half of the tribe quickly adopting the language by 1825, likely challenging the literacy rates of surrounding white settlements.[45] Increasing literacy among the tribe ensured a quicker and more reliable transfer of knowledge through articles in the *Phoenix*. Boudinot asserted his intention in the Prospectus of the *Phoenix* to publish articles "calculated to

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[43] Elias and Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman Vaill, November 21, 1827, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 159.

[44] Elias and Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman Vaill, 1827, 158.

[45] McLoughlin, 353.

promote Literature, Civilization, and Religion among the Cherokees."[46] By educating the Cherokee public of the matters of the Nation, the intent was to create a more informed populace aware of the matters of note in the state and aware of how they could improve their situation in respects to adopting characteristic traits of civilized societies. Further, a literate and informed populace would be more able to respond act as a cohesive nation when responding to the trying ordeals the Cherokee were going through with respect to Georgian incursions into Cherokee territory. As a reflection of white society, the Cherokee language now allowed the spread of ideas and information like never before in the Cherokee Nation; so much so that the items greatest in demand from traders were ink, pens and paper.[47] This explosion of literacy and communication ensured that the *Cherokee Phoenix* would hold a prominent place in the Cherokee Nation as its people were hungry to read and communicate. The *Phoenix* was the primary source for tribal news and through its publications, its publishers took advantage of its ability to at once inform and unite the tribe in the face of white aggression.

In its inaugural issue, Boudinot declared his intent, and that of the National Council, to devote the Phoenix to national purposes, including "'The laws and public documents of the Nation,' and matters relating to the welfare and condition of the Cherokee as a people," publishing these in both Cherokee and English.[48] The printing of legal documents pertaining to the Nation was essential in making the knowledge of the acts of the National Council well known in Cherokee society and ensured that a

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[46] Boudinot, "Prospectus," 90.

[47] McLoughlin, 352-353.

[48] "To the Public," *Cherokee Phoenix*, February 21, 1828, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18280221c.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

consistent message was sent to the people of the tribe. These articles and acts of the Cherokee National Council were also printed in English, likely for the reading and comprehension of the white subscribers of the *Phoenix*. In doing so, Boudinot and the Cherokee were demonstrating how far the Cherokee had come and the nation's similarities to the United States in an effort to impress Americans who would read it and provide reform groups sufficient evidence of Cherokee progress that they could utilize in the reformer's social movements in the United States that championed the importance of civilization and the ability of Christianity to lift up even the lowest of peoples.

The paper's audience, however, was not limited to the Cherokee people, but perhaps more significantly, the paper played to readers in the United States. Many parties in the United States had great interest in the goings-on in the Cherokee Nation, and for their part, the Cherokee leaders displayed a canny knowledge of this and in the *Phoenix*, a conscious effort was made to appeal to them. The audience consisted primarily of philanthropists and others championing the Cherokee's course to civilization, such as churches and related mission societies like the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The subscribers were likely residents of New England and Eastern Pennsylvania, areas who had not had significant conflicts with Native Americans in recent memory. Subscribers in the South, on the other hand, were few in far between, likely since the Cherokee territory was so expansive that citizens of all of southern states at one point or another had engaged in direct conflict with the Cherokee over land seizures and as such, the animosity bred from border skirmishes and attacks ran too deep for widespread support of Cherokee acculturation. During the late 1820s in New England, social reform movements were beginning and the plight of the

Cherokee was a cause which could easily be seized upon, particularly since Boudinot, the voice of the tribe among whites, was known as a well-spoken Christian from his tours throughout the region that put him before church assemblies, one of the hotbeds for the early reformists.

Despite the sincerity of Boudinot's religious beliefs, displayed in his personal letters, he was canny enough to know that the religious audience he guaranteed by promoting the importance of Christianity and steps toward (Christian) civilization the Cherokee could be used to garner allies to the Cherokee's causes in the United States. Despite the progress the tribe was making toward acculturation, there were many in Georgia who wished the Cherokee to submit to the will of the state instead of existing as a sovereign nation. This looming crisis led to Boudinot playing on certain tropes in the missionary societies he grew up in and visited to garner support for the Cherokee and their sovereignty.

To his white subscribers, Boudinot was selling the idea of the Cherokee Nation and making the case for its existence, much as he did during his tours through the United States when he delivered his famous, "An Address to the Whites." Granted, an American who subscribed to the *Phoenix* was likely already sympathetic to the Cherokee's cause, but what the paper provided was ammunition for armchair philanthropists in the East who could use the arguments put forth by Boudinot to make the case to their acquaintances and during political debates. It is essential to recognize that the support and patronage of the Cherokee acculturation movement was an offshoot of other popular social movements in the United States at the time, including the beginning of the women's suffrage movement and societies for the abolition of slavery. In comparison to both women and

slaves, the Cherokee held a relatively strong position during this period as the tribe was standing tall as an independent sovereign nation, having undergone significant changes and made considerable progress towards the contemporary ideas of "civilization." Echoes of the women's movement can be seen in Harriett Gold's zeal for missionary work and helping the state of the Indians, fueled by her romance with Boudinot. Contemporary issues regarding a woman's role in society sprung up as the Cornwall community reacted adamantly against the union with her brother-in-law, Herman Vaill, questioning whether her reasons for ministering to the Cherokee were purely religious or instead the fancy of a smitten young woman.[49] Because many of the social reform movements were organized from the church organizations, appealing to the Christian sensibilities of this audience was a canny decision that played to the strengths of Boudinot with his education from Spring Place and the Foreign Mission School.

In addition to the social movements in the Early Republic, there existed a romantic remembrance of the Founding Fathers during the Democratic Revolution which the *Phoenix* picked up upon in attempts to argue their position. In several early issues, Boudinot included in the paper addresses from men such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, extolling the virtues of the Cherokee character as well as expressing the need for the Cherokee to abandon hunting and the trading of furs in favor of husbandry and agriculture.[50] With the 50-year anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1826, it was likely that Boudinot was attempting to cash in on a patriotic

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[49] Herman Vaill to Harriett Gold, 29 June 1825, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 91.

[50] *Cherokee Phoenix*, March 20, 1828, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18280320a.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

upsurge in the United States by using the speeches of the near-mythological Founding Fathers to champion Cherokee society and extol their accomplishments since those speeches were given.

Because Boudinot received his education in communities similar to those he was appealing to, he knew how to get his message across to these communities in a meaningful manner. One of Boudinot's most clever yet poignant articles early in the *Phoenix* was concerning alcoholism among the Cherokee. In a piece titled, *"*Intemperance*,"* he describes the evils of alcohol that habitually plague not only the Cherokee, but virtually all Native American tribes, since its introduction by white traders, intertwining both a deeply upsetting issue among the Cherokee as well as one of the most prominent issues championed by the religious arm of the social reform movements. "Even at this day," Boudinot laments, "when it is generally conceded that we are the most civilized of all the Aboriginal tribes, we see this enemy of all good stalking forth in triumph, carrying desolation and misery into families and neighborhoods. The murders committed in this Nation, with very few exceptions, are occasioned by intoxication."[51] This tragic fact dovetails with the beginnings of the American Temperance Society in 1826 and the growing attention it was receiving among religious and social groups in the North. Boudinot goes on to directly address his own countrymen, speaking plainly on the need to remove alcohol as an obstacle on the road to prosperity. He then likens the threat posed by alcohol to the Cherokee to that of an invasion of a conquering forth and insists that the effects of alcohol among the Cherokee are no less devastating than war. [52]

[51] "Intemperance," *Cherokee Phoenix*, October 1, 1828, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18281001b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

Champions of temperance reading this would immediately be able to empathize with the plight of the Cherokee and other Native Americans, sympathizing with the tribes over their shared understanding of the devastating effects of alcohol consumption. For the Cherokee, the temperance advocates could serve as a source of support in the East that could relate the consequences of alcoholism for the Cherokee and other tribes while at the same time using said tribes as an example of what the ravages of alcohol could do and how Christian values, like those practiced and championed by the editor of the *Phoenix* could help fight the specter of alcohol.

Boudinot also championed causes similar to those of New England reformers, particularly his outspoken stance regarding slavery. His Christian tutelage instilled him with strongly idealized notions of the brotherhood of man, evident through many of his speeches during his American tours. As Editor of the *Phoenix,* Boudinot used the platform available to him to speak about issues that even contradicted his own tribe's practices. In July of 1829, Boudinot addressed Georgian claims to Cherokee lands and what they would accomplish with them, "The Editor of the Milledgeville Recorder (sic), elated by the "certainty of obtaining at an early day" the lands now in the occupance (sic) of the Cherokees, directs the attention of Georgians to the growing importance of the State… He supposes the population of the State will, in ten years, be doubled, and in twenty years tripled."[53] Boudinot goes on to shred this theory given the inability of the Cherokee land, no matter how fertile, to support a dense population. He then stingingly replied, "[Georgia] will have to overcome one great obstacle before she becomes a great

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[52]"Intemperance."

[53] *Cherokee Phoenix*, July 1, 1829, in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 110-111.

state- slavery."[54] This criticism comes in spite of the Cherokee Nation itself allowing slavery and many prominent leaders on the Cherokee National Council owning slaves themselves, including Boudinot's powerful uncle Major Ridge and the Principal Chief John Ross. This indictment of the practice as something backwards and unbecoming of a "great" state likely caught the eye of Northern reformers just as it seemingly indicted Boudinot's own countrymen of the practice.

The philanthropists and northern reformers that helped support the *Phoenix* with their patronage did not have any direct sway over what Boudinot published in the *Phoenix*, but their influence was still felt. While Boudinot professed the newspaper was meant for the Cherokee and the tribe's benefit, many articles published read as if they were intended for audiences in the East. Much like in his "An Address to Whites," Boudinot peppers the paper with the necessity of action from Americans interested in the welfare of the Cherokee to continue to support the Nation. In the first issue, he implores the aid of, "the Christian, the Patriot, and the Philanthropist," to help ensure that the Cherokee Nation doesn't share the destiny of other American Indian Tribes that had faded into oblivion.[55] Many of the articles in the *Phoenix* that were printed in English contained explanations of Cherokee culture, familiarizing the paper's subscribers with the traditional practices of the Cherokee and often comparing their relative progress from their former state. In January of 1829, Boudinot addresses the strides the Cherokee people had taken in thirty years:

> In the Fall and Winter seasons [the young men] were gone to follow the [hunt], which occupation enabled them to purchase of the traders a few articles of

[54] *Cherokee Phoenix*, July 1, 1829, 111.

[55] Boudinot, "To the Public," 91.

> clothing, sufficient to last perhaps until the next hunting time. From the soil they derived a scanty supply of corn, barely enough to furnish them with gah-no-ha-nah, and this was obtained by the labor of women and grey-headed men, for custom would have it that it was disgraceful for a young man to be seen with a hoe in his hand.[56]

Since then, the Cherokee had largely adopted subsistence agriculture, and while the culture of the ball-play and hunting still held great significance to the Cherokee, the same men who would have balked at hoeing a field thirty years prior now labored for the support of their families.

In his appeals to religious whites, Boudinot was aided by his friend and collaborator Samuel Worcester, a missionary associated with the Brainerd Mission in Chattanooga who championed the spread of Christianity and civilization among the Cherokee. Boudinot and Worcester first began working together in 1827 prior to the establishment of the *Phoenix* to standardize the Cherokee language while Boudinot and his wife were taking charge of a mission in High Tower, a small town on a branch of the Coosa River.[57] This collaboration was essential for both men's purposes independent of their friendship as a codified Cherokee language would further their shared goals of a civilized and Christian Cherokee Nation. By this time, the *Cherokee Phoenix* was already an important goal of the nation, given the prominence of Boudinot's Eastern tours, and by streamlining the Cherokee Language that would be printed in the paper, the

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[56] *Cherokee Phoenix,* January 21, 1829, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18290121b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

[57] Elias and Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, January 5, 1827, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 153.

men could more easily spread their respective messages. This intent is clearly displayed by the Cherokee-language version of the Lord's Prayer in the first issue of the *Phoenix*.

In late 1827, at the same time the *Phoenix* was taking flight, the state of Georgia was attempting to build railroads through Cherokee lands but finding their efforts frustrated by Cherokee refusal to grant permission or cede land for the projects.[58] Knowing that President John Adams had no intention of disputing the Cherokee's sovereignty, Georgian legislators took charge on the matter and began passing legislation in an attempt to solve their Indian problem. Because of the Cherokee Constitution declaring itself an independent and sovereign power, and the United States enforcing Cherokee rights via her intercourse laws, the Georgians were playing a balancing act between federal and state authority, but were emboldened in their decision by the popularity of Andrew Jackson, a known Indian-foe, spreading throughout much of the United States.[59] Political rhetoric from both the Cherokee and Georgians were nearly continuous in their attacks on each other. Boudinot's efforts to ensure the subscribers to the *Phoenix* increased tenfold as he defended the Cherokee from the charges of the Georgian media. The Indian Question was a hotly debated topic during the lead up to the 1828 presidential elections in the United States and continued their prominence afterwards for several years. By addressing the attacks upon their rights in the *Phoenix*, Boudinot was providing his American audience, many of whom were politically active in reform movements and politics with the Cherokee perspective to the events so that the

[58] Wilson Lumpkin, *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia*, (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 40.

[59] Lumpkin, 43.

reformers could address the situation with proper knowledge of what was going on in the distant Cherokee country.

The *Phoenix* served as an alternative source of news from the Cherokee borderlands, contrasting reports that may come from Georgian periodicals colored by Georgian prejudices. Because of the explosion and democratization of newspapers and printing, a boom in the number of publications throughout the colony increased, ran by individuals who, by virtue of the Constitution's freedom of the press, were able to print largely what they wanted with the general public able to choose their news sources. Whereas before the turn of the 19th century, printing presses were primarily located in the northeast, by the 1820s, they had spread to the South as well, contributing to the presence of Southern periodicals. These papers, located as they were in a state with a significant interest in acquiring Indian land, published regular articles both pressing the need for land acquisitions and spreading propaganda against the Native Americans to bolster popular support for the efforts. The *Phoenix* was the only way that the Cherokee could uniformly and broadly address the misinformation published by the Georgian paper, reassuring its subscribers and patrons that the reports were false. This way, the *Cherokee Phoenix* was essential in not only spreading news of the Cherokee Nation to its own citizens, but also to American readers with its ability to redress false propaganda published in other periodicals.

Though rare, Boudinot occasionally addressed those who opposed the Cherokee's rights to the land directly. On the very heels of Indian Agent Thomas L. McKenney making estimates of the costs of the removal of the Chickasaw Indians, Boudinot responded to proponents of Cherokee removal by similarly reckoning the expense of the

removal of the Cherokee based on McKenney's estimates for the Chickasaw. The costs Boudinot calculates just for the building of homes, to be paid for by the United States, assuming the same rules of the McKenney's Chickasaw estimations, amount to $520,000, more than the entirety of the Chickasaw removal calculated by McKenney. Boudinot goes on to list the costs of replacing the rest of the property owned by the Cherokee including infrastructure and livestock and comes to the total cost of removal at $2,229,662.[60] While Boudinot does not cite any source for the values he listed beyond his own reckoning, what he is trying to point out is the sheer financial impracticality of the Cherokee removal in face of the costs. With such a sum, theoretically, being spent to remove the Cherokee to the West which would only delay the Cherokee problem for the United States as the country would continue to expand, Boudinot argues that the money could instead be put to a better use. With this sum of money, he points out, innumerable improvements including schools, a college and the large-scale printing and distribution of literature in both Cherokee and English could be made to the Cherokee territory and great progress could be made in the process of civilization of the tribe.[61] By appealing to the financial implacability of removal, Boudinot was likely preaching to those whites undecided on the matter or those more concerned with the profit to be derived from the sale and parceling out of tribal lands. When faced with the sheer daunting costs of the endeavor, Boudinot likely hoped that their resolution would give way to a cheaper alternative, even if it kept the Cherokee in territory claimed by Georgia. For resolute opponents to the Cherokee remaining in their homelands, by complicating the matters economically, Boudinot made the case for removal that much more difficult.

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[60] "Indian Emigration."

[61] "Indian Emigration." Costs not adjusted for inflation.

The relationship of Boudinot, and the *Phoenix*, had with the Cherokee Nation's leadership was complicated by his family connections and his own politics as well as the presence of Samuel Worcester. Elias Boudinot was the nephew of the famous Major Ridge, a Cherokee of great renown for his wartime leadership during the Chickamauga conflict against American settlers and earned the title "Major" during the Creek War when he was allied with Americans led by Andrew Jackson. Since the end of the conflict, Ridge had become an influential leader among the Cherokees and an early advocate for acculturation and became a wealthy planter and slave owner. As such, Boudinot's appointment to the position of Editor of the *Phoenix* may have been seen among Ridge's rivals as a political appointment, particularly given Boudinot's outspoken evangelical stance which may have rubbed some of the older chiefs the wrong way.

Added to his political connections through his popular uncle, Boudinot's relationship with Samuel Worcester also was a point of criticism for some. After their collaboration during Boudinot's winter at High Tower, he and Worcester struck up a fast friendship and spiritual brotherhood founded upon a mutual religious devotion and a deep concern for the plight of the Cherokees. When Boudinot took his place as editor of the *Phoenix*, the undertaking was a significant task for one man. Harriett regularly mentions in letters to her family of her husband's exhaustion and his meager free time and the sacrifice of his leisure and time for the sake of his country, as well as regular mentions of the time her husband spent working alongside Worcester and visiting he and his family.[62] The shared passion that Boudinot and Worcester had for the betterment of the Cherokee

[62] Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, January 7, 1831, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 172-173.

likely drove them to work together on several projects; just as Boudinot aided Worcester on his translation of the New Testament into Cherokee and the publishing of a hymnbook, the first book published in the Cherokee language, Worcester aided in the production of the *Phoenix*. By January 1829, Boudinot had to change printers as his first printer, a Mr. Harris, was found to be "secretly circulating falsehoods, one of which is that the Cherokee Phoenix is under the influence of Mr. Worcester."[63] The spirit of the rumor was likely rooted in the belief that Boudinot, as part Cherokee, wasn't able to perform the job and had to rely on the guidance and instruction of missionaries, such as his friend Samuel Worcester.

While many of the Phoenix's articles were meant to exalt the progress the Cherokee had made in their civilization efforts, shortly after the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 to the presidency, the *Phoenix* spent more time detailing the heightening tensions on the borderlands. In late 1827, the state government of Georgia became much more insistent with its claims for Cherokee lands, emboldened by the rising tide of Andrew Jackson's popularity on his road to the White House. As a result, the state released a series of resolutions demanding the United States government fulfill their obligations under the Compact of 1802 in which the Federal Government had promised to extinguish all Indian land claims in Georgia.[64]

After the passage of the resolutions of December 1827 that declared Georgian hegemony over any sovereignty the Cherokees may claim, the English portion of the

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[63] Elias and Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, January 23, 1829, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 162.

[64] McLoughlin, 411-412.

Phoenix began more insistently drawing attention to the plight of the Cherokee and the immediate threat from Georgian aggression. In an article responding to claims of Georgian hegemony from the *Georgia Journal,* that Boudinot responds to in July of 1829 when he decries their claims regarding Cherokee attitudes:

> The eagerness which is manifested in Geo. To obtain the lands of the Cherokees has frequently led the journals of that state to deceive the people, by stating, that we are "making extensive preparations to remove to the west." So desirable is it to get rid of these troublesome Cherokees, that every flying report is grasped at as an undoubted fact, & spread abroad to the rejoicing of the thousands… No sooner does this statement make its appearance, before we had time to take breath, & certainly before we had the opportunity of contradicting it, it is copied into many papers, and now there is hardly a paper with which we have the honor of exchanging, but what has informed the readers that "The Cherokee are making extensive preparations to remove.[65]

In this case, Boudinot is attempting damage control of the situation created by the article from the *Georgia Journal* as affiliates of the *Phoenix*, papers that would republish articles from the Cherokee paper, were picking up the story published in the *Georgia Journal* and reporting it to their subscribers before the Cherokee had opportunity to address it. The reports that readers would receive from Georgian or pro-removal periodicals, as indicated in the excerpt from the *Georgia Journal*, would claim willingness on the part of the Cherokee to remove to West of the Mississippi, not reflecting the general attitude of the entire tribe. As such, the *Phoenix* had the responsibility of disseminating the prevailing attitude of the Cherokee and the tribe's leaders to its subscribers in an effort to counter the disinformation being spread by pro-removal sources.

As the situation between the Cherokee and Georgia grew worse, Boudinot began charging President Jackson as directly responsible for whatever fate may befall the

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[65] *Cherokee Phoenix*, July 15, 1829, in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 109-110.

Cherokee, given his position. In September 1829, Boudinot accuses Jackson of dealing out "forked justice" to the Cherokee in with his handling of the conflicts along the Georgia/Cherokee border, failing to "execute her own laws."[66] Boudinot subverted the contemporary trope of Indians as "savages" by his detail of Georgian aggression towards the Cherokee, painting the Georgians as the real savages for their vicious attacks on Cherokee settlements. Boudinot accused President Jackson of not fulfilling the duties of his office by enforcing United States policies in Indian country via Indian Agents who acted under the Secretary of War, John Eaton. Because precedent dictated that the Cherokee were dealt with as a sovereign power through the intercourse acts, it was Jackson's responsibility as executive of the United States to oversee the implementation of United States law regarding the Cherokee Nation. Pleas and cries for assistance to Indian Agent Col. Hugh Montgomery were falling upon deaf ears and an unresponsive executive branch. Corruption within the executive branch was revealed in 1829 when Col. Montgomery allowed a white man to start a farm on Cherokee land and, upon complaint from the Cherokee Council, removed the man only to replace him with his own son-in-law and seize another farm about 100 miles removed from his headquarters and to lay in the possession of a close relative.[67]

In February 1830 when a Cherokee was killed by white intruders from Georgia, Boudinot's position regarding the tense relationship was revealed in his admitted

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[66] *Cherokee Phoenix*, September 9, 1829, in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 111.

[67] John Ross to Andrew Jackson, April 6, 1829, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross, vol. 1*, ed. Gary E. Moulton, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 159-160.

gladness that it was a Cherokee who first suffered a fatal encounter.[68] A Cherokee assault upon whites would most assuredly create pandemonium along the border with Georgia leading most likely to the formation of militias and posses to retaliate against innocent Cherokee. Since the crime was committed by the white intruders, blame could be placed squarely upon whites intruding into Cherokee land with the Cherokee as victims, further complicating the depiction of the Cherokee as savages.

As Andrew Jackson continued to fail to uphold the United States responsibilities in respect to the Cherokee, tensions in Georgia and Cherokee territory continued to rise as Georgians grew more emboldened in their intrusions into Cherokee lands, particularly after the discovery of gold in 1829. Upon the discovery, squatters and gold hunters swarmed across the border with claims that they were acting under the encouragement of Georgian leaders. Although agents had driven off Georgian intruders form the gold mines in Cherokee lands, they had not pursued warrants for the trespass, particularly given that mining the gold was illegal for both Cherokee *and* whites, according to Georgia law.[69] Since they were not prosecuted, it was likely that many of the trespassers filtered back into Cherokee country and the gold mines. In the mind of Boudinot, this was an indication that the Georgian government wasn't punishing intruders into Cherokee land.

Given the legislative and popular desire for land in Cherokee country, there was little drive to prosecute the perpetrators who, if anything, likely received little more than

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[68]"First Blood Shed by the Georgians!!", *Cherokee Phoenix*, February 10, 1830, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18300210b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

[69]"Intruders," *Cherokee Phoenix*, April 7, 1830, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18300407b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

a slap on the wrist. Boudinot addresses the situation with the intruders into Cherokee territory directly and fervently, launching a stinging indictment against figures in the Georgian government and society as well as President Jackson:

> It cannot be questioned but that they are encouraged by some of the leading men of the neighboring counties, by the lawyers especially, who will stand "between them and all danger." This is no great matter of surprise when it is known that some of the *officers of the United States* have been clandestinely encouraging intruders into the nation- we do not mean the United States' agent, but the *appraisers*. A number of the intruders with whom the late difficulties existed, have lately certified that they came into the nation through the encouragement given to them by these appraisers, who told them that it was perfectly safe to take possession of all the improvements abandoned by the [Cherokee] emigrants, and that this encouragement was given, as they understood from the appraisers, upon authority of a letter from the President of the United States, -and furthermore, some of these certifiers heard the letter read![70]

While Boudinot questions the existence of a letter from Jackson, he does not discount the encouragement from government officials in Georgia regarding the intruders. As concerned as Boudinot was with the Cherokee predicament, it is altogether likely that he was aware that throughout the history of land seizures upon Native Americans, once American settlers became entrenched in Indian lands, they were notoriously hard to remove. Many Americans, and Boudinot, were just as likely to be aware of this fact, particularly since Jackson owed his election, in large part, to the populations along the frontier who repeatedly butted into Indian lands and elected Jackson on his reputation of being hard on Indians.

For nearly all his life, Boudinot was a champion of the ability of acculturation to negate the differences from the Indian and White, but with antagonists along the Georgia/Cherokee border, his lifetime conviction was being sorely tested. The Georgians

[70] "Intruders."

and the United States Government continued to reveal themselves as more interested in national and internal interests than the well-being of their Cherokee neighbors, or in the case of the President, "his redchildren."[71] Using the *Cherokee Phoenix*, Boudinot hoped to provide a Cherokee voice to his white subscribers in the East. While the *Phoenix* contained Cherokee-language articles for Boudinot's fellow countrymen, the paper's more important role was to communicate the advances and position of the Cherokee to foster support among Americans who would be able to incite their own elected representatives to take up legislation that favored the Cherokee position, namely their rights to their land and the integrity of their national sovereignty. With Andrew Jackson's landslide election, popular opinion in the United States, particularly in the South, was decidedly in favor of the Tennessean statesmen and the frontier-spirit he represented. With Georgia's redoubled efforts to claim sovereignty over Cherokee lands from the tribe and impose their own primacy over the Cherokee Nation, the outlook for the tribe appeared bleak.

The Georgians had long coveted the Cherokee land in the northwestern part of the state, land which was essential in the successful development of the state's western trade as the United States stretched to the Mississippi.[72] At the turn of the century, Georgia coveted the goal of expanding their land claims to the east, but the United States federal government had recently made peace with the renegade Chickamauga and didn't want to chance the conflict renewing, so convinced the Georgians that they would obtain the land eventually from the Cherokee on behalf of the state. The period of the 1820s and 1830s

[71] *Cherokee Phoenix,* September 9, 1829, 111.

[72] Lumpkin, 42.

was a boom period in the United States as the Nation's population exploded driving settlement further towards the Mississippi River but the federal government had not yet fulfilled its promise to remove the Cherokee. The Cherokee Nation's location was an impediment for Georgia to take part in that expansion, disrupting trade with white settlers in the west. Access to the Mississippi River was a goal for all Americans in the west of the Appalachian because of the potential for trade the great river offered, allowing farmers and merchants alike to send their wares down the Mississippi to the port at New Orleans where the goods could then be sent to the East Coast or Europe. With the Cherokee blocking Georgian expansion and access to lands that would aid the state in building the infrastructure and easing travel for those travelling west, the tribe made itself an adversary to Georgian interests.

The Georgians were also frustrated by baffling sets of laws extending over the Cherokee Nation, all of which seemed to contradict each other.[73] The United States enforced its intercourse laws for the Cherokee government, while the Cherokee themselves established their own laws and constitution while residing in land that was promised to Georgia by the United States in 1802. The Georgian authorities, by the 1830s long tired of navigating complicated treaties to acquire land they believed was rightfully the state's, were unlikely to cease attempts to claim Cherokee land, even at the insistence of the President of the United States.

[73]Lumpkin, 43.

Chapter 3

By using the *Phoenix*, Elias Boudinot was able to spread the message of the Cherokee's plight to allies in the United States but despite the support of northern reform groups, the United States and Georgia still pursued their aims of removing the Cherokee to the west. The progress achieved by the Cherokee during acculturation, besides improving the plight of the Cherokee people, was furthermore a means to prove that the tribe and its people were just as capable of attaining a civilized society, living the same as their white neighbors, and existing as a Christian society worthy of nationhood and self-sovereignty in its traditional homeland. Desire for the Cherokee's lands resulted in Georgians disregarding advancements made by the Cherokee and seeking to undermine their sovereignty.

Georgia gradually passed laws and resolutions reinforcing their dominion over the Cherokee in an effort to negate the tribe's sovereignty for the benefit of the state and its citizens, and kept insisting that it was in the Cherokee's best interest to remove west. Wilson Lumpkin, governor of Georgia from 1831 to 1835 placed the blame for the Cherokees' suffering upon those who would, "…defeat the best and most reasonable plans which can be devised for the salvation of the poor, perishing, and afflicted aborigines of this country."[74] By resting the blame at the feet of the missionaries, Lumpkin indicted them for convincing the Cherokee to remain in a situation that would only end in their ultimate removal and prolonging the pain that would come with it.

As Samuel Worcester and Eliza Butler, two missionaries to the Cherokee, languished in a Georgian jail for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to Georgia while in Cherokee country they and their fellow missionaries from the ABCFM had to think

[74] Lumpkin, 56.

seriously about the proposition that pro-removal parties put forth, that by remaining the Cherokee were dragging out their suffering. Added to the struggle with the Cherokee, the United States was undergoing with national crises such as the Bank War and the Nullification Crisis springing up and endangering national unity. With the national divisions exacerbated by social reformers in the North clamoring for abolition of slavery and the missionary groups pressing for the recognition of Cherokee sovereignty and obstinate states-rights advocates who wanted to disregard the dictates of the federal government who resided in the South, the nation was faced with a difficult dilemma: Were the interests of the Cherokee more important than the national cohesion of the United States?

The relationship between mission groups and the Cherokee Nation had been the firmament of the acculturation movement since 1817. As they aided Cherokee progression towards civilization, the missionaries were able to spread the word of the Lord, tying the two together as a unit. This support of the Cherokee furthered the missionaries' own goals of converting followers to Christ. By backing the Cherokee and their claims of sovereignty, the missionaries guaranteed the Cherokee a network of allies in the United States and the Cherokee would allow the missionaries to proselytize in their nation with official support toward the goals of conversion. Boudinot's connection to the missionaries helped facilitate this arrangement as he had close ties to both groups through blood and marriage. When the ABCFM began questioning the wisdom of the Cherokee's policies regarding removal, though, Boudinot's loyalties were split as well. Boudinot had to decide whether to heed the advice of his brother Cherokee who insisted that removal

wasn't an option or to heed that of his brothers in faith that removal should be considered.

Even though the decision of the Supreme Court in *Worcester v. Georgia* was in the Cherokee's favor, inaction on implementing the judicial branch's decision by the Jackson administration and a pro-Jackson majority in Congress made any interference from the General Government on the behalf of the Cherokee in their dispute with Georgia highly unlikely. Unrestrained aggression from Georgia with tacit approval from Washington made the clarified the problem that the Cherokee position was untenable. The Cherokee would be unable to hold off Georgians with arms and diplomatic overtures had failed. It was in this environment that the Cherokee were faced with the seeming inevitability of their removal to West of the Mississippi.

With the specter of removal looming more and more menacingly over them, the Cherokee leadership continued to hold out hope for a diplomatic solution that would allow the Cherokee to maintain their lands and sovereignty. The Cherokee had been able to endure since Jackson ascended to the presidency in 1829, and with his reelection campaign in 1832, there was hope that a more Indian-friendly president would defeat Jackson. To this end, several Cherokee statesmen, including Boudinot, spent time touring the East in late 1831 and 1832, first confronting Jackson and then touring primarily in the North East where Jackson's greatest concentration of opponents lied. The delegation was sent first to Washington to speak with Jackson regarding "the many grievous circumstances that beset the citizens of this nation, "and to remind him, "of the positive assurances of protection which he had made us" and to make clear that, "the Cherokee Nation will never consentingly abandon this country to remove west of the

Mississippi river."[75] Ross wanted his representatives to remind Jackson of the laws that he, as President, had sworn to uphold, most particularly the treaties with the Cherokee. His response, which the Cherokee likely presumed would be the most recent in a string of refusals, would justify the second mission of the delegation: to incite the allies of the Cherokee against Jackson and his fellow Democrats in the upcoming election. Boudinot along with his cousin John Ridge, again perhaps the best-spoken, educated, and acculturated men of the delegation, toured the East as the face of the tribe when interacting with white benefactors. In the upcoming elections, it would be necessary for the opponents of Jackson's election to be as united as possible in hopes of defeating the incumbent.

It was during this trip, actually being among Americans where Boudinot and his fellow delegates began to consider their position, and that of the entire Cherokee Nation, untenable in the face of American politics. After meeting with the friends of the Cherokee in Congress, Boudinot summarized, "…true friends in Congress, and elsewhere, have signified that they can do us no good."[76] Upon coming to Washington, the Cherokee delegation found the United States was dealing with important domestic policies such as the rechartering of the nation's banks and the simmering tensions surrounding tariffs imposed by the United States that fostered sectional conflict between the South and North. Such domestic controversies necessitated the concentration of Congress and the Executive Branch while gripping the attention of the American public.

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[75] John Ross to John Martin, John Ridge, and William S. Coodey, December 1, 1831, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross, vol. 1,* ed. Gary E. Moulton, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 222.

[76] Elias Boudinot, "To the Readers of the *Cherokee Phoenix*," *Cherokee Phoenix*, August 11, 1832, in Georgia Historic Newspapers, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/News/chrkphnx/18320811b.pdf (accessed February 7, 2014).

With such an important matter, popular interest in the plight of the Cherokee fell by the wayside.

A meeting held between part of the Cherokee delegation and Judge John McLean, a Supreme Court Justice, provided insight into the Cherokee situation. Judge McLean spelled out to the delegation that while the Court had done its duty in the case of *Worcester v. Georgia,* that is affirming the Cherokee Nation's sovereign powers, Jackson would be unlikely to act and even allowing for a change in administration with the election in 1833, Georgia would then have to voluntarily submit to the Supreme Court's decision, which was equally unlikely.[77] Though he was likely not at the meeting, due to his tour throughout the East, Boudinot would still receive the report second-hand from his fellows. Despite any aid the Cherokee may be able to garner from their allies in the United States, an uncaring executive branch under Jackson wouldn't follow through on measures to protect the integrity of the Cherokee Nation's sovereignty. This assertion discouraged hopes that a change in the United States administration would result in a stronger position for the tribe.

Complicating the matter further, the Nullification Crisis in South Carolina could potentially lead to similar aggressive presses for states' rights at a time when Jackson was facing an upcoming election and sectional conflicts arising from various popular reform movements in the North such as abolition. In South Carolina, growing frustration with the federal government regarding the so-called "Tariff of Abomination," passed in 1828 was leading to murmurings supporting secession in the face of what South Carolina

[77] John Ross to William Wirt, June 8, 1832, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross, vol. 1*, ed. Gary E. Moulton, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 245.

perceived as onerous taxes.[78] The political will of most of the nation was in preventing the secession of South Carolina, but with the insistence that the tariffs remain. Until he was faced with the results of *Worcester v. Georgia*, Jackson likely had little compunction with the imposing of federal tariffs by force of arms if necessary. South Carolina was only a single state and, should it rise up against federal authority, the results would serve as an example to other states that wished to ignore federal supremacy in similar matters. However, after *Worcester v. Georgia*, the issue was complicated. Should he enforce the federal government's authority over the states in South Carolina, he would then be obliged to do the same in Georgia regarding the federal recognition of the Cherokee sovereignty, via the Supreme Court, despite Georgia's protests. To take this measure, Jackson and the federal government would then strengthen southern sentiment against the federal union, further fanning the flames of secessionist rhetoric. To this point, Jackson had been successful in isolating South Carolina's sentiments regarding secession due in part to his strong stance on Indian removal.

Ultimately, Jackson was able to sidestep the issue since the United States' agents, appealing to the patriotic interests of the missionaries, were able to convince Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler to sacrifice their own interests for the good of the entire nation.[79] Should they continue in their appeals to the Supreme Court to have the United States enforce the court's decision upon Georgia, the very integrity of the United States was at stake. Eventually both the men, as well as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, agreed to give up the Cherokee cause in favor of the integrity of the

[78] McLoughlin, 445.

[79] McLoughlin, 446.

United States. This betrayal held dire consequences for the Cherokee who had up to that point held the missionaries up as heroes and champions of the Cherokee people but now left them alone to face the full force of the United States.

To the Cherokee, the missionaries had long been stalwart allies in the face of American aggression. The missionaries were champions of Christianity and civilization who found in the tribe a godly cause worth championing. The Cherokee were a people seeking to improve themselves through taking on trappings of white culture and moving toward a way of life seen as respectable by Americans. The missionaries, sponsored by the ABCFM, served to champion literacy, education, and the adoption of various agricultural techniques meant to make more efficient use of the land. Over the course of several decades from the first establishment in Spring Place, the missionaries had interwoven within Cherokee society, becoming friends and, in some cases, family. Recognizing the importance of the missionaries to the Cherokee, the Georgia legislature passed a series of laws that would restrict the ability of whites to remain in Cherokee country without swearing an oath of loyalty to the state of Georgia, which would betray the Cherokee. Butler and Worcester refused to do this, leading to the case of *Worcester vs. Georgia*. The ultimate admission of guilt resulted from letters being sent to Butler and Worcester from the leadership of the ABCFM urging them to do so, followed by a letter to John Ross explaining that further resistance on the part of the Cherokee was useless and that the Cherokee should negotiate the best possible treaty and remove west, for their own sake.[80]

[80] McLoughlin, 446.

With the withdrawal of their allies in the United States from their side and now advocating Removal to the west, Boudinot decided to follow their logic that the Cherokee were suffering with no chance of success in sight. Reaching this conclusion, Boudinot attempted to open a discussion addressing the possibility of removal with his fellow Cherokee, broaching the "Cherokee Question," publicly for the first time. Because of his staunch opposition for removal and optimism that the Cherokee would find a way to remain in their homelands, Principal Chief Ross refused to allow the question to be addressed in a public forum. These two former allies now had to face off in the political arena. Elias Boudinot would have to survive the political arena relying on his birth family, many of them politicians, to counsel him through these times as he debated with John Ross regarding the proposition for the Cherokee removal to west of the Mississippi River.

Upon the realization that there was no aid coming from their allies in the United States and the Cherokee were at the mercy of Georgian interests, Boudinot and like-minded Cherokee sought to open a discussion of the "Cherokee Question," within the tribe, but Ross and the Nation's leadership were opposed to any divisive rhetoric that would fracture the tribe. As the editor of the *Phoenix*, Boudinot had a platform from which to bring up the national discussion of the matter within the tribe. As an essential tool in the promotion of literacy and the spread of ideas throughout the tribe, the newspaper provided an ideal forum to discuss the serious matters facing the nation. Holding Boudinot back from taking this course was the fact that the *Phoenix* was a state-funded entity with its content subject to the discretion of the National Council and

because the Council did not want to introduce the possibility of voluntary removal as a viable option, it restricted Boudinot from pursuing his desired discussion.

In response to this restriction, Boudinot tendered his resignation as Editor-in-Chief of the *Cherokee Phoenix* to Chief John Ross, publishing his letter of resignation in the *Phoenix*. Boudinot's chief rationale for his resignation was rooted in the fact that he could not conscientiously publish a periodical which ostensibly ignored what Boudinot perceived as the direst issue facing the nation, namely the impending forced removal of the Cherokee to west of the Mississippi. Because of its popularity and circulation within the Cherokee Nation, the *Phoenix* served as the best possible medium to inform the tribe as to the situation facing them, a fact Boudinot surely realized. Boudinot felt that it was the duty of every Cherokee to, "reflect upon the dangers with which we are surrounded…to talk over all these matters, and, if possible, come to some definite and satisfactory conclusion…"[81] As the conflicts with Georgia became hotter and the chance of federal intervention on the Cherokee behalf faded, it seemed more and more likely that the Cherokee would have to adapt to the situation to the best of their abilities. Boudinot hoped that a national discussion on the issue would lead to a way that the Cherokee could peaceably resolve the situation in the best manner possible, essentially making the best of a bad situation.[82] Boudinot's experiences in Washington likely led to his belief that the time the Cherokee had to prepare for their final negotiations with Georgia and the United States was winding down and the tribe should use what time they have left to prepare for the inevitable treaty negotiation that would either result in the tribe's relocation west or

[81] Boudinot, "To the Readers of the *Cherokee Phoenix.*"

[82] Boudinot, "To the Readers of the *Cherokee Phoenix*."

the nation's dissolution as former Cherokee territory became property of the United States and the tribe subjects of whatever state their part of the nation was located within.

Though Boudinot thought to use the *Cherokee Phoenix* as a platform for the tribe to debate these matters, the influence of the Cherokee National Council prevented that possibility. As a state-sponsored entity, the subject matter of the *Phoenix* was at the discretion of the Cherokee's political leaders. It was this aspect of the paper's existence that ultimately led Boudinot to part ways with the *Phoenix*. Unlike the United States Constitution, that of the Cherokee did not guarantee freedom of the press, so even if Boudinot were able to acquire the means to print another paper similar to the *Phoenix*, he could not be sure that the National Council would let him do so in Cherokee Territory. In response to Boudinot's resignation, Chief John Ross told the tribal council that, "The toleration of *diversified views* to the columns of [the *Phoenix*] would not fail to create fermentation and confusion among our own citizens, and in the end prove injurious to the welfare of the nation."[83] Ross saw the same situation as Boudinot: American interest in the Cherokee's plight was at an all-time low in the face of their pressing domestic matters like the Nullification Crisis and the debates about slavery in new states and the U.S. expanded westward. Ross's concern, though, was that the Cherokee Nation would need to be as strongly unified as possible in the face of the Georgian blitz into Cherokee country.

Many land seizures committed by the United States, and the colonies before the American Revolution, stemmed from canny American speculators exploiting fractures

[83] John Ross, "To the Committee and Council in General Council convened:," in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 165.

with the various tribes. Surely aware of this fact, Ross's wariness is understandable. Should the opinion of the tribe, which was at this time almost universally against removal, split regarding migration West, the Cherokee would find themselves in a much weaker bargaining position with the United States. Indian agents in the territory would be able to gauge where to guide the negotiations to take advantage of the internal disunity. As Ross points out in his address to the General Council, the majority of Cherokee agree with the council's position regarding removal.[84] Opening the subject for debate would only take away from the solidarity of the nation in the face of removal pressures; the United States was already trying to use the Arkansas Cherokee, who had emigrated decades prior, to convince the eastern portion of the tribe to remove.

The Cherokee had achieved a great deal since they began their progress toward acculturation, establishing essential infrastructure connecting the disparate parts of the Nation, transforming a collection of relatively isolated townships into a formal nation, organized under a constitution and central government. Should the Cherokee remove to the west, they would have to build from scratch what took centuries to erect. Because of this, Ross felt that if the Cherokee could not exist in the east, where they already possessed farms, mills, roads and other essential cornerstones of civilized society, they wouldn't be able to maintain their society in the west, where they would have to create all this over again.[85] This fact was not addressed by the group of Cherokee who would come to be known as the Treaty Party, who instead believed that removal west would remove them from the depredations of the Americans, even if it meant the sacrifice of all they

[84] Ross, "To the Committee and Council in General Council convened:," 165.

[85] McLoughlin, 449.

had achieved in their homeland. To be sure, annuities and payment for the land ceded would go to pay for the creation of infrastructure in the Indian Territory to which the Cherokee would remove, but the struggle would be from establishing a national infrastructure from nothing.

Despite Boudinot's beliefs, the majority of Cherokee did not align with his ideology regarding the tribe's prospects. The general population that did not speak or read English was likely not as informed as events in the United States as men like Ross and Boudinot, both of whom had regular correspondence with contacts in the United States and whose positions within the nation necessitated their attention to developments with the Americans. Of more concern to the average Cherokee were the changes the tribe was going through, becoming a nation of planters and merchants instead of warriors and hunters. Progress towards civilization was in full force in Cherokee country, in spite of the policies enacted by the Georgian legislature to diminish the Cherokee Nation.

Boudinot, however, insisted that Chief Ross was keeping the Cherokee in the dark regarding the Nation's predicament and should the Cherokee learn of the truth of their precarious possession of the homeland, the majority would surely wish to remove west away from the depredations sought against them by their white neighbors.[86] While the truth of this statement can never be known, it is telling that Ross kept his countrymen in the dark regarding the reality of their position. Boudinot accused Ross of not dealing plainly with his countrymen regarding the Cherokee's prospective fate.[87] Ross may have

[86] Elias Boudinot, "Resolutions," in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 177.

feared the retribution the Cherokee would take against whites upon learning of their mistreatment by their erstwhile allies in the federal government. The nation was just over a generation removed from the Chickamauga Wars, but many of the young bucks who had taken part were now older, influential men in the Nation, such as Major Ridge. Should a Chickamauga veteran inspire young men to take up arms against the whites that treated so deceitfully with their nation, the ramifications for the Cherokee could be, without exaggeration, genocidal. Reflecting upon the situation, Boudinot later writes, "Instead of contending uselessly against superior power, the only course left, was, to yield to circumstances over which they had no control."[88]

Continually pressed as they were by Georgians, and without support of the United States, Boudinot eventually decided that the answer to the "Cherokee Question" was for the nation to remove itself to the West, away from their persecutors to be able to govern themselves independently of white governments. Boudinot saw the continued aggressive legislation against the Cherokee and their interests by Georgia, the desire to absorb Cherokee territory into the state and have the tribe's citizens subject to onerous laws as tantamount to putting the Cherokee into a state similar to that of the American's black slaves. With laws restricting the Cherokee ability to testify in Georgian courts, the Cherokee, in the best case, were to live as third-class citizens behind rich whites, then poor whites, little better than slaves. The Cherokee had seen the Creek capitulate to Georgian demands earlier in the 1830s only to face oppression and fraud before

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[87] Elias Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 178.

[88] *Cherokee Phoenix*, "To the Public."

emigrating west of the Mississippi.[89] Georgia held all the cards and with tensions so high, all that was needed was a spark, such as a Cherokee killing a Georgian, even in self defense, to ignite an armed conflagration that would consume and destroy the Cherokee Nation. Boudinot summarizes in his "Resolutions,":

> *Resolved* That is our decided opinion, founded upon the melancholy experience of the Cherokees within the last two years, and upon facts which history has furnished us in regard to other Indian nations, our people cannot exist amidst a white population, subject to laws which they have no hand in making, and which they do not understand; that the suppression of the Cherokee Government, which connected this people in a distinct community, will not only check their progress in improvement and advancement in knowledge, but, by means of numerous influences and temptations which this new state of things has created, will completely destroy every thing like civilization among them, and ultimately reduce them to poverty, misery, and wretchedness.[90]

By removing the nation west, away from the Georgians, the Cherokee would be free from the laws that Georgia imposed upon the Cherokee.

Boudinot's change in perspective regarding the "Cherokee Question," seems timed coincidentally with the same change from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as well as his close friend Samuel Worcester. Boudinot had been accused during his tenure of being too influenced by the beliefs and opinions of his missionary acquaintances that some detractors saw as holding too much sway in the way Boudinot executed his duties as Editor-in-Chief of the *Cherokee Phoenix*.[91] Considering this accusation years later when he again changes his viewpoint of the Cherokee's plight after the ABCFM changed theirs is worth noting. While it could be seen as Boudinot again towing to the beliefs of his missionary contacts, it is just as likely that the betrayal

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[89] Boudinot, "Resolutions," 177.

[90] Boudinot, "Resolutions," 175-176.

[91] Elias and Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, January 23, 1829, 162.

of the Cherokee by the ABCFM reminded Boudinot of the controversy surrounding his engagement to Harriett Gold in 1825 and how the missionary community turned on he and his fiancé. Seeing the last group prominently behind the Cherokee's rights to their land flee from their side, Boudinot may have finally accepted defeat, believing that the Cherokee Nation could not stand alone against Georgia and the United States.

Regardless of Boudinot's relationship with the ABCFM and his erstwhile ally Samuel Worcester, after his resignation from the *Phoenix*, he became the chief spokesmen for the group of Cherokee politicians who promoted removal that would come to be known as the Treaty Party. This group was comprised of many former members of the Cherokee Council who had been impeached for bringing up the discussion of the "Cherokee Question," and having opinions that differed from those entertained by the leadership of the council.[92] Ross had already denied Boudinot the opportunity to discuss the question in the *Phoenix* where the public could be exposed to the "divisive rhetoric" and subsequently denied his own fellow councilmen to discuss the matter among themselves in the Council.

The greatest threat to the Cherokee advancement, Boudinot believed, was becoming subsumed by Americans, subject to American law that the Cherokee had no voice in creating. The Cherokee Nation, which took part in the plantation system that thrived in the South, saw how the whites treated their black slaves and may have seen a similar fate in store the Cherokee should their sovereignty be disregarded by Georgian authorities. By moving west, Boudinot saw the opportunity for the Cherokee to govern

[92] Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," 175.

themselves, according to their own rule of law without interference from state governments challenging their sovereignty.[93]

Boudinot had his answer to the "Cherokee Question," but was faced with an obstinate Ross who was adamantly against removal and actively took measures to hinder potential treaty negotiations and seemingly left Boudinot and the Treaty Party no choice but to go behind Ross and the Council's back and sign away the Cherokee land. At root in Boudinot's decision was his deep devotion to both his people and his God, and his sincere belief that there would be less suffering in exile than in their homeland. If Ross had painted Boudinot as a villain and enemy of the Cherokee people before, his party's signing of the treaty removing the nation would most certainly bring that painting to life in the minds of his fellow Cherokee. But to Boudinot, he was making a sacrifice of himself to his people's welfare, taking upon himself a self-sacrificing burden not unlike that of the God that he worshipped.

On December 27, 1835, the Treaty Party signed the Treaty of New Echota with the United States, believing that the Nation's efforts to remain in the East after Andrew Jackson's successful election in 1833 was causing more harm than it was worth. Boudinot led this group, comprised primarily of young men who had come to age during the acculturation movement, more educated than their elders, thanks to missionary schools, more exposed to western ideas and mostly mixed-blooded. Perhaps because of their education level, significantly higher than that of the majority of the Cherokee Nation, they took it upon themselves to negotiate a treaty behind the back of the Cherokee National Council and its leaders. Boudinot sets out the logic of his actions,

[93] Boudinot, "Resolutions", 176

stating that, "If one hundred persons are ignorant of their true situation, and are so completely blinded as not to see the destruction that awaits them, we can see strong reasons to justify the action of a minority of fifty persons-to do what the majority *would do* if they understood their condition- to save a *nation* from political thralldom and moral degradation."[94] The presumption of Boudinot's argument, though, ignored the reality that the Cherokee population was 15,000 souls and the treaty party was a tiny fraction in comparison, drastically different from the 50/50 metaphor Boudinot used. Therefore the Treaty Party took it upon themselves to negotiate a treaty with Commissioners William Carroll and J.F. Schermerhorn from the United States who had come to the Cherokee Nation to obtain said treaty. They explained their reasons to Ross in a letter, "…there was no alternative left but either to linger out another miserable year, subject to all the privations incident upon the oppressive legislation of the States, or immediately to settle the perplexed difficulties by a treaty arrangement," and asked him to ratify it, as he had travelled to Washington to meet with Jackson in person even though Ross had been told Jackson wouldn't be able to meet with him.[95]

Despite his detractor's claims of Boudinot's blind devotion to the missionaries, all of his actions leading to the signing of the Treaty of New Echota indicated instead that he cared deeply for his brethren in the Cherokee Nation, regardless of the stance of the ABCFM. Though he did not grow up among many other Cherokee, he still had a deep connection and concern for his fellow countrymen. While he was labeled a traitor for his

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[94] Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," 162.

[95] Major Ridge, James Foster, Long Shere, and others to John Ross and others, February 5, 1836, in *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot*, ed. Theda Perdue (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 196-197.

advocacy of considering removal as an option for the tribe, his intuition led him to believe that there was no other good option left to the Cherokee.[96] Growing up separated from his own culture, though, led to a distance from other Cherokee. When he returned to live in the Cherokee Nation full time after his marriage in 1826 and took on the role of editor of the *Phoenix* in 1828, he worked and associated in a world separate from that of the average Cherokee citizen, working and corresponding with American contacts in the United States and working alongside missionaries like Samuel Worcester. Boudinot and his wife admit to Boudinot's lack of leisure time and regular exhaustion by working so often without an assistant at the *Phoenix*.[97] His heavy work schedule at the *Phoenix* may have led to his only acquaintances being those men he worked with, such as Worcester, and his lack of leisure time outside of the office, he had little opportunity to connect with other Cherokee particularly when they still reveled in some old traditions like the ball play, which Boudinot did not attend due to the primitive nature relegated to the game. Despite this, Boudinot makes claims of his countrymen being sunk in, "misery and degradation."[98] Boudinot never makes clear his sources or names specific instances of atrocities, save for the instances of a few attacks detailed in the *Phoenix*.

Marrying a devout woman and working closely with missionaries who were working to spread their gospel to Cherokee by helping develop their written language all reinforced the teachings of his childhood in the missionary schools. Because of how

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[96] Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," 161.

[97] Harriett Gold Boudinot to Herman and Flora Gold Vaill, January 7, 1831, in *To Marry an Indian: The Marriage of Harriett Gold and Elias Boudinot in Letters, 1823-1839*, ed. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 172-173.

[98] Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," 185.

integral his faith was to his being, Boudinot felt he was acting as his brother's keeper as he advocated for, and eventually signed, the treaty that would ensure the Cherokee removal west. As a Christian, Boudinot understood the importance of self-sacrifice and becoming a martyr for the greater good. Like Moses standing up to Pharaoh, Boudinot sought to become the shepherd of the Cherokee and lead them to a land free from oppression where they would have the opportunity to live without interference from the oppressive elements in the United States.

After the signing of the Treaty of New Echota, Ross, who objected to it, resisted the implementation of the treaty, again claiming he was following the will of the Cherokee. Boudinot, however, pointed out that Ross had made the same argument for five years with the Cherokee's situation growing worse, "all their institutions and improvements utterly destroyed- their energy enervated- their moral character debased, corrupted, and ruined."[99] This description of the Cherokee's situation reveals Boudinot's penchant for hyperbole, but his indictment of Ross's defense has merit in that much of the recent trouble and turmoil among the Cherokee and their uncertain future could have been avoided since the resolution of *Worcester v. Georgia*. With the ABCFM determining removal was the best option for the Cherokee and withdrawing its political support for remaining, the Cherokee lacked any significant allies in the United States. Again, Boudinot's regular indictment that Ross failed to properly inform his constituents of the real situation that was facing the Cherokee rings true. If the Cherokee populace was ignorant to the goings on in the United States, and Ross refused to open the subject for discussion within the nation, the populace had only hearsay and rumors to rely upon.

[99] Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," 198.

Despite Ross's best attempts to halt or delay the removal west, the Trail of Tears, as the migration would come to be known, began in 1838 and saw the remaining Cherokee population, those who hadn't yet emigrated, rounded up by the United States military and marched forcibly to Indian Country, west of the Mississippi in present-day Oklahoma. Shortly after the Cherokee arrived, Boudinot, like the God he worshiped, was sacrificed, struck down by vengeful countrymen for his role in signing the Treaty of New Echota.

Conclusion

When his tribal brothers fell upon him with tomahawks and a bowie knife, Elias Boudinot gave up his spirit to the Almighty, martyred for being one of the signees of the Treaty of New Echota signing away the rights to the Cherokee homeland. The Ridges, John and Major, similarly met their own gruesome fates at almost the same for their roles in signing away the ancestral home of their tribe. Boudinot's attackers were disaffected young Cherokee, and disciples of Boudinot's rival, Principle Chief John Ross, who struck out at the traitors for aligning against the nation. [100] Elias Boudinot passed away on the 22nd of June, 1839, unable to enjoy what his life had bought for his people.

For almost forty years, the Cherokee Nation's chieftains slowly accepted the adoption of the characteristics of their white neighbors, attempting to accommodate their expectations and demands, since the United States had defeated the British in the American Revolution and subsequently claimed all land to the Mississippi as their own. The attack that ended Boudinot's life was the culmination of almost a decade's worth of frustration due to continuous legal battles between the Cherokee nation, the State of Georgia and the Federal Government of the United States. Doubt drove the average Cherokee to a fearful state, uncertain whether they would be able to stay on their ancestor's land or be forced to leave, like the removals of the Creek and Choctaw to which the Cherokee had born witness. By assuming the character of white culture, the Cherokee elites had sought to gain an equal footing to their neighbors to the east and be recognized as a legitimate sovereign nation.

Elias was born into a tribe just recovering from factional divisions left over from the Chickamauga conflict and just beginning to pull itself together to face the threat of

[100] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians,* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), 293.

encroaching white settlement and the loss of the tribe's traditional homelands with a new generation of mixed-blood Cherokee taking leadership of the tribe. Divisions between the Upper and Lower Town Cherokee that sprung up during the Chickamauga split from the older chiefs to fight a frontier campaign against white settlers. The mixed-blood leaders were able to negotiate the diplomatic ties with the United States more deftly than their full-blooded counterparts by virtue of the lifetime of exposure to both the English language and white culture. The acculturation movement, championed by these mixed-blooded leaders, provided a means both to modernize the Cherokee political landscape as well as its social culture. Because of the lack of a strong economy in the Cherokee Nation, the tribe allowed missionaries to begin founding mission schools both for the education they would provide the tribe's children and the infrastructure they would bring to the Nation.

To the missionaries who championed the causes of the Cherokee in the United States and spread their gospel to the tribe, Elias Boudinot was the ideal example of what a Cherokee who embraced the gospel could achieve. As a product of a western education obtained from the missionary schools in Spring Place and Cornwall, Connecticut, Boudinot was able to appeal to white audiences, including philanthropists who upon meeting Boudinot could easily speculate as to the effectiveness of the mission schools in educating and uplifting the Native Americans. This role, in addition to serving to prove the importance of mission schools to potential donors, was also utilized to the benefit of the Cherokee Nation as Boudinot underwent political and fundraising missions in the United States, serving as the face of the Nation on political and goodwill trips.

While Boudinot served as the voice of the Cherokee as editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* after 1826, aided by the missionaries from the ABCFM including Samuel Worcester, the Cherokee experienced both the exciting vigor of the acculturation movement as well as an emerging persistence from Georgia to assert their own sovereignty of the Cherokee homelands over the sovereignty of the tribe. Though he was often worked to the point of exhaustion at the *Phoenix*'s office, Boudinot was able to appeal to both his Cherokee audience and his white friends and patrons in the North by publishing articles on the importance of temperance. As the editor of the *Phoenix*, Boudinot was allowed to live among his fellow tribesmen in the Cherokee Nation, but because of his workload at the *Phoenix,* he often had no leisure time, leaving him isolated from his Cherokee peers. The primary source of companionship, save for his wife, was with men like Samuel Worcester who helped Boudinot publish the *Phoenix*.

Though the missionaries were allies of the Cherokee, championing their acculturation and serving as their advocates in the United States, their conclusion in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in *Worcester v. Georgia* was a reversal of their previous stance that it was in the Cherokees' best interest to remain upon their traditional homeland. It was this decision by the ABCFM that caused Boudinot to make a decision that put him at odds with his fellow Cherokee. Boudinot came to the same conclusion as his missionary allies that it was in the best interest of the Cherokee to remove to the West.

For the United States, the issue of Cherokee removal in the aftermath of *Worcester v. Georgia* proved to be an important moment of regional tension between the struggle of federal authority and state sovereignty. The tensions surrounding the regional

interests in the United States plagued Andrew Jackson during his tenure as president with both the controversy surrounding the 1828 Tariff of Abomination and the Nullification Crisis that led to many in South Carolina to press for secession from the Union. Pressure from Northern reform groups who were connected with supporters of the Cherokee and championed causes such as abolition served to exacerbate the situations as Jackson had to enforce federal authority in South Carolina while ensuring that the state was isolated in its calls for secession by not overly asserting itself in Georgia, the leadership of which had grown agitated with continued resistance to Georgian claims upon Cherokee land. Jackson has often been cited as the president who ignored the Supreme Court decision protecting the Cherokee Nation's sovereignty, but these claims have ignored the tense political situation at the time. Instead of being noted as an abuse of executive power, Jackson's actions should be thought of as a leader choosing the lesser of two evils.

Though his detractors claimed that his close relationship with the missionaries clouded his judgment, Boudinot's decision to sign the Treaty of New Echota was in line with his actions prior to the ABCFM's shift in policy. To Boudinot, the ABCFM's change in position indicated that the position was untenable now that the Cherokee were without the support of their most significant eastern ally; Boudinot and the ABCFM came to the same conclusion, but for different reasons. Boudinot, through his letters, appeared to be a devout man that cared deeply for the plight of his tribal brothers and sisters. Without an American ally to advocate for them, however, the Cherokee Nation did not have the necessary influence in the United States legislature to resist a determined Georgia and Executive Branch agenda that would see the Cherokee removed by force if necessary. Because of the bloodshed that would entail and the setback it would be to the

acculturation process, Boudinot determined that to sacrifice their traditional homeland was an equitable tradeoff if it meant preserving the tribe. In signing the treaty, Boudinot ultimately sacrificed his own reputation and life for what he felt was in the best interest of his people, even if they did not agree with his decision. As a western-educated mixed-blood, Boudinot was distinct from the majority of the full-blooded tribe and part of a small group of elites that led the tribe. Boudinot's cultural isolation from the tribe didn't allow him the same perspective that the tribal majority held and led to his acting on their behalf with the belief that he was acting in their best interested. Despite his altruism, Boudinot's confidence that his course was the best option for the tribe resulted in his acting without authority or legitimacy in signing the Treaty of New Echota alongside the Treaty Party.

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