

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

REPUBLIC ON THE RED RIVER:

DOCUMENTING CHOCTAW POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION FROM

REMOVAL TO RECONSTRUCTION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

CHRISTOPHER D. WILSON

Norman, Oklahoma

2022

REPUBLIC ON THE RED RIVER: DOCUMENTING CHOCTAW POLITICAL  
TRANSFORMATION FROM REMOVAL TO RECONSTRUCTION

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Gary C. Anderson, Chair

Dr. Raphael Folsom

Dr. Kimberly Weiser

© Copyright by CHRISTOPHER D. WILSON 2022

All Rights Reserved.

Table of Contents:

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Abstract .....           | v  |
| Terminology notice ..... | vi |
| Thesis .....             | 1  |
| Bibliography .....       | 30 |

Abstract:

The Trail of Tears left a stain upon American history, as a betrayal of the republic's founding principles: but out of the removal, a political transformation was underway in the Choctaw Nation. Under the leadership of men such as Mushulatubbee, Greenwood LeFlore, George W. Harkins, and Peter Pitchlynn, the Choctaw Nation progressed from its previous pre-removal tribal society into a post-removal democratic state. Operating as a republic under Western-proscribed understanding of law and government, the Choctaw maintained their distinct understanding of culture and the world, and knew their place in it depended on adaptation. The adoption of many Western ideas – Christianity, Western education, a bicameral legislature, a singular chief executive, and a written constitution – was both a demonstration to the United States of the Choctaws' ability to survive colonization and a declaration of the Choctaws' sovereignty from American power. The Choctaw emulated many colonized societies of the past – taking on the perceived benefits offered by the outside power while shunning that which they believed was detrimental to their interests, never losing sight of who they were. By analyzing sources left behind from those men who shaped tribal politics, as well as modern understandings of tribal politics by both Choctaw and non-Native scholars, this piece is meant to demonstrate the political transformation of the Choctaw state did not cost the nation its identity, but preserved it against all odds in an environment created to by a hostile power to facilitate their national destruction.

*Keywords:* democracy, colonization, adaptation, transformation, sovereignty

A notice about the use of certain terminology:

Please note that throughout this paper, I use the terms *Indian*, *American Indian*, *Native American*, and *Indigenous* interchangeably, while *Choctaw* is the norm as the tribe is the subject of this piece. As a citizen of the Choctaw Nation, I understand that certain people and contexts would be opposed to using one or many of these terms. However, based on how I was raised, how my grandfather taught me to identify us, I am not opposed to using them.

When one considers the development of Native tribes in the United States from the pre-colonial era to post-colonial relationships with both the federal and state governments, there were many different paths to take. Some mounted armed resistance, such as the Comanche and the Lakota, while other tribes sought resistance through a less-confrontational means. It was not a desire of appeasement towards the colonial expansion of the U.S., but a bid to see the nation, culture and people survive; the instinct of survival is inherent to every person and every culture. This was the path on which the Choctaw Nation found itself in 1830, with the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek by chiefs such as Greenwood LeFlore and Mushulatubbee and reviled by the populace as a surrender. The Trail of Tears followed, with estimates ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 Choctaws perishing. After this forced relocation to Indian Territory, the nation entered into a period of deep soul searching. The decades ranging from removal to post-Civil War reconstruction show a rapid and remarkable transformation not of the culture itself, at least not alone, but mainly of the political system by which the nation governed itself. This was exemplified in the transition from many de-centralized chiefs to a single chief executive, the shift from a pre-colonial council-governance system to a parliamentary republican system with a senate and house, utilization of voting, and adoption of a written constitution.

These changes, though brought about in response to attempted destruction and spurred by rising nationalist sentiments did, in a short period of time, transform the Choctaw Nation from a pre-colonial system into a republican form of government, modeled after the United States. The changes from pre-colonial to post-colonial were noted by several Choctaw of the day in their writings, including LeFlore and Mushulatubbee, but also in later letters from Chief Basil LeFlore and writings by Peter Pitchlynn, among others. It was also after the reservation was annexed to Oklahoma in 1907 that writers such as Angie Debo, Donna Akers, and others, both Native and

non-Native, sought to chronicle the Choctaws' revolutionary change in this era, and how it was the key to their survival as a tribe and as a culture. That will be the objective of this article: to display in context the sources of the period primarily from the removal up to Reconstruction and join with the later sources that drew on them to show the transformation of Choctaw society, and why the later authors saw the transformation not as a surrender to government-sponsored assimilation, but as a blueprint for future cultural revival.

The following two paragraphs are direct quotations from the Choctaw Delegation's letter to the United States Congress in 1825, preparing to address grievances and express admiration of the American political system, under which they believed they would receive fair representation. It was written primarily by Mushulatubbee, along with the American interpreter John Pitchlynn. It is included here to help establish the perspective of the Choctaw people prior to removal in their relationship with the United States and the influence of that country over their own.

“ As the representatives of the Choctaw Nation... we feel ourselves impelled, alike by duty and by inclination, to address you at the present crisis... You are an Assembly which we have been taught to consider the most august in the world, and into whose hands are committed the destinies of our people. To whom, then, could we properly address ourselves on the great points connected with our happiness and prosperity? Our good Father, the President, has spoken to you...he has recommended that all the Indians east of the Mississippi be persuaded to remove and establish themselves to the west, that a certain form of government be provided for them; and that the land to which they may remove, be secured to them forever...We have long been sensible to our weakness: and we know that, should the Government of the United States rise in hostility against us we must inevitably be exterminated, or driven to the west. We know that the extensive country which you now possess once belonged to our forefathers. We have heard that, from a small beginning, you have grown into a great and powerful people; and that, as you advanced, we receded; as you flourished, we decayed.”

“We have been tempted to ask, Why should this be so? Has the Great Spirit frowned upon his red children, that they should thus have withered in your presence? Yet we have been told from the Good Book, that he loves all his children alike: and that his greatest attribute is his infinite mercy. This we are most willing to believe: and, believing, we are led to the natural conclusion, that for some great end, only known to himself, he has permitted us to merit before you: but that the time must come, when his interposing hand will be outstretched on our behalf, and we be made to become like white men... You

have institutions to promote and disseminate the knowledge of every branch of science: you have a government, and you have laws, all founded upon those principle of liberty and equality which have every been dear to us. For, in all our vicissitudes of fortune we have never been the slaves of any power: and we trust in the Great Spirit, we never shall be. The theory of your Government is, justice and good faith to all men. You will not submit to injury from one party because it is powerful: nor will you oppress another because it is weak. Impressed with that persuasion, we are confident our rights will be respected.”<sup>1</sup>

It was this belief in genuine goodwill on behalf of the United States that led many Choctaw leaders to believe they could reason with them. However, land fever was soon to strike the new country, and no Native nation would be spared in the epidemic that was to follow. It was out of this moment that a class of politically savvy Choctaw leaders rose to command the discussion and seek to save what could be saved by war or compromise.

To understand why men like Greenwood LeFlore, a well-educated, mixed-blood Choctaw who favored relocation, and Mushulatubbee, a full-blood Choctaw who at one time opposed relocation, could come to an agreement on the issue in 1830, one must first understand what led the Choctaw to this position. The death of the chiefs Apukshunubbee (c. 1740–1824) and Pushmataha (c. 1764–1824) within two months of each other left a power vacuum in the tribal government, where at the time, three chiefs were elected by each of the three districts to represent the people in council. This allowed the rise of new leadership under people like LeFlore and George W. Harkins, who were educated in Tennessee and Kentucky, respectively, to become more wary in the colonial ways and attempt to use the system to promote Choctaw interests. At this time, both the Christianization of the Choctaw Nation, as well as serious inducement into the slaveholding ways of the South was underway, as the tribe now became dependent on the slaveholding states that surrounded them and conspired to take more of their

---

<sup>1</sup> Mushulatubbee and John Pitchlynn, “Address from the Choctaw Delegation of Indians in Washington relative to their Condition in Common with other Tribes, and Praying that the same may be Improved,” February 21, 1825, in *American Exceptionalism, Volume 3*, ed. Lindsey DiCuirici (Abington-on-Thames: Routledge Press, 2013), 249-251.

territory. LeFlore, to his credit, understood this, and prepared to exchange Choctaw land in the east for that in the west, which had for five centuries been part of the tribe's hunting grounds.

While he was alive, Pushmataha had defied Andrew Jackson, his old ally from the Red Stick War and the Battle of New Orleans, and flat-out refused to sign any more treaties that eroded Choctaw territory: "I know very well who you are, but I wish you to understand that I am Pushmataha, head chief of the Choctaws; and, by the Eternal, I will not sign that treaty."<sup>2</sup>

Jackson took advantage of the new leadership in the tribe to move his agenda forward once he came to power. With LeFlore becoming a wealthy plantation manager and slave-owner, Jackson saw him as key to the plan, although he despised LeFlore as he did all Natives as inferior, both racially and culturally. Division fermented in the tribe as 1830 drew near, while Mushulatubbee, who had previously endorsed the Christianization to educate children in reading, writing, and English, began to turn against foreign influence in the affairs of state. In April 1826, Mushulatubbee was ousted from his office on charges that he was "intemperate, ignorant, tyrannical, and capricious in the disposition of treaty monies;"<sup>3</sup> however, he maintained that he had been ousted by "unorthodox political procedures"<sup>4</sup> brought on by forces most likely aligned with LeFlore.

LeFlore, knowing he did not yet have full support for leadership, wrote to him in April 1830 to express his regret of the "gossip" being spread of bad blood between him and the Chief. "I am unwilling to believe any bad report, and hope that is all lies; or that if any unpleasant feelings have existed that they were produced by lie; and that when you and your people know

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles Lanman, "Pushmatahaw," in *Recollections of Curious Characters and Pleasant Places* (D. Douglas, 1881), 211-212.

<sup>3</sup> Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992): 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 151.

the truth from me, that you and all of them will unite with us as brothers... you have heard that the president has told us that if we live here, we must submit to the laws of Milikiyakni\* – you know that if Milikiyakni extends her laws over us, that bad white men will soon come among us, and settle on our vacant land, and cheat us out of our property.”<sup>5</sup> LeFlore then lists the positives that might come out of a treaty favorable to the Choctaws, while also understanding that removal is now inevitable. While Mushulatubbee opposed the move on principle, like the others, he knew that the nation could not survive as an independent country surrounded by hostile Southern whites and harassed by an increasingly totalitarian government in Washington.

In a letter dated February 9, 1832, Mushulatubbee expressed these sentiments to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, in which he protested that even though removal was not yet completed, “I write to inform you that the white people are daily moving in our country and settling amongst us. This we understand, to be contrary to the treaty, and no doubt be a great disadvantage to our people, as some of them are said to be very bad people. I want the government to take some measure to prevent it and cause them to be removed.”<sup>6</sup> A short time later, Cass received another letter, from Mississippi Democratic congressman Franklin E Plummer, recommending in eight pages that no action should be taken against the illegal settlers, who were “the pinnacle of southern society.”<sup>7</sup>

Of course, no action was taken, and so it was that the 1830 Treaty was signed. Although through the shrewdness of LeFlore were the Choctaws able to obtain the best land in modern day Oklahoma, his rise to power as the first unitary chief of the tribe and exercising direct powers at

---

\* *Milikiyakni* – Choctaw word for the United States.

<sup>5</sup> Greenwood LeFlore to Mushulatubbee, Big Land, Choctaw Nation, April 7, 1830, 169. Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>6</sup> Mushulatubbee to Lewis Cass, Choctaw Nation, February 9, 1832, 170. LR, Choctaw Agency

<sup>7</sup> Franklin E. Plummer to Lewis Cass, Washington City, May 22, 1832, 170. LR, Choctaw Agency.

Dancing Rabbit Creek angered the council. Approximately one year after the treaty was signed and before the removal was to begin, LeFlore was overthrown by the council in a coup, and replaced as Principal Chief by his nephew, George W. Harkins (who remained unrecognized by Jackson's government). The animosity between those seen as "conservative" Choctaws opposing removal vs. "Christian" Choctaws supporting it led to a further lack of trust in a new centralized system (even though many Choctaws, Christian and traditional, opposed the 1830 Treaty). "The Choctaw polity was not differentiated from kinship, and it did not form a unified political nationality in which loyalties and commitments to the national government superseded loyalties to the region, local communities, and kin groups. The attempt by LeFlore to centralize authority had failed as the district governments reclaimed their traditional authority."<sup>8</sup>

Harkins seemed to know at least some part of what was coming, and understood that the Choctaws had only two paths, both of which filled him with anguish. One which guaranteed suffering, but had a hope for survival, however small, while the other also guaranteed suffering, but was the path to annihilation. To stay behind and become Americans, to give up their land and language and culture, was to deny who they were as Choctaw people. As he explained in his *Farewell Letter to the American people*, "We were hedged in by two evils, and we chose that which we thought the least... we as Choctaws rather chose to suffer and be free, than live under the degrading influence of laws, which our voice could not be heard in their formation."<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted that the Trail of Tears is still subject of debate among modern historians as constituting either an intentional genocide or an ethnic cleansing. Jeffrey Ostler

---

<sup>8</sup> Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992): 156-157.

<sup>9</sup> George W. Harkins, "Farewell Letter to the American People", 1832. *The American Indian*, December 1926. Reprinted in *Great Documents in American Indian History*, edited by Wayne Moquin with Charles Van Doren. New York: DaCapo Press. 1995; 151.

promotes the former based on actions he claims were taken,<sup>10</sup> while Gary Anderson advocates the latter based on a lack of evidence thereof directed mass extermination.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of how individuals in modern times define it, it was unspeakable horror; yet it did not achieve its central effect – to break the Choctaw spirit and destroy their identity. While Mushulatubbee died in 1838 and LeFlore would remain in Mississippi (where he would die in 1865) rather than join the remainder of the nation, their departure from center stage left open the door for new Choctaw leaders to emerge and shape the destiny of their nation. Upon their arrival in Indian Territory, the nation set the wheels in motion for a revival, both in culture and politics.

Looking at how future historians examined this historical moment, Grant Foreman and Donna Akers take different approaches. Foreman represents a class of people born in the North who moved to Oklahoma and became captivated by its history as a meeting point between cultures and races in the last 200 years. His book *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* provides an outsider's perspective; the very title utilizing the word “emigration” implies that a population left deliberately and of their volition to settle elsewhere. This puts Foreman's work at odds with much of the compiled historiography as it assumes the Choctaws and the other Five Tribes made the move voluntarily, when the truth is just the opposite. However, further inspection of the book will reveal Foreman's outright acknowledgement of the scandalous nature of the “treaties” signed between the Choctaw and the U.S., and how missionaries that had been sent to educate the tribes now lobbied for them to leave, as a means of “preserving the Indian from extinction.”<sup>12</sup> In that way, not only had they

---

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Gary C. Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime That Should Haunt America* (Norman, OK: Univ of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

treated the tribes as less than humans, but as infants, needing to be ushered around and dictated to, as Chief Justice John Marshall would later label the tribes in his court decisions as “domestic dependent nations,” implying the tribes were meant to rely on the government.

Marshall’s words clearly had an impact on academics from the cloth that Foreman is cut, as to them, the tribes are not considered sovereign states equal to other countries of the world. Foreman’s examining of these divisions culminates with Greenwood LeFlore’s efforts to usurp Mushulatubbe as chief and take over removal negotiations with Jackson. Although thwarted, it proved to have a lasting impact on the tribe, setting families against each other based on which side they took, but also left the nation vulnerable to a more powerful and resolved federal government, aimed to force them into exile. This shows a split between what some previous works have believed about the Five Tribes, that the only infighting in the tribes came from those who signed the treaty versus those who refused; the attempted coup by LeFlore displays that even within those who might have sought an equitable solution to removal, interior political divisions, wrought by the influx of cultural transformation only contributed to civil conflict. Foreman’s work should be taken with understanding of its limited scope and not dealing as much with cultural transformation, but also of its focus on key divisions on development that contributed to the removal process.

Looking at Choctaw author Donna Akers, and her article “Removing the Heart of the Choctaw People: Indian Removal from a Native Perspective,” who speaks directly to how removal fit into the minds of Choctaw leaders. This is not intended as a slight to non-Native historians, however Native voices and perspectives for far too long have been excluded from history, and while some non-Natives like Angie Debo sought to give Native people a voice and a seat at the table when it was unpopular, more or less until recent memory, Native people have

not been allowed to tell the history as they see fit. In understanding how the Choctaws viewed their forced removal, we can come to understand how they viewed the gradual adoption of the system of government which they looked up to originally but soon became responsible for their expulsion. Akers argues the Choctaws incorporation into the fur and gun trades, as well as selling crops and cattle to nearby white and other Native settlements, while leading to their integration towards Euro-American society, hastened their downfall.<sup>13</sup> As the Choctaw adopted western ways, the U.S. government began to assume they could live this way in any territory and circumstance, and thus saw no need to hold back from trying to acquire Choctaw land. A key piece of Choctaw identity before westernization was a closeness and relationship to the land itself, and understanding the land was a protector and sustainer. To authors of Akers school of thought, Western society had left that concept behind when it “evolved” into the modern era.

Akers continues a greater illumination of Choctaw historiography and the process of westernization, particularly in how the process began. In her book *Living in the Land of Death*, Akers traces the process from its beginning in earnest following the de Soto expedition and expulsion of the Spaniards and treating with the French until France’s expulsion from Louisiana following the Seven Years War. While incorporating some early Choctaw-U.S. relations prior to 1830, it is from that year until 1860 which Akers is primarily focused. Arguing that Western culture at the time was uniquely “white,” and was brought into the Nation unwanted, she places blame on unscrupulous settlers who brought alcohol as part of this. However, she mentions the beginnings of Choctaw pastoralism, another byproduct of cultural hybridization, along with Choctaws beginning to intermarry with white immigrants and form large-scale ranches.

---

<sup>13</sup> Donna L. Akers, “*Removing the Heart of the Choctaw People: Indian Removal from a Native Perspective*,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 23, no. 3 (1999): 63-76, <https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.23.3.p52341016666h822>.

All beginning in the pre-removal era, this would ensure the Nation was on its way to democracy by the time of removal. For better or worse, the cultural hybridization was allowing the Nation to develop, according to Akers, following massive devastation by Chickasaw and English slave raiders in the Yamasee War and bouts of European diseases. She argues that while the Nation did survive in part due to its evolution, she remains unhappy that much of the old ways were forced to change as time went by. She also reveals how Andrew Jackson, acting as an Indian Agent before his presidency, deliberately sought to sow distrust and hatred between the “mixed-bloods and intermarried whites and the full bloods.”<sup>14</sup> Akers makes the case that biculturalism, while she views it with relative distain, was understood by most Choctaws in that day as a way forward, out from under the dominion of a foreign power, and capable of national development. “Although Choctaw society evolved, it still carried on as distinctly Choctaw.”<sup>15</sup> Her examination of archives, government records and newspapers showcase a need for greater understanding of biculturalism’s development in a host of Indigenous societies.

Arthur DeRosier’s book concerning Andrew Jackson and the Choctaws is no shock to those who have studied the Jacksonian era. Indian Removal revealed Jackson’s dark side, and his betrayal of his once trusted allies from the war against the Creeks and the British in 1812. The book *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* suggests the radical notion that Jackson owed his presidency and fame to the Choctaw Nation. It is a clever argument, that without Choctaw support in the Red Stick War and the War of 1812, things might have gone differently, and indeed Jackson’s political fortunes had been tied to a successful military career. DeRosier argues in both the book and subsequent article “Andrew Jackson and Negotiations for the Removal of

---

<sup>14</sup> Donna Akers, *Living in the Land of Death: The Choctaw Nation, 1830-1860* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004): 87.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 102

the Choctaw Indians,” that the entire policy and “success” of Indian removal dependent on whether the Choctaws could be moved.<sup>16</sup> He draws on sources of the day in an attempt to include in the narrative how the tribal leaders saw removal and their place in it, and how their heritage, land ownership, or ties to slavery or commerce affected their beliefs. While informative, his works take an approach that the Choctaw Nation effectively ceased to exist once it moved west, as it had, in the perspective of that author, lost that which gave it meaning – its original territory.

Muriel Hazel Wright reviewed this book, and coming from a Choctaw perspective, she observed the nation, contrary to DeRosier’s assertion, endured well to the present day. “His last sentence describes the Choctaws as a proud people crushed in oblivion when they moved west never to ‘rise again as a nation.’ This might be answered in another book. The Choctaws as a tribe lived well over one hundred years after the great Indian removal and have had an important role in the history of Oklahoma, the very name itself of Choctaw origin- ‘red people.’”<sup>17</sup> Wright points out that rather than decline following removal, the Choctaw and other Five Tribes experienced a political and economic resurgence in the years leading to the Civil War. This is seen particularly in which the Chickasaw seceded from the Choctaw Nation in 1855 to reestablish their own state and create new ties with the U.S. government. While DeRosier’s works should be included in the greater historiography of Choctaw cultural adaptation, particularly in understanding how the tribal leaders viewed the process in the pre-removal era (and Wright credits him for his bibliography in the piece), Wright’s criticism and analysis should be taken alongside it as a counterweight to ensure that those who disagree with DeRosier’s assertions can see substantiated academic disputes with it.

---

<sup>16</sup> Arthur H. DeRosier, *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970).

<sup>17</sup> Muriel H. Wright, “Review of The Removal of the Choctaw Indians by Arthur H. DeRosier,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, (July 1971).

A serious political transformation that followed the Choctaw to Indian Territory was the institution of constitution authority, a form of republic and democratic ways of governing. Duane Champagne's *Social Order and Political Change* is a fascinating piece detailing the development of such constitutional government among the Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Muscogee. Focusing on the Choctaw Nation in particular, Champagne shows how long it took for the Choctaws to form a centralized government and write a constitution. Neither came about in earnest while they were still in Mississippi, as before the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, the Choctaws had a very divided and confederation-style government, akin to the Muscogee.

“Leaders were accountable to the people, and decisions made by consensus and negotiation among the leaders. Ideally, the people were the sovereign power among the Choctaw, and leaders whose conduct displeased the people were subject to removal from office. Those found to be ineffective or incompetent could be impeached by the people directly. Choctaw political norms emphasized individual, social, and political autonomy...the principal chief and other leaders were never seen as having absolute powers. Authority was local, segmentary, and decentralized... ‘all the villages are so many little republics in which each does as he likes.’”<sup>18</sup>

As such, no one clan, village, or leader could agree on how leadership was to be centralized and thus could not craft a national identity.

While they always held a Choctaw identity, as Champagne explains, the connection people felt directly to their clan and village was of utmost importance to who they were and how they defined themselves. This changed following relocation and led to the successive adoption of six constitutions between 1834 and 1860, as the nation sought to balance traditional cultural ways of governance with more democratic means.<sup>19</sup> This included dissolving the local chief districts and placing authority in a central chief, empowered by a council to represent the people

---

<sup>18</sup> Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992): 29-30.

<sup>19</sup> Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change*, 186-191.

of the smaller districts. Despite adopting constitutional governments before and after the Civil War, it did not fully convince the American government of the cultural adaptations of the Indian Nations, as the government did not consider them sufficient. Historians do well to remember how long it takes most nations to fully adopt democratic constitutional governments, and Indian nations were no exception. However, their adoption of said practices symbolized a certain desire for stability, which was promised under the process of westernization. While Champagne clearly showcases the shortcomings of the U.S. government's failure to recognize Native progress, he seeks to include within the historical catalogue, that which was previously overlooked; the efforts by Choctaw leaders to synthesize their cultural practices with western-proscribed governance, to maintain their culture and their sovereignty.

Peter Pitchlynn was one of the most noteworthy Choctaw leaders during the pre-annexation era, skilled as a diplomat, statesman, and wartime chief. More than many of his day, his writings and his correspondence showcase a transformation of Choctaw political structuring. First examining the letter to the newly confirmed Commissioner of Indian Affairs, T. Hartley Crawford in 1842, he passionately took up the cause of holding the U.S. government accountable for remittances due from the 1830 Treaty, demanding reimbursement of what the government promised, both in money and in protection.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted at this time, as seen with the other Five Southern Tribes, the local agency issued certificates recognizing land claims, an example of the tribal government modernizing to where it knows both the system and language of the colonizer, and does not allow them a loophole to escape their obligations.<sup>21</sup> Statements of funds made to the Choctaw agent William Armstrong (confirmed by the senate December 22,

---

<sup>20</sup> Peter Pitchlynn to T. Hartley Crawford, Washington City, January 24, 1842, 171. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>21</sup> Commission of Indian Affairs, Blank Certificate, issued in purposes of Claims under the 14<sup>th</sup> Article of the Treaty of September 1830, 171. LR, Choctaw Agency.

1843) display the government dragging its feet on what is due to the tribe, as well as the tribe specifically requesting more funds explicitly for the purposes of education.<sup>22</sup> The agency's statement on the application of present funds shows the change in society, from one of a pre-colonial state to a post-colonial society. This came one year after the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky had closed and the tribal government moved education directly to the nation, and began educating Choctaw girls as well as boys in both traditional and western ways.

As the delegate to Washington, Pitchlynn became the highest authority of negotiations with the U.S. government in the period before there was a single Choctaw chief. In 1854, three letters express both his opinion and those of his fellow delegates to the new Choctaw Agent, Capt. Douglass H. Cooper. The first, dated March 27, was most likely written by Pitchlynn himself, but received input from Samuel Garland and Israel Folsom: it expressed to Cooper how the government has consistently failed to honor its agreement with the tribe, and the people are suffering as a result. It begins with "the undersigned delegates appointed by the Choctaw Council to visit the Capitol of the United States for the purposes of attending to the business of the Choctaw Nation with the United States Government," and very clearly sticks to the reasons behind the visit: "and to think that according to the Treaty of 1830 at Dancing Rabbit Creek there is a subsidizing obligation of the United States Government to provide the necessary aid to enable the Choctaw Government to break up the introduction of liquor into their Country."<sup>23</sup> The influx of alcohol was a scourge to the tribe while they were still trying to rebuild, and the U.S. government was obliged to continue to pay remittances to the tribe for removal by treaty right.

---

<sup>22</sup> Statement of funds submitted to William Armstrong, Choctaw Agency, Indian Territory, 1843, 171. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Pitchlynn to Douglass H. Cooper, Washington City, March 27, 1854, 173. LR, Choctaw Agency.

Letters from other Choctaw officials such as G.W. Harkins and Basil LeFlore articulate the demands of the tribal government for the federal government to pay its dues in the treaty requirements.<sup>24</sup> They also speak to the of the modernization of the Choctaw Light Horse into an effective patrol of both the borders and village settlements, including apprehending illegal whites on the reservation for delivery to Agent Cooper.<sup>25</sup> The transformation of the traditional warrior society into a police force resembling a Civil Guard with a regular salary is another hallmark of the society's political transformation along "western" lines. Their voices, together with Pitchlynn's showcase a development of a political class within the tribe which sought to monopolize its power in dealing with Washington.

The following letters were sent only one day apart, one on April 5<sup>th</sup> and the other on April 6<sup>th</sup>. In these letters, Pitchlynn and the delegates treat this business as though it was a diplomatic exchange between two sovereign countries: this showcases the true scope of Choctaw perspectives of the day, in which they truly saw themselves as a separate country, who were unafraid in both diplomacy and political acculturation. The April 5<sup>th</sup> letter is eight pages and starts in diplomatic speech, declaring "we have concluded to explain and submit it in writing and therefore, respectfully address you this communication."<sup>26</sup> This exemplifies a massive political transformation in the previous two decades since removal, as the tribe now conducts itself in the belief that as a sovereign country, it should act akin to the colonizing powers in terms of diplomacy, rather than more traditional methods still pursued by the tribes of the Plains and the Far West at the time.

---

<sup>24</sup> George W. Harkins to Douglass H. Cooper, May 20, 1860, 176. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>25</sup> Basil LeFlore to Douglass H. Cooper, May 31, 1860, 173. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Pitchlynn to Douglass H. Cooper, Washington City, April 5, 1854, 173. LR, Choctaw Agency.

“The Choctaws have reached an important stage of their history and progress, having emerged from a state of pupilage and become sufficiently capable of taking care of themselves to justify, material changes in their...relations with the United States. And they are anxious to affect such changes in those respects as may be agreeable to the Government and have a tendency to promote their advancement and propriety. Hoping that the recent movements in Congress with reference to some modifications in our politics and relations will lead to such as are necessary and desirable.”<sup>27</sup> The delegates then speak to both land and monetary claims the U.S. government had reneged on. “There have been contests and disputes of one kind or another in regard to the execution of the different stipulations, which to a greater or less extent, have kept our people in a state of perplexity, uncertainty, and dependance externally embargoing and prejudicial to their interests and welfare.”<sup>28</sup> This one letter shows such clarity and resolve in both the Choctaw delegates and tribal government that they signed the treaty in good faith and expect the U.S. government to pay its end of the bargain. The words chosen by Pitchlynn, Garland, and the other delegates speak to just how much they view their country as changed, and how their use of politics can obtain them the justice they seek. Later authors, such as Baird, use this as part of a larger argument of self-determination.

The April 6<sup>th</sup> letter speaks of another issue. “We would respectfully call your attention to the fact that wandering bands of Choctaw Indians, are dispersed through Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas: that they are rapidly learning complacency demoralized and degenerate, by contact with the influences which surround them.”<sup>29</sup> The delegates go on to cite another Treaty in 1820 which guarantees the federal government had promised to round up and

---

<sup>27</sup> Pitchlynn to Cooper, April 5, 1854, Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Pitchlynn to Douglass H. Cooper, Washington City, April 5, 1854, 173. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>29</sup> Pitchlynn to Cooper, April 6, 1854, Ibid.

bring to the main reservation in Indian Territory, remaining Choctaw stragglers. They justify it as well by noting the “human and benevolent conditions which prompted the Choctaw People in 1820 to ask – and the United States to permit that these wanderers should be collected exist in full, if not guaranteed, at this time and so respectfully as that such measures may be adopted as will effectuate the desired result.”<sup>30</sup> These letters, and the author’s understanding both of language and politics shatter the stereotypes those of the day and even some historians would have held towards Native peoples, believing them incapable of truly treating on an equal level with Euro-Americans. The demonstration of Pitchlynn, Garland, and other Choctaw delegates showcases not only their adaptability linguistically, but politically: they understand how certain aspects of the treaty were unfair to begin with, and how some articles are being outright ignored. By stating that they as a people have advanced beyond a “state of pupillage” shows how they viewed themselves as having changed in a way that did not forsake their previous cultural heritage but adapted to survive on a continent run by Europeans. Survival is, in a way, its own form of resistance to colonialism, simply by refusing to die out.

The letters and documents produced during this time period are, themselves, an example of political transformation, in which the tribe adopts written methods of correspondence and record-keeping. This kept them on equal footing with the Americans and a step ahead of their other Native brethren. This following letter from George W. Harkins displays key political change in its contents. Harkins, as one of the last district chiefs prior to a single chief being instituted in 1860, addressed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, and he was backed by 77 other signatories. The letter states that “the Choctaw people throughout the whole Nation is in a most deplorable and confused state, owing to the fact that a small minority has

---

<sup>30</sup> Pitchlynn to Cooper, April 6, 1854, Ibid.

assumed the reins of the government, contrary to the will of a large majority of the people. They are guarding the money of the Nation – and officiating no good whatsoever. We regret very much that the money was turned over last fall to the minority party.”<sup>31</sup> He lays out charges of corruption against the Indian agent for being in league with the corrupt officials of the minority party. This shows something not seen in many Native communities at this time: the development of rival political parties jockeying for power in the government, and influence with Washington. Harkins ends with “we would therefore most respectfully request again that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs would give instructions that not one Dollar shall be paid to either party until everything is settled satisfactory between the two parties.”<sup>32</sup>

It is not so remarkable to notice corruption in government, but what is most enlightening is that as the Choctaws adopted the principles of republican governance, they so did adopt the usual vices that came with it. The democratic systems in Athens and Rome too had corruption which left them internally vulnerable before they collapsed, and the American Founding Fathers were determined not to make the same mistakes as republican governments before them. This American transformation was soon to bleed over into Native republics which developed in its wake. This ties to how, as previously elaborated on by Duane Champagne, the Choctaws sought to develop their constitutional system. Having six different constitutions before the Civil War (for context, France has had fourteen constitutions since 1789) contributed to divisions and avarices in both government, commerce, and private life. Another letter from Pitchlynn addresses the prospect of a new constitution and changing the makeup of the Choctaw government. “Besides objecting to various provisions of this constitution, a large portion of the

---

<sup>31</sup> George W. Harkins to Charles E. Mix, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 3, 1858, 175. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>32</sup> George W. Harkins to Charles E. Mix, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Choctaw Nation, July 3, 1858, 175. LR, Choctaw Agency.

Choctaw people, take exception to it being put in force without being submitted to the people for acceptance or rejection.”<sup>33</sup>

Pitchlynn goes on to elaborate that the people fear any unjust imposition upon them, or laws made without their input, and threaten to upend the process if they are not given a voice. This showcases not necessarily a republic at work, but a democratic shaping of society. In the past, where villages would elect delegates or chiefs to represent them in council as they saw fit, this was now the creation of a unitary binding force in common law, something that had been attempted before with little success. Pitchlynn is attempting to warn Commissioner Mix that interference from the outside will not be tolerated but Washington’s acceptance of a constitutional government should be encouraged for further developing the society. This notion is reflected in a letter from Henry O’Reilly to Pitchlynn in 1845, containing a newspaper clipping which suggests the admission of the Choctaw Nation as a new state to the Union,<sup>34</sup> or the possibility of organizing the Choctaws and Cherokees into a new territory for future admission. While almost certain to be rejected by the population as an affront to their sovereignty, the idea of incorporating a foreign territory as a state based on its progression of “civilization” showcased just how far the perceptions of the Choctaw and other southern tribes had shifted over time.

Pitchlynn actively sought some form of westernization, but on his own terms. He believed in preserving what it meant to be Choctaw while adopting new institutions to survive in the white man’s world. This adoption had a dark side to it, as it included the use of chattel slavery among some members of the Five Tribes. The tribes of this continent were no stranger to

---

<sup>33</sup> Peter Pitchlynn to Charles E. Mix, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 3, 1858, 175. LR, Choctaw Agency.

<sup>34</sup> Henry O’Reilly, admission of Choctaw nation as a state, news clipping regarding Choctaw and Cherokee application for organization as a territory of the United States, Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

slavery before the arrival of the white man, having practiced routine enslavement following wars with each other, but chattel slavery gave the word an entirely different meaning, particularly regarding enslaved Africans. As with many in the times, slaveholders like Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson believed that by Indians owning slaves like the whites, it would lead to faster civilization process, even though slaveholding was rare among the large populaces of the tribes. As Choctaw hybridization grew with the further adoption of republican government and democratic values, Pitchlynn continued to become more involved. As W. David Baird observes, Pitchlynn was among those most fervently opposed to removal, but nevertheless sought to “rebuild the republic”<sup>35</sup> once the tribe was resettled in Indian Territory. To do so, he focused primarily on building schools directly in the nation. Many letters between him and his contemporaries express this view. Not only did he help establish the Choctaw Academy in Kentucky, which also took in scores of other Indian youth, but when he felt it no longer functioned properly, he made no qualms about disposing of it. This was evidenced in a letter to Pitchlynn from Jacob Folsom in October 1841, on the General Council’s decision to close the school, and relocate education of Choctaw children to the reservation itself.<sup>36</sup>

Christina Snyder’s *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* arguably does not have Choctaws as the centerpiece of the work: however, it does touch on Pitchlynn’s relationship with white Americans involved at Choctaw Academy in Kentucky. Relationships like these were key in how the Choctaw would perceive cultural transformation as positive or negative and could judge its effects based on who was lobbying for it. He took it deeply personal when the academy began to fall into disrepair and the students treated cruelly.

---

<sup>35</sup> W. David Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn, Chief of the Choctaws* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

<sup>36</sup> Jacob Folsom, General Council’s decisions to close the Kentucky School, to locate the school in the Choctaw Nation, to nominate Pitchlynn as superintendent and as representative to Washington, Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

“When shall the Red Man receive justice?” he wrote shortly before departing for Washington to seek support to shut down the academy.<sup>37</sup> Pitchlynn’s experiences here would further influence Choctaw desire to build schools in their own country which they had ultimate jurisdiction over. His correspondence with David and Israel Folsom confirms these beliefs, as well as the need to educate Choctaw girls as well as boys.<sup>38</sup> Pitchlynn, along with the Folsoms, believed that while some whites had good intentions in education, it was critical that Choctaw children be educated by Choctaw teachers; this was a means of both national development and national sovereignty, taking back the right to educate their youth the way they saw fit.<sup>39</sup>

This nationalist sentiment however, showcased in Peter Pitchlynn a kind of deep-seeded prejudice against tribes outside the southeast, whom he viewed as uncivilized compared to his own country. While finding people among the Osage agreeable and relatable, his writings showed a hatred of the Lakota and other Plains tribes as barbaric. In his journal he described them as “a rude and uncultivated race, and from every appearance a miserable set.”<sup>40</sup> Pitchlynn did not view civilization as being tied to race, but rather to a way of life. In his mind, the agrarian ways of the eastern tribes were civilized, as opposed to the “state of nature” he associated with the lifestyles of the Plains tribes. Again, while Snyder’s emphasis in this book is far from Choctaw cultural transformation, this work does encapsulate the drastic changes taking place in the Choctaw society of the time and how its leaders sought a new path forward. By also

---

<sup>37</sup> Christina Snyder, *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019): 241.

<sup>38</sup> Israel Folsom, Plans to open a separate female school for girls, Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

<sup>39</sup> David Folsom, problems with Folsom's land claim, need for Choctaw schools, Pitchlynn's possible appointment as head of school and the need for the school to be run by Choctaws and not whites, Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

<sup>40</sup> Christina Snyder, *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019): 131.

including Pitchlynn's writings in her book, she gives credit to him as a historian in his own right, attempting to leave behind a legacy that would encourage his children and his people to remain true to Choctaw nationalism and tradition.

In terms of how Oklahoma historians viewed the Choctaws' transformation in Indian Territory, none are so respected perhaps as Angie Debo. One of the earliest advocates of tribal republicanism, she was among the first non-Native authors who took Native perspectives seriously during an era of paternalism and discrimination. She surmised how the Five Tribes, particularly the Choctaw, managed to maintain their own cultural distinctiveness via the process of adaptation. In terms of developing a constitutional government within the Choctaw system, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* is an essential volume for any ethnohistorian to begin study of cultural adaptation of the tribal legal system. Debo's work speaks greatly to how the Choctaw interpreted the ideas of democracy and constitutionalism before removal and how it developed when in Indian Territory. She was one of the original non-Native Oklahoma historians who treat the Choctaws as a fully functioning sovereign state, giving credit to their forming of branches of government modeled after those of the United States, while still retaining their understanding of traditional power sharing from the pre-colonial society, as evidenced in Pitchlynn's letters. The Americans took an understanding of constitutional republicanism from Athenian, Roman, and some Native sources, and now Native nations were developing governments along the lines of the republic which had dispossessed them. Debo documents the passage of time in the Nation and how democracy developed, including it being threatened by the Civil War, yet surviving through the persistence of leaders who, according to federal

officials, had aligned with the South only because the Confederates “offered the best means of preserving their national identity.”<sup>41</sup>

While not a defense of the Confederate alliance, Debo makes the case that the tribe made the choice as a sovereign nation, and while being steadily adapted to Anglo-American culture, still functioned on its own. Debo’s inclusion of this specifically shows that even certain members of the United States government were willing to recognize that the Choctaws were distinct and separate, even as they resented their adaptation to change and coveted their lands. Where some other historians are lacking, Debo speaks directly to the demographic change and immigration promoted by the U.S. government to isolate the Choctaws politically and make it easier to take control of their country.<sup>42</sup> The commission sent to observe the tribal government during allotment, deliberately shunning the notion of modernization, with “their reports indicate that they never at any time appreciated the attachment of the Choctaw people to their institutions. They believed that the Indian governments were corrupt and inefficient.”<sup>43</sup> She is quick to point out how the American perspective taken on communal land holding blinded the commissioners to the tribe’s development. “They were convinced that the communal ownership of land enabled the aristocratic and wealthy leaders of the tribe to enjoy more than their share, and that consequentially only this class was opposed to division. They never realized the universal character of the Choctaw resistance.”<sup>44</sup> Debo’s inclusion of this “resistance” showcases the main theme of the work, arguing that Choctaws maintained their agency even through change.

---

<sup>41</sup> Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934): 86.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 245.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

Documents from Pitchlynn's collection leading up to the Civil War and the Reconstruction era shine light on how the tribe viewed itself in the fight between the Union and the Confederacy. Such texts reinforce Debo's interpretation. The idea that the Choctaw Nation operated on its own accord for national defense against hostile nations, namely the Comanche in 1846,<sup>45</sup> 1851,<sup>46</sup> and 1858.<sup>47</sup> The 1851 document also speaks to the need to limit foreign (white) immigrants to the Choctaw Nation and how it must be the policy of the tribal government to limit anyone immigrating to the territory. The latter speaks too to the problem the Choctaw leadership perceived with threats to their power coming from certain missionaries. Lycurgus Pitchlynn notes rumors were spreading that the missionaries were responsible for stoking division and leading opposition to the new constitution, in part due to abolitionist sentiments among many.<sup>48</sup> Fears that the United States would no longer respect their sovereignty began to sew doubt in certain Choctaws before the Civil War erupted,<sup>49</sup> and soon suspicions of insurrections among enslaved people like that in the Cherokee Nation in 1842 began to creep back into the foreground.<sup>50</sup> Many leaders also wondered what their place would be in the event of a breakup of the Union,<sup>51</sup> but realized that the fight between the North and the South was not

---

<sup>45</sup> Thomas J. Pitchlynn, health of family, coming election, and troubles with Comanches in Texas. Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas J. Pitchlynn, the bill currently before Congress; family news including the marriage of Daniel Folsom to a white woman; movements of the Comanches; and hopes that the government will put a stop to the influx of whites. Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> H.M.C. Brown to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: rumors of a band of Comanches and Apaches of hostile nature gathering. Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Lycurgus P. Pitchlynn. Tornado which struck; the impending constitutional convention, and the support of the people for it; the distrust of "half-breeds" by "full-breeds," the rumor that the missionaries are at the head of the opposition to the new constitution. Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> George W. Harkins. The wretched condition of the nation, and the men responsible by name, the ills of the new constitution; the threat of U.S. troops; the problems created by the incompetent U.S. agent. Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Peter P. Howell. The extreme fear in the Nation of a black insurrection; of a former slave on the plantation caught elsewhere as an insurrectionist; confusion over the death of John Pitchlynn; suspicion that the missionaries are behind the slave insurrections. Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> John Conner. Peter Pitchlynn's predictions proving true, the dilemma of the Indian Nations against the white man, and the divided republic. Ibid.

their concern.<sup>52</sup> That changed when U.S. troops abandoned their posts in the Choctaw Nation and the reservation was invaded by Texas Confederates.<sup>53</sup> Now trapped and needing to raise an army to repel the invasion, Pitchlynn still originally advocated neutrality;<sup>54</sup> but acting as sovereign agents, and realizing that U.S. help was not coming, the tribe made an alliance with the Confederate States of America, and raised an army to fight on their behalf,<sup>55</sup> as Debo said, to preserve “their national identity.” Choctaw agency was never in question, but it was disputed by the United States, which not keen on having quasi-independent enclaves operating in the middle of its territory, and this would lead the Federal Government to fall hard on the Five Tribes after the war.

Like Donna Akers, Clara Sue Kidwell’s position as a Choctaw woman reexamining the events of acculturation and tribal development is invaluable to scholars of the modern day. Her work, *The Choctaws in Oklahoma: From Tribe to Nation, 1855-1970* extends beyond the time frame of Removal to Reconstruction, but nevertheless she provides key insights to how westernization led to the shaping of the modern Choctaw Nation of today. Neither by passively surrendering to colonization nor assimilating into total western ways, the Choctaw created a distinction as to how they perceived themselves and how the outside world perceived them. For example, the public burning of a slave by her Choctaw mistress for the murder of her husband,

---

<sup>52</sup> Peter Folsom. Dissolution of the Union; the necessity of attending to the Choctaw bonds and securities in U.S. government holdings so as not to lose them if the government goes defunct; the delegation to Washington should be empowered to act with full authority for the C.N. as circumstances develop; the need for the C.N. to be silent and observe events transpiring regarding the United States; plans to depart for Washington immediately. Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Sampson Folsom, the invasion of the Choctaw Nation by Texans at war with U.S. troops, the capture by Texas of military forts in the C.N., Sampson's plans to visit the Confederate capital, then Washington, and the mustering of a Choctaw army to repel the invaders. Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

<sup>54</sup> Atlantic Monthly. “*Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws.*” (Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma: 490.

<sup>55</sup> Sampson Folsom, the creation of a Choctaw army to serve the Confederate States of America. Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

who was in good standing with the local church, would make historians question if the missionaries had truly brought Christianity to the Nation, with such practices, as well as slavery, continuing. Americans, both missionaries and civilians, often presumed that with Christianity came civilization: Kidwell reminds however, the widow was the daughter of Peter Pitchlynn, and the dead man was the brother of another former chief. “In the eyes of the U.S. government and the missionaries, they were acculturated Christians who represented the achievement of American policy, but they were also politically powerful slave owners, and the American Board missionaries depended upon them to sanction their efforts...although the missionaries taught the Christian value of agricultural self-sufficiency, American society was promoting large-scale exploitation of land and labor.”<sup>56</sup> Kidwell’s examining of the complex balancing act the Choctaws played in the years leading up to the Civil War as to perception and development reminds the present observer that not everything is black and white in history. Spreading Christian values versus American values or viewing them in tandem caused many issues to develop later in how the tribe perceived itself against foreign antagonists.

The Choctaws reliance on the missionaries for education, Kidwell argues, led to inevitable conflict within the missionaries about what to do. The Nation forbade discussion of abolitionism in 1836 and threatened to expel anyone engaged in teaching slaves.<sup>57</sup> While morally reprehensible, it was another exercise of sovereignty, and acculturation to western traditions. The Choctaw saw themselves withing their rights as a sovereign nation to conduct affairs this way, and as a “road to civilization” with the Americans who engaged in the same manner. This included slander of some of the schools and the missionary-run school board by Pitchlynn and

---

<sup>56</sup> Clara Sue Kidwell, *The Choctaws in Oklahoma: From Tribe to Nation, 1855-1970* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008): 31.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

George W. Harkins, so the Nation could gain control of the funds and invest them as they saw fit.<sup>58</sup> Kidwell's work also makes a key distinction in how the Choctaw viewed themselves during this ongoing process, especially following the Civil War. The title of the work, "From Tribe to Nation" showcases how in the eyes of the people, they were transformed from a previous state of "pre-contact civilization" to a "post-contact civilization".

However, not once is it mentioned that they lost their identity or succumbed to the U.S. government's "official standard" of what an Indian was. Since before the war the government and the missionaries promoted both agrarianism and slavery as tools for acculturation and civilization, it can be said that the Choctaws did adapt their system to include these byproducts, which would have to be remedied following the war. The Dawes Commission was certainly a weapon to the process of cultural adaptation, as Senator Henry L. Dawes (R – Massachusetts) himself declared "there is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization."<sup>59</sup> While to previous Americans they had become "civilized," in the eyes of the post-war generation, as they had not acculturated to the latest government interpretations of what citizens were, they were now to be overwhelmed and forced into a mold. Unfortunately, Kidwell does not focus as much on the other forces attempting to change how the Choctaw perceived themselves, particularly the change of demographics which was promoted by the U.S. government. The American government's explicit goal of this was to undermine tribal sovereignty and leave the Choctaws as a minority in their own country: thus, it would then be easier to both allot and annex.

It did not matter by now that the Choctaws had become thoroughly accustomed to western society in terms of governance, business operations, agriculture, law, religion, and

---

<sup>58</sup> Kidwell, *The Choctaws*, 36.

<sup>59</sup> Kidwell, *The Choctaws*, 137.

diplomacy; they still possessed an area greater than that of Hawaii, rich in natural resources which the U.S. and the illegal white and black squatters were determined to seize. In this way, westernization prepared the Choctaws for the inevitable, and allowed them to survive beyond the annexation, but it could not save them from it. However, according to Kidwell, the fact that the people viewed themselves as being separate from other tribes, historically and culturally distinct, and having carved out a historical process for themselves in which they fought incursion and constantly survived, created the concept of nationhood akin to the level of any other country.<sup>60</sup> This would serve the Choctaw well going forward in the efforts to restore tribal sovereignty.

If one is to accept the notion that American Indians can retain their culture while assimilating, the Choctaw serve as an example among the tribes, that no matter the perspective taken or time analyzed, the trails all lead to the same place: for the people and their leaders, sovereignty was tied to survival, and survival at that time meant cultural adaptation. Just because the Choctaw acted as the Americans would consider “civilized” and not like the stereotypical “wild Indians” of the west did not mean the Choctaws lost an Indigenous identity. The primary source documents all showcase a level of Indigenous self-stylized sophistication and shockingly even some feelings of superiority among certain levels of Choctaw society towards other Indians. Debo, Wright, Kidwell, and Champagne all approach the topic with the understanding the tribe experienced cultural adaptation as a means of survival, and presented it as a positive, while Akers, DeRosier and Foreman come from the perspective that adaption was forced rather than voluntary, and the previous elements of identity did not survive. However, in examining the tribe both in its southern origins and post-removal, while they argued the nature of the tribe’s defining of indigeneity changed, none of the authors argue that hybridization of culture and political

---

<sup>60</sup> Kidwell, *The Choctaws*, 216.

transformation guaranteed a loss of indigeneity, and as such, a retention of culture in an ever-changing world, while difficult, was possible. Utilizing education and varied forms of democracy allowed the Choctaw to adapt themselves to the “New World” of the colonial United States, and yet never losing sight of who they were as a separate nation – an independent republic on the Red River.

Bibliography:

Akers, Donna. *Living in the Land of Death: The Choctaw Nation, 1830-1860*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2004.

Akers, Donna. "Removing the Heart of the Choctaw People: Indian Removal from a Native Perspective." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 23, no. 3 (1999): 63–76.  
<https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.23.3.p52341016666h822>.

Anderson, Gary C. *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime That Should Haunt America*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.

Atlantic Monthly. "Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws." April 1870, page 486–497. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 6, Folder 5. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma*.

Baird, W. David. "Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws." Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972.

Blank Certificate, issued in purposes of Claims under the 14<sup>th</sup> Article of the Treaty of September 1830. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 171*.

Brown, H.M.C. Letter from H.M.C. Brown to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: rumors of a band of Comanches and Apaches of hostile nature gathering. August 27, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 30. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma*.

Champagne, Duane. *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Conner, John. Letter from John Conner to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Peter P.'s predictions proving true, the dilemma of the Indian Nations against the white man, and the divided republic. January 30, 1860. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 53. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma*.

Debo, Angie. *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972; 1934.

Derosier, Arthur H. "Andrew Jackson and Negotiations for the Removal of the Choctaw Indians." *The Historian* 29, no. 3 (May 1967): 343–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6563.1967.tb01782.x>.

Derosier, Arthur H. *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1970.

Dukes, Joseph. Letter from Joseph Dukes to Peter P. Pitchlynn. The meeting of Towson County to try and restore peace and order, the decision there to abide by the Constitution of 1850 until further legal action occurred; revival of the three-chief system; majority opposition to the new constitution. March 5, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 16. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma*.

Document: Resolution of the General Council of the Choctaw Nation. Re: honors given the Choctaw warriors who fought in the War. October 10, 1864. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 4, Folder 12. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Dukes, Joseph. Letter from Joseph Dukes to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the convention and the changes made to the system of government, the new Doaksville Constitution. February 3, 1860. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 55. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, David. Letter from David Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: problems with Folsom's land claim, need for Choctaw schools, Pitchlynn's possible appointment as head of school and the need for the school to be run by Choctaws and not whites. January 26, 1842. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 78. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Jacob. Letter from Jacob Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: General Council's decisions to close the Kentucky School, to locate the school in the Choctaw Nation, to nominate Pitchlynn as superintendent and as representative to Washington and the From Council's "deranging" of Sloan Love. October 20, 1841. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 69. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Jacob. Letter from Jacob Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Disagreement with an editorial stating that the Choctaws are advancing in education and self-government, and the reasons for disagreeing. January 19, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 11. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Israel. Letter from Israel Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: plans to open a separate female school for girls. September 13, 1841. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 66. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Israel. Letter from Israel Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: need for Pitchlynn to continue his good work and Folsom's intention to nominate Pitchlynn to go to Washington to represent the Choctaws. September 24, 1841. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 68. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Israel. Letter from Israel Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: asking assistance for John Morris Nail and the need for a female school. December 7, 1841. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 71. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Israel. Letter from Israel Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: elections in nation; female school administration and purpose. January 16, 1842. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 76. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Israel. Letter from Israel Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: celebrations before election, David Folsom's address at a temperance celebration, and suggesting that Pitchlynn speak on patriotism. June 14, 1842. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 80. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Peter. Letter from Peter Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: dissolution of the Union; the necessity of attending to the Choctaw bonds and securities in U.S. government holdings so as not to lose them if the government goes defunct; the delegation to Washington should be empowered to act with full authority for the C.N. as circumstances develop; the need for the C.N. to be silent

and observe events transpiring regarding the United States; plans to depart for Washington immediately. January 19, 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 93. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Sampson. Letter from Sampson Folsom to Col. Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: total failure to elect officers in any of the counties; rejection by the Council of the peoples' petition regarding the New Court; who is to blame for the turmoil; anarchy approaching. December 9, 1857. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 1. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Sampson. Letter from Sampson Folsom to Uni Oshi Ma (Peter P. Pitchlynn). Eastern Choctaw-Chickasaw boundary line and the Treaty of June 1855; the loss of Choctaw nationality; lack of allegiance to the new constitution; election of a new governor; council dissention; Chief Pushmataha; question of creating a new state or territory of the Indian Nations and the fear that North-South disagreement would create another Kansas. December 9, 1857. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 2. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Sampson. Letter from Sampson Folsom to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the invasion of the Choctaw Nation by Texans at war with U.S. troops, the capture by Texas of military forts in the C.N., Sampson's plans to visit the Confederate capital, then Washington, and the mustering of a Choctaw army to repel the invaders. May 14, 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 94. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Folsom, Sampson. Letter from Sampson Folsom to Albert Pike. Re: the creation of a Choctaw army to serve the Confederate States of America. September 5, 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 95. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Foreman, Grant. *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972.

Foreman, Grant. *The Five Civilized Tribes; A Brief History and A Century of Progress*. Edited by Carolyn Thomas Foreman. Muskogee, OK: Indian Centennial Board, 1966.

Garrison, Tim Alan and Greg O'Brien, eds. *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017.

General Orders No. 27. From Brig. Gen. D.H. Cooper. Re: fine behavior of the First Choctaw Battalion in an engagement with federals on Sept. 23, 1864. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 4, Folder 11. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Harkins, George W. "Farewell Letter to the American People," February 25, 1832. Great Documents in American Indian History. New York, NY: DaCapo Press, 1995.

Harkins, George W. Letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles E. Mix, July 3, 1858. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 175.*

Harkins, George W. Letter from George W. Harkins to Peter P. Pitchlynn. The wretched condition of the nation, and the men responsible by name, the ills of the new constitution; the threat of U.S. troops; the problems created by the incompetent U.S. agent. April 19, 1858. *Peter*

*Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 21. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Harkins, George W. Letter to the Indian Agent Douglass H. Cooper May 20, 1860. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 176.*

Howell, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Howell to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the extreme fear in the Nation of a black insurrection; of a former slave on the plantation caught elsewhere as an insurrectionist; confusion over the death of John Pitchlynn; suspicion that the missionaries are behind the slave insurrections. October 1860. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 83. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Jolly, John and Black Coat. Letter from John Jolly and Black Coat, the Principal Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation to the Chiefs of the Choctaws (Fort Smith, Arkansas Territory). Re: a proposal of peace from the Delaware Nation to the Choctaws. March 18, 1832. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 28. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Kidwell, Clara Sue. *The Choctaws in Oklahoma: From Tribe to Nation, 1855-1970*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.

Lambert, Valerie. *Choctaw Nation: A Story of American Indian Resurgence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Lanman, Charles. "Pushmatahaw." Essay. In *Recollections of Curious Characters and Pleasant Places*, 211–12. D. Douglas, 1881.

LeFlore, Basil. Letter from Basil LeFlore to Douglass H. Cooper, May 31, 1860. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 176.*

LeFlore, Greenwood. Letter from Greenwood LeFlore to Mushulatubbee, April 7, 1830. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 169.*

LeFlore, Greenwood. Letter from Greenwood LeFlore to Major P.P. Pitchlynn. Re: the appointment of G.S. Gaines to remove the Choctaws to the Mississippi River and no further, and his request for the assistance of Pitchlynn and Folsom in the removal. September 9, 1831. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 25. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

McDonald, J.S. McDonald, J.S. Letter from J.S. McDonald (Jackson, Mississippi). To Col. Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: concern regarding Moshulatubbee's conduct. March 18, 1831. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 21. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Mushulatubbee. Letter from Mushulatubbee to Lewis Cass, February 9, 1832. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 170.*

Mushulatubbee. Letter from Mushulatubbee to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: appointment of Pitchlynn as Captain of the Lighthorsemen, date unknown, categorized 1824. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 3. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Mushulatubbee and John Pitchlynn. Address from the Choctaw Delegation of Indians in Washington relative to their Condition in Common with other Tribes, and Praying that the same may be Improved, February 21, 1825. In *American Exceptionalism, Volume 3*, by Timothy Roberts and edited by Lindsay DiCuirci. Abington-on-Thames: Routledge Press, 2013.

O'Reilly, Henry. Letter from Henry O'Reilly (at Albany, New York) to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: admission of Choctaw nation as a state, news clipping from the "Albany Argus" regarding Choctaw and Cherokee application for organization as a territory of the United States. September 11, 1845. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 97. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Ostler, Jeffrey. *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019.

Pickens, Edmund. Letter from Edmund Pickens to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the smoking of the pipe on July 4. July 7, 1860. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 68. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pike, Albert, C.S.A. To George Hudson. Re: Confederate President Jefferson Davis' message to the Confederate Congress and Congress' resolutions and treaties passed concerning the Indian Nations; the admission of Indian Territory to the Confederate States. December 29, 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 97. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Lycurgus. Letter from Lycurgus P. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Tornado which struck; the impending constitutional convention, and the support of the people for it; the distrust

of “half-breeds” by “full-breeds,” the rumor that the missionaries are at the head of the opposition to the new constitution. March 22, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 18. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Lycurgus. Letter from Lycurgus P. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the new Doaksville Constitution and the Skullyville Constitution; changes made in the government structure by the new constitution. February 5, 1860. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 56. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Lycurgus. Letter from Lycurgus P. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re; slave insurgency and the disarming of blacks in the Choctaw Nation. 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 91. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter Pitchlynn to T. Hartley Crawford, January 24, 1842. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 171.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter Pitchlynn to Douglass H. Cooper, March 27, 1854. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 173.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter Pitchlynn to Douglass H. Cooper, April 5, 1854. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 173.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles E. Mix, September 3, 1858. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 175.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from the Choctaw Delegates to Douglass H. Cooper, April 6, 1854. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 173.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn to Daniel Folsom. Re: the disappointing session of Congress just adjourned, and why it was so in regard to the Choctaw Nation; working with Col. Peter Folsom; his health; his intention to write and publish a history of the Nation. June 15, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 27. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn and Sampson Folsom to Charles E. Nix. History of the constitutional crisis in the Choctaw Nation--its origins, personalities, and causes. September 3, 1858. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 32. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Howell. Re; the War Dance and preparation of troops; killing and scalping Yankees. October 21, 1861. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 3, Folder 96. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn to E. Kirby Smith. Re; request to confirm the rumors that the Confederate armies met with disaster east of the Mississippi; request to know as soon as possible if the Department of the Trans-Mississippi is to be surrendered; request that

Indian troops not be surrendered as prisoners of war so that the Indian Nations can make their own terms. May 17, 1865. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 4, Folder 19. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn to Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Re: reasons the Choctaw sided with the Confederates and public opinion regarding them; peace with the other tribes with the United States; resolutions of the Grand Council; Pitchlynn to make every effort to have every Indian tribe in the U.S.A. in existence at the Grand Council; hopes for U.S. commissioners to attend the Council. June 20, 1865. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 4, Folder 26. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Peter. Letter from Peter P. Pitchlynn to Edmond Gardner. Re: treaty stipulations with the U.S.A.; future of the Choctaw Nation and request for law and order. June 20, 1865. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 4, Folder 27. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Thomas J. Letter from Thomas J. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: rumors that Pitchlynn is selling the Choctaw Nation; the coming elections, and T.J. Pitchlynn's indebtedness. March 19, 1846. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 104. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Thomas J. Letter from Thomas J. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: health of family, coming election, and troubles with Comanches in Texas. June 9, 1846. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 105. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Pitchlynn, Thomas J. Letter from Thomas J. Pitchlynn to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: the bill currently before Congress; family news including the marriage of Daniel Folsom to a white woman; movements of the Comanches; and hopes that the government will put a stop to the influx of whites. March 30, 1851. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 2, Folder 19. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Plummer, Franklin E. Letter from Franklin E. Plummer to Lewis Cass, May 22, 1832. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 170.*

Snyder, Christina. *Great Crossings: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Age of Jackson*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Unknown. Statement of funds submitted to William Armstrong, Choctaw Agency, Indian Territory, 1843. *Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824 – 81, Choctaw Agency 1824 – 76. Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma. Reel 171.*

Wall, Thomas. Letter from Thomas Wall (Choctaw Agency) to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: preparations for war on the Choctaws and Cherokees by the Indians on the Blue and the Washita Rivers, and his political runnings. April 1, 1841. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 1, Folder 62. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Wright, Allen. Letter from Allen Wright (at Union Theological Seminary) to Peter P. Pitchlynn. Re: studies at the seminary school, the plight of the Nebraska Territory and the hardship placed on all Indians by the whites. March 30, 1854. *Peter Perkins Pitchlynn Collection, 1815-1881. Box 2, Folder 34. Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Wright, Muriel H. "Brief Outline of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in the Indian Territory 1820 to 1860." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 7, no. 4 (1929): 388–419.

<https://cdm17279.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17279coll4/id/45335/rec/31>.

Wright, Muriel H. Review of *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* by Arthur H. DeRosier. *Western Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 3, (July 1971).