

Highwapee Garrison

1st March 1809.

Sir.

On my way to the seat of Government in November last I met with your letter of covering a kind of remonstrance & petition signed by twenty nine Chickasaw Chiefs. Stating their imaginary grievances in which they charge The President & yourself with duplicity in purchasing the Cherokees right or claim to the lands to which both these nations had (perhaps) an equal claim eventually: but it is a fact that there ^{were} ~~was~~ no public documents to show that the Chickasaws had any claim to that land untill 1794; Eleven years after the same land had been designated as belonging to the Cherokees: & The Chickasaws obtained their parchment, (as they term it) probably from reasons of State. Altho the interest of the Indians is perfectly safe from the love of justice & magnanimity of the U. States, & they cannot be made fully to believe it. Jealousy is a prominent trait in Indian character. & there is always some white men who from base & unworthy motives will excite their discontent, & will write any thing, & put on a colouring, even not intended by the Indians themselves.

George Colbert tho, not highest in rank in the Chickasaw nation yet from his ambition & interest, very much

influences the affairs of that nation. He is extremely miscalculates his importance, & when not awed by the presence of the officers of Government takes upon himself great airs. He discovers a partial enmity to the people who have leased lands in the reserve at the Shoals. —

In the petition remonstrance (which I consider as the work of Colboit), they state that they "suspect Col^o meigs, Clark, Hall & Lyon, to have had Mr. D. Chipolm & Doublehead as emissaries to prevent the Chukchee & Chickasaws from settling their boundaries."

It is disagreeable to my feelings to be charged with improper conduct even by an Indian however unfounded the charge: but as calumny is the order of the day with a certain description of characters. I am willing to take my share of honor from that quarter. — So far from endeavoring to hinder the settlement of their boundaries, that I wrote to the late Agent Mr. Wright in favor of it & furnished to the Black Fox who went down for that purpose. Three Barrels of flour for them to eat while on that business. The Black Fox returned without effecting the object which I believe failed by some neglect or cause by the Chickasaws. —

Mr. D. Chipolm, Clark, Lyon, Hall or any other individual, never attempted to influence me in any public transactions. I have never had any speculation in lands or any other way since I came to the Agency in my business here I have been under no influence or control except that

that officially communicated by the Department of war.

I do not know who may succeed to the place you have held in the War department ~~But~~ am confident it will be well filled. — As this sin may be the last letter I may have the honor to address to you of a public nature, it may (perhaps) not be amiss for me in my own vindication to assure you on my sacred word of honor that, since the bowels of the earth have been torn up in search of Diamonds & the precious metals, there has not been enough feared to induce me to deviate from what accords with my conceptions of right. — I wish you may be happy, & I am sure you will be, because you can look back on the past without regret, & forward with pleasing anticipation.

I am very respectfully
your Ob^t. Servant
Return please.


Henry Dearborn Esq.
Secretary of War.