

Excerpts from John Ross's words to delegates of the Iroquois League:

"Brothers: The tradition of our Fathers . . . tells us that this great and extensive Continent was once the sole and exclusive abode of our race. . . . Ever since [the whites came] we have been made to drink of the bitter cup of humiliation; treated like dogs . . . our country and the graves of our Fathers torn from us . . . through a period of upwards of 200 years, rolled back, nation upon nation [until] we find ourselves fugitives, vagrants and strangers in our own country. . . .

"The existence of the Indian Nations as distinct Independent Communities within the limits of the United States seems to be drawing to a close. . . . You are aware that our Brethren, the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Creeks of the South have severally disposed of their country to the United States and that a portion of our own Tribe have also emigrated West of the Mississippi -- but that the largest portion of our Nation still remain firmly upon our ancient domain. . . . Our position there may be compared to a solitary tree in an open space, where all the forest trees around have been prostrated by a furious tornado."