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Communication from Josiah Gardner, delegate
Choctaw and Chickasaw Union Party, transmitting
statements and petitions from the Choctaw Indians
relative to the bill

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PETITION OF CHOCTAW INDIANS.

MAY 25, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

The VICE-PRESIDENT presented the following

**COMMUNICATION FROM JOSIAH GARDNER, DELEGATE CHOCTAW
AND CHICKASAW UNION PARTY, TRANSMITTING STATEMENTS
AND PETITIONS FROM THE CHOCTAW INDIANS RELATIVE TO
THE CURTIS BILL.**

To the United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

SIRS: Find inclosed the statements and petitions of 360 Choctaw Indians from 7 different counties in our nation, and will say that I am expecting similar petitions from the remaining 10 counties of this nation, there being 17 counties in all. On account of the recent floods in this part of the country a majority of the people were unable to attend the county meetings held for the purpose of petitioning the President, William McKinley. You will notice that our petitions are addressed to him, because we were of the opinion that the President was the only person we could expect to give us justice, and naturally so, after discovering that the House passed the Curtis bill without the least consideration—a bill that was of such vast importance to us. However, I desire to explain that copy of our petitions as herewith inclosed expresses our feelings on the measure, and I sincerely trust that your honorable body will give the same serious consideration.

My people have the utmost confidence in your action on the same, believing that as soon as you understand the injustice of the proposed legislation, and know that the Choctaw people are willing and anxious to make a final agreement if given an opportunity. My people desire to make an agreement that will do justice by all our citizens and all noncitizens lawfully resident in our nation. However, they do not believe it right for them, the owners of this country, to be forced to submit to an unjust agreement or legislation by Congress. The people feel that the United States Government is acting too hasty in this matter of allotment. The United States courts now have full jurisdiction, and it seems that our people ought to be given sufficient time to get accustomed to the said courts and, by observing that the United States laws are impartially administered, would necessarily restore confidence and good will among our people, and then would be the proper time to make the final arrangements for the allotting of our lands.

We are delighted to see the hesitancy of your honorable committee in acting on the Curtis bill, and hope that they will defeat any action on the same until such future time as may be proper; furthermore, the people desire to submit a proposition that would be satisfactory to all concerned, they deeming the Curtis bill an unjust and unlawful measure.

We are not the stubborn and uncompromising people that we have been represented to be, but have been and are now simply endeavoring to get an honest and just settlement of our affairs.

It has been heretofore that the United States commissioners upon their arrival here begun by telling us what we must do and that we must do it quick, never allowing or soliciting any propositions from the people. If this is our country it seems that the people should be consulted in the matter and not just a few men, who might not have the interest of the Choctaw people at heart. At any rate we would prefer to act personally in the matter.

Therefore, in behalf of the full-blood Choctaw Indians who petition you, and whom I represent, I beg of you to be more liberal and conservative in your actions toward us, and do most respectfully demand that the Choctaw people be given an opportunity of demonstrating to your guardian Government that they are willing and anxious to make a final and satisfactory agreement.

Would like to say in explanation of our position that the reason the Dawes Choctaw and Chickasaw agreement caused such universal dissatisfaction was because the commissioners on the part of the Choctaws represented a minority and not the majority of our people, as the coming August election will demonstrate. It is an undeniable fact that the union party of to-day represents three-fourths of the voting population of our nation; and it is very distressing to our people to think that a great government like the United States is now giving its legislative ear to the representatives of the minority of our people and to Congressmen and Senators who know absolutely nothing about the Indian situation here, but who are striving to receive the applause of the "boomer" element in this nation. But bear in mind we do not class all noncitizens as "boomers," for I can assure you that a great majority of the noncitizen residents of our nation are men of honor and a credit to our country, and such men are endeavoring to assist us in education and civilization.

Now, in conclusion, I hope and trust that your honorable body will grant the prayer of my Choctaw people, thereby demonstrating to them that the United States Government is in no wise prejudiced against the Choctaw Indians, granting to us ample time in which to prepare for the great change that is almost beyond our comprehension.

Respectfully submitted.

JOSIAH GARDNER,

Delegate Choctaw and Chickasaw Union Party.

MCALESTER, IND. T., May 18, 1898.

As citizens of the Choctaw Nation, and residents of Jackson County of said nation, in mass meeting assembled, hereby submit a few statements and our petition:

We desire to say that the statements and representations made to

the departments and members of Congress by the promoters and advocates of the Curtis bill are absolutely false; and we are confident that by such false means the members of the lower House of Congress were influenced to pass the Curtis bill "without discussion," thereby violating solemn treaties, impairing the rights, and destroying the peace and happiness of our people.

We object to the Curtis bill, deeming it an injurious and unlawful measure. Its provisions would work an irreparable injury on a helpless and dependent people.

We deny that we are crowded to the hills by the more enlightened and prosperous of our citizens, and state that all of us who live in the remote districts of our country do so of our own free will and at our pleasure. We can safely assert that more than one-fourth of our county (Jackson) is unoccupied. We have abundant unoccupied lands in our nation, sufficient to accommodate the present and future generations of our people; therefore we are content, satisfied, and happy.

We respect and honor our treaties, our constitution, and our laws, and respectfully demand that the United States Government give them proper consideration and respectful recognition.

We condemn the action of the Dawes Commission in disregarding our treaties, constitution, and laws.

We realize and admit that soon our tribal government is to cease, but insist that we be consulted in the final settlement of the affairs of our country; therefore we beg for sufficient time to educate ourselves preparatory to a Territorial form of government and final statehood. Furthermore, it is the desire and intention of our people to submit a proposition to the United States Government settling this important question, recognizing the equitable, legal, and just rights of our citizens, and all noncitizens lawfully resident in our nation.

We, your petitioners, respectfully ask that you veto the Curtis bill should it pass the Senate. By so doing you will prevent endless litigation, protect a helpless and dependent people, assisting in the education and civilization, and, finally, the admitting of a happy and prosperous people to citizenship of the United States.

Grant the above and your petitioners will ever pray, etc.

To WILLIAM MCKINLEY,
President of the United States, Washington, D. C.

Respectfully submitted.

G. N. Belvin.
Robert Jackson.
Isiah Nickolis.
Aaron Scott.
Thomas Belvin.
David Frazier.
George Victor.
Sam Scott.
Johnson Scott.
Solomon Belvin.
Robert Belvin.
Solomon Foster.
Osbern Frazier.
James Harrison.
L. G. Wilson.
Jackson Frazier.

Ratio Battice.
Joshua Flore.
Solomon Hall.
Sampson Scott.
Lumles Jackson.
James Durant.
Isaac Nickolis.
Wallace Frazier.
Moses Belvin.
Noe Belvin.
Sampson Sharkey.
Dickson Frazier.
Ardining Wilson.
Thomas Frazier.
Nickolis Battice.
Robinson Battice.

Lemus Belvin.
Simeon Levi.
Lewis James.
Stephen Herbert.
William Frye.
Thomas Johnson.
Billy Jackson.
C. Cole.
C. H. Semernee.
Wm. Leflore.
Joe Hampton.
Thos. Hampton.
Johnson Wollie.
Peterson Wollie.
Isaac Hampton.
Peter Robinson.

Total, 48.

The citizens of Cedar County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition, and signed as follows:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| L. H. Williams. | James Lewis. | Gilbert Jefferson. |
| Simeon Morris. | Gilbert Choate. | Thomas Eyachubbe. |
| E. H. Nelson. | Jammie Thorn. | Logan Cole. |
| Morris Tom. | Lewis Campbell. | Jim Carlister. |
| Solomon Nehka. | William Tillis. | Nicholas Cosby. |
| Rayson Hopson. | Lewis Isaac. | Thomas Wesley. |
| Rayson Campbell. | Morris Bond. | Wesley Edward. |
| Levin Lore. | P. W. Jefferson. | Stork Emer. |
| Josiah Thomas. | William Cable. | Allen Billy. |
| Silas Bacon. | A. H. Reed. | William Harkin. |
| Willie Billy. | David Charles. | Sam Frazier. |
| R. B. Harland. | Jessie Thorn. | Isham Nelson. |
| Bobb Nehka. | J. P. Thompson. | Paul Homer. |
| Pharis Nehka. | Johnas Wesley. | Technumseh Homer. |
| Lyman Billy. | Robt. Tims. | Turner Cole. |
| Alexon Holme. | John Taylor. | Gilbert Filihkatubbe. |
| Josie Thomas. | Johnson Wesley. | Able Colin. |
| David Houston. | Celum Taylor. | Simeon Cole. |
| Able Hays. | Joseph Taylor. | Levi Durant. |
| William Hicks. | Jim Tillis. | Henry Bean. |
| Austin Billy. | Steward Jefferson. | George Davenport. |
| Haaman Billy. | Noel Nehka. | Jim Davenport. |
| Joe Wesley. | Goodman McKinzie. | Johnny Tims. |
| Campbell Wesley. | Wm. Eyachubbe. | Willie Tims. |

Total, 72.

The citizens of Jackfork County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition, and signed as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| J. H. Hampton. | Allen Cole. | G. W. Baldwin. |
| Dixon Frazier. | Raymon Tobby. | H. J. Gibson. |
| Mack Frazier. | S. M. Frazier. | William Willis. |
| Lyman Colbert. | V. M. Locke, jr. | Ellis Gibson. |
| John Petterson. | J. J. Turner. | William Anderson. |
| T. L. Wood. | Edmon William. | Able Noah. |
| Stepheson Nochtubbe. | V. M. Locke. | Mullen Underwood. |
| Wilson Cole. | Tobear Edward. | Daniel Miller. |
| Logan Cole. | John Gibson. | Silas Cole. |
| C. J. Hudson. | Albert Thompson. | E. H. Corner. |
| Barvilli Lewis. | Thomas Prush. | Morgan Cole. |

Total, 33.

The citizens of Kimitia County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition, and signed as follows:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| T. L. Griggs. | Elias Jacob. | Hall Greenwood. |
| Ed. Roebuck. | Daniel Webster. | Amos Marsh. |
| S. L. Bacon. | Bond Coleman. | Allen Tautubbe. |
| A. R. Durant. | Osborne Battice. | Eastman Alexander. |
| Ed. W. Gardner. | Sam Robinson. | Willson Thomas. |
| Ellis Choate. | Jas. Skelton. | Thompson Coleman. |
| Sim Harrison. | Josiah Anderson. | Arlington Ward. |
| Isaac Cole. | William Fulton. | Sam Colbert. |
| Geo. Ward. | James Thompson. | Daniel Wilson. |
| Lyman Robinson. | Moses Kainabee. | Sam Hayes. |
| Thomas Ashford. | Sammie Chofy. | Sam Taintubbee. |
| H. C. Williams. | Joseph Cole. | M. H. Fisher. |
| David Roebuck. | John James. | Martin Speaker. |
| Mack Roebuck. | Ben James. | Josiah Battice. |
| Haris Frazier. | Noel Skelton. | Johnson Tautoby. |
| Dennis Roberts. | Alex Skelton. | Willie Baxter. |
| Tobias Robinson. | Tobias William. | Willie Cole. |
| Moses Cooper. | | |

Total, 57.

The citizens of Boktoklo County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition, and signed as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| J. J. Williams. | J. A. James. | Daniel Anderson. |
| Able Henderson. | Moses Jackson. | Johnney Anderson. |
| David Henderson. | Thomas Watson. | Simpson Dennis. |
| Edmond P. Willis. | Iseral Kanashombe. | Jammie Pitchlynn. |
| A. H. Clay. | Forbes Kanashombe. | Morris T. Edwards. |
| R. W. Thomas. | Banabbe. | Stephen Kanashombe. |
| R. N. IshCommar. | Franklin Homma. | E. H. Willis. |
| Sylvester Davis. | Garlvin James. | Gipson Ishtonake. |
| Thomas Charley. | Harrison Kanashombe. | Hodges Lawitaga. |
| Allen Watson. | Monroe IshCommar. | Sampson Willis. |
| Moses P. Edward. | Stephens Parker. | Jefferson Davis. |
| B. W. Thomas. | Silas Anderson. | Willie Charley. |
| Loma Watson. | Tobias Thomas. | |
| Albert John. | Charley Colbert. | |

Total, 40.

The citizens of Wade County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition, and signed as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| G. W. Thompson. | Payson James. | James Beams. |
| Robert McKinney. | Sampson Lewis. | W. J. Wright. |
| S. B. McKinney. | A. H. Williams. | Charles Billy. |
| C. J. Anderson. | Joseph Wright. | Robert King. |
| H. D. Anderson. | Wilson Nicholis. | H. J. Alexander. |
| G. W. Bell. | Thomas Graham. | Gabriel Paxton. |
| Daniel Dainey. | Peter James. | Davis Anderson. |
| G. W. Dukes. | Joseph Williams. | L. W. Bohanan. |
| J. A. Dukes. | Julius Billy. | J. S. Bacon. |
| G. W. Foster. | Lymus James. | Louis McKintosh. |
| Henry Dukes. | Asmon Pitchlynn. | S. T. Push. |
| S. B. Lewis. | H. W. Johnson. | H. Nail. |
| I. H. Frazier. | Alexander Pitchlynn. | I. B. Nail. |
| A. E. Paxton. | Forbis Potts. | D. Thomas. |
| Solomon Jones. | Isham James. | David Burney. |
| Thomas H. Bohanan. | James Willis. | Josiah Billy. |
| S. H. Woods. | Allen Anderson. | William James. |
| C. L. Bacon. | Allen Bacon. | Houston Terrell. |
| J. J. Yota. | Ellis Bacon. | John L. Baggett. |
| S. S. Woods. | Joel Woods. | J. H. Bond. |
| L. D. Dukes. | | |

Total, 61.

The citizens of Blue County, in mass meeting assembled, adopted a duplicate of the foregoing petition and signed as follows:

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| N. H. Gardner. | J. E. Nelson. | J. H. Nelson. |
| David Gardner. | Ashotubbe. | Silas Bell. |
| H. J. James. | A. J. Homer. | S. H. Livingston. |
| Isaac Carson. | S. E. Nelson. | W. J. Billy. |
| William Gardner. | Gilbert Nelson. | Impson Johnson. |
| Jacob Green. | B. J. Roberts. | Simeon Johnson. |
| Henry Prince. | Solomon Johns. | Thomas Jefferson. |
| J. A. James. | C. M. Byington. | William Nicholas. |
| Jefferson Williams. | E. M. Cole. | Alfred King. |
| Galloway Williams. | C. N. King. | B. J. Huston. |
| C. J. Jones. | E. S. Johnson. | R. D. Anderson. |
| W. W. Hampton. | Isaac McGee. | Joseph Forb. |
| Sam Dyer. | David Hopakubbe. | Walton Hitehouse. |
| Tanner Covchner. | B. L. Gardner. | Nelson Nail. |
| Daniel Moses. | John Holden. | W. M. Frazier. |
| William Robinson. | McKeney Holden. | S. Cole. |

Total, 48.

PETITION OF CHOCTAW INDIANS.

Recapitulation.

| County. | Amount of unoccupied land in county. | Number of signatures. |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Blue | One-third of county | 48 |
| Wade | One half of county | 61 |
| Boktoklo | One-fourth of county | 40 |
| Jackson | do | 48 |
| Cedar | One-half of county | 73 |
| Kimitia | One-third of county | 57 |
| Jackfork | 400,600 acres in county | 33 |
| Total | | 360 |

The above amounts of land, unoccupied in each of the said counties, is stated in each original county petition, all of which will soon be in the hands of the President, William McKinley.