

Doc. 2 Elias Boudinot (Modified)

Vocabulary:

Degraded - reduced far below ordinary standards of civilized life and conduct

Impoverished - represented by few species or individuals

Opressors – people who burden by abuse of power or authority

I see here nothing but certain death, and at the West a probable way to escape. I will not debate on the morality of what the United States is requesting of the Cherokee Nation, that is useless. But, the Cherokees do have a right to save themselves from destruction. That bears no question in my opinion; and such is the dictate of wisdom and sound reason. To debate whether the United States of America is doing us an ethical service is useless since we are being abused at home. Many in our country have sought out our most intelligent leaders to answer the questions of removal for us. And many of them have set us on a destructive policy. To remain here at all events until we are forced away, as though that would add credit to our character, and disgrace and infamy to the oppressors is a mistaken policy. Taking all views under consideration, I was convinced to sign the Treaty of 1835. I was fully satisfied that it was the best that could be done for the Cherokees, and that it was far preferable that they should go, however reluctantly, with the advantages of that Treaty, than that they should be driven away degraded and impoverished.

Source: Elias Boudinot signed the Treaty of New Echota in his home in 1835. He was representing the minority of Cherokee who favored removal / relocation. This is a letter written on August 1, 1837 to David Green, explaining why he signed the treaty.