

Davy Crockett on the removal of the Cherokees, 1834

Introduction

In this letter, written in December 1834, Davy Crockett complains about President Andrew Jackson's forced removal of the Cherokees from their homes to Oklahoma. Crockett opposed that policy and feared Vice President Martin Van Buren would continue it, if elected president. He even goes so far as to say that if Van Buren is elected, Crockett would leave the United States for the "wildes of Texas." Crockett writes, "I will consider that government a Paridice to what this will be. In fact at this time our Republican Government has dwindled almost into insignificancy our [boasted] land of liberty have almost Bowed to the yoke of of [sic] Bondage." Crockett actually went to Texas before Martin Van Buren was elected president, and he died in the Battle of the Alamo on March 6, 1836, months before the election.

Excerpt

I have almost given up the Ship as lost. I have gone So far as to declare that if he martin vanburen is elected that I will leave the united States for I never will live under his kingdom. before I will Submit to his Government I will go to the wildes of Texas. I will consider that government a Paridice to what this will be. In fact at this time our Republican Government has dwindled almost into insignificancy our [boasted] land of liberty have almost Bowed to the yoke of Bondage. Our happy days of Republican principles are near at an end when a few is to transfer the many.

Questions for Discussion

Read the document introduction, examine the excerpt and if possible the entire transcript, and apply your knowledge of American history in order to answer the questions that follow.

1. From the excerpt, identify the reasons Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett opposed legislation forcing members of the Cherokee Nation to relocate.
2. What prediction does Crockett make about the future of the United States?
3. On a map of the United States, locate the native homeland of the Cherokee Nation and the area to which they were relocated. What was the impact of this move?
4. Extra Credit: Under what other circumstances have people in the United States been forced to relocate?

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Image

Washington City
25th Dec^r 1834

Dear Sir

I wrote you a short time ago and as I have
 not a leisure moment I will write a gain although
 I can not but little. Times is still no report yet from
 the Committee of either house upon the French war
 recommendation I expect when that report comes in
 to see the same strings brake the western & southern
 men dare not to sustain Jackson in his mad
 career and when they refuse all the blood money
 in the nation will be let loose on them

The time has come that man is expected
 to be transferable and as negotiable as a promise
 or note of hand in these days of glory and
 Jackson is reforming the little Paper Mills in his chair
 and ^{looks} as if he were a red fox and I have no doubt but
 that he thinks Andrew Jackson has full power
 to transfer the people of these united States at
 his will and I am truly afraid that a majority
 of the free Citizens of these united States will
 submit to it and say amen Jackson done it
 is right if we judge by the part we can make
 no other calculations

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Present to S. Cohen by his son and others etc
 Mr Ogden N.Y.
 Post Office N.Y. 1840.

David Crockett to Charles Schultz, December 25, 1834 (The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC01162)

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 the many, this is Vanburen principles there is
 more Slaves in New York and Pennsylvania than
 there is in Virginia and South Carolina and
 they are the meanest kind of Slaves they are
 Plantation Slaves our Southern Slaves is of some
 use to the owner they will make support
 for their masters and those others is of no other
 use than to make mischief I must close with
 a hope of seeing better times
 I am with great respects your friend
 D. Crockett

Charles Schultz
 Will you get a paper from your editor that
 contains the proceedings of the day I spent in your
 City last summer on my way home please to
 get it and enclose it to me as soon as convenient
 and oblige your friend D. Crockett

David Crockett to Charles Schultz, December 25, 1834 (The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC01162)

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Transcript

David Crockett to Charles Schultz, December 25, 1834 (The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC01162)

Washington City

25 Dec^r 1834

Dear Sir

I wrote you a Short time ago and as I have Cant a leasure moment I will write again although I can ad but littleTimes is still no report yet from the Committee of either house upon the French war recommendation. I expect when that report comes in to see the home strings brake the western & Southern men dare not to Sustain Jackson in his mad Carear, and when they refuse all the Blood hounds in the nation will be let loos [*sic*] on them

The time has Come that man is expected to be transfarable and as negotiable as a promisary note of hand, in those days of Glory and – Jackson & reform & co – little Vann Sets in his chair and [*inserted: looks*] as Sly as a red fox and I have no doubt but that he thinks Andrew Jackson has full power to transfer the people of these united States at his will, and I am truly afread that a majority of the free Citizens of these united States will Submit to it and Say amen Jackson done it. It is right If we Judge by the past we can make no other Calculations.

I have almost given up the Ship as lost. I have gone So far as to declare that if he martin vanburen is elected that I will leave [2] the united States for I never will live under his king dom before I will Submit to his Governmint I will go to the wildes of Texas, I will consider that government a Paridice to what this will be in fait at this time our Republican Governmint has dwindled almost into insignificancy our bosted land of liberty have almost Bowed to the yoke of of Bondage our happy days of Republican principles are near at an end when a few is to transfer the many this is Vanburen principles there is more Slaves in New York and Pennsylvana then there is in Virginia and South Carolina and they are the meanest kind of Slaves they are – Volunteer Slaves our Southern Slaves is of some use to the owner they will make support for their masters and those others is of no other use than to make mischief I must Close in a hope of Seeing better times

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I am with great respects your friend

& obt Servt

David Crockett

Charles Shultz

P.S will you get a paper from your editor that Contains the proceedings of the day I Spent in your City last Summer on my way home pleas to get it and enclose it to me as soon as convenient and oblidge your friend D.C –

[written on margin of first page]

Presented to D^r Cohen by his friend and oblged svt.

Baet. March 7, 1840

M^r. Ogden Niles