Lamar Cherokee Removal Letter – Original

Executive Department
Houston 29th June 1839

To
David G Burnet
A Sidney Johnson, Thomas J. Rusk,
J W Burton & James S Mayfield Esqrs.

Gentlemen.

Recent Events of which you are already apprised, Convince me of the necessity of the immediate removal of the Cherokee Indians, (and the ultimate removal of all other emigrant Tribes now residing in Texas, beyond Her Territorial limits; I have therefore appointed you Commissioners on the part of the Republic, to make the necessary arrangements for Carrying this measure into effect.

Upon assembling at ~~Nacogdoches~~, or such other point as you may find more Convenient for your operations (which you are requested to do as early as practicable) you will inform yourselves of the best mode of procuring the removal of the Cherokees beyond the Red River, and take such Steps as will accomplish that object with as little delay as Circumstances will admit. It is desirable that this should be done in a peaceful and friendly manner, and to render the proposition acceptable to the Indians, you are authorized to make them a fair (and liberal Compensation) for their improvements, Crops and such other property as they will be unable to take with them out of the Country the Amount of which to be ascertained by appraisers which I have appointed for that purpose; but in Consenting to make them this Compensation you will not agree to pay them more than one fourth part of it in Cash

the residue to be paid in goods, which is understood the Merchants of Nacogdoches and San Augustine will advance at fair prices on the Credit of the Government. Previous however to making any stipulations to this effect with the Cherokees, you will have a distinct understanding with the Merchants, that they will receive from them in payment for goods such Scrip or Orders as you may issue to them, and that they will supply a sufficient quantity of goods at fair prices, to redeem all the Scrip or Orders which you may thus issue.

If you find that it will be acceptable to the Indians to receive the whole Amount of Compensation agreed to be given them for their improvements and other property, in goods, you will adopt that as the ~~preferable~~ preferable mode of making payment — but if they express a decided wish to receive apart in cash, you will stipulate to pay them One fourth of the Amount in money, provided it does not exceed Twenty five thousand dollars, but in no event will you agree to pay a larger Sum than 25.000 $ in cash, nor will you pay them any Money or issue to them any Scrip for goods until the property agreed to be paid for has been delivered to such persons as may be appointed by the Secretary of War to receive and take charge of it. — You will also have it understood that after they have received their Scrip, only a limited time (which you will designate) will be allowed for its Negotiation, immediately after the expiration of which they will Commence their journey of removal beyond the Red River. —

In your Communication with these Indians, you will endeavour to convince them by all proper arguments of the friendly disposition of this Government towards them, and of its desire to make such arrangements

(them

But will at the same time assu

as will be entirely just and satisfactory to them, that under no circu-stances can they be permitted to remain in the Country longer than will be required to make the necessary preparations for their removal. — That this Course has been adopted towards them, because I am satisfied that it is essential not only to the peace and prosperity of our own Citizens, but to their safety and existence as a people; and that unless they consent at once to receive a fair Compensation for their improvements and other property, and remove out of this Country, nothing short of the entire distruction of all they possess, and the extermination of their Tribe will appease the indignation of the white people against them. —

If you meet, or can have Communication with the Kickapoo tribe of Indians you will make known to them also, the necessity of their immediate removal out of the Country, and you will take such steps as you may find necessary to get them beyond our limits without delay. —

As regards the Delawares, Shawnees, and such other tribes as have manifested a peaceful and friendly disposition, you will permit them to remain in the Country for the present, upon their giving assurances of their good Conduct while they do remain, but you will be careful to impress it upon them, that any evidence of hostility on their part will cause their immediate punishment and expulsion. — But in giving them permission to remain for the present you will be careful to excite no hopes on their part, of being eventually allowed to identify themselves with the Country, or to claim any right in the Soil. — The terms of their Continuance are, that they shall not be disturbed provided they Conduct themselves properly until such time as Congress or the Government may make such arrangements in respect to their future disposition as will be satisfactory

to both parties.

Reposing gentlemen the most entire confidence in your discretion and abilities, these matters are Confided to your management, with the fullest assurance on my part, that every thing will be done which circumstances may demand, towards bringing our Indian difficulties in that quarter to a Speedy and final Close. ---

I am Gentlemen with great Respect
Your Obedient Servant

Mirabeau B Lamar

A True Copy of the Original

a correct copy as per Record of the Department of State.

Jos Waples
acting Secty State

9th January 1841