

Name _____

Date _____ Class _____



BACKGROUND: 1777 Treaty with the Cherokee

The Cherokee distrusted state leaders when they arrived at Long Island in 1777. They had been treated unfairly in earlier treaties. Two years earlier, a land transaction took place between the Transylvania Company, owned by a North Carolinian, and the Cherokee people. After negotiations, the company claimed 20 million acres of Cherokee land, which included parts of Virginia, Tennessee (then North Carolina), and Kentucky. In exchange, the Cherokee received five wagon loads of trade goods. Many Cherokee leaders denied the terms and legality of the 1775 exchange. Those at Long Island in 1777 argued that the earlier agreement was for a lease only.

In 1776, young Cherokee warriors, led by Dragging Canoe, acted against the injustice of earlier treaties and land transactions and waged war on White settlements. State governments of the Carolinas and Virginia then retaliated with force. State soldiers killed Cherokee warriors and burned over 50 Cherokee villages and crops. Scottish traders working for the British crown in the backcountry were also involved. They tried to persuade the Cherokee to build alliances with Appalachian-region tribes. That way, many tribes could side with the British and fight the new states. Wanting peace, Cherokee leaders ceded land to the new states. Although peace did not last, the 1777 treaty halted British efforts at a large American Indian alliance against the states and established the Cherokees' neutrality in the Revolution. The result was that the states' military could focus on fighting British forces in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

Quick Fact Check

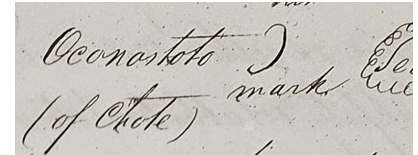
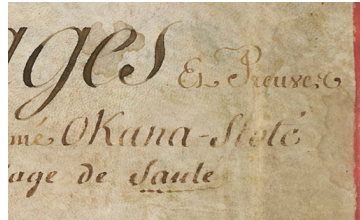
1. Why were some colonists angry at British Parliament?
2. How did some women support the Provincial Congress' resolves?
3. What was the difference between the Provincial Congress and the Continental Congress?
4. To whom did delegates at the First Provincial Congress pledge their allegiance?

In addition to five of the men who negotiated the treaty (introduced in the Reader's Theater Script) three other men had notable roles at the event.



Details of Military Commission Granted to Chief Okana-Stoté of the Cherokee by Governor Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlérec, 1761, National Archives collection 6924937.

Quiet elder leader of the Cherokee: **Oconostota**, (c. 1707–1783) was a Cherokee warrior from Chota in today's Monroe County, Tennessee. He came to prominence during the French and Indian War. He later served as the First Beloved Man of Chota from 1775 to 1781. He spoke briefly at the beginning of negotiations but allowed Old Tassel to speak on his behalf. The French translation of Oconostota from his 1761 French military commission is below center. The English translation of his name for the Treaty of Long Island on Holston, 1777, with Oconostota's own signature mark, is below right.



Treaty of Long Island on the Holston, 1777, signature page detail, Governors' office records, council papers, 67.1.11, State Archives of N.C.

Interpreter: Joseph Vann (c. 1730-1780) was likely born in Chowan or Bertie County, N.C. and married a Cherokee woman, Wah-li. Joseph bought land in South Carolina and later moved to Georgia with his family. He translated the Cherokee speeches during negotiations. His services enabled state commissioners to understand and clerks to write official records. Though sources disagree, Moravian records of Wah-li's words identify Joseph as the deceased father of prominent Georgia Cherokee chief, James Vann.



Scribe: William Tatham (1752-1819) recorded what the interpreters and commissioners said. Tatham came to America from England at age 16 to work as a clerk for Virginia merchants. In 1776, he moved to North Carolina's Watauga Settlement (present-day East Tennessee). There he started his own mercantile business, learned surveying, and defended the settlers' fort against several hundred Cherokee warriors. The following year, he served as assistant clerk to the N.C. commissioners. Soon after the Revolution, he planned and named the town of

Lumberton and was elected to the state legislature, representing Fayetteville. He later returned to live in Tennessee, then England, and finally Virginia. While living in England, he published descriptions of three Cherokee chiefs, including Old Tassel. Although they were his former enemies, his recollections show he admired them.