

Primary Source

Cherokee Phoenix Introduction

Shortly after the Cherokee Nation adopted its Constitution in 1827, the Cherokee Phoenix, the first Native American newspaper, began publication at the Cherokee capital of New Echota. The Cherokee Phoenix printed items in both English and in the written Cherokee language. Most of these items dealt with Native Americans' troubled relations with the state and federal governments, but topics such as religion and literature received coverage as well. While serving as the voice of the Cherokee Nation in particular, it addressed issues faced by all Native Americans at the time. This excerpt below is taken from the introductory editorial from the first issue of the Cherokee Phoenix.

“To the Public”

....

As the Phoenix is a national paper, we shall feel ourselves bound to devote it to national purposes. “The laws and public documents of the Nation,” and matters relating to the welfare and condition of the Cherokees as a people, will be faithfully published in English and Cherokee.

As the liberty of the press is so essential to the improvement of the mind, we shall consider our paper, a *free paper*, with, however, proper and usual restrictions. We shall reserve to ourselves the liberty of rejecting such communications as tend to evil, and such as are too intemperate and too personal. But the columns of this paper shall always be open to free and temperate discussions on matters of politics, religion, &c.

....

In regard to the controversy with Georgia, and the present policy of the General Government, in removing, and concentrating the Indians, out of the limits of any state, which, by the way, appears to be gaining strength, we will invariably and faithfully state the feelings of the majority of our people. Our views, as a people, on this subject, have been most sadly misrepresented. These views we do not wish to conceal, but are willing that the public should know what we think of this policy, which, in our opinion, if carried into effect, will prove pernicious to us.

Source: *Cherokee Phoenix*, February 21, 1828.