

All About New Echota

By Jeannette Holland Austin



Council House

Before New Echota was settled the seat of the Cherokee tribe was located at Ustanali on the Coosawattee River which was established ca 1777 by refugees from the Cherokee Lower Towns in northwestern South Carolina after the murder of Old Tassel and other chiefs while on an embassy to the State of Franklin. Little Turkey was elected chief of the Cherokee and the seat of the Cherokee council was removed from Chota to Ustanali.

New Echota (named after Choata) was the capital of the Cherokee Nation from 1825 to their forced removal in the 1830s. Today, the site is a State Park and Historic Site which is located North of Calhoun and South of Resaca, Georgia and situated at the confluence of the Coosawattee and Conasauga Rivers.

The tribal council commenced a building program which included construction of a two-story Council House, Supreme Court, and later the office (printer shop) and was the first Cherokee newspaper. The editor and printer, Elias Boudinot wrote the Cherokee Phoenix newspaper in the Cherokee language. Issues of this newspaper are available at most regional libraries in Georgia on microfilm. After the Congressional passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1832, Georgia included Cherokee territory in its Sixth Land Lottery, allocating Cherokee land to white settlers.

The Cherokee Nation had never ceded the land to the state. Over the next six years, the Georgia Guard operated against the Cherokee, evicting them from their properties. By 1834, New Echota was becoming a ghost town. Council meetings were moved to Red Clay, Cherokee Nation (now Tennessee). The United States urged the Cherokee to remove to Indian Territory, in exchange for their lands in Georgia.

It has been my experience in researching Cherokee heritages that all Cherokees were not removed from North Georgia. The applications of Indian descendants in Georgia to the Dawes Commission (to be awarded free Oklahoma land) reflect some interesting details. Although only a small portion of these

applicants succeeded in proving as much as 1/32nd blood descent, those who did succeed traced themselves to one or more of the Indian Rolls. This is the key.

Tribes kept Rolls, beginning about 1818, with the names of natives. The Cherokee Census and other records assist the genealogists. A list of the records available on Georgia Pioneers are listed here