

Washington City
March 3, 1845

Hon. William Wilkins
Secretary of War

Sir,

I have the honor herewith to enclose information attained relative the present state of improvement among the Cherokee Indians belonging to the town of Qualla, situated in Haywood Co. NC, which comprehends the principal settlement of the full blood Cherokee now East of the Mississippi River. This information shows that those people are now increasing instead of diminishing. That they now subsist by agriculture instead of depending upon the chase [sic]. That they have now their own mechanics, own farmers, own school teachers, and own preachers. This information having been prepared under the superintendence of the Chiefs may be relied on as correct.

Very Respectfully
Your _____
William H. Thomas

Present State of Civilization among the Cherokee Indians of Qualla Town situated on the waters of Tuckasega [sic] river in Haywood Co. N. Carolina.

In 1840 when the census was taken of the town the aggregate number- 669 (*This number included a considerable number of old and infirmed persons who were unable to remove west and were brought to that town to be taken care of by their friends which increased the number of deaths*).

From the fall of 1840 to the fall of 1844 the number of births- 166

The aggregate number of deaths in the same time- 53

Increase of population 113 or about 16 2/3 percent- 113

1840 At the last date (1844) the aggregate number of blind- 2

“ the aggregate number of deaf and dense- 3

“ the aggregate number of idiots and insane- 0 (*The cause of their being no idiots or insane persons is probably attributable to an ancient custom which prohibited intermarriages between persons belonging to the same clan. The Cherokee tribe is formed of seven clans*).

“ No. of persons engaged in agriculture- 259 (*Some belonging to the town live by hunting. All to some extent depending upon agricultur*).

“ No. of Black Smiths, gun smiths, and silver smiths- 13 (*The blacksmiths make and repair farming tools etc. the gunsmiths make the _____ rifle including locks and every other part. The silversmiths as yet have not advanced farther than the making of ornaments, ear rings, etc.*).

“ No. of Coopers who make _____ for whites as well as for Indians- 35

“ No. of person who understand the art of making spinning wheels- 11

“ No. who stuck guns for whites and Indians- 49 (*A large portion can make long plow stucks [?]*)

“ No. who perform public duty in working upon roads- 172 (*Under their own overseers they keep up the public roads which lead through their town*).

“ No. of females who have learned to card and spin- 206 (*Many of them also understand the art of weaving cloth on the common hand loom*).

“ No. of members belonging to the temperance society- 310 (*To the Temperance Society which was formed by the Chief Yunaguska (under the advice of an orphan boy who was an adoptive Cherokee) is attributable the increase of the population & rapid improvement exhibited*).

“ No. of Sabbath school teachers and schollars [sic]- 103

“ No. of persons have learned to read and write- 159 (*Their education is principally confined to reading and writing in their own language with a few exceptions they are full blood Indians. These being _____ - as white man can- united with them by marriage*).

“ No. of capital offences committed in the 4 years- 0

“ No of cases of assaults and batteries- 0 (*Offences of this description are looked upon as disgraceful and of rare occurrence among the Cherokee Indians they are _____ intoxicated. At this time out of a population of 782 persons there is not a single habitual drunkard and not exceeding eight persons who taste spirits of any description. Previous to the establishment of the temperance society nearly all both male and female were and had been from their childhood. In the habits of drinking ardent spirits and their councils and dances usually [ended?] in scenes of dissipation accompanied by acts of violence towards each other and the use of deadly weapons which made offences of common occurrence. And wounds were frequently inflicted by brother upon brother, husband upon wife, and father upon the son indiscriminately which caused the deaths of many*).