

Fourth Prize, Dear George Washington Contest 2013  
Ethan Yan, Fifth Grade  
The Nueva School

Tota Wari Crescioni is a clan mother in the Tuscarora tribe of the Iroquois Indians, who is concerned about protecting her land.

Dear President Washington,

I am a Beaver Clan mother in the Tuscarora nation. With the signing of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the Continental Congress guaranteed that the Oneidas and the Tuscaroras would get to keep our land. Only you, Mr. President, can make sure that New York will honor the Treaty.

We have moved out of our homes before. Prior to joining the League of Nations, we lived in North Carolina. There, we were originally friends with the settlers around us. We provided them with food and knowledge about the wilderness, but they took advantage of us; they took our farmlands and took us as slaves. Many of us were killed, some burned alive. Fortunately, the League accepted us.

After we had settled in our new homes, your troops started fighting the British for independence. Because we were allies with them, the Onondagas, Senecas, Mohawks, and Cayugas sided with the Red Coats. Only the Oneidas and we remained loyal to you. By fighting against our fellow Hodenosaunee, we broke up the League for the first time since Hiawatha and the Peacemaker united us. Do you remember, in the Winter of 1777 at Valley Forge, we supplied corn for your army while we were starving? You cannot let our children die in vain.

Our land is very important to us; it is our duty to take care of it. Around this land we grow the Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash; we hunt and fish. You have to outlaw the selling of our land to new settlers, for our livelihood depends on it. Compared to all of our sacrifices, this is a small favor to ask. From a hopeful clan mother of four children, to a great leader, I beg for your help.

Sincerely,

Tota Wari Crescioni